RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A POST-2015 DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

RECAPTURING THE VISION OF A WORLD FIT FOR CHILDREN AND THE CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

ChildFund Alliance

Save the Children

SOS CHILDREN'S VILLAGES
A loving home for every child

Plan

World Vision

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INTRODUCTION

In July 2014, a historical milestone in the Post-2015 Development Agenda process was reached with the release of the *Open Working Group (OWG) on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Outcome Document*. As child-focused organizations, we followed the deliberations of the OWG over the last several months with great interest and feel that there is much to celebrate for children in this report. The introductory text of the outcome document acknowledges the need to ensure the *protection, survival and development of children to their full potential* as key to sustainable development, in accordance with the *Rio+20 outcome document*, and that sustained and inclusive economic growth, social development and environmental protection must benefit all, *in particular the children of the world, youth and future generations of the world.*

That being said, there is still more to be accomplished in ensuring that children are placed at the heart of the Post-2015 Development Agenda. Fulfillment of child rights is the *moral and legal obligation* of all governments, however, it is also the *smartest investment* that governments can make. Investing in children is essential for achieving all aspects of sustainable development, not only the social issues that are "traditionally" associated with children. Children are the future workforce and drivers of economic growth and development. They are also the future guardians of a sustainable world and its natural resources. Evidence shows that investing in the health, well-being, education, care and safety of children are some of the best interventions for return on investment (ROI) and these investments pay dividends not only for children and their families, but for all of society. Simply put, we will not make progress *on any of the goals* if we do not have a continuum of investment in people throughout their lives.

On the specific goals, it is imperative that we "get to zero" on a number of issues for children, in particular: preventable newborn, child and maternal deaths; hunger; malnutrition; and violence. In addition, there must be universal access to: sustainable and nutritious food; fresh, clean water and sanitation; quality education; healthcare and social protection services. This is part of fulfilling the promise of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and taking them to the next level through the SDGs.

ChildFund Alliance, Plan International, Save the Children, SOS Children's Villages, UNICEF and World Vision, as child-focused organizations, are committed to working together with governments to ensure this critical focus on children for the fulfillment of the future SDGs. This is not an option, but a moral and practical imperative, if *the future we want* is to be a realized for all.

COMBATTING INEQUALITY AND POVERTY

Children are over-represented among the extremely poor. They suffer on a larger scale and child poverty has long-term consequences: often becoming adult poverty and intergenerational poverty as the consequences of the deprivation and marginalization are transmitted from one generation to the next.

Within Goal 1 of the OWG Outcome Document, *End poverty in all its forms everywhere* the specific recognition of **child poverty** in target 1.2, -- *By 2030, reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions*-- is a key step in

eradicating poverty and achieving the sustainability of all the other goals in the framework. Progress towards the achievement of all goals is systematically endangered if child poverty persists. Target 1.2 must be both maintained and strengthened in the new Agenda. Furthermore, the definition and measures of poverty must go beyond income, looking at poverty's multiple roots and causes, including discrimination and exclusion. Ending poverty in all its forms, including *getting to zero* on issues such as hunger, malnutrition and preventable child and maternal deaths, is within reach by the year 2030.

Social protection for all is another step toward guaranteeing that poverty is eliminated and that inequalities are tackled in a systematic way. The development of indicators showing the provision and implementation of child-sensitive social protection in target 1.3 -- *Implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable* -- will be important to the success of this target and others. These measures should include family strengthening programs, targeting children in situations of high risk or vulnerability and ensuring access to basic services such as day-care, housing or health.

The OWG Outcome Document also seeks to address one of the biggest omissions and weaknesses of the MDG framework, by addressing the inequality gaps and drivers of inequality among different social and economic groups through a dedicated headline goal and targets. This is key to the eradication of poverty, achieving social stability, eradicating violence, guaranteeing inclusive economic development and shared prosperity and ensuring the full engagement of all people. All of this must start in childhood. Children are often left behind or they are seen as beneficiaries of programs rather than as active contributors.

Regarding target 10.1 -- *By 2030 progressively achieve and sustain income growth of the bottom 40% of the population at a rate higher than the national average* -- we must ensure that the benefits of income growth are felt by the individual child and not only their families or caregivers. This could be formulated at the indicator level.

Target 10.3 --*Ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome, including through eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies and actions in this regard* – is also key for children as they tend to experience discrimination based on their status and also that of their families. The discrimination experienced and internalized during childhood is carried along in the form of shame, social detachment and emotional problems throughout the life cycle. For example, there is an increasing body of evidence that shows the profound negative impact that "toxic stress" has on children, and is one way that poverty becomes entrenched and thus spread from generation to generation. To ensure the elimination of inequalities and the eradication of discrimination in the long-term, we must focus on children first.

Besides the specific measures to address inequalities proposed in the OWG outcome document, it is essential that the whole framework is aimed, designed, implemented, monitored and evaluated from a perspective that not only leaves no one behind, but that **prioritizes the hardest-to-reach and must vulnerable first**. Goals should be monitored and evaluated using disaggregated data that will highlight gaps in progress among different social and economic groups, including children and youth. Furthermore, a commitment must be made to not only collect data on different groups, but to effectively use this to track progress and improve

outcomes.

Reducing inequalities that exist between countries is also important for outcomes for children. Target 10.b -- *Encourage ODA and financial flows, including foreign direct investment, to states where the need is greatest, in particular LDCs, African countries, SIDS, and LLDCs, in accordance with their national plans and programmes* – is important for prioritizing the poorest children in the poorest countries. This should also include fragile, disaster-prone and conflicted-affected areas.

