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UN Watch Oral Statement

**Human Rights Council, 26th Session
UPR of Yemen
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Delivered by Miriam Manning

Mr. President,

UN Watch is deeply concerned about the state of human rights in Yemen, in particular children's rights.

Yemen is one of only two countries in the world with no legislation on the minimum age of marriage. In its recent UPR, attention was repeatedly called to the lack of constitutional protection of children's human rights. Child marriage was identified as a major factor in malnutrition, domestic violence and a root cause of female illiteracy, contributing to the epidemic gender inequality in the country.

As many as one in three school-age girls, sometimes as young as 8 and 9 years old, are forced by their parents to marry men many years their senior. Last year we saw the death of an 8-year-old bride in Sanaa on her wedding night after intercourse that caused her severe internal injury following her marriage to a 40-year-old man. Many child brides commit suicide to escape this fate.

Yemen has also one of the highest execution rates in the world. Many of these death sentences are passed after proceedings which fall short of international standards for fair trial. But in Yemen, this issue is not isolated to adult offenders. Many minors whose ages cannot be reliably determined are unlawfully sentenced to death, some having been arrested as young as 13 years old. Hundreds of these children await a death by beheading, firing squad, crucifixion or stoning.

In 2012 we saw the execution of Hind Al-Barati, a girl who was only 15 when she was arrested. This took place despite assurances given by Yemen to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child in 2005 that the death penalty and other inhumane treatment of the underage had been abolished by the Penal Code.

Mr. President, these continued flagrant contraventions of human rights against innocent children are unacceptable. UN Watch calls upon the members of the council to help those children who suffer from these injustices in Yemen.

Thank you.