

# A POST-2015 WORLD FIT FOR CHILDREN



A review of the Open Working Group Report  
on Sustainable Development Goals from a  
Child Rights Perspective

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## A Post-2015 World Fit for Children

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*People are at the centre of sustainable development and, in this regard, Rio+20 promised to strive for a world that is just, equitable and inclusive, and committed to work together to promote sustained and inclusive economic growth, social development and environmental protection and thereby to benefit all, in particular the children of the world, youth and future generations of the world without distinction of any kind such as age, sex, disability, culture, race, ethnicity, origin, migratory status, religion, economic or other status.*

-- Proposal for Sustainable Development Goals: Outcome of the United Nations General Assembly Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals, para 4

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## Key Messages

- There is much to celebrate for children in the goals and targets proposed by the Open Working Group, which have significantly built on the MDGs.
- Explicit targets on reducing inequality, ending violence against children and combating child poverty are major steps forward.
- This progress for children's rights must be maintained as negotiations around the new development agenda continue and intensify, and strengthened where gaps remain.
- There must be a clear and explicit focus on "leaving no one behind." Reaching first the poorest and most disadvantaged children must be reflected in all targets, as well as indicators and national implementation frameworks as they are developed.
- Targets need to be measurable and translated into indicators to measure progress within and across countries and to track equity gaps.
- Investing in the rights of all children, in every place in the world -- no matter the child's gender, ethnicity, race, economic, disability or other status is the fundamental building block for achieving the future we want.

## OVERVIEW

As the era of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) comes to an end in 2015, a new framework for global development will be put in place. The 'Post-2015 Development Agenda' will culminate in the formulation of a new set of goals and targets – the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – that will build on the progress of the MDGs and also address the shortcomings.

In anticipation of the transition, the United Nations system has been engaging in an unprecedented effort to bring the voices of people into the discussions and debates concerning the next agenda and the future. The aim of these public consultations is to support governments to create and adopt an agenda that is at once bold and ambitious, inspirational yet practical and – most of all – reflective of the aspirations of people from every part of the world, of all ages and from all walks of life. Millions of people have participated in national and global consultations, surveys, workshops and other initiatives to make their voices heard. Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) have been particularly instrumental in this process and child-focused CSOs have been a critical force in ensuring that children's voices are heard and heeded.

At the center of these efforts is the Open Work Group (OWG) on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The OWG was established following the 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, commonly known as Rio+20. Consisting of 70 Member States sharing 30 seats, the OWG has been working over the past 18 months to develop a set of SDGs for consideration by the UN General Assembly. On the 19<sup>th</sup> of July 2014, the OWG finalized their report.

**This report is truly historic and represents a watershed moment for the United Nations.** Never before has there been an articulation of all aspects of sustainable development – the social, the economic and the environmental – together in one place.

Crucial issues for children have been captured across the goals and targets: the strengths of the MDGs have been enhanced, and several areas where the MDGs were silent – including reducing inequality, ending violence against children and combating child poverty – are now recognized and addressed. Right from the introductory text, children youth and future generations are referenced as central to sustainable development.<sup>1</sup>

This review looks at the proposals of the OWG from a child rights perspective. This year, as we celebrate the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the review examines the **critical goals and targets for children proposed by the OWG that must be maintained in the final SDGs** and highlights areas that could be further reinforced. In some places there may be room for further refinements and improvements to strengthen the links between the SDGs and children's rights – ranging from small but important refinements in language, to areas where there is scope for great ambition and specificity. The deliberate focus on making sure that the poorest and most vulnerable children are prioritized in the pursuit of all goals must be maintained.

As important as the goals, targets and indicators themselves is the **world's shared vision of the future we want**. It is a world that is safer and cleaner, where all people live free from fear and want, where all people are healthy, well-educated and treated equally and with dignity. It is a world where they have hope. The fundamental building block for achieving that future is an investment in the rights of all children, in every place in the world – regardless of the child's gender, ethnicity, race, economic, disability or other status. If we do not make this investment, the future will not only be unsustainable, it will be bleak. When a child is not healthy, is chronically malnourished, does not receive a quality education, does not feel safe in his or her home, school or community, or lacks the opportunity to have his or her voice heard, this child will not be best equipped to fulfil his or her full potential. That not only denies the individual child his or her rights, but also deprives the entire human family of the intellectual, social, moral and economic benefits that derive from the fulfilment of these rights.

