

UN Human Rights Council 41: explanation of vote on child marriage

Thank you, Mr President,

The United Kingdom rejects the Amendment proposed by the Russian Federation to the resolution before us contained in document L.45.

As we have said earlier today, this amendment contains numerous changes, additions, caveats and deletions all of which were raised over the course of a number of open and transparent informal meetings. They failed to garner support from the delegations participating in these informal meetings, or from the penholder of this resolution and were therefore not incorporated.

We are particularly concerned that this amendment seeks to strike out references to girls' autonomy and to caveat the participation of girls in the elaboration of humanitarian responses. We note the consistent efforts of the Russian Federation to erase girls from texts that seek to promote and protect their human rights, to empower them and to give them voice and control over their own lives. We reject this approach, particularly in the context of supporting girls who have been subjected to child marriage. To suggest they cannot participate in finding solutions to their own concerns is absurd.

The passage of this amendment would set a bad precedent for the working of this Council. At this stage in our deliberations, Council Members should be considering thoughtful and well-articulated amendments that reflect concerns and issues of specific importance to delegations.

For these reasons, we will vote against this amendment and we call on all other Members of the Human Rights Council to do the same.

Thank you, Mr President.