'GETTING TO ZERO' ON PREVENTABLE NEWBORN, CHILD AND MATERNAL DEATHS AND ENSURING FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY

Despite remarkable progress in a number of low and middle income countries, it is clear that many will not meet the MDG targets for improving child and maternal health by 2015. We welcome the commitment to finish the job started in the MDGs and the specific targets in the OWG Outcome Document that refer to child and maternal health, in particular 3.1 — *Reduce the global maternal mortality ratio to less than 70 per 100,000 live births* — and *3.2 — By 2030 end preventable deaths of newborns and under-five children.*

However, the health of children is largely absent from the introductory text of the Outcome Document, notably from Paragraph 7 which outlines a number of other rights. The urgent steps needed to improve quality, coverage and availability of disaggregated data to ensure that 'no-one is left behind' are also of relevance to the health goal where inequities are often manifested in the starkest terms of life and death.

Health and nutrition are inextricably linked, with malnutrition being the cause of nearly half of all under-five deaths. Though it is critical to have stand-alone goals on both health and nutrition, there is an opportunity to demonstrate this linkage through targets and indicators that look at these issues more holistically, which will be necessary to succeed in ending preventable newborn and child deaths. We welcome a standalone goal on food security and nutrition (Goal 2) and we strongly affirm the commitment to 'end all forms of malnutrition'. The reference to internationally agreed targets on stunting and wasting (Target 2.2) is important but these are due to be met by 2025 so Member States must urgently agree global targets for eliminating all forms of malnutrition by 2030.

IMPROVING MONITORING AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The effectiveness of the Post-2015 development framework will depend on locally-led and transparent mechanisms for monitoring progress and ensuring accountability. People should be empowered to make positive change in their own communities and able to hold their governments accountable for equitable progress at national, regional and local levels.

There is evidence to show that social accountability improves development outcomes, reduces inequality and can help generate data in real time that will track and improve delivery of services for improved outcomes. It is critical to embed opportunities for local communities to actively participate in the setting of national and

sub-national targets and indicators and their monitoring, including through social accountability processes, both in the new agenda and in its means of implementation mechanisms.

The OWG Outcome Document has included a number of important areas that are vital to the successful implementation of a new agenda, such as multiple mentions of marginalized and vulnerable people; a call to ensure inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making; and to develop effective, accountable and transparent public institutions at all levels. The outcome document also notes the need to improve public access to information, and to develop and implement capacity building programmes, particularly in terms of data collection, in developing countries. All these help ensure positive development outcomes, though there must be a strengthened and explicit role identified for people themselves in monitoring and accountability activities.

While we recognize that there may be a separate accountability framework for the development goals, we also note that the Outcome Document's goals and targets are critical in setting the scene for monitoring and accountability. As such, we propose the strengthening of language on monitoring and accountability at all levels, as well as language that refers to the participation of local communities in real time monitoring and interactive systems of accountability. Paragraph 14 of the outcome document raises the importance of multi-stakeholder partnerships for sustainable development and of a mechanism to review implementation. We propose to strengthen *the mechanism for implementation review* through by specifically promoting *a mechanism for monitoring and accountability*.

We commend the emphasis on disaggregation of data, timeliness and data quality in target 17.18 -- *By 2020, enhance capacity building support to developing countries, including for LDCs and SIDS, to increase significantly the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts.* Nevertheless, there is an imperative to go beyond availability of data to ensuring access to data and that people are part of the generation of data.

ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN

Perhaps one of the fundamental lessons learned from the MDGs was that they lacked goals and targets on the issue of violence and how violence can dramatically undermine progress in all other areas of development. We are pleased that this has been addressed in the OWG deliberations and outcome document and recognize the important work of all involved to ensure that violence against children is addressed throughout the document, particularly in the following targets:

- *4.a: Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all;*
- *5.2: End all forms of violence against women and girls in public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation;*
- *5.3: Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilations;*

8.7: Take immediate and effective measures to secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, eradicate forced labour, and by 2025 end child labour in all its forms including recruitment and use of child soldiers;

11.7: By 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, particularly for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities;

16.1: Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related deaths everywhere;

16.2: End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence and torture against children;

16.9: By 2030 provide legal identity for all including birth registration.

We would like to see targets 5.2 and 5.3 under the goal area *Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls* address violence against **boys as well as girls**. We also call for target 16.1 to significantly reduce *violent injuries* as well as deaths. For target 16.2, we would like the include ending *neglect* and for target 16.9 to call for *free* birth registration, as found in previous drafts of the document.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, many of the building blocks and potential for crafting a transformational agenda are in place. In the negotiations to follow over the next year, we must collectively push ourselves even further. We must also work together to better flesh out means of implementation, commitments on accountability, financing and other areas that will be essential in order to properly operationalize the new agenda so that it translates into real improvements in the lives of the people it aims to serve. This will undoubtedly lead to some difficult discussions and tough choices. The rights of children cannot be sacrificed or compromised in these discussions.

Children are not merely another interest group – childhood is the one thing that *every single human being on the planet* has in common: we were all children once. How we were treated, cared for, protected, nourished and educated had a profound impact on who we became as adults and this is true for the children growing up today and the future generations to come. Children and childhood are the very foundation for sustainable development and a sustainable world cannot be achieved when children do not survive and thrive. They must be at the center of the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

ABOUT THE CHILD FOCUSED AGENCIES

We are committed to assist United Nations Member States in designing a Post-2015 Development Agenda that advances the rights of every child and puts children at the center of Sustainable Development. We are committed to working with partners in advocating for, implementing and monitoring such an agenda.

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