The future will be filled with both great opportunities and immense challenges. Children must be able to harness those opportunities and face those challenges. At the heart of these goals are future generations – today's and tomorrow's children.

## THE PROPOSED GOALS OF THE OPEN WORKING GROUP

All of the goals, from infrastructure to marine resources, are important for the world's children. Indeed, the future wellbeing of children around the world will depend on the degree to which nations succeed in making progress across all the goals in a way that combines economic growth, social equity and environmental protection. This, in essence, is sustainable development. It is critical for children

everywhere that the final framework is ambitious and balanced enough to drive a global transformation of economies and societies towards a fairer and safer future for all. This will be the ultimate test of the entire Post-2015 process. Within that context, the agenda must deliver on urgent and specific challenges facing the world's children. The rest of this review highlights the goals most directly related to children's rights and where UNICEF's perspective may add most value to the ongoing deliberations around the SDGs. The full list of proposed goals of the Open Working Group is below, with those this review focuses on indicated in bold.

**Proposed goal 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere**

**Proposed goal 2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture**

**Proposed goal 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages**

**Proposed goal 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all**

**Proposed goal 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls**

**Proposed goal 6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all**

**Proposed goal 7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all**

**Proposed goal 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all**

Proposed goal 9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation

**Proposed goal 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries**

**Proposed goal 11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable**

Proposed goal 12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

**Proposed goal 13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts**

Proposed goal 14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development

Proposed goal 15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss

**Proposed Goal 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels**

Proposed goal 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development Finance, Technology, Capacity building, Trade, Policy and institutional coherence, Multi-stakeholder partnerships and Data, monitoring and accountability

## CRITICAL ISSUES FOR ALL GOALS AND TARGETS

### A universal agenda for all children, everywhere

The proposals of the OWG articulate a universal agenda that protects the rights of all children everywhere to get the best start in life, to survive and thrive, to receive a quality education and to live free from violence and abuse. Rights are not constrained by national borders; therefore all countries are expected to commit to pursuing the goals and targets through national action. This universalism must be maintained as final goals and targets are decided, and indicators developed.

### Equitable results for all children, ‘leave no one behind’

Perhaps the most fundamental lesson of the MDGs was that, due to their focus on national averages and global aggregates, they failed to account for stagnating progress or – in some cases – growing inequalities among income and social groups and along gender lines. Addressing inequalities and promoting equity are addressed in the new framework. However, specific measures for prioritizing and accelerating progress for the poorest and most vulnerable children should be pursued to ensure the new SDGs are met equitably.

### Disparities and the ‘data revolution’

All targets must be measurable to ensure equitable results for all children. In addition, disaggregated data will be essential for monitoring equity gaps, strengthening social accountability and ensuring that the gaps between the most and least advantaged groups are narrowing. Data should also be disaggregated by all grounds of discrimination prohibited by international human rights law, including *inter alia* by sex, age, race, ethnicity, income, location, disability, and other grounds most relevant to specific countries and contexts, for example: caste, minority groups, indigenous peoples, migrant or displacement status.

### Meaningful participation of children and young people, both girls and boys

Member States agreed at Rio+20 that, “sustainable development must be inclusive and people-centred, benefiting and involving all people, including youth and children.” They also, “stress[ed] the importance of the active participation of young people in decision-making processes...[and noted] the need to promote intergenerational dialogue and solidarity by recognizing their views.”<sup>2</sup> The voices of children and youth have been invaluable for the process of developing the new agenda and will be equally important to monitoring and accountability.

### Resilience of children in an uncertain world

Shocks, including disasters, armed conflict, epidemics, economic downturns and food price hikes, are eroding the rights of children and impeding sustainable development. Stresses, including violence, unplanned urbanization, rapid population growth, climate change and environmental degradation, are

compounding the vulnerability of children, reducing their resilience and increasing the impact of shocks. Strengthening the resilience of children, families, communities and systems to shocks and stresses comes through in a number of the OWG proposals, and must remain as a priority as the final SDGs are developed.

