



**UNITED NATIONS ASSOCIATION**  
*of the United States of America*  
A PROGRAM OF THE UNITED NATIONS FOUNDATION

**Input to the UN Human Rights Office:**

**“Protection of the Rights of the Child and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”**

**Submitted: October 14, 2016**

**A. Introduction**

The United Nations Association of the United States of America (UNA-USA), a program of the UN Foundation, is a membership organization dedicated to informing, inspiring and mobilizing the American people to support the ideals and vital work of the United Nations. For 70 years, UNA-USA has worked to accomplish its mission through its national network of chapters, youth engagement, advocacy efforts, as well as educational programs and public events. Independent from the U.S. government, UNA-USA and its sister organization the Better World Campaign represent the single largest network of advocates and supporters of the United Nations in the world.

UNA-USA is pleased to send this input for the report of the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) on the Protection of the Rights of the Child in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in support of the goals of UN Human Rights Council Resolution 31/7 of March 23, 2016.

**B. Methodology**

This input was compiled through a UNA-USA teleconference workshop that took place in September 2016. Observations and recommendations are based on reflections from seven participants of the UNA-USA GenUN network of youth, students, and young professionals who participated in the call from locations across the United States including New York, Pasadena, San Francisco, Arizona, and Washington DC. Participants were asked to share their direct, firsthand experiences related to the topic as well as offer constructive observations, idea, and recommendations.

The findings below are a synthesis of this conversation and integrated employing the suggested format under the OHCHR “Call for Inputs: ‘Protection of the Rights of the Child and 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.’”

**C. Key Findings**

*“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:”*



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### 1. *Equality and non-discrimination*

- (1a) The principle of “leave no one behind” that underpins the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is also fundamental to the effective protection of the rights of the child. Consequently, the SDGs must reach vulnerable communities. This includes children that are immigrants and refugees; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or intersex (or perceived to be); or disabled, among others.
- (1b) There is urgency in addressing the bullying of children as it is detrimental to the objectives of SDGs 3, 4, and 16, among others. In December 2011, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon identified bullying, and particularly homophobic bullying, as a “grave violation” of human rights.<sup>1</sup> Combatting instances of ‘cyber bullying’ should also be prioritized. Children themselves can be agents of implementation in this regard through use of bullying-awareness campaigns on social media, innovation, and working to raise awareness about the implications of bullying.

### 2. *Investing in children*

- (2a) There is urgency in expanding awareness and understanding of synergies between the human rights of children and the SDGs. This should include a focus on hunger (SDG 2), good health and wellbeing (SDG 3), gender equality (SDG 5) quality education (SDG 4) clean water (SDG 6), opportunities for decent work (SDG 8), inequalities (SDG 10); and peace and justice (SDG 16).

### 3. *Partnerships for implementation*

- (3a) Partnerships supporting the SDGs as well as protection of the rights of the child should be multi-stakeholder in scope. This includes collaborative efforts among governments, business, schools and teachers, the tech sector, as well as intergovernmental organizations like the UN. Similarly, there is a significant role for local governments to play in creating opportunities for youth to be involved with community policy planning, awareness projects, and decision making relevant to the SDGs and the protection of human rights.

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<sup>1</sup> “Homophobic bullying represents grave violation of human rights-Ban,” UN News Centre, December 8, 2011. Available: [http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=40671#.V\\_UrwPkrKUK](http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=40671#.V_UrwPkrKUK).



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4. *Accountability and monitoring*

- (4a) Expanding awareness and accessible educational materials relevant of the United Nations, UN human rights system, and the SDGs in schools can go hand in hand in growing understanding of the rights of the child as well as identifying synergies with the new SDGs. “The first tool for empowerment is education,” said one participant.
- (4b) Robust accountability, monitoring as well as follow-up and review is defined by perspectives from the children being “expressed” rather than solely “interpreted.” In this regard, there is need to expand space for the representation of children at the local, national, and international level in conferences and other convenings relevant to human rights and the SDGs—including the United Nations in New York, Geneva, and elsewhere.

5. *Other relevant considerations*

- (5a) By greatly reducing the “threshold of engagement” as well as allowing for quantification of impact, the Internet and social media represent key entry points for children to act as both data and implementation agents in support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as well as the ensuring the rights of children and others. As such, decision makers should prioritize Internet freedom ensuring individuals have the same human rights online as they do offline, including the freedom of expression.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> See, for example, UN Human Rights Council Resolution A/HRC/32/L.20, “The promotion, protection and enjoyment of human rights on the Internet,” June 27, 2016.