

Inputs from Agenda 2030 (PPD) Team for the OHCHR Report on protection of rights of the child in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

What key lessons learned from the experience of implementing the Millennium Development Goals should be taken into account to ensure that the rights of the child are protected in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?

- Over the 15 years that was the MDG era, there was remarkable progress on many of those goals. In a 2015 UNICEF report, [Progress for Children – Beyond Averages: Learning from the MDGs](#), the data show that we live in a world where 53 percent fewer children die before their fifth birthday than did in 1990; where the number of people living in absolute poverty has been reduced by 900 million; where HIV/AIDS infection rate of children under 14 has been reduced by 58 percent since 2001; and where the rates of primary school attendance for girls are now equal to boys in many regions across the world. But as the report also notes, progress has been tragically uneven, especially in early childhood, which is a crucial stage of human development. Globally, the poorest children are still at significantly higher risk of dying before their fifth birthday, being stunted due to chronic malnutrition, or lacking access to clean water, hygiene and sanitation facilities. The quality of early stimulation and education varies dramatically across the world, and those who are poor, minorities, disabled or live in remote areas often suffer the life-long consequences of this lack of quality education. Communities affected by conflict and humanitarian crises have seen years of painstaking progress wiped away in mere days or months.
- Furthermore, it is not only children in the developing world who face such challenges. [In 2016, UNICEF's Innocenti Research Center explored inequalities in child well-being in rich countries](#) and found that gaps in educational achievement, health and overall life satisfaction were significantly higher in wealthy nations that had greater levels of inequality in their societies. The recent [global financial crisis also hit many high income nations particularly hard and has exacerbated these issues](#). The number of children entering into poverty during the recession is 2.6 million higher than the number that have been able to escape from it since 2008 (6.6 million, as against 4 million) and around 76.5 million children live in poverty in the 41 most affluent countries. In the European Union (EU), 7.5 million young people (almost the population of Switzerland) were identified as "NEET" -- meaning not in education, employment or training. In some of the worst hit European nations, the youth unemployment rate is estimated to be upwards of 50%, while at the same time schools are not preparing youth with the skills and knowledge needed to transition to the working world.
- The 2030 Agenda offers an opportunity to address these dual issues of 1) **universality** and 2) **inequitable results** across different economic and social groups, which were not an explicit focus of the MDGs.
- To that end, the UN system will need to support Member States to strengthen the capacity of their national authorities to collect, analyse and report official statistics with a particular focus on ensuring that these are disaggregated, where relevant, by income, sex, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability and geographic location, or other characteristics, in accordance with

the [Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics](#). This will be essential to better understand those who are being “left behind” and implementing policies, practices and programmes to explicitly target the most vulnerable.

- Also critical to ensuring the realization of child rights in the implementation of Agenda 2030 is the explicit recognition that “children and young women and men are critical agents of change” and their meaningful inclusion in both the implementation and monitoring of the SDGs will be key to their fulfilment. Shifting from development for people to development with people, particularly children and young people to improve the quality of aid and its impact on development. It is only through this type of transformational and long term change that development gains will be internalized by a broad range of stakeholders, thereby increasing ownership and creating shifts in behavioral and social norms that will be passed on to future generations.

What approaches to implementing the 2030 Agenda would ensure the protection of the rights of all children, and that no child is left behind? Please define your response in relation to the following areas:

Equality and non-discrimination

- Dignity and human rights are the birth right of all, without distinction of any kind with regard to sex, age, race, ethnicity, income, location, disability, or other status. Specific measures for prioritizing and accelerating progress for the poorest and most vulnerable children, and to address discrimination, should be pursued to ensure the SDGs promote equal opportunity for all. Inequalities must be addressed both within and between countries.
- As defined in the *State of the World’s Children Report for 2016*, an ‘equity approach’ to development begins with learning more about who is being left behind and why, identifying the children at greatest risk and analysing the structural determinants of inequity – poverty, geography and discrimination, for example – and the complex interplay among them. It requires asking hard questions about how deficient public policies, discriminatory practices, inefficient delivery systems and other obstacles that prevent children from realizing their rights, and finding innovative solutions to these problems.
- There is an increasing need to adopt principles of results-based reporting for spending on children and youth, with a particular focus on equity and effectiveness. Examples include tracking of spending that explicitly addresses geographic disparities of services for children (both quality and access) as well as inequities among different population groups in service provision or other matters. Possible criteria for spending effectiveness include the degree to which budget programs intended for children (directly or indirectly) succeed in achieving their objectives.

Investing in Children

- Investments in children and young people over a generation are investments in productivity, growth, peace and security; and most importantly are investments in the rights that every child has, as enshrined in the [Convention on the Right of the Child](#). The [Addis Agenda for](#)

[Action](#) (notably para 7) establishes a clear link between investments in children and achievement of growth and development.