## Financing for development

The goals articulated in the new agenda will not be achievable unless there is a forward-looking, ambitious and realistic approach to financing at global and national levels. At the global level there is an urgent need to establish a new, shared understanding of how public and private sources of financing can be mobilized and combined in support of sustainable development everywhere and particularly when it comes to developing countries. Domestic financing will be crucial for all countries, not only for reasons of national ownership of public policies, but also accountability to constituents and their needs. Firm and reliable commitments on Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) will be essential, and should have a strong focus on the most deprived children wherever they are, but particularly in poorer countries. Additionally, as we move to an increasingly multi-polar world, South-South Cooperation and investment will be an important mechanism of financing. The financial sector, private business, foundations and non-profits will need to be central players as investors, partners, innovators and mobilizers to bring new opportunities and innovative solutions to complex problems. Credible and responsible institutions, which are committed to building domestic capacity, combating poverty and being truly accountable to the people they serve, must underpin effective financing.

## A REVIEW OF GOALS AND TARGETS: FULFILLING THE PROMISE OF THE MDGs AND BUILDING ON PROGRESS

### Proposed Goal 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere

For children this goal is crucial to end extreme child poverty in all its forms and extend coverage of nationally defined, child-sensitive social protection systems for all. Children are over-represented among the extremely poor, with 47 per cent of the global population living in extreme poverty being 18 years old or younger.<sup>3</sup> Child poverty has especially devastating impacts on children themselves as well as societies and economies.

**The proposals of the OWG under goal 1 represent strong progress for children.** As well as the overarching agreement to end poverty, the explicit mention of child poverty is a major step forward in recognising its importance and the ability to measure it nationally by national definitions. It is crucial that this focus remains in the final goals. The **recognition of social protection systems for all** is a necessary response in addressing child poverty and is also a vital step forward from the MDGs.

**Proposed OWG targets of crucial importance to children:**

- by 2030, eradicate extreme poverty for all people everywhere, currently measured as people living on less than \$1.25 a day
- 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
- implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable
- by 2030 build the resilience of the poor and those in vulnerable situations, and reduce their exposure and vulnerability to climate-related extreme events and other economic, social and environmental shocks and disasters

## Proposed Goal 2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture

All children have the right to optimal nutrition for their survival, growth and development. In addition to tackling the unfinished agenda of acute malnutrition, which puts nearly 51 million children under age 5 at increased risk of death,<sup>4</sup> another issue of particular urgency is childhood stunting. Stunting affected 162 million children under 5 around the world in 2012,<sup>5</sup> and is highly correlated with children from the poorest households, trapping those children in a vicious cycle of poverty and under-nutrition.

The **OWG report includes a child nutrition target**, including a commitment to achieve by 2025 agreed targets on stunting and wasting of children under five years of age, and addressing the needs of adolescent girls, pregnant and lactating women. This target draws from the 2012 World Health Assembly (WHA) nutrition-related targets, which contain six distinct nutrition related targets.<sup>6</sup> Although these targets could have been separated by the OWG to underline their importance, this is generally very positive and these distinctions can instead be captured at the indicator level. There are two important areas that can be further expanded upon: (i) **lack of explicit mention of the rate of exclusive breastfeeding** and (ii) **no mention of the growing challenges of children being overweight**. UNICEF suggests that all elements of the WHA nutrition targets should be captured and measured.

### Proposed OWG targets of crucial importance to children:

- by 2030 end all forms of malnutrition, including achieving by 2025 the internationally agreed targets on stunting and wasting in children under five years of age, and address the nutritional needs of adolescent girls, pregnant and lactating women, and older persons

## Proposed Goal 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

The MDGs were instrumental in providing the framework and political commitment for reducing child and maternal deaths, and much progress has been made over the last two decades. However, UNICEF data show that approximately 18,000 children died per day in 2012 mostly from preventable causes before reaching their fifth birthday.<sup>7</sup> Additionally, around 800 women died per day in 2013 due to the health risks inherent in pregnancy and childbirth.<sup>8</sup> The emerging development agenda must continue the work of the MDGs in this area, with a prioritization on the hardest-to-reach communities and on

making sure that children do not just survive but also thrive, develop and grow up healthier through affordable access to quality health services and care.

The **proposals of the OWG maintain a clear focus on child and maternal health**, providing a goal for maternal mortality, the ending of newborn and under-five preventable deaths and the recognition of the need to continue the fight against the epidemics of HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and neglected tropical diseases, as well as achieving universal health coverage and reducing the negative impacts of pollution.

