**Written Report to Working Group on Discrimination against Women and Girls regarding Chad**

**Introduction:**

Female genital mutilation (FGM), early female child marriage, and low representation of women in general and in both the political and decision-making sectors represent different shapes and forms of violence and discrimination that have risen against women through the years.

Although the Chadian government has adopted different measures and plans aiming at narrowing the gender gap and to combat the different shapes of discrimination against women, the elements and factors that cultivate discrimination vary widely creating an active discrimination nature. Some of these elements stem from the traditional norms that support discrimination against women through the years, while other factors are backed by laws that have not been subject to treatment and revision for years resulting in creating a legislative frame that doesn’t cope with the international obligations of Chad.

Most of these elements affect Delaying Chad’s catch-up with sustainable development goals, especially goal number 5 which aims to build societies in which women experience equal rights and don’t witness any forms of discrimination.

As a result, it is very important to monitor and review the elements and sectors in which women witness forms of discrimination, aiming to redirect the attention of the working group on discrimination against women and girls and the Chadian government toward them.

1. **Women's Rights Violation in Chad**

One of the most important observations that Chad received through the years centered around the weakness of the legislative frame that prevented it from playing an effective role in protecting women’s rights in Chadian local communities.

* **Gender-Based Violence**

For years, GBV against Chadian women has proven to be a reality experienced by all ages of Chadian females, pushing it to be in the center of light as one of the key problems that has to be dealt with by Chadian authorities and stakeholders.

Although GBV became at the heart of the Chadian government which launched a 5-year strategy of national gender policy (2019 – 2023), also on 2020 a national forum on Gender-based violence was organized to support opening a dialogue that aims to improve combating gender-based violence.

* **Female Genital Mutilation**

FGM as a practice is still considered one of the deepest shapes of gender-based violence that is widely spread in Chadian society. It is reported that 34.1% of Chadian females aged between 15-49 have experienced FGM during their lifetime and it also varies from one region to another. The highest numbers are usually in the southeastern regions as the percentage reaches to mark 81.7% of women aged between 15 and 49 in the Salamat region, while 80.4% in the Mandoul region and 75.7% in the Sila region. [[1]](#footnote-1)

Also, the prevalence of FGM is the highest among Muslim women as it reaches 42.8% compared to 28% among Catholic women and 21% of protestants according to 2023 records.[[2]](#footnote-2)

* **Child Early Marriage**

It happens to be one of the forms of violence against women and girls. Early marriage centers around mainly forcing female children to marry and be part of a blinded commitment without making a free and informed decision. Early forced marriage also includes a wide range of health risks that female children can be exposed to.[[3]](#footnote-3)

Although Chad has taken a remarkable step in combating child marriage by adopting a new reform for its panel code that raises the legal marriage age of girls from 15 to 18,[[4]](#footnote-4) this reform conflicts with other laws, as article 277 of the criminal code which assures that marriages of girls above 13 years are legal according to the customary law leads the marriage of girls under 18 to continue in practice[[5]](#footnote-5) supported by the cultural norms are considered a strong motive or drive to the practice despite legislation in Chad.

Although the legislative frame of Chad contains laws to combat harmful practices the reality of women shows that further measures still need to be taken as in 2019, the child marriage rate reached 24% of children under 15 years and 61% between children under 61%[[6]](#footnote-6), however, statistics show that the problem is witnessing more deterioration as by 2022 child marriage rate has risen to reach 68% of the population, half of them are girls married under the age of 18[[7]](#footnote-7). The previous numbers show that Chad still needs to make more effort in the context of pushing its local legislation to match international and African obligations.

If these trends continue, 636.000 young girls who were born between 2005 – 2010 will be forced married before the age of 18 by 2030.[[8]](#footnote-8)

1. **Discrimination against Women**

Chad has exerted many efforts in combating discrimination against women since signing the convention of “eliminating all forms of discrimination against women”; however, Chadian women are still facing a wide range of discrimination against them.

Women in Chad still face different forms of discrimination, most of them are backed by culture norms, while other forms are backed by laws that weren’t subject to treatment and revision over the years. As Chad’s ranking comes between the 5 highest countries on the gender gap index ranging from 57.5% and 40.5% recorded gap between genders[[9]](#footnote-9).

* **Discrimination in Labor Sector**

One of the most intensive discrimination forms that women experience in Chad is in the labor sector. Chad is among 16 economies around the world that impose rules on women such as preventing women from working in certain occupations. The imposed rules are considered discrimination as they play a great role in widening the gap between genders which causes women to lose more economic opportunities in the labor sector.[[10]](#footnote-10)

The imposed rules and laws affect negatively women in the labor sector, leading only 50% of Chadian women to participate in the labor force compared to nearly 73% of men participation, also women are mostly employed in the informal sectors earning as a result less money than men workers, Same problem repeat at the entrepreneurship sector as although women own 57% of non-farm enterprises in Chad, they still gain 77% less profit that men enterprises in 2021[[11]](#footnote-11).

