

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

Introduction

The Executive Board of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) met formally from 9-12 September 2014.¹ During this session the Executive Board proposed a program of work for 2015, discussed financing *The UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2014-2017*, and revised country and area programs, among other topics.² The next formal session for the Executive Board will take place from 3-5 February 2015, with significant preparations already underway.³ This update will assess the recent work and predicted topics of the coming sessions in order to provide a better understanding on how the Executive Board functions and works with other bodies to effectively produce and implement policies that support the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*.

Recent Activities

The UNICEF Executive Board holds a midyear annual session and two regular sessions, one at the beginning of the year and one at the end.⁴ As stated above, the most recent regular session was held in September 2014, and the first regular session of 2015 is set to take place in February while the annual session of 2015 is scheduled for June.⁵ The second regular session in September 2014 discussed UNICEF's financial plan and financial reports and statements, approved altered country programs as introduced at the annual session, and finally established the program of work for 2015.⁶ The Executive Board aims to follow such an agenda at every second regular session.⁷

For first regular sessions the Executive Board aims to discuss the annual work plan and proposed budgeting, the report of the Board of Auditors, and approve any updates to country programs discussed in the previous session.⁸ Accordingly, the first regular session in February will have such an agenda and the UNICEF Secretariat is currently leading the necessary preparations for the meeting.⁹ The Secretariat prepares documents and background notes relevant to the agenda of every upcoming session for the Executive Board to review and prepare for discussion at least four weeks prior to meeting.¹⁰ The documents include a draft decision if the Executive Board is required to make a decision on a topic during session, while background notes are provided for informational purposes and do not include draft decisions.¹¹ Many documents and background notes are already available for the coming first regular session.¹²

Recent Policy Outcomes

The current agenda documents and draft decisions produced by the Secretariat allow for predictions on the policy outcomes of the Executive Board's upcoming first regular session in February. This meeting is set to discuss the country programs in Madagascar and Mali and the extension of country programs in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Ethiopia, Myanmar and Papua New Guinea.¹³ Other topics to be discussed include UNICEF's work with countries transitioning from middle-to-high-income status, as many countries are reaching high-income status and must be addressed based on current and relevant needs, and additionally an expansion of the Vaccine Independence Initiative and an extension of the fund pertaining to the Initiative so as to make the vaccines more affordable.¹⁴ The coming session will also include an update on UNICEF

¹ UNICEF, *Second regular session 2014*, 2014.

² Ibid.

³ UNICEF, *First regular session 2015*, 2015.

⁴ UNICEF, *The UNICEF Executive Board: An Informal Guide*, 2014, p. 6.

⁵ UNICEF, *First regular session 2015*, 2015; UNICEF, *Second regular session 2014*, 2014.

⁶ UNICEF, *The UNICEF Executive Board: An Informal Guide*, 2014, p. 7.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ UNICEF, *First regular session 2015*, 2015.

¹⁰ UNICEF, *The UNICEF Executive Board: An Informal Guide*, 2014, pp. 9-11.

¹¹ Ibid; UNICEF, *UNICEF Executive Board 2015 Programme of Work*, 2014.

¹² UNICEF, *First regular session 2015*, 2015.

¹³ Ibid; UNICEF, *Extension of ongoing country programmes: Note by the secretariat (E/ICEF/2015/P/L.3)*, 2014.

¹⁴ UNICEF, *UNICEF work with countries transitioning from middle- to high-income status (E/ICEF/2015/P/L.6)*, 2014; UNICEF, *Recommendation to the Executive Board: Extension and expansion of the Vaccine Independence Initiative and its revolving fund (E/ICEF/2015/P/L.5)*, 2014.

humanitarian action and a proposal to increase the Emergency Programme Fund ceiling,¹⁵ The Secretariat's proposal to increase the Emergency Programme Fund ceiling states that the issue of humanitarian crisis in 2014 was unprecedented.¹⁶ With UNICEF aid given during the Ebola outbreak in West Africa and the conflicts in areas such as Central African Republic, South Sudan, Iraq, and also in the Syrian Arab Republic and the situation of refugees in surrounding countries, by October 2014, UNICEF and other humanitarian organizations had responded to over 556 emergencies in 40 countries.¹⁷ The coming session should determine an appropriate increase to the Emergency Programme Fund and also strengthen UNICEF's response to humanitarian action, all in line with *The UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2014-2017*.¹⁸

Another area of focus during the meeting is on the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), of which UNICEF is a cosponsor.¹⁹ Since June 2014, UNICEF and UNAIDS have led an initiative called "All In: Towards ending the AIDS epidemic among adolescents" with the purpose of influencing policymakers to take practical steps to increase HIV prevention and treatment for adolescents.²⁰ UNICEF and UNAIDS are currently developing regional and national plans to focus on the 25 leading countries in adolescent treatment disparity and intend to officially launch the program on 25 February 2015.²¹

Common needs for the future of UNICEF noted by the Secretariat in the pre-session documents include preparedness at the national and regional level for health and humanitarian crises, appropriate allocation of funds and fundraising to ensure appropriate aid is given by trained professionals during a crisis, and finally, working accordingly with fellow United Nations (UN) agencies and civil society to meet the goals that will be set forth in the post-2015 development agenda.²²

Implementation of United Nations Children's Fund Outcomes

At the end of every session, all of the adopted decisions of the Executive Board are combined into a report, and at the close of the year a report of all sessions of the year is compiled for submission to the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).²³ ECOSOC then reports to the UN General Assembly, which then reviews UNICEF's report as part the agenda in the larger discussion on development within the UN system.²⁴ The Executive Board's decisions are to follow the guidance of the General Assembly and ECOSOC as outlined in General Assembly resolution 48/162, and thus adhere to the mandate of the UN Charter.²⁵ The reports are put to a majority vote as most decisions are in the General Assembly.²⁶

The UNICEF Executive Board holds the first regular session directly before or after the related sessions of the Executive Boards of sister agencies such as the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund, and the United Nations Office of Project Services.²⁷ The purpose of holding the sessions so close together is so the Executive Boards may also hold a combined meeting to ensure joint efforts on common issues, and

¹⁵ UNICEF, *Strengthening predictability of the UNICEF response to humanitarian crises: Proposal to increase the Emergency Programme Fund ceiling (E/ICEF/2015/P/L.4)*, 2014.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

¹⁷ UNICEF, *Strengthening predictability of the UNICEF response to humanitarian crises: Proposal to increase the Emergency Programme Fund ceiling (E/ICEF/2015/P/L.4)*, 2014, p. 3.

¹⁸ UNICEF, *Update on Strengthening Humanitarian Action (E/ICEF/2015/CRP.4)*, 2014.

