# Contribution to the research and report that the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights is preparing in accordance with Human Rights Council resolution 47/24

Save the Children are pleased to share  the publication of Save the Children’s latest climate report ***[Born into the Climate Crisis: Why we must act now to secure children’s rights](https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/node/19591/pdf/born-into-the-climate-crisis.pdf)***[.](https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/node/19591/pdf/born-into-the-climate-crisis.pdf) The report is highly relevant for the research and report that the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights is preparing in accordance with Human Rights Council resolution 47/24 entitled “Human Rights and Climate Change”.

We partnered with an international team of leading climate researchers led by Vrije Universiteit Brussel to quantify the extent to which children will experience extreme weather events as a manifestation of climate change, the disparities between generations, and the widening inequality between high-income and low- and middle-income countries (this was published in parallel in the journal ***Science***  -  [Intergenerational inequities in exposure to climate extremes (science.org)](https://www.science.org/doi/10.1126/science.abi7339).

This was done with the support of a dedicated reference group of children from across the globe who contributed to the report – their reflections starkly lay out how the intergenerational impacts of climate change are infringing on children’s rights. The inadequacy of climate emission pledges is laid bare, and shows children born in the last year will face many more extreme weather events than their grandparent’s generation – this includes:

- 2x as many wildfires as a person born in 1960  
- 2.8x as many crop failures as a person born in 1960  
- 2.6x as many droughts as a person born in 1960  
- 2.8x as many river floods as a person born in 1960  
- and a staggering 6.8x as many heatwaves as a person born in 1960  
  
These are just the global averages, and the figures consistently get worse for many low-income countries – in Afghanistan, children could face 18 times as many heatwaves as their grandparents.

**The climate crisis is a child rights crisis:**

Through the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the world has made a promise to leave no one behind. But without urgent action – to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, end the production, use and subsidy of fossil fuels and other practices that destroy or disrupt necessary ecosystems; fund climate adaptation and climate justice measures; and avert catastrophic warming of the earth – entire generations of children, present and future, are at risk of being left behind as their planet is reshaped by climate change. Children’s increasing exposure to extreme events caused by the climate crisis has serious implications for both their rights as enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the development trajectories of states as articulated in the SDGs.

**Keeping our promises will make a difference:**

Compared to Paris Agreement pledges, if global warming is limited to 1.5°c above pre-industrial levels, the additional lifetime exposure of newborns to extreme weather events will be reduced substantially. This includes a reduction in risk of *exposure to heatwaves by 45%, droughts by 39%, river floods by 38%, crop failures by 28%, and wildfire by 10%.* These differences will have a critical impact on the ability of more children to access their rights to services, to meet their basic needs, and to a future.

**We must act with urgency:**

The evidence shows that the world’s window of opportunity to act is quickly closing. But too often, commitments to climate action, finance, and children’s participation in decision-making remain dangerously inadequate. Unless global leaders scale up their ambition children’s rights will suffer, and shared global prosperity will be under threat as the costs of responding to humanitarian crises resulting from extreme weather events increase. Recent estimates suggest that investing $1.8 trillion globally in key areas of adaptation from 2020 to 2030 could generate $7.1 trillion in total net benefits.

**Accountability is essential:**

Governments have a major role to play in mandating, establishing, and effectively resourcing accessible platforms for children to raise concerns and hold governments to account for existing climate commitments, as well as demanding more ambitious ones to come. Law and policy should provide guidance on the format, structure, operation, and evaluation of all child participatory mechanisms. Sufficient financial and other resources must also be made available to ensure sustainable and effective mechanisms are introduced and maintained. Other key measures include establishing children’s citizens’ assemblies and taking steps to facilitate accountability including ratifying the third Optional Protocol to the CRC, which allows children to bring complaints directly to the Committee on the Rights of the Child. Now governments have met at COP26 to assess progress and accelerate their commitments to the next five-year cycle of the Paris Agreement, they must recall not only their obligations to act in the best interests of children, but the agency and capacities of children themselves.

**Building forward better:**

When the international community now considers its development trajectories in a post-pandemic world, the climate crisis, and its impact on children, must remain central. Recovery efforts from COVID-19 provide an opportunity to build a better, greener, and more equal future for children.

**Political action needed:**

We hope this report will be a useful tool to push governments to take more ambitious actions – on limiting warming to 1.5 degrees, but also on child-sensitive climate financing, social protection, climate adaptation and loss and damage. They must also redouble efforts to deliver on their obligations and ensure that children are present at this critical juncture – not just as an inspiration, but as rights-holders, as the most acutely-affected, and as agents of urgent, necessary, and transformative change.  We have therefore also produced some guidance to ensure we have a [child-friendly COP.](https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/library/cop-fit-children-how-support-childrens-participation)

See also these two additional relevant reports:

[Double Disasters: The effect of cyclones Idai and Kenneth on child marriage in Mozambique | Resource Centre (savethechildren.net)](https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/pdf/policy_brief-_mozambique_final.pdf)

[Walking into the Eye of the Storm: How the climate crisis is driving child migration and displacement | Resource Centre (savethechildren.net)](https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/pdf/Eye-of-the-Storm.pdf/)