ENDING CHILD MARRIAGES: How can the law help?
And their human rights too! They have a right to education and protection from exploitation and abuse. That's a very important point, because I know what happens to these girls. My mother was a child bride. It breaks my heart. They become like property... ...some of them are sold off like possessions, like cattle.

But you're right. And in the process, we forget that vital concept... ...the best interests of the child.

And importantly, they have every right to protect their sexual and reproductive health... ...and to get access to such health services.

That's a very important point, because I know what happens to these girls. My mother was a child bride. She had me and my sisters when she was basically still a child herself. Just think of how difficult her life was, and all the opportunities she missed!
I have a school friend who got married off. Now at my age, and she’s had many pregnancies already.

*Sigh*, her poor health!

But her husband is not giving her any say in the matter.

Sad, her poor health!

Not that I know of, but in that household, she’s got very little power to make decisions.

And if you bet her education and health suffered because she had to leave school early.

Sadly, yes, so it’s unlikely she’ll be able to make a living all on her own.

We know these girls are far less secure in their marriages and living arrangements.

Well, that means we’ve got our work cut out for us. Education, health and rights!

Yip, we must champion the SADC Model Law on Eradicating Child Marriage in every country in the SADC region.

I’ve looked at it properly, and it explains exactly how and why we need laws and policies on child marriage.

Yes, it’s a great tool for promoting girls’ rights. If more countries adopt this law, the lives of so many girls would change...

... from something like this...

Wait to Wed
Dreams
Career
Prosperity
Health
Education

Doors will literally open for them if waiting to wed until later in life becomes the norm!
... they could enjoy a life of learning, good health, and personal development.

... they can choose if they marry, who they marry, and when they marry.

They also can choose to have children, and how many.

And have the chance to be employed in a decent job, and even work towards a secure old age.

Hey, forget about old age, Fanaka, think productive life!

... these women will take their rightful place in society if culture, law and tradition enshrined waiting to wed as the norm.

End.
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