

## 115 million boys and men around the world married as children - UNICEF

First ever analysis on child grooms brings global child marriage figures to 765 million

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NEW YORK, 7 June 2019 – An estimated 115 million boys and men around the world were married as children, UNICEF said today in its first ever in-depth analysis of child grooms. Of these, 1 in 5 children, or 23 million, were married before the age of 15.

Using data from 82 countries, the study reveals that child marriage among boys is prevalent across a range of countries around the world, spanning sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, South Asia, and East Asia and the Pacific.

“Marriage steals childhood,” said UNICEF Executive Director Henrietta Fore. “Child grooms are forced to take on adult responsibilities for which they may not be ready. Early marriage brings early fatherhood, and with it added pressure to provide for a family, cutting short education and job opportunities.”

According to the data, the Central African Republic has the highest prevalence of child marriage among males (28 per cent), followed by Nicaragua (19 per cent) and Madagascar (13 per cent).

The new estimates bring the total number of child brides and child grooms to 765 million. Girls remain disproportionately affected, with 1 in 5 young women aged 20 to 24 years old married before their 18th birthday, compared to 1 in 30 young men.

While the prevalence, causes and impact of child marriage among girls have been extensively studied, little research exists on child marriage among boys. However, children most at risk of child marriage come from the poorest households, live in rural areas, and have little to no education.

“As we mark the 30th anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, we need to remember that marrying boys and girls off while they are still children runs counter to the rights enshrined in the Convention,” said Fore. “Through further research, investment and empowerment, we can end this violation.”

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Notes to editors

Multimedia content can be downloaded here.

Estimates of the global and regional prevalence of child grooms are calculated on the basis of national estimates in the UNICEF global databases, comprised of nationally representative data from 82 countries. National data on child marriage are primarily drawn from household surveys, including the UNICEF-supported Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS) and the USAID-supported Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS). Demographic data are drawn from the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division.

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