



NEW YORK, NY

22 - 26 March – Conference A

29 March - 2 April – Conference B

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# UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND BACKGROUND GUIDE 2015

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## NATIONAL MODEL UNITED NATIONS





# THE 2015 NATIONAL MODEL UNITED NATIONS

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Dear Delegates,

We are pleased to welcome you to the 2015 National Model United Nations Conference New York (NMUN•NY)! This year's United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) staff are: Directors Leah Schmidt (Conference A) and Katelyn Connell (Conference B), and Assistant Directors Thejasvi Ramu (Conference A) and Kassi Conley (Conference B). Leah is currently completing dual degrees in International Relations and Women's Studies in Calgary, and works as a gender and sexual diversity educator on campus. This is her third NMUN conference on staff. Katelyn is a graduate of Valdosta State University. At the end of 2014, she completed her service as a Community Health Facilitator in the Peace Corps in Vanuatu. Thejasvi is an undergraduate of Political Science at the University of British Columbia, and will be Assistant Director at NMUN for the first time. Kassi recently graduated from Georgia State University with a degree in Political Science concentrating in International Affairs and the Middle East. She currently volunteers with an organization focused on refugee issues and plans to attend law school in fall 2015.

The topics under discussion for UNICEF are:

- I. Prioritizing Children's Rights in the National and International Development Agendas
- II. Children and Armed Conflict: Reintegration & Recovery
- III. Advancing Human Development for Adolescents

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) is the only council within the United Nations that advocates for the rights of children and equates the rights of the child with sustainable development. As such, UNICEF provides on-the-ground support, research, long-term care, and emergency relief to marginalized populations, while collaborating with existing non-governmental organizations and other United Nations specialized committees to make positive steps forward. With the Millennium Development Goals drawing to a close and drafting of the post-2015 development agenda underway, UNICEF is uniquely poised to influence policy over the future of children's rights.

At NMUN•NY 2015, we are simulating the Executive Board of UNICEF in terms of composition and size; however, delegates are not limited to the strict mandate of the Executive Board, as a budgetary and administrative body, during the conference. On the contrary, for the purposes of NMUN•NY 2015, and in line with the educational mission of the conference, the committee has the ability to make programmatic and policy decisions on issues within the mandate of UNICEF in line with the overall function of the organization.

This background guide is not meant to replace further research and we highly encourage you to consider the background guide, Bibliography, and Annotated Bibliography as starting points as you explore in-depth your countries' policies regarding these topics. In preparation for the conference, each delegation will be submitting a [position paper](#). Please take note of the [NMUN policies](#) on the website and in the [Delegate Preparation Guide](#) regarding plagiarism, codes of conduct/dress code/sexual harassment, awards philosophy/evaluation method, etc. Adherence to these guidelines is mandatory. The [NMUN Rules of Procedure](#) are available to download from the NMUN website. This document includes the long and short form of the rules, as well as an explanatory narrative and example script of the flow of procedure. It is thus an essential instrument in preparing for the conference, and a reference during committee.

If you have any questions concerning your preparation for the Committee or the Conference itself, feel free to contact the Under-Secretaries-General for Development, Sonia Patel (Conference A) and Patrick Parsons (Conference B). You can reach either USG by contacting them at: [usg.development@nmun.org](mailto:usg.development@nmun.org). We wish you all the best for your preparation for the Conference and look forward to seeing you at the conference!

Sincerely,

## Conference A

Leah Schmidt, *Director*  
Thejasvi Ramu, *Assistant Director*

## Conference B

Katelyn Connell, *Director*  
Kassi Conley, *Assistant Director*



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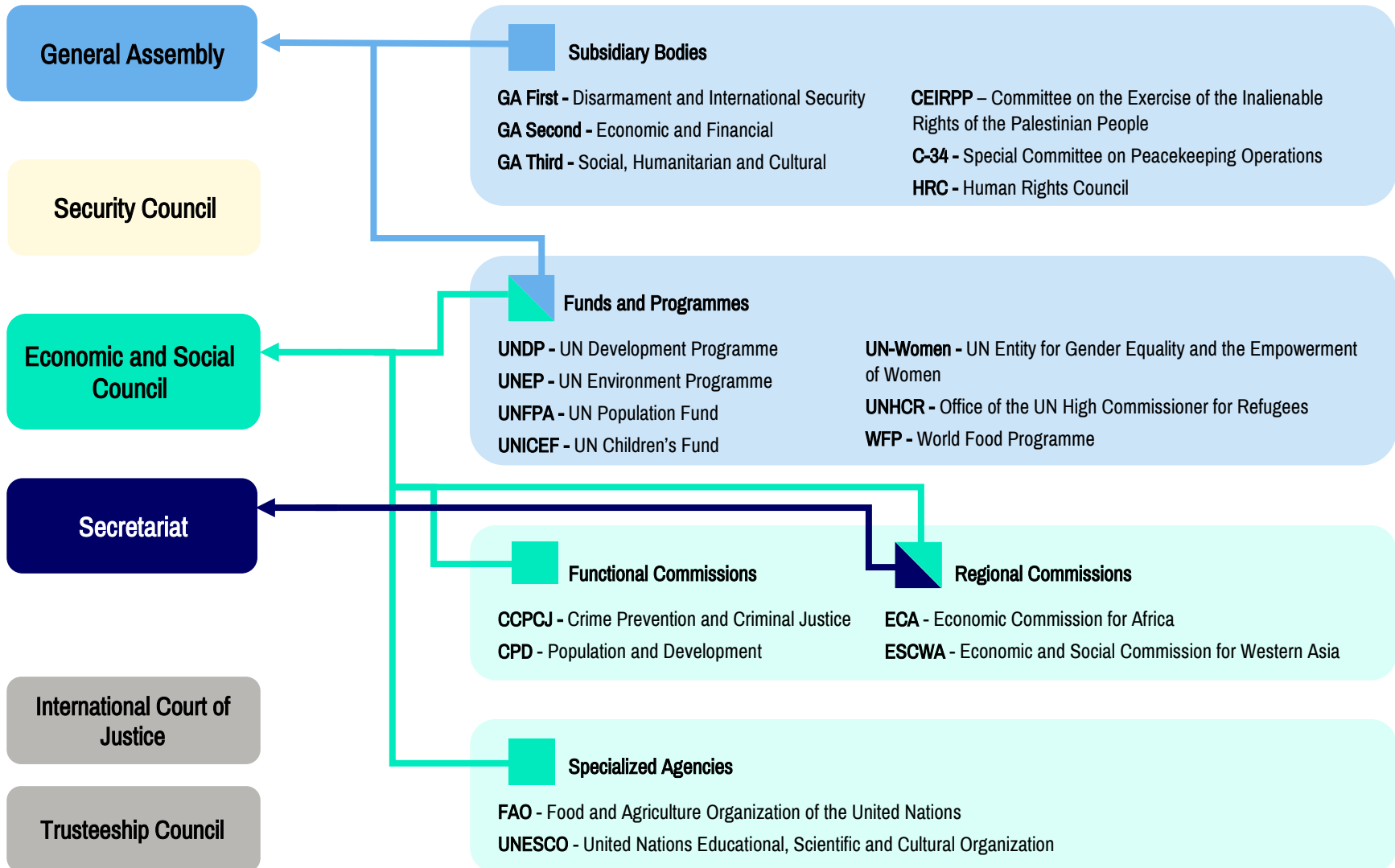
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## Abbreviations

<b>AGD</b>	Age, Gender and Diversity
<b>ARC</b>	Action for the Rights of Children
<b>CEDAW</b>	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
<b>CMAM</b>	Community Management of Acute Malnutrition
<b>CRC</b>	Convention on the Rights of the Child
<b>CSO</b>	Civil society organizations
<b>DDR</b>	Disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration
<b>ECD</b>	Early Childhood Development
<b>ECOSOC</b>	Economic and Social Council
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>GA</b>	General Assembly
<b>GAP</b>	Gender Action Plan
<b>HLP</b>	High-level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda
<b>IANYD</b>	Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development
<b>MDG</b>	Millennium Development Goals
<b>MENA</b>	Middle East and North Africa
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organization
<b>OWG</b>	Open Working Group
<b>PGA</b>	President of the General Assembly
<b>SAP</b>	Structural Adjustment Programs
<b>SDG</b>	Sustainable Development Goal
<b>STI</b>	Sexually transmitted infections
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNGA</b>	UN General Assembly
<b>UNHCR</b>	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children’s Fund
<b>WCDRR</b>	World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction
<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organization
<b>WPAY</b>	World Programme of Action for Youth

## United Nations System at NMUN·NY

This diagram illustrates the UN System simulated at NMUN·NY. It shows where each committee “sits” within the system, to help understand the reportage and relationships between the entities. Examine the diagram alongside the Committee Overview to gain a clear picture of the committee's position, purpose and powers within the UN System.





## Committee Overview

### Introduction

In 1952, the United Nations (UN) elected to indefinitely extend the mandate of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), a small sub-organization created in 1947.<sup>1</sup> Originally established through General Assembly resolution 57(1) as a relief organization for European child refugees after Second World War, the 1952 extension of UNICEF's mandate made it an official UN Programme and Fund, marked with a successful global campaign to against yaws, a disfiguring childhood disease.<sup>2</sup>

The **United Nations Entity Children's Fund** (UNICEF) is a Programme and Fund of the United Nations, reporting to the Economic and Social Council and General Assembly.

At NMUN·NY 2015, we are simulating the Executive Board of UNICEF in terms of composition and size; however, delegates are not limited to the strict mandate of the Executive Board, as a budgetary and administrative body, during the conference. On the contrary, for the purposes of NMUN·NY 2015, and in line with the educational mission of the conference, the committee has the ability to make programmatic and policy decisions on issues within the mandate of UNICEF in line with the overall function of the organization.

### History

The General Assembly (GA) adopted the *Declaration on the Rights of the Child* in 1959.<sup>3</sup> It determined that "children [should have] rights to protection, education, health care, shelter and good nutrition," and formed the basis of the influential future document, the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (CRC) (1990).<sup>4</sup> Throughout the two decades following the Declaration, UNICEF focused on meeting small substantive goals in the area of children's education, and also gaining popular support through the "Ambassador at Large" celebrity positions.<sup>5</sup> In 1979, the first "International Year of the Child" (1979) was declared in General Assembly resolution 31/169, wherein individuals and organizations around the world reaffirmed their commitment to children's rights.<sup>6</sup> UNICEF's focus thus shifted towards holistically addressing the numerous issues facing children.<sup>7</sup> In the 1980s, with the groundbreaking 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.<sup>8</sup>

The results of the "Adjustment with a Human Face" study led to the 1990 adoption of the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (CRC), a document that took UNICEF over ten years to create with the assistance of governments, non-governmental 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

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

<sup>2</sup> UNICEF, *Our History*, 2003.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> UNICEF, *Our History*, 2003; UN General Assembly, *International Year of the Child (A/RES/31/169)*, 1979.

<sup>7</sup> UNICEF, *Our History*, 2003.

<sup>8</sup> UNICEF, *Adjustment with a Human Face*, 2014.

<sup>9</sup> UN General Assembly, *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, 2014.

<sup>10</sup> UNICEF, *Our History*, 2003; UNESCO, *Guide to the Archives of International Organizations*, 2014.

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>

### ***Mandate***

Mandated by the General Assembly, UNICEF advocates for the protection of children's rights, helps meet their basic needs, and expand their opportunities to reach their full potential.<sup>12</sup> Collectively, UNICEF's mandate is based on the concept that "nurturing and caring for children [is] the cornerstone of human progress."<sup>13</sup> The *Convention on the Rights of the Child* is still the guiding force for this mandate.<sup>14</sup> Providing a formalized document definitively identifying children as intrinsically possessing rights, the Convention has guided UN and UNICEF action on the children's rights for the past 25 years, and provides a consistent reminder of how much work on children's rights remains.<sup>15</sup> UNICEF's current aims are structured around the four key thematic areas of: child protection and social inclusion, child survival, education, and emergencies and humanitarian aid.<sup>16</sup> Guided by the *UNICEF Mission Statement*, updated in 2003, UNICEF provides a forum for advocacy on children's rights within the UN by establishing the well-being of children as integral to all human rights.<sup>17</sup>

UNICEF currently serves to meet several key functions as defined through the 2014 Programme of Work, a document which is adopted by the Executive Board through an annual process of hearing agenda items, adopting draft decisions, oral reports, and finalizing the program through a voting process.<sup>18</sup> The 2014 Programme of Work includes a focus on providing leadership on issues facing children globally by setting norms and standards, articulating ethical and human rights-based policy options, monitoring and assessing trends of child rights in relation to global development, and encouraging South-South and triangular cooperation.<sup>19</sup> Through these functions, UNICEF's key actions focus on improving young child survival and development; advocating for basic education and gender equality; combating HIV/AIDS in children; protecting children from violence, exploitation, and abuse; engaging in policy advocacy and partnerships for children's rights; prioritizing humanitarian action; and encouraging increased national capacity-building and enhanced reporting on results.<sup>20</sup>

### ***Governance, Structure and Membership***

Today, UNICEF is an organization that has a presence in 190 countries.<sup>21</sup> Supplementing their work, UNICEF runs 36 National Committees focused on creating productive private and public partnerships, as well as raising revenue for UNICEF.<sup>22</sup> These National Committees manage all national fieldwork at regional headquarters in New York City, United States of America; Geneva, Switzerland; Florence, Italy; Brussels, Belgium; and Tokyo, Japan, and then report to the international Executive Board in New York City.<sup>23</sup> The Executive Board constitutes the highest level of UNICEF administrative management and determines all major policy and budgetary decisions based on reports from the National Committees while also serving as the main functional body of UNICEF.<sup>24</sup> The Executive Board is also most commonly recognized as the supervisory board of the organization, is appointed by the Secretary-General, and observes all United Nations carried out in the areas of children and youth.<sup>25</sup>

As an agency, UNICEF's main goals are met during work undertaken in the field, through country offices created via government partnerships, and collaborative five-year cycles of research and policy within each Member State.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> UNICEF, *Our History*, 2003; UNICEF, *Millennium Development Goals*, 2014.

<sup>12</sup> UNICEF, *UNICEF's Mission Statement*, 2003.

<sup>13</sup> UNICEF, *UNICEF: Who We Are*, 2014.

<sup>14</sup> UNICEF, *UNICEF: Convention on the Rights of the Child*, 2014.

<sup>15</sup> UNICEF, *UNICEF: Convention on the Rights of the Child*, 2014.

<sup>16</sup> UNICEF, *About UNICEF*, 2014.

<sup>17</sup> UNICEF, *UNICEF's Mission Statement*, 2003.

<sup>18</sup> UNICEF *Executive Board, 2014 Programme of Work*, 2014.

<sup>19</sup> UNICEF, *UN Volunteers: Current Partners*, 2014.

<sup>20</sup> UNICEF, *Thematic Report 2012: Policy Advocacy and Partnership for Children's Rights*, 2012.

<sup>21</sup> UNICEF, *UNICEF National Committees*, 2003.

<sup>22</sup> UNICEF, *The Structure of UNICEF*, 2014; UNICEF, *National Committees*, 2014.

<sup>23</sup> UNICEF, *The Structure of UNICEF*, 2014; UNICEF, *UNICEF Headquarters*, 2014.

<sup>24</sup> UNICEF, *The Structure of UNICEF*, 2014.

<sup>25</sup> UNICEF, *UNICEF Executive Board*, 2014.

<sup>26</sup> UNICEF, *The Structure of UNICEF*, 2014; UNICEF, *Info by Country*, 2014.

Comprising 36 Member States, elected to three-year terms by the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), the UNICEF Executive Board functions with an allocation of eight seats to Africa, seven seats to Asia, four seats to Eastern Europe, five seats to Latin America and the Caribbean, and 12 seats allocated to Western Europe and Others.<sup>27</sup> ECOSOC elects members on the Executive Board for three-year terms out of a pool of international government representatives.<sup>28</sup> Outside of the administrative structure, UNICEF also coordinates a Supply Division headquarters in Copenhagen, Denmark, and the Innocenti Research Centre in Florence, Italy, which liaises with policy creators and provides research to the Executive Board.<sup>29</sup>

### ***Functions and Powers***

As a subsidiary body of the General Assembly, UNICEF reports through ECOSOC in accordance with GA resolution 802 (VIII), section 5(b); it sits within the UN Programme and Funds, working to protect human rights.<sup>30</sup> UNICEF has both a normative role in devising and setting international standards, and an operational role carried out at field level in areas such as emergency relief and rehabilitation; health; nutrition; education; water and sanitation; the environment; child protection; and gender issues and development.<sup>31</sup> The Executive Board, as the main supervisors of UNICEF's work, is also fully in charge of all documents adopted by the organization.<sup>32</sup> Important examples of these include the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (1990), which UNICEF was a main contributor towards; the *Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action* (2010); the annual "State of the World's Children" report; the "Progress for Children" report (updated annually or biannually); and the "Committing to Child Survival" report.<sup>33</sup> These reports are presented to ECOSOC and the General Assembly, to deliver information on the progress made by UNICEF in child welfare and which areas need further support, and make recommendations.<sup>34</sup> To meet the mandate, UNICEF can work in coordination with United Nations partners and humanitarian agencies, particularly other intergovernmental organizations. These include: the Task Force on Children and Armed Conflict; the Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development; and the Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict.<sup>35</sup> UNICEF also partners with NGOs through the National Committees, as well as working collaboratively through reports and on-ground action with the governments of relevant member states and civil society in order to ensure that the rights of children can be substantively met within state borders.<sup>36</sup>

### ***Current Priorities***

UNICEF's publicly accessible Strategic Plans are created and approved by the Executive Board every four years.<sup>37</sup> Currently, UNICEF is currently working under the 2014-2017 Strategic Plan and Integrated Budget, guided by the theme of "realizing the rights of every child, especially the most disadvantaged," based on reviews and statistics from UNICEF's previous plans in collaboration with Member States.<sup>38</sup> This Strategic Plan is replacing the previous framework, the twice-extended 2006-2013 Strategic Framework.<sup>39</sup> This document also symbolizes an increased movement towards human rights-based approaches for UNICEF policy creation, as well as an increased focus on the post-2015 UN agenda.<sup>40</sup> Thus, UNICEF's policy focus reiterates the aims of UNICEF's previously stated key actions, while still working under the post-2015 framework.<sup>41</sup> New under this Strategic Plan is an increased collaborative focus with International NGOs on policy creation, as well as the newly created *Peer Review Group*,

<sup>27</sup> UNICEF, *UNICEF Executive Board*, 2014.