Because the OWG report does not include a numerical target in the ending of preventable child deaths, UNICEF suggests the inclusion of targets from *A Promise Renewed*<sup>9</sup>, namely **(i) reducing the neo-natal mortality rate to 12 or less deaths per 1,000 live births and (ii) reducing the under-five mortality rate to 25 or less deaths per 1,000 live births.**

In 2012, approximately 534,000 deaths amongst children under five were attributable to household air pollution, resulting from the use of energy sources in the home that release particulate matter (soot) into the air.<sup>10,11</sup> UNICEF believes that a target on reducing the incidence of mortality from indoor air pollution that specifically mentions children under five would strengthen the target on deaths and illnesses from hazardous chemicals and air, water, and soil pollution and contamination.

**Proposed OWG targets of crucial importance to children:**

- by 2030 reduce the global maternal mortality ratio to less than 70 per 100,000 live births
- by 2030 end preventable deaths of newborns and under-five children
- by 2030 reduce by one-third pre-mature mortality from non-communicable diseases (NCDs) through prevention and treatment, and promote mental health and wellbeing
- strengthen prevention and treatment of substance abuse, including narcotic drug abuse and harmful use of alcohol
- by 2020 halve global deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents
- by 2030 end the epidemics of AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria, and neglected tropical diseases and combat hepatitis, water-borne diseases, and other communicable diseases
- achieve universal health coverage (UHC), including financial risk protection, access to quality essential health care services, and access to safe, effective, quality, and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all
- by 2030 substantially reduce the number of deaths and illnesses from hazardous chemicals and air, water, and soil pollution and contamination
- support research and development of vaccines and medicines for the communicable and non-communicable diseases that primarily affect developing countries, provide access to affordable essential medicines and vaccines, in accordance with the Doha Declaration which affirms the right of developing countries to use to the full the provisions in the TRIPS agreement regarding flexibilities to protect public health and, in particular, provide access to medicines for all

- increase substantially health financing and the recruitment, development and training and retention of the health workforce in developing countries, especially in LDCs and SIDS

## **Proposed Goal 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable, quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all**

The last decade has witnessed significant progress in expanding access to primary education and gender parity in education. Between 1999 and 2011, the number of children out of school fell almost by half, and the percentage of girls who are out of school has decreased in a number of regions.<sup>12</sup> Many countries have achieved gender parity in primary education.<sup>13</sup> However, for those in school, at least 250 million primary-school age children are not learning basic skills, even though half have spent at least four years in school.<sup>14</sup> Disparities in both enrolment and achievement also persist for children with disabilities<sup>15</sup> and children from indigenous groups.<sup>16</sup>

The proposed goals and targets of the OWG build on and strengthen the MDGs on education, and include a focus on gender equality. Other significant achievements include commitments to early childhood development, care and education, learning achievement, enrolment and completion and the importance of developing relevant knowledge and skills, as well as youth and adult literacy and numeracy. UNICEF supports all proposed education targets as they stand.

### **Proposed OWG targets of crucial importance to children:**

- by 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes
- by 2030 ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education
- by 2030, increase by x% the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship
- by 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, and children in vulnerable situations
- by 2030 ensure that all youth and at least x% of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy
- by 2030 ensure all learners acquire knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including among others through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship, and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development
- build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all
- by 2030 increase by x% the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries, especially LDCs and SIDS

## Proposed Goal 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

Achieving gender equality for women and girls is crucial to achieving the world we want. Women and girls face particular vulnerabilities and threats which must be explicitly tackled. The MDGs created a strong foundation with a clear focus on gender equality that has been carried forward in the proposals of the OWG. As well as a focus on discrimination, there is explicit mention of the sexual violence and exploitation faced by women and girls, child marriage, female genital mutilation and the recognition of unpaid and domestic work. The goal could be developed to acknowledge that **sexual abuse is suffered by boys as well as girls**, as well as the **inclusion of boys and men in promoting and achieving gender equality**.