¹⁹ UNICEF, *UNICEF follow-up to recommendations and decisions of the UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board meetings (E/ICEF/2015/CRP.3)*, 2014.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² UNICEF, *UNICEF work with countries transitioning from middle- to high-income status (E/ICEF/2015/P/L.6)*, 2014; UNICEF, *Update on Strengthening Humanitarian Action (E/ICEF/2015/CRP.4)*, 2014; UNICEF, *Strengthening predictability of the UNICEF response to humanitarian crises: Proposal to increase the Emergency Programme Fund ceiling (E/ICEF/2015/P/L.4)*, 2014; UNICEF, *Recommendation to the Executive Board: Extension and expansion of the Vaccine Independence Initiative and its revolving fund (E/ICEF/2015/P/L.5)*, 2014.

²³ UNICEF, *The UNICEF Executive Board: An Informal Guide*, 2014, p. 4.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ UN General Assembly, *Further measures for the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields (A/RES/48/162)*, 1994.

²⁶ UN General Assembly, *Functions and powers of the General Assembly*.

²⁷ UNICEF, *The UNICEF Executive Board: An Informal Guide*, 2014, p. 8.

in more recent years, the World Food Programme and United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) have also participated.²⁸ As the organizations have coordinated cycles for strategic plans, having such a meeting allows the bodies to analyze progress and ensure support in achieving mutual goals.²⁹ For example, in the joint meeting of 2014, the Executive Boards focused on gender mainstreaming and its importance across each organization's Strategic Plan 2014-2017.³⁰ Through the last meeting, UNICEF was able to align its Gender Action Plan with the Strategic Plans, and presented the Gender Action Plan for approval in the June 2014 meeting.³¹ The joint meeting for 2015 was scheduled for 2 February 2015.³²

Members of the Executive Boards of the agencies discussed above also complete field visits each year to national UNICEF programs, which are visited on a rotating basis.³³ The field visit is intended to observe UNICEF work on a national level, aid in the implementation of UNICEF policies on the field, and where possible, meet with government and non-government partners to discuss UNICEF program results.³⁴ The most recent joint site visit was held in March 2014 in Panama and El Salvador.³⁵ The major focus of the site visit was for members of the Executive Boards to work more closely with the United Nations Country Teams (UNCT) in El Salvador on their Delivering as One effort and to provide necessary guidance so that the domestic efforts of UN agencies were in line with international decisions and working in a results-oriented manner. Following the site visit, the UNCTs were able to work more closely with government agencies in meeting the goals under the UN's Delivering as One endeavor.

Conclusion

The United Nations Children's Fund serves as the leading agency of the United Nations responsible for overseeing the rights and well-being of children, and the Secretariat as well as the Executive Board of the Fund work diligently throughout the year to ensure that the policies and agenda of UNICEF are upheld. As an agency continuously partnering with fellow development leaders, UNICEF has and continues to play a crucial role in the improvement of the lives of children globally. UNICEF's current efforts and goals for the coming year are sure to impact the lives of children particularly in humanitarian crisis and will hopefully lead to greater impact through the post-2015 development agenda.

²⁸ UNICEF, *The UNICEF Executive Board: An Informal Guide*, 2014, p. 8.

²⁹ UNICEF, *Strategic Plan 2014-2017*, 2014.

³⁰ UNDP, et al., *Report of the Joint Meeting of the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS, UNICEF, UN-Women and WFP*, 2014.

³¹ Ibid.

³² UNICEF, *UNICEF Executive Board Calendar*, 2015.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ UNICEF, *Proposed guidelines for field visits by members of the UNICEF Executive Board (E/ICEF/2004/19)*, 2004, pp. 1-2.

³⁵ UNDP, et al., *Report of the joint field visit of the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS, UNICEF, UN Women and WFP to Panama and El Salvador (DP/FPA/OPS-ICEF-UNW-WFP/2014/CRP.8)*, 2014, p. 12.

Annotated Bibliography

United Nations Children's Fund. (2004). *Proposed guidelines for field visits by members of the UNICEF Executive Board (E/ICEF/2004/19)* [Decision]. Retrieved 2 January 2015 from:

http://www.unicef.org/about/execboard/files/04-19-Guidelines_field_visits-ODS-English.pdf

Produced in 2004, and still followed today, this document establishes the guidelines for how UNICEF is to run field visits. Clearly outlining the goals of a visit and the partnerships between the UNICEF Executive Board and its sister agencies in the process, delegates should become familiar with the guidelines here to fully comprehend how field visits impact policy implementation. This document will also provide a clearer understanding on how the UN development agencies are connected in achieving the overall agenda of the UN.

United Nations Children's Fund. (2014). *Strengthening predictability of the UNICEF response to humanitarian crises: Proposal to increase the Emergency Programme Fund ceiling (E/ICEF/2015/P/L.4)* [Decision]. Retrieved 30 December 2014 from:

http://www.unicef.org/about/execboard/files/2015-PL4-EPF_proposal-ODS-EN.pdf

One of the many documents prepared by the UNICEF Secretariat for the coming February session, this piece offers an example of a document for decision by the Executive Board and includes a draft decision at the end. This document is particularly important because it discusses the humanitarian issues that have greatly increased in more recent years and puts the topic forward that has been relevant to UNICEF even during sessions in 2014. To fully understand UNICEF's role in current humanitarian crises, delegates should understand the information prepared by the Secretariat in this document.

United Nations Children's Fund. (2014). *UNICEF Executive Board 2015 programme of work*. Retrieved 30 December 2014 from:

http://www.unicef.org/about/execboard/files/UNICEF_Executive_Board-2015_programme_of_work-21Nov2014.pdf

The above source is linked to the Executive Board's 2015 Programme of Work. This document is one of the last decisions agreed on at the September 2014 meeting and reflects work that is to place in the coming year. Delegates should familiarize themselves with the coming timeframe and relevant issues that UNICEF plans to work on in 2015.

United Nations Children's Fund. (2014). *The UNICEF Executive Board: An Informal Guide*. Retrieved 30 December 2014 from:

http://www.unicef.org/about/execboard/files/Executive_Board-An_Informal_Guide-2014-ENGLISH.pdf

This recently released document is vital in understanding the role of UNICEF's Executive Board. The guide provides a brief history and goes on to detail the procedural functions of the Executive Board as well as its relationship with other agencies. Delegates should become familiar with the processes listed in this document in order to fully understand how UNICEF implements policies from the international to national levels.

United Nations Children's Fund. (2014). *UNICEF follow-up to recommendations and decisions of the UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board meetings (E/ICEF/2015/CRP.3)* [Background Note]. Retrieved 29 December 2014 from:

http://www.unicef.org/about/execboard/files/2015-CRP3-Oral_report_UNAIDS_PCB-7Dec2014-EN.pdf

Another of the documents prepared by the UNICEF Secretariat for the February session, the above source represents a document provided for informational purposes. While the background note still offers appropriate steps for the future, it does not include a draft decision. This document is also very relevant at present as it discusses some of UNICEF's most recent work as well as approaches for reaching the post-2015 agenda.