<sup>28</sup> UNICEF, *The Structure of UNICEF*, 2014.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid; UNICEF, *UNICEF Executive Board: Home*, 2014.

<sup>30</sup> UNESCO, *Guide to the Archives of International Organizations*, 2014; General Assembly. *Establishment of an International Children's Emergency Fund*, 1946. p. 3.

<sup>31</sup> New Zealand, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *United Nations Handbook 2013-14*, p. 225.

<sup>32</sup> UNICEF, *UNICEF Executive Board*, 2014.

<sup>33</sup> UNICEF, *UNICEF Publications*, 2014.

<sup>34</sup> UNICEF, *What We Do*, 2014.

<sup>35</sup> UN Youth Social Policy and Development Division, *United Nations Inter-agency Network on Youth Development*, 2014; Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, *Strategic Framework 2011-2013*, 2010, p. 5; Security Council, *Security Council Working Group on Children in Armed Conflict*, 2014.

<sup>36</sup> UNICEF, *Civil Society Partnerships*, 2014.

<sup>37</sup> UNICEF, *Strategic Plan 2014-2017*, 2013.

<sup>38</sup> UN ECOSOC, *The UNICEF Strategic Plan 2014-2017*, 2013.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> UN ECOSOC, *Road map towards the UNICEF medium-term strategic plan for 2014-2017*, 2012.

<sup>41</sup> UN ECOSOC, *The UNICEF Strategic Plan 2014-2017*, 2013.



which calls upon experts to “strengthen linkages of the strategic plan results frameworks with country programs of cooperation and global and regional priorities.”<sup>42</sup>

Currently, key areas of focus for UNICEF include increasing organizational efficiency and effectiveness, and meeting aims in HIV/AIDs, immunization, and maternal and newborn health through collaboration with the World Health Organization.<sup>43</sup> Through the 2014 Strategic Plan, UNICEF is also increasingly invested in water sanitation in programming, and water supply issues in conflict areas, through emphasizing capacity development to increase sustainable access to safe drinking water; eliminating open defecation; improved access to adequate sanitation; increasing hand-washing and good hygiene practices; providing safe drinking water, sanitation and hand-washing facilities in schools and health centers (with attention to the needs of girls); and increasing preparedness to respond to humanitarian situations.<sup>44</sup> Thematic focuses such as nutrition, child protection, gender equality, and education remain equally prevalent in UNICEF goals.<sup>45</sup> The most recent sessions of the Executive Board have involved increased discussion on the most recent global thematic evaluation, financing the 2014-2017 Strategic Plan, and the need for extension of ongoing country programs and UN investment in areas such as Timor-Leste, Angola, Comoros, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Palestine, Tunisia, Afghanistan, Sierra Leone, Ecuador, Guatemala, Paraguay, and Bosnia and Herzegovina.<sup>46</sup>

### **Recent Sessions**

On 4-7 February 2014, UNICEF held its First Regular Session of 2014 in New York City, wherein the Executive Board Composition was reviewed, and the Officers of the Executive Board, including a President and Four Vice-Presidents representing each regional group, were elected and presented.<sup>47</sup>

This session began with an oral report on UNICEF’s follow-up of recommendations and decisions of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) Programme Coordinating Board.<sup>48</sup> This was followed by a session updating the board on the progress of a costed action gender plan (GAP) for 2014-2017, created with the aims of aligning with the UNICEF 2014-2017 Strategic Plan through increased reports and inter-agency collaboration.<sup>49</sup> Through the proposed GAP, recently identified gender “bottlenecks” were addressed, and a refined “modeling of success” approach to child gender equality was proposed.<sup>50</sup> The fourth period of the First Annual Session was dedicated to a thematic discussion on the work of UNICEF in humanitarian situations; focusing on the “Strengthening Humanitarian Action Initiative” UNICEF is undertaking as a response to the goals stated in the 2014-2017 Strategic Plan.<sup>51</sup> Regional reports and budget proposals were presented, and the First Annual Session closed with a meeting focusing on increasing the partnership between the European Union and UNICEF.<sup>52</sup>

The Annual Session of 2014 was held from 3-6 June 2014 in New York City.<sup>53</sup> UNICEF’s approach to gender equality was finalized with the passing of the UNICEF Gender Action Plan 2014-2015, which called for an increased focus on gender mainstreaming and a proposal to increase institutional effectiveness of UNICEF through increased accountability, financial targets, and knowledge sharing.<sup>54</sup> Target Member States presented reports, and an extension of ongoing programs was proposed and approved for nine nations.<sup>55</sup> The global synthesis report for the Evaluation of Community Management of Acute Malnutrition (CMAM) was presented, and the report called upon an increased progressive integration of CMAM into national health systems, and finally full government

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> UN ECOSOC, *The UNICEF Strategic Plan 2014-2017*, 2013.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> UN ECOSOC, *The UNICEF Strategic Plan 2014-2017*, 2013; UNICEF, *Second Regular Session 2014*, 2014.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> UNICEF, *First Regular Session of 2014*, 2014.

<sup>48</sup> UNICEF, *UNICEF follow-up to recommendations and decisions of the UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board meetings*, 2013.

<sup>49</sup> UNICEF, *Update on the Progress of a Costed Gender Action Plan*, 2014.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> UNICEF, *Thematic discussion on the work of UNICEF in humanitarian situations*, 2014.

<sup>52</sup> UNICEF, *Partners for change and development: the growing partnership between the European Union and UNICEF*, 2014.

<sup>53</sup> UNICEF, *Annual Session 2014*, 2014.

<sup>54</sup> UNICEF, *UNICEF Gender Action Plan 2014-2017*, 2014.

<sup>55</sup> UNICEF, *Extensions of Ongoing Country Programmes*, 2014.

ownership.<sup>56</sup> The Annual Session concluded with a Special Session on Children in Africa, including key statistics on child survival, protection, and development.<sup>57</sup>

The Second Regular Session was held from 9-12 September 2014, wherein the proposed program of work for UNICEF in 2015 was presented and discussed, with an emphasis on policy advocacy as a major area of concentration for the coming year.<sup>58</sup> This session had a strong focus on emergency humanitarian aid, particularly in areas where mothers and children were at risk, such as Palestinian refugees and children in the Middle East and North Africa, and in states such as Afghanistan, Tunisia, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, and Sierra Leone, among others.<sup>59</sup> There were also positive reports on fundraising efforts, and how these would affect the implementation of the 2014-2017 UNICEF Strategic Plan.<sup>60</sup> Finally, there was discussion of the four field-visits completed by UNICEF this term, to the states of Burkina Faso, Sudan, Panama, and El Salvador.<sup>61</sup> Within these reports, the common themes of chronic poverty, maternal mortality rates, chronic malnutrition, and child marriage were stressed as key areas for UNICEF to implement programming upon, and also accentuated as being under-researched areas.<sup>62</sup> The issues of vulnerable populations, particularly adolescents along with disabled, homeless, and gender-variant children, were exposed as further gaps in current UNICEF research.<sup>63</sup> Of unique interest, was UNICEF's positive response to the current political and street activist involvement by Sudanese youth as being an integral process for creating positive systemic change within their state.<sup>64</sup>

In regards to the post-2015 development agenda, UNICEF has contributed substantively on reports such as the 2013 "Making Education a Priority in the Post-2015 Development Agenda"; "A Post-2015 World Fit for Children: A review of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals Report from a Child Rights Perspective," and "Sustainable Development Starts with Safe, Healthy and Well-Educated Children," among others.<sup>65</sup> These documents, as well as UNICEF's Key Messages for the Post-2015 Agenda," are built upon a recognition of the failure of the MDGs to achieve universality and solve the development disparities among children globally, particularly in areas where efforts to maintain peace and security have been unsuccessful.<sup>66</sup> UNICEF's overall goal is to reduce maternal and newborn mortality down to 0%, as well as increase child health through the "Scaling Up Nutrition Initiative."<sup>67</sup> In these plans, UNICEF asserts that investing in both funds and education for these target populations in developing nations will be the key route to meeting target goals in this area.<sup>68</sup> UNICEF further attests that in order to meet this investment, nations should rely further on collaborative partnerships with non-

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<sup>56</sup> UNICEF, *Evaluation of Community Management of Acute Malnutrition (CMAM): Global Synthesis Report*, 2014.

<sup>57</sup> UNICEF, *Special focus session on Africa's Children*, 2014.

<sup>58</sup> UNICEF, *Second Regular Session 2014*, 2014.

<sup>59</sup> UNICEF, *UNICEF Executive Board: Second Regular Session 2014*, 2014; UNICEF, *Revised Country Programme Document: Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela*, 2014, p. 1-11; UNICEF, *Revised Country Programme Document: Afghanistan*, 2014, pp. 1-12; UNICEF, *Revised Country Programme Document: Tunisia*, 2014, pp. 1-11; UNICEF, *Revised Country Programme Document: Sierra Leone*, 2014, pp. 1-12; UNICEF, *Revised Country Programme Document: Palestinian children and women in Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic and the State of Palestine (2015-2016)*, 2014, p. 1-15.

<sup>60</sup> UNICEF, *Financing the 2014-2017 UNICEF Strategic Plan*, 2014, pp. 1-7.

<sup>61</sup> UNICEF, *UNICEF Executive Board: Second Regular Session 2014*, 2014.

<sup>62</sup> UNICEF, *UNICEF Executive Board: Second Regular Session 2014*, 2014; UNICEF, *Report of the field visit to Burkina Faso by Members of the Bureau of the UNICEF Executive Board: 26 April to 2 May 2014*, 2014, pp. 1-15; UNICEF, *Report of the field visit of members of the UNICEF Executive Board to Sudan: 26 April to 2 May 2014*, 2014, pp. 1-15; UNICEF, *Report of the joint field visit of the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS, UNICEF, UN Women and EFP to Panama and El Salvador*, 2014, pp. 1-14.

<sup>63</sup> UNICEF, *Report of the field visit to Burkina Faso by Members of the Bureau of the UNICEF Executive Board: 26 April to 2 May 2014*, 2014, pp. 1-15; UNICEF, *Report of the field visit of members of the UNICEF Executive Board to Sudan: 26 April to 2 May 2014*, 2014, pp. 1-15; UNICEF, *Report of the joint field visit of the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS, UNICEF, UN Women and EFP to Panama and El Salvador*, 2014, pp. 1-14.

<sup>64</sup> UNICEF, *Report of the field visit of members of the UNICEF Executive Board to Sudan: 26 April to 2 May 2014*, 2014, pp. 1-15.

<sup>65</sup> UNICEF, *Making Education a Priority in the Post-2015 Development Agenda*, 2013; UNICEF, *A Post-2015 World Fit for Children: A review of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals Report from a Child Rights Perspective*, 2013; UNICEF, *Sustainable Development Starts with Safe, Healthy and Well-Educated Children*, 2013.

<sup>66</sup> UNICEF, *UNICEF's Key Messages for the Post-2015 Agenda*, 2014.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

governmental actors, as well as South-South triangulation collaboration.<sup>69</sup> For the future, UNICEF's overarching goal of the post-2015 framework can be summarized through their framework mission of creating "A World Fit for Children."<sup>70</sup>

### ***Conclusion***

UNICEF, as an organization, acts to represent the marginalized group of children with efficiency, sustainability, and dignity. As the only internationally ratified organization in the world representing the rights of children, UNICEF holds a unique niche within the international sphere and provides an unparalleled forum for international collaboration.<sup>71</sup> However, their work is far from over. As the United Nations shifts towards to post-MDG framework, it is UNICEF's role to spearhead successful initiatives that will place children first.<sup>72</sup> With increasing concerns surrounding issues such as the representation of adolescents and the rehabilitation of children in conflict, it is UNICEF's responsibility to serve as the voice of those who are unable to represent themselves in order to lead to an increased global recognition of children's rights.

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<sup>69</sup> UNICEF, *UNICEF's Key Messages for the Post-2015 Agenda*, 2014.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid; UN, *United Nations Special Session on Children*, 2002.

<sup>71</sup> UNICEF, *About UNICEF*, 2014.

<sup>72</sup> UNICEF, *UNICEF's Key Messages for the Post-2015 Agenda*, 2014.



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*This page provides access to the newly created UNICEF medium-term strategic plan, which will likely shape the focus and aims of UNICEF over the next three years. On top of an increased focus on humanitarian action, gender equality, and policy advocacy, the new plan also includes details such as a policy timeline and an updated roadmap towards the plan, both of which include details about how the work relates to the integrated budget of UNICEF. Delegates will find the Executive Board Informal Presentations, Peer Review Groups results, session-wide workshop presentations, and other related links on this page, to be particularly useful for researching the in-depth goals of the strategy.*

United Nations Children's Fund. (2013). *Executive Board of the United Nations Children's Fund: Report on the first regular and second regular sessions and annual session of 2013* [Report]. Retrieved 11 July 2014 from: [http://www.unicef.org/about/execboard/files/2013-7-Rev1-UNICEF\\_EXB\\_Report-ODS-English.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/about/execboard/files/2013-7-Rev1-UNICEF_EXB_Report-ODS-English.pdf)

*This document is key to providing a generalized overview of the action taken and completed by UNICEF during 2013. On top of providing basic information, such as the 2013 Executive Board Membership, this document delves into the creation of the medium-term strategic plan for 2014-2017, and the influence of other reporting ECOSOC sub-committees on this document. Delegates will find this publication useful in providing a brief but in-depth overview of recent action taken in the committee, and UNICEF's plans for the next short-term and medium-term periods.*

United Nations Children's Fund. (2013). *UNICEF: Annual Report 2013* [Report]. Retrieved 11 July 2014 from: [http://www.unicef.org/publications/files/UNICEF\\_Annual\\_Report\\_2013\\_web\\_26\\_June\\_2014.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/publications/files/UNICEF_Annual_Report_2013_web_26_June_2014.pdf)

*In collaboration with the Executive Board's Report on UNICEF progress in 2013, the UNICEF: Annual Report acts as a public-friendly document that breaks down the basic aims of UNICEF throughout 2013, and explores the key aims for the organization's future. On top of acknowledging the increased focus on topics such as humanitarian challenges and aiding the most vulnerable children, this document also explores key policy adjustments through the chapter on "Managing for Results." Delegates will most likely find this document an accessible way to retrieve key statistical and social programming results, and will also have the benefit of viewing brief sidebars on current UNICEF case studies.*

United Nations Children's Fund. (2013). *UNICEF: Post-2015 Millennium Development Agenda* [Website]. Retrieved 11 July 2014 from: <http://www.unicef.org/post2015/>

*The best guide to UNICEF's goals and approaches following the completion of the Millennium Development Goals in 2015, this document should be the delegate's key resource in examining UNICEF's future actions. Providing links to Key Resources and Key Website, this page also links to news that is continually updated with the most up-to-date developments on the agenda. It also provides a link to the very useful page "UNICEF in Action," on which UNICEF provides links between their mandate, mission, and future actions on human rights goals.*

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*This document provides a brief but important overview of the main goals of UNICEF's 2014 Programme of Work. It provides a breakdown of key goals into areas of discussion, including "Resources, Budgetary, and Financial Matters," "Evaluation, Audit, and Oversight Matters," among others. Most importantly, it also provides a itemization of how the UNICEF Executive board goes through their policy decision-making process, which is incredibly useful to understanding the procedure involved in the creation of UNICEF documents.*



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## I. Prioritizing Children’s Rights in National and International Development Agendas

*“Children’s rights and well-being should remain at the centre of the post-2015 agenda. Investment in children is a fundamental means to eradicate poverty, boost shared prosperity, and enhance inter-generational equity. It is also essential for strengthening their ability to reach their potential as productive, engaged, and capable citizens, contributing fully to their families and societies.”<sup>73</sup>*

### **Introduction**

As the establishment of the post-2015 development agenda remains high on the global agenda, the responsibility to recognize and uphold the rights of children has become a major priority throughout national and international development initiatives. Some of the basic rights of children laid out under international law include the right to development with dignity; a name and nationality; access to basic necessities such as food, housing, and medical care; special care if handicapped; love and understanding; a free education; protection in dangerous situations; and peace, love, and friendship “without distinction or discrimination on account of race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status, whether of himself or of his family.”<sup>74</sup> Assisting children in achieving their full potential is also investing in the progress of humanity as a whole. It is in the crucial first years that interventions make the most significant differences in a child’s physical, intellectual, and emotional development.<sup>75</sup> Investing in children means achieving development goals faster, as children constitute a large percentage of the world’s poor.<sup>76</sup> Therefore, a focus on ensuring the inclusion of children’s rights and well-being in all spheres of life is vital to the success of the post-2015 development agenda.

