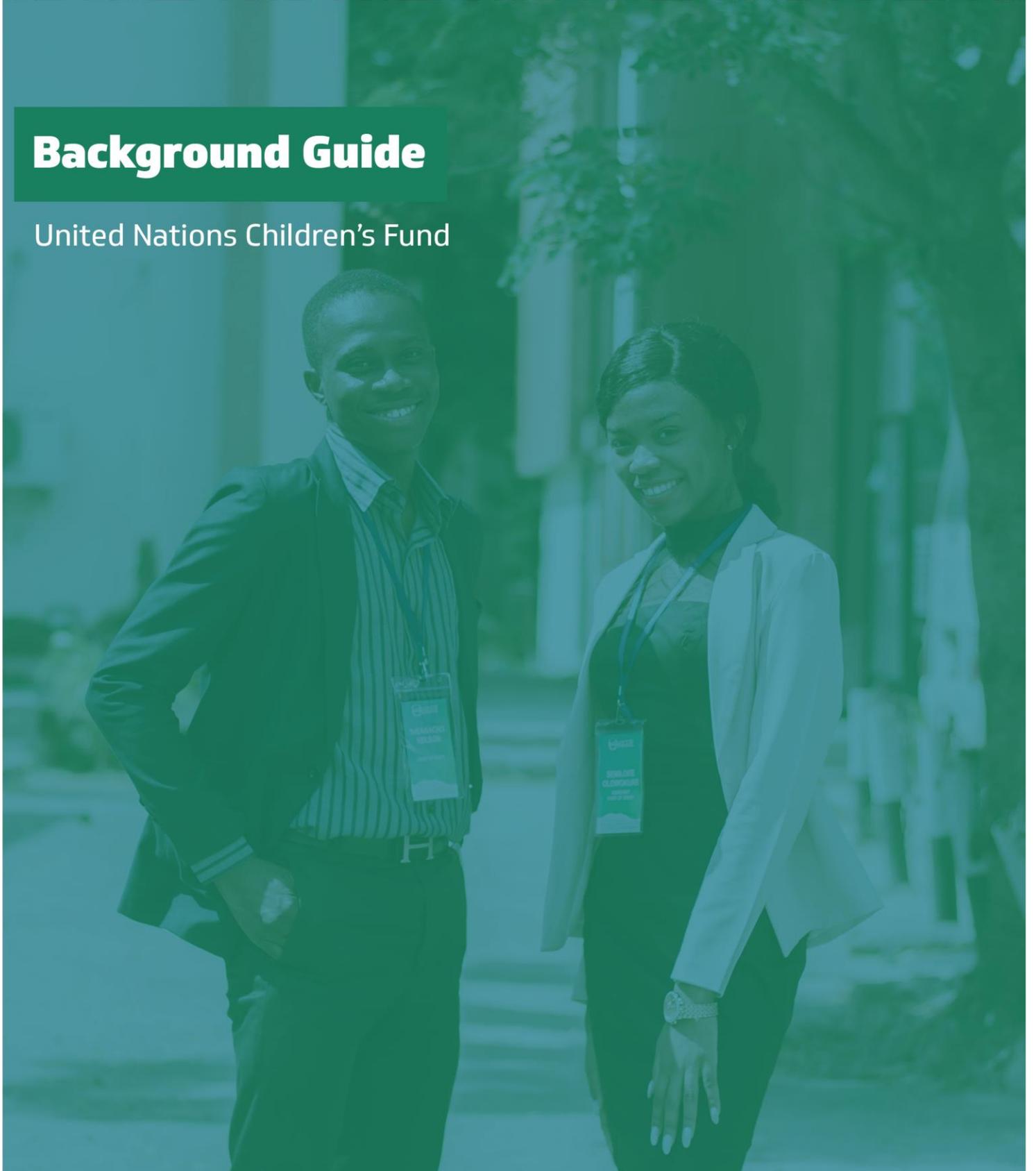


# Background Guide

United Nations Children's Fund



Property of Lagos Model United Nations

Background Guide: United Nations Children's Fund.

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## Letter from the USG

Dear Delegates,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to this year's Lagos Model United Nations (LMUN) conference. This year symbolizes many things for us at LMUN but most importantly, it is our fifth year and our fifth session. LMUN is a platform for youths to innovate, debate and take action to create the world that they want, while developing skills in leadership, public speaking, diplomacy, critical thinking, research and teamwork. This has been our mission for the last four years and we hope to achieve this and more this year.

The world has only ten years to achieve its goals on global issues including children's rights. Yet, there is still a lot to be done. The task ahead is not an easy one, so everyone must play their part. It is my hope that delegates embrace this duty and strive to create solutions to the issues before their committees. Furthermore, it is my hope that this desire to make impact transcends beyond this conference.

The staff for the **United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)** are: **Adedokun Titilope Ayo** (Under-Secretary-General); **Achimugu Martin** (Chair); **Anele Mary-Esther** (Vice Chair); **Ayinde Joseph Oluwasegun** (Researcher); and **Falaiye Atinuke Abimbola** (Researcher).

**Titilope** was a delegate at LMUN 2017 & 2018, where she won Position Paper and Distinguished Delegate awards. She was also a Vice Chair at LMUN 2019. She served as a delegate at National Model United Nations New York 2019, where she won the Position Paper award and co-won the Outstanding Delegation award. In 2020, she served as a Chair at Geneva International Model United Nations. **Martin** is a 500 level law student at the University of Lagos. He is passionate about the protection of human rights and a passion for the attainment of sustainable development. He participated as a delegate at both LMUN and Ghana International MUN in 2018, as a Researcher for UNICEF at LMUN 2019 and Vice Chair for the Security Council at Ghana International MUN in 2020. **Mary-Esther** is a 300 level law student at the University of Lagos and a published writer on various platforms. She has passion for gender equality, human rights and international diplomacy. She served as the Researcher for the General Assembly at LMUN 2019 and aims to participate more in MUNS. **Joseph** is a 400 level law student at the University of Lagos. He is very passionate about MUNS, and was a delegate at LMUN 2017. He was also a delegate at LMUN 2018 where he won the Honorable Mention award. **Atinuke** is a 300 level law student at the University of Lagos who is passionate about human rights and particularly, women's rights. She attended the Nigerian International Model United Nations Conference in 2018 and 2019, serving as the President of the General Assembly in 2020.

UNICEF is concerned with advocating for the rights of children worldwide. To this end, UNICEF works with governments, civil societies, non-governmental organizations and the private sector.

The topics to be discussed by the committee are:

- I. Promoting the Social Inclusion of Children
- II. Addressing Gender Stereotypes in the Development of Children

The Background Guide is one of the first steps to research at LMUN. However, delegates must note that it is not to serve as a replacement for their individual research. Therefore, delegates are encouraged to conduct research outside of the Background Guides. Delegates are also advised to make use of the Further Research, Annotated Bibliography and Bibliography parts of the Background Guide to aid their research. In addition to this, delegates are encouraged to use the Delegate Prep Guide and the Rules of Procedure for their preparation towards the Conference. These documents are available on the LMUN website – [www.lmun.ng](http://www.lmun.ng).

In order to further prepare for the conference, each delegate or delegation is to submit a Position Paper on the date communicated after registration and assignment of country and committee, in accordance with the position paper guide.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding your preparation for the committee or the Conference itself, please contact the USG at - [usgpeacesecurityhr@lmun.ng](mailto:usgpeacesecurityhr@lmun.ng) or the committee at - [unicef@lmun.ng](mailto:unicef@lmun.ng).

We look forward to seeing you at the LMUN 2020 Conference!

**Adedokun Titilope Ayo**

USG Peace, Security and Human Rights, LMUN 2020

## Abbreviations

<b>AU</b>	African Union
<b>CEDAW</b>	Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
<b>CRC</b>	Convention on the Rights of the Child
<b>CSO</b>	Civil Society Organizations
<b>ECOSOC</b>	United Nations Economic and Social Council
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>GA</b>	General Assembly
<b>GAMAG</b>	Global Alliance on Media and Gender
<b>GAP</b>	Gender Action Plan
<b>IGOs</b>	Intergovernmental Organizations
<b>IRC</b>	Innocenti Research Centre
<b>MDGs</b>	Millennium Development Goals
<b>NGOs</b>	Non-Governmental Organizations
<b>OHCHR</b>	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
<b>OSCE</b>	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
<b>PF4C</b>	Public Finance For Children
<b>SAPs</b>	Structural Adjustment Programs
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNCED</b>	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
<b>UNESCO</b>	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organization

## Committee Overview

*“Children’s education, cognitive capital, health, protection and safety matter to all of us. We must work together to give a new generation the skills they need to build better futures for themselves — and their societies.” – Henrietta Fore<sup>1</sup>*

### Introduction

The United Nations (UN) International Children Emergency Fund (UNICEF) is a council dedicated to providing long-term humanitarian and developmental assistance to children and mothers in developing countries.<sup>2</sup> The main purpose of UNICEF is to tackle problems such as child labour and any other issues with relations to children rights.<sup>3</sup>

On December 10, 1946, *General Assembly Resolution 57(1)* established the UNICEF as a relief organisation to provide emergency food and healthcare to young children in countries devastated by World War II. Ludwik Rajcman, a polish bacteriologist, widely regarded as the founder of UNICEF, was its first chairman between 1946 and 1950.<sup>4</sup> In 1953, under *Resolution 802 (VIII)*, the General Assembly elected to expand UNICEF’s mandate indefinitely and according charged the Organisation’s full name to the United Nations Children’s Fund.<sup>5</sup>

The *Declaration of the Rights of the Child*, adopted in 1959, guarantees inalienable human rights for all children.<sup>6</sup> The Declaration aims to ensure their protection against child marriage and conflict, defend their right to education at all stages of life, healthcare from pre-natal through post-partum, shelter, and nutrition. UNICEF has continued to focus on meeting substantive goals in the area of children’s education, healthcare, and poverty, and remains active as the issues persist. In 1979, the first *International Year of the Child* was declared in General Assembly Resolution 31/169, wherein individuals and organizations around the world reaffirmed their commitment to children’s rights. UNICEF’s focus then shifted towards holistically addressing the numerous issues facing children in the global community.<sup>7</sup>

In the 1980s, with the ground-breaking 1987 UNICEF study, *Adjustment with a Human Face*, UNICEF began to employ a human rights-based approach to development and policy, shifting away from approaches to development that prioritized Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs), which had a negative marginalizing impact on health and education of children in the Global South. In 1990, the results of the *Adjustment with a Human Face* study led to the adoption of the *Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)*,<sup>8</sup> a document

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<sup>1</sup> Henrietta H. Fore, UNICEF Executive Director Executive Board Statement, New York, June 11, 2019.

<sup>2</sup> General Assembly, *Establishment of an International Children’s Emergency Fund (GA/RES/57(1))*, 1946.

<sup>3</sup> General Assembly, *Declaration of the Rights of the Child (A/RES/1386 (XIV))*, 1959.

<sup>4</sup> General Assembly, *Establishment of an International Children’s Emergency Fund (GA/RES/57(1))*, 1946.

<sup>5</sup> General Assembly, *United Nations Children’s Fund (GA/RES/802(VIII))*, 1953.

<sup>6</sup> General Assembly, *Declaration of the Rights of the Child (A/RES/1386 (XIV))*, 1959.

<sup>7</sup> General Assembly, *International Year of the Child (GA/RES/31/169)*, 1979.

<sup>8</sup> General Assembly, *Convention on the Rights of the Child (A/RES/44/25)*, 1989.

that took UNICEF over ten years to create with the assistance of governments, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), human rights advocates, lawyers, health specialists, social workers, educators, child development experts, and religious leaders, and was to become the “most widely- and rapidly-accepted human rights treaty in history”.<sup>9</sup> Following the adoption of the CRC, UNICEF hosted an unprecedented World Summit for Children in 1990, which boasted the largest gathering of world leaders in history and helped incite a broadening of the debate on children in conflict in the Security Council in the 1990s.<sup>10</sup> In the 2000s, UNICEF moved towards increasingly accessible global operations, creating the *Say Yes for Children* campaign, and in 2000 committed itself to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) through the five main strategic areas of: young child survival and development; basic education and gender equality; HIV/AIDS and children; child protection; policy analysis, advocacy, and partnership for children’s rights.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as part of the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* calls for accelerated efforts to close the gender equality gap in light of persistent emerging threats such as climate change, appalling levels of poverty, gender-based violence and trafficking in persons.

## **Governance and Structure**

UNICEF has both an internal and external governance structure. In the external structure, UNICEF reports to the General Assembly through the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).<sup>12</sup> As an integral Specialized Agency of the UN, its work is reviewed every year by ECOSOC.<sup>13</sup> All financial reports and accounts as well as the report of the Board of Auditors are submitted to the General Assembly and are subsequently reviewed by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and by the Fifth Committee.<sup>14</sup>

The internal governance comprises of the Executive Board, which is the official governing body of UNICEF.<sup>15</sup> The Executive Board constitutes the highest level of UNICEF administrative management, determines all policy and budgetary decisions based on reports from the National Committees, and meets three times annually. Comprised of 36 Member States elected to three-year terms by the ECOSOC, the Executive Board allocates eight seats to Africa, seven seats to Asia, four seats to Eastern Europe, five seats to Latin America and the Caribbean, and 12 seats to Western Europe and Others. The Executive Board also observes all UN missions related to children and youth, and oversees all documents adopted or produced by the organization, including several annual reports.

In 2018, the Executive Board adopted the *Every Child Alive* report, which highlights the challenges that many mothers and their babies face when enduring childbirth and care for

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<sup>9</sup> General Assembly, *Convention on the Rights of the Child (A/RES/44/25)*, 1989.

<sup>10</sup> UNICEF, *World Summit for Children*, 1990.

<sup>11</sup> UNICEF, *UNICEF: 70 years for every child*, 2018.

<sup>12</sup> UNESCO, *Guide to Archives of International Organizations: UNICEF*, 2002.

<sup>13</sup> UNICEF, *The Structure of UNICEF*, 2017.

<sup>14</sup> UNESCO, *Guide to Archives of International Organizations: UNICEF*, 2002.