### Proposed OWG targets of crucial importance to children:

- end all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere
- eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation
- eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilations
- recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies, and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate
- ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic, and public life
- ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the Programme of Action of the ICPD and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences
- adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels

## Proposed Goal 6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all

In 2012, around 1,600 children under 5 years of age died every day from diarrhoeal diseases.<sup>17</sup> Eighty-eight percent of these deaths – more than 1,400 every day – were due to a lack of safe drinking water, sanitation and basic hygiene.<sup>18</sup> Investing specifically in children's access to water, sanitation and hygiene has cumulative benefits for the rest of society. For example, when children learn about WASH in schools they are empowered as agents of change and drivers of healthier practices among their families and communities.<sup>19</sup>

The **proposed goal represents further progress on the MDGs** by clearly stating the need to achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water and sanitation and hygiene for all,

with a focus on the needs of women and girls in vulnerable situations. Another **crucial step forward is the specific focus on ending open defecation**; for children, it is important this remains in the final goals. The target could be strengthened by emphasizing the need for universal access to water, sanitation and hygiene for households, schools and health facilities. Explicitly articulating these locations would make a significant difference to children.

**Proposed OWG Water and Sanitation Targets of crucial importance to children:**

- by 2030, achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all
- by 2030, achieve access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all, and end open defecation, paying special attention to the needs of women and girls and those in vulnerable situations
- support and strengthen the participation of local communities for improving water and sanitation management

**Proposed Goal 7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all**

Many children across the world have little or no access to modern energy services, which can have a host of negative consequences on their well-being, education, safety and health. Household air pollution, which results from the use of energy sources in the home that release particulate matter (soot) in the air, is also linked to preventable child deaths and illnesses.

**Proposed OWG targets of crucial importance to children:**

- by 2030 ensure universal access to affordable, reliable, and modern energy services

**Proposed Goal 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all**

Many aspects of inclusive growth, productive employment and decent work for all are vital to the financial stability of households and children living in poverty. As children grow up and enter the labour market, they need to be able to find employment to support themselves and their future children and families. Seventy-five million youth worldwide were unemployed in 2012,<sup>20</sup> making up 40 percent of the world's unemployed.<sup>21</sup> As youth are the future workforce and engine of sustainable economic growth, investing in youth employment is an investment in the future global economy.

The OWG's specific recognition of full and productive employment and the particular recognition of the issue of youth employment is a major step forward. Additionally, the call for an **immediate end to the worst forms of child labour and forced labour** as well as the **elimination of child labour in all its forms including recruitment and use of child soldiers by 2025** represent major victories for children.

**Proposed OWG targets of crucial importance to children:**

- by 2030 achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value
- by 2020 substantially reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training
- 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

## Proposed Goal 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries

Inequalities deny millions of people the opportunities they need to build better lives for themselves, their families and their societies. Investing in the poorest children and giving them an equal opportunity to access health, education and protection is a practical pathway to break intergenerational cycles of poverty and accelerate development progress. Studies show that when we design policies and programmes around the most disadvantaged, we actually achieve more and better results, more cost-effectively. Any additional costs are outweighed by the additional results.<sup>22</sup>

A major criticism of the MDGs is that they lack reference to equitable progress, which may have inadvertently lead to achieving progress for those easiest to reach. The OWG's proposed goal on inequality addresses this omission. UNICEF welcomes its inclusion; while not explicitly child focused, it will help ensure clear attention on this fundamental issue. Beyond the goal, it will be imperative that progress is monitored through an equity lens across all of the goals and targets. Collection and use of **data that can be disaggregated by sex, age, race, ethnicity, income, location, disability, and other grounds most relevant to specific countries and contexts** will be critical for monitoring equity gaps and levels of improvement among different groups.

### Proposed OWG targets of crucial importance to children:

- by 2030 progressively achieve and sustain income growth of the bottom 40% of the population at a rate higher than the national average
- by 2030 empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status
- 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

## Proposed Goal 11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

A safe environment with access to essential services is central to a child's health and happiness. Each child has the right to housing and to the living conditions necessary for their development. Safe, affordable and reliable transportation helps ensure access to education, health and work. Public spaces in which a child can study, transport through and gather are also vital.

#### **Proposed OWG targets of crucial importance to children:**

- by 2030, provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, improving road safety, notably by expanding public transport, with special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations, women, children, persons with disabilities and older persons
- 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

### **Proposed Goal 13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts**

Although it is commonly recognized that children are particularly vulnerable to the negative impacts of climate change,<sup>23,24</sup> they are not substantially included in the policy discourse or in actions taken to reduce people's climate vulnerability.