The promotion of such development policies can occur through a variety of methods including data collection and research; planning and policy-making at all levels of government; implementing and monitoring mechanisms such as specific targets and progress indicators; and forming partnerships with United Nations (UN) entities, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the private sector, and civil society organizations (CSOs).<sup>77</sup> It is important to identify and address sources of marginalization and inequity by intervening at a young age before psychological or physical damage occurs from being raised in poverty.<sup>78</sup> Preventing discriminatory cycles resulting from the economic and social stratification of society is imperative for children to reach their full potential and contribute to society as active, informed citizens regardless of their upbringing.<sup>79</sup> Increased human development initiatives for youth and children combined with the active participation of youth in the policy-making and monitoring processes, equalizes outcomes, and positions them to become global citizens that are better able to attain civic, social, and economic awareness and success.<sup>80</sup> Proper investment in children at a young age and the cessation of the intergenerational poverty cycle will greatly benefit society, both economically and socially.<sup>81</sup>

### **International and Regional Framework**

Early in the history of the UN, Member States recognized that children had rights and incorporated this view into the body of international humanitarian law with the establishment of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948), the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* (1966), and the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* (1976).<sup>82</sup> On 20 November 1989, the UN General Assembly (UNGA) adopted the text of the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (CRC), which entered into full force in September 1990, creating for the first time a legally binding instrument to cover the full range of human rights and the unique rights of the child.<sup>83</sup> With nearly all states a party to the CRC, it has become the most widely and rapidly supported human

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<sup>73</sup> UNICEF, *A Post-2015 World Fit for Children: Sustainable Development Starts and Ends With Safe, Healthy, and Well-Educated Children*, 2013, p. 1.

<sup>74</sup> SOS Children’s Villages USA, *Children’s Rights: What to Know*.

<sup>75</sup> UNICEF, *The Millennium Declaration and Development Goals: A Blueprint for Progress*.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>77</sup> UNICEF, *Strategic Plan 2014-2017*, 2014.

<sup>78</sup> UNICEF, *Implementing Child Rights in Early Childhood*, 2006.

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

<sup>80</sup> Bond Child’s Rights Group, *Children’s Rights and the Post-2015 Development Agenda*, 2012, pp. 1-2.

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

<sup>82</sup> UNICEF, *Path to the CRC*, 2014.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*; UNICEF, *Protecting Children’s Rights*, 2014.

rights treaty to date and serves as the basis for national legislation and policy-making regarding children.<sup>84</sup> The right to life, survival and development, non-discrimination, the promotion of a child's best interest, and respect for the child's views form the cornerstones of the Convention and affirm that a child's rights are "inherent, indivisible, interdependent, and implicit."<sup>85</sup> The responsibility falls on Member States, however, to develop policies and laws at the national level to meet the requirements laid out in the Convention and ensure that children are given the ability and resources to develop to their fullest potential.<sup>86</sup>

Many additional documents have since placed an emphasis on furthering the rights of children, which cross cut nearly every facet of society. These documents include: the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women* (1979) and the *Beijing Platform for Action* (1995), which both focus particularly on women's empowerment and even more specifically on the girl child, and the *Istanbul Declaration* (2013), which addresses organ trafficking, transplant tourism, and transplant commercialism further demonstrating that the world recognizes that children require special protections.<sup>87</sup>

### ***Role of the International System***

From the 2000 *United Nations Millennium Declaration* (A/RES/55/2), a list of global priorities known as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were created.<sup>88</sup> At the turn of the millennium, higher living standards, fresh opportunities, and rapid growth were expected to ensue as globalization increased.<sup>89</sup> Yet even with globalization illuminating the prospects of a brighter future, many states still faced conditions of poverty, conflict, and a degraded environment.<sup>90</sup> Some 1.1 billion people were forced to live on less than \$1 a day, with 30 percent being children.<sup>91</sup> These circumstances led to six of the eight MDGs addressing the development and well-being of children by promoting measurable goals and targets aimed at decreasing childhood malnutrition and infant mortality; increasing maternal health; providing access to healthcare, sanitation, and education; and decreasing the risk of exploitation, violence and instability, and HIV/AIDS.<sup>92</sup> A vital step in achieving the MDGs was made by the 2002 UNGA special session focused on "A World Fit for Children."<sup>93</sup> The outcome of the session reaffirmed the world's commitment to improving the situation of children and adolescents by setting 21 specific goals and targets with direct input from youth participation.

While making tremendous strides towards meeting the MDGs, the goals expire in 2015 leaving unmet goals.<sup>94</sup> The way the goals were measured failed to encourage efforts to reach some the most vulnerable segments of society, especially those marginalized because of their sex, ethnicity, disability or residence.<sup>95</sup> Matters such as child marriage, gender-based violence, early pregnancy, and other forms of damaging practices were omitted, despite the pivotal role they play in holding back efforts to reduce poverty.<sup>96</sup> New goals should build upon the progress that the MDGs achieved through initiatives and program designed to achieve their targets such as "Getting to Zero" aimed at eradicating child mortality.<sup>97</sup> A continued focus should be placed on social development, poverty eradication, hunger, education, and child and maternal health and mortality taken forward in the post-2015 framework, with the aim of reaching all children.<sup>98</sup> An example of how this might take form in the post-2015 agenda is provided by the Bond Child's Rights Group in regard to education. New commitments should seek to move beyond a focus on the completion of primary education to include a focus on ensuring transition into lower secondary, complemented by a

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<sup>84</sup> UNICEF, *Path to the CRC*, 2014.

<sup>85</sup> UNICEF, *Fact Sheet: A summary of the rights under the on the Convention of the Rights of the Child*, 2014.

<sup>86</sup> Lansdown, Save the Children UK, *Every Child's Right to be Heard: A Resource Guide on the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child General Comment No. 12*, 2011, pp. 32-33.

<sup>87</sup> UNICEF, *Convention on the Rights of a Child: Protecting Children's Rights*, 2014.

<sup>88</sup> UNICEF, *The Millennium Declaration and Development Goals: A Blueprint for Progress*.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>93</sup> UNICEF, *United Nations Special Session on Children: A world fit for Children: An agenda both visionary and concrete*, 2002.

<sup>94</sup> Bond Child's Rights Group, *Children's Rights and the Post-2015 Development Agenda*, 2012, p. 3.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 2-3.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*

focus on the quality of education and educational outcomes.<sup>99</sup> They encourage the framework to incentivize a quality education, which promotes gender equality, non-discrimination, and human rights principles.<sup>100</sup> Education is imperative for development and the eradication of poverty, as it teaches youth how to improve their quality of life, take advantage of resources and opportunities at their disposal, and prepares them to later enter the labor market and earn a sustainable living.

Civil society also plays an important role in promoting children’s rights both in terms of policy and putting forth their observations for the development of a post-2015 agenda that prioritizes children, as well as in practice, initiating projects and programs to promote youth inclusiveness and engagement. The Overseas Development Institute, a leading think-tank on international development and humanitarian issues, put forth a collection of briefings making the case for putting a youth-lens on all development policies.<sup>101</sup> They discuss the implications of investing in youth as catalysts for poverty reduction, economic growth, and good governance on international development policy.<sup>102</sup> Another organization, Restless Development, led a pilot project in the Ugandan district of Karamoja, which has been affected by decades of armed conflict, famine, and extreme poverty.<sup>103</sup> In the program, Restless Development professionally trained and supported 14 young Karimojong Volunteer Development Professionals who reached 3,365 young people, leading activities to engage their peers in conflict resolution and sexual reproductive health awareness, while establishing youth income-generating projects in rural areas.<sup>104</sup> The projects results were astounding with a 45% increase in young males using condoms, a 36 percent increase in those reporting food security, and a reported 84% increase in greater capacity to respond to conflict.<sup>105</sup>

The UN Major Group on Youth and Children has emphasized disaster risk reduction and more resilient societies through safer schools and hospitals, making sure the proper capacities for risk assessment exist for the steady and informed delivery of basic social services, with an emphasis on health, water, education and protection.<sup>106</sup> They also advocate ensuring adequate financial support, for example by including youth and children in national budgets and policy creation.<sup>107</sup> Plan International leads the way in reevaluating its own policies, partnerships, and practices to achieve greater influence and a higher impact on improving, protecting, and promoting the rights and circumstances of children worldwide.<sup>108</sup> It has several initiatives in collaboration with its “One Plan,” getting to 2015 strategy, including its “Because I am a Girl” campaign, which focuses on the marginalization and inclusion of girls who are less likely to be enrolled in school, receive medical care, or achieve food security.<sup>109</sup> Also notable is their intention to create the “Plan Academy,” an institute to focus on high-quality programming for children for both development and emergencies.<sup>110</sup> Civil society partnerships, projects, and participation are crucial in the formulation of a successful post-2015 agenda, as they not only highlight the importance of children’s rights in policy, but also pioneer them in practice.

### ***Post-2015 Development Agenda and Children***

The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and many other UN entities are participating in the formulation of a new, inclusive post-2015 development agenda that prioritizes children’s rights across all levels of government and society. The foundation for the development policy and programming in the UN system reflects the core principles of equity, participation, and protection, utilizing lessons learned by the shortcomings and successes of the MDGs as a starting point.<sup>111</sup> To this end, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon established the UN System Task Team to coordinate preparations for the development agenda beyond 2015.<sup>112</sup> He also appointed a High-level Panel of Eminent Persons

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<sup>99</sup> Bond Child’s Rights Group, *Children’s Rights and the Post-2015 Development Agenda*, 2012, p. 3.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> Overseas Development Institute, *Youth and international development policy: the case for investing in young people*, 2013.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> Restless Development, *Direct Delivery*.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> UN MGCY, *Statement from 3<sup>rd</sup> Major Groups Consultation for WCDRR*, 2014.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> Plan International, *One Plan, One Goal: Plan’s Strategy to 2015*, 2011.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

<sup>111</sup> Bond Child’s Rights Group, *Children’s Rights and the Post-2015 Development Agenda*, 2012, p. 4.

<sup>112</sup> UN System Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda, *Realizing the Future We Want for All: Report to the Secretary-General*, 2012.

on the Post-2015 Development Agenda (HLP) in 2012, consisting of leaders from national and local governments, civil society, and the private sector, along with the joint leadership of President Yudhoyono of Indonesia, President Johnson-Sirleaf of Liberia, and Prime Minister Cameron of the United Kingdom.<sup>113</sup>

The World We Want initiative was designed by the UN Development Group to promote discussions on the post-2015 development agenda and to promote global ownership, comprehensively and ambitiously structured planning, and multi-stakeholder partnerships.<sup>114</sup> To ensure the new agenda's success, ideas have been exchanged by individuals, states, and other interested groups through a set of eleven multi-stakeholder thematic consultations, and additionally through national consultations, which began in May 2012.<sup>115</sup> The UN and its partners have also created the global MyWorld Survey, which through online and offline methods, asked global citizens to vote on the six most important issues that they thought would make the largest difference in their lives.<sup>116</sup> As the largest global survey to date, with over 5 million votes cast, the survey will remain open until the formulation of the new 2015 agenda to ensure the priorities of individual across every social, economic, and geographical range are taken into consideration before the final results will be shared with the Secretary-General.<sup>117</sup>

The thematic consultations, in addition to the survey, are being explored to evaluate the potential role of various themes and interlinkages within the framework.<sup>118</sup> The eleven themes have been included in a forum for discussions on: inequalities, health, governance, education, growth and employment, environmental sustainability, food security and nutrition, conflict and fragility, population dynamics, energy and water, giving individuals and groups alike the ability to submit specific ideas and proposals to be considered for incorporation in the post-2015 agenda in an attempt to make its achievement relevant worldwide across both developing and developed nations.<sup>119</sup> The regional economic commissions are engaged in regional consultations, which will come to fruition in a report on a regional perspective on the post-2015 development agenda.<sup>120</sup> The national consultations give Member States an avenue to take into consideration different national realities, capacities, and levels of development when articulating their vision of the new agenda.<sup>121</sup> For an ambitious post-2015 development agenda to be achieved, multi-stakeholder partnerships must be utilized between all levels of government, individuals, and civil society alike to ensure the incorporation of children's rights into the goals themselves and into practice in all levels of society.

#### *UNICEF's Role Post-2015*

Included in all of the aforementioned consultations are discussions on how to incorporate children and their specific needs and rights into the new agenda. With this in mind, UNICEF has developed a list of key tasks identifying the previous agenda's shortcomings and highlighting what is necessary to include in the new development agenda to fully realize the rights of children.<sup>122</sup> To achieve these key priorities, UNICEF advocates legislation, policies, programs, and budgets that are based on sound data collection, policy advisement, and advocacy through the leveraging of national resources and the influence of non-governmental entities and affected groups.<sup>123</sup> These national and international structures and frameworks must be based on principles of equality, promote children's rights, reflect equity, support further measures to address economic and social inclusion, improve accountability and monitoring mechanisms, and advocate for social protection floors and the decentralized provision of basic essential services.<sup>124</sup> These actions will help address the multidimensional aspects of child poverty through official and non-official individual and collaborative entities. They will also contribute to reducing vulnerability and promoting the realization of child's rights and participation of youth and children in greater society.

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<sup>113</sup> UN High Level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda, *The Secretary-General's High-Level Panel of eminent persons on the Post-2,15 Development Agenda*.

<sup>114</sup> UN DESA, Division for Sustainable Development, *The Post-2015 Process*, 2014.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>116</sup> UN My World, *The United Nations Survey for a Better World*.

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

<sup>118</sup> UN DESA, Division for Sustainable Development, *The Post-2015 Process*, 2014.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*

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

<sup>122</sup> UNICEF, *Key Asks on the Post-2015 Development Agenda*, 2013, p. 1.

<sup>123</sup> UNICEF, *Thematic discussion on results and lessons learned in the medium-term strategic plan focus area 5: Policy advocacy and partnerships for children's rights*, 2012, p. 1.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*

To demonstrate the collaborative emphasis, as a part of their 15-year ongoing partnership UNICEF is co-hosting regional workshops with the European Union (EU).<sup>125</sup> The workshops are tailored to create awareness and to inform targeted participants of the materials and resources under the Child Rights Toolkit, which was designed by UNICEF and the EU to increase understanding of how children’s rights can be mainstreamed in development through practical application and concrete programming tools.<sup>126</sup> The workshops are designed for a wide range of stakeholders representing the different target groups addressed by the Toolkit: regional and national officials, civil society representatives, UN agencies, and donors.<sup>127</sup> The entire Toolkit and associated materials have also been published online to enhance accessibility and convenience.<sup>128</sup>

The rights of children also have been recognized as playing a role in business development and action. In 2012, in conjunction with UNICEF and Save the Children, the UN Global Compact released the *Children’s Rights and Business Principles*, which have since raised awareness of children and youth’s role as business stakeholders.<sup>129</sup> The principles included a comprehensive framework for business action to respect and support children’s rights.<sup>130</sup> The ten principles, each with multiple subtopics, fall into three arenas: the workplace, the marketplace, and the community and the environment.<sup>131</sup> For example, in the workplace, the elimination of child labor and the creation of decent work for young people, parents, and caregivers are at the forefront.<sup>132</sup> Ensuring that facilities, services, and products are safe for children, and ensuring responsible marketing respects the rights of children falls under the marketplace.<sup>133</sup> Lastly, in terms of the community and environment, protecting children in emergencies, supporting children’s rights in security arrangements, and reinforcing government and community efforts to protect and respect children are considered important.<sup>134</sup> The second meeting on the *Children’s Rights and Business Principles* took place in Nairobi, Kenya, in May 2014, where organizations evaluated the progress of businesses and governments in Africa and also discussed how information and communication technologies can be channeled into promoting and supporting the rights of children in Africa and abroad.<sup>135</sup> Following the conclusion of this meeting, a collection of good business practices regarding each principle was put forth in a summary document entitled *Children’s Rights and Business Principles-Good Practices per Principle*.<sup>136</sup> In addition to the workshops offered by UNICEF and other UN organizations, various independent organizations and NGOs offer workshops and educational programming on broad and specialized issues related to recognizing children’s rights and the responsibility of the international community to protect them. An example of such includes the Human Rights Education Associates, which offers a range of e-learning courses and training workshops on children’s rights, child development, participation and protection.<sup>137</sup>

### ***Strengthening National Policy Frameworks***

The restructuring or creation of national development agendas to prioritize children’s rights is paramount to ensuring children are afforded the rights and protections outlined for them in the CRC on the national and sub-national levels. Governments must reaffirm their commitments, bearing in mind the obligations laid out within the CRC and goals of the Millennium Declaration as a foundation for any future agenda in the context of children. Mainstreaming children’s rights in national strategies, policies and programs through placing economic and social policy work seeks to place children’s issues high on the agenda in all sectors of government planning.<sup>138</sup>

In the quest to eliminate discrimination and extreme child poverty, national policy planning and program development processes must take into account the most marginalized and vulnerable groups of children and the

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<sup>125</sup> UNICEF, *Child Rights Toolkit: Workshops*.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*

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

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>129</sup> UN Global Compact, *Children’s Rights and Business Principles*, 2014.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>131</sup> UN Global Compact, *New Tools on Children’s Rights and Business*, 2014.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*

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

<sup>135</sup> UN Global Compact, *Children’s Rights and Business Principles*, 2014.

