

Intergovernmental Negotiations on the Post-2015 Development Agenda
STATEMENT BY LUXEMBOURG
ON BEHALF OF 28 MEMBER STATES OF THE GROUP OF FRIENDS
ON CHILDREN AND SDGs

21 April 2015

M. le Co-facilitateur,

J'ai l'honneur de prononcer une déclaration au nom de 28 Etats membres¹ du Groupe d'amis sur les Enfants et les Objectifs de développement durable. La version complète de notre déclaration avec la liste des Etats membres qui s'y associent sera communiquée au Secrétariat pour publication sur le site internet de nos négociations.

A child born at the start of this millennium turns 15 this year. At the end of the SDG time horizon that child will be a 30 year-old adult. How we, as a society cultivate the life of that child – by investing in his/her education, health and nutrition, protection from violence, exploitation and abuse – will define who he/she is as an adult and how he/she is able to function in and contribute to society. *This child is our agent of change.*

Investing in all children, especially the most vulnerable and marginalized is a moral and legal obligation enshrined in the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*. It is also the smartest and the most leveraged investment we can make in social cohesion, inclusive economic growth and development, and sustainability of the planet and its natural resources. There is an ever-increasing amount of evidence to support this claim -- for example -- research from the *Copenhagen Consensus Think Tank* has shown that **increasing access to early education has a 33 dollar Return on Investment for every dollar spent**¹. This is but one data point of many.

Through our discussions on *Means of Implementation* and *Financing for Development* we have the opportunity to shore up commitments to position children and future generations at the center of the world we want by 2030. **The level of resources available for services that benefit children is important.** Across countries higher spending on basic public services like health or education, tends to be associated with lower poverty levels and better outcomes for children. It is important that we commit to improving financial and other resources for basic services that matter to children, including through adequate assistance to countries with the greatest financing gaps. We must never forget the children who today live in places ravaged by conflict or natural disaster, who are without parental care, or who are disabled or from a marginalized group. Investing in the most disadvantaged children has some of the most dramatic positive results.

¹ Belgium, Bulgaria, Chile, Colombia, Croatia, Denmark, Egypt, Estonia, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guatemala, Japan, Kazakhstan, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Mexico, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, Republic of Korea, Senegal, Sweden, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom and Uruguay.

In addition to transparent, adequate, reliable and diverse financing, there are other important aspects of Means of Implementation. For example, we need to **increase support and capacity for quality data collection, analysis and use** by paying particular attention to the need for disaggregation of data in order to reach the most vulnerable and marginalized children who are often left behind when targeting averages. Disaggregated data on programming, spending and results is an important precondition for monitoring gaps in progress between different income and social groups. During last month's discussions, we highlighted the need for collection and use of different types of data. Funding and capacity for this data work will be essential, so that all countries are able to monitor the situation of children and improve programmes, policies and service delivery based on this information.

We also need to recognize both **the promise and the challenge of technology**. Lack of access to technology is inextricably linked to persistent inequalities. Children who live in poverty, or in remote areas or have disabilities often have limited or no access to information resources and new technologies that are available to other children and are thus deprived of the opportunities that their better-off peers have to realize their full potential. These disadvantages will also be passed on to future generations thus aggravating the problem further. Sharing technologies that help the poorest communities should be an explicit focus for SDG implementation so that these communities have access to information and services that give them a voice.

Innovations, including in technology, also bring great promise for tackling issues that today may seem insurmountable or prohibitively expensive. We can imagine, for example, a future where wearable technology – currently just reaching the mainstream – is something that could be used to effectively monitor health or nutrition markers of global and remote populations in real-time. Children and young people have grown up in this digital age, and are often at the forefront of these innovations.

We have achieved a great deal in bringing the views of civil society, the private sector, academia and concerned individuals into these intergovernmental deliberations on what the SDGs should look like. Going forward, we will need their support and that of many others to actually implement this agenda at local, national and global levels. Increasing public awareness is a first step, but this knowledge must lead to action. **Meaningful participation in policy-making, budgeting and monitoring progress** will help make all our efforts to achieve these goals more effective.

The SDGs present all of us with a framework for collective action on issues that matter for children through effective global partnerships. Businesses, civil society, the UN System, academic institutions, the media, faith-based organizations, children and youth groups, parents, schools and others all have a role to play in working together to achieve progress. Let us look at successful models in nutrition and health as examples of how to effectively mobilize different actors; and use what has been learned for pursuing new partnerships on emerging issues in the SDGs such as, for example, protecting children from violence, exploitation and abuse.

Children and young people are not passive beneficiaries of this process – whether or not we invest in their rights will determine if the promise of the SDGs becomes a reality... or not. This agenda is about the child who is born today, the child who is 15 today, the child who will be born in 2030. **They will decide, and are, our future.**

Equipping all of these children with the means and tools to fulfil their full potential -- free from fear and want -- is the path to achieving our common goal for a more prosperous, peaceful and sustainable future for all.

Thank you.

ⁱ <http://www.copenhagenconsensus.com/post-2015-consensus/nobel-laureates-guide-smarter-global-targets-2030-0>