



A GUIDE FOR ACTION

# Are climate change policies child-sensitive?

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UNICEF Office of Global Insight and Policy

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## **Acronyms**

ACE	adverse childhood event
ADB	Asian Development Bank
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
COP	Conference of the Parties (to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change)
DRR	disaster risk reduction
EIA	environmental impact assessment
GAP	Gender Action Plan
GGCA	Global Gender and Climate Alliance
IES	Institute of Environmental Studies
IPCC	UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
KJIP	Kiribati Joint Implementation Plan
LCIPP	Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform
LDCs	least developed countries
MFI	multilateral finance institutions
MoEWC	Ministry of Environment, Water and Climate
MRFCJ	Mary Robinson Foundation Climate Justice
NAP	National Adaptation Plan
NCCRS	National Climate Change Response Strategy
NDC	Nationally Determined Contributions
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
PCCB	Paris Committee on Capacity-Building
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UN DESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
WEDO	Women's Environment and Development Organization
WRI	World Resources Institute
ZIMSTAT	Zimbabwe National Statistical Agency

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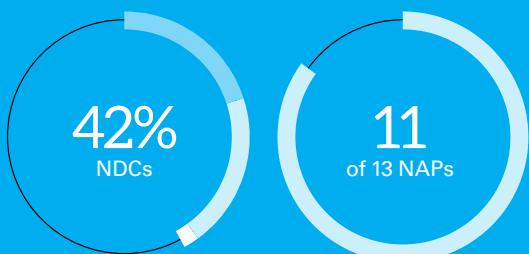
# Key messages

01

Climate policies are not addressing children...

Only **42 per cent** of all Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) contain direct reference to children or youth while only **20 per cent** mention children specifically. Less than **two per cent** mention the rights of children.

**Eleven of 13** National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) explicitly refer to children or youth, viewing them as both a vulnerable group and as beneficiaries in terms of education and health interventions.



02

...but 2020 NDC revisions and new NAPs offer opportunities for change.

As countries gear up to submit new or update their current NDCs by the **2020 deadline**, they have the opportunity to enhance their ambition for reducing emissions as well as strengthening adaptation measures and other elements to bring their NDCs into closer alignment with the goals of the Paris Agreement.

NAPs are "continuous, progressive, and iterative" processes which follow a country-driven, gender-sensitive, participatory and fully transparent approach.

As such, in both instances, there is space to ensure that the rights and needs of those most impacted by climate change are addressed.

03

Child-sensitive climate policies need to be structured around the following principles:

#### Ambitious and urgent

Ambitious mitigation and adaptation measures that protect the rights and best interests of the child from harm caused by climate change.

#### Rights-based

Explicit and meaningful references to children and youth, considering them as rights-holders and important stakeholders.

#### Holistic and multi-sectoral

Specific sector interventions that address children's specific risks and vulnerabilities.

#### Inclusive

Systematic consultation and meaningful participation of all children, including children of different ages, gender and social backgrounds, that will inform every step of the climate policymaking process at all levels.



“

## SECTION 1

# Why this report?

The scientific community has sounded the alarm. Climate change is a global emergency and we have little more than a decade to undertake the urgent and unprecedented actions required to limit global temperatures to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. Beyond that time, the risks of deadly drought, flooding, heatwaves, extreme weather and poverty will significantly worsen for hundreds of millions of people.<sup>1</sup>

Children will continue to suffer the most under the impacts of climate change (see section 2). Yet, despite their disproportionate vulnerability, children are consistently overlooked in the design and content of climate policies and related processes.

With this in mind, this report seeks to assess and contribute to addressing the gap between current practice and a ‘child-sensitive’ approach to climate policymaking, namely one in which the particular needs, vulnerabilities, rights and agency of the child are considered and used to inform climate policies.<sup>2</sup>

There is no such thing as a child-neutral policy. Whether intended or not, every policy positively or negatively affects the lives of children.

EU-UNICEF (2014).  
Child Rights Toolkit: Integrating Child Rights in Development Cooperation

1 IPCC, (2018). *Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C. Sustainable Development, Poverty Eradication and Reducing Inequalities*.

2 In line with the norms and standards set down in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

**To this end, the study sets out:**

1. **A baseline analysis of the current landscape** of national climate policies/plans and the degree to which these are child-sensitive, based on evaluation of countries' Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and National Adaptation Plans (NAPs);
2. **Identification of key elements needed for child-sensitive climate policymaking**, including principles to be applied, approaches and tools that contribute to a conducive and enabling environment as well as measurement and impact;
3. **Examples of good practice** regarding child-sensitive national climate policies; and
4. **A 'checklist'** of key criteria with which to guide and assess child-sensitive climate policymaking.

## Methodology

For this report, UNICEF analyzed 160 NDCs<sup>3</sup> and 13 NAPs comprising a quantitative and qualitative assessment, based on: (i) a systematic search of key words to capture any direct or relevant reference to children and youth in the policy and (ii) an assessment of the nature of the reference to evaluate whether this was 'substantive' or 'passive'.<sup>4</sup>

The following 15 key words were searched in English, French and Spanish: child, youth, young, adolescent, infant, baby, girl, boy (*direct references*), and vulnerable, rights, human rights, intergenerational equity, mother, school, and education (*child-relevant key terms* to capture consideration of heightened vulnerability, a rights-based approach, and child-targeted interventions, even where a direct reference to children may not appear).<sup>5</sup>

KEY WORDS USED TO SEARCH NATIONALLY DETERMINED CONTRIBUTIONS		
ENGLISH	FRENCH	SPANISH
child	enfant	hijo/hija
youth	enfance/jeunesse	juventud/infancia
young	jeune	joven/jóvenes
adolescent	adolescent/e	adolescente
infant/baby	bébé	bebé
girl	fille	niña/chica
boy	garçon	niño/chico
vulnerable	vulnerable	vulnerable
rights/human rights	droits/droits de l'Homme	derechos/derechos humanos
intergenerational equity	équité intergénérationnelle	equidad intergeneracional
mother	mère	madre
school	école	escuela
education	education	educación

3 At the time of writing, 184 NDCs were listed on the NDC registry website, but only 160 NDCs were mapped. The discrepancy can be explained by the fact that a) the 28 countries of the European Union submitted a single joint NDC; b) two NDCs from the registry could not be searched (Oman — only in Arabic, and Timor Leste — format prevents searching); c) six additional NDCs that were not available on the UNFCCC registry were found elsewhere online ([Iran](#), [Kyrgyzstan](#), [Lebanon](#), [Philippines](#), [Senegal](#), and [Yemen](#)).

4 The methodology was adapted in particular from approaches adopted by the Gender Climate Tracker, developed by the Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO), the Global Gender and Climate Alliance, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland. See: [www.genderclimatetracker.org](http://www.genderclimatetracker.org).

