

15.02.2024

Written input on behalf of 62ⁱ members of the Group of Friends of Children and the SDGs on the Zero Draft of the Pact for the Future

The Group of Friends of Children and the SDGs welcomes the Zero Draft of the Pact for the Future. We commend the co-facilitators for their commitment to articulate a vision of an international system that can address the challenges of today and tomorrow.

We welcome the reaffirmation of the importance of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in Chapter 4, as well as the references to children's rights and distinct needs. It is imperative that we do not lose these references throughout our negotiations in the coming months as the final text of the Pact must be inclusive of all children. They are the future custodians of the planet and, will be greatly impacted by any and all decisions we make today.

Further, as this year marks the 35th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, let us commemorate this occasion by reaffirming our commitment to children in the Pact. Children's rights are human rights, and they must be included as we envision the future that they will inherit.

To this end, we submit the following general comments for consideration on the Zero Draft for the Pact for the Future:

Chapter 1 - Sustainable Development and Financing for Development

- It should be recognized that children stand to lose the most if we do not achieve the 2030 Agenda and that timely and fully resourced investments in children and children's rights are critical to setting present and future generations on a trajectory for success.

Chapter 2 - International Peace and Security

- A recognition should be made that building sustainable, inclusive, equitable and resilient societies must begin with investing in all children, safeguarding their rights and ensuring that they grow up in a safe and healthy environment, free from all forms of violence, abuse and exploitation.

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- The pact should also recognize that children are disproportionately affected by conflict and that without ensuring their protection and the inclusion of their needs in conflict prevention and resolution, peacebuilding, peace processes, post-conflict processes and humanitarian action, peace cannot be achieved and sustained. The pact should thus reaffirm our collective commitments under the children and armed conflict agenda.

Chapter 4 - Youth and Future Generations

- Young persons and children should be recognized as custodians of the future. There remains a continued need to highlight and distinguish “children” as a group of distinct rights holders under international law. It should be noted that at present there exists no universally agreed international definition of the youth age group. That is, depending on the national context the age group may range from 13 years to 30+ years, whereas universally ‘children’ include all persons under the age of 18.

- A commitment must also be made to protecting, enhancing, and expanding budgets for social sectors that serve children and recognize that, even in contexts of economic distress, child-responsive budgets should be the last to be cut.

-It should be stated that the reform of the multilateral system must focus on eliminating discrimination, as well as promoting inclusivity and participation of children. To that end, the expansion and strengthening of safe and meaningful child participation in UN processes, as appropriate, should be prioritized, particularly on issues that affect the lives of children.

Chapter 5 - Transforming Global Governance

- It should be noted that transforming global governance should also include eliminating discrimination in a manner that promotes the safe, inclusive, and meaningful participation of children in all UN decision-making processes, especially on issues that affect the lives of children.

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ⁱ Andorra, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Austria, Belgium, Benin, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Croatia, Denmark, Djibouti, Ecuador, Estonia, Ethiopia, European Union (observer), Finland, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, the Republic of Korea, Lesotho, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Malta, Morocco, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Nigeria, Norway, Panama, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Romania, Senegal, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Türkiye, Uganda, Ukraine, the United Arab Emirates, the United States of America, Uruguay