What is the SADC Model Law All About?
A Sunny Day in Southern Africa

**ERADICATING CHILD MARRIAGES IN THE SADC REGION**

**WAIT TO WED**

**LEGAL OFFICE**

**SADC MODEL LAW on Eradicating Child Marriage**

**WAIT TO WED**

Goodbye, Mrs. Mondlane, Chisisi. I’ll get right back to you with a plan of action.

Pleeeease Fanaka! We must persuade my husband that our child is far too young to get married!

Another case of child marriage, Bahati.

Another man wants to marry a young girl who is barely 14. Her entire life and potential ahead of her.

We promote a simple message. That girls should wait to wed if they can. That they should be allowed to make that choice themselves. But it feels like it’ll never be heard!

Let’s look at the SADC Model Law on the Eradication of Child Marriage, and see what we can do for her.

It might – with the right framework and participation!

It really describes what this is: a standardised set of laws on child marriage that can be used in every country in the SADC region.

I like the term “model law.”

I can’t wait to know more. Getting started immediately!

And it’s quite specific. A lot of work went into developing this.

I know several countries have already used it to improve their legislation to end child marriage!

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#WAITTOWED
First, it sets out the basic rights of a child, and how to ensure that they are realised.

**Basic Rights of a Child**

Because child marriage is a violation of human rights, and girls are the worst affected.

The law must protect them from getting married as children.

I won’t allow her to get married! Surely you, Father, must agree she’s much too young?

... Surely you must all agree?

The model law also proposes measures to prevent child marriage...

... and how existing child marriages can be revoked in certain circumstances.

The Law must protect them from getting married as children.

Then we have provisions for the prevention of child marriage...

... and how existing child marriages can be revoked in certain circumstances.

Measures for the Prevention of Child Marriage

Like verifying the age of a person through a birth certificate if you suspect they’re younger than 18.

... before letting them get married.

First, it sets out the basic rights of a child, and how to ensure that they are realised.

**Provisions for the Prohibition of Child Marriage**

Thank you. Yes.

Then we have provisions for the prevention of child marriage...

... and how existing child marriages can be revoked in certain circumstances.

**Measures for the Prevention of Child Marriage**

Like verifying the age of a person through a birth certificate if you suspect they’re younger than 18.

... before letting them get married.

Have you been working all night?

But it was worth it...

I think I can sum up the contents for you, Miss-Graduated-First-in-Her-Class!

C’mon then, let’s hear it!

It also needs parents, faith leaders, and community members to work together to end child marriage.

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C’mon then, let’s hear it!
I see... And what about children who are already caught in such a marriage? Who couldn’t or didn’t wait to wed?

Guidance for Mitigation of Harmful Effects of Child Marriage

...the law has guidance on how to mitigate the harmful effects of child marriage.

Monitoring and Evaluation / Access to Data

...the model law also supports the monitoring of child marriage, and champions the creation of public records on the practice.

Measures for Enforcement and Compliance

...and then the last important point: the model law establishes measures for enforcement and compliance.

That's the next point...

...and then the last important point: the law has guidance on how to mitigate the harmful effects of child marriage.

That will ensure the situation is constantly evaluated and proper data is collected for future use.

There's more...

...the model law also supports the monitoring of child marriage, and champions the creation of public records on the practice.

Very important!

Because we know a law may be fantastic on paper, but what matters is how it is enforced.

EXACTLY...

...the law has guidance on how to mitigate the harmful effects of child marriage.

And then the last important point: the model law establishes measures for enforcement and compliance.

The onus cannot be only on the girl to choose to wait to wed. It must be accepted society-wide.

End.

Well, I must say I’m impressed. I feel that wait to wed is coming into focus so strongly now.

Yes, no more lip service - only action!
The UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage is generously funded by:

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