<sup>136</sup> UN Global Compact, *Children’s Rights and Business Principles-Good Practices per Principle*, 2014.

<sup>137</sup> Human Rights Education Associates, *Children’s Rights, Child Development, Participation, and Protection*.

<sup>138</sup> UNICEF, *Thematic discussion on results and lessons learned in the medium-term strategic plan focus area 5: Policy advocacy and partnerships for children’s rights*, 2012.

positive economic and social returns of investing in Early Childhood Development (ECD).<sup>139</sup> Research from the World Bank has shown that adult income inequality is related to early life circumstances, with children often lacking care, protection, and access to basic services, which can permanently degrade physical and mental health of a child beyond repair.<sup>140</sup> The underutilization of human potential undermines poverty eradication and sustainable development and further hinders building human capacity. States can utilize data collection, research, and qualitative analysis like the World Bank research to formulate better national policies that address core structural problems responsible for exclusion.<sup>141</sup> The child poverty and disparities analysis applied at national levels involves collaboration between UNICEF, ministries of finance and planning, national statistics offices, and universities.<sup>142</sup> This analysis ensures that there is adequate funding for programs, clear communication to prioritize areas of focus and ensure coordination for effectiveness, and effective partnerships for the implementation of those programs.<sup>143</sup> Material deprivations are recognized and examined through seven dimensions in the national level offices including health, nutrition, education, water, sanitation, information, and shelter.<sup>144</sup> Policy planners analyze the data for inconsistencies, equity gaps, and inequalities.<sup>145</sup> They strive to use a human rights-based approach and results-based methods in instituting development policies encouraging growth where deficiencies in strategy or the current situation are identified.<sup>146</sup> This leads to sound policies, norms, and standards of accountability, as well as the incorporation of children's rights into all facets of national development.

With greater local institutional capacity and the mobilization of community groups, local planners and community actors can increasingly set, pursue, and monitor their own development goals within overall national frameworks.<sup>147</sup> This can form the basis for greater mutual accountability for development through performance contracts with health, water, and education providers or co-responsibility compacts built around local goals.<sup>148</sup>

In May 2007, the National Assembly of Namibia convened the Children's Parliament of Namibia.<sup>149</sup> Two students and one teacher from each of the country's thirteen regions participated in the program.<sup>150</sup> The program, recommended by the African Children's Parliamentary Union Initiative, aimed at teaching children to realize and demand their own and other children's rights, including those of underprivileged children.<sup>151</sup> As part of their Plan of Action, they coherently discussed and made viable recommendations on five thematic areas including rights and protections, education, care and support, health and nutrition, and management and networking.<sup>152</sup> This allowed children to build leadership skills, participate in their own lives, and build skills helpful to successful futures.<sup>153</sup> This and other initiatives at the regional and national level empower children to become active members of society, which benefits the younger and older generations alike.

### ***Identifying and Addressing Inequalities***

With the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the CRC approaching, UNICEF has declared 2014 as the *Year of Innovation for Equity* to encourage creative solutions to the challenges that still deny many children the rights and benefits of development.<sup>154</sup> According to the Open Working Group (OWG) Report, there are several critical considerations for the development of goals and targets for the post-2015 agenda.<sup>155</sup> First and foremost, the goals of the new agenda need to be universal in nature and build on the successes of the MDGs, so that they protect children's rights without

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<sup>139</sup> UNICEF, *Implementing Child Rights in Early Childhood*, 2006.

<sup>140</sup> World Bank, *Circumstances at Birth are Important Drivers of Inequality in South Africa*, 2012.

<sup>141</sup> UNICEF, *Thematic discussion on results and lessons learned in the medium-term strategic plan focus area 5: Policy advocacy and partnerships for children's rights*, 2012.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>147</sup> UNICEF, *UNICEF Key Messages on the Post-2015 Development Agenda*, 2013.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>149</sup> Namibia, *Plan of Action for Orphans and Vulnerable Children*, 2007, p. 17.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*

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

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

<sup>154</sup> UNICEF, *CRC@25: Innovating for Children, Innovating for Equity*, 2014.

<sup>155</sup> UNICEF, *A review of the open Working Group report on sustainable development Goals from a Child rights Perspective*.

regard to national boundaries and allow states to commit to pursuing the goals and targets through national action.<sup>156</sup> Referred to in the OWG on Sustainable Development Goal's (SDG) Report to "leave no one behind," a framework identifying inequalities, especially to the most vulnerable and marginalized individuals and encouraging equity in outcomes for all children is also imperative to the successful formation of a new agenda.<sup>157</sup> A major failure and valuable lesson of the MDGs was that indicators failed to recognize that focusing on national averages and global aggregates as forms of measurement often masked the lack of progress or widening divide of inequity.<sup>158</sup> Targets and goals should be formulated to ensure the measurability of equitable outcomes for children through the analysis of disaggregated data, isolating and identifying the primary structural reasons for discrimination and exclusion so their negative impacts minimized.<sup>159</sup>

The active participation of youth and children in the decision-making, monitoring, and accountability processes is central to facilitating an agenda that recognizes their set of views, respects their rights, and values the essential input they can offer policy makers.<sup>160</sup> Children must be empowered to participate in the creation of new national development agendas and policies, whether their input is local or more widespread, it is necessary to commence a dialogue between youth, children, and adults to fully recognize child's rights, especially those who are vulnerable and marginalized. Youth and children who learn to participate in society and the attainment of their needs and rights have the ability to become active global citizens and affect change in the future. Focusing on children in the post-2015 development agenda ultimately benefits every aspect of society, both in the short and long-term, as they will feel the results and inherit the policies and outcomes of what is established today.<sup>161</sup> The OWG thus concludes that, "investments in the rights of all children in every place in the world—regardless of the child's gender, ethnicity, race, economic, disability or other status" are the fundamental building blocks for achieving the world's shared vision of the future.<sup>162</sup>

### ***Realizing Children's Rights***

The majority of UNICEF's work is carried in the field through projects and programs designed at benefitting the overall well-being of children regardless of their origin. These investments are the most important kind, as they directly impact youth and families. UNICEF has staff in over 190 countries actively working to help families, communities, and individuals realize and promote children's rights through educational institutions and awareness campaigns and specific initiatives aimed at targeted problems. For example, since 1990, two billion people have gained access to clean water with the help of UNICEF.<sup>163</sup> Currently, UNICEF works in more than 100 countries to improve access to safe water and sanitation facilities.<sup>164</sup> In order to help combat the 1,400 children that die every day from diseases linked to unsafe drinking water, or a lack of sanitation facilities, UNICEF sponsored its "TAP Project" during World Water Month.<sup>165</sup> Under this project, individuals with smart phones downloaded an application that monitored cell phone activity. For every ten minutes they did not touch their phone, donors and sponsors funded one day of clean drinking water for children in need.<sup>166</sup> Currently, even after the conclusion of the "TAP Project," a donation of just one dollar can provide up to 40 days of clean drinking water.<sup>167</sup> This is just one of many projects UNICEF has undertaken with its partners to achieve measurable results, and it is through projects in the field like these, that the policies and strategies created in this deliberative body are applied to actually improve the lives of children and ensure their successful development worldwide.

### ***Conclusion***

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<sup>156</sup> UNICEF, *A review of the open Working Group report on sustainable development Goals from a Child rights Perspective*.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>158</sup> UNICEF, *Thematic discussion on results and lessons learned in the medium-term strategic plan focus area 5: Policy advocacy and partnerships for children's rights*, 2012.

<sup>159</sup> UNICEF, *A review of the open Working Group report on sustainable development Goals from a Child rights Perspective*.

<sup>160</sup> UNICEF, *UNICEF Key Messages on the Post-2015 Development Agenda*, 2013.

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

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>163</sup> UNICEF USA, *UNICEF Tap Project*, 2014.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*

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

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

<sup>167</sup> *Ibid.*





The successful creation and implementation of the post-2015 development agenda will rely on the foundations set forth in the MDGs. On a national level, there must be a focus on the importance of sound policies and legislation, with implementation and accountability measures. This should also include strengthening national planning and policy-making processes through utilizing research, data, and results-oriented methods, child and youth input and participation at all levels of policy development, and the introduction of assessment and accountability mechanisms to ensure policies are carried out effectively. Next, there must be a focus on identifying and addressing inequalities in development to eliminate discrimination and promote the inclusion and social well-being of all children, regardless of their socio-economic situation, and especially marginalized and vulnerable groups. This includes the discussion of capacity-building for human development, as it is important to have an informed and empowered youth to participate in the development process to become well-rounded, global citizens. All of this must work in tandem with the realization of children's rights by the international community's to advance the rights of children through leveraging national resources for essential services and advocacy in the creation of national and international policies regarding children's rights in development.

### ***Further Questions***

In an attempt to fully realize children's rights in the creation of the post-2015 development agenda and its application, a variety of proposals must be considered to ensure inclusiveness across all demographics. An effective solution will take into account differences in gender, socio-economic situations, resources, culture, among a plethora of other factors that contribute to different levels of development for children and adults alike. A comprehensive approach will also address the participation of different spheres of society including governments, civil society, and individuals.

When drafting national and international development agendas, what priorities are most important in terms of development to the rights of children within each Member State's borders, as well as worldwide? What goals, targets, and indicators should be included to ensure the viability and universality of the agenda moving forward? It is important to remember to incorporate measures designed to reduce and eradicate poverty and encourage shared prosperity moving forward. How do Member States and the international community include implementation, accountability, and follow-up mechanisms that allow for the adaptability of the new development agenda in the future, and what might they include? Lastly, what was learned from the shortcomings of the MDGs, and how can the post-2015 agenda build on the successes and overcome the failures of the world's last set of development goals?

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Bond Childs Rights Group. (2012). *Children's Rights and the post-2015 Development Agenda* [Background Note]. Retrieved 9 July 2014 from: <http://www.worldwewant2015.org/pt-br/node/295937>

*While not an official entity of the UN, the discussion put forth by this child's advocacy group raises many valuable assessments of the previous work in this area and measures for achieving progress in this sector moving forward. Not only does it elaborate on the importance of children's rights for the future of developments, it includes key initiatives and concrete proposals for moving forward. This document is a great place to start when learning about the importance and interrelation of child rights and development as well as forming a basis for possible solutions to go before the committee.*

ChildFund Alliance, Plan International, Save the Children, SOS Children's Village, UNICEF, and World Vision. (2013). *Recommendations for a Post-2015 Development Agenda: "Recapturing the Vision of a World Fit for Children."* Retrieved 9 July 2014 from: <http://freefromviolence.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/Joint-Position-Paper.-ENGLISH.pdf>

*A joint position paper by several civil society organizations in partnership with UNICEF, issuing a joint statement on the new focus of the sustainable development agenda, which includes focusing on the "well-being of all children, including the most vulnerable and marginalized, without discrimination of any kind or for any reason." They advocated a human rights, child-centered development framework for the post-2015 Development Agenda and detail the main targets and focus of this strategy. This document demonstrates how UNICEF collaborates with other children's rights advocacy organizations to create a joint platform for promoting the equity of outcomes for all children.*

Government of the Republic of Namibia. (2007). *Plan of Action for Orphans and Vulnerable Children* [Report]. Retrieved 7 September 2014 from: <http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/files/NPAforOVC-Voll.pdf>

*This report elaborates on the plan of action put forth in Namibia with a special focus on orphans and vulnerable children. It shows how national plans of actions can incorporate children's rights, even the most marginalized and disadvantaged groups, and be put into action on the national and regional level. It also shows how involving children in the process can yield a more productive outcome in the end. This is just a few of many examples of how children can be included in national planning and agendas.*

Jolly R. (2011). *UNICEF, Economists and Economic Policy: Bringing Children into Development Strategies*. Social and Economic Policy Working Briefs, October 2011. UNICEF. Retrieved 8 July 2014 from: [http://www.unicef.org/socialpolicy/files/Jolly\\_PolicyBrief\\_October2011\\_Final.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/socialpolicy/files/Jolly_PolicyBrief_October2011_Final.pdf)

*This document discusses the importance of the involvement of children in development strategies, especially in the economic sector. It details the importance of combating inequalities and highlights the necessity of early human development as an alternative means of capacity-building. It identifies the need for a youth that has access to basic necessities and human rights for the eradication of poverty and positive outlook towards the future.*

United Nations Children's Fund. (n.d.). *Convention on the Rights of the Child* [Website]. Retrieved 8 July 2014 from: <http://www.unicef.org/crc/>

*This website serves as a primary guide regarding the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). It summarizes and explains the CRC, and elaborates on the current level of implementation in the international community thus far. It also identifies what is still lacking and the future impact of discussions regarding the content of the document. It details UNICEF and other actors' involvement in the implementation of the CRC, and provides further knowledge for the advancement and improvement of children's rights following the guidelines laid out in the document.*

United Nations Children's Fund. (n.d.) *Fact Sheet: A summary of the rights under the on the Convention of the Rights of the Child*. Retrieved 8 July 2014 from: [http://www.unicef.org/crc/files/Rights\\_overview.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/crc/files/Rights_overview.pdf)

*This fact sheet provides a summary of the rights laid out in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. While it is important to read the actual Convention in its entirety, this document will make it easier to understand and remember the rights, especially on short notice. It provides an overview of the document as a whole.*

United Nations Children’s Fund. (2012). *Thematic discussion on results and lessons learned in the medium-term strategic plan focus area 5: Policy advocacy and partnerships for children’s rights (E/ICEF/2012/CRP.15)*. Retrieved 09 July 2014 from: [http://www.unicef.org/about/execboard/files/2012-CRP15\\_Thematic\\_discussion\\_FA5-19Apr2012.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/about/execboard/files/2012-CRP15_Thematic_discussion_FA5-19Apr2012.pdf)

*This document discusses the results and best practices gathered regarding focus area five of the medium-term strategic plan, which is Policy Advocacy and Partnerships for children’s rights. This document details the gaps that already exist when it comes to the advancement of children’s rights and development policies. It also discusses current activities and priorities for UNICEF when it comes to the realization of children’s rights in post-2015 development, and areas of focus going forward to ensure that no child is discriminated against or excluded on any grounds.*

United Nations Children’s Fund. (2013). *UNICEF Key Asks on the Post-2015 Development Agenda*. Retrieved 9 September 2014 from: [http://www.unicef.org/ceecis/Post\\_2015\\_Key\\_Ask\\_V01.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/ceecis/Post_2015_Key_Ask_V01.pdf)

*This document provides a summary of some of the key priorities and related targets for prioritizing children’s rights in the post-2015 development agenda. It discusses some of the targets of the Millennium Development Goals, and how they can be incorporated into the new agenda. Since this document is published directly by UNICEF, it is important it is used in the evaluation of new programs and solutions for the creation of the new agenda.*

United Nations Children’s Fund. (2013). *UNICEF Key Messages on the Post-2015 Development Agenda*. Retrieved 8 July 2014 from: [http://www.unicef.org/post2015/files/Post\\_2015\\_Key\\_Messages\\_V07.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/post2015/files/Post_2015_Key_Messages_V07.pdf)

*The utilization of this document for familiarizing oneself with UNICEF’s key messages and priorities for the post-2015 development agenda is imperative. It elaborates on failed measure, current initiatives, and future goals when discussing sustainable development and prioritizing children’s rights. The document’s suggested actions and recommendations should serve as a starting point for the directives of this committee and research on possible solutions.*

The World We Want. (n.d.). *Dialogues on the Implementation on the Post-2015 Development Agenda* [Website]. Retrieved 9 July 2014 from: <http://www.worldwewant2015.org/sitemap#>

*This webpage and associated website are a great place to begin coming up with creative solutions to put before the committee. It includes the thematic and country based consultations as well as the forum for the dialog of individuals and groups on the new agenda. Including ideas from this source can help ensure that the new agenda is far reaching and can be applied across many different contexts.*

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## II. Children and Armed Conflict: Reintegration and Recovery

*“The international community is quick to respond to emergency funding requests, but the reintegration of children falls into the fault line between emergency assistance and development assistance.”*<sup>168</sup>

### **Introduction**

Armed conflict has affected families, children, and refugee communities around the globe for decades; children particularly, are either being directly recruited into armed forces or armed groups or are becoming the victims of the armed groups.<sup>169</sup> Children affected by armed conflict face mental and physical trauma, displacement, and social stigmas, and need to recover and reintegrate back into society after experiencing such hostilities.<sup>170</sup> Throughout the globe, approximately 250,000 children are currently deployed as child soldiers in armed conflicts.<sup>171</sup> In addition, hundreds of thousands of youth are exposed to the direct or indirect consequences of war and violence.<sup>172</sup> Nearly 51% of people in conflict are under the age of 25.<sup>173</sup> As of 2010, there were over one billion children living in areas affected by armed conflict, with over a quarter of them being under the age of five.<sup>174</sup>

Recovery and reintegration overlap and reinforce each other, taking place once children are disassociated with fighting forces and armed groups.<sup>175</sup> Article 39 of the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* (1989), defined reintegration and rehabilitation as the “recovery and social reintegration of a child victim of: any form of neglect, exploitation, or abuse; torture or any other form of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; or armed conflicts.”<sup>176</sup> Although not necessarily sequential, reintegration often starts earlier, and encompasses the process of transitioning children “back into civil society and enter[ing] meaningful roles and identities as civilians who are accepted by their families and communities in a context of local and national reconciliation.”<sup>177</sup> Further reintegration processes for children should ideally “ensure that children can access their rights including education, family unity, and safety from harm.”<sup>178</sup> The recovery process begins during, and continues long after, the formal reintegration process has occurred, encompassing the physical and psychological healing that children must undergo when they have been impacted by conflict.<sup>179</sup>

Reintegration is vital for children who have experienced trauma in a variety of situations including living and working on the streets, children who are economically exploited as child laborers, orphaned children facing neglect in home and community environments, children in conflict with the law, children living with diseases or disabilities, children accused of witchcraft or honor crimes, children with severe psychological distress from traumatic experiences, children who have been sold or trafficked, children that are displaced or refugees, and children without formal or legal citizenship.<sup>180</sup> Additionally, children affected by armed conflict and in need of recovery and reintegration assistance differ by situation. The needs of children who were forcefully recruited into armed forces differ from those who were victims of the armed forces or armed group or those who lived near areas of armed conflict.<sup>181</sup> Nonetheless, all war-affected children and victims are in need of recovery and reintegration programs.<sup>182</sup> While a great majority of programs focus on aiding former child soldiers, such programs should also be integrated

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<sup>168</sup> War Child UK & War Child Holland, *From Neglect to Protect*, 2012, p. 8.