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United Nations Children's Fund. (2015). *First regular session 2015* [Website]. Retrieved 29 December 2014 from: http://www.unicef.org/about/execboard/index_78020.html

United Nations Children's Fund. (2014). *Recommendation to the Executive Board: Extension and expansion of the Vaccine Independence Initiative and its revolving fund (E/ICEF/2015/P/L.5)*. Retrieved 30 December 2014 from: http://www.unicef.org/about/execboard/files/2015-PL5-VII_and_revolving_fund-ODS-EN.pdf

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United Nations Children's Fund. (2014). *Update on strengthening humanitarian action (E/ICEF/2015/CRP.4)*. Retrieved 30 December 2014 from: http://www.unicef.org/about/execboard/files/2015-CRP4-Humanitarian_action-8Dec2014.pdf

United Nations Children's Fund. (2014). *The UNICEF Executive Board: An Informal Guide*. Retrieved 30 December 2014 from: http://www.unicef.org/about/execboard/files/Executive_Board-An_Informal_Guide-2014-ENGLISH.pdf

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United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Population Fund, United Nations Office of Project Services, United Nations Children's Fund, United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, World Food Programme. (2014). *Report of the joint field visit of the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS, UNICEF, UN Women and WFP to Panama and El Salvador (DP/FPA/OPS-ICEF-UNW-*



WFP/2014/CRP.8) [Report]. Retrieved 25 January 2015 from: http://www.unicef.org/about/execboard/files/EB-2014-JFV-2014-UNWetc-2014-CRP8-JFV_report-en.pdf

United Nations, General Assembly. (n.d.). *Functions and powers of the General Assembly* [Website]. Retrieved 24 January 2015 from: <http://www.un.org/en/ga/about/background.shtml>

United Nations, General Assembly, Forty-eighth session. (1994). *Further measures for the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields (A/RES/48/162)* [Resolution]. Retrieved 24 January 2015 from: http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/48/162

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

Introduction

The recent UNICEF report, *Every Child's Birth Right: Inequities and Trends in Birth Registration*, notes that the births of at least 230 million children under the age of five globally have not been officially recorded with the government, thereby preventing these children their basic right to a name and nationality.³⁶ UNICEF is committed to addressing a variety of issues faced by children across the globe, such as this, while focusing particularly on the rights of the child, and with the establishment of the post-2015 development agenda, the need to recognize children's rights in both national and international agendas.³⁷

Considerations on this topic have been intensive over the past several months. In December 2014, the Third Committee (Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural) of the General Assembly of the United Nations (UN) adopted A/RES/69/157 by acclamation, a document which explored the rights of the child and other marginalized groups.³⁸ Sister documents include A/RES/69/158, which focuses on protecting children from bullying, and A/RES/69/156, which emphasizes the need for immediate global action on early and forced marriage.³⁹ A/RES/69/158 additionally recognizes the growing pressure on bullying in many Member States.⁴⁰

During the 27th Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council (HRC) in September, various human rights issues, particularly those pertaining to children, were discussed explicitly. The A/HRC/27/L.28 explores the issue of the right of the child to engage in play and recreational activities, as well as the matter of providing and sustaining safe spaces.⁴¹ Within the same session, A/HRC/27/L.23 explores the issue of child mortality and morbidity as a human rights concern. The resolution calls for collaboration amongst various UN agencies, including UNICEF, in providing practical application of technical guidance on existing frameworks addressing this issue.⁴²

During the 28th Session of the HRC in February, there was a review and evaluation of the practical application of child rights policies, particularly on the issue of child mortality.⁴³ The *Annual Report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence Against Children* (A/HRC/28/55) provided a review of the Post-2015 Agenda progress pertaining to children, while also introducing the role that technology and violence play in affecting children's rights, as well as emphasizing the need for increased dialogue at both a global and domestic level.⁴⁴

The UN has historically encouraged the recognition of children's rights in international law through the establishment of key documents such as *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948), *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* (1966), and the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* (1976).⁴⁵ Supporting documents such as the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women* (CEDAW) (1979), and *Beijing Platform for Action* (1995), have been recently referenced in resolutions as forming the basis of children's rights in international policy, particularly the rights of the girl child.⁴⁶

Recent Developments

The Major Group on Children and Youth (WCDRR) is a formal group of civil society organizations comprised of organizations that have a shared interest in children and youth issues.⁴⁷ The group actively endorses a need for equality by increasing child participation in the decision-making process on various issues, such as the Sustainable

³⁶ UNICEF, *Every Child's Birth Right: Inequities and Trends in Birth Registration*, 2013.

³⁷ UNICEF, *A Post-2015 World Fit for Children: Sustainable Development Starts and Ends with Safe, Healthy, and Well Educated Children*, 2014, p.1.

³⁸ United Nations General Assembly, *Resolutions: 69th Session*, 2014.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ UNHRC, *The right of the child to engage in play and recreational activities (A/HRC/27/L.28)*, 2014.

⁴² UNHRC, *Preventable mortality and morbidity of children under 5 years of age as a human rights concern (A/HRC/27/L.23)*, 2014.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ UNHRC, *28th session of the Human Rights Council: Reports*, 2014.

⁴⁵ UNICEF, *Path to CRC*, 2014.

⁴⁶ UNICEF, *Convention on the Rights of a Child: Protecting Children's Rights*, 2014.

⁴⁷ UN MGCY, *Statement from 3rd Major Groups Consultation for WCDRR*, 2014.

Development Goals (SDGs).⁴⁸ In Fall 2014, the group focused its advocacy on gaining further financial support for children and youth programs in national agendas and policy-making.⁴⁹ Regarding the development of the post-2015 agenda and UNICEF’s goal to ensure children’s rights in development agendas, the consultation for WCDRR has pushed for greater inclusion of children and youth in the decision-making process through the establishment of Pre-Zero Draft.⁵⁰

UNICEF: 25 Years of the Convention on the Rights of the Child

With UNICEF celebrating 25 years of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), a report was published by UNICEF making an evaluation of the progress of the CRC’s goals, entitled *25 Years of the CRC: Is the World a Better Place for Children?*⁵¹ During the last weeks of 2014, UNICEF encouraged various offices within its framework to explore and debate the topic “Is the world a better place for children?”⁵² The evaluation of this topic is reflective of the understanding that the degree to which the CRC, an integral legal tool for children’s rights in the context of international law, is effective in encouraging national agendas to increase the protection and enhancement of the lives of children.⁵³ The report recognizes that while many individuals benefit from the CRC, there are still many challenges that need to be addressed, including cultural gender roles, poverty, and current political conflicts.⁵⁴