<sup>15</sup> UNICEF, *UNICEF Executive Board*, 2018.

their new-borns.<sup>16</sup> Harsh realities such as premature death, disability, and severe illness all stem from the lack of proper tools and essential items to deliver babies in safe and sterile environments. The report emphasizes the importance of looking past medical complications being the only source of childhood mortality, and also examine the marginalization of families, who face harsh living conditions due to injustices.<sup>17</sup> The report promotes “the way forward,” assessing how people, places, products, and power all play a role in achieving universal health coverage for new-born babies, while also holding health care providers accountable for the services they are to perform on these same new-borns. Strong emphasis is placed on a facility’s cleanliness, functionality, people and their proper training, life-saving equipment, and an emphasis on empowering women and girls to protect themselves and make informed decisions about their healthcare.<sup>18</sup> The Executive Board reports on committee progress and makes recommendations regarding the status of children worldwide to both ECOSOC and the General Assembly.<sup>19</sup>

Today, UNICEF has a strong presence in 192 countries.<sup>20</sup> UNICEF runs 36 National Committees focused on fundraising, establishing best practices and sharing methods for public-private partnerships, and improving children’s rights. UNICEF is funded entirely by voluntary contributions from IGOs, NGOs, corporations, foundations, and private individuals.<sup>21</sup> UNICEF maintains a country office in most Member States, promoting cooperation through a five-year program of evaluation.<sup>22</sup> UNICEF evaluates the needs of children within each Member State, and if these needs can be met by grassroots programs utilizing local workers and volunteers within those same states.<sup>23</sup> Outside of the administrative structure, UNICEF also coordinates a Supply Division headquartered in Copenhagen, Denmark.<sup>24</sup> This facility stores supplies for medical emergencies, natural disasters, or post-conflict. The Innocenti Research Centre (IRC) in Florence, Italy, branch of UNICEF liaises with intergovernmental policy creators and leaders.<sup>25</sup> The Innocenti Research Centre also examines the efficacy of UNICEF policies and programs, and promotes the CRC by monitoring changing situations, highlighting chronic problems, finding ways to support areas lacking capacity, and influencing intergovernmental policies that affect children the IRC presents and reports to the Executive Board.<sup>26</sup>

## **Mandate, Functions and Powers**

Mandated by the *General Assembly Resolutions 417 (V)* (1953) and *802 (VIII)* (1950), UNICEF advocates for the protection of children’s rights, helps meet their basic needs, and

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<sup>16</sup> UNICEF, *Every Child ALIVE*, 2018.

<sup>17</sup> UNICEF, *Every Child ALIVE*, 2018, p. 2.

<sup>18</sup> UNICEF, *FAQ*, 2017; UNICEF, *Information by country and programme*, 2018.

<sup>19</sup> UNICEF, *UNICEF Executive Board*, 2018.

<sup>20</sup> UNICEF, *FAQ*, 2017; UNICEF, *Information by country and programme*, 2018.

<sup>21</sup> UNICEF, *The Structure of UNICEF*, 2017; UNICEF, *National Committees*.

<sup>22</sup> UNICEF, *Evaluation Function at UNICEF*.

<sup>23</sup> UNICEF, *The Structure of UNICEF*, 2017.

<sup>24</sup> UNICEF, *The Structure of UNICEF*, 2017; UNICEF, *About Supply*, 2018.

<sup>25</sup> UNICEF, *The Structure of UNICEF*, 2017.

<sup>26</sup> UNICEF, *The Structure of UNICEF*, 2017; UNICEF, *UNICEF Executive Board*, 2016.

expand their opportunities to reach their full potential.<sup>27</sup> Collectively, UNICEF’s mandate is based on the concept that “nurturing and caring for children is the cornerstone of human progress.”<sup>28</sup> The CRC is the guiding force for this mandate. UNICEF reports to the General Assembly and ECOSOC, both of which undertake annual reviews of UNICEF’s work.

In fulfilling its mandate, UNICEF coordinates with UN partners like UN Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in capacity building initiatives.<sup>29</sup> UNICEF also works with World Health Organization (WHO) and UN Development Programme (UNDP), which have achieved ground-breaking results in curing of diseases such as Polio and Yaws and also through the administration of vaccines for six commonly known childhood killer diseases, the Task Force on Children and Armed Conflict, the Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development and ECOSOC.<sup>30</sup> UNICEF partners with NGOs through the National Committees and works collaboratively with Intergovernmental Organizations (IGOs) and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to protect children’s rights.<sup>31</sup> The SDGs continue to be a focal point for UNICEF, especially Goals 1 (no poverty), 2 (zero hunger), 3 (good health and well-being), 5 (gender equality), 10 (reduced inequalities), 11 (sustainable cities and communities) and 13 (climate action).<sup>32</sup>

### **Recent Sessions and Current Priorities**

UNICEF is mandated to advocate for the protection of the rights of children, help meet their needs and expand their opportunities to help them reach their full potential.<sup>33</sup> UNICEF’s support to monitoring SDGs related to children is based on its mandate in the CRC to work with Member States in monitoring the progressive realization of child rights<sup>34</sup> and UNICEF works to support the realization of the rights of every child, especially the most disadvantaged.<sup>35</sup> UNICEF’s current strategic plan is anchored in the CRC and recognizes the need to work across sectors with a focus on cross-cutting issues of equity, gender and sustainability.<sup>36</sup> The Strategic Plan will increase UNICEF’s ability to deliver results for children in four key ways, by “aligning the organization’s resources around common goals and strategies, supporting UNICEF’s ability to make strategic choices, creating more effective communication about UNICEF’s work for every child to win more support for the cause of children and strengthening the organization’s accountability framework.”<sup>37</sup> The overarching goal of the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2018–2021 is to drive results for the most

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<sup>27</sup> General Assembly, *Establishment of an International Children’s Emergency Fund (A/RES/57 (I))*, 1946, p.3

<sup>28</sup> UNESCO, *Guide to the Archives of Intergovernmental Organizations: UNICEF*, 1999; UNICEF, *Mission Statement*, 2003; UNICEF, *About UNICEF*.

<sup>29</sup> UN DESA, *United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development*, 2010; UN Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, *Strategic Framework 2011-2013*, 2011, p. 5.

<sup>30</sup> UNICEF, *Sixty Years for Children*, 2006, p.6.

<sup>31</sup> UNICEF, *Civil Society Partnerships*.

<sup>32</sup> General Assembly, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015.

<sup>33</sup> UNICEF, *Mission statement*.

<sup>34</sup> UNICEF, *BRIEFING NOTE SERIES ON SDG global indicators related to children*.

<sup>35</sup> UNICEF, *Strategic Plan 2018-2021*, 2018.

<sup>36</sup> UNICEF, *Strategic Plan 2018-2021*, Executive Summary.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

disadvantaged children and young people through 5 goal areas which are that every child survives and thrives, that every child learns, that every child is protected from violence and exploitation, that every child lives in a safe and clean environment and that every child has an equitable chance at life.<sup>38</sup>

UNICEF convened with the UNDP, the UN Population Fund (UNFPA), UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), in June 2019 at the annual Joint Meeting of the Executive Boards which presented progress reports on the first year of implementation of the common chapter of the Strategic Plans, 2018-2021 of UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and UN-Women and the commitment of the four agencies to work collaboratively in compliance with their respective mandates and in partnership with other members of the UN family to contribute to implementing the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, based on the principles of universality, equality and leaving no one behind.<sup>39</sup> A significant number of joint efforts have been developed in 2018 in each of the six key common chapter areas of collaboration, involving two or more of these agencies and often involving additional development partners for stronger results through a selection of many initiatives such as eradicating poverty, addressing climate change, improving adolescent and maternal health, achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls and so on.<sup>40</sup>

By making use of the Global Indicator Framework for the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, adopted by the General Assembly as *Resolution 71/313*(2017),<sup>41</sup> UNICEF has established statistical guidelines and methods to monitor progress toward the goals<sup>42</sup> outlined under the strategic plan 2018-2021.<sup>43</sup>

## **Conclusion**

UNICEF continues to ensure that the rights of children worldwide remain a priority within the global sphere, providing a body to ensure actions are undertaken to ensure the realization of child rights.<sup>44</sup> UNICEF also continues to tackle burning issues as outlined by the SDGs and continues to ensure that children remain a priority on the global agenda,<sup>45</sup> partnering with government and private individuals to achieve the actualization of child rights.

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<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> UNICEF, *2019 Joint Meeting of the Executive Boards of UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, UN-Women, 2019.*

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>41</sup> General Assembly, *Work of the Statistical Commission pertaining to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*(A/RES/71/313), 2017.

<sup>42</sup> UNICEF, *Strategic Plan 2018=2021, Executive Summary.*

<sup>43</sup> UNICEF, *About UNICEF.*

<sup>44</sup> UNICEF, *About UNICEF.*

<sup>45</sup> UNICEF, *Annual Report 2018, 2018, p. 55.*

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*This report examines stillbirth and new-born mortality rates, emphasizing the rate of death in children less than one month old. It examines the current challenges and obstacles to providing quality healthcare to mothers and expectant mothers and explores the impact of health care access, nutrition and clean water on stillborn and infant mortality rates. Delegates can use this source to become familiar with infant mortality and can use this research to begin their investigation into UNICEF's work on infant mortality*

United Nations Children's Fund, *UNICEF Executive Board* (2018) [Website]. Retrieved 13 September 2019 from: <http://www.unicef.org/about/execboard/>

*This page provides up-to-date information from the UNICEF Executive Board. It offers direct links to current sessions and information about the bureau, members, board documents, and other relevant information. Delegates will find this page a useful resource for understanding how the Executive Board works with other UN bodies, budget requirements, and the implementation of the UNICEF mandate for assessing the current situation as well as information regarding the ratification process for the CRC*

Working together to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2019). Retrieved 27 September 2019 from: [https://www.unicef.org/about/execboard/files/2019-Joint\\_annex-common\\_chapter-2019.05.06.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/about/execboard/files/2019-Joint_annex-common_chapter-2019.05.06.pdf) (accessed 27 September 2019)

*This joint annex presents progress on the implementation of the common chapter of the Strategic Plans, 2018-2021, of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women)*

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## I. Promoting the Social Inclusion of Children

*“Let us acknowledge and celebrate what the youth can do to build a safer, more just world. Let us strengthen our efforts to include young people in policies, programs and decision-making processes that benefit their futures and ours.”* – **Ban Ki-Moon, former Secretary-General of the United Nations**<sup>46</sup>

### Introduction

According to UNICEF, “around the world, nearly one in three children – roughly 663 million – live in poverty. Of these, some 385 million experience extreme poverty, struggling to survive on less than \$1.90 a day.<sup>47</sup> Children – especially young children – are more likely to live in poverty than adults. They are also more vulnerable to its effects.”<sup>48</sup> In 2017, according to Eurostat, an estimated 24.9% of children in countries that belong to the European Union were at risk of poverty or social exclusion compared with 23.0% of adults (18-64 years) and 18.2 % of the elderly (65 or over).<sup>49</sup> Discrimination creates and compounds inequity – funnelling care, resources and services away from the children with the greatest need and creating emotional and psychological barriers to children’s development and well-being.<sup>50</sup>

The UNICEF plan is anchored in the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (CRC), emphasized by the *General Assembly Resolution 70/137*(2015), and maps a way towards the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the actualization of a future where children are given a fair chance at life.<sup>51</sup> UNICEF continues to strengthen programmatic interventions to address child poverty and discrimination, promote participation and civic engagement of adolescents, and work towards changing gender norms.<sup>52</sup> Together with state governments, United Nations (UN) partners, the private sector, civil society and with the full participation of children, UNICEF remains fully involved in its commitment to the realization children’s rights globally and to achieve the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (2015), a world where no child is left behind. UNICEF works to generate evidence as regards the social and individual benefits of the social inclusion of children, as well as on increasing the participation of the members of the most disadvantaged communities in policy dialogue and creation, to enable them to advocate directly for the importance of focusing on social inclusion.<sup>53</sup>

Social exclusion is a barrier in the way of guaranteeing the well-being of children. Children, as with adults, have the right to acceptable standards of living, social services and a life

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<sup>46</sup> Ban Ki Moon, Secretary General’s message on International Youth Day, New York, 12 August 2010.

<sup>47</sup> UNICEF, *Social Policy*.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>49</sup> Eurostat: *Children at risk of poverty or social exclusion*.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>51</sup> UNICEF, *Convention on the Rights of the Child, 2015*.

<sup>52</sup> UNICEF, *Global Annual Results Report 2018*.

<sup>53</sup> UNICEF, *Social Inclusion of Children: The case for support*.

free from bias and stigma.<sup>54</sup> Social exclusion describes a state in which children are unable to participate fully in economic, social, political and cultural life.<sup>55</sup> Social exclusion can describe a condition or an outcome in which excluded children are unable to participate fully in their society because of their social identity as children which may also be peculiar to their gender, age, ethnicity, caste, religion or other manifestation of cultural identity or social location (for example, children who live in remote areas, or regions that are stigmatised or suffering from war and conflicts or migrant children).<sup>56</sup> UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) defined social inclusion to mean the process by which efforts are made to ensure equal opportunities – that every child, regardless of their background, can achieve their full potential in life. Such efforts include policies and actions that promote equal access to (public) services as well as activities to enable children’s participation in the decision-making processes that affect their lives.<sup>57</sup>

### **International and Regional Framework**

The basic right of every human being is well established under the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UDHR).<sup>58</sup> *Article 7 of the UDHR* provides that all are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. *Article 25 of the UDHR*, and *Article 11 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* (ICESCR),<sup>59</sup> provide that all people have the right to an adequate standard of living and security. *Article 21(2) and Article 22 of the UDHR* further provides that everyone has the right of equal access to public service in his country and that everyone, as a member of society, has “the right to social security and is entitled to realization, through national effort and international co-operation and in accordance with the organization and resources of each State, of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality”.<sup>60</sup> All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, should enjoy this same social protection.

The *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (CRC), adopted by the General Assembly and coming into force in 1990, in its *Article 2* stipulates that state parties shall respect and ensure the rights set forth in the present Convention to each “child within their jurisdiction without discrimination of any kind, irrespective of the child’s or his or her parent’s or legal guardian’s race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status.”<sup>61</sup> *Article 3(1)* states that in all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best

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<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>55</sup> UN, *Identifying social inclusion and exclusion*, 2013.

<sup>56</sup> UNESCO, *An indicative review of UNESCO’s work on social inclusion*.

<sup>57</sup> An indicative review of UNESCO’s work on social inclusion: UNESCO-ODI study of promising practices in the field of social inclusion, 2007.

<sup>58</sup> General Assembly, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (A/RES/217 A(III)).

<sup>59</sup> *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* (A/RES/2200A (XXI)), 1966.

<sup>60</sup> General Assembly, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (A/RES/217 A(III)).

<sup>61</sup> General Assembly, *Convention on the Rights of the Child*(A/RES/44/25), 1989.

interests of the child shall be a primary consideration. *Article 6(2)* states that states parties shall ensure to the maximum extent possible the survival and development of the child.

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, adopted by the General Assembly in 2007 also provides a platform for the equal enjoyment of rights for children with disabilities. *Article 7 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)*<sup>62</sup> provides that

“State parties shall take all necessary measures to ensure the full enjoyment by children with disabilities of all human rights and fundamental freedoms on an equal basis with other children. In all actions concerning children with disabilities, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration.”

Furthermore, resolutions have been adopted by the international community as regards the full enjoyment of rights and social inclusion of children. The General Assembly adopted *Resolution A/RES/S-27/2 (2002)* on a World Fit for Children,<sup>63</sup> which stresses the commitment of member nations to create a world fit for children, in which sustainable human development, that takes into account the best interests of children, is founded on important cornerstone principles such as that of peace and social justice democracy, non-discrimination, equality and the universality, indivisibility, and interrelatedness of all human rights.