<sup>169</sup> UNICEF, *Impact of Armed Conflict on Child Development*, 1996.

<sup>170</sup> Centre for Children in Vulnerable Situations & War Child Holland, *The Kampala Recommendations on the Recovery and Reintegration of Children and Youth Affected by Armed Conflict*, 2013, p. 3; UNICEF, *Impact of Armed Conflict on Child Development*, 1996.

<sup>171</sup> [International Interdisciplinary Conference. \*Rehabilitation and Reintegration of War-Affected Children\*. \(2009\), p. 3.](#)

<sup>172</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>173</sup> Aptel & Ladisch, *Through a New Lens: A Child-Sensitive Approach to Transitional Justice*, 2011, p. 5.

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>175</sup> UNICEF, *Impact of Armed Conflict on Child Development*, 1996.

<sup>176</sup> UN General Assembly, *Convention on the Rights of the Child (A/RES/44/65)*, 1989.

<sup>177</sup> UNICEF, *The Paris Principles: Principles and Guidelines on Children Associated with Armed Forces or Armed Groups*, 2007, p. 7.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>179</sup> UNICEF, *Impact of Armed Conflict on Child Development*, 1996.

<sup>180</sup> War Child UK & War Child Holland, *From Neglect to Protect*, 2012, p. 5.

<sup>181</sup> UNICEF, *The Cape Town Principles and Best Practices*, 1997, p. 10.

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid.*

into efforts that address the situation of all children affected by the conflict, while ensuring the continuing implementation of specific rights and benefits of demobilized children.<sup>183</sup>

### *Key Terms*

According to the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*, a child is defined as a person who is under 18 years old.<sup>184</sup> The United Nations (UN) General Assembly defines a youth as a person between the ages of 15 and 24 years inclusive.<sup>185</sup> Children affected by armed conflict is a term that can be applied to “various groups of children adversely affected by armed conflicts,” including refugee children who have been displaced, children who have experienced sexual violence or exploitation, and children who have severe psychological distress following their experiences.<sup>186</sup> The term recruitment is officially defined in the *Cape Town Principles* as compulsory, forced, or voluntary recruitment into any type of armed group or armed force.<sup>187</sup> Demobilization is defined as the formal discharge of child soldiers from an armed force or armed group.<sup>188</sup> The term psychosocial refers to the relationship between the psychological and social effects of armed conflict.<sup>189</sup>

### ***International and Regional Framework***

The current framework of international humanitarian law provides special protection for children involved in armed conflict. Policies relevant to the reintegration and recovery are further detailed within international human rights law, as well as policies and practices related to displacement.<sup>190</sup> The *Geneva Conventions* (1949) specifically state that children under the age of fifteen shall not be involved in armed conflict or armed forces.<sup>191</sup> The 1989 *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (CRC) also prohibits the participation of children under the age of 15 in hostilities.<sup>192</sup> An optional protocol to the 1989 Convention was introduced in May 2000 that extended the age of involvement to 18; this further instructed armed groups not to recruit or use children under the age of 18 in any circumstances.<sup>193</sup> The protocol called for states to criminalize such practices.<sup>194</sup>

### *Convention on the Rights of the Child*

As the most widely ratified human rights instrument, the CRC is fundamental in establishing the protection of children in armed conflict.<sup>195</sup> The Convention enumerates rights specific to recovery and reintegration and declares that organizations should “promote the establishment of prevention, support and caring services as well as justice systems specifically applicable to children.”<sup>196</sup> The Convention further advises that states fully safeguard the rights of children and work to provide specially trained staff to promote children's reintegration in society.<sup>197</sup> Furthermore, the international legal framework promotes demobilization and effective disarmament and aims to implement effective measures for rehabilitation, physical and psychological recovery, and reintegration into society.<sup>198</sup> The CRC states that all measures to promote physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration of a child victim must be taken in an environment conducive to enhancing the mental and physical health of the child.<sup>199</sup>

### *Optional Protocol to the CRC*

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<sup>183</sup> UNICEF, *The Cape Town Principles and Best Practices*, 1997, p. 10.

<sup>184</sup> UNDP & ILO, *United Nations Policy for Post-Conflict Employment Creation, Income Generation, and Reintegration*, 2009, p. 15.

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>186</sup> International Committee of the Red Cross. *Children Affected by Armed Conflict and Other Situations of Violence*, 2011, p. 3.

<sup>187</sup> UNICEF, *The Cape Town Principles and Best Practices*, 1997, p. 12.

<sup>188</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>189</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>190</sup> UN Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, *The Six Grave Violations Against Children During Armed Conflict: The Legal Foundation*, p. 1.

<sup>191</sup> UNICEF, *Fact Sheet: Child Soldiers*, 2002, p. 1.

<sup>192</sup> International Committee of the Red Cross, *Children protected under international humanitarian law*, 2010.

<sup>193</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>194</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>195</sup> UNICEF, *The Paris Principles: Principles and Guidelines on Children Associated with Armed Forces or Armed Groups*, 2007, p. 8.

<sup>196</sup> UN General Assembly, *A world fit for children (A/RES/S-27/2)*, 2002.

<sup>197</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>198</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>199</sup> UN General Assembly, *Convention on the Rights of the Child (A/RES/44/65)*, 1989.



The Optional Protocol to the CRC was widely accepted and adopted in 2000, however its adoption received opposition from a handful of states over the age for voluntary recruitment.<sup>200</sup> Major contentions were raised as such states felt obligated to raise the minimum age for voluntary involvement from fifteen to eighteen years old.<sup>201</sup> Nonetheless, the *Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflicts*, advises states to cooperate in implementing programs that will offer children who have been recruited or involved in hostilities with appropriate assistance to facilitate their physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration.<sup>202</sup> Additionally, Article 7 encourages states to provide technical cooperation and financial assistance, which may be provided in the form of implementing training or vocational programs, financial grants, or advisory services.<sup>203</sup> States are also encouraged to work with international organizations in establishing these programs.<sup>204</sup>

#### *Children Associated with Fighting Forces*

In addition, the *Cape Town Principles*, adopted by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in 1997, were a result of collaboration with the Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) Working Group on the Convention on the Rights on the Child.<sup>205</sup> The NGO Working Group brought together experts and partners to develop strategies for preventing the recruitment of children.<sup>206</sup> The collaboration of these bodies developed strategies to prevent the recruitment of children, demobilize child soldiers, and help them reintegrate into society.<sup>207</sup> Since their adoption, the Principles have become foundational in developing policies, as they provide a roadmap towards implementing demobilization, recovery, and reintegration processes.<sup>208</sup> Further progress was reached when the International Criminal Court declared that the recruitment of children under 15 years equates to a war crime, although this decision signaled the need to update the *Cape Town Principles*.<sup>209</sup> In 2005, UNICEF introduced the *Paris Commitments to Protect Children Unlawfully Recruited or Used by Armed Forces* ("Paris Commitments") along with *The Principles and Guidelines on Children Associated with Armed Forces or Armed Groups* ("Paris Principles") to provide detailed guidance for states and organizations implementing programs.<sup>210</sup> Although non-binding in action, the *Paris Commitments* and *Paris Principles* provide critical legal and operational means to protect and prevent children from recruitment.<sup>211</sup> Specific attention is given on the reintegration process. Additionally, as revisions were made to the aforementioned documents in 2006, the reintegration process slowly became more encompassed within formal disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration principles.<sup>212</sup>

#### *Children Who are Displaced*

International humanitarian law also provides protection to refugee and displaced children as a result of armed conflict.<sup>213</sup> Article 25 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948) states that children must be granted the right to social protection.<sup>214</sup> Children who are forced to flee to neighboring countries or who become displaced are likely to suffer from physical and emotional trauma.<sup>215</sup> Additionally, UNICEF and the United Nations Human Rights Committee formed the Action for the Rights of Children (ARC) initiative in 1997 to provide aid and care for displaced children and children in emergency situations.<sup>216</sup> The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees further sought the protection of refugee and displaced children in the *United Nations Convention relating to the*

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<sup>200</sup> International Committee of the Red Cross, *Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict*.

<sup>201</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>202</sup> International Committee of the Red Cross, *Practice Relating to Rule 135. Children*, 2014.

<sup>203</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>204</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>205</sup> UNICEF, *The Paris Principles: Principles and Guidelines on Children Associated with Armed Forces or Armed Groups*, 2007, p. 1.

<sup>206</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>207</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>208</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>209</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>210</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>211</sup> UNICEF, *Children and Conflict in a Changing World*, 2009, p. 60.

<sup>212</sup> UNICEF, *The Paris Principles: Principles and Guidelines on Children Associated with Armed Forces or Armed Groups*, 2007, p. 10.

<sup>213</sup> UNICEF, *Special Concerns*, 1996.

<sup>214</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>215</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>216</sup> UNHCR, *Action for the Rights of Children*, 2001.

*Status of Refugees* (1951) and the *Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees* (1967).<sup>217</sup> These frameworks serve as a guide in seeking solutions and providing assistance to refugee and displaced children and require national governments to protect and ensure the rights of all children without discrimination.<sup>218</sup>

### ***Role of the International System***

*The UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2014-2017*, reaffirms UNICEF’s commitment to leadership in the field of child protection in armed conflict and stresses the importance of increasing familial and communal resilience to humanitarian crises through raising healthy, well-educated children as a precursor for recovery and reintegration.<sup>219</sup> Paragraph 25 of the Plan seeks to strengthen resilience and systematically reduce vulnerability to disaster and conflict through risk-informed country programs that prevent and respond to humanitarian crises and shocks that affect children.<sup>220</sup> This provides special opportunities to improve the links between humanitarian responses and development programs, as well as promote human security.<sup>221</sup> Further, these risk-informed programs will promote rapid recovery and in “situations of civil unrest or armed conflict, UNICEF will uphold humanitarian principles.”<sup>222</sup>

Additionally, Leila Zerrougui, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, and UNICEF launched the March 2014 campaign *Children, Not Soldiers* to raise awareness and stimulate support to end the recruitment and use of children by national security forces by 2016.<sup>223</sup> Currently, seven national security forces are listed for the use and recruitment of children in armed conflict.<sup>224</sup> Since its initiation, the campaign has received broad support from the UN, its partners, Member States, NGOs, and global citizens, and the UN Security Council has endorsed its principles in resolution 2143.<sup>225</sup> The campaign encourages rehabilitation and reintegration in accordance with the Paris Principles and emphasizes justice for children on both sides of conflict through judicial and non-judicial measures as well as restorative justice initiatives.<sup>226</sup> While broad support for the campaign has spurred its momentum, funding continues to be a problem as reintegration of children following armed conflict often falls into the gaps between short-term emergency funding and long-term development assistance.<sup>227</sup>

The campaign has also led the Special Representative to establish an advisory group of NGOs and civil society partners to consult on issues of monitoring, reporting, and a range of other agenda items.<sup>228</sup> The group includes Child Soldiers International, World Vision, the International Rescue Committee, Human Rights Watch, and others.<sup>229</sup> Civil society organizations have also taken action to contribute to international and regional legal frameworks. Most notably, the *Kampala Recommendations on the Recovery and Reintegration of Children and Youth Affected by Armed Conflict* (2013) calls for civil society practitioners, international organizations, national authorities, donors, and academics to collaborate to properly implement recovery and reintegration programs.<sup>230</sup> Organizations such as Save the Children and the International Red Cross also aim to cover areas where intergovernmental organizations fall short. While, such organizations have greatly contributed to the recovery and reintegration efforts, additional assistance and collaboration with international organizations and governmental partners is called for.<sup>231</sup>

### ***Reintegration***

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<sup>217</sup> UNHCR, *Summary Note on UNHCR’s Strategy and Activities Concerning Refugee Children*, 2002, p. 1.

<sup>218</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>219</sup> UNICEF, *The UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2014-2017 (E/ICEF/2013/21)*, 2013.

<sup>220</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>221</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>222</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>223</sup> UN Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, *Children, Not Soldiers*, 2014.

<sup>224</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>225</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>226</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>227</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>228</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>229</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>230</sup> Save the Children, *Stolen Futures: The reintegration of children affected by armed conflict*, 2007, p. 1.

<sup>231</sup> *Ibid.*

The reintegration process consists of multiple steps. First, family reunification is often a principle factor to begin effective social reintegration.<sup>232</sup> As a result, reintegration programs should give special attention to re-establishing the emotional link between the child and the family prior to and after the child's return.<sup>233</sup> If reunification with the family is not possible, a stable emotional relationship between the child and community members such as religious leaders or teachers should be maintained.<sup>234</sup> Programs should also be developed with support from the community that harness existing resources while being mindful of the community's priorities, values, and traditions.<sup>235</sup> Furthermore, programs should locate and integrate traditional ways of generating income through apprenticeships and money-making practices to engage social interaction while earning financial resources.<sup>236</sup> Vocational training can provide children with necessary tools and encourage self-reliance, while also leading to employment opportunities.<sup>237</sup> Educational provisions should be included to compensate for the loss of educational opportunities while participating in hostilities.<sup>238</sup> Education can help boost the development of self-esteem.<sup>239</sup> A critical aspect of reintegration programs is psychosocial treatment and development.<sup>240</sup> Further psychosocial aid can be fostered through recreational activities since such activities contribute to a child's psychosocial well-being and alleviate the reconciliation process.<sup>241</sup> Traditional resources and practices in the community should be harnessed to support and promote psychosocial integration of children affected by war.<sup>242</sup> Psychosocial programs should assist children in developing and building capacities that will facilitate reattachment to families and communities.<sup>243</sup> While there is always room for progress and additional resources, programs that are currently available have helped many children with the recovery and reintegration processes thus far.

### *Reintegration for war-affected Children*

Regardless of being volunteers or recruited by force, children who participate in armed conflict are subject to major trauma to physical, emotional, and social well-being.<sup>244</sup> As such, children involved in armed conflict and armed forces have special short and long-term post-conflict needs.<sup>245</sup> The reintegration process is therefore recognized as a process that takes time and must be carried out in multiple steps.<sup>246</sup> According to the Cape Town Principles, demobilization is regarded as the first step in the social reintegration process.<sup>247</sup> Steps in the demobilization process work to help children recover from the trauma gained during involvement in armed conflict.<sup>248</sup> Next, an interview process is suggested to assess the needs and aid a child requires.<sup>249</sup> Particular attention should be given to girls during the interview process, since girls experience a different type of trauma than boys.<sup>250</sup> Efforts to reestablish contact with family members and to plan reunification should be made immediately.<sup>251</sup> The next priority requires a health assessment and proper treatment, followed by measures to ensure the protection of the child.<sup>252</sup> Such health assessments should take place on an individual basis away from superiors and peers and should protect the

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<sup>232</sup> UN Security Council, *The Role of United Nations Peacekeeping in Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration: Report of the Secretary-General (S/2000/101)*, 2000, p. 17-18.

<sup>233</sup> UNICEF, *The Cape Town Principles and Best Practices*, 1997, p. 8.

<sup>234</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>235</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>236</sup> International Labour Organization, *Economic Reintegration of Children Formerly Associated with Armed Forces and Armed Groups*, 2010, p. 5.

<sup>237</sup> Finn et al., *Making Vocational Training Work: A Study of Vocational Training in DDR*, 2014, p. 29.

<sup>238</sup> UNICEF, *The Cape Town Principles and Best Practices*, 1997, p. 10.