UNICEF Executive Board Meetings

In the Second Regular Session of the UNICEF Executive Board, discussion on the financing of the UNICEF *Strategic Plan 2014-2017*, as well as revision of country and area program documents specifically discussing children in conflict and post-conflict regions, were produced.⁵⁵ The reviews of the program documents explore how UNICEF can create more substantive goals in this area; as well as a discussion on developing better understandings of resource coordination with other development partners, particularly those in post-conflict recovery Member States such as Timor-Leste and Angola.⁵⁶ During this session, there were various evaluations of UNICEF programs that were conducted, including that of UNICEF *Cluster Lead Agency Role in Humanitarian Action* (CLARE) and UNICEF programs to protect children in emergencies (CPiE).⁵⁷

The UNICEF Executive Board First Regular Session that was held 3-5 February 2015, discussed and evaluated best practices regarding the humanitarian response to Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines.⁵⁸ Evaluation of UNICEF’s upstream work on basic education and gender equality was also conducted.⁵⁹

UNICEF’s Role Post-2015

UNICEF is currently leading a campaign called #EVERYChild 2015 for the year of global action for children, engaging all global stakeholders to provide change for every child.⁶⁰ In identifying and addressing the inequalities that are already present in the post-2015 discussions, the agenda for the campaign of specific inclusion of children’s rights would aid in ensuring that children’s rights are prioritized in both national and global agendas in the sustainable development context.⁶¹ Specifically, reiterating the issues of children in violence, exploitation, marginalization, and poverty, emphasize the need to look at children as growing stakeholders in the progressing progress of global development agendas.⁶²

⁴⁸ UN MGCY, *Statement from 3rd Major Groups Consultation for WCDRR*, 2014.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² UNICEF, *25 Years of the Convention on the Rights of the Child*, 2014.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ UNICEF Executive Board, *Second regular session 2014*, 2014.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ UNICEF, *A Post-2015 World Fit For Children*, 2015.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid.

Conclusion

UNICEF continues to promote children's rights, both in national and in international agendas, despite challenges due to current conflicts or cultural conceptions of the roles of children.⁶³ The successful adoption of the Post-2015 Development Agenda is dependent on the contributions made by Member States both nationally and internationally, and the rights of children are foundational in securing this.⁶⁴ UNICEF is in a key position to build the necessary trust in ensuring that Member States that have adopted various international legal frameworks promoting and securing children's rights, in order to prioritize these rights in national and international agendas.

⁶³ UNICEF, *A Post-2015 World Fit for Children: Sustainable Development Starts and Ends with Safe, Healthy, and Well Educated Children*, 2014, p.1; UNICEF, *Path to the CRC*, 2014.

⁶⁴ UNICEF, *The Millennium Declaration and Development Goal: A Blueprint for Progress*.

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<http://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/8402.pdf>

The discussion put forward by the Institute endorses why there is a need for including children and youth in the decision-making process. Not only does this report elaborate on the importance of children's rights in the context of national and international development, but it is also important in providing an understanding of proposals that are currently being considered. Most importantly, this document is useful in providing the basic current understanding of the relationship between children's rights and development.

United Nations Children's Fund. (2014). *Convention on the Rights of the Child* [Website]. Retrieved 19 January 2015 from: http://www.unicef.org/crc/index_30160.html

This website will provide the necessary guide and support to understanding and addressing any aspect of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). The database is extensive, from providing supporting documents, to reports on the outcomes of the project, to, most importantly, exploring the role of UNICEF and other actors. Documents that are found on the website provide further knowledge for advancement and improvement of children's rights and further implementation of the framework.

United Nations Children's Fund. (2014). *25 Years of the Convention on the Rights of the Children: Is the world a better place for children?* [Report]. Retrieved 6 January 2015 from:

http://www.unicef.org/publications/files/CRC_at_25_Anniversary_Publication_compilation_5Nov2014.pdf

The report is useful in seeing the progress of the CRC since it was first adopted by Member States. Providing a reflection on what has been achieved and what the new issues that have entered society since the drafting of the Convention will remind delegates of the constant need to address the changes of children's rights. Familiarizing oneself with UNICEF's priorities is key to understanding the role of children in the scope of development, and this document provides the required background on this matter.

United Nations Children's Fund. (2014). *Path to the CRC* [Website] Retrieved 6 January 2015 from:

http://www.unicef.org/crc/index_30197.html/

The website is useful in providing additional information on the CRC and other relevant legal documentation on the rights of the child. The well-rounded overview will provide delegates with a broad understanding of the introduction of children's rights in general and explain why the development in this field remains pressing. Furthermore, this document is critical to understanding the limitations and entitlements of this Convention, as well as the guiding legal mechanisms when discussing children's rights in national and international agendas.

United Nations Human Rights Council, Twenty-Seventh Session. (2014). *Preventable mortality and morbidity of children under 5 years of age as a human rights concern (A/HRC/27/L.23)* [Resolution]. Retrieved 29 January 2015 from: http://ap.ohchr.org/documents/dpage_e.aspx?si=A/HRC/27/L.23

The resolution highlights what has been done to address child mortality and why it continues to be a pressing issue in both national and international agendas. This session further emphasizes that this is a serious issue that not only needs to be addressed at an international and national level, but also needs to be addressed within growing development agendas. The resolution also provides insight on how related bodies are exploring the issue and collaborating with other agencies to find more feasible solutions.

United Nations Children's Fund. (2015). *A Post-2015 World Fit For Children: An Agenda for #EVERYChild 2015* [Report]. Retrieved 29 January 2015 from: http://www.unicef.org/post2015/files/P2015_issue_brief_set.pdf

The document provides insight as to how UNICEF is going to take part in the development and establishment of the post-2015 agenda this year. While the document reiterates many UNICEF principles of children's rights, it also helps put the relevance of these issues in the context of the global sustainable development agenda. Furthermore, delegates will find this is as a useful

reminder of how significant the Post-2015 Agenda is to addressing the issue of children's rights in development agendas.

United Nations General Assembly, Sixty-Ninth Session. (2014). *Resolutions: 69th Session* [Website]. Retrieved 28 January 2015 from: <http://www.un.org/en/ga/69/resolutions.shtml>

This broad database is useful for delegates who are interested to see the works adopted by various committees of the General Assembly in the September 69th Session. What will be most useful is the fact that the resolutions regarding children's rights have influenced many of UNICEF's reports and evaluations of existing programs over this period. Delegates should be making connections between recent resolutions and the agendas of UNICEF's Executive Board meeting to understand how the organization is interested in proceeding on this matter.