In 2017, the General Assembly also adopted *Resolution A/RES/72/142* on promoting social integration through social inclusion,<sup>64</sup> which provides that Member States, which bear the main responsibility for social integration and social inclusion, should prioritize the creation of a “society for all” based on respect for all human rights and the principles of equality among individuals, non-discrimination, access to basic social services and promotion of the active participation of every member of society, in particular, those in vulnerable or marginalized groups or situations and social integration policies should seek to reduce inequalities and that equity and social inclusion are crucial for the achievement of sustainable development.<sup>65</sup>

There are also several general comments relating to the social inclusion of children. One of such is the UN Committee on the Rights of a Child’s *General Comment No. 1* on the aims of education,<sup>66</sup> which focuses on article 29 of the Convention and provides in paragraphs 10 and 11<sup>67</sup> that discrimination on the basis of any of the grounds listed in article 2 of the Convention, whether overt or hidden, “offends the human dignity of the child and is capable of undermining or even destroying the capacity of the child to benefit from educational opportunities. Discrimination against female children, as well as children with

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<sup>62</sup> General Assembly, *The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*(A/RES/61/106).

<sup>63</sup> General Assembly, *A World Fit for Children (A/RES/S-27/2.)*.

<sup>64</sup> General Assembly, *Promoting Social Integration through Social Inclusion (A/RES/72/142)*.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>66</sup> UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC), *General comment No. 1 (2001)*.

<sup>67</sup> Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education Inclusive Education and International Human Rights Instruments.

disabilities is also pervasive in many formal educational systems and a great many informal educational settings, including in the home.”

In addition to that, the UN Committee on the Rights of a Child’s *General Comment No. 6* on the treatment of unaccompanied and separated children outside their country of origin<sup>68</sup> clarifies that these children have the same right to education as all children and describes the obligation on states in paragraphs 41 and 42, meaning that states should ensure that access to education is maintained during all phases of the displacement cycle. Every unaccompanied and separated child, irrespective of status, should be given full access to education in the country that they find themselves. This access should be granted equally and without discrimination and particularly, separated and unaccompanied girls shall have equal access to formal and informal education, which includes vocational training at all levels. Access to quality education should also be ensured for children with special needs, particularly children with disabilities.<sup>69</sup>

There are also regional frameworks in place concerning the inclusion of children. For example, the European Union (EU) *Agenda for the Rights of the Child* contains general principles that should ensure that EU action is exemplary in ensuring the respect of the provisions of the *CRC*, with regards to the rights of children.<sup>70</sup> Furthermore, it focuses on concrete actions in areas where the EU is capable of providing added value, such as child-friendly justice, protection of vulnerable children and combating violence against children both regionally and externally.<sup>71</sup>

In Africa, Member States of the African Union (AU) recognized social protection as a vital part of their social development and inclusive growth strategies. The *Ouagadougou Declaration and Plan of Action on Employment and Poverty Alleviation in Africa (2004)*<sup>72</sup> acknowledged the importance of increased coverage and enhanced effectiveness of social protection as a response to the widespread poverty.<sup>73</sup> Africa is set on a course towards development and the vision that inspires this course is captured in the AU’s *Agenda 2063*.<sup>74</sup> Young people – and children, in particular – are vital in achieving this cause, as they have been stated to be the drivers of Africa’s renaissance. This Agenda is informed by and builds upon numerous existing legal and policy frameworks such as the *Africa Fit for Children Declaration and Plan of Action*,<sup>75</sup> UNICEF’s the State of the World’s Children<sup>76</sup> and others. The Agenda sets out aspirations, to be achieved by 2040 such as providing an effective continental framework for advancing children’s rights, creating an effective child-friendly

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<sup>68</sup> UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC), *General comment No. 6 (2005)*.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>70</sup> *European Union Agenda on the Rights of the Child*, Brussels, 15 February 2011.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>72</sup> Assembly of the African Union, *Third Extraordinary Session on Employment and Poverty Alleviation*; 2004, Ext/Assembly/AU/3 (III).

<sup>73</sup> “Children and Social Protection Systems: Building the African Agenda” prepared jointly by the African Union Commission and UNICEF.

<sup>74</sup> African Union, “Africa’s Agenda for Children 2040 Fostering an Africa Fit for Children”.

<sup>75</sup> UNICEF, *Pan-African Child Rights Forum (PACRIF)*.

<sup>76</sup> UNICEF, “The State of the World’s Children”.

national legislative, policy and institutional framework is in place in all Member States and ensuring that the views of the children matter.<sup>77</sup>

## **Role of the International System**

Through the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), States reached an agreement for the first time to end extreme child poverty. The SDGs call for multidimensional child poverty to be halved by 2030, “building a world in which all children have what they need to survive, thrive and fulfil their potential.”<sup>78</sup> To honour this commitment, UNICEF mobilizes actors at all levels to help countries measure and address child poverty. With the World Bank, UNICEF produces global statistics on extreme child poverty that guides policymakers. UNICEF also works with governments and partners on integrated policies and programmes, backed by the resources needed to put them into practice.<sup>79</sup> This has resulted in the expansion of child-sensitive social protection programmes, including universal child benefits, which positively impact children’s health and education.<sup>80</sup>

UNICEF’s Global Social Protection Programme Framework states the role that child-sensitive social protection systems play in addressing these challenges. It highlights UNICEF’s approach to social protection, evidence of its impact, and explanations on what constitutes a child-sensitive social protection system.<sup>81</sup> The framework also lays out 10 action areas on social protection, through which UNICEF, in conjunction with its government and non-government partners, supports countries to achieve social protection for children. The framework also contains a comprehensive guidance document, featuring activities across each of UNICEF’s 10 action areas in social protection, a repository of tools and resources, UNICEF’s monitoring and evaluation framework, and annexes containing additional material.<sup>82</sup>

Since 2014, UNICEF has played an instrumental role in directing global attention to child poverty. The Global Coalition to End Child Poverty, chaired by UNICEF, has become a powerful initiative for raising awareness about child poverty and accelerating global efforts to tackle it. As part of the coalition, a comprehensive guide was produced to help countries reach the SDGs for child poverty.<sup>83</sup>

Furthermore, due to past engagements on this issue, UNICEF has accumulated vast experience in social inclusion and policy programming, in both development and humanitarian contexts. UNICEF’s comparative advantage in this area of work is defined by several factors.<sup>84</sup> Firstly, UNICEF’s mandate to assist countries in meeting their obligations

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<sup>77</sup> African Union, “Africa’s Agenda for Children 2040 Fostering an Africa Fit for Children”.

<sup>78</sup> UNICEF, *Child Poverty*.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>82</sup> UNICEF, *Global Social Protection Programme Framework, 2014*.

<sup>83</sup> UNICEF, *Child Poverty*.

<sup>84</sup> UNICEF, *Social Inclusion of Children*.

under the CRC coupled with its extensive on-the-ground experience as both a technical partner and advisor for the best interests of children places it in the most suitable position to address the wide range of challenges and possible solutions to the social exclusion of children.<sup>85</sup> Secondly, UNICEF country offices have working relationships with a wide range of partners, from government ministries and planning departments to local authorities, religious leaders, youth and community organizations, parliamentarians, universities and think tanks.<sup>86</sup> Furthermore and because several of its partners expect to hear UNICEF's voice on issues such as child poverty and discrimination, this gives it a crucial and helpful starting point which allows UNICEF to convene others and act as a conversation starter.<sup>87</sup> UNICEF also works with different partners to generate data and research and as regards child poverty and exclusion, and translate its findings into practical policy and programme recommendations.

UNICEF's technical capacities and widespread global presence allow the organization both to make a strong advocacy impact and to provide practical support to put better policies into action.<sup>88</sup> It possesses a cohort of social policy staff who are able to help partners understand and address the policy and financing obstacles to better child outcomes. As the importance of social protection has grown around the world as an effective response to poverty and exclusion.<sup>89</sup>

Also, UNICEF has helped countries to make sure these programmes, coupled with its experience benefits children and worked collaboratively with other key actors, including the World Bank, ILO, EU, AU and others.<sup>90</sup> UNICEF's technical strength in the area of communication for development has made the organization an acknowledged leader in this field – and the organization to whom the world turns when looking to address harmful sociocultural practices.<sup>91</sup>

UNICEF's work on Public Finance for Children (PF4C) is responsible for contributing to more transparent, efficient, non-discriminatory and proportionate investments in children. The PF4C is geared towards influencing government decisions as regards budgeting on children and social services, reducing spending disparities among different population groups and applying value for money approaches to allow children benefit from the scarce resources available.<sup>92</sup> Success usually involves working with different actors, including budget departments of line ministries, the ministries of finance, planning and local government, parliament and civil society. In the public finance for children programme area, UNICEF works to contribute to results in 50 countries social spending on a per capita basis being

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<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>88</sup> UNICEF, *Advocacy Toolkit*.

<sup>89</sup> UNICEF, *Social Inclusion of Children*.

<sup>90</sup> UNICEF, *Civil Society Partnerships*.

<sup>91</sup> UNICEF, *2017 Report on Communication for Development (C4D)*.

<sup>92</sup> UNICEF, *Social Inclusion of Children*.

maintained or increasing and 79 countries which have policy and/or budgetary frameworks that explicitly address child poverty and disparities.<sup>93</sup> UNICEF partners with infinitely diverse civil society organizations, as well as Non-Governmental Organizations to offer a wide range of expertise and experience. UNICEF-CSO partnerships reach across a broad range of child-related issues, realizing rights for children is the common thread that unites them.<sup>94</sup> UNICEF, in conjunction with the Nelson Mandela Foundation and the Hamburg Society for the Promotion of Democracy and International Law, started the “Schools for Africa” initiative to ensure that every African child has the opportunity to access education that leads to a safer and happier future.<sup>95</sup> Its goal is to provide access to quality education for vulnerable children in Africa. The funds are being used to provide millions of children in over 21 African Countries with not only quality education but improved learning environments that are safe and easily accessible, rehabilitated classes, school furniture, teaching and learning materials along with safe drinking water and sanitation facilities for girls and boys.<sup>96</sup> In 2010, UNICEF, in partnership with Special Olympics Indonesia helped to promote the importance of inclusion for children, regardless of their circumstances by organizing a National Special Olympics Games every four years.<sup>97</sup>

## **Child Poverty and Social Inclusion**

Around the world, nearly one in three children – roughly 663 million – live in poverty.<sup>98</sup> Of these, some 385 million experience extreme poverty, struggling to survive on less than \$1.90 a day.<sup>99</sup> Children – especially young children – are more likely to live in poverty than adults. They are also more vulnerable to its effects.<sup>100</sup> Poverty robs children of the things they need most for survival and development, such as nutrition, education, health services, water and sanitation. As children grow, the consequences of poverty are compounded, taking an enormous toll on their well-being – and their ability to build a better future for themselves, their families and their communities.<sup>101</sup> According to the UNICEF, on average, poor children worldwide die before their fifth birthday at twice the rate of their better-off peers. Children are left behind for various reasons.<sup>102</sup> Critical social services are often underfunded, and sparsely available funding is more likely to favour services that will not reach impoverished children. Also, local governments who are responsible for providing health, education and other services, more often than not lack the capacity and analytic data used to determine where and how children are missing out.<sup>103</sup> Without these

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<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>94</sup> UNICEF, Civil Society and UNICEF.

<sup>95</sup> UNICEF, Schools for Africa.

<sup>96</sup> UNICEF, UNICEF, Mandela Foundation and Hamburg Society consolidate ‘Schools for Africa’.

<sup>97</sup> UNICEF, Special Olympics Indonesia and UNICEF promote social inclusion.

<sup>98</sup> UNICEF, *Social Policy*.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*

resources used to collect local data and consult in the communities where they serve; decision-makers may be unable to effectively develop plans and budgets that will reach children in need.

Social protection covers a wide range of policies and programmes which are vital in reducing the consequences of poverty and exclusion. Programmes such as cash transfers – including child grants, school meals, skills development and more – help to connect families with health care, nutritious food and quality education and to give children a fair chance in life, irrespective of the circumstances they are born into.

However, an estimated two out of every three children worldwide are not provided for by any form of social protection, which exposes them to economic hardship and social exclusion.<sup>104</sup> Several reasons exist to explain why children may be unable to access social protection.<sup>105</sup> For children in places where social protection is even accessible, services may be fragmented. Governments that fund programmes to expand education but neglect those that tackle malnutrition, for example, may find that girls and boys still struggle to learn. It is necessary for all social programmes geared towards children to show interdependency amongst each other. When social protection programmes do not reinforce one another – in education, health, nutrition and other areas – children miss out on key opportunities and remain vulnerable to the lifelong effects of poverty.<sup>106</sup>

The *CRC* provides that State parties shall ensure to the maximum extent possible the survival and development of the child and ensure that policy creation be done in the best interests and intention for the children.<sup>107</sup> By virtue of this, as well as the Goal 1 of the SDGs which provides for the elimination of poverty, UNICEF works to make child poverty visible at the country level and promotes programmatic responses to address it. This includes supporting countries in measuring monetary as well as multi-dimensional child poverty and to address it through policies, programmes and budgets.<sup>108</sup> UNICEF works in 104 countries to help strengthen social protection systems for greater impact on child well-being. Other emerging interventions include child care along with other early childhood development services, which have both immediate as well as the long-term impact on poverty, and innovative work with adolescents on building skills for adult life. Through the child poverty and social protection programme area,<sup>109</sup> UNICEF aims to ensure the number of children living in extreme poverty is reduced, to ensure that in 53 countries, social protection systems have a positive impact on children's well-being which had 35 countries in 2013, expanding the number of children covered by social protection systems and to track effectiveness of social protection.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> UNICEF, *Social Protection*.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>107</sup> General Assembly, *Convention on the Rights of the Child (A/RES/44/25)*, 1989.

<sup>108</sup> UNICEF, *Annual Results Report 2017 on Social Inclusion*.

<sup>109</sup> UNICEF, *Global Social Protection Programme Framework*.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*

## Inclusion of the Girl Child

Across the globe, girls are systematically excluded from participation in social, economic, and political life.<sup>111</sup> The absence of girls in these areas has implications not only for the young women themselves but also for society, exacerbating poverty and perpetuating disparities in health, education, and economic achievement.<sup>112</sup> Internationally, this marginalization makes it difficult or impossible for some countries to achieve the SDGs.<sup>113</sup>

Female social exclusion begins early in life and is especially notable at life transitions such as puberty and marriage. Exclusion is also evident in many of the obstacles, girls encounter during the transition to adulthood. According to Professor Barbara D. Miller, a cultural anthropologist with topical specialities in international development, gender and children, adolescent girls encounter barriers to entering and staying in school, finding work, making friends, learning life skills, accessing health services, and participating in civic life. In some parts of Asia, sex-selective abortion and female infanticide reduce girls' chances of even starting life.<sup>114</sup>

Girls' exclusion is most pronounced in extremely poor countries and those where women have been historically marginalized (such as in the Middle East). In several developing countries, the combination of gender, culture, and poverty explain female social exclusion. Recent estimates indicate that three-fourths of the 60 million girls aged 6-11 who are not in school belong to ethnic, religious, linguistic, racial, or other minorities.<sup>115</sup> Girls from these minorities suffer disproportionately in comparison to their male counterparts and other girls in the mainstream population. Girls tend to have limited mobility when compared to their male peers, therefore, services and opportunities that are not in a girl's immediate neighbourhood may be out of her reach completely. They may also lack the financial means to travel safely to access employment or educational opportunities.<sup>116</sup>

The social exclusion of girls creates a system of poverty at individual and household levels, denying them access to education, services, resources, decision making, and markets.<sup>117</sup> Expectations and actual experiences of exclusion and discrimination can cause feelings of powerlessness among those left out, which may, in turn, result in low self-esteem.

