

# A POST-2015 WORLD FIT FOR CHILDREN

## AN AGENDA FOR #EVERYCHILD 2015



**World leaders are setting out a roadmap for human progress over the next 15 years. Known as the Sustainable Development Goals, these new global targets will drive investment and action in virtually every country on earth, touching millions of lives. That is why it is vital that every child is included – and that children everywhere are at the heart of the new global agenda.**

2015 should be a year of global action for children, engaging everyone – governments, institutions, corporations, communities, families, and individuals in every country – to demand and drive change for every child.

### An Agenda for #EVERYChild 2015

- 1. End violence, neglect, exploitation and abuse of children.** In a world where almost one billion children between the ages of 2 and 14 suffer regular physical punishment, and almost 1 in 4 girls between the ages of 15 and 19 experience physical violence, violence against children is a universal problem affecting every community and every country. Violence, conflicts, weak governance and the absence of the rule of law severely undermine development gains made in other areas. Despite its prevalence, violence against children often hides in plain sight. More must be done to encourage people to speak out when they see or suspect violence against children, to raise awareness in schools and communities, and increase investment in social welfare systems and services that protect children from harm and provide support to those who are already victims.
- 2. Put ending child poverty in all its dimensions at the heart of poverty eradication efforts.** Nearly 570 million people aged 18 or younger live below the international poverty line of \$1.25 a day. Children make up nearly half of the world's extreme poor – and poverty in childhood is often the root cause of poverty in adulthood. To break the cycle of poverty, we need to capture the full picture of child poverty in all its dimensions. Poverty measures must go beyond income, examining factors such as access to services and social protection systems, health, nutrition, water and sanitation, shelter, quality education and other issues like discrimination, stigmatization and exclusion. More also needs to be done to reduce the impact of poverty – for example, by reducing the vulnerability of households, tackling the worst forms of child labour, and strengthening the systems that protect poor families.
- 3. Renew the global effort to end preventable child and maternal deaths.** Children in the poorest 20 per cent of homes are twice as likely as those in the richest 20 per cent to die before reaching their fifth birthday, and nearly three times as likely to be underweight and thus more vulnerable. And despite greater public attention to the problem of maternal mortality, we have not made enough progress. To save more lives, we must build better health systems, target resources to increase access to clean water, sanitation and hygiene, reduce childhood stunting, increase rates of breastfeeding, and focus on maternal health to make pregnancy and childbirth safer.



**4. Pay more attention to the ‘second decade of life’ – adolescence.** Adolescence is a pivotal – and vulnerable – period during which we can either consolidate – or lose – the gains made during early childhood. All too often, adolescents are endangered by violence, limited by a lack of quality education, and unable to access critical health services. To protect adolescents and better prepare them to become productive adults, they must be included in policy planning and service delivery. More focus needs to be placed on providing learning and preparation for the world of work, building healthy lifestyles that reduce non-communicable diseases and improve sexual health, and protecting adolescents from involvement in violence.

**5. Leverage the growing ‘Data Revolution’ to support the rights of every child.** Timely, credible 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 left behind – and left out of policy decision making. Data are also crucial to measuring the results we achieve, so we can track progress and change course where necessary.

**6. Increase investments in all children, especially the most vulnerable and marginalized.** There is no better investment than investment in our children – through development finance, humanitarian finance, climate finance, and domestic finance. Whether in education, water and sanitation, health care or social protection, sufficient money must be spent not only to deliver results for children but also to reach the children who need it most. This is not only a moral and strategic imperative, it is a practical one: Growing evidence shows that investing in the most disadvantaged children contributes to sustained growth and the stability of societies and nations.

**7. Break the cycle of chronic crises affecting children.**

With 230 million children living in countries affected by conflicts in 2014, and many others affected by disasters, the world’s response to humanitarian crises – whether natural or man-made – should include investments in safer futures for children. Building resilience – by investing in initiatives to help children, families, and communities to better withstand future shocks – is crucial to ending the terrible cycle of crises that too many endure today.

If the significant gains made for many children in recent years are not to be lost, if growing nations are to continue to thrive, if troubled regions are to become more stable, if the natural environment is to be safeguarded for today’s generations and for those to come, then children must be at the heart of the new global agenda. And children, young people, and people in poverty must have a voice in setting this agenda and helping move it forward.

The global community – led by governments and supported by citizens and partners from every sector – has an historic opportunity to dismantle the barriers that continue to exclude too many children from progress, and to complete the work of building a society in which every child can survive and thrive, learn and grow, participate and contribute fully to society.

It’s not just the right thing to do – it is in everyone’s interests. The world can shape a better future for all children, by coming together and taking action for #EVERYChild.

To read more on UNICEF’s position on the Sustainable Development Goals, please see our set of SDG issue briefs and our analysis of the Open Working Group’s proposed SDGs from a child rights perspective.

[http://www.unicef.org/post2015/files/P2015\\_issue\\_brief\\_set.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/post2015/files/P2015_issue_brief_set.pdf)

[http://www.unicef.org/post2015/files/Post\\_2015\\_OWG\\_review\\_CR\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/post2015/files/Post_2015_OWG_review_CR_FINAL.pdf)

**For more information**

Please see UNICEF’s webpage on Children and the Post-2015 Development Agenda: <http://www.unicef.org/post2015/>