United Nations Major Group for Children and Youth. (2014). Statement from 3rd Major Groups Consultation for WCDRR [Website]. Retrieved 19 January 2015 from: <http://childrenyouth.org/2014/10/06/statement-from-3rd-major-groups-consultation-for-wcdrr/>

The website contains the most recent stakeholder on the topic of disaster risk reduction (DRR). Delegates should find this useful in being able to address DRR in the context of children's rights in domestic and global development agendas, as well as exploring the relevance of UNICEF in the Third World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction. This website provides multiple resources particularly in understanding the role of non-UN or state actors, on discussions surrounding children's rights in national and international agendas.

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II. Children and Armed Conflict: Reintegration and Recovery

Introduction

With current estimates that over 5,000 children are displaced daily due to conflict, the necessity of urgently addressing the needs of children and youth in areas of struggle remains pressing.⁶⁵ UNICEF has declared 2014 a “devastating” year for children, after over 15 million individuals under the age of 18 were caught in conflict.⁶⁶ Combined with the dozens of UNICEF-issued statements condemning the current treatment of children in the war-torn areas of the Central African Republic, Syria, and Ukraine, there remains much work to be done to help the existing status of children in conflict.⁶⁷

With the failures of 2014 noted, UNICEF has responded by increased efforts to mainstream the rights of girls in conflict. According to UNICEF’s new *State of the World’s Children Report* (launched in December 2014), the processes of engaging children and youth through fostering creativity and critical thinking in post-conflict areas are predicted to increase the chances that the needs of the world’s most marginalized children will be met.⁶⁸ The UN will consistently utilize processes like these, as well as increased gender mainstreaming in post-conflict recovery, as tools to shape international responses to children and armed conflict issues in 2015.⁶⁹ Key reports established during the Fall 2014 period which align with these future goals also include the December *2015 Strategic Response Plan for Syria and the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan, 2015-2016*; the *State of the World’s Children Report for 2015*; and September’s *Hidden in Plain Sight: A statistical analysis of violence against children*, and *New Estimates in Levels and Trends in Child Mortality 2014*, all of which ascertain future UNICEF objectives in prioritizing children’s rights in post-conflict regions.

Additionally, UNICEF has collaborated with other multiple specialized agencies, programs, funds, and other organs both internal and external to the UN system over the past few months, including the World Health Organization with regards to vaccination transportation in conflict areas; UN peacekeeping in target areas, including the Central African Republic, Syria, and the Middle East; as well as the World Bank, in order to establish fragile- and conflict-afflicted priority areas.⁷⁰ One of UNICEF’s most notable collaborations from this period is their work with the European Union on the 25th anniversary of the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, wherein the two organizations co-created the *Voices of Children* project to “raise the voices of children who are living through humanitarian emergencies,” aligning with UNICEF priorities through the 2015 *State of the World’s Children Report*.⁷¹

The key documents that continue to underpin this topic include the recent resolution *A/68/970* (2014), the most recent Report of the Open Working Group of the General Assembly on Sustainable Development Goals, which establishes that attention to post-conflict peacebuilding and the promotion of durable peace is intrinsic to future sustainable development, particularly in regards to marginalized populations such as children.⁷² During the Fall 2014

⁶⁵ Health and Human Rights Info, *Selected Links on Children and Armed Conflict*, 2014.

⁶⁶ UNICEF, *Press release: With 15 million children caught up in major conflicts, UNICEF declares 2014 a devastating year for children*, 2014.

⁶⁷ UNICEF, *Press Release: Increased Investment in Education and Protection helps safeguard the future of a generation of children affected by Syria crisis*, 2014; UNICEF, *News Note: Central African Republic: Two out of five children without vital aid- UNICEF*, 2014; UNICEF, *Press Release: Conflict in Ukraine leaves almost 150 schools closed: UNICEF*, 2014.

⁶⁸ UNICEF, *The State of the World’s Children 2015: Reimagine the Future*, 2014.

⁶⁹ UN Women, *International Day of the Girl Child*, 2014.

⁷⁰ World Bank, *FSC Countries are a Priority for the World Bank*, 2014; World Health Organization, *Amidst ongoing conflict, Iraq completes massive polio campaign for children with support of UNICEF and WHO*, 2014; UNICEF, *Second regular session 2014, 2014*; UNICEF, *Revised area programme document: Palestinian children and women in Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic and the State of Palestine (2015-2016)*, 2014.

⁷¹ UNICEF, *Press Release: As 25th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child approaches, UNICEF asks: Is the world a better place for children?*, 2014; European Union and UNICEF, *Voices of Children*, 2014; UNICEF, *News Note: 8 Million Europeans lend their voices in support of children in emergencies together with the EU and UNICEF*, 2014; UNICEF, *News Note: European Parliament celebrates CRC@25 and renews EU commitments for children*, 2014; UNICEF, *Press release: With 15 million children caught up in major conflicts, UNICEF declares 2014 a devastating year for children*, 2014.

⁷² UN Security Council, *Resolution 2143 (2014)*, 2014; Security Council, *Resolution A/65/820-S/2011/250*, 2011; UN DPKO, *Policy: Mainstreaming the protection, rights and well-being of children affected by armed conflict with UN*

session, while not specifically addressing the needs of children during conflict, the key target areas of the Middle East, Syria, and Palestine were also confirmed as still being in need of support; and the issues of displacement, lack of access to education, under-funded health centers, and access to safe, sufficient, and affordable water were determined to be the most pressing issues facing children in these areas.⁷³

Recent Developments

UNICEF adopted a few key reports of note during the fall 2014 period. On December 18, UNICEF launched the *2015 Strategic Response Plan for Syria and the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan, 2015-2016*, based on the 2015 Syrian appeal, which calls for a renewed commitment to the protection of children living under siege.⁷⁴ This document calls for an increase in safe water and sanitation access for families; increased provision of learning materials for children, particularly in remote areas; and maintaining ongoing vaccination campaigns, among other emergency initiatives.⁷⁵ On the 25th Anniversary of the *Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)*, UNICEF also launched the *State of the World's Children Report* for 2015, with this year's report entitled "Imagine the Future," focusing on innovating thinking to improve child rights.⁷⁶

In September 2014, UNICEF also released *Hidden in Plain Sight: A statistical analysis of violence against children*, a revolutionary compilation of data on violence against children, which seeks to establish solid statistics, drawing on data from 190 countries, in order to establish the needs of the six key areas of child violence.⁷⁷ Of these, the presence of "conflict" remains one of the key issues facing children; and this report further resulted in six UN-recommended strategies for the prevention of child rights violations during conflict and for post-violence recovery, including supporting parents, and equipping children with life skills by generating evidence and awareness about violence, amongst other key proposals.⁷⁸ On September 16, UNICEF also released the report *New Estimates in Levels and Trends in Child Mortality 2014*, with estimates provided by the UN Inter-agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation, which noted that the highest-risk Member States for under-five mortality were also noted for currently being in conflict, violence, or fragile situations.⁷⁹

Reintegration, Rehabilitation, and Recovery

Despite these successes, there remains much work to be done. UNICEF confirmed that resources are still desperately needed for Syrian children, that nearly one in four adolescent girls experience physical violence; that limited access and funds are hampering UNICEF's response in the Middle East, and that a critical contribution of humanitarian assistance and funds is desperately needed in Mali.⁸⁰ As well, UNICEF has confirmed that two out of five children in the Central African Republic remain without aid, conflict in the Ukraine still leaves over 150 schools

Peacekeeping Operations, 2009; UN General Assembly, *Report of the Open Working Group of the General Assembly on Sustainable Development Goals (A/68/970)*, 2014.