5 A decision was taken not to search for the key term 'health' or other child-relevant sectoral interventions, e.g. nutrition etc., as it was assumed that the search for direct references to children would capture where such interventions explicitly addressed children and could therefore be categorised as 'child-sensitive'. However, education was included, to ensure that interventions focusing on schools or curricula were captured, even if children were not mentioned. This was the case, for example, for the NDCs of Bahrain, China, Ghana, Haiti, Madagascar, Palau, South Africa, Togo and the UAE.

A ‘substantive’ reference indicates an explicit reference to children and youth, or that the key term is directly linked to children/youth, or child/youth-related topics (e.g. primary schools and respective infrastructure). A ‘passive’ reference indicates that the term could potentially be relevant for children/youth but does not directly refer to them (e.g. ‘vulnerable groups’ or ‘public education’). The introduction of this qualitative assessment was intended to provide a clearer picture of the degree to which NDCs and NAPs not only address sectors and interventions which will broadly benefit children — along with other segments of the population — but to also capture whether policies explicitly recognise and consider their particular needs, rights, vulnerabilities and agency, in line with the definition of ‘child-sensitive’ applied in this paper.

Following this analysis, and in light of its findings on the prevailing omission of children and youth from climate policies, an extensive body of literature, guidance and tools were examined with a view to identifying the key principles, and elements required to address this gap. In particular, materials from the fields of child and human rights, gender-mainstreaming, and child-centred disaster risk reduction were consulted, as well as documentation capturing the perspectives of children themselves.

The report has focused on NDCs and NAPs, critical tools for advancing the central objectives of UNFCCC, that provide a consistent baseline for analysis across countries, as well as a clear reference point against which future progress can be assessed. It is important to note however, that they are not the only policies on climate and therefore, any conclusions drawn are necessarily tentative, recognising that some countries’ submissions may not reflect other climate-related policies, strategies and plans at the national level that are child-sensitive.

#### BOX 1 | WHAT ARE NDCS AND NAPS?

**Nationally Determined Contributions** (NDCs) outline the post-2020 climate actions that countries intend to take to reduce national emissions in line with the goal of the Paris Agreement to limit warming to under 2°C.<sup>6</sup> While their focus is on mitigation, Parties are invited to include a more comprehensive view of national climate policies, strategies and action plans, including adaptation and means of implementation.<sup>7</sup> Given this comprehensive coverage, and the role of

NDCs in setting out State Parties’ national commitments on climate change, these provide a useful indication of national priorities and the degree to which these are child-sensitive.

**National Adaptation Plans** (NAPs) identify medium- and long-term adaptation needs of countries and strategies/programmes to address them.<sup>8</sup> The NAP process, established in 2010, is ‘continuous, progressive and iterative...[and] follows

a country-driven, gender-sensitive, participatory and fully transparent approach’.<sup>9</sup> Since NAPs represent countries’ strategic approach to adaptation, and address issues that are fundamental to children’s rights in developing countries, the degree to which they are child-sensitive provides an important insight into whether governments understand, recognise and prioritise the specific needs and capacities of children and youth.

6 At the time of writing, 184 countries (of 196 State Parties) have submitted their first NDC to the UNFCCC Secretariat, and are expected to communicate or update these by 2020 and every five years thereafter.

7 See UNFCCC (2014) Decision 1/CP.20.

8 At the time of writing, 13 out of 153 developing countries had submitted their plans.

9 UNFCCC, National Adaptation Plans, available at: [www.unfccc.int/topics/adaptation-and-resilience/workstreams/national-adaptation-plans](http://www.unfccc.int/topics/adaptation-and-resilience/workstreams/national-adaptation-plans).



## SECTION 2

# How does climate change affect children?

Children bear a disproportionate share of the burden imposed by climate change. Extreme weather events, flooding, droughts and increase in temperatures pose unique threats to children's health and well-being including potential erosion of much of the progress made in child health and development over recent decades.<sup>10</sup> This impact is most evident among children under 5, an age with rapid and unique physiological and emotional development.<sup>11</sup>

- **Children require more food and water per unit of bodyweight than adults**, rendering them particularly vulnerable to food and water scarcity. Droughts lead to crop failures and rising food prices, which for the poor mean food insecurity and nutritional deprivations that can have lifelong impacts. Around 600 million children — or 1 in 4 children worldwide — will be living in areas with extremely limited water resources by 2040.<sup>12</sup> They are also more likely to succumb to vector- and water-borne diseases such as malaria, dengue and cholera, which are increasing in prevalence with climate change, and are major

10 UNICEF (2015a), *Unless We Act Now: The impact of climate change on children*.

11 Ibid.

12 UNICEF (2017). *Thirsting for a Future*.

causes of child mortality globally. In addition, evidence is mounting of the short and long-term impacts of dealing with repeated disasters on children's **mental health**.



- Disasters form part of what pediatricians call adverse childhood events (ACEs) that can lead to adverse health outcomes through toxic stress including earlier death, higher rates of cancer and engaging in more risk-taking behaviour.<sup>13</sup> Climate change affects a child's ability to learn. Extreme weather events destroy schools and transportation infrastructure. In addition, extreme heat can affect a child's **ability to learn**, and exposure to higher-than-average temperatures as well as associated health impacts is linked with fewer years of schooling.<sup>14</sup>
- **Climate-related displacement and migration brings increased vulnerability**, including separation from family members, and violence, exploitation and abuse.<sup>15</sup> Girls are at increased risk of violence and exploitation, including sexual and physical abuse, and trafficking during and after extreme weather events. These risks are heightened when collecting food, water and firewood or when staying in temporary shelters or refugee camps. In addition, when a family is faced with economic hardship caused by climate change, studies suggest that the risk of child marriage can increase.<sup>16</sup>
- Children are **acutely vulnerable to the impacts of air pollution**, which both contributes to, and is exacerbated by, climate change, and is a major contributing factor in the deaths of approximately 600,000 children under the age of 5 every year.<sup>17</sup>
- **The most disadvantaged children face the greatest risks**, as climate-related impacts threaten to overwhelm their limited coping capacity and further compound inequity.<sup>18</sup>
- As children will live longer, they will also **bear the brunt of escalating harm and instability** linked to rising temperatures in the years to come. A recent report by The Lancet highlights that if the world continues to produce the same amount of carbon emissions, a child born today could be living with an average temperature that is 7.2 degrees Fahrenheit (4 degrees Celsius) warmer by their 71st birthday.<sup>19</sup>

Representing approximately one-third of the global population, and facing an increasingly uncertain and unstable future, it is impossible to overstate children's stake in effective climate policies and action. Furthermore, children are passionate about environmental issues and climate change. According to a UNICEF poll of children conducted in more than 60 countries, 77 per cent think that climate change is one of the most pressing issues for young people, and 98 per cent think that governments need to take urgent action to tackle this issue.<sup>20</sup> Recent events, and the global climate FridaysForFuture school strikes, have revealed the depth of frustration that children feel at this intergenerational form of injustice, as well as their courage and willingness to challenge the status quo.

