

Summary of the side-event: “Ensuring sustainable development: Targeting inequalities experienced by children in the post 2015 framework”

In the frame of the 8th session of the inter-governmental Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals, SOS Children's Villages, together with Plan, organized a side-event on the need to target inequalities experienced by children in the post 2015 agenda. This was an important opportunity to raise awareness on the kind of inequalities affecting the most vulnerable children and young people, and to discuss the necessary steps that governments should take to address them.

The event was co-hosted by the Government of Germany and the Government of Brazil, whose representatives, **H.E. Ambassador Heiko Thoms** and **H.E. Ambassador Guilherme de Aguiar Patriota**, have spoken highly about the work of SOS Children's Villages and Plan with the most vulnerable and marginalised children and families. Similar appreciation came from the UNICEF Senior Advisor for the Executive Director on the Post 2015 Development Agenda, Mr. **Richard Morgan**, who took part in the event as speaker. Among the speakers, there were also Ms. **Margaret Akello**, Gender Advisor for Plan Uganda, and Ms. **Sofía García García**, Post 2015 Advocacy Advisor for SOS Children's Villages.

Overall, there was consensus on the fact that the next global agenda for sustainable development will have to place more emphasis on the human rights of children. “In Germany's view, they are not adequately reflected in the current development agenda”, stressed *H.E. Ambassador Heiko Thoms*. “Investing in children will provide high returns in terms of both human rights and human progress”, added Mr. Richard Morgan.

Mr. Morgan enriched the debate with information from most recent studies on the inequalities affecting the world's children (e.g. [AINA Report](#)). Accordingly, children are the most impoverished. They experience inequalities from day one, so that most of the damages (e.g. lack of nutrition, violence, and health problems) are done in the first two years of life, with a negative impact on brain development.

Ms. Margaret Akello has pointed to education as one of the key means to break the circle of intergenerational and gender-biased transmission of poverty. She argued in favour of a standalone goal on quality education that supports the transition to secondary education for *all* children. She also explained that action to prevent school drop outs is crucial to reduce gender inequalities. “In Uganda, once girls drop out of school, they become victims of child marriage, which is not only a clear violation of their human rights, but also a critical driver of poverty and inequality”.

Against a background of growing inequalities between and within countries, which affect children in a disproportionate way and often deprive them from the love and care of a family, *Ms. Sofía García García* suggested that social protection measures are the key to a post 2015 framework that eradicates poverty and inequality in a sustainable AND sustained way. Current social protection systems are very limited in coverage, as they often do not reach children outside of family care. Instead, social protection systems that support the most vulnerable children as individual citizens and prevent family separation through family strengthening programmes can tackle the structural drivers of inequalities and poverty.

The possibility to have a standalone goal on social protection in the post 2015 agenda was enthusiastically promoted by *H.E. Ambassador Guilherme de Aguiar Patriota*. He argued that public policies are the main driver of social change, and that states should be the main welfare provider, while the private sector should be encouraged to work in favour of welfare policies. He also added that “universality of programmes” is necessary to grant that no one is left behind. He also agreed with Mr. Morgan that most of the damages have been done before children reach school age, and thus post 2015 policies should target children since the first years of the childhood. In closing, the ambassador reminded that it will be important to formulate these policy suggestions in a way that is culture-sensitive, so that it can be accepted by all member states. At the same time, he mentioned that a paradigm shift is necessary for social change: “Putting children first and allocating more resources from public budgets in children should not be seen as expenditure, but rather as an INVESTMENT”.