⁷³ UNICEF, *Second regular session 2014*, 2014; UNICEF, *Revised area programme document: Palestinian children and women in Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic and the State of Palestine (2015-2016)*, 2014.

⁷⁴ UNICEF, *Statement: Launch of the 2014 Strategic Response Plan for Syria and the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan-2015-16*, 2014.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ UNICEF, *Press Release: Innovation can drive change for most disadvantaged children- UNICEF Report*, 2014; UNICEF, *The State of the World's Children Reports*, 2014.

⁷⁷ UNICEF, *Press Release: New global data expose acute prevalence of violence against children: UNICEF*, 2014; UNICEF, *Press Release: New global data expose acute prevalence of violence against children: UNICEF*, 2014; UNICEF, *Media Advisory: UNICEF briefing on largest global compilation of data on violence against children*, 2014; UNICEF, *Press Release: New global data expose acute prevalence of violence against children: UNICEF*, 2014; UNICEF, *Hidden in Plain Sight: A statistical analysis of violence against children*, 2014.

⁷⁸ UNICEF, *Press Release: New global data expose acute prevalence of violence against children: UNICEF*, 2014.

⁷⁹ UNICEF and the UN Inter-agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation, *Levels & Trends in Child Mortality: Report 2014*, 2014.

⁸⁰ UNICEF, *Children's winter needs are greater than ever in the Middle east but limited access and funds hamper UNICEF response*, 2014; UNICEF, *Press Release: Mali: Emergency Directors emphasize critical contribution of humanitarian assistance and call for urgent funds to maintain the UN humanitarian air service*, 2014; UNICEF, *Press Release: Nearly one in four adolescent girls experience physical violence*, 2014; UNICEF, *News Note: Significant new pledges announced but more resources still required for children affected by the Syria crisis*, 2014.

closed, and one year after the end of the conflict, children are still under daily threat in South Sudan.⁸¹ Formal statements were also issued by UNICEF on several key events, including the release of 70 Kurdish children; the deaths of children in Donetsk, Ukraine; and on the suicide bombing of a school in northeast Nigeria.⁸² Within the 2014 period, UNICEF also formally condemned the deadly attacks on children in Yemen and Peshwar, Pakistan; the lack of protection of children during armed conflict in Eastern Ukraine; and the double bombing in Homs, Syria.⁸³

Recovery and Reintegration of Girls

Gender mainstreaming continues to take priority in discussions of post-conflict response and children's rights. During this session, several events helped to spotlight this approach, including many of the Beijing+20 events that occurred during the South-South learning seminars in October. These seminars focused on South-driven development solutions to post-conflict response, through events such as meetings with media agencies under the umbrella-topic of "Communication, Gender, and Human Rights;" and intensive training sessions on "Communication, Gender, and Human Rights for Communication Students," held in collaboration with UNICEF.⁸⁴ The UN also observed the International Day of the Girl Child during this period, with the theme of "Empowering Girls: Ending the Cycle of Violence," resulting in a moderated discussion forum and showcase by UNICEF on the issue.⁸⁵ Overall, there was also increased social mobilization for the Secretary-General's *UNITED Campaign to End Violence against Women*, and a prioritization of female education throughout UNICEF's on-the-ground work in conflict areas.⁸⁶

Conclusion

While aiding children in crisis areas remains a pressing topic for the UN and UNICEF to prioritize, work throughout Fall 2014 has done much to further support on the issue. Upcoming meetings will also focus on this issue, including the UNICEF First Regular Session of 2015, held on February 3-5, which will be prioritizing reaction to humanitarian crises through "Strengthening predictability of the UNICEF response", as well as a reevaluation of the effectiveness of private fundraising and partnerships in order to meet the needs of marginalized child populations.⁸⁷ The 2 February 2015 joint-meeting between the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS, UNICEF, UN-Women and WFP, as well as June 2015 Annual session, will also likely feature and prioritize response to children and armed conflict.⁸⁸

⁸¹ UNICEF, *News Note: Central African Republic: Two out of five children without vital aid-* UNICEF, 2014; UNICEF, *Press Release: Conflict in Ukraine leaves almost 150 schools closed:* UNICEF, 2014; UNICEF, *Press Release: One year after conflict, children still under daily threat in South Sudan*, 2014.

⁸² UNICEF, *UNICEF welcomes release of 70 Kurdish Children*, 2014; UNICEF, *Statement: UNICEF Statement on the suicide bombing of a school in northeast Nigeria*, 2014; UNICEF, *Statement: Statement on the protection of children during the armed conflict in Eastern Ukraine*, 2014;

⁸³ UNICEF, *Statement: Statement by Hanna Singer, UNICEF Representative in Syria, on double-bombing in Homs*, 2014; UNICEF, *Statement: Statement by UNICEF Executive Director Anthony Lake on killing of children in Peshawar Pakistan*, 2014; UNICEF, *Statement: UNICEF Statement on the deadly attacks on children in Yemen and Pakistan*, 2014; UNICEF, *Statement: UNICEF Statement on deaths of children in Donetsk, Ukraine*, 2014.

⁸⁴ UN Women, *Beijing +20 Events 2014-2015*, 2014.

⁸⁵ UN Women, *International Day of the Girl Child*, 2014.

⁸⁶ United Nations, *United Nations Secretary General's Campaign UNITE To End Gender Violence*, 2014.

⁸⁷ UNICEF, *First Regular Session 2015*, 2014.

⁸⁸ UNICEF, *UNICEF Executive Board 2015 Calendar*, 2014.

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[http://www.unicef.org/media/files/Levels_and_Trends_in_Child_Mortality_2014\(1\).pdf](http://www.unicef.org/media/files/Levels_and_Trends_in_Child_Mortality_2014(1).pdf)

This report provides access to the most recent UNICEF collaborative data set on rates and issues affecting child mortality for 2014; and includes the most current information on the progress achieved towards the Millennium Development Goal 4, as well the existing collaboration issues between relevant UN agencies on this topic. Delegates will find the charts on levels and trends, as well as the regional-specific investigations and graph-based summaries of current progress, to be helpful in informing research.