13 Public Radio International, "How climate change affects children's health", September 2019.

14 UNICEF (2015a), op.cit.

15 Ibid.

16 Plan International (2019). *Effects of Climate Change on Girls' Rights*.

17 UNICEF (2016), *Clear the Air for Children*.

18 UNICEF (2015a), op. cit.

19 N. Watts et. al., (2019). The Lancet Countdown on health and climate change: ensuring that the health of a child born today is not defined by a changing climate, *The Lancet*, 394(10211).

20 UNICEF (2016), U-Report poll on climate change disseminated to more than 5500 children, <http://www.ureport.in/opinion/1474>.

A child born today could be living in a world with average temperature that is **7.2°F or 4°C** warmer by their 71st birthday.

**1 in 4** children will be living in areas with extremely limited water resources by 2040.



## SECTION 3

# What do national policies say about children?

Our analysis has revealed the following in terms of the extent to which NDCs and NAPs consider children and their rights.

## Nationally Determined Contributions

**Forty-two per cent** of all NDCs directly reference children or youth while only 20 per cent mention children (under 18) specifically. The term 'children' is often mentioned in connection with women as one of the most vulnerable groups in a population. Whereas the word 'young' is often used to describe the situation and livelihoods of young persons in their respective countries, 'youth' appears to be connected to capacity-building and increased youth empowerment. The term 'infant' appears infrequently, notably with regard to health issues, including malnutrition and other health impacts. Just two countries (Malawi and Zambia) call attention to gender dimensions among children, and consideration of differential impacts on girls.

**Of the 42 per cent of NDCs that include a direct reference to children or youth, many of these cannot be considered ‘child-sensitive’.** The nature of the reference is often merely descriptive and/or superficial, for example it is not developed or translated into meaningful or targeted climate-related commitments and action. The number of NDCs that can be considered ‘child-sensitive’ is therefore considerably lower.

**Just three countries (<2 per cent) explicitly mention the rights of children. A further five countries refer to human rights in the context of intergenerational equity or future generations.**<sup>21</sup> NDCs that include references to human rights and/or intergenerational equity contain more relevant and substantive focus on children/youth and climate change. This is unsurprising as rights-based approaches add significant depth and strength to climate-related policies by considering human rights obligations as fundamental to the policymaking processes of governments and relevant entities.

**Sixty per cent of NDCs address education in the broad sense,**<sup>22</sup> however only 24 per cent specifically target or consider the education of children and young people, for example with respect to school curricula, facilities or associated infrastructure. The term is often referred to as one of several sectors (similar to the economy or agriculture, for example) which will be impacted by climate change. The term is also often related to public education, awareness-raising and capacity-building more broadly.<sup>23</sup>

**Almost one-quarter (23 per cent) of NDCs do not mention children or youth or child-relevant terms such as education at all.**<sup>24</sup> Highly-developed countries<sup>25</sup> fall predominantly into this category, representing a stark contrast between developed and developing countries in relation to the content and extent of NDCs with reference to the socioeconomic dimensions of climate change. This may be due to the fact that developing countries are traditionally not the largest emitters, yet are acutely experiencing the effects of climate change and as such are much more focused on its impact on their populations and adapting to those effects. Meanwhile, developed country NDCs tend to display a narrower focus on emissions.

## BOX 2 | NDCs AND THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Data from ‘Climate Watch’, an online database managing linkages between NDCs and SDGs, highlights how the social SDGs — such as health and education — and SDG targets that are most relevant for reaching vulnerable populations are extremely underrepresented in NDCs.<sup>26</sup> Yet, bridging climate action under the Paris Agreement

and the SDGs — as well as the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction — will be essential for achieving the 2030 Agenda’s goal of leaving no one behind, particularly children. As the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) recognizes, the success of climate-resilient development pathways will depend on

addressing intersecting inequalities, marginalization, and poverty.<sup>27</sup> In addition, the IPCC notes that aligning mitigation measures to sustainable development and poverty eradication objectives can ‘ensure public acceptance, encourage faster action and support the design of equitable mitigation that protects human rights’.<sup>28</sup>

26 Climate Watch tool: <https://www.climatewatchdata.org/ndcs-sdg>. The NDC-SDG linkages database is managed by the World Resources Institute, and is a contribution to the NDC Partnership, which was launched in 2016 to help countries to achieve their NDC commitments through technical support: <https://ndcpartnership.org>. 85 countries, UN agencies and various multilateral finance institutions (MFIs) are members. UNICEF joined the partnership in 2020 with a view to supporting development and implementation of countries’ plans.

27 IPCC (2018), op. cit.

28 Ibid.

21 Indonesia, Lesotho, Uruguay: the references in the reports of Indonesia and Lesotho are quotes from the Paris Agreement preambular language on the rights of children. Armenia, the Philippines, Tuvalu, Venezuela and Zimbabwe reference human rights and intergenerational equity.

22 Search terms: education/school.

23 For an in-depth analysis and examination of children’s education in NDCs, see Kwauk, C., Muma, M., Hara, E., and Pegram, J. (2019). Girls’ Education in Climate Strategies: Opportunities for improved policy and enhanced action in nationally determined contributions. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution.

24 Key search terms: vulnerable/rights/intergenerational equity/school/education.

25 Australia, the European Union, Iceland, Japan, Lichtenstein, Monaco, New Zealand, Norway, Singapore, Switzerland and the United States.

## POSITIONING OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN NDCs

To the extent that children and youth are included in NDCs, there is a wide range of ways in which they are positioned.

In **Liberia**, children and youth are considered as a vulnerable group, as beneficiaries and as stakeholders, notably in the context of adaptation:

"For the most part, women and children are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. However, their unique knowledge and perspectives also provide opportunities for inclusive, equitable and efficient adaptation responses and coping strategies." The NDC further notes that the country's Climate Change Gender Action Plan "provides a framework for enhancing gender equality in both climate adaptation and mitigation activities including decision-making processes, capacity-building, implementation of policies and measures to ensure that climate change vulnerabilities are addressed with gender equity and youth development." In addition, "youth and student representatives" are identified as key relevant stakeholders that were included in the NDC planning process.

In **Myanmar**, the empowerment of children and youth is recognised as a high-priority approach in the context of both mitigation and adaptation, recognising them as both beneficiaries and agents of change: "Myanmar recognises a number of important emerging themes which are key to addressing both future emission reductions and adaptation to climate impacts, including the need for sustainable urban development; a more consistent inclusion of civil society perspectives; the empowerment of groups at risk of the short- and long-term impacts of climate change, (such as children and other younger members of society); and the integration of gender

considerations into climate change policy design." The NDC notes that the Government is incorporating disaster risk reduction and climate change in school curricula and learning materials to achieve long-term positive impacts.

In **Canada**, children are not mentioned, but youth are positioned as key stakeholders:

"The Government of Canada recognizes that collaboration on climate change action is important, which is why its approach builds on the efforts of provinces and territories, local governments, Indigenous organizations, businesses, youth, the academic community, and non-governmental organizations."