While recognising the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) as the primary forum for the global response to climate change, the proposal of the OWG does include important climate change targets, with a strong focus on adaptation. These are important steps, but the targets lack ambition. While it is mentioned in the introductory text, there is no commitment within the targets to holding the increase in global average temperature below 2° C, or 1.5° C above pre-industrial levels. Referencing children with regard to building climate change awareness, as well as dedicating **public investments in climate change adaptation to directly benefit children**, would strengthen this goal.

#### **Proposed OWG targets of crucial importance to children:**

- strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate related hazards and natural disasters in all countries
- integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies, and planning
- improve education, awareness raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction, and early warning
- implement the commitment undertaken by developed country Parties to the UNFCCC to a goal of mobilizing jointly USD100 billion annually by 2020 from all sources to address the needs of developing countries in the context of meaningful mitigation actions and transparency on implementation and fully operationalize the Green Climate Fund through its capitalization as soon as possible
- promote mechanisms for raising capacities for effective climate change related planning and management, in LDCs, including focusing on women, youth, local and marginalized communities

## Proposed Goal 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

The lack of goals, targets and indicators in relation to violence, exploitation and abuse in the MDGs must be rectified in the new goals. The MDGs also contained no target on the need for all children to have a legal identity including birth registration. In a **tremendous step forward**, the OWG proposals have addressed these omissions. UNICEF welcomes Goal 16's mention of reducing all forms of violence, and **ending abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against children**, as well as the inclusion of **birth registration** is crucial to guarantee the fundamental rights of children to an identity.

For children, it is imperative that these targets remain in the final SDGs. Further, UNICEF advocates that all countries should **monitor and report on violent injuries in addition to deaths** which gives a fuller picture of the level and cause of this phenomenon.

Additionally, improving fair processes for hearing and deciding disputes, addressing violations, and other justice issues for children is essential. UNICEF would encourage the specification of **universal access for children to independent justice systems** that include **child-friendly processes**.

Finally, UNICEF would also encourage the inclusion of the word "free" in the target on birth registration. Indeed, a major constraint for poor families in achieving birth registration is the costs associated with having the birth registered.

### Proposed OWG targets of crucial importance to children:

- significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere
- end abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence and torture against children
- promote the rule of law at the national and international levels, and ensure equal access to justice for all
- by 2030 provide legal identity for all including birth registration

## Proposed Goals 9, 12, 14, 15 and 17

Although Goals 9, 12, 14, 15, and 17 contain no specific references to children and youth, the goals are clearly central to their upbringing and well-being. Goal 9, *Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation*, is valuable to, and reliant on, children. We must involve the dynamism of youth researchers and inventors to solve some of the world's most pressing issues. In addition, children are current and future consumers and producers, therefore proposed Goal 12, *Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns*, will rely on involving children in related issues such as the efficient use of natural resources, recycling and other sustainable practices.

Similarly, Goal 14, *Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development*, and Goal 15, *Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss*, will directly benefit the environment that children will inherit and inhabit. In turn, future generations will become the future guardians of the earth.

Goal 17, *Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development*, is central to the success of the Post-2015 Development Agenda and children and youth are essential stakeholders for partnership. The voices of children and youth have been invaluable for the process of developing the new agenda and will be equally important to monitoring and accountability. Enhanced international support for effective and targeted capacity building will be critical for achieving all SDGs including those specifically related to children. Furthermore, the disaggregation of data will ensure that their unique and important experiences are being measured and can therefore be improved.

## CONCLUSION

The ways in which Member States have championed child rights during the OWG sessions and in the final report must be celebrated. The report is a major leap forward and UNICEF stands committed to assisting Member States in this next phase, working towards the passage and implementation of a transformational agenda – for children, for all of humanity and for the planet.

## END NOTES

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- <sup>1</sup> Proposal for Sustainable Development Goals: Outcome of the United Nations General Assembly Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals, July 2014
- <sup>2</sup> Outcome document adopted at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, 'The Future We Want,' Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, June 2012.
- <sup>3</sup> United Nations Children's Fund, 'Child Poverty in the Post-2015 Development Agenda,' Knowledge Brief, Division of Policy and Strategy, UNICEF, April 2014.
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