Because mobility is restricted for many girls, the primary requirement for social inclusion is a safe, supportive space where they can interact with peers and mentors. Parents expect that their daughters will be discriminated against in the labour market and as such, they may choose not to invest in their education. A young girl participating in a council project in Guatemala noted, at times "it's just because we're women that they won't pay for our

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<sup>111</sup> United Nations, *Achieving Gender Equality, Women Empowerment and Strengthening Development and Cooperation*, 2010.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>113</sup> Kelly Hallman and Eva Roca, *Reducing the social exclusion of girls* (2001).

<sup>114</sup> Barbara D. Miller, "Female-Selective Abortion in Asia: Patterns, Policies, and Debates" (2001) Vol. 103(4).

<sup>115</sup> Maureen Lewis and Marlaine Lockheed, *Inexcusable Absence* (2000).

<sup>116</sup> K.R. Murugan and K. Manimekalai, "Social Exclusion and Inclusion of Women in India" (2015) Vol. 2.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*

education, and they say that only boys should study because they're more intelligent. Some people tell my father,

"Don't support her studies because she won't do what you want, you'll only waste your money and she'll get married and won't finish school, you better not send her to school."<sup>118</sup>

The social exclusion of girls has consequences at the national level. Even when national economies grow, excluded groups are left behind. Social isolation and relative economic deprivation are associated with poorer mental health, especially among females, and can further reduce the ability of excluded individuals to be productive members of society.<sup>119</sup> As the gap between the poor and non-poor increases, poverty becomes deeper and more intractable.

Due to either tradition or discrimination, intentionally or not, the outcome is almost the same: girls' lives are more limited than those of boys in nearly every way. From an early age, girls that reside in the same communities and households as boys are more excluded from investments and opportunities. In several settings, puberty is when preconceived gender roles and expectations become differentiated and intensified.<sup>120</sup> Boys are given the majority of attention in the household, resources, and freedom. This is based on the perception that boys contribute more to the household economy and that they can be counted on for old-age security of parents.

Girls are perceived, however, to contribute less when it comes to their labour and income-generating capacity, and are regarded in some contexts, as a strain on household finances because of the costs associated with their marriage and the belief that they would move on to their husband's houses.<sup>121</sup> The extra investment in boys is evident in their achievements relative to girls in education, literacy, and participation in the labour force.<sup>122</sup> Population Council research provides evidence from several settings that adolescent girls lack protective social networks and support. For many girls, marriage is the only socially acceptable avenue giving them for exiting a poor and overly protective natal home and opening them up to a more socially inclusive setting for them. This expectation frequently does not materialize, however. Council research shows that married girls have more limited peer networks, less social mobility and freedom, more limited access to media and other sources of information and lower educational attainment while also exposing them to harmful child marriages.<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> Dries-Daffner, Ingrid, Kelly Hallman, Jennifer Catino, and Karla Berdichevsky, "Guatemala, in *International Encyclopaedia of Adolescence*" (2007) Vol. 2, New York and London: Routledge.

<sup>119</sup> Patel, Vikram and Arthur Kleinman, "Poverty and common mental disorders in developing countries" (2003) *Bulletin of the World Health Organization*.

<sup>120</sup> K.R. Murugan and K. Manimekalai, "Social Exclusion and Inclusion of Women in India", Vol. 2, (2015).

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>122</sup> United Nations Girls' Education Initiative, *Why are Boys Underperforming in Education?*

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*

The UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) evaluation of gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) was commissioned by the United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator's Office (UNRCHCO) and carried out between mid-January 2011 and February 2011. It identified human rights, gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) as one of the four Priority Areas that provided a framework for coordinated UNCountry Team system activities.<sup>124</sup>

UNICEF works with communities, governments and partners to remove barriers to girls' education and promote social inclusion through gender equality in education – even in the most challenging settings.<sup>125</sup> Investing in girls' secondary education is one of the most transformative development strategies in leading to social inclusion and that is why UNICEF prioritizes efforts that enable all girls to complete secondary education and develop the knowledge and skills they need for life and work. This is achieved when the most disadvantaged girls are supported to enter and complete pre-primary and primary education.

UNICEF further tackles discriminatory gender norms and harmful practices that deny girls access to school and quality learning. It supports governments to ensure that budgets are gender-responsive and that national education plans and policies prioritize gender equality.<sup>126</sup> It also helps schools and governments use assessment data to eliminate gender gaps in learning, promotes social protection measures, including cash transfers, to improve girls' transition to and retention in secondary school, focuses teacher training and professional development on gender-responsive pedagogies and removes gender stereotypes from learning materials.<sup>127</sup>

### **Inclusion of Children living with Disability**

*Article 1 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)* describes persons with disabilities as “those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others”<sup>128</sup> “It is estimated that, overall, between 500 and 650 million people worldwide live with significant impairment.<sup>129</sup> According to the World Health Organization (WHO), around 10% of the world's children and young people, some 200 million, have sensory, intellectual or mental health impairment.<sup>130</sup> Around 80% of them live in developing countries.” Statistics such as these show that being born with or acquiring an impairment during the period of one's life is neither unusual nor abnormal.<sup>131</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> UNDAF, *Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (Evaluation Report)*.

<sup>125</sup> UNICEF, *Girl Education*, 2015.

<sup>126</sup> UNICEF, *Girl Education*.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>128</sup> General Assembly, *The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (A/RES/61/106)*.

<sup>129</sup> UN Factsheet on Persons with Disabilities.

<sup>130</sup> UNICEF, *Study on Children and Disability in Transition in CEE/CIS and Baltic States*.

<sup>131</sup> UNICEF, Innocenti Research Centre, *Promoting the Rights of Children with Disabilities*.

According to the Chief of UNICEF's Disability Unit, Rosangela Berman Bieler, children living with disabilities continue to be the most excluded among all groups of children in Africa. Only a small portion of them are in school, and far fewer receive the adequate inclusive education they need.<sup>132</sup> Country-specific information suggests that between 5 and 10% of all children in Africa grow up with disabilities.<sup>133</sup> However, 25 out of 55 African countries are yet to ratify the *CRPD* which provides that children with disabilities be protected against discrimination in all forms, and they have access to education, health services and protection from violence.<sup>134</sup>

Among children with disabilities, school attendance is much less than among other children.<sup>135</sup> A 2011 UNICEF study undertaken in Madagascar found that only 11% of children with disabilities on average were primary school students, with school attendance among girls even lower.<sup>136</sup> Bullying, as well as a lack of inclusive practices also causes children with disabilities to be more likely to drop out of school than their peers. Their learning achievements are often more limited than those of other children because schools are not designed to cater to them, and teachers are often not adequately equipped to do so.<sup>137</sup> Also, due to the high degree of stigma associated with disability in certain countries, parents and other family members may be reluctant to report that their child has a disability.<sup>138</sup> More often than not, these children are not even registered at birth, the result is that they are unknown to health, social services or schools.<sup>139</sup>

The number of children with disabilities thought to be out of school across Europe and Central Asia is estimated to be in millions.<sup>140</sup> Many are excluded from mainstream education and enrolled in "special schools". Some teachers refuse to educate children with disabilities, and parents fear that the education of their children will suffer if they share the classroom with a child living with a disability.<sup>141</sup>

Furthermore, the World Bank has estimated that persons with disabilities account for up to one in five of the world's poorest people, that is, those who live on less than a dollar a day and who are unable to access basic necessities like food, clean water, clothing and shelter.<sup>142</sup> These figures have been brought to life in a recent report from Inclusion International which documents the poverty and exclusion experienced daily by people with intellectual disabilities and their families in all regions of the world.<sup>143</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> UNICEF, *UNICEF calls for social inclusion of children with disabilities in Africa*.

<sup>133</sup> WHO, *World Report on Disability*.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>135</sup> UNICEF, *UNICEF calls for social inclusion of children with disabilities in Africa*.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>137</sup> Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, *Equity and Quality in Education*.

<sup>138</sup> United Nations, *Disability and Development Report*.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>140</sup> UNICEF, *Children with Disability*.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>142</sup> The World Bank, *Disability Inclusion Overview*.

<sup>143</sup> Inclusion International, *Hear Our Voices: A Global Report*.

Most children and even adolescents with disabilities are isolated from social activities and participation in their communities – a problem made glaring by inaccessible nature of transport and buildings to people living with disabilities. Social stigma also stops families from asking for help or information, leaving them unaware of their rights or any support that is available to them. Families also struggle to balance earning a living with caring for a child with disabilities -increasing the risk of institutionalization for the child.<sup>144</sup>

Importantly, laws and policies do not yet fully reflect the social model in the area of disability assessment. The focus on perceived “deficits” does not comply with the bio-psycho-social model of disability as described in the *CRPD*, which emphasizes the impact of the interaction between a person with impairment and attitudinal barriers. Importantly, legislation and policies around teachers’ education must meaningfully equip future teachers with the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to support all children by providing individualized instruction. This is not yet evident.<sup>145</sup>

UNICEF upholds the rights of children with disabilities across Europe and Central Asia through promoting their best possible care to supporting their education and participation. It supports services geared towards outreach to families with young children to help identify and respond as rapidly as possible to any disabilities at an early age, giving children a chance to maximise their potential.<sup>146</sup> UNICEF also employs home-visiting programmes – an approach that spans child protection, health and nutrition and early childhood development – which helps give families support and connect them to specialized services necessary for aiding these children.<sup>147</sup> UNICEF also aims to create an inclusive and child-focused school culture, recognizing that the obstacles to learning and participation which impede children with disabilities are not as a ‘fault’ of a child’s impairment, but rather the capacity of schools to remove those obstacles. UNICEF’s work with its partners has helped to increase the number of children with disabilities attending regular schools across the region. In Moldova, for example, children with special educational needs in regular schools quadrupled between 2012 and 2015.<sup>148</sup> UNICEF tackles the discrimination that keeps children with disabilities isolated, supporting training to change mind-sets and develop skills among medical staff, teachers, psychologists, occupational therapists and social workers, and working to change public attitudes towards disability.

The “Global Partnership on Children with Disabilities” (GPCWD) launched in 2012 as a network for advocating for rights of children with disabilities, through the inclusion of disability rights across all global child-related agendas.<sup>149</sup> Coordinated by UNICEF, its

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<sup>144</sup> UNICEF, *Children with Disability*.

<sup>145</sup> UNICEF, *Rapid Review on Inclusion Report*.

<sup>146</sup> UNICEF, *Children with Disability*.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>148</sup> UNICEF, *Children in the Republic of Moldova, Situation Analysis*.

<sup>149</sup> UNICEF, *Global Partnership on Children with Disabilities*.

partners include over 240 international, national, and local NGOs, governments, Disabled People's Organizations (DPOs), academics and private sector actors.

## **Inclusion of Migrant Children**

According to UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) data, the estimated number of people aged 19 or under living in a country other than the one where they were born rose from 28.7 million in 1990 to 37.9 million in 2019.<sup>150</sup> In 2019, child migrants (aged 19 years and under) accounted for 14% of the total migrant population and 5.9% of the total population (of all ages).<sup>151</sup> The estimated number of young migrants (aged 15 to 24) also rose from 22.4 million in 1990 to 30.9 million in 2019.<sup>152</sup> In 2019, young migrants accounted for 11.4% of the total migrant population and 5.1% of the total population (of all ages).<sup>153</sup> Several children are on the move. Some are driven from their homes by conflict, poverty or disaster; others are migrating in the hope of finding a better, safer life. Many of them encounter danger, detention, deprivation and discrimination on their journeys.

Migrant and displaced children encounter several challenges in transit and even when they arrive, often because many of them have limited options to move through safe pathways and with their families. Far too often, children are kept in detention centres, separated from their main family members, unable to access education, forced to work dangerous jobs, married off or given into the arms of smugglers or traffickers. They face violence, abuse, exploitation or discrimination.<sup>154</sup> They miss out on education and proper medical care. The fact that they are newcomers can hinder their inclusion – especially as they try to learn a new language and integrate into a new culture. These difficulties have lasting physical and psychological effects.<sup>155</sup>

While children belonging to these groups often are 'invisible' in national statistics, they are paradoxically very 'visible' in the streets and migrants' settlements. As basic care is provided primarily within the family unit or guardianship in charge, thus minimizing contact with institutions, identification is extremely difficult. Undocumented and unaccompanied children face serious obstacles to accessing basic social services and social protection. Fear of being discovered by immigration authorities, thus being subject to deportation, is a deterrent to approach institutions providing services such as health and education or protection. In some cases, there are reports of various kinds of exploitation such as child labour, trafficking, etc and abuse occurring within the same family or group, which represents an added difficulty in identifying rights violations by national authorities.<sup>156</sup>

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<sup>150</sup> United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs: Number of international migrants reaches 272 million.

<sup>151</sup> Migration Data Portal; Child and Young Migrants.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>154</sup> UNICEF, *Beyond Borders*, 2015.

<sup>155</sup> UNICEF, *Children Uprooted*.

<sup>156</sup> UNICEF, *Rapid Review on Inclusion Report*.

There is little to no information regarding the access of children from these populations to education, health and other services, or regarding the degree of their integration into society, culture and language. Like other areas of vulnerability, a common bottleneck regarding children affected by migration is the overall lack of age-sensitive data on migrant populations by national and international data collection systems, which prevents the accurate profiling and creation of needs assessments and policies that target this specific group due to the shortage of statistical visibility. Lack of data remains a major issue particularly for children who migrate across borders.

Moreover, structural discrimination, unequal treatment and the criminalization of undocumented migrant children, compounded with the lack of coordination, cooperation and information exchange on migration issues among ministries and institutions at both domestic and international levels, have an impact on the level of protection and access to rights by vulnerable children affected by migration.

Regarding legislation/policy, one of the main problems is that most migration laws do not include migrant children as a separate category with a right to special protection. Furthermore, although some countries may include in their national legal frameworks access to basic rights, services and protection for all children in general, it is not clear to what extent migrant children including undocumented migrants can freely enjoy these rights in practice. Where policies and institutions exist, unclear accountabilities and lack of coordination among service providers may hamper effective access.

According to UNICEF Director of Emergency Programmes Manuel Fontaine, it is important to remember the threats and challenges that children on the move face daily.<sup>157</sup> UNICEF has repeatedly called for an end to the detention of children because of their migration status and has worked with organizations around the world, including the International Detention Coalition, to call attention to the practice.<sup>158</sup> The coalition also advocates for alternatives such as foster care, supervised independent living or community-based accommodations for families.<sup>159</sup>

Recent large-scale movements of refugees and migrants have drawn attention to the need for global and coordinated action for peaceful, orderly and comprehensive approaches to refugees and migrants. As a first step towards such global action, UN Member States adopted the *New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants A/RES/71/1* in September 2016.<sup>160</sup> With this declaration, Member States committed to “fully protect the human rights of all refugees and migrants, regardless of status”. They acknowledged the vulnerabilities of uprooted children and committed to taking steps to protect them.<sup>161</sup> UNICEF has further

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<sup>157</sup> UNICEF Director of Emergency Programmes Manuel Fontaine speaking at ‘What Excites Us, Unites Us’ initiative to engage football fans in support of refugee and migrant children.