<sup>239</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>240</sup> Betancourt et al., *Psychosocial Adjustment and Social Reintegration of Children Associated with Armed Forces and Armed Groups: The State of the Field and Future Directions*, 2008, pp. 1-2.

<sup>241</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 44-46.

<sup>242</sup> Duncan & Arntson, *Children in Crisis: Good Practices in Evaluating Psychosocial Programming*, 2004, pp. 24-25.

<sup>243</sup> UNICEF, *The Cape Town Principles and Best Practices*, 1997, p. 11.

<sup>244</sup> Legrand, *Lessons Learned from UNICEF Field Programmes for the Prevention of Recruitment, Demobilization and Reintegration of Child Soldiers*, 1999, p. 3.

<sup>245</sup> European Union, *Update of the EU Guidelines on Children and Armed Conflict*, p. 1.

<sup>246</sup> UNICEF, *The Cape Town Principles and Best Practices*, 1997, p. 5.

<sup>247</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>248</sup> World Bank, *Child Soldiers: Prevention, Demobilization and Reintegration*, 2002, pp. 1-2.

<sup>249</sup> UNICEF, *The Cape Town Principles and Best Practices*, 1997, p. 6.

<sup>250</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>251</sup> UN Security Council, *Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration at heart of Peacekeeping Efforts, Secretary-General Tells Security Council*, 2000.

<sup>252</sup> UNICEF, *The Cape Town Principles and Best Practices*, 1997, p. 6.

confidentiality of child's assessment.<sup>253</sup> Special assistance and protection measures must be made to protect the children from those who recruited the children and those associated with the armed forces or armed groups.<sup>254</sup> Eventually, the child should be returned to their communities under conditions of safety.

At the regional level, reintegration is often encompassed within disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) efforts. The European Union (EU) assumed a major role in supporting DDR efforts by contributing financial resources and collaborating with peacebuilding programs, such as the World Bank's Multi-country Demobilization and Reintegration Program and the UN Trust Fund to establish more reintegration programs.<sup>255</sup> The EU sponsors multiple projects such as a DDR project in Uganda, health and nutrition projects in Sudan and Colombia as well as psychosocial support program in Sierra Leone, Lebanon, and the West Bank.<sup>256</sup> Similarly, the African Union initiated a DDR program for Member States where armed conflict is rampant.<sup>257</sup> In 2013, the African Union DDR Capacity Program was launched to monitor various DDR programs in different Member States.<sup>258</sup> At the national level, efforts to enact such provisions have succeeded in some countries. In some cases, cooperation between national governments and armed groups has been reached to cease the recruitment of children and ensure reintegration.<sup>259</sup> In June 2007, an agreement was signed between the Central African Republic, the Assembly of the Union of Democratic Forces rebel group, and UNICEF to release and reintegrate 400 children associated with armed groups.<sup>260</sup>

### ***Rehabilitation and Recovery***

The reintegration and recovery processes consist of multiple approaches that are vital in ensuring that children resume their lives in health and safety.<sup>261</sup> Reintegration and recovery programs typically include three major approaches providing relocation assistance, physical health and psychosocial support, and educational training.<sup>262</sup>

#### *Relocation and Reunification*

Children who are displaced as a result of armed conflict and armed forces demand special attention throughout the reintegration process, mainly needing assistance in relocation and reuniting processes.<sup>263</sup> Reintegration programs for displaced children provide help in tracing and relocating family members of the displaced children.<sup>264</sup> The tracing and relocation processes include verifying the relationships between the child and family members and confirming the willingness of the child to be reunited with their family.<sup>265</sup> Upon completion of the verification and relocation process, the child and family are often reunited.<sup>266</sup> It is crucial that the reunification process consider the best interest of the child and involves the appropriate local authorities, existing welfare systems, and local communities.<sup>267</sup>

#### *Physical Health*

Armed conflict greatly affects the physical and psychological health of children involved.<sup>268</sup> Reintegration and recovery programs are encouraged to offer primary health care and adequate rehabilitative services, such as the

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<sup>253</sup> UNICEF, *The Cape Town Principles and Best Practices*, 1997, p. 6.

<sup>254</sup> UN Security Council, *Gains Made Protecting Children in Situations of Armed Conflict Overshadowed by New Global Crises, Special Representative Tells Security Council*, 2014.

<sup>255</sup> International Alert, *DDR: Supporting Security and Development: The EU's added value*, 2006, p. 3.

<sup>256</sup> European Union, *Update of the EU Guidelines on Children and Armed Conflict*, p. 14.

<sup>257</sup> African Union, *Disarmament Demobilization and Reintegration*, 2014.

<sup>258</sup> African Union, *African Union DDR Capacity Program (AU DDRCP)*, 2014.

<sup>259</sup> UNICEF, *Children and Conflict in a Changing World*, 2009, p. 65.

<sup>260</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 66.

<sup>261</sup> UNICEF, *Impact of Armed Conflict on Child Development*, 1996.

<sup>262</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>263</sup> UNHCR, *Summary Note on UNHCR's Strategy and Activities Concerning Refugee Children*, 2002, p. 2.

<sup>264</sup> International Committee of the Red Cross, *Inter-agency Guiding Principles on Unaccompanied and Separated Children*, 2004, p. 7.

<sup>265</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 37.

<sup>266</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>267</sup> International Committee of the Red Cross, *Inter-agency Guiding Principles on Unaccompanied and Separated Children*, 2004, p. 37.

<sup>268</sup> Betancourt et al., *Psychosocial Adjustment and Social Reintegration of Children Associated with Armed Forces and Armed Groups: The State of the Field and Future Directions*, 2008, pp. 1-2.

provision of health examinations or the provision of artificial limbs for permanently injured children.<sup>269</sup> Such examinations and services should involve local professionals and organizations working in conflict situations, as well as governments and non-state entities.<sup>270</sup>

### *Psychosocial Health*

Children who have experienced traumatic events in times of war are likely to suffer from increased anxiety related to being separated from their families.<sup>271</sup> Children suffer trauma from witnessing destruction and death, being separated from their families, and being sexually assaulted.<sup>272</sup> As a result, depression, insomnia, and nightmares are additional psychological consequences plaguing many war-affected children.<sup>273</sup> Recovery and reintegration programs require caregivers to be supportive and understanding of the child's trauma and troubles.<sup>274</sup> Programs must further prevent traumatic experiences by preventing family separation and undertake practices to avert gender-based violence.<sup>275</sup> Measures to prevent isolation and stigmatization within or by a community must be taken, as this can exacerbate psychological stress.<sup>276</sup> The recovery process must be handled by a caregiver with a solid continuing relationship with the child and take place in a confidential, supportive, and stable environment.<sup>277</sup> Recovery programs in particular must consist of activities that can help rebuild the ability to trust; activities often include daily routines such as preparing meals, washing clothes, going to school, or working.<sup>278</sup> Activities such as playing sports or story telling allow children to express themselves but also provide a sense of comfort in group settings.<sup>279</sup> The main goal for reintegration and recovery processes is to reestablish a sense of normalcy.<sup>280</sup> Program caregivers should have knowledge of the local culture and an understanding of child development along with the familiarity of the political and social situation for children in the local community.<sup>281</sup>

### *Education*

Education is often considered a means of psychosocial recovery and social reintegration.<sup>282</sup> Furthermore, education adds structure to a child's life and can instill community values, promote justice, and enhance stability and interdependence.<sup>283</sup> Educational activities should be established as a priority component of humanitarian assistance. Reintegration and recovery programs can incorporate education into flexible systems; such systems may allow children to learn at home, in a group setting using provided teaching materials, or at a school.<sup>284</sup>

### *Recovery and Reintegration of Girls*

Most recovery and reintegration programs are geared towards boys and men, while the consequences of conflict equally affect girls.<sup>285</sup> Girls face specific consequences from their time in armed forces or armed groups; the stigma greatly differs from those facing boys, as girls are commonly stigmatized or rejected by the community if it is known that they were used by an armed group.<sup>286</sup> Community dialogue and mediation is crucial to support reintegration for girls.<sup>287</sup> Local community leaders such as teachers, midwives, and religious leaders are recruited to

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<sup>269</sup> UNICEF, *Impact of Armed Conflict on Child Development*, 1996.

<sup>270</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>271</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>272</sup> Arntson & Knudsen, *Psychosocial Care & Protection of Children in Emergencies: A Field Guide*, 2004, p. 3.

<sup>273</sup> War Child Canada, *Psychological Impacts of War*, 2014.

<sup>274</sup> UNICEF, *Impact of Armed Conflict on Child Development*, 1996.

<sup>275</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>276</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>277</sup> UNICEF, *Promoting Psychosocial well being Among Children Affected by Armed Conflict and Displacement: Principles and Approaches*, p. 8.

<sup>278</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 6-7.

<sup>279</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 6-7.

<sup>280</sup> UNICEF, *Impact of Armed Conflict on Child Development*, 1996.

<sup>281</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>282</sup> Robinson, *The Right of Child Victims of Armed Conflict to Reintegration and Recovery*, 2012, p. 83.

<sup>283</sup> Triplehorn, *Education: Care & Protection of Children in Emergencies A Field Guide*, 2001, pp. 17-19.

<sup>284</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>285</sup> Centre for Children in Vulnerable Situations & War Child Holland, *The Kampala Recommendations on the Recovery and Reintegration of Children and Youth Affected by Armed Conflict*, 2013, p. 6.

<sup>286</sup> UNICEF, *The Paris Principles: Principles and Guidelines on Children Associated with Armed Forces or Armed Groups*, 2007, p. 4.

<sup>287</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 37.

aid and provide psychosocial support to promote acceptance by the girls' families and communities.<sup>288</sup> Provisions should aim to enable girls' acceptance through activities such as conducting traditional rituals and providing vocational and educational services.<sup>289</sup> Furthermore, programs must offer health care examinations since many girls give birth during or after their time with an armed force and are likely to suffer from health problems, neglect, rejection, and abuse.<sup>290</sup> The surviving children also face health and psychological repercussions.<sup>291</sup> It is recommended that recovery and reintegration programs for girls provide access to medical and surgical care, voluntary and confidential post-rape counseling, and treatment for sexually transmitted infections and HIV/AIDS.<sup>292</sup> Sexual exploitation is another major concern arising in the reintegration process. As families may expect a girl to provide income, oftentimes girls are sexually exploited to earn income for the family.<sup>293</sup> To prevent such exploitation, reintegration programs should promote advocacy within community, and educational and vocational skills.<sup>294</sup>

### ***Conclusion***

While international and regional frameworks provide relevant guidance, the successful reintegration and recovery of children impacted by armed conflict strongly depends on the cooperation and collaboration between intergovernmental organizations, governments, and members of civil society. Without collaboration, existing norms and standards remain unenforced and unimplemented. These entities, including the UN and international organizations, have yet to create standardized requirements for program implementation, through which collaboration can be enacted.<sup>295</sup> Additionally, the implementation of community-based reintegration programs boasts much success, however funding for such programs remains an issue. The future holds an uncertain outcome if additional collaboration and cooperation is not reached.

### ***Further Research***

While the threat of armed conflict is likely to persist across the globe, enhanced cooperation between governments, non-state organizations, and regional organizations remains crucial to providing war-affected children with the proper services needed for reintegration and recovery. With that in mind, how can reintegration and recovery programs be introduced in areas where none currently exist? How can the programs improve to fully cover the needs of both war-affected boys and girls? In what ways can states and organizations further collaborate to improve the shortcomings of current recovery and reintegration programs? How can states with successful recovery and reintegration programs help states with programs in need of assistance? How can organizations and states alleviate the challenge of funding in implementing recovery and reintegration programs?

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<sup>288</sup> Arntson & Knudsen, *Psychosocial Care & Protection of Children in Emergencies: A Field Guide*, 2004, p. 10.

<sup>289</sup> UNICEF, *The Paris Principles: Principles and Guidelines on Children Associated with Armed Forces or Armed Groups*, 2007, p. 40.

<sup>290</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>291</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>292</sup> UNICEF, *The Impact of Conflict on Women and Girls in West and Central Africa and the UNICEF Response*, 2005, p. 13.

<sup>293</sup> UNICEF, *The Paris Principles: Principles and Guidelines on Children Associated with Armed Forces or Armed Groups*, 2007, p. 37.

<sup>294</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>295</sup> Save the Children, *Stolen Futures: The reintegration of children affected by armed conflict*, 2007, p. 47.

## Annotated Bibliography

Centre for Children in Vulnerable Situations & War Child Holland. (2013). *The Kampala Recommendations on the Recovery and Reintegration of Children and Youth Affected by Armed Conflict* [Report]. Retrieved 22 July 2014 from: <http://www.kampala2013.ugent.be/KampalaRecommendations.pdf>

*The Kampala Recommendations are highly useful for delegates in that they provide an outside perspective from a civil society entity. More importantly, the document offers delegates a lot of content specific to the recovery and reintegration issues as opposed to focusing broadly on the issue of children in armed conflict as a whole. The document is divided into reader-friendly sections: Society and Community, Transitional Justice, Child Protection and Participation. This will provide not only a different perspective from a non-governmental organization, but will also offer delegates with more content to incorporate into the writing process.*

Save the Children. (2007). *Stolen Futures: The reintegration of children affected by armed conflict* [Report]. [http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/sites/default/files/docs/stolen\\_futures\\_1.pdf](http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/sites/default/files/docs/stolen_futures_1.pdf)

*This document provides a review of the 1996 Machel study, however from the perspective of a civil society organization. The document provides specific insight relating to the reintegration process, which is rare, as most documents commonly include the reintegration process with DDR initiatives. The specific focus on reintegration is discussed in 22 main points. Delegates may receive a wider and more organized approach in comparison to the official Machel strategic review published by UNICEF in 2009. The document also gives additional recommendations on how to better improve what is currently implemented, which can encourage delegates to develop their own recommendations for developing policies on this subject matter.*

United Nations Children's Fund. (1997). *The Cape Town Principles and Best Practices* [Meeting Record]. Retrieved 22 July 2014 from: [http://www.unicef.org/emerg/files/Cape\\_Town\\_Principles\(1\).pdf](http://www.unicef.org/emerg/files/Cape_Town_Principles(1).pdf)

*The Cape Town Principles are key to understanding the efforts made towards preventing the recruitment of children into armed forces as well as those made to reintegrating the victims of armed conflict back into society. While the source is limited to child soldiers involved in conflicts in Africa, the principles are applicable to many other conflicts around the world. The document specifies practices made to facilitate reintegration such as reuniting the children with their families and maintaining stable relationships around the child. Additional practices such as providing community support and psychosocial services are mandated in the document. The document will be beneficial in understanding the general practices used to initiate the reintegration process. Delegates may refer to this source when looking for a high-level explanation, as the document also focuses on other topics relevant to children in armed conflict.*

United Nations Children's Fund. (2007). *The Paris Principles: Principles and Guidelines on Children Associated with Armed Forces or Armed Groups* [Report]. Retrieved 10 July 2014 from: [www.unicef.org/emerg/files/ParisPrinciples310107English.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/emerg/files/ParisPrinciples310107English.pdf)

*The Paris Principles are foundational for delegates in understanding a more complete and detailed perspective of the reintegration and recovery process associated with armed conflict. The relevant portion of this document discussing reintegration is simultaneously discussed with the process of releasing children in armed conflict. Delegates will gain a broader perspective of the issue at hand by reading the release and reintegration sections together. The document also provides more guidance on how, when, and with whom the reintegration process should be handled. Details such as locating family members and how to specifically handle the reintegration of girls are discussed at length. Delegates should try to refer to this document when drafting resolutions, as it provides a wealth of detail on the issues surrounding reintegration.*

United Nations Children's Fund. (2009). *Children and Conflict in a Changing World* [Report]. Retrieved 12 July 2014 from: [www.unicef.org/publications/files/Machel\\_Study\\_10\\_Year\\_Strategic\\_Review\\_EN\\_030909.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/publications/files/Machel_Study_10_Year_Strategic_Review_EN_030909.pdf)

*The document provides an update on the progress that has been made since the implementation of the Machel Study in 1996. Delegates can compare the strategic review to the original document and can interpret areas of improvement that still need attention. In addition, this document can*

*provide delegates how to develop a sense of how to interpret the progress or update on a previous document by highlighting which areas have improved and which areas have digressed.*

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. (2011). *Economic reintegration of children formerly associated with armed forces and armed groups* [Report]. Retrieved 14 July 2014 from: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0019/001907/190780e.pdf>

*This document provides delegates with a well-rounded overview and timeline of the statutes and mandates that address the topic of reintegration. This document also provides a general overview on the topic of children in armed conflict, but does not discuss the issue at length. In a more simplistic manner, the document succinctly outlines the elements needed for reintegration programs. The report provides a different perspective by discussing the economic aspect of reintegration, including issues such as the role of poverty or the benefit of vocational trainings in the reintegration and recovery process. Delegates can use this as a basic reference in drafting solutions that may propose the creation of special reintegration programs.*

United Nations, General Assembly, Forty-fourth session. (1989). *Convention on the Rights of the Child (A/RES/44/65)*. Retrieved 22 July 2014 from: <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/44/a44r025.htm>

