

Intergovernmental Negotiations on the Post-2015 Development Agenda
Statement by Bulgaria on behalf of 24 Member States¹ of the Group of Friends on Children and SDGs

Ending poverty in all its forms everywhere.

This is the first goal that we have articulated for the Sustainable Development Agenda. Children experience poverty more acutely than adults, due to their increased dependency and vulnerability, and therefore it is important that children are fully considered as part of this goal and its associated measurement.

Children are not only disproportionately concentrated among the world's extreme poor, but they are also most vulnerable to the effects of poverty.

As we look towards the follow-up and review mechanisms for the implementation of the SDGs, we must bear in mind two fundamental issues.

First, investing in children is a key element for achieving progress on the poverty goal, and other relevant SDGs. Poor health, malnutrition, lack of access to essential services and failure to protect children from violence remain major obstacles to sustained economic growth and development. A society can adopt the most market-friendly policies...but it won't achieve the same levels of future growth if, for example, over 50% of its children are stunted today. Investment in the well-being of children is the only way to break the vicious intergenerational cycle of poverty and move us towards a virtuous cycle of inclusive and sustainable growth and prosperity for all. *This is a fundamental paradigm shift that needs to be reflected in the way the SDGs are implemented and financed.*

Second, making progress for children across all of the SDGs is the only way to end poverty in all its forms everywhere. This is especially true for the most marginalized and disadvantaged girls and boys. Research shows that investing in children's health, nutrition, education and protection from violence provide some of the highest returns per dollar spent, particularly in early childhood. One example is the positive effects of investing in quality education for girls: a child whose mother can read is 50% more likely to live past age 5 and one additional school year can increase a woman's earnings by up to 20%.

As part of the work on monitoring, accountability and review, we will need to explore approaches and mechanisms that can deliver accurate and timely results for informed decision-making. Tracking multidimensional poverty can help us identify the realities of child poverty, and also identify equity gaps through data and monitoring. Data and information from existing reporting mechanisms should be used where possible, bearing in mind the need for national capacity building in regard to improved data collection. Measuring child poverty using monetary and multidimensional indicators can help guide policies and programmes to reach those who are being left behind and target public investment to improve children's well-being and end poverty in all its forms. Monitoring of such investments through age and gender disaggregated data on results and spending would allow States to track their investments in children and in tackling multi-dimensional child poverty.

The role of civil society is also of importance for follow-up and review. This includes organized civil society, but also individuals belonging to the most vulnerable and marginalized groups whose voice often remains

¹ Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Croatia, Estonia, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Japan, Kazakhstan, Republic of Korea, Luxembourg, Mexico, The Netherlands, Nigeria, Panama, Peru, Senegal, Sweden, Turkey, United Arab Emirates and Uruguay.

unheard, such as people living in poverty, persons with disabilities, migrant children, and children living in areas affected by armed conflict, among others. Their valuable experiences and knowledge can be captured through real-time monitoring systems, citizen feedback tools and sentiment surveys. As even remote populations start to gain access to technology and tools, there will be increasing opportunities to connect people to each other and to decision-makers.

Participatory monitoring approaches at the national level encourage responsible collaboration between people and their government, and can promote social inclusion and equality. Openness and transparency in policy-making, setting of budgets and use of public funds are key elements for building greater trust and fostering valuable public input into these processes.

Finally, the reporting framework should foster constructive learning between countries. It should strike a balance between being comprehensive and useful while at the same time not placing an undue burden on countries, particularly those with lower capacity. Progress for children must be explicitly tracked across all reporting levels -- global, regional, national and thematic. Close monitoring by the statistical community of multidimensional child poverty, including measurement of investments in children, would represent an important contribution to the follow-up and review process.