<sup>158</sup> UNICEF, *Beyond Borders*.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>160</sup> General Assembly: *New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants (A/RES/71/1)*.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*

called on decision-makers to put children at the centre of their discussions. UNICEF requests commitment to the six essential policies stated in the UNICEF Agenda for Action.<sup>162</sup> Part of this agenda includes helping uprooted children to stay in school and stay healthy, keep families together and give children legal status, end the detention of refugee and migrant children by creating practical alternatives and protect uprooted children from exploitation and violence.<sup>163</sup>

In some countries, legislative steps are being taken to either eliminate or greatly reduce the detention of children. For example, Malta and the United Kingdom have implemented alternatives to detention for migrant children and families to successful results.<sup>164</sup> All around Europe, several civil society organizations are developing case management-based alternatives to detention and sharing amongst each other, information and best practices to Detention Network.<sup>165</sup> In Indonesia and Malaysia, pilot schemes are making available, alternative care arrangements for migrant children that are unaccompanied and separated.<sup>166</sup>

## **Social Inclusion of Children and the Sustainable Development Goals**

There are 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to be achieved by every Member State by 2030, in order to create a better world for people to live in.<sup>167</sup> The UNICEF Strategic Plan for 2018-2021 is in line with the *2030 Agenda* and aspires to create a world where all children live in good health and are protected, kept in a clean, adequate and safe environment, have access to quality education and are given a fair chance to succeed. It binds UNICEF to support Member States in localising the SDGs, setting ambitious national targets as relates to children, creating functional systems to monitor progress in reducing inequality, and ensuring that no child is left behind.<sup>168</sup>

Education is how society imparts socially acceptable behaviour and prepares each generation for the labour market. As the SDGs are interdependent, achieving the education goal (SDG 4) will have transformative effects on the social inclusion of children. By educating children, the next generation is equipped with the tools necessary to fight poverty, diseases and build resilient and peaceful societies. The adoption of Goal 4 of the SDGs was both recognition of the importance of education and a commitment to achieve more ambitious outcomes in education access, learning outcomes, and skills development. “Every Child Learns”, a goal of UNICEF which is fully aligned with Goal 4 of the SDGs and other education-related targets and aims to make sure that this is attainable in every country’s contexts, even in areas experiencing humanitarian crises and development

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<sup>162</sup> UNICEF, *Agenda for Action*.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>164</sup> Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, *Beyond Detention: A Global Strategy to support governments to end the detention of asylum-seekers and refugees – 2014–2019*, UNHCR, Geneva, August 2016.

<sup>165</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>167</sup> SDG Briefing Note: National and global monitoring of child-related SDG indicators.

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.*

settings, irrespective of differentiating factors such as location, wealth, migration status, gender, language, disability or minority status.<sup>169</sup> For every child to learn, all girls and boys should gain access to and participate in education and education should lead to learning and the development of relevant skills for full participation in society.<sup>170</sup>

UNICEF encourages Member States to include in their Voluntary National Review, a continued commitment to improving access to pre-primary, primary and secondary education for all, including for children from minority groups and those with disabilities and ensure all children are in school, with a focus on marginalized children and children in emergency settings because an education is instrumental to improving a marginalized child's social and economic opportunity.<sup>171</sup>

In achieving social inclusion for all children worldwide that remain excluded, it is important to remember that no member nation is an island in development, even though there may be such geographically. Goal 17 of the SDGs preaches global partnership between various member states as well as between non-governmental organizations and community-based organizations, private sector and corporate entities, the mass media and regional and international organizations for the achievement and realization of goals such as this.<sup>172</sup>

To enhance the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development contained in Goal 17, complemented by multi-stakeholder partnerships that mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources to support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in all countries, particularly developing countries, UNICEF works in 190 countries through country programmes and UNICEF national committees. These UNICEF Country programmes are geared towards practical ways of achieving the rights of children. UNICEF works with other UN agencies, collaborating at the country, regional and global level.<sup>173</sup>

## Conclusion

Social inclusion plays a standout role in all-round development of children. Therefore, it is important that it is achieved through policies that recognize the importance of societal levels of analysis and not simply an economic or individual indicator.<sup>174</sup> Socially inclusive development needs to be a longer-term strategic policy of all nations worldwide and UNICEF, in conjunction with world governments, private actors and Non-Governmental Organizations seeks to create a society where children are adequately included in all necessary spheres.<sup>175</sup> Children need to be included if there is to be any chance for the achievement of the SDGs.

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<sup>169</sup> UNICEF, *Key Asks For 2019 SDG Voluntary National Reviews*.

<sup>170</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>172</sup> United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, Partnership Platform.

<sup>173</sup> World Health Organization: UNICEF.

<sup>174</sup> United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, *The Significance of Social Inclusion for Development*.

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.*

## Further Research

Social inclusion of children is a more pressing issue in today's climate considering that the social exclusion cuts across several different criteria of children globally. What are areas that remain unexplored in the achievement of social inclusion for these children? Can the already existing programmes for inclusion of children be improved to achieve this inclusion? Can any more be done on an international or regional framework level to ensure this social inclusion? Is the global community doing enough to ensure social inclusion? In what ways can states and intergovernmental organizations further collaborate to improve the situation of social inclusion of children?

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*This report contains an overview of the main child rights violations and equity gaps in the realization of rights leading to the social inclusion of children in Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States.*

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## II. Addressing Gender Stereotypes in the Development of Children

*“Removing the barriers that keep women and girls on the margins of economic, social, cultural, and political life must be a top priority for us all—businesses, governments, the United Nations and civil society”* - **Ban Ki-Moon, Former Secretary-General of the United Nations**<sup>176</sup>

### Introduction

The United Nations (UN) International Children Emergency Fund (UNICEF) *Child Protection Strategy* commits UNICEF to promoting gender equality.<sup>177</sup> Gender Equality Strategy 2014-2017 sets out five strategic objectives, one of which is combating gender stereotypes and sexism.<sup>178</sup> The strategy defines gender stereotyping as “preconceived ideas whereby males and females are arbitrarily assigned characteristics and roles determined and limited by their sex”.<sup>179</sup> Every child in the global community deserves to reach his or her full potential, but gender inequalities in their lives hinder this reality.<sup>180</sup> Sex-role stereotypes are arguably the most common type of stereotype examined by UN human rights mechanisms.<sup>181</sup> A gender stereotype is harmful when it limits girls’ and boys’ capacity to advance and utilize their abilities, pursue their professional careers and make choices about their lives.<sup>182</sup>

Gender stereotyping continues to be an obstacle to the achievement of equality between boys and girls.<sup>183</sup> Apart from the social consequences of gender stereotyping in girls and boys, it also has negative repercussions on countries’ economic development.<sup>184</sup> Gender stereotyping places unhealthy demands on both sexes which inhibit their natural talents and interests from developing and consequently limit economic progress and prevent social cohesion.<sup>185</sup>

Subsequently, gender stereotyping is transmitted to children from babyhood; by parents, social-networks, early learning experiences and by media.<sup>186</sup> This is imposed through interactions, expectations, household, society, religion and television.<sup>187</sup> From an early age, boys and girls are placed into the blue or pink ‘box’ with its associated behaviours and expectations.<sup>188</sup> Children themselves display gender-stereotyped attitudes and behaviours

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<sup>176</sup> Ban Ki Moon, Former Secretary-General on the International Day of the Girl held in October 11, 2019.

<sup>177</sup> United Nations Children’s Fund, *UNICEF Child Protection Strategy*, (E/ICEF/2008/5/Rev.1), 2008.

<sup>178</sup> Council of Europe, *Gender Equality Strategy*, 2017.

<sup>179</sup> Council of Europe, *Gender Equality Strategy*, 2017.

<sup>180</sup> UNICEF, *Accelerating progress and opportunities for everyone*, 2018.

<sup>181</sup> Rashida Manjoo, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against girls, its causes and consequences*, UN DOC. A/HRC/23/49. Para.7, 2013.

<sup>182</sup> Savith Goonesekere, *UNICEF- Women’s and Children’s rights in a human rights-based approach to development*, 2006.

<sup>183</sup> *Combating Gender stereotypes in and through education*, Report of the 2<sup>nd</sup> conference of the Council of Europe National Focal Points on Gender Equality, October 2014.

<sup>184</sup> UNICEF, *State of the World’s children*, 2016.

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<sup>187</sup> Council of Europe, *Combating gender stereotyping and sexism in the media*, 2015.

<sup>188</sup> UNICEF, *Promoting Gender Equality*, 2018.

as early as pre-school.<sup>189</sup> Parents encourage gender-appropriate activities and discourage cross-gender activities.<sup>190</sup> Even where parents cross the gender dividing line in their behaviour and expectations for their boys and girls, the other influences in children's lives compete strongly to stereotype them.<sup>191</sup>

Moreover, wrongful gender stereotyping is a recurring cause of discrimination against women and contributes to the violation of rights such as the right to health, adequate standard of living, education, marriage and family relations, work, freedom of expression, freedom of movement, political participation and representation, effective remedy, and freedom from gender-based violence.<sup>192</sup> Examples of wrongful gender stereotyping are the failure to criminalize marital rape based on societal perception of women as the sexual property of men, the unacceptability of men showing emotion or crying, and the failure to effectively investigate, prosecute and sentence sexual violence against women based on the stereotype that women should protect themselves by dressing and behaving modestly.<sup>193</sup> Girls' self-esteem, ambition and expectations are the first victims of gender stereotypes.<sup>194</sup> Stereotypes affect how children see themselves and also how they judge and are judged.<sup>195</sup> Children need to live in a world where all possibilities are endless. They need to live without gender limitations and differences.<sup>196</sup>

## International and Regional Frameworks

The international human rights law framework prohibits gender stereotypes and stereotyping which undermine the enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms.<sup>197</sup> States commit to eliminate discrimination against boys and girls in all areas of their lives.<sup>198</sup> This commitment requires states to take measures to address gender stereotypes both in public and private life as well as to refrain from stereotyping.<sup>199</sup> Some UN human rights mechanisms, including, most notably, the *Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women* (CEDAW) have increasingly shed important light on the grave harms of gender stereotypes.<sup>200</sup>

The CEDAW was adopted by the UN in 1979 and came into force on 3 September 1981.<sup>201</sup> In its 1997 Concluding Observations on Slovenia, the CEDAW Committee commended the

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<sup>189</sup> UNICEF, *Promoting Gender Equality*, 2018.

<sup>190</sup> UNICEF, *Guidance on Evaluating Institutional gender mainstreaming*, 2015.

<sup>191</sup> UNICEF, *Guidance on Evaluating Institutional gender mainstreaming*, 2015.

<sup>192</sup> OHCHR, *Stereotyping as a Human Rights violation*, 2013.

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<sup>195</sup> UN-Women, *Countering Gender Discrimination and Negative Gender Stereotypes: Effective Policy Responses*, 13 July, 2011.

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<sup>200</sup> *Declaration on the Elimination of violence against women*, 1993.

<sup>201</sup> CEDAW Committee, *concluding observations: Albania*, UN DOC. CEDAW/C/ALB/CO/3 (2010), para.31.

adoption of the Slovene Advertising Code.<sup>202</sup> This self-regulatory mechanism provided among other things that advertising may not contradict the self-evident equality between the sexes, and neither may it present men, women or children in an insulting or degrading way.<sup>203</sup>

In its 2003 Concluding Observations on Brazil, the Committee commended that Brazil develops policies to eliminate harmful gender stereotypes related to women's traditional roles in the family, workplace, and society in general.<sup>204</sup> Certain advertisements in Brazil portrayed women as a commodity or sex object in order to market products targeting men, such as beer, cars, etc. Moreover, media entertainment similarly shows portrayed women and maintained myths related to sexual and domestic violence.<sup>205</sup> As a result, the Committee recommended that Brazil encourage the media to project positive images of women, and the equal status and responsibilities of women and men in society.<sup>206</sup>

Further, in its 2014 Concluding Observations on Venezuela, the Committee acknowledged the state's legislative efforts to address gender stereotypes by establishing an agency to monitor sexist or discriminatory content in the media.<sup>204</sup> However, the Committee found that the measures were not comprehensive enough to eliminate gender stereotypes in all spheres.<sup>205</sup>

In general, States parties under CEDAW Committee, *General Recommendation No.28, Article 5(a)* are obliged to take "all appropriate measures" to modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of boys and girls" in an effort to eliminate practices that "are based on the ideas of the inferiority or the superiority of either of the sexes or stereotyped roles for boys and girls".<sup>206</sup> It addresses both gender stereotypes that are based on a view of women as being inferior to men and sex-role stereotypes.<sup>207</sup> Also, the committee has played a leadership role in identifying the linkages between gender stereotypes and violence against women, beginning with its celebrated *General Recommendation No. 19* (1993) where the committee has sought to identify some of the steps that States Parties are required to take under CEDAW to address gender-stereotypes related to gender-based violence against the girls.<sup>208</sup>

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<sup>202</sup> UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, *Report of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women*, General Assembly Official Records, 52<sup>nd</sup> Session, Supplement No 38, A/52/38/Rev.1, Part 1, para. 93.

<sup>203</sup> UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, *Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discriminations against women, Second periodic reports*, CEDAW/C/SVN/2, 26 April 1999, p.32 (Slovenia).

<sup>204</sup> UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, *Concluding observations on the combined seventh and eighth periodic reports of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela*, CEDAW/C/VEN/CO/7-8, 14 November 2014, para. 16.

<sup>205</sup> UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, *Concluding Observations on the combined seventh and eighth periodic reports of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela*, CEDAW/C/VEN/CO/7-8.14 November 2014, para. 17(f).

<sup>206</sup> CEDAW Committee, *General Recommendation No.28*, UN DOC. CEEDAW/C/GC/28, 16 December 2010, para.7.

<sup>207</sup> CEDAW Committee. *General Recommendation No.28*, UN DOC. CEDAW/C/GC/28, 16 December 2010, para.7.

<sup>208</sup> CEDAW Committee, *General recommendation. No.19*, UN DOC. A/47/38 at 1 (1993), para. 11.