* **Discrimination in Political and Decision-Making Sectors**

Once again, Chad's strategic plans to integrate women into decision-making platforms prove a degree of weakness, as despite the step of launching Chad’s national action plan for women, peace and security (2023 – 2027) is considered one of the late yet great steps in merging women more into the building peace and promoting security in the Chadian society although the process of working on the plan started in 2019[[12]](#footnote-12), the reality shows that Chadian women are still excluded from the peace and sustainable development process — not only at the higher levels but also at the grassroots level[[13]](#footnote-13).

Although the principle of women's participation equally in the political sector is enshrined by the Chadian constitution, the political representation and participation of women is considered one of the weakest in Chad, in the reality barely 30% of Chadian women participate effectively in the management of public and political affairs.[[14]](#footnote-14)

This fact is also evident in the formation of the Chadian transitional government in October 2022, under the presidency of Mohamed Addis Deby, as the government includes 11 women among the ministers and secretaries of state, which represents only a quarter or 1/4 of the total Chadian government[[15]](#footnote-15). Nearly the same strategy was adopted while forming Chad’s national transitional council which contained 93 different members only 33% of them were women[[16]](#footnote-16). Besides, women's representation in the committee that leads negotiations with politicians and the military is low, as the committee consists of 24 members, including only one woman.[[17]](#footnote-17)

**Recommendations**

* **According to observations of FGM in the Chadian local communities**, Elizka recommends the working group on discrimination against women and girls cooperate with the Chadian transitional government in launching an awareness program that focuses on making residents of local communities aware of the dangers of FGM in girls and also making them aware of the legal penalties they may be exposed to if they engage in this practice.
* **In the context of developing the legislative framework**, Elizka recommends the Chadian legislative body to work on revising and treating article 277 of the criminal code which assures that marriages of girls above 13 years are legal according to the customary to cope with the international obligations of Chad.
* Elizka recommendsthe Chadian government work on accelerating ways to integrate women in decision-making platforms and political and diplomatic sectors in Chad.
* Elizka recommends, **based on its observation of the weak integration of women into the negotiations and discussions** that the country is witnessing during the transitional period, that the transitional government should revive the commitment to the constitutional rules that stipulate non-discrimination against women and rely on these rules to integrate women more into peace-building negotiations.
* According to what has been observed **in the context of low participation of women in the labor sector**, Elizka recommends the working group on discrimination against women and girls to cooperate with the Chadian transitional government in launching an action plan that supports “financial empowering of women” by building their skills to manage their working careers.

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2. Ibid [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Chad, PROFILES OF 10 COUNTRIES WITH THE HIGHEST RATES OF CHILD MARRIAGE, <https://bitly.ws/39KWs> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. # Chad raises legal marriage age to 18, abrogates death penalty, African news, <https://bitly.ws/39P2x>

   [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Chad, Girls not brides, <https://bitly.ws/39PdR> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. ## Countries with the highest child marriage rate as of 2022, Statista, <https://bitly.ws/39NTa>

   [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. # Chad. African Child's Day, COOPI, <https://bitly.ws/SZHJ>

   [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Op, Cite, PROFILES OF 10 COUNTRIES WITH THE HIGHEST RATES OF CHILD MARRIAGE. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. # The Global Gender Gap Persists, Global health education and learning incubator at Harvard university, Harvard university, <https://bitly.ws/39Q9q>

   [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Western and central Africa, World bank, <https://bitly.ws/39QzR> [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. # Gender inequality in Chad and the impact of Covid-19, Global dev, <https://bitly.ws/39Qqx>

    [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. #### Cha, Peace women.org, <https://bitly.ws/3a3bP>

    [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. # The power of women's voices in Chad, FHI360, <https://bitly.ws/39QNp>

    [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. # Chad: the fate of women concerns, Alwihda, <https://bitly.ws/39Re9>

    [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. # Le Gouvernement de transition, Présidence de la République du Tchad, <https://bitly.ws/3a3mp>

    [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. # Ces nominations au parlement de transition du Tchad qui divisent, VOA, <https://bitly.ws/3a3ur>

    [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. # Le CONAF dénonce la faible représentation des femmes dans le comité de négociation avec les politico-militaires, Tchadinfos, <https://bitly.ws/3a3xu>

    [↑](#footnote-ref-17)