*This document is critical to understand, as it was one that set the foundation for legislation and conventions to come. Delegates should have a general understanding of the provisions because it should be cited or referred to in the preambles of working papers and resolutions. While the entire subject of children in armed conflict is vast, this document does consider the importance of the reintegration and recovery processes. Additionally, many current works relating to this issue cite this as the basis of their principles, as the right of a child does include the right to be free from forced involvement and subsequently allowed to reintegrate to his/her family and community.*

United Nations, General Assembly, Fifty-first session. (1996). *Impact of armed conflict on children: Note by the Secretary-General (A/51/306)* [Report]. Retrieved 8 August 2014 from: [http://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/51/306](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/51/306)

*The original report, also known as the "Machel Report", provides delegates with a full-bodied perspective on the impact of armed conflict on children. While the document does not fully focus on recovery and reintegration, it is a foundational resource and still gives insight on relevant issues in section 2a, paragraph 3. Delegates should have a basic understanding of the Machel Report and what it covers, since a great majority of the reports and documents relevant to the reintegration and recovery processes originate from this report.*

United Nations, Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict. (2013). *The Six Grave Violations against Children during Armed Conflict: The Legal Foundation* [Report]. Retrieved 14 July 2014 from: [https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/publications/WorkingPaper-1\\_SixGraveViolationsLegalFoundation.pdf](https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/publications/WorkingPaper-1_SixGraveViolationsLegalFoundation.pdf)

*It is highly recommended for delegates to become very familiar with this document, because it provides the legal bases for the use of children in armed conflict. Not only will this source be useful for gaining a legal perspective, but more importantly delegates can reference this when writing and drafting resolutions. The document is vast in providing the legal basis for nearly all matters related to children and armed conflict. However, the legal background for the release and reintegration of children can be found under Grave Violation One. According to international humanitarian law, children associated with armed forces or armed groups are afforded special protection. This clause will be key in developing proposals for action on this topic.*

World Bank. (2011). *Child Soldiers* [Website]. Retrieved 8 August 2014 from:

<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTSOCIALDEVELOPMENT/EXTCPR/0,,contentMDK:20487883~pagePK:148956~piPK:216618~theSitePK:407740,00.html>

*This site is beneficial for delegates because it provides a list of case studies sourced from various areas of conflict around the world. A great majority of the cases do focus on demobilization and reintegration instead of solely discussion reintegration. It is important to understand that the processes are heavily inter-related. The variety of case studies ranging from El Salvador to Angola will provide delegates with a diverse insight on the variety of conflicts that have involved child soldiers, along with the reintegration processes used.*



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### III. Advancing Human Development for Adolescents

#### *Introduction*

Since 1946, the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) has actively worked to produce rights-based policy, advocating globally for the rights of children, and promoting positive development from early childhood to adolescence.<sup>296</sup> The United Nations (UN) has defined “adolescence” as a distinct and transitional phase in an individual’s life between late childhood and early adulthood, often designated as between the range of 15-19.<sup>297</sup> This phase is distinct for causing rapid changes in the physiological, emotional and mental attributes of the individual.<sup>298</sup> Many societies recognize the rapid period of transition from child to adult as significant to the overall growth of an individual, and this period of adolescence is defined and recognized differently across cultures.<sup>299</sup> As such, adolescence falls under the heading of “human development” at the UN, which is defined as emphasizing the diverse priorities that an individual must encounter in order to achieve the average social and economic success in their adulthood and later stages of life.<sup>300</sup>

In the case of the human development of adolescents, UNICEF is primarily focused on fulfilling children’s rights as stated in the 1989 *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (CRC).<sup>301</sup> However, this document, addressing the specific human rights for children, does not make specific concessions concerning the adolescent population.<sup>302</sup> Adolescent populations are a relatively new area of discussion in UNICEF, without the legacy of policy that the area of children’s rights possesses.<sup>303</sup> Over the last few decades, significant development in the creation of legal frameworks addressing issues of children, including humanitarian action in emergency situations, education and nutrition, has taken place.<sup>304</sup> However, there is a lack of framework addressing the unique needs of adolescents, and there exists a major policy gap between individuals who fall between the areas of “adults” and “children.”<sup>305</sup> Adolescents face similar issues to children, however the status of their mental, physical, and emotional development means that they face additional challenges, further aggravated by social, economic, and cultural factors. There is insufficient policy addressing this age group, effectively making them a marginalized group within the international community.<sup>306</sup> With the transition from the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), to the post-2015 agenda, it is imperative to ensure that the specific needs of the adolescent group are fully addressed within the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).<sup>307</sup>

#### *International and Regional Framework*

In 1965, through the General Assembly resolution 20/2037, on the “Declaration on the Promotion Among Youth of the Ideals of Peace, Mutual Respect and Understanding Between Peoples,” Member States reaffirmed their commitment to recognizing the needs and ideas of young people globally.<sup>308</sup> This Declaration highlighted the “responsibility” that youth populations carry in the future progression of the world, in social, economic, and political arenas.<sup>309</sup>

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<sup>296</sup> UNICEF, *Adolescents and Youth, Introduction*, 2014.

<sup>297</sup> UN DESA, *United Nations Expert Group Meeting on Adolescents, Youth and Development*, 2011, p. 5; UNICEF, *Adolescents and Youth, Introduction*, 2014.

<sup>298</sup> UNICEF, *Adolescents and Youth, Introduction*, 2014.

<sup>299</sup> UNICEF, *Adolescents and Youth, Introduction*, 2014; World Health Organization, *Adolescent Development*.

<sup>300</sup> UN, *World Programme of Action for Youth*, 2010, p. i; UNICEF, *Adolescent Development in East Asia and the Pacific: Realizing their Potential*, 2006, p. i.

<sup>301</sup> UN General Assembly, *Convention on the Rights of the Child (A/RES/44/25)*, 1989.

<sup>302</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>303</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>304</sup> UNICEF, *Our Priorities*, 2014.

<sup>305</sup> UN, *Millennium Development Goals*, 2000.

<sup>306</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>307</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>308</sup> UN General Assembly, *Declaration on the Promotion Among Youth of the Ideals of Peace, Mutual Respect and Understanding of Peoples (A/RES/20/2037)*, 1965.

<sup>309</sup> *Ibid.*

The 1979 *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women* (CEDAW) promotes the rights of women and girls internationally.<sup>310</sup> While CEDAW does not directly address adolescents as a group, it does provide an understanding as to the importance of addressing various age groups within social development.<sup>311</sup> CEDAW does, however, emphasize particular areas linked to adolescent humans, particularly with regards to gender.<sup>312</sup> For instance, CEDAW highlights the various social, physical, and mental stresses endured by women of all ages, as well as the necessity to consider human rights in addressing the needs of different populations.<sup>313</sup> For example, CEDAW identifies discrimination of pregnant women and their restriction of opportunities as a serious issue, which also applies to adolescent mothers.<sup>314</sup>

By 1995, support for human development for adolescents continued to rise in the establishment of the *World Programme of Action for Youth* (WPAY).<sup>315</sup> The policy framework and practical guidelines within WPAY establish fifteen problem areas and related plans of actions that need to be addressed by Member States.<sup>316</sup> These priorities cover health, recreational drug use, and juvenile delinquency, and provide potential programs and solutions for Member States.<sup>317</sup> WPAY considers factors that influence the socio-economic behavior of adolescents at a national level by taking into account the influence of globalization and factors that are shared across borders.<sup>318</sup> Such interactions include the manners in which adolescents adjust to unsustainable globalization and its cross-fertilization of ideas, particularly the results of intensified poverty, social disintegration, and unemployment.<sup>319</sup> The policy proposals include a potential framework for the implementation at both the regional and international levels, thereby addressing the need for intergovernmental cooperation in dealing with adolescent development.<sup>320</sup>

### ***Role of the International System***

#### *UNICEF*

Key policy framework regarding the issue of adolescence is often found in UNICEF resolutions, and the majority of these strongly support the need to implement sustainable programs promoting the social and economic growth of adolescents.<sup>321</sup> This is done with the belief that these programs are significant in addressing social and economic development in the international level.<sup>322</sup> Particularly, UNICEF hopes to prioritize and promote the access to various resources and services including health care, skill-based educational training, and justice and protection for the adolescent population.<sup>323</sup>

In the working paper series, “The Participation Rights of Adolescents: A Strategic Approach,” UNICEF identifies the necessity of participation by adolescents in the social and political sphere in their society.<sup>324</sup> By using a developmental approach, UNICEF allows the adolescents to invest in their own future by providing them the necessary assistance to do so, making this working paper series a positive step forward.<sup>325</sup> Through solving their present-day issues and taking a leading role in solving adolescent problems, UNICEF encourages current adolescents to approach topical issues that will affect their future, and provides them with opportunities for job training, and to be involved with educational institutions, health services, and media.<sup>326</sup>

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<sup>310</sup> UN General Assembly, *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (A/RES/34/180)*, 1979.

<sup>311</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>312</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>313</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>314</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>315</sup> UN, *World Programme of Action for Youth*, 2010, p. i.

<sup>316</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>317</sup> *Ibid.*, p. v.

<sup>318</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 44.

<sup>319</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 44.

<sup>320</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 44.

<sup>321</sup> UNICEF, *Adolescents and Youth, Introduction*, 2014.

<sup>322</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>323</sup> UNICEF, *Our Priorities*, 2014.

<sup>324</sup> UNICEF, *The Participation Rights of Adolescents: A Strategic Approach*, 2001, p. 1.

<sup>325</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>326</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 1-29.

In 2004, UNICEF produced a collection of case studies studying existent frameworks regarding the adolescent programming experiences during conflict and post-conflict.<sup>327</sup> These studies looked at the various opportunities available to adolescent populations where conflict is present or in a post-conflict state, and how to improve their participation in community development and peacebuilding processes during and post-conflict.<sup>328</sup> A product of UNICEF’s collaboration with its country and regional offices, as well as the *Women’s Commission for Refugees and Children*, these case studies analyze and prioritize the various issues that need to be addressed in order to better aid adolescents for political and social participation.<sup>329</sup> Programs that have been notable for conducting “good practices” including HIV/AIDS awareness programs, peer-to-peer psychological help, gender equality training, educational training, and vocational training.<sup>330</sup> In doing this, UNICEF strengthens its commitment by supporting Articles 12-14 in the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*.<sup>331</sup>

#### *Other UN Entities*

The 1989 *Convention on the Rights of the Child* recognized the need for an independent document that highlighted the necessities of individuals under the age of 18.<sup>332</sup> This legally binding mechanism was produced, ensuring that any child would not be discriminated against, had the right to life and development, and that the best interests of children would always be a priority.<sup>333</sup> Furthermore, the Convention emphasizes a child’s role in the decision-making process of various issues, as well as the importance in preparing children to be capable of making responsible decisions.<sup>334</sup> The CRC is a general legal framework for governing child rights that provides consideration to the different phases within childhood and the need for discussion of each particular phase.<sup>335</sup> It considers the responsibilities towards and the needs of children of all ages, emphasizing the different requirements for health care and education for adolescents.<sup>336</sup> In doing so, the CRC recognizes that cultures and diverse societies influence adolescents and the type of development they experience.<sup>337</sup>

More recently, the Commission on Population and Development adopted resolution E/2012/25 in 2012 on “adolescents and youth,” which discusses the necessity of specific programs that address social development and target the adolescent population.<sup>338</sup> Acknowledging the growing adolescent demographic globally, the resolution also identifies adolescents as “key agents” in the sphere of development.<sup>339</sup> This resolution is notable for taking into consideration the connection between age and socio-economic development when addressing the varying needs of adolescent populations.<sup>340</sup> To complement the growing needs of addressing specific periods of childhood, the resolution requests that governments collaborate to produce sustainable and feasible programs for the adolescent population.<sup>341</sup>

Various bodies within the UN framework speak to the human development of adolescents by addressing how their body’s mandate would be able to assist in addressing the issue. For example, the UN Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development (IANYD) is the network consisting of agencies present within the UN system whose work is related to the progress and development of youth.<sup>342</sup> The goal of the network is to strengthen coordination efforts conducted by various UN entities and their proposed policies and framework in order to ensure maximum output.<sup>343</sup> The network endorses the collaborative efforts and 15 priority areas proposed by WPAY.<sup>344</sup> As agreed by the

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<sup>327</sup> UNICEF, *Adolescent Programming Experiences During Conflict and Post-Conflict*, 2004.

<sup>328</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>329</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>330</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>331</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>332</sup> UNICEF, *Protecting children’s rights*, 2014.

<sup>333</sup> UNICEF, *Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC/GC/C/11)*, 2009.

<sup>334</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>335</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>336</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>337</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>338</sup> UN Population Division, *Adolescents and youth (E/2012/25)*, 2012, p. iii.

<sup>339</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>340</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>341</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>342</sup> *The Joint Statement of the UN Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development*, 2010.

<sup>343</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>344</sup> *Ibid.*

General Assembly, the priority areas are: education, employment, hunger and poverty, health, environment, substance abuse, juvenile justice, leisure-time activities, girls and young women, globalization, information and communication technology, HIV/AIDS, armed conflict, intergenerational issues, and, most importantly, the participation and inclusion of young women in the decision-making sphere.<sup>345</sup> Furthermore, as a forum, the network reviews existing UN resolutions, conventions, and goals set up by other organizations.<sup>346</sup> The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) produced the “Age, Gender and Diversity (AGD) Approach Forward Plan 2011-2016,” a five-year plan to ensure that the agency is able to be fully inclusive in its organizational structure, programs, and policies.<sup>347</sup> UNHCR wishes to implement “Specific Actions to Enhance the Protection of Children,” including adolescents.<sup>348</sup> Through this plan, UNHCR has made specific commitments to addressing the nature of human development of adolescents in emergency situations, noting that they are a unique age group from children.<sup>349</sup>

The World Health Organization (WHO) addresses issues regarding the human development of adolescents from a medical and health perspective.<sup>350</sup> With topics regarding pregnancy, mental health, and HIV/AIDS, WHO takes initiatives in accommodating this age phase and its unique needs due to the transitions taking place in this population.<sup>351</sup> Taking particular interest in the various factors of development concerning adolescents, including physical, neurodevelopmental, psychological, and social changes, the WHO approaches policies and programs while keeping in mind the implications of catering to the needs of this specific age group.<sup>352</sup> WHO’s report “Health for the World’s Adolescents” explores the necessity of making a distinction between children, adolescents, and adults, particularly in regards to the area of health.<sup>353</sup> Providing an overview of current operations and programs dedicated to adolescents, the report observes that what occurs during the adolescent stage of life has a major influencing factor over the rest of an individual’s life.<sup>354</sup> According to the report, there is growing attention for adolescent health in various national agendas, which demonstrates that adolescents are a unique group with equally unique health care needs.<sup>355</sup> The WHO also recognizes and supports UNICEF’s actions in promoting adolescent participation in decision-making, particularly in areas of health.<sup>356</sup> This is due to the fact that adolescents are better equipped than children to understand their needs, and services available to them.<sup>357</sup>

### *Civil Society*

Many civil society organizations (CSOs) advocate for the rights of adolescents, while also facilitating and empowering the adolescent population.<sup>358</sup> As CSOs, these groups are able to address the concerns of the adolescent population with understanding of the local economic, cultural, and political nature of the region.<sup>359</sup> Kutenga is one of five CSOs in Mozambique advocating for adolescent sexual and reproductive health through promoting safety and education on sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and fighting discrimination of those affected.<sup>360</sup> The Education for Employment Foundation emphasizes work placement training as an effective mechanism to ensure financial security for unemployed adolescents in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA).<sup>361</sup> The MENA region has the largest youth population and the highest youth unemployment rates, therefore the need to increase employment

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<sup>345</sup> UN General Assembly, *World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond* (A/RES/50/81), 1996.

<sup>346</sup> *The Joint Statement of the UN Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development (IANYD)*, 2010.

<sup>347</sup> Groves, *Global Analysis 2012-2013: UNHCR Accountability Framework for Age, Gender and Diversity Mainstreaming and Target Actions*, 2013, p. 1.

<sup>348</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>349</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>350</sup> World Health Organization, *Adolescent health*.

<sup>351</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>352</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>353</sup> World Health Organization, *Health for the World’s Adolescents*, 2014.

<sup>354</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1-3.

<sup>355</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>356</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12.

<sup>357</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12.

<sup>358</sup> Pathfinder International, *Iniciativa*.

<sup>359</sup> Krishna, *How are Civil Society Organizations Important for Development?*

<sup>360</sup> Pathfinder International, *Iniciativa: Strengthening the Capacity of Youth Civil Society in Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights*, 2012; French Committee for International Solidarity, *Mozambique: Residents organize to improve their lives*.