The UN adopted the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (CRC) in 1989.<sup>209</sup> This Convention and its optional protocols outline rights to be enjoyed without discrimination, including on the grounds of gender.<sup>210</sup> The legal framework includes all fundamental human rights treaties with provisions confirming the principle of non-discrimination and equality between boys and girls.<sup>211</sup> In 2016, the Committee on the Rights of the Child adopted two striking comments: *No. 19 on public budgeting for the realization of children's rights*, and *No. 20 on the implementation of the rights of children during adolescence*, which guides States on measures to ensure fulfilment of the rights of the child during adolescence.<sup>212</sup>

Also, in 1995 at the Fourth World Conference of the General Assembly, the *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action* was adopted. It calls on governments and other relevant stakeholders to tackle gender stereotypes in public and private life.<sup>213</sup> At the special session of the General Assembly in 2000, a resolution on further actions and initiatives to implement the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action was adopted.<sup>214</sup> Member States undertook to support the implementation of plans and programs of action to ensure quality education and improved enrolment rates for boys and girls and the elimination of gender discrimination and gender stereotypes in educational curricula and materials, as well as in the process of education.<sup>215</sup> In the 15-year review of the implementation of the *Beijing Platform for Action* in 2010, the persistency of gender stereotypes was raised concerning education and training of the girl child, violence against young girls and women.<sup>216</sup> The Action encourages Member States to take a range of strategies to combat stereotypes against children.<sup>217</sup>

In 2010, the Human Right Council established a Working Group on the issue of gender discrimination against the girl child to eliminate the discriminatory laws.<sup>218</sup> The group also engages in capacity development and technical assistance in outreach and advocacy on gender-based violence issues affecting children.

At the regional level, the European Union (EU) has endorsed gender mainstreaming as a guiding strategy towards gender equality and set about promoting the consideration of gender equality in all policy domains. In 1999, the *Treaty of Amsterdam* included the promotion of equality and the elimination of discrimination between boys and girls among the EU's fundamental tasks.<sup>218</sup> Over the years, several additional gender equality-related

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<sup>209</sup> *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (adopted 20 November 1989 entered into force 2 September 1990).

<sup>210</sup> CRC, art. 5,14(2).

<sup>211</sup> CRC, art. 12(1).

<sup>212</sup> CRC Committee, *General Comment No. 12*, UN Doc. CRC/C/GC/12 (20 July 2007), para.77.

<sup>213</sup> General Assembly, *The Fourth World Conference on Women and the outcomes of the 23<sup>rd</sup> special session entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the 21<sup>st</sup> century"*, 2000.

<sup>214</sup> General Assembly, *The Fourth World Conference on Women and the outcomes of the 23<sup>rd</sup> special session entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the 21<sup>st</sup> century"*, 2000.

<sup>215</sup> General Assembly, *The Fourth World Conference on Women and the outcomes of the 23<sup>rd</sup> special session entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the 21<sup>st</sup> century"*, 2000.

<sup>216</sup> UN-Women, *Framework to underpin action against young girls*, 2015.

<sup>217</sup> UN-Women, *Take the HeforShe Pledge*, 2015.

<sup>218</sup> Council of Europe, *The Treaty of Amsterdam in promoting gender equality*, 1999.

directives were issued, and, in 2006, these were brought together in the *Recast Gender Directive*.<sup>219</sup>

Furthermore, the African Union (AU) recognises that gender equality is a fundamental human right and an important part of regional integration, economic growth and social development and has developed the AU's strategy for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) in 2018 to ensure the inclusion of women in Africa's development agenda.<sup>220</sup> The strategy requires State Parties to combat all forms of discrimination against women through appropriate legislative measures. It is also responsible for leading, guiding and advocating for the AU's efforts to achieve gender equality and promote women's empowerment and ensuring African countries live up to the AU's *Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa*(SDGEA).<sup>221</sup>

Also, the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, better known as *Maputo Protocol* of the AU is a ground-breaking protocol on women and girls' rights, which was adopted in 2003 and came into force in 2005. It includes 32 articles and a clearly expressed definition of discrimination against women and pays specific attention to vulnerable and marginalised women and girls.<sup>222</sup> The implementation of the *Maputo Protocol* has been affected by continued contestations related to women and girls' rights and culture and patriarchal norms and structures, which are frequently invoked to justify violations of women and girls' rights, with many states experiencing challenges meeting the targets set out in the Plan and the Abuja Declaration. There is now growing awareness and consensus of the importance of social norm change to respect and realise women and girls' rights.

Following the *World Declaration on Education for All* (1990) and its companion *Framework for Action to Meet Basic Learning Needs* adopted by the World Conference on Education for All at Thailand, world leaders recognised the urgent priority of ensuring access to and improving the quality of education for girls and women (SDG 4 and 5 respectively), and to remove every obstacle that hampers their active participation.<sup>223</sup> Subsequently, the *Dakar Framework for Action* (2005) included among its six goals, one on eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education and good equality.<sup>224</sup> The text of the *Dakar Framework for Action* states "Gender-based discrimination remains one of the most intractable constraints to realizing the right to education". And without overcoming this obstacle, *Education for All* cannot be achieved.<sup>225</sup>

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<sup>219</sup> Council of Europe, *Recast Gender Directive*, 2006.

<sup>220</sup> UNECA, *The AU Gender Strategy, 2018-2027*.

<sup>221</sup> AU, *Gender Policy Concept note*, p. 1.

<sup>222</sup> AU, *The State of African Women*, June 2018.

<sup>223</sup> OECD, *Education for All*, 1990.

<sup>224</sup> OECD, *Dakar Framework for Action*, 2005.

<sup>225</sup> OECD, *Education for All*, 1990.

## Role of the International System

The United Nations advocates for a wide variety of actors to collaborate at the local, regional, and international levels for increased action to address the gender roles and stereotyping, through the implementation of policy and mobilization of programs.<sup>226</sup> After the Nairobi and Vienna Conferences, the 1995 UN Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing established gender mainstreaming as the major global strategy for ensuring the incorporation of gender perspectives in all areas of societal development and the promotion of gender equality. In 1996, the General Assembly emphasized the importance of gender mainstreaming calling upon the United Nations to promote an ‘active and visible policy’ of mainstreaming of gender perspectives. Subsequent resolutions of the General Assembly recalled the same principle and the other UN bodies have provided explicit mandates for gender mainstreaming in specific areas of work of the UN.<sup>227</sup>

The General Assembly established UN-Women in July 2010 and decided to transfer to the new entity the mandates and functions of the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI), the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW), the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), with the additional role of leading, coordinating and promoting accountability of the UN system in its work on gender equality and the empowerment of women. Also, the UN-Women provide through its normative support functions and operational activities help to guide and provide technical support to all Member States at their request, on gender mainstreaming, gender equality and the empowerment and the rights of women and girls.<sup>228</sup>

Furthermore, the UNICEF’s global *Gender Action Plan (GAP) 2018-2021* is UNICEF road map for supporting the achievement of gender equality goals in conjunction with partners and national stakeholders, as outlined in the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDGs)*.<sup>229</sup> The UNICEF *Gender Action Plan* serves to reinforce the obligation to gender equality found in the organization’s periodic strategic plans.<sup>230</sup> The first GAP covered the five year period 2014-2017 and the second GAP will cover 2018-2021.<sup>231</sup> The document specifies how UNICEF intends to promote gender equality across all the organization’s work at global, regional and country levels, in alignment with the UNICEF strategic plan.<sup>232</sup>

The European Union, through the *Treaty of Amsterdam*, endorsed gender mainstreaming as a guiding strategy toward gender equality and set about promoting the consideration of gender equality in all policy domains.<sup>233</sup> The *Treaty of Amsterdam* included the promotion

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<sup>226</sup> UNICEF, *State of the world’s children*, 2016.

<sup>227</sup> UN, *The United Nations Mandate on gender mainstreaming*, 1995.

<sup>228</sup> General Assembly, *Gender Mainstreaming (Resolution 64/289)*, 2010.

<sup>229</sup> UNICEF, *Gender Action Plan 2018-2021*, 2018.

<sup>230</sup> SADC, *Gender Protocol Barometer*, 2017.

<sup>231</sup> UNICEF, *Gender Action Plan 2014-2017*, 2017.

<sup>232</sup> UNICEF, *Promoting Gender Equality*, 2015.

<sup>233</sup> Council of Europe, *The Treaty of Amsterdam in promoting gender equality*, 1999.

of equality and the elimination of discrimination between boys and girls among the EU's fundamental tasks. Over the years, some additional gender equality-related directives were issued, and, in 2006, these were brought together in the *Recast Gender Directive*.<sup>234</sup> In addition, the Council of Europe from its inception has considered equality between boys and girls in all spheres of public and private life, as a fundamental principle of human rights and democracy.<sup>235</sup> More specifically in the field of promoting gender equality in education, the *Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy 2014-2017* specifies that the Council of Europe action will focus *inter alia* on promoting education syllabuses and teaching practices which are free from explicit and implicit gender stereotypes, as well as other measures proposed in the *Committee of Ministers Recommendation on gender mainstreaming in education (CM/Rec (2007)13)*.<sup>236</sup> This Recommendation puts forward a set of comprehensive measures which the Member States need to put in place to ensure effective gender mainstreaming in education.<sup>237</sup> Subsequently, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) plays a major role in full and peaceful gender equality.<sup>238</sup> It adopted the *2004 OSCE Action Plan* for the promotion of gender equality and direct equal rights of girls and boys.<sup>239</sup> The Action Plan commits the Organization to the objective of gender mainstreaming in all its programmes and operations, and to support the attainment of these objectives in the OSCE's assistance to participating States in ensuring the eradication of gender stereotypes.<sup>240</sup>

The OHCHR also occupies a unique position in raising awareness of the issue of gender stereotyping and the myriad ways this practice undermines the recognition of girls and boys human rights.<sup>241</sup> The OHCHR has completed research on wrongful gender stereotyping by the judiciary in cases of sexual and gender-based violence and is engaged in projects in some countries to address stereotyping in judicial decisions.<sup>242</sup> The body also supports human rights mechanisms in analysing human rights obligations related to gender stereotypes and stereotyping.<sup>243</sup>

## **Gender Roles and How They Affect the Development of Children**

Gender roles are influenced by the media, family, environment, and society.<sup>244</sup> Children's understanding of gender roles impacts how they socialize with their peers and form

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<sup>234</sup> Council of Europe, *Recast Gender Directive*, 2006.

<sup>235</sup> Council of Europe, *Gender Equality Strategy*, 2014.

<sup>236</sup> Council of Europe, *Gender Equality Strategy 2014-2017: Committee of Ministers Recommendation on gender mainstreaming in education (CM/Rec (2007)13)*.

<sup>237</sup> Council of Europe, *Gender Equality Strategy 2014-2017: Committee of Ministers Recommendation on gender mainstreaming in education (CM/Rec (2007)13)*.

<sup>238</sup> OSCE, *2004 Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality*.

<sup>239</sup> OSCE, *2004 Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality*.

<sup>240</sup> OSCE, *2004 Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality*.

<sup>241</sup> OHCHR, *Report on engaging men and boys in promoting and achieving gender equality, in the context of eliminating violence against women*, 2018.

<sup>242</sup> OHCHR, *Gender Stereotyping as a human rights violation*, 2013.

<sup>243</sup> OHCHR, *Gender Stereotyping as a human rights violation*, 2013.

<sup>244</sup> KayA. Chick, "The Impact of Child Care on Gender Role Development and Gender Stereotypes" (2002) *Early Childhood Education Journal*.

relationships.<sup>245</sup> Many children have a firm sense of their gender identity, while some children can experience gender identity confusion.<sup>246</sup> In many communities, gender inequality is one important cause of children's poor development in the early years.<sup>247</sup> Gender discrimination in relation to male preference means that young girls receive less nutrition, opportunities to play and access early learning than young boys.<sup>248</sup> Upholding or supporting rigid gender stereotypes can potentially hamper both girls' and boys' development and inadvertently shape their later career prospects, their ability to process emotion in healthy ways and their capacity to engage in equal and respectful relationships.<sup>249</sup>

The Global Early Adolescent Study in 2015 found that gender roles are generally first introduced to children in the home and are further reinforced as they grow up by siblings, classmates, mentors and others.<sup>250</sup> The effects of gender stereotypes in girls are pretty profound as their experiences are as twice as much as that of their male counterparts.<sup>251</sup> Girls are often made to see less of themselves and as such, become easy targets for assault.<sup>252</sup> Such gender-based restrictions on girls leave them at a greater risk of dropping out of school, pregnancy, child marriage and exposure to violence, depression, HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases.<sup>253</sup> In fact, compared to boys, girls are twice as likely to experience depression by the age of 16 according to the National Institutes of Health. Since 2007, the suicide rates for both teen boys and girls have been climbing.<sup>254</sup> Moreover, the impact of gender stereotypes on boys generally puts them at a higher risk of falling victim to physical violence, according to researchers.<sup>255</sup> Researchers have also found that not only do boys die more frequently than girls from unintentional injuries, and are they more prone to substance abuse and suicide, but as adults, their life expectancies are also shorter compared to women.<sup>256</sup> As young people grow up, they learn to view the world through their own gender-based understandings.<sup>257</sup> To combat this processes, the researchers call for the fostering of gender-equitable approaches that have the potential to improve the well-being of adolescent boys and adolescent girls in the short and long terms.<sup>258</sup>

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<sup>245</sup> UNICEF, *Gender and Learning*, 2010.

<sup>246</sup> UNICEF, *Gender Identity and Gender Confusion in Children*, 2015.

<sup>247</sup> UNICEF, *Gender Identity and Gender Confusion in Children*, 2015.

<sup>248</sup> UNICEF, *Gender Action Plan*, 2017.

<sup>249</sup> General Assembly Resolution, *Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, 2015.

<sup>250</sup> WHO, *The Global Early Adolescent Study*, 2015.

<sup>251</sup> Galambos, N.L., *Gender and gender role development in adolescence*, 2004.

<sup>252</sup> Sarah Boseley, Health editor, *Children are strait-jacked into gender roles in early adolescence, says study*, 2017.

<sup>253</sup> SADC, *Gender Protocol MER Framework*, 2017.

<sup>254</sup> SADC, *Gender Protocol MER Framework*, 2017.

<sup>255</sup> SADC, *Gender Protocol MER Framework*, 2017.

<sup>256</sup> SADC, *Gender Protocol Barometer*, 2017.

<sup>257</sup> SADC, *Gender Protocol Barometer*, 2017.

<sup>258</sup> FizaPirani, *Ground-breaking study finds rigid gender stereotypes in children tied to higher depression, violence, suicide risk-* *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, published 20 September 2017.

Overall and in the long run, gender stereotypes affect children negatively even if it cannot be seen.<sup>259</sup> It has been well-established that gender stereotypes have an overwhelmingly negative impact on young children.<sup>260</sup> In a society that is rife with gender stereotypes and discrimination, children regularly learn to adopt gender roles which are not always fair to both sexes.<sup>261</sup> As children move through childhood and into adolescence, they are exposed to many factors which influence their attitudes and behaviours regarding gender roles.<sup>262</sup>

### **The Effect of Patriarchy on Male and Female Children**

The patriarchal society sets the restrictions for girls and women's structurally unequal position in families and markets by condoning gender-differential terms in inheritance rights and legal adulthood, by tacitly condoning domestic and sexual violence and sanctioning differential wages for equal or comparable work.<sup>263</sup> Within the context of patriarchy, stereotyped gender roles often devalue girls.<sup>264</sup> It has been argued that androgyny later on in life can foster more intimacy in close relationships and mutual respect between the sexes. In other words, girls may express themselves more assertively and boys may show more concern and nurturance in contrast to strict gender roles stereotypes.<sup>265</sup> In childhood, boys who embrace firm masculine stereotypes are prone to exhibiting aggressive behaviour, which may persist as the child matures.<sup>266</sup> Rigid gender role stereotypes have been found in adolescents who report dating violence, and young men who endorse rape-tolerant views are more likely to hold traditional gender role stereotypes, particularly depicting females as inferior and males as superior beings.<sup>267</sup>

Generally, the girl child educational opportunities tend to be circumscribed by patriarchal attitudes about gender roles, which result in some parents attaching greater importance to the education of boys than girls.<sup>268</sup> This is always the likelihood when the parents lack resources to enrol all children in school.<sup>269</sup> In some families, investing in girls' education is regarded as investing for the benefit of the family she will eventually marry into, unlike in the case of boys.<sup>270</sup> This argument holds in particular for higher education, which involves greater expenditure and is seen to be less necessary for females whose main role will be in home keeping and childbearing.<sup>271</sup>

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<sup>259</sup> UN Secretary General's Study, *Violence against Children*, 2016.