- There is an overwhelming body of evidence on investments which yield the most economic and societal returns: comprehensive early childhood interventions, particularly the first 1,000 days; quality education, and adolescence and young people. Also, protecting women and children is a must, particularly with increasing incidences of fragility, instability and inequality within societies.
- The advent of the SDGs compels us to re-examine some of the fundamentals of partnership and programming, including how development activities are financed. These could include, for example:
 - Move from vertical to horizontal solutions and strengthen synergies across areas and sectors through multi-year investment plans for children and young people – who are the foundation for sustainable development and the key to addressing new challenges;
 - Strengthen domestic resource mobilization and public finance *for children*;
 - Promote new innovative partnerships with the private sector and strengthen compliance with children’s rights and business principles;
 - Make development spending catalytic through rallying multi-year support to evidence-based investment cases by strengthening domestic resource mobilization efforts and promoting new innovative partnerships with the private sector

Partnerships for implementation

- Aid continues to play a critical role in mobilizing the resources needed to strengthen education systems for the world’s poorest and most disadvantaged children, including children threatened by conflict and displacement. According to data provided by the *2016 State of the World’s Children* report there is a global shortfall of around US\$8.5 billion a year – an average of US\$113 per child – in the funding needed to educate the estimated 75 million children affected by crises. To make up that deficit governance arrangements would be needed for effective coordination across United Nations agencies, multilateral partnerships such as the *Global Partnership for Education*, and aid organizations. Coordination could give rise to partnerships that successfully bridge the divide between humanitarian responses and development expertise.
- In the midst of funding shortfalls and increasing competition for official development assistance and humanitarian aid, low- and middle-income countries and their development partners are finding new ways of filling gaps in funding and securing more predictable and diversified funding sources. New partnerships are showing how public and private funding can be mobilized and targeted directly to the most disadvantaged – from cash grants for poor families so they can afford health care and education for their children, to financing for programmes that train front-line and community health workers, to support for expanded education programming in ethnic minority and indigenous communities. Some of the most promising of these new partnerships are finding new ways to finance the development and provision of critical supplies such as vaccines, insecticide-treated mosquito nets and nutritional supplements to the most excluded children and communities.

Accountability and Monitoring

Data

- Collection, analysis and use of disaggregated data are critical to developing and implementing policies that can improve the lives and futures of the most disadvantaged, marginalized and vulnerable children. Disaggregated data help us to see the children and communities that are being rendered invisible or falling behind – so that programming and policy decisions can be deployed to improve the situation and help break the vicious cycles that perpetuate intergenerational inequalities. Additionally, better monitoring of the impact of public spending is critical to achieving virtually all of a government's priorities, and achieving equity for children is no exception.
- Official data collection through civil registration systems, census surveys and other methods is essential to understanding the issues and challenges that the SDGs seek to address. However, this official data is only part of the picture. Data that enables people/citizens, communities and civil society organizations to share their experiences (e.g. perception data) is equally important and can provide critical evidence and insights into how policies, laws, social services, etc. are being delivered or applied on the ground.
- Innovative tools and methods can be used to for real-time, multidirectional information flows. Technological innovations not only improve communication and collaboration, but they also provide new ways of gathering data and analysing data, in some cases allowing governments and their partners a quicker sense of critical issues as they arise and enabling them to, in turn, direct their responses more quickly and effectively.

National Human Rights Institutions

- As independent accountability institutions ensuring that international commitments are upheld domestically, National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) will have a role to play in promoting and protecting human rights in the context of the SDGs. In fact, the role of NHRIs is explicitly recognized, with a proposed indicator focusing on the existence of an independent NHRI to underpin Goal 16 (16.a.1). NHRIs play a unique role by bringing the international commitments to the national spheres. They also ensure the connection between different government institutions, as well as between government and civil society. This role is particularly important in the context of SDGs as collaboration between a variety of actors and sectors will be key to their effective and equitable implementation.

Social Accountability

- People-led, bottom-up and demand-driven accountability initiatives can make an important contribution towards enhancing accountability for international child rights commitments in the implementation of the SDGs. Social accountability with and for children is an approach towards building accountability for children's rights that relies on the engagement of civic groups,

children and their representatives, in exacting government and private sector accountability. Social accountability is part of a wider accountability continuum from the local to the global level. It can reinforce other accountability mechanisms in different ways, including linking to national and international reporting mechanisms, such as the follow up and review of the SDGs. Furthermore, rather than being a one-off initiative or tool, social accountability is a political process that shifts power from the state to the people, especially to poor people and excluded children. It has the potential to empower marginalized children and their communities with knowledge, and in doing so, improving the quality of governance and services for children, and advancing equity.

- UNICEF supports various social accountability initiatives for children's rights across all regions, which includes promoting the participation of girls and boys at key levels of local government processes, as well as supporting the monitoring and tracking of budget implementation through community-based monitoring. These efforts support children and adolescents in fulfilling their full potential as agents of change. They are also contributing to the removal of barriers to service access and quality, extending opportunities for rights-fulfilling services to marginalized and excluded groups of children and families, and thus advancing equity.