<sup>361</sup> Education for Employment, *What we do*.



opportunities and a skilled labor force is a priority.<sup>362</sup> Education for Employment recognizes the need for adolescent education and equal opportunity as a benefit to the adolescent's future, and as a societal benefit, in that skilled and employed adolescents are able to contribute financially to their community.<sup>363</sup> Similarly, the Glocal Forum, based in Rome, Italy, brings together leaders of local governments, international organizations, and private companies to network their available resources to aid adolescent and youth populations.<sup>364</sup> This CSO takes particular interest in youth empowerment, investing in youth health, nutrition, and information and communication technology initiatives.<sup>365</sup> For the Glocal Forum, increased opportunities for the youth through sustainable lifestyles and increased personal autonomy is a key goal, as it is the youth who will have the authority over political and economical decision-making in the future.<sup>366</sup>

### ***Challenges Facing Adolescents***

#### *Health*

While the adolescent stage is the most rapid phase in the development of the body, physically and psychologically, social factors may also have a strong influence over this age.<sup>367</sup> More than one-third of girls under the age of 18 are married in the developing world.<sup>368</sup> For adolescent girls, early marriage and pregnancy restrict their educational and employment opportunities.<sup>369</sup> This tends to often have long-term impacts on adolescent girls, and the following generation, thereby creating a cyclical system where opportunities for females who enter adulthood are limited.<sup>370</sup> The lack of access to sexual education and resources increases the risk of adolescents contracting HIV/AIDS and other STIs.<sup>371</sup> Early sexual activity, without having received formalized sexual education, can lead many adolescent girls to facing pregnancy. About 11% of all births occurring in the world are to adolescent girls, and in Africa, the leading cause of female adolescent deaths are from complications in pregnancy and childbirth.<sup>372</sup>

The lack of resources and services aimed at improving the health and well-being of individuals in the adolescent phase of their lives makes these individuals more prone to mental illness.<sup>373</sup> It is recorded that 20% of adolescents face some form of mental illness such as depression, each year.<sup>374</sup> Mental illness is still not an issue widely discussed by many societies, and therefore it limits the number of opportunities for adolescents to achieve their maximum potential as adults.<sup>375</sup> Often, mental health problems encountered by adolescents are associated with poor educational opportunities, crime, unemployment or lack of sustainable economic opportunities, and risk-taking behavior, which leads to inadequate self-care and an increased risk of premature mortality.<sup>376</sup> Adolescent health also needs to include a focus on good nutrition, a lack of which can be linked to numerous health concerns.<sup>377</sup> The General Assembly adopted resolution 66/197 in 2012 to substantively address malnutrition in adolescent populations; however, with the development of the post-2015 framework, the need for increased focus on malnutrition in vulnerable populations is needed.<sup>378</sup>

#### *Education*

With regards to the development of the Sustainable Development Goals, it is noted that education is a significant issue.<sup>379</sup> However, adolescents in most developing nations are often disadvantaged when it comes to having access

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<sup>362</sup> Education for Employment, *About Us*.

<sup>363</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>364</sup> The Glocal Forum, *About Us*, 2014.

<sup>365</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>366</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>367</sup> UNICEF, *Progress for Children, A report card on adolescents*, 2012, p. 3.

<sup>368</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>369</sup> UN, *World Programme of Action for Youth*, 2010, p. 18.

<sup>370</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 26.

<sup>371</sup> UNICEF, *Progress for Children, A report card on adolescents*, 2012, p. 5.

<sup>372</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4

<sup>373</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19.

<sup>374</sup> UNICEF, *Adolescence: An Age of Opportunity*, 2011, p. 27.

<sup>375</sup> UNICEF, *Progress for Children, A report card on adolescents*, 2012, p. 19

<sup>376</sup> UNICEF, *Adolescence: An Age of Opportunity*, 2011, p. 27.

<sup>377</sup> UNICEF, *Progress for Children, A report card on adolescents*, 2012, p. 4

<sup>378</sup> UN Conference on Sustainable Development, *The Future We Want (A/CONF.216/L.1)*, 2012.

<sup>379</sup> *Ibid.*

to post-secondary education.<sup>380</sup> Despite government programs and policies, it is difficult to persuade families to send their children to secondary school, either because families are unable to afford sending their children away from their homes for the purpose of secondary education, or because the family relies on the adolescent individual for income.<sup>381</sup> Gender disparity is also prevalent, especially in communities where it is expected of young women to stay at home, take care of their families, and to get married at a young age.<sup>382</sup> This lack of adolescence, particularly for female adolescents, results in access to education to be reduced and a decrease in the overall youth literacy rates in Member States where these situations are prevalent.<sup>383</sup>

Literacy, a measure of a person's ability to read, is a skill required by most individuals in order to acquire full employment in adulthood.<sup>384</sup> Formal education provides individuals and societies with an economic future by providing skill-based training to increase their chances of employment and job security.<sup>385</sup> Despite growing access to formal education, globally, the UN generally follows the assumption that adolescents would best benefit from vocational training, where they may make immediate use of skills acquired.<sup>386</sup> This tactic also ensures a degree of youth justice, particularly in that if an adolescent is able to access educational opportunities, they are more capable of finding and acquiring necessary legal support, if needed.<sup>387</sup> Education is also seen as a tool of empowerment for adolescents, ensuring more positive economic futures and a greater quality of life.<sup>388</sup> However, the UN stresses that all programs which increase access to education must have a focus on sustainability, which therefore encourages a focus on long-term education and skill-based employment education.<sup>389</sup>

### *Employment*

Adolescents are present in the labor force across the world.<sup>390</sup> Adolescents around the world work for different reasons, for example to make money to support their family's livelihood, or gain economic independence.<sup>391</sup> While child labor still exists, particularly in developing nations, there are many international and domestic-level laws that place an age restriction on employable individuals to make child labor illegal.<sup>392</sup> It is imperative that Member States consider the role of adolescents in their economies seriously, as they are often untapped resources that could provide an economic boost to a nation through higher employment levels.<sup>393</sup> In order to ensure that this group can positively contribute to their Member State's economy in the future, it is important to highlight the significance of job creation, as well as education, as mechanisms with which to provide employment-based skills to youth.<sup>394</sup> However, employment issues are not limited to adolescents presently working, future sources of work for adolescents when they reach adulthood must be considered.<sup>395</sup> Through the development of the SDGs, it is strongly encouraged that the creation of employment be at the forefront of national agendas, particularly in the context of eradicating poverty and promoting a sustainable economy.<sup>396</sup>

### *Violence*

While the *Millennium Declaration* states that it is a parent's responsibility to raise their children free from violence, injustice, and oppression, it also reaffirms the commitment of various UN bodies to protect children.<sup>397</sup> There are various forms of violence that target adolescents across the world, and these are often similar, regardless of the

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<sup>380</sup> UNICEF, *Progress for Children, A report card on adolescents*, 2012, p. 13.

<sup>381</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>382</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>383</sup> UNICEF, *Adolescence: An Age of Opportunity*, 2011, p. 29.

<sup>384</sup> UNICEF, *Progress for Children, A report card on adolescents*, 2012, p. 16.

<sup>385</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>386</sup> UNICEF, *The Participation Rights of Adolescents: A strategic approach*, 2001, p. 2.

<sup>387</sup> UNICEF, *Adolescence: An Age of Opportunity*, 2011, p. 31.

<sup>388</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 29.

<sup>389</sup> UN Conference on Sustainable Development, *The Future We Want (A/CONF.216/L.1)*, 2012.

<sup>390</sup> Brown, *Promoting Adolescent Livelihoods*, 2001, p. 4.

<sup>391</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>392</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>393</sup> UNICEF, *Adolescence: An Age of Opportunity*, 2011, p. 45.

<sup>394</sup> Brown, *Promoting Adolescent Livelihoods*, 2001, p.4.

<sup>395</sup> UNICEF, *Adolescence: An Age of Opportunity*, 2011, p. 45.

<sup>396</sup> UN Conference on Sustainable Development, *The Future We Want (A/CONF.216/L.1)*, 2012.

<sup>397</sup> UNICEF, *Progress for Children, A report card on adolescents*, 2012, p. 31.

socio-economic conditions within which they are raised.<sup>398</sup> The diversity of violence today includes sexual, domestic, peer, and gang violence.<sup>399</sup> Violence may be a result of the vulnerabilities of age, gender, and physical or mental disabilities, and these factors may also influence the type of violence the individual is subjected to in the future.<sup>400</sup>

Violence, in all forms, has adverse effects on the mental and physical status of adolescents, which may range from contracting STIs, to unplanned pregnancies, to declining mental coping mechanisms due to trauma.<sup>401</sup> In 2002, it was recorded that 150 million girls and 73 million adolescent boys were subjected to sexual violence, and the gendered values of this figure are especially notable.<sup>402</sup> Bullying, and in particular cyberbullying, is becoming a pressing topic of discussion in the examination of peer-based adolescent violence, and the international community is currently facing a policy gap on these issues.<sup>403</sup> There are no set legal parameters on bullying in many developing states, and equally few legal parameters on cyber bullying, due to the difficulty of defining the parameters of an online community.<sup>404</sup> From the virtual sphere to many neighborhoods across the world, gang violence is almost always a situation in which one is pressured, through peer-pressure or economic pressure, into joining.<sup>405</sup> In this, gender is an important indicator of risk, since the majority of participants and victims of gang violence are adolescent boys.<sup>406</sup> Inadequate economic conditions and lack of avenues and services where adolescents may address the pressures of their lifestyle may aggravate the participation in gang violence, along with uncompromising governmental policies and political turmoil which encourage escalations of street violence.<sup>407</sup>

### **Conclusion**

Adolescents are a unique group to address through policy, as they experience dramatic physical, psychological, and social changes within a very short period of time, in a manner unlike any other age group.<sup>408</sup> While issues concerning adolescents are discussed under the umbrella of youth and childhood, there is little UN action concerning the adolescents as a distinct group.<sup>409</sup> Despite the lack of awareness of the need for human development for adolescents currently, it is the responsibility of the UN to explore the issue further.<sup>410</sup> The needs and necessities of adolescents are diverse and unique in contrast to the needs and necessities of other age groups addressed in international policy.<sup>411</sup> Responsibilities that individuals have had in their childhood evolve, or change diversely as they enter adulthood, and safe and secure human development during this time period is essential for positive outcomes for future adult populations. It is key for the international community to advocate for changes in the current legal frameworks at both the international and national levels, and increase collaborative efforts with civil society for meeting the needs of adolescents.

### **Further Research**

In examining current issues affecting today's adolescents, it is important that human development policy for adolescents is expanded beyond coordination between different organizations and governments. It is important to ask what changes in policy direction are necessary to assist this particular age group. UNICEF has identified some of the issues highlighted above as important agenda items moving into the post-2015 agenda; how can UNICEF strengthen the significance of adolescents as a distinct age group and meet their unique needs? In what ways can UNICEF coordinate with other UN entities when establishing policy framework for adolescents? How can the work of civil society be incorporated into international and national efforts to produce strong and effective policy, and assist in the implementation?

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<sup>398</sup> UNICEF, *Progress for Children, A report card on adolescents*, 2012, p. 31.

<sup>399</sup> Ibid.

<sup>400</sup> Ibid.

<sup>401</sup> UNICEF, *Adolescence: An Age of Opportunity*, 2011, p. 47.

<sup>402</sup> UNICEF, *Progress for Children, A report card on adolescents*, 2012, p. 31.

<sup>403</sup> UNICEF, *Adolescence: An Age of Opportunity*, 2011, p. 47.

<sup>404</sup> UNICEF, *Progress for Children, A report card on adolescents*, 2012, p. 11.

<sup>405</sup> UNICEF, *Adolescence: An Age of Opportunity*, 2011, p. 47.

<sup>406</sup> Ibid.

<sup>407</sup> UNICEF, *Progress for Children, A report card on adolescents*, 2012, p. 33.

<sup>408</sup> UNICEF, *Adolescents and Youth, Introduction*, 2014.

<sup>409</sup> UNICEF, *Adolescence: An Age of Opportunity*, 2011, p. 30.

<sup>410</sup> UNICEF, *Adolescents and Youth, Introduction*, 2014.

<sup>411</sup> Ibid.

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*The case studies presented in this document provide a background on the necessity for adolescent participation in community development and peacebuilding during times of social and political crisis. This document identifies adolescents as significant actors in times of conflict. The case studies reflect on positive evidence of participation by adolescents as they contribute their voice to the development of their home. This is an excellent resource for diverse perspectives of different programs on the ground, providing examples from South America, the Middle East and Asia.*

United Nations Children’s Fund. (2006). *Adolescent Development: Perspectives and Framework* [Discussion Paper]. Retrieved 11 July 2014 from: [http://www.unicef.org/ADAP\\_series\\_1.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/ADAP_series_1.pdf)

*The paper explores the existing frameworks adapted by various UN organs addressing adolescent development. It acknowledges that there are various facets to adolescent development, and different perspectives that are operated by the diverse-range of bodies when addressing the issue. This paper is useful to delegates as it examines and evaluates existing approaches, and the implications of meeting the demands of the various components.*

United Nations Children’s Fund. (2011). *Adolescence: An Age of Opportunity*. [Report]. Retrieved 11 July 2014 from: [http://www.unicef.org/adolescence/files/SOWC\\_2011\\_Main\\_Report\\_EN\\_02092011.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/adolescence/files/SOWC_2011_Main_Report_EN_02092011.pdf)

*This report was produced through the collaboration of stakeholders that work both inside and outside of UNICEF, such as WHO. Information was provided from key UNICEF field offices from across the world and other relevant UN bodies, including the WHO Adolescent Health and Development Team. Perspectives on the challenges faced by today’s adolescents is also provided by stakeholders. Delegates would find this useful as it shows how various bodies within the UN cooperate in order to address this issue.*

United Nations Children’s Fund. (2012). *Progress for Children, A report card on adolescents*. Retrieved 7 August 2014 from: [http://www.unicef.org/media/files/PFC2012\\_A\\_report\\_card\\_on\\_adolescents.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/media/files/PFC2012_A_report_card_on_adolescents.pdf)

*This report reviews social aspects of the communities within which adolescents of today exist, while also reviewing the limitations of the data collected on this issue. The report makes brief suggestions on what actions need to take place at the domestic level, as well as policy development in the intergovernmental realm. Delegates should find this report useful to understand the situation of adolescents under various social contexts, while also understanding how these various factors interrelate.*

United Nations, Committee on the Rights of the Child. (2003). *General Comment No. 4: Adolescent health and development in the context of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC/GC/2003/4)* [Resolution]. Retrieved 11 July 2014 from:

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*The supplementary document is extremely useful because it provides further analysis into issues of health for adolescents in particular. It addresses the principles and obligations of States Parties; the creation of safe and supportive environments; access to information and the provision of counseling and health services; and vulnerability and risk. It encourages States Parties to collect and disaggregate data by sex, age, and origin, and to ensure that the situation of specific groups (ethnic, indigenous, migrant, refugee, employed, and adolescents with disabilities) is studied to ensure that appropriate action can be taken.*

United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. (2010). *World Programme of Action for Youth* [Report]. Retrieved 7 August 2014 from: <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/documents/wpay2010.pdf>

*This document provides a policy framework and practical guideline for national action and international cooperation in addressing the need to incorporate and consider the role of adolescents in today’s society. This will be useful to delegates as it approaches each of the key fifteen issue areas that are considered to be most influential on the development of today’s*

*adolescent population, and therefore delegates will find it most useful in understanding each factor while also seeing proposed guidelines for the key issue areas.*

United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. (2011). *United Nations Expert Group Meeting on Adolescents, Youth and Development* [Report]. Retrieved 11 July 2014 from:

[http://www.un.org/esa/population/meetings/egm-adolescents/EGM%20on%20Adolescents\\_Youth%20and%20Development\\_Report.pdf](http://www.un.org/esa/population/meetings/egm-adolescents/EGM%20on%20Adolescents_Youth%20and%20Development_Report.pdf)

*This report is based on the meeting of experts regarding the issue of adolescents, youth and development. The meeting was arranged by the General Assembly resolution 64/134 as the preparatory meeting for the sixty-fourth session of the Commission on Population and Development. The meeting addressed issues ranging from demographic dynamics, family planning, and youth employment. What is unique to this report is the fact that the experts discuss the transition from adolescence to adulthood and why this transition phase is important for the overall growth of the individual.*

United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. (n.d.). *UN Inter-Agency Network on Youth and Development* [Website]. Retrieved 1 September 2014 from: <http://social.un.org/youthyear/unianydn.html>

*The website provides background on existing coordinating efforts between UN bodies in addressing the concerns and efforts on issues of not only adolescents, but youth, as well. It acknowledges the necessity to streamline and make the programs and efforts of UN bodies more efficient through coordination. Delegates will find this useful as it provides the framework within which this coordination occurs.*

United Nations, General Assembly. (1965). *Declaration on the Promotion Among Youth of the Ideals of Peace, Mutual Respect, and Understanding Between Peoples (A/RES/20/2037)* [Resolution]. Retrieved 1 September 2014 from: <http://www.un-documents.net/a20r2037.htm>

*This resolution aligns the human rights as stated in the Charter of the United Nations with the principles and necessities of the youth population. The principles suggest early issue areas regarding youth and human rights and areas where solutions would be appropriate, such as education and coordination between national and international associations. Delegates will find this useful, as it would provide a historical background on the consideration of adolescents and youth in policy framework.*

United Nations, General Assembly. (1979, December 18). *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (A/RES/34/180)*. Retrieved 8 August 2014 from:

<http://www.ohchr.org/en/ProfessionalInterest/pages/cedaw.aspx>

*This international treaty, an international bill of rights for women, enshrines the necessity to improve gender equality amongst all its Member States. However, while it addresses girls under the age of twenty-one as youth, there is no consideration of the unique situations and issues faced of adolescent girls. Delegates would find this treaty useful when attempting to find ways in which they could adapt it to accommodate the special needs of adolescent girls.*

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