<sup>260</sup> *Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women*, 1993.

<sup>261</sup> World Bank Gender Strategy, *Gender Equality, Poverty Reduction and Inclusive Growth (2016-2023)* P 31.

<sup>262</sup> OSCE, *Making laws work for women and men: A practical guide to gender-sensitive legislation*, 2017.

<sup>263</sup> Kandiyoti D, *Bargaining with Patriarchy*. *Gender & Society*, 274-290.

<sup>264</sup> SO Ademiluka, *Patriarchy and Women Abuse*, 2018.

<sup>265</sup> SO Ademiluka, *Patriarchy and Women Abuse*, 2018.

<sup>266</sup> *Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women, Status of treaties*, 1999.

<sup>267</sup> *Briefing Paper, Modifying Gender Role Stereotypes in Children*, written by Professor Laura McCloskey, School of Public Health, Indiana University, Bloomington Indiana, United States of America. Reviewed by the Sexual Violence Research Initiative, Coordinating Group and Secretariat.

<sup>268</sup> GEM, *Women's Entrepreneurship 2016/17 report*.

<sup>269</sup> GEM, *Women's Entrepreneurship 2016/17 report*.

<sup>270</sup> *SG report on the Girl Child*, 2017.

<sup>271</sup> *SG report on the Girl Child*, 2017.

There also exists gender stereotyping in the school curriculum and the academic streaming process, where certain subjects and courses such as the sciences, mathematics and other technical disciplines are tagged masculine, while secretarial studies and home economics are tagged feminine, thereby denying both sexes the opportunities to benefit from exposure to all subject areas.<sup>272</sup> The female inferiority complex established from childhood through social interactions in the home, including the differential levels of support and motivation, influence the aspirations and eventual learning achievement of boys and girls.<sup>273</sup>

Boys and girls become visible and invisible under different conditions in a patriarchal culture. Women are invisible when they do something well, such as “raising children into healthy adults or coming up with a brilliant idea at a business meeting”.<sup>274</sup> Men, on the other hand, become invisible when their behaviour is socially undesirable and might raise questions about the appropriateness of male privilege.<sup>275</sup>

In India, women form half of the population of the country, but their situation has been grim. For centuries, they have been deliberately denied the opportunities for growth in the name of religion and socio-cultural practices.<sup>276</sup> At the social-political plain, women suffered from the denial of freedom even in their homes, repression and unnatural indoctrination, an unequal and inferior status, rigid caste hierarchy and even untouchability.<sup>277</sup> Religious tradition and social institutions have a deep bearing on the role and status of women.<sup>278</sup> The patriarchal system and the gender stereotypes in the family and society have always shown a preference for the male child.<sup>279</sup> Sons are regarded as a means of social security and daughters remained under male domination. Also, the literacy rate of women is much lower than men because boys receive more schooling than girls. India is one of the 43 countries in the world where the male literacy rate is at least 15% higher than female rates.<sup>280</sup>

Subsequently, in most communities in Africa, there exists a great preference for male children.<sup>281</sup> Female children are treated lesser than their male counterparts; unequal and preferential treatments are given to male children than female children.<sup>282</sup> Most households celebrate the birth of a male child and less attention is given to the birth of a female child. Male children are empowered through training and educational programs

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<sup>272</sup> GL Policy brief on Masculinities, Gender links, 2013.

<sup>273</sup> GL Policy brief on Masculinities, Gender links, 2013.

<sup>274</sup> SG report on the Girl Child, 2017.

<sup>275</sup> The New York Times, *Boys to Men: Teaching and Learning about Masculinity in an Age of Change*, 2015.

<sup>276</sup> Global Report, *Know Violence in Childhood: Ending violence in childhood*, New Delhi, 2017.

<sup>277</sup> US Kambhampati, *Children: Patriarchy and the Role of Girls in India's Rural communities*, University of Reading Journal.

<sup>278</sup> US Kambhampati, *Children: Patriarchy and the Role of Girls in India's Rural communities*, University of Reading Journal.

<sup>279</sup> Denise Comanne, *How Patriarchy and Capitalism combine to aggravate the oppression of women*, 2017.

<sup>280</sup> University of Chicago Legal Forum, *Patriarchy and Inequality: Towards a Substantive Feminism*, 2010.

<sup>281</sup> Makama & G.A, *Patriarchy and Gender Inequality in Nigeria: The Way Forward* (2015) Department of Political Science, Faculty of Social Sciences, Nasarawa State University.

<sup>282</sup> Makama & G.A, *Patriarchy and Gender Inequality in Nigeria: The Way Forward* (2015) Department of Political Science, Faculty of Social Sciences, Nasarawa State University.

while female children are made to sit at home and indulge in household duties in preparation for marriage. They are seen as tools for marriage and the sustainability of a man's home.<sup>283</sup>

Addressing patriarchy and its effects in households is an important step in eliminating gender roles and stereotypes in children.<sup>284</sup> Reformative values and beliefs should be reinforced in homes as they are the first agents of socialisation for children and adolescents.<sup>285</sup> Households should give equal treatment to both child gender and provide the same resources for each child while educating young children and adolescents on the importance of gender equality in communities.<sup>286</sup>

## **The Role of Parents in Challenging Gender Stereotyping in the Formative Years**

Undeniably, parents are one of the largest influences over children and will imprint on how children see themselves, who they think they are, who they should be, what they are worth, and what they can or cannot do in society.<sup>287</sup> Because of the stereotypical beliefs and behaviours created in early childhood, parents play a key role in supporting their children's ability to freely and fully determine their own interests and preferences, regardless of gender or social expectations.<sup>288</sup>

Family dynamics can especially influence gender specialization.<sup>289</sup> Parents who have male children are more likely to express conservative gender role views than parents who have female children, with fathers emphasizing the parental breadwinning role of males.<sup>290</sup> The effects of parental expectations of gender roles can especially be seen in the role children play in the household's duties.<sup>291</sup> Generally, girls do more house chores than boys and the type of house chores assigned to children largely depends on gender.<sup>292</sup> Children are greatly influenced by their parent or parents through the roles they are assigned inside and outside their home and through language that is used with children themselves.<sup>293</sup>

While children and young people are exposed from early in their lives to many socialising influences, parents and the family setting are the first players in this process.<sup>294</sup> They also continue to influence, either directly or as role models, their children's personal,

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<sup>283</sup> Makama & G.A, *Patriarchy and Gender Inequality in Nigeria: The Way Forward* (2015) Department of Political Science, Faculty of Social Sciences, Nasarawa State University.

<sup>284</sup> UNDP, *Gender Equality Strategy 2014-2017, The Future We Want: Rights and Empowerment*, New York.

<sup>285</sup> OSCE, *Making laws work for women and men: A practical guide to gender-sensitive legislation*, 2017.

<sup>286</sup> OSCE, *Making laws work for women and men: A practical guide to gender-sensitive legislation*, 2017.

<sup>287</sup> Our Watch, *Challenging gender stereotypes in the early years: the power of parents*, 2015.

<sup>288</sup> Leaper C, *Parents' Socialization of Gender in Children*, 2010.

<sup>289</sup> Leaper C, *Parents' Socialization of Gender in Children*, 2010.

<sup>290</sup> UN-Women, *Raising Children more gender equitably. A guidance note to inform the Development of National Policies and Programmes based on results from the International Men and Gender Equality Survey (IMAGES) - Middle East and North Africa*.

<sup>291</sup> UNICEF, *Early Childhood and Socialization*, 2015.

<sup>292</sup> The Atlantic, *How Parents can teach Kids about Gender Roles*.

<sup>293</sup> NCBI, *Parental influence on Children's socialization to gender roles*, 2007.

<sup>294</sup> UNICEF, *communicating with children: principles and practices to Nurture, Inspire, Excite, Educate and Heal*, 2015.

educational and other choices throughout their years in school and often into early adulthood. Parents also transfer their values, beliefs and cultural traditions to their children.<sup>295</sup> As societies become more egalitarian and governments implement policies to promote gender equality, some parents' traditional beliefs of the roles of boys and girls, in the home and society, may run counter to the principles being promoted in education systems. Therefore, parents must be included as key players in schools' promotion of gender mainstreaming activities and must be assisted in understanding what is involved in the process.<sup>296</sup> Challenging gender stereotyping in schools without the involvement and co-operation of parents could lead to tensions for either boys or girls in relation to educational, training or career choices.<sup>297</sup> Parents may not be aware of the obligations of schools concerning compliance with legislation and should be informed accordingly.<sup>298</sup>

For children who are raised in gender role specific environments, gender stereotypes are more difficult to break.<sup>299</sup> Studies have shown that parents teach most effectively through modelling and therefore those who model behaviours that are non-gender specific will raise children with fewer gender biases.<sup>300</sup>

According to social learning theory, parents are models for gender stereotypes through their behaviours, occupations and interests, but more importantly, they reinforce gender-stereotypical behaviours in their children.<sup>301</sup> Firstly, parents need to become more aware of rigid gender stereotypes and consciously question their existence, necessity and impact.<sup>302</sup> Parents can also promote gender equality by supporting a range of activities for both their sons and daughters.<sup>303</sup> However, it is impossible for parents alone to comprehensively change gender relations.<sup>304</sup> When accompanied by other community interventions, for instance in schools and the workplace, early childhood is a prime opportunity to create effective change.<sup>305</sup> Supporting parents to promote more diverse concepts of gender with their young children may reduce rigid gender stereotypes tied to attitudes that support violence, and create a more gender-equitable community in the long term.<sup>306</sup>

## **The Impact of Gender Stereotypes in Children and Adolescents**

Adolescence is a critical period in the development of gender roles and behaviours, which have potentially life-long effects.<sup>307</sup> Adolescents are defined as young people between the

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<sup>295</sup> Spinner Lauren, *Socialising Gender: The Role of Parents, Peers, and the Media in Children's Gender-Typed Preferences and Stereotypes*, 2017.

<sup>296</sup> S. Indramalar, *Raising Children, not stereotypes*, 2019.

<sup>297</sup> Witt Susan, *Parental influence on children's socialization to gender roles*, 2017.

<sup>298</sup> Witt Susan, *Parental influence on children's socialization to gender roles*, 2017.

<sup>299</sup> UNICEF, *Early childhood and Gender socialization*, 2015.

<sup>300</sup> UNICEF, *Early childhood and Gender socialization*, 2015.

<sup>301</sup> Our Watch, *Challenging gender stereotypes in the early years: the power of parents*, 2016.

<sup>302</sup> NCBI, *Parental influence on Children's socialization to gender roles*, 2007.

<sup>303</sup> SD Witt, *Parental Influence on Children's socialization to gender roles*, 1997.

<sup>304</sup> SD Witt, *Parental Influence on Children's socialization to gender roles*, 1997.

<sup>305</sup> M Hussain, *Gender Stereotyping in Family*, SAGE journals, 2015.

<sup>306</sup> M Hussain, *Gender Stereotyping in Family*, SAGE journals, 2015.

<sup>307</sup> WHO, *Global Accelerated Action for the Health of Adolescents*, 2015.

ages of 10-19 years in the phase known as adolescence, which is a transition period between childhood and adulthood.<sup>308</sup> Children's gender stereotypes of activities and occupations develop quickly during the preschool years, reaching a very high level by kindergarten.<sup>309</sup> With age, children become increasingly knowledgeable about gender stereotypes. However, as the firmness of their stereotypes declines, they begin to recognise the cultural relativity of these norms.<sup>310</sup> Some evidence suggests that boys hold more rigid gender stereotypes than girls and are held to more rigid ideals than girls.<sup>311</sup>

When children move into early adolescence, they began to take on new gender roles associated with femininity and masculinity, often reinforcing socially and culturally conventional gender norms related to being women and men.<sup>312</sup> These gender roles have an impact upon the decisions that young people in early adolescence make, and therefore upon their health and well-being. They have an impact on the choices young adolescents make concerning inter-personal relationships and career choices, which can affect their health and well-being throughout the rest of their lives.<sup>313</sup>

In adolescence, media use is associated with more tolerant views of sexual harassment and more support for the belief that women are at least partially responsible for their sexual assaults.<sup>314</sup> The television programs and films that children and adolescents watch reinforce traditional gender stereotypes.<sup>315</sup> Heavier viewing of gender-traditional TV and film content is linked to the expression of more rigid beliefs about what men and women do and are and how they ought to behave.<sup>316</sup> Accepting rigid stereotypes about the roles and attributes of women and men has consequences for development in childhood, adolescence, and adulthood.<sup>317</sup> As children enter adolescence, media provide lessons on how they are expected to behave in romantic and sexual situations, and these lessons are strongly gendered.<sup>318</sup> There are several ways to combat gender stereotypes and promote positive gender representations, including presenting counter-stereotypes, talking to children about media content, and providing media-literacy education.<sup>319</sup>

Subsequently, unequal responsibility for work in the home socializes children into thinking that these duties are women's only roles, thereby curtailing generational change and

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<sup>308</sup> UNICEF, *Children & Adolescents*, 2010.

<sup>309</sup> UNICEF, *State of the World's Children*, 2016.

<sup>310</sup> Glendon G. UP, *Childhood and Adolescence in cross-cultural perspective*, 2010.

<sup>311</sup> UNICEF, *State of the World's Children*, 2016.

<sup>312</sup> UNICEF, *State of the World's Children*, 2016.

<sup>313</sup> UNICEF, *Early Childhood and Early Gender Socialization*, 2015.

<sup>314</sup> WHO, *Special Supplement on the Global Early Adolescent Study*, 2015.

<sup>315</sup> *Gender Stereotypes in a Children's Television Program: Effects on Girls' and Boys' Stereotype Endorsement, Math Performance, Motivational Dispositions, and Attitudes*, 2018.

<sup>316</sup> *Gender Stereotypes in a Children's Television Program: Effects on Girls' and Boys' Stereotype Endorsement, Math Performance, Motivational Dispositions, and Attitudes*, 2018.

<sup>317</sup> *Gender Stereotypes in a Children's Television Program: Effects on Girls' and Boys' Stereotype Endorsement, Math Performance, Motivational Dispositions, and Attitudes*, 2018.

<sup>318</sup> Safer Internet Day, *Mass media and its influence on stereotypes in the home*, 2019.

