

*Delegation from*  
Russian Federation

### **Position Paper for the Human Rights Council**

The topics under discussion before the Human Rights Council are: Ending forced child marriage and its impact on gender equality; Fighting intimate partner violence with special regards on marital rape; Ameliorating the Human Rights situation in Saudi Arabia; Finding measures to protect people with disabilities, especially in conflict settings. Completely open to discussion and peaceful negotiations, the Russian Federation wishes to keep in mind the goals that the UN was created for being cooperation, compromise and teamwork in order to achieve reasonable and suitable solutions.

#### **I. Ending forced child marriage and its impact on gender equality**

The Russian Federation notices with disappointment that child marriage puts an end to a girl's childhood, takes away the possibility to continue her education and her ability to have the fulfilling life she deserves and exposes her to domestic violence. In order to grant these rights to young women the Russian Federation set the minimum legal marriage age to eighteen years old, as expressed under Section 13 of the Russian Family Code. As a matter of fact, the Russian society strongly believed in marriage to happen as early as possible for women. However, nowadays, the majority of young men and women are given the chance to pursue their goals, receive an education and settle down before making the decision of getting married. The previously mentioned law and the newly implemented practice have received rather positive support amongst the Russian people. We believe that the challenge given to the questionable tradition of marriage equality is a great step towards the empowerment of women as well as gender equality. However, the delegate of the Russian Federation is fully aware that the practice of forced child marriage is pursued due to a number of cultural specific reasons such as economical, social and political factors as well as traditional views being enforced on the child by the family themselves. The first step that has to be taken in order to tackle this issue regards the empowerment of women, to be achieved by giving them the opportunity to develop skills and knowledge in order to understand and most importantly exercise their rights. Secondly, a process of implementation of laws and policies that prevent the practice of child marriage should occur. In order to promote gender equality the minimum legal marriage age should be the same for both men and women; this should include a mandatory registration of all marriages, in order to safeguard that such policies and laws are being respected. Previously mentioned programs and actions should strongly respect the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and promote stronger and more effective cooperation between Member States and organizations such as UNICEF; Human Rights Watch and NGOs such as "Girls Not Brides".

#### **II. Fighting intimate partner violence with special regards on marital rape**

Intimate Partner Violence and Marital rape are very current and relevant issues which are unluckily rather underestimated. They are also very hard to control as they happen between the walls of one's private home. Nevertheless, the opinions of the Russian citizens regarding these issues are becoming stronger and stronger. There are several campaigns in order to finally define Intimate Partner Violence as a crime which will make it easier for it to be punished properly. However, these issues still represent a challenge for the Russian Government. As a matter of fact, the Russian Federation finds it rather hard to implement recommendations such as the ones described in the Special Rapporteur's 2006 report U.N. Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against

Women (CEDAW Committee). The main reason behind this struggles is the fact that such policies interfere with personal affairs regarding a family and they contradict the importance that the Russian population attributes to family in a traditionalistic manner and the actual federal regulations of the Russian Federation. It is problematic for the Russian Federation to cooperate with the United Nations to tackle the issue of Intimate Partner Violence due to a significant lack in funding and any sort of financial support to be dedicated entirely to this cause. The delegate of the Russian Federation therefore encourages the first step towards tackling the issue of Intimate Partner Violence to involve an increase in the funding for individual Member States; secondly, inadequate legislation should be aided in order to identify this cause as a crime and the attitude of governments and local authorities must be improved to give this cause the respect and attention it deserves.

### **III. Ameliorating the Human Rights situation in Saudi Arabia**

The Russian Federation would like to acknowledge the Human Rights situation in Saudi Arabia as critical. As a matter of fact, to this day they lack any sort of freedom of expression, association, assembly and religion; they further have significant discrimination against minority ethnic groups and against women. Despite these facts, Saudi Arabia was elected in September 2015 as chair of a key UN Human Rights Council panel, and therefore given the ability to shape international Human Rights Standards and report any violations. The delegate of the Russian Federation would like to express her great disappointment towards such decision seeing as it does not reflect nor respect in any way the principles that the United Nations was founded on. With the worst record in the world in regards to freedom of speech and women's right, Saudi Arabia obtained this important position anyway. The delegate of Russia strongly believes in ameliorating the situation of Human Rights in Saudi Arabia before such mistakes are repeated in the future. The Russian Federation encourages a better and more effective use of the already existent tools and organizations such as the Human Rights Watch and therefore promotes better cooperation with such.

### **IV. Finding measures to protect people with disabilities, especially in conflict settings**

The Russian Federation is proud to announce that a big step towards the protection of the rights of disabled people has been taken in 2012, when we ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD). The main aims of the UNCRPD are providing people with disabilities with basic rights such as equality, fair access to education, freedom from violence, abuse and discrimination, and general improvement of the quality of their life. Since 2012 the Russian Federation has been changing the legislation to correspond to the standards set by the UNCRPD. Following the success of the Russian Paralympic team in the 2014 Winter Paralympic Games, the attitude of the Russian Citizens towards this issue also changed and the government is doing more every day to promote the implementation of people with disabilities in everyday society. Despite the efforts already taken, the delegate of the Russian Federation recognizes the existence of room of improvement; we therefore wish to cooperate with other Member States to finalise the achievement of respect of the Human Rights of people with disabilities. We encourage the implementation of specific laws recognizing the rights as well as providing suggestions on possible action-based plans to implement in the Member States themselves; in conclusion, we suggest the use of economic sanctions in case the previously mentioned laws and legislation are not being respected.