

1. ENDING CHILD MARRIAGE

- Whereas 1** Early marriages cut short childhood, education and reduce the ability to be autonomous and self-supporting, and increase the incidence of experiencing violence; and
- Whereas 2** in Canada girls and boys are legally still children (minors) until the age of majority at 18 or 19 years, so they cannot enter into a contract to marry or divorce until that age; and
- Whereas 3** Canada's Civil Marriage Act describes marriage as "free and enlightened consent of two persons", and it specifies a legal minimum age of 16 years; and
- Whereas 4** the provinces and territories govern marriage practice, however there are exceptions where children of 16 and 17 years can be married because of parents' cultural or religious practices, or a judge's opinion; therefore be it
- Resolved 1** that the National Council of Women of Canada (NCWC) adopt policy to protect girls and boys from marrying before age 18, with no exceptions; and further be it
- Resolved 2** that NCWC urge the Government of Canada, working with the Provincial governments, to amend the legislation to restrict marriage to persons of age 18 years or over with no exceptions; and
- Resolved 3** that NCWC further urge the Government of Canada, working with the Provincial governments, to refuse to recognize marriages performed outside of Canada of persons under the age of 18 years who are emigrating to or residing in Canada; and
- Resolved 4** that NCWC urge the Government of Canada, working with the Provincial governments, to ensure that the reunification of families does not include an immigrant spouse, or intended spouse, under the age of 18 years; and further be it
- Resolved 5** that NCWC urge the Government of Canada to present a resolution to the United Nations through appropriate channels to urge its members to adopt practices to prevent the marriage of children younger than 18 years of age.