These approaches contrast with more passive representation of children and youth in NDCs. For example, the NDCs of **Guatemala** and **Uganda** mention children as a vulnerable group, but do not acknowledge or foresee a role for children or youth as stakeholders:

"Los grupos poblacionales más impactados son los pueblos indígenas, los agricultores de subsistencia, los pescadores artesanales y, entre ellos, las mujeres y los niños." (The groups most impacted are Indigenous Peoples, subsistence farmers, artisanal fishermen and, among others, women and children).

"The rural poor and those living in slums are especially vulnerable as they have lower capacity to cope with and adapt to the impacts of climate change. Women are especially vulnerable in terms of food insecurity, water shortage and fuel wood scarcity. Children, the elderly, and persons with disabilities or sick are also particularly vulnerable." Uganda's NDC does, however, envisage sustainable energy solutions for schools in off-grid areas, and the enhancement of climate change education.

## National Adaptation Plans<sup>29</sup>

**Eleven of 13 NAPs explicitly refer to children or youth. The remaining NAPs (Chile and Sri Lanka) do not mention children but include either 'school' or 'education' as child-relevant key terms.** Generally in the 11 NAPs, children/youth are referred to as being among the most vulnerable groups which will be disproportionately affected by climate change. In particular, with respect to health and climate change risks and adaptation, children are almost always mentioned as an especially vulnerable group. Here, some NAPs place an emphasis on the particular exposure of children to air pollution, respiratory diseases or poor drinking water quality.<sup>30</sup>

**Only two NAPs refer to children as rights-holders. Three NAPs recognise the rights of future generations, and only one refers to the concept of 'intergenerational equity'.<sup>31</sup>**

**The second-most mentioned child-relevant term (after vulnerable groups) is 'education' which appears in 12 of 13 NAPs and is directly linked to children/youth in the majority of NAPs.** References to 'education' and 'schools' are generally related to the resilience of physical buildings and social infrastructure against extreme weather events.<sup>32</sup> The term 'education' is also used synonymously with awareness-raising and capacity-building, and is frequently linked to 'climate change education', where this relates to curricula and/or enhancing knowledge of local communities about the consequences and adaptation practices related to climate change.

## Summary

It is clear that NDCs, particularly those submitted by high-income countries, fall far short of what is required in terms of the extent to which they directly address children. While governments are not mandated to consider or provide information on children within their NDCs, (unfortunately, governments rejected proposals to integrate child and human rights in the guidance for the Paris Agreement 'Rulebook'<sup>33</sup>), children are also omitted from the technical guidance for NAPs.<sup>34</sup>

Yet this analysis reveals that NAPs do address children, even if the emphasis is limited in scope, referring to them as a vulnerable group and as beneficiaries in terms of education and health interventions in particular. Though this inclusion is welcome, further progress is required to recognise the status of children as rights-holders and active stakeholders, and to embed child-sensitive measures.

### BOX 3 | CHILD RIGHTS-BASED CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION

Investments in education and related infrastructure are a rights-based, cost-effective and sustainable method of empowering children. Health, water and sanitation, housing infrastructure and related services are also critical to children's adaptation and resilience. Disaster risk

reduction is another key area for investment and includes training for teachers, parents and children as well as climate-resilient schools and infrastructure. In the aftermath of climate-related disasters, resources should be devoted to ensure children's access to health services, to reunite

children with their families and to not only protect them with physical support, such as food and clean water, but also to provide psychosocial care to prevent or address fear and trauma. Support should take into account children's distinct needs for play and safety.

Source: OHCHR, Climate Change and the Full and Effective Enjoyment of the Rights of the Child (A/HRC/35/13).

29 NAPs to date: Brazil, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chile, Colombia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Kenya, Saint Lucia, Sri Lanka, State of Palestine, Sudan, Togo.

30 See Brazil, Burkina Faso and Fiji.

31 The NAPs of Fiji and Kenya refer to children's rights; the NAPs of Colombia, Fiji and Sudan refer to the rights of future generations; and Fiji's NAP also refers to intergenerational equity.

32 See Cameroon, Fiji and Sri Lanka.

33 Center for International Environmental Law (2018). *Katowice COP24 Outcome Incompatible with Paris Agreement*.

34 UNFCCC (2012), *National Adaptation Plans: Technical guidelines for the national adaptation plan process*.



#### SECTION 4

# How should national policies address children's issues?

Given such stark absence of children's rights and needs in national policies, is there anything that States can do? Countries have an opportunity to address this through their revised NDCs (to be resubmitted every five years starting from 2020), in their NAPs as 'iterative' processes, and in other relevant national climate policies. We therefore propose several key principles that can be applied when such policies are developed or revised.

## Principle 1: Ambitious and urgent

A child-sensitive climate policy must set out sufficiently ambitious mitigation and adaptation measures to protect the rights and best interests of the child from actual and foreseeable harm caused by climate change.

- The level of commitments contained in the NDCs — even if fully implemented by all countries — places the world on a path to a devastating 3°C of global warming by 2100, breaching Paris Agreement commitments to limit warming to ‘well below’ 2°C. Child rights obligations demand that developed States and other large emitters must, at a minimum, reduce their emissions in line with these international commitments. At 1°C of warming, climate change is already negatively affecting hundreds of millions of children around the globe. The IPCC notes that the aspirational 1.5°C target — currently considered a ‘best case’ scenario — “is not considered ‘safe’ for nations, communities, ecosystems and sectors and poses significant risks to natural and human systems as compared to the current warming of 1°C.”<sup>35</sup> Yet the IPCC has also found that the impacts experienced at this temperature — while grave — will be significantly lower than those encountered at 2°C.<sup>36</sup>
- Limiting warming to 1.5°C will require a 45 per cent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030, and ‘net zero’ emissions by 2050, necessitating “rapid, far-reaching, and unprecedented changes in all aspects of society”.<sup>37</sup> Furthermore, since climate-related impacts are already occurring, a sharp increase in child-sensitive adaptation measures and associated resources is also necessary.
- Unfortunately, while the Paris Agreement says that climate finance should be evenly split between mitigation and adaptation, there is a huge ongoing imbalance towards mitigation. The Global Commission on Adaptation estimates that adaptation finance has accounted for only around a quarter of total climate finance flows in recent years, noting that this falls far short of what is required.<sup>38</sup> For 2017/18 (the most recent figures available), tracked adaptation finance increased from USD 22 billion in 2015/16 to USD 30 billion, but this represented just 12 per cent of public finance flows, and only 5 per cent of overall climate finance from all flows for which data was available.<sup>39</sup>



“The kind of changes that need to happen mean everyone recognising that this is a crisis and committing to radical transformations.”

Greta Thunberg, Anna Taylor and others in *The Guardian*

“I am joining this strike to demand that decisions are more future-focused and that policy will reflect our environmental rights as written in our constitution.”

Dona Van Eeden, 21, Cape Town, South Africa

<sup>35</sup> IPCC, (2018), op. cit.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> IPCC (2018), Press release 2018/24/PR, “Summary for Policymakers of IPCC Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C approved by governments”.