UNICEF. (2014). *Hidden in Plain Sight: A statistical analysis of violence against children*. Retrieved 4 January 2014 from:

http://files.unicef.org/publications/files/Hidden_in_plain_sight_statistical_analysis_EN_3_Sept_2014.pdf

This document is key to quantitatively understanding the pervasiveness of violence against children, and provides specific examples as the six-key areas left for UNICEF to target, including an emphasis on children in post-conflict situations. This report also acts to provide statistical analysis on the issue, from the scope of existing UN analysis, to the cross-spectrum appearances of sexual violence, to violent unions among adolescents, by including graphs, charts, and comparisons on these topical issues. Delegates will find the extensive sections detailing the need to change attitudes and social norms, as well as the report's key findings and regional-based conclusions on reporting and strategies, to be helpful in discovering quantitative ways to stop children's involvement in violence.

UNICEF. (2014). *Press release: With 15 million children caught up in major conflicts, UNICEF declares 2014 a devastating year for children*. Retrieved 4 January 2014 from: http://www.unicef.org/media/media_78058.html

A succinct and impactful summary of the statistics and stories behind children in conflict over the course of 2014, the year is rightly dubbed as "devastating" by UNICEF. With statistical analysis of the crises in the Central African Republic, Gaza, Syria, and South Sudan, as well as quotes from major UNICEF staff, including Anthony Lake, this article provides brief snapshots of major developments over 2014. Delegates will also likely find the 2014 UNICEF video, found here, which includes stories of children and families impact by conflict world-wide, to also be helpful in their research.

UNICEF. (2014). *Second regular session 2014*. Retrieved 4 January 2014 from:

http://www.unicef.org/about/execboard/index_73865.html

These documents are key to providing a generalized overview of the action taken and completed by UNICEF during the fall period of 2014. On top of providing basic information, such as the Proposed programme of work for Executive Board sessions in 2015 and the UNICEF strategic plan, this collection of documents also provides the most updated versions of area programme documents and proposals for UNICEF programme cooperation, as well as yearly evaluation. 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.

UNICEF. (2014). *The State of the World's Children Reports*. Retrieved 4 January 2014 from:

<http://www.unicef.org/sowc/>

The 2015 State of the World's Children Report has been released, and its theme is "Reimagine the Future," based in the idea that innovation will provide the path forward to improving child rights. This collection of documents and collaborations is based on the 25th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and aims to highlight the work of children and innovative groups around the world in improving child rights. Delegates should start here to see UNICEF's plans for 2015, and will likely find topical sub-headings such as "Rethinking Structures," "Sparking creativity," "Working with Communities," and "Adapting Solutions," among others, to be key in guiding future solution development.

UNICEF. (2014). *Recent News Stories*. Retrieved 4 January 2014 from: <http://www.unicef.org/recentstories.php>
UNICEF released over 30 press statements over the fall 2014 period, covering a variety of current event topics related to the three Background Guide sub-themes of Reintegration; Rehabilitation and Recovery; and Recovery and Reintegration of Girls. The official press statements were diverse, and included a condemnation of existing Member State failures to account for child development; as well as celebrations of UNICEF/UN successes in Gaza, the Central African Republic, Syria, and the Ukraine, particularly with regards to achievements in increased children's right to education in post-conflict areas. UN updates on UNICEF on-the-ground efforts, including supply delivery and resources the lack access to education for children in conflict zones, are also discussed here in real-time; and delegates will find the consistent and neutral updates useful for comprehension of UNICEF's current efforts.

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III. Advancing Human Development for Adolescents

Introduction

Mahbub ul Haq, founder of the Human Development Report, viewed the objective of development as creating “an enabling environment for people to enjoy long, healthy and creative lives.⁸⁹ Under the premise that “people are the real wealth of a nation,” human development measures achievements that may not immediately influence traditional economic growth or income figures—myriad achievements including political and cultural freedoms, nutritional and health services access, and secure livelihoods, and access to knowledge and education.⁹⁰

While the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) address broad areas of human development including education and hunger, those goals and targets do not specifically address the needs of youth and adolescents. As focus turns to the post-2015 development agenda, however, the Open Working Group of the General Assembly on Sustainable Development Goals (OWG) has followed a people-centric approach that “benefits all, in particular the children of the world, youth and future generations of the world...”⁹¹ While the proposed Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) seek to improve the lives of all people regardless of age, targets on employment, education, climate change, and food security all include specific provisions for improving the situation of youth and adolescents and including them in the discussion and planning of sustainable development.⁹²

Recent Developments

Shortcomings of the MDGs: Education for All

Primary education has long been considered the key to achieving a child’s full development, and to that end, the second MDG seeks to achieve universal primary education.⁹³ By 2012 all developing regions of the world achieved or were close to achieving gender parity in primary education.⁹⁴ Similarly, by 2012 the primary school enrollment rate in developing countries increased to 90%.⁹⁵ Despite those strides, high dropout rates have been a significant impediment to achieving universal primary education.⁹⁶ Globally, 1 in 11 primary school-aged children are not in school, but that statistic doubles to 1 in 5 for adolescents.⁹⁷ In the report “Fixing the Broken Promise of Education for All: Findings from the Global Initiative on Out-of-School Children” jointly released by the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization, both organizations stressed that the post-2015 development agenda must look beyond primary education to include universal secondary education for the world’s adolescents.⁹⁸

Globally there are twice as many primary school-aged children as lower secondary-aged youth, yet the number of adolescents who are out of school outnumbers that of primary –aged children by 5 million.⁹⁹ For the 63 million adolescents not in school, “[b]usiness as usual strategies... are not enough...” according to UNICEF Director-General Irina Bokova.¹⁰⁰ UNICEF Executive Director Anthony Lake further elaborated that fixing the problem requires a three-pronged strategy of getting more children into primary school, helping children stay through the secondary level, and improving the quality of learning.¹⁰¹ Secondary education is “increasingly recognized as the foundation for the acquisition of the skills needed for a healthy and productive life,” and although the MDGs have made significant progress in achieving the first prong of accessing primary education, new approaches are needed

⁸⁹ UNDP, *About Human Development*.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ UN DESA, *Open Working Group proposal for Sustainable Development Goals*, para. 4.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ UN DPI, *Goal 2: Achieve Universal Primary Education*, 2015.

⁹⁴ undp, *The Millennium Development Goals Report 2014*, 2014, p. 4.

⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 5.

⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 18.

⁹⁷ UNICEF, *Adolescents twice as likely to be out of school as children of primary school age, say UNESCO and UNICEF*, 2015.