<sup>319</sup> Safer Internet Day, *Mass media and its influence on stereotypes in the home*, 2019.

narrowing girls' ambitions.<sup>320</sup> Home chores, caring for siblings, and safety issues keep girls out of school, while expectations of earning money force boys to dropout.<sup>321</sup> By the time children reach age 10, boys' worlds often expand while girls' worlds' contract, resulting in negative consequences that can last a lifetime.<sup>322</sup>

To help fight against gender stereotypes in children and adolescents, UNICEF harnesses the full force of global presence and partners to help further gender equality through the Gender Action Plan.<sup>323</sup> The Gender Action Plan promotes strategies to prevent violence and discrimination against girls, boys and women<sup>324</sup> as well as help adolescent girls and boys to thrive in their learning and pathways to a meaningful life.<sup>325</sup>

## **The Role of Media in Breaking Sex-Role Stereotypes**

From birth, children can quickly learn that a great deal of their lives will be spent dealing with masculinity and femininity.<sup>326</sup> Even though many environmental factors influence the construction of gender, nothing in biology labels behaviours as right or wrong, normal or abnormal.<sup>327</sup> Though parents and teachers teach these lessons intentionally as well as unintentionally; young children also learn through television and other media communications.<sup>328</sup> As has been proven a significant source of cultural gendered messages is television, perhaps most powerful for children who watch up to an average of four hours daily.<sup>329</sup> With impressionable young minds, a wide variety of information can help shape these children's views on male and female roles in society.<sup>330</sup>

Media depictions of men and women as fundamentally "different" appear to perpetuate misconceptions.<sup>331</sup> It has been observed that children also suffer the consequences of exaggerated claims of gender difference -for example, the widespread belief that boys are better than girls in math.<sup>332</sup> However, according to meta-analysis research, boys and girls perform equally well in math until high school, at which point boys do gain a small advantage.<sup>333</sup> Mass media play a unique and important role in the shaping of a society where boys and girls enjoy equal rights.<sup>334</sup>

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<sup>320</sup> Safer Internet Day, *Mass media and its influence on stereotypes in the home*, 2019.

<sup>321</sup> WHO, *Special Supplement on the Global Early Adolescent Study*, 2015.

<sup>322</sup> WHO, *Special Supplement on the Global Early Adolescent Study*, 2015.

<sup>323</sup> ChildtoChild, *Working with Children and Adolescents is critical to change gender stereotypes*, 2015.

<sup>324</sup> ChildtoChild, *Working with Children and Adolescents is critical to change gender stereotypes*, 2015.

<sup>325</sup> ChildtoChild, *Working with Children and Adolescents is critical to change gender stereotypes*, 2015.

<sup>326</sup> Council of Europe, *Combating gender stereotyping and sexism in the media*, 2018.

<sup>327</sup> Council of Europe, *Combating gender stereotyping and sexism in the media*, 2018.

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<sup>329</sup> Council of Europe, *Combating gender stereotyping and sexism in the media*, 2018.

<sup>330</sup> Council of Europe, *Combating gender stereotyping and sexism in the media*, 2018.

<sup>331</sup> J. Archer, "Sex differences in aggression in real-world settings: A meta-analytic review" Vol. 8 *Review of General Psychology*, p. 291-322.

<sup>332</sup> Barnett, R. & Rivers, C. *Same difference: How gender myths are hurting our relationships, our children, and our jobs*, New York: Basic Books.

<sup>333</sup> Barnett, R. & Rivers, C. *Same difference: How gender myths are hurting our relationships, our children, and our jobs*, New York: Basic Books.

<sup>334</sup> Margaret Gallagher, *The Portrayal and Participation of Women in the Media*, UNESCO, 1979.

The impact of the stereotypes spread in the media is very serious on teenagers, both males and females, and it can have extreme lasting effects.<sup>335</sup> The Maltese Safer Internet Centre (SIC) describes this issue and the activities they carry out to fight the negative influence of stereotypes on children and teenagers.<sup>336</sup> Without a doubt, one cannot but admit that mass media are part of the world of today, in particular in developed countries.<sup>337</sup> Newspapers and printed materials, the television, the radio and the internet provide entertainment and are necessary for work and daily life.<sup>338</sup> With the messages sent, highlighted and given importance to, the media has the power to influence people's desires, opinions, beliefs and attitudes.<sup>339</sup> Sometimes, these mental schemes, often based on tradition and resistant to change, produce many simplifications and generalisations which create an incomplete, subjective and unrealistic or false idea of reality.<sup>340</sup> What children and youths see, hear and understand in the media helps them figure out who and what is valued in our society.<sup>341</sup> The media have a lot of power to endorse gender stereotypes.<sup>342</sup>

Males are influenced regarding the limits of their macho persona, being aggressive and not showing feelings and emotions.<sup>343</sup> Females, on the other hand, are influenced regarding their position in society, occupations and, to a much greater extent than males, to their ideal physical image.<sup>344</sup> Explicit and indirect hidden messages online could reinforce stereotypical gender norms, that influence young people who are in the process of developing their identity and views about the roles and opportunities they see available depending on their gender.<sup>345</sup> However, the stereotypes propagated by the media go way beyond just gender stereotypes.<sup>346</sup> Due to their great influence on people's attitudes, the television and the internet, in particular, can depict certain social groups adversely and unrealistically.<sup>347</sup>

The Committee of Ministers Recommendation CM/Rec (2013)1 on gender equality and the media provides specific guidelines and suggests action to ensure gender equality and to combat gender stereotyping.<sup>348</sup> The recommendation is addressed to Member States and media organisations and contains implementation measures to adopt and implement national indicators for gender equality in the media and to support Member States in their

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<sup>335</sup> Media Literary Council, *Stereotyping in media*, 2018.

<sup>336</sup> Maltese Safer Internet Centre, *Mass media and its influence on stereotypes*, 2019.

<sup>337</sup> Maltese Safer Internet Centre, *Mass media and its influence on stereotypes*, 2019.

<sup>338</sup> JT Wood, *The influence of Media on Views of Gender*, New York University 2018 Publication.

<sup>339</sup> JT Wood, *The influence of Media on Views of Gender*, New York University 2018 Publication.

<sup>340</sup> JT Wood, *The influence of Media on Views of Gender*, New York University 2018 Publication.

<sup>341</sup> Council of Europe, *Positive role of the media in combating gender stereotypes and gender-violence in children*, 2017.

<sup>342</sup> Council of Europe, *Positive role of the media in combating gender stereotypes and gender-violence in children*, 2017.

<sup>343</sup> Council of Europe, *Combating gender stereotyping and sexism in Media*, 2017.

<sup>344</sup> UN-Women, *In Focus: Women and the Media*, 2015.

<sup>345</sup> UNESCO, *Challenging gender stereotypes in the Vietnamese*, 2015.

<sup>346</sup> Anne Kiprotich, "Gender Communication Stereotypes: A Depiction of the Mass Media" (2015) Vol. 20(11) *ISOR journal of Humanities and Social Science*, pp. 69-77.

<sup>347</sup> Anne Kiprotich, "Gender Communication Stereotypes: A Depiction of the Mass Media" (2015) Vol. 20(11) *ISOR journal of Humanities and Social Science*, pp. 69-77.

<sup>348</sup> Council of Europe, *The Committee of Ministers Recommendation CM/Rec (2013)1 on gender stereotyping in the media*.

efforts to implement these measures.<sup>349</sup> Also, the European Commission's Roadmap for Equality between Women and Men 2006-2010 (COM (2006)0092) and the related impact assessment (SEC (2006)0275) foster the elimination of gender stereotypes in the media and propose key actions to "support awareness-raising campaigns and exchange of good practices in schools and enterprises on non-stereotyped gender roles and develop dialogue with the media to encourage a non-stereotyped portrayal of women and men".<sup>350</sup> In June 2008, the Council of the European Union adopted Council Conclusions on Eliminating Gender Stereotypes in Society.<sup>351</sup> The Council recognised the responsibility of the media in reproducing culturally transmitted stereotypes and promoting the non-discriminatory and realistic portrayal of girls and boys in society.<sup>352</sup> The Council called on the Member States and the European Commission to promote awareness-raising campaigns and the exchange of good practices on combating gender stereotypes and the advancement of the realistic and non-discriminatory gender roles.<sup>353</sup>

Subsequently, the Audio-visual Media Services Directive of 10 March 2010 requests Member States to ensure that "audio-visual media services provided by media service providers under their jurisdiction do not contain any incitement to hatred based on race, sex, religion or nationality".<sup>354</sup> Additionally, this directive clearly requests Member States to ensure that audio-visual commercial communications do not prejudice or promote any discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, nationality, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation.<sup>355</sup>

In December 2013, UNESCO and partners gathered media organisations, media professionals, academics, policymakers, civil society groups, and development agencies in Bangkok for a Global Forum on Media and Gender.<sup>356</sup> The Forum took the *Beijing Declaration* (1995) as its reference point and resulted in the setting up of a pioneering Global Alliance on Media and Gender (GAMAG).<sup>357</sup> The aim of GAMAG has two main dimensions: Firstly, it will ensure the constructive dialogue between media partners and civil society; secondly, it will enable all stakeholders to collectively give momentum to women's access to expression and decision-making by promoting a gender-inclusive media and communication environment.<sup>358</sup>

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<sup>349</sup> Council of Europe, *Combating gender stereotyping and sexism in the media*, 2018.

<sup>350</sup> EU, *The European Commission's Roadmap for Equality between Women and Men 2006-2010* (COM (2006)0092).

<sup>351</sup> *Council Conclusions on Eliminating Gender Stereotypes in Society* (Doc.9271/08).

<sup>352</sup> *Council Conclusions on Eliminating Gender Stereotypes in Society* (Doc.9271/08).

<sup>353</sup> European Commission, *Opinion on Breaking Gender Stereotypes in the Media*, 2010.

<sup>354</sup> *Directive 2010/13/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 10 March 2010 on the coordination of certain provisions laid down by law, regulation or administrative action in Member States concerning the provision of audio-visual media services (Audio-visual Media Services Directive)*: see also *Directive 2007/65/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2007 amending Council Directive 89/552/EEC on the coordination of certain provisions laid down by law, regulation or administrative action in Member States concerning the pursuit of television broadcasting activities*.

<sup>355</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>356</sup> UNESCO, *Media and Gender: A scholarly Agenda for the Global Alliance on Media and Gender* Published by the International Association for Media and Communication Researchers (IAMCR), 2014.

<sup>357</sup> UN, *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action* (pdf).

<sup>358</sup> UN, *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action* (pdf).

## Conclusion

Gender stereotyping can reduce and strain the development of the natural talents and abilities of girls and boys, as well as their educational, professional experiences and life opportunities in general.<sup>359</sup> Stereotypes about women, both result from and are the cause of deeply engrained attitudes, values, norms and prejudices against women. They are used to justify and maintain the historical relations of power of boys and girls as well as sexist attitudes that hold back the advancement of women.<sup>360</sup> Gender stereotyping and sexism remain a strong force in the functioning of modern societies and exist in all their structures; organisations; and in the relationships between boys and girls.<sup>361</sup> Modern cultures, including social media, are powerful influences in the development of children and young people should be used to challenge gender stereotypes.<sup>362</sup> Most Member States have incorporated the principle of equality between boys and girls into national laws, and other measures have taken to promote gender equality. States must eliminate discrimination against boys and girls in all areas of their lives. This obligation requires Member States to take measures to address gender stereotypes both in public and private life as well as to refrain from stereotyping.<sup>363</sup>

## Further Research

As delegates explore the topic at hand, they should keep in mind the following questions: How are international institutions creating and enforcing laws to restrict gender roles and eliminate harmful gender stereotyping? What actions can Member States take to stop traditional patriarchy that limits the choices and development of male and female children? How can parents and society work towards the elimination of gender roles that stunt the development of children? How can media institutions promote gender equality and eliminate discrimination between the male and female gender? Aside from the effects of gender-violence discussed in this guide, how else do children and adolescents experience violence due to gender roles? What role does UNICEF play in providing children and adolescents with the tools they need to identify and report harmful gender stereotyping and gender-violence? What can the UN system, civil society and regional institutions do to allow children and adolescents enjoy equal rights free from gender stereotyping?

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*This document examines the role of media in combating gender stereotyping and how it affects children and adolescents' views on gender. Delegates will be*

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<sup>359</sup> OHCHR, *Gender Stereotyping*, 2015.

<sup>360</sup> Gender Equality Commission of the Council of Europe, *Gender Equality*, 2015.

<sup>361</sup> Gender Equality Commission of the Council of Europe, *Gender Equality*, 2015.

<sup>362</sup> Gender Equality Commission of the Council of Europe, *Gender Equality*, 2015.

<sup>363</sup> UNICEF, *Breaking Gender Stereotypes*, 2015.

*able to understand the solutions involving the media in eradicating gender stereotyping and harmful gender roles in children and young adults.*

OCHR, *Gender Stereotyping* [Report], available at:

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*This report discusses the issue of gender stereotyping and its effects on children. Stereotyping becomes problematic when it is used as a vehicle to degrade and discriminate women. Abolishing negative gender stereotypes is essential to achieving gender equality, and educators are central to prompting this change. Delegates will be able to have an easier understanding of the role of the international system in eliminating gender stereotyping.*

Our Watch, *Challenging gender stereotypes in early years: Power of the parents* [Evidence Paper], available at: <https://www.ourwatch.org.au/getmedia/e42fe5ce-8902-4efc-8cd9-799fd2f316d7/OUR0042-Parenting-and-Early-Years-AA.pdf.aspx?ext=.pdf> (accessed 3 December 2019)

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United Nations, General Assembly, Seventieth session (2015). *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, available at: <http://undocs.org/A/RES/70/1> (accessed 3 December 2019)

*These SDGs show the progress of the international community as UNICEF and International entities built upon the MDGs by expanding attention to people and children suffering from gender roles. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is at the core of many UN actions and strategies and delegates must be familiar with how it relates to the topic of gender roles and gender stereotyping in children.*

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UNICEF, *State of the World's Children*, 2016 [Report], available at: <https://www.unicef.org/sowc/> (accessed 4 December 2019)

*This report examines which States have ratified and implemented conventions against gender stereotyping. This information will assist delegates in understanding their States' position and if they have ratified or implemented the actions called upon in the statute. This report provides national-level examples as well as successful methods to eliminate harmful gender stereotyping.*

UN-Women, *SG Report on the Girl Child*, 2017 [Report], available at: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/girl-child> (accessed 7 December 2019)

*This document focuses on the report of the harmful impact of gender roles in the lives of the girl child and how it affects their career choices, inter-personal relationships and lives choices. This information will assist delegates in understanding their States' policies on the protection of the girl child.*

World Bank, *Gender Equality, Poverty Inclusion and Inclusive Growth*, 2017 [Report], available at: <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/207481489888852225/Gender-Equality-Poverty-Reduction-and-Inclusive-Growth-2016-2023-Gender-Strategy-2017-Update-to-the-Board> (accessed 8 December 2019)

*This report focuses on the economic impacts of gender stereotyping and how it affects nations' growth. This report will assist delegates in knowing the developing countries suffering from poverty as a result of gender inequality and discrimination.*

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