<sup>38</sup> Global Commission on Adaptation (2019), *Adapt Now: A Global Call for Leadership on Climate Resilience*.

<sup>39</sup> Climate Policy Initiative (2019), *Global Landscape of Climate Finance 2019*. The authors note that tracked adaptation finance represents a partial estimate due to challenges in definition, accounting, reporting and data availability.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF INCLUDING THE PRIVATE SECTOR

Governments' obligations to children extend to adopting policies and adequately regulating the private sector to prevent business enterprises from causing or contributing to abuses of children's rights, including as a result of environmental harm.<sup>40</sup> Businesses also have responsibilities to respect children's rights, including the right to a healthy environment.<sup>41</sup> These obligations and responsibilities are extremely important with respect to climate change, as the private sector is a significant contributor to carbon emissions; just 100 companies are responsible for more than 70 per cent of emissions released since 1988, and more than half of all emissions globally since the industrial revolution.<sup>42</sup> Yet it is clear that both governments and businesses are falling short of their responsibilities. In fact, carbon emissions from the global energy industry rose by 1.7 per cent in 2018, the highest rate of growth since 2013, and 70 per cent higher than the average increase since 2010.<sup>43</sup>

In addition, according to a major recent study on attitudes of Chief Executive Officers (CEOs), 59 per cent of businesses state that they are deploying low-carbon and renewable energy, but only one-third of CEOs confirmed that

they have or plan to establish a science-based carbon target.<sup>44</sup> This level of action is far from commensurate with the scale of the climate crisis and level of action required for meeting IPCC pathways to limit warming to 1.5°C. Nonetheless, high-profile initiatives such as the Business Ambition for 1.5°C campaign are gaining traction.<sup>45</sup>

Stronger action could be facilitated by the uptake of guidance from the Committee on the Rights of the Child which states that governments should ensure that businesses not only abide by environmental standards, but also conduct 'child-rights due diligence' to ensure that businesses identify, prevent and mitigate their impact on children's rights, including across their supply chains and within their global operations.<sup>46</sup> This due diligence should include consideration of the consequences of their actual and proposed actions on the rights of children through environmental harm, including for example, their contribution to carbon emissions and climate change.<sup>47</sup> The Committee also notes that governments should ensure children's access to effective redress mechanisms for violations of their rights by businesses, in terms of their operations both at home and abroad.<sup>48</sup>

40 UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (2013) General Comment No. 16 on State obligations regarding the impact of the business sector on children's rights.

41 See the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, the Children's Rights and Business Principles (UNICEF, UN Global Compact, Save the Children (2012). Principle 7 states: 'Respect and support children's rights in relation to the environment and to land acquisition and use.'). See also General Comment No. 16 (2013) of the Committee on the Rights of the Child.

42 Richard Heede, "Tracing anthropogenic carbon dioxide and methane emissions to fossil fuel and cement producers, 1854–2010", *Climatic Change*, vol. 122, issue 1–2, pp. 229–241 (January 2014).

43 International Energy Agency (2019), Global Energy & CO<sub>2</sub> Status Report.

44 Accenture and UN Global Compact (2019), 'The Decade to Deliver: A Call to Business Action'.

45 See: <https://sciencebasedtargets.org/business-ambition-for-1-5c-3/>

46 UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (2013) General Comment No. 16, op. cit.

47 UN Special Rapporteur (2018), A/HRC/37/58, on the Relationship between Children's Rights and Environmental Protection.

48 Ibid.

## Principle 2: Rights-based

A child-sensitive climate policy must contain explicit and meaningful references to children and youth and consider them as rights-holders and important stakeholders.

- To the extent that they are mentioned at all, children are overwhelming positioned as part of a vague ‘vulnerable group’, rather than individual rights-holders and important stakeholders. Climate change affects children and adults differently, and policies that explicitly recognise and meaningfully address children, including their perspectives, are more likely to deliver stronger and more effective outcomes. Such an approach also guards against unintended harmful consequences of climate responses, which may inadvertently infringe children’s rights.
- To be considered child-sensitive climate policies must position children as a cross-cutting priority, and identify them as both beneficiaries and stakeholders, recognising their specific needs, vulnerabilities, rights and agency.
- Since children are not a homogenous group, their specific vulnerabilities, based on age, gender, and other socioeconomic characteristics, should inform all stages of the policy process, from formulation through to implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

### IN PRACTICE

#### APPLYING LESSONS FROM CHILD-SENSITIVE DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

In December 2019, governments and youth activists came together at the UNFCCC’s 25th annual Conference of the Parties (COP) to launch a new Intergovernmental Declaration on Children, Youth and Climate Action.<sup>49</sup> The Declaration was inspired by the Children’s Charter on Disaster Risk Reduction, which was developed through extensive consultation with children, and provided a best practice model for the meaningful engagement of children in policy making.<sup>50</sup> Both are based on priorities identified by children and youth from around the world. Although no global institutional framework exists to address children’s unique vulnerabilities to climate change and other disaster risks, The Charter outlines children’s top 5 priorities for policies that address natural disasters, and has contributed to sensitising governments and other stakeholders on applying a child-sensitive approach to the DRR agenda. In addition, The Declaration is the first of its kind committing governments to accelerate child-sensitive climate policies and action at national and

global levels, and to advocate for recognition and fulfilment of children’s right to a healthy environment more broadly. The Declaration sets out seven key commitments:

1. Recognise and fulfil children's right to a healthy environment
2. Scale up efforts to respect, protect and promote children's rights in climate action, including in national climate policies, NDCs and NAPs
3. Urgently increase and accelerate investment in child-sensitive climate action
4. Strengthen children's capacity through climate change education
5. Enhance meaningful participation of children in climate change processes at all levels
6. Consider and actively explore measures to establish an International Commission for Children and Future Generations
7. Adopt practical measures and partnerships at national and international levels to pursue these commitments

<sup>49</sup> UNICEF and the Children’s Environmental Rights Initiative are joint custodians of the Declaration. At the time of writing, 10 governments had signed. See: <https://www.childrenenvironment.org/declaration-children-youth-climate-action>

<sup>50</sup> Children in a Changing Climate Coalition (2011), Children’s Charter: An action plan for Disaster Risk Reduction for Children by Children

## Principle 3: Holistic and multi-sectoral

A child-sensitive climate policy must address children's specific risks and vulnerabilities through holistic and multi-sectoral interventions.

- Referencing children in a policy is not enough. Policies must also cover interventions targeted at children in areas that are most relevant to children's needs and rights in the national context. Since children face specific and heightened risks in the context of climate change impacts, it is vital that policies integrate measures to address these risks, through a holistic and multi-sectoral approach to low-carbon climate resilience that encompasses education, health, food security, water and sanitation, housing and social protection.
- For example, the importance of environmental education is explicitly recognised in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which states that one of the principle aims of education "shall be directed to ... the development of respect for the natural environment" (Article 29). Enhancing children's knowledge and skills in this area empowers them to both protect themselves from risks and to advocate and participate meaningfully in related decision-making, as agents of change in their own right. Education in this area is therefore fundamental to guaranteeing their right to be heard and other 'access rights'. A powerful example of the role that climate change education can play is the young climate activist Greta Thunberg's description of the transformative effect learning about this in school had on her and her subsequent journey to strike from school, sparking a global movement.<sup>51</sup>
- More recently both Italy and New Zealand have made climate change education a priority. In Italy, starting in September 2020, students in public schools will attend lessons on climate change and sustainable development for a total of 33 hours a year, about one per week. This has been championed by the Education Minister, who wants to make the Italian educational system the first educational system that puts the environment and society at the core of everything that is learned in school.<sup>52</sup> In New Zealand, every school will have access to materials about the climate crisis written by the country's leading science agencies — including tools for students to plan their own activism, and to process their feelings of 'eco-anxiety' concerning global heating.<sup>53</sup>

### IN PRACTICE

#### MARYLAND'S ENVIRONMENTAL LITERACY STANDARDS<sup>54</sup>

In 2011, the state of Maryland in the United States adopted one of the first regulations to mandate that students be environmentally literate as a high school graduation requirement. Emerging from widespread concern about the polluted state of the Chesapeake Bay, the regulation aimed to instill an environmental stewardship ethic in young people, and to catalyse change within the community, in order to address

lack of environmental awareness and prevent further degradation of the estuary. Each local school system was mandated to provide a comprehensive and locally-developed environmental education programme at all ages, integrated through a wide range of subjects. Results indicate positive school-wide changes in knowledge, behaviour and action, and improvements in student's learning outcomes in various subjects more broadly.

<sup>54</sup> World Future Council (2015), Celebrating the World's Best Laws and Policies to Secure Children's Rights.

51 Jonathan Watts, (11 March 2019), 'Greta Thunberg, schoolgirl climate change warrior: 'Some people can let things go. I can't'', *The Guardian*.

52 Berger, Miriam (6 November 2019), "Italy's government becomes first to mandate climate change education in schools," *The Washington Post*.

53 Graham-McLay, Charlotte (12 January 2020), "New Zealand schools to teach students about climate crisis, activism and 'eco anxiety','' *The Guardian*

## Principle 4: Inclusive

A child-sensitive climate policy must be informed by, and provide for, the systematic consultation and meaningful participation of all children, including children of different ages, genders and social backgrounds, at every step of the climate policymaking process and at all levels.<sup>55</sup>

- Despite the obligations referenced in the UNFCCC, the Paris Agreement, the SDGs and in the Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, the views of children and youth — particularly those of younger children — are consistently overlooked in climate policymaking.
- While climate policies need to consider the heightened vulnerability of children and set out measures that will protect them from harm, their agency must also be recognised, and notably their right to be heard on one of the most critical threats facing their generation. Guaranteeing this right demands that climate policies must be informed by, and provide for, the systematic consultation and meaningful participation of all children to the extent possible, including children of different ages, gender and social backgrounds, in the climate policymaking process.<sup>56</sup>
- Empowering children with the knowledge and tools required to tackle climate change is a fundamental investment in a country's resilience, well-being and prosperity, and is one of the most simple and effective strategies for strengthening mitigation and adaptation pathways, and sustainable development more broadly.
- The international FridaysForFuture school strike movement has done much to place children's voices and demands squarely on the agenda of decision-makers, but many countries have not yet established child-friendly mechanisms and platforms to facilitate formal engagement in the policy process. Such forums could include Children's Parliaments, Children's Councils, standing consultative committees that include children's perspectives, and the involvement of child representatives in State institutions at different levels. At the same time, governments must take measures to provide a safe and empowering context for children and young people to express their views and participate in policy processes, without fear of reprisals.



"The vast majority of climate strikers taking action today aren't allowed to vote. Imagine for a second what that feels like. Despite watching the climate crisis unfold, despite knowing the facts, we aren't allowed to have a say in who makes the decisions about climate change."

Greta Thunberg, Anna Taylor and others in *The Guardian*

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<sup>55</sup> UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (2017). *Outcome Report on 2016 Day of General Discussion on Child Rights and the Environment*.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

## YOUTH DELEGATES IN THE UNFCCC

Countries such as Finland, the Netherlands and Norway are setting a positive example by including official Youth Delegates in their Party Delegations, providing a direct line of access to negotiation processes. These delegates represent valuable assets for both youth networks and the Parties themselves, as they form a vital bridge between young people and the UNFCCC, raising awareness at home, and showcasing domestic youth-led climate initiatives at the international level. Dutch Youth Delegates, for example, are mandated to engage at least 2,000 youth at the national level each year. The Children and Youth Constituency to the UNFCCC (YOUNGO) has called on more countries to adopt Youth Delegate programmes, and to learn from and improve on current practice.<sup>57</sup>

While YOUNGO, formed in 2009, has done much to increase the voice of youth in particular in the negotiations, critical barriers

remain, including a lack of financial support to attend meetings, and a lack of opportunities to meaningfully participate.<sup>58</sup> The barriers for younger children are even higher — the annual Conference of Youth in advance of each COP represents the key space for children to shape YOUNGO's position in the talks, yet participants are required to cover their own costs to attend.<sup>59</sup>

Despite these barriers, youth remain very active at the annual climate negotiations. Youth regularly participate inside events, activations and even protests at the COP venue itself. There are already indications that child-led strikes on the street are leading to a more inclusive approach to child and youth participation in the halls of power as well as an increase in the number of young people participating in the latest COP 25,<sup>60</sup> although the decisions and politics themselves have yet to reflect children's demands.

57 YOUNGO (2017), 'Submission to the UNFCCC on ways of enhancing the implementation of training, public awareness, public participation and public access to information so as to enhance actions under the Agreement'

58 Ibid.

59 <https://conference-of-youth.org/en/about-coy>

60 Kartik Chandramouli, "Youth rising at COP25: They came, they protested, they negotiated" 19 December 2019, Mongabay, India.



SECTION 5

# Transforming principles into action, measurement and impact

No matter how perfectly-crafted and cognisant of children's rights, even the most ambitious policy is unlikely to deliver on its intended results if it is not underpinned by a strong evidence base, and if procedures and mechanisms are not in place to facilitate effective implementation, monitoring, evaluation and accountability. Supporting the principles for child-sensitive climate policymaking also requires two vital elements: an enabling environment and measurement with specific targets.

## Enabling environment for action



### Political will and high-level leadership:

According to gender advocates, high-level political support and leadership from Heads of State, Ministers, key Government negotiators, leaders in the UN and champions within the UNFCCC Secretariat have been ‘key driving forces’ behind formalising mandates on gender mainstreaming in UNFCCC decision-making and policies, which has in turn helped to bolster progress with respect to national climate change mitigation and adaptation policies.<sup>61</sup> For example, in 2017, the UNFCCC Executive Secretary, Patricia Espinosa, announced that she has become an ‘International Gender Champion’, committing to advance gender equality within the UNFCCC Secretariat as an organization, and in its support to the intergovernmental process.<sup>62</sup>

Political will has also been critical for advancing recognition of Indigenous Peoples’ rights in international and national climate policies. Indigenous leaders from Canada and Canadian Government negotiators played a leading role in the adoption of the Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform (LCIPP) established by the Paris Agreement.<sup>63</sup> In September 2017, the Government of Canada and Indigenous Peoples of Canada hosted an informal dialogue attended by more than 60 governments and Indigenous Peoples from around the world, to advance discussions on the Platform. Canada was subsequently recognised for its leadership in reaching an agreement on the operational launch of the Platform just months later, at COP23.<sup>64</sup>

Similarly, integrating children’s rights into national climate action will require political will from high-level leaders and senior decision-makers. Such leadership often comes from the national/central level but can also come from the district or city level. Indeed, in the past several years we have seen a growing number of cities taking bold climate action and paving the way to a more sustainable future even when national governments are lagging.<sup>65</sup>

### Knowledge, awareness-raising and capacity-building of climate policymakers:

Research suggests that the majority of climate policymakers feel ill-equipped to understand and apply human rights standards and principles in their work,<sup>66</sup> representing a major impediment to child-sensitive policies in this area. Similarly, gender mainstreaming advocates have identified awareness-raising, training and guidance among climate policymakers as a vital intervention for ensuring that the social dimensions of climate change are considered and addressed in climate policies, including through the integration of rights-based approaches to both mitigation and adaptation.<sup>67</sup> As a way to support this, the GenderCC toolkit for climate experts and decision-makers calls for all staff involved in climate policymaking to undergo mandatory gender training.<sup>68</sup>

Interviews conducted by the World Resources Institute (WRI) with respect to aligning SDG and NDC objectives, including cross-cutting objectives such as gender equity and poverty reduction, have pointed to a demand by experts for simple, comprehensive and sector-specific guidelines.<sup>69</sup> The same is true of demands

<sup>61</sup> UN-Women, UN DESA, UNFCCC Secretariat (2015). Background Paper, Gender Mainstreaming Practices in the Context of Climate Responses (EGM/GR-CR/BP.1).

<sup>62</sup> International Gender Champions: Bonn-Berlin, A Work in Progress: <https://unfccc.int/topics/gender/workstreams/gender-action-plan/international-gender-champions>

<sup>63</sup> Climate Action Network Canada Brief: UNFCCC SB50 Bonn Climate Change Conference (2019). The LCIPP formalizes a distinct space for Indigenous participants in the UNFCCC.

<sup>64</sup> Government of Canada (2017), 7th National Communication and 3rd Biennial Report on Climate Change to the UNFCCC.

<sup>65</sup> Anne McKibbin (2019). “Cities Take the Lead on Climate Action”, Elevate Energy. [www.elevateenergy.org/cities-take-lead-climate-action](http://www.elevateenergy.org/cities-take-lead-climate-action)

<sup>66</sup> Mary Robinson Foundation Climate Justice (2016). *Rights for Action*.

<sup>67</sup> UN-Women, UN DESA, UNFCCC Secretariat (2015), op. cit.

<sup>68</sup> GenderCC (2009) Gender into Climate Policy. Available at: [https://gendercc.net/fileadmin/inhalte/dokumente/5\\_Gender\\_Climate/toolkit-gender-cc-web.pdf](https://gendercc.net/fileadmin/inhalte/dokumente/5_Gender_Climate/toolkit-gender-cc-web.pdf)

<sup>69</sup> WRI (2018), ‘Bridging Implementation of SDGs and NDCs: Examples and Early Lessons from Country Experiences’

“We have reached a point in history when we have the technical capacities to solve poverty, malnutrition, inequality and of course global warming ... whether we succeed or not depends on our political will.”

Dona Van Eeden, 21, Cape Town, South Africa

from climate experts in the UNFCCC, which has resulted in concrete entry points on capacity-building, with significant relevance for increasing understanding of the positive role that human rights and child rights can play in informing more effective climate action. These include workstreams on: access to information, education and participation under Article 6 (Action for Climate Empowerment); the Gender Action Plan (which defines capacity-building as one of its five priorities); and the Paris Committee on Capacity-Building, whose workplan for 2016–2020 includes a focus on cross-cutting issues such as gender responsiveness, human rights and indigenous peoples' knowledge.<sup>70</sup>

In addition, countries that have signed up to the intergovernmental Geneva Pledge have committed to promote better cooperation among their representatives at the Human Rights Council and UN climate change negotiations, and to facilitate exchange of knowledge and best practice at the national level as well.<sup>71</sup> Co-operation and coordination with non-State actors — particularly child rights experts and civil society — in addition to consultation with children themselves, also has an essential role to play in increasing knowledge and capacity with respect to developing child-sensitive climate policies. In Zimbabwe, for example, UNICEF worked closely with the Government and climate experts to enhance the child-sensitive nature of the country's National Climate Change Response Strategy, building the capacity of decision-makers to integrate child-sensitive approaches to the Strategy's formulation in terms of content and process.<sup>72</sup>

### **Child-sensitive budgeting**

The level of resources required to adapt to and mitigate the impacts of climate change is substantial, with estimates for adaptation alone ranging from USD 140–300 billion per annum by 2030 and USD 280–500 billion by 2050.<sup>73</sup> Adequately limiting greenhouse gas emissions will require an additional several hundred billion dollar each year. While public funds represent a relatively small portion of climate change finance compared to the private sector, they have a critical role to play, both in ensuring that available resources respond equitably to the needs of children, and in providing a best-practice model for future private investments and the broader climate finance architecture.

In fact, evidence suggests that public finance that is child-sensitive yields higher social and economic returns, since investments during childhood are relatively cost-effective, contributing significantly to adult outcomes by increasing the health, education and well-being of a population, and reducing inequalities.<sup>74</sup> In addition, States have obligations under the UN CRC to invest all necessary resources 'to the maximum extent' available — including through international cooperation — in public policies and programmes to fulfil children's rights. Therefore, dedicated resources and/or decision-making processes resulting in budgeting (particularly at the local level) that supports child-sensitive investments, including from climate finance mechanisms, are necessary.<sup>75</sup> In practical terms, this means:<sup>76</sup>

- Ensuring that funds are available for measures to address the specific needs, vulnerabilities and rights of children, including by introducing child-specific criteria in allocation of funds;
- Providing resources to cover the costs of 'child-screening' climate plans and measures, and to 'climate screen' child-focused policies and plans;
- Making funding available to facilitate child-sensitive implementation, monitoring and evaluation, including through, for example, guidance, technical assistance and capacity-building for local policy-makers and implementing agencies;<sup>77</sup> and
- Providing resources for community-led climate initiatives, with a dedicated focus on children.

70 UNFCCC Paris Committee on Capacity-Building (PCCB), see: <https://unfccc.int/pccb>

71 See Human Rights and Climate Change Working Group: <https://climaterights.org/our-work/unfccc/geneva-pledge>

72 See case study in 'Examples of Best Practice' below.

73 UN Environment (2018) Adaptation Gap Report.

74 ODI (2011). *Investment in Children: Report Commissioned by Save the Children Child Rights Governance Initiative*

75 It is important to note that this may not necessarily require an increase in overall expenditures, but rather a reprioritization of financial resources within sectors to ensure that gaps in addressing children's specific needs are addressed. This process will be greatly facilitated if a child-sensitive lens is applied more widely at the national level, including through child-sensitive budgeting.

76 Based on guidance from UNDP and GGCA (2011). Ensuring gender equity in climate change financing and GenderCC GAMMA Tool, see [www.unfccc.int/sites/default/files/gendercc-gamma-tool.pdf](http://www.unfccc.int/sites/default/files/gendercc-gamma-tool.pdf)

77 UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (2017), op. cit.

## INSIGHTS FROM GENDER-RESPONSIVE CLIMATE FINANCE

There can be no doubt that women's and girls' rights must be prioritized in the allocation of climate finance, recognizing their status as both highly vulnerable and as critical agents of change. Empowering women also helps mothers to support their children, for example in communities reliant on subsistence farming, where women's contribution to household income has a direct impact on food and education received by children.<sup>78</sup> In addition, since women are primary caregivers, improving their awareness and knowledge with respect to the sustainable use and management of resources is likely to be passed on to children at a young age,

instilling critical values.<sup>79</sup> In 2016, Governments at COP22 requested all constituted bodies under the UNFCCC to include information on progress made towards integrating a gender perspective in their reports and processes, and mandated the development of the Gender Action Plan (GAP). The GAP emphasizes gender-responsive finance as a core tool for implementation. Progress with respect to mainstreaming gender in climate finance is encouraging and offers important lessons for increasing child-sensitive climate policies and means of implementation — including finance — more broadly, both under the UNFCCC and at national levels.

78 UNICEF UK (2011). *Climate Proof Children: Putting the Child First in Climate Finance*.

79 Government of Fiji (2018), National Adaptation Plan.

## Measurement, targets and impact

### Collection and assessment of disaggregated data

Weaknesses in data collection and an over-reliance on averages fail to capture the specific and differential impacts of climate change on children based on their age, sex or other socioeconomic characteristics, and compromises effective policy planning and equitable implementation of climate action and children's rights. Understanding the challenges that climate change poses to children is essential to inform and prioritise policies, plans and targeted measures, and to underpin the elaboration of child-sensitive targets and indicators as well as monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.

For example, efforts to improve disaggregated data on SDG 6 on clean water and sanitation have revealed the extent to which the burden of water collection and treatment falls on women and girls. Survey data for 61 countries shows that in 80 per cent of households that lack access to water on the premises, women and girls are responsible for water collection particularly for the poorest households in rural areas.<sup>80</sup> By including survey questions on time spent on water collection and information on the role of individual household members, these data were able to shed far more light on gender roles and the disproportionate impacts of increasing water scarcity on women and girls than if the questions had been limited to water quality alone.

Replicating such approaches more broadly to collect and assess disaggregated data on the climate risks for children aged under 5, under 18, and boys and girls, along with other grounds of discrimination (such as gender, household income, disability and migration status), would help to inform child-sensitive vulnerability and needs assessments for climate policymaking.

Additionally, to further improve the global picture with respect to children, the Committee on the Rights of the Child has called for disaggregated data with respect to environmental issues to be complemented by inclusive programmes which can actively involve children and parents — as much as possible — in research and monitoring, as well as longitudinal studies to explore the relationship between children's rights and environmental harm over time. Concurrently, information related to the environmental and social determinants of children's health and development can be integrated.<sup>81</sup>

80 UN Women (2018). *Turning Promises into Action: Gender Equality in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*.

81 UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (2017), op.cit.

## Child rights impact assessments

Impact assessments help to bring the connections between child rights and a particular set of issues to light and inform more effective policymaking, helping to ensure that children are not excluded from benefits, and that policies do not inadvertently undermine the rights of those they seek to protect. For example, while the connection between policies covering renewable energy or green infrastructure and children's well-being may seem marginal at first glance, the effects of programmes in these and other areas of climate policy on children and young people are profound. In fact, sustainable energy solutions in households and the education, health and water sectors can provide major opportunities in terms of improving children's health, well-being and development.<sup>82</sup>

Similarly, policies may lead to unexpected negative impacts. Examples include the displacement of indigenous children and communities from their ancestral lands in order to make way for hydrodams, or mass-relocation of communities in areas threatened by floods or sea-level rise, without adequate assessment of the impacts on children or their views. Such relocations can cause significant psychological and social problems among children, intensifying the negative effects of climate change.<sup>83</sup>

Child impact assessments can be further strengthened by considering the views of communities and child rights experts as well. In the absence of dedicated child rights impact assessments, environmental and/or social impact assessments should incorporate consideration of children. In all cases, the effects of the proposed policy on particularly vulnerable children should be fully taken into account.

### IN PRACTICE

#### THE SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT: CHILD RIGHTS AND WELLBEING IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The Scottish Government uses the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) as the basis for a national approach to ensuring that children's rights are embedded in all policy, law and decision-making, including by incorporating the CRC in Scots law, an Action Plan on child rights, the application of a Child Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment (CRWIA)<sup>84</sup> to policies and legislation, and reporting on progress to Parliament.

The CRWIA in particular is used to assess whether policies and legislation will realise children's rights and help protect and promote the well-being of children and young people. Guidance on the CRWIA for public bodies and children's services sets out that they should take into account any Concluding Observation from the Committee on the Rights of the Child that is relevant to their policy/measure. This includes the 2016 Concluding Observation to the United Kingdom to:

- Make a statutory commitment to reduce air pollution levels, especially near schools and in residential areas; and
- Place children's rights at the centre of climate change and adaptation strategies.<sup>85</sup>

The Government is also committed to monitoring progress. Public authorities must report every three years on the steps they have taken to implement the CRC. Notably, the 2018 report on progress since 2015 includes a dedicated section on steps the Government is taking to tackle climate change and air pollution, with a particular focus on children and young people's specific needs and views, and measures to raise their awareness.<sup>86</sup> Furthermore, it is expected that a Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment will be undertaken with respect to climate change policies and plans to be elaborated to meet targets under the 2018 Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) Bill.<sup>87</sup>

84 See: [www.gov.scot/policies/human-rights/childrens-rights](http://www.gov.scot/policies/human-rights/childrens-rights)

85 See Scottish Government (2019), Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessments: Guidance

86 Scottish Government (2018). *Progressing the Human Rights of Children in Scotland: 2018 Report*.

87 Climate Change (Emissions Reductions Targets) (Scotland) Bill: EIA results report (2018)

82 UNICEF (2015b), Why Sustainable Energy Matters for Children.

83 UNICEF UK (2017), No Place to Call Home: Protecting Children's Rights when the Changing Climate Forces them to Flee.

## Integrating child-sensitive targets and performance indicators

Incorporating clear targets and performance indicators in