**Inputs by the Syrian Arab Republic to the written report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to the Human Rights Council on**

**progress, gaps and challenges in addressing CEFM and measures to ensure accountability (HRC res. 41/8)**

- Gender equality is a fundamental and ultimate societal value in the Syrian Arab Republic. Promoting equality is at the core of the Constitution of the Syrian Arab Republic. The national strategic plan for gender equality and its executive framework prepared by the Syrian Commission for Family and Population Affairs in cooperation with the relevant ministries and the United Nations Population Fund, contains objectives and measures to promote gender equality and prevent discrimination in Syria. This plan is a tool for coordinating policies and actions on gender equality in the work of the Government and its partners, and to identify the roles and responsibility of all stakeholders. This plan has been developed to ensure that gender equality and ensure that women and men are partners in the societal reforms and major projects. The plan also contributes to fulfilling the obligations imposed in the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and other related obligations, including within the efforts to achieve the sustainable development goals. This plan is based on a revision of the national strategic priorities. It took into consideration papers presented by different stakeholders on their activities and views. The vision of this plan is to reach a Syrian society conscious of gender equality as a condition for sustainable development.

The strategic priorities are:

1. Achieve economic empowerment of women and men.

2. Reduce gender-based violence and domestic violence.

3. Ensure Participation in decision-making at different level and in different areas.

4. Promote equal access to women's health-care services with ensuring their high quality.

5. Create more equal educational opportunities for both sexes.

6. Institutionalize and mainstream the principles of gender equality.

- The Syrian Commission for Family and Population Affairs has prepared a draft law on protection against domestic violence, which aims to protect the family from all forms of violence within the family, limit its spread and prevent it, punish its perpetrators, compensate for the resulting damages and provide the necessary care for the victims. This draft law is under discussion and will be referred for issuance at the completion of this stage.

- The Family Protection Unit of the Syrian Commission for Family and Population Affairs works to receive women and children survivors of violence, and provides an integrated package of services such as shelter, medical service, psychosocial support, legal aid and economic empowerment such as vocational training.

- The Family Protection Unit which was opened on International Women’s Day, 8 March 2017, and it continues its work with the support of From the United Nations Population Fund. The Syrian Commission for Family and Population Affairs is working on re-launching the National Observatory of Violence with initial 20 monitoring points distributed in several hospitals, police stations, and some associations to monitor cases of domestic violence and prepare statistical and analytical reports that help decision-makers in making decisions and setting plans relating to domestic violence and raise awareness on that. the Commission, in cooperation with the Ministry of Information and other national partners, launched an anti-violence campaign entitled (don’t be silent) to raise awareness on the need to report any case of violence and refer it to the concerned authorities to address it from all sides (legal, social and psychological).

- The Child Rights Law No. 21 was issued on 2021, which includes basic principles for child protection and care, in particular prioritizing the principle of the best interest of the child in all decisions and procedures related to the child, in addition to other basic principles enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

- A national committee has been formed, headed by the Minister of Social Affairs and Labor and the Chair of the Syrian Commission for Family and Population Affairs, and the membership of the concerned governmental and civil society. This committee is tasked with proposing the general policy related to the rights of the child and setting national plans for implementing the abovementioned law 21 and the obligations stipulated in the Convention on the Rights of the Child and to follow up on its implementation. The necessary executive procedures for implementing the law were also issued by a decision of the Minister of Social Affairs and Labor.

- Amendments to the Syrian Penal Code and the Personal Status Law have been adopted to address early marriage cases. Article (16) of the Personal Status Law has been amended, which includes raising the marriage age for young men and women until they complete (18) years of age, and amending articles (469, 470, 471, 472) of the Penal Code, in terms of including the imposition of criminal penalties on the parties involved in early marriage cases (parents, partners, witnesses, and everyone who supports this case of marriage).

- The Syrian Commission for Family and Population Affairs prepared a study on the societal determinants of early marriage (reality on the ground and interventionist policies), in addition to studying the economic cost of early marriage. The study was published in 2020. The main objective of this study was to shed light on the phenomenon of early marriage, and to clarify the danger of its spread during the current situation that Syria is experienced and to identify appropriate intervention mechanisms to curb this phenomenon, in addition to preparing an executive national plan to address early marriage.

The Syrian Arab Republic also committed, at the Nairobi Summit: The 25th Anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD25), to achieve a set of national commitments by 2030, including to reduce the rate of early marriage from (13%) to (5%) by 2030. Based on these commitments, a national plan is being developed to implement them on the ground.

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