⁹⁸ UNESCO, *Fixing the Broken Promise of Education for All: Findings from the Global Initiative on Out-of-School Children*, 2015, p. 7.

⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 17.

¹⁰⁰ UNICEF, *Adolescents twice as likely to be out of school as children of primary school age, say UNESCO and UNICEF*, 2015.

¹⁰¹ United Nations News Centre, *‘Wake-up call’ data shows 63 million adolescents out of school – joint UN agency report*, 2015.

for the post-2015 development agenda ensure those gains in human development are carried through to adolescents in secondary education.¹⁰²

UNICEF and the post-2015 development agenda

With global leaders converging for the World Economic Forum, UNICEF unveiled its “Agenda for Every Child” to outline its priorities for the post-2015 development agenda.¹⁰³ The fourth of seven priority areas is devoted to “Pay more attention to adolescence, the second decade of life.”¹⁰⁴ In prioritizing adolescents, UNICEF has recognized that gains made in childhood can either be further or lost during adolescence.¹⁰⁵ Ultimately, consolidating gains made in education and healthy lifestyles will act to protect adolescents and better prepare them to make meaningful contributions to society in adulthood.¹⁰⁶

Conclusion

Looking to the future, the Secretary-General’s synthesis report on the post-2015 development agenda recognizes the need to advance human development of adolescents. *The road to dignity by 2030: ending poverty, transforming all lives and protecting the planet* highlights six essential elements to frame a new sustainable development agenda including the need to “ensure healthy lives, knowledge and the inclusion of...children.”¹⁰⁷ A new, people-centered approach seeks to “leave no one behind” by ensuring equality, non-discrimination, equity, and inclusion of all people—including children, adolescents, and youth and particularly protecting “children and young boys and girls” from violence.¹⁰⁸ The “people” element further elaborates that “[a]ll children and adolescents have a right to education and must have a safe environment in which to learn.”¹⁰⁹ More than just the MDGs aim to achieve universal primary education, the post-2015 development agenda must recognize that it is “essential that young people receive relevant skills and quality education and lifelong, from early childhood development to post-primary school, including life skills and vocational education and training, as well as science, sports and culture.”¹¹⁰

While the international community moves toward final agreement on the post-2015 development agenda and coalesces around a new framework to guide development actions, youth have increasingly made their voices heard. Through the Global Youth Call, the MY World Survey, and numerous other outreach events, millions of global citizens, and especially young people, have demanded the international efforts advance the development of children, youth, and adolescents. Throughout 2015, the international community has the opportunity to not only chart a new path forward through the post-2015 development agenda, but to also take concrete actions that will begin to increase the potential of the world’s youth. Recent efforts by UNICEF to focus attention on adolescents’ access to post-primary education demonstrates one aspect of advancing human development, but many other remain including health, civic engagement, and broad issues affecting quality of life.

¹⁰² UNESCO, *Fixing the Broken Promise of Education for All: Findings from the Global Initiative on Out-of-School Children*, 2015, p. 17.

¹⁰³ UNICEF, *Put children at heart of global agenda, UNICEF challenges Davos*, 2015.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ The Economic Times, *WEF 2015: UNICEF wants Davos elite to take up ‘Agenda for Every Child’*, 2015.

¹⁰⁶ UNICEF, *Put children at heart of global agenda, UNICEF challenges Davos*, 2015.

¹⁰⁷ United Nations General Assembly, *The road to dignity by 2030: ending poverty, transforming all lives and protecting the planet (A/69/700)*, 2014, p. 1.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

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United Nations Children’s Fund. (2015). *Put children at heart of global agenda, UNICEF challenges Davos* [Press Release]. Retrieved 25 January 2015 from: http://www.unicef.org/media/media_78728.html

During the World Economic Forum, UNICEF utilized the global platform to outline its “Agenda for Every Child.” That agenda sets out UNICEF’s seven priority areas for inclusion in the post-2015 development agenda. Delegates should pay particular attention to the fourth priority regarding adolescents to better understand how UNICEF feels that adolescents’ human development can be improved through future development goals and frameworks.

United Nations Development Programme. (n.d.). *About Human Development* [Website]. Retrieved 25 January 2015 from: <http://hdr.undp.org/en/humandev>

Human development looks beyond purely economic indicators to consider a myriad of factors that increase the quality of the lives people live. Because human development encompasses such a wide range of issues, it is also harder to make uniform measurements and assessments of the success of policies and actions in achieving human development gains. Before delegates can adequately discuss advancing adolescents’ human development, they must first understand what elements are included in human development and how their indicators are measured through indicators like the Human Development Index.

United Nations Development Programme. (2014). *The Millennium Development Goals Report 2014* [Report]. Retrieved 25 January 2015 from:

http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/MDG/english/UNDP_MDGReport_EN_2014Final1.pdf

The annual Millennium Development Goals Report provides a key resource for delegates to understand long-term trends and the achievement status of the MDGs. As the world moves toward the post-2015 development agenda, these reports are important tools in assessing successes, failures, and shortcoming in the achievement of development goals. Delegates should pay particular attention to goals impacting human development and use their achievement status to set priorities for future actions.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, Institute for Statistics. (2015). *Fixing the Broken Promise of Education for All: Findings from the Global Initiative on Out-of-School Children* [Report]. Retrieved 25 January 2015 from http://www.unicef.org/education/files/allinschool.org_wp-content_uploads_2015_01_Fixing-the-Broken-Promise-of-Education-For-All-full-report.pdf

Education is a key aspect of human development and is fundamental in creating opportunities and allowing individuals to fully assert other basic rights. This report explains that while success has been made in achieving universal primary education, that goal is weakened by reduced access and opportunities in post-primary education. For delegates, this report offers key insight into an issue that directly affects the human development of adolescents and also demonstrates how current development goals do not adequately address the needs of all youth.

United Nations, General Assembly. Sixty-ninth session. (2014). *The road to dignity by 2030: ending poverty, transforming all lives and protecting the planet (A/69/700)* [Report]. Synthesis report of the Secretary-General on the post-2015 sustainable development agenda. Retrieved 14 February 2015 from:

http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/69/700&referer=http://www.un.org/en/documents/&Lang=E

To achieve widespread advancement in the human development of adolescents, the post-2015 development agenda must recognize the need to focus on children and youth. The Secretary-General’s synthesis report combines the inputs from all post-2015 development agenda and Sustainable Development Goals processes to chart the path forward toward final agreement on a new framework of development goals. While creating concrete actions for increasing human development in the present is key, delegates must also consider long-term means for ensuring that adolescents remain a priority on the global agenda.

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United Nations News Centre. (2015). *'Wake-up call' data shows 63 million adolescents out of school – joint UN agency report* [Website]. Retrieved 25 January 2015 from: <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=49834#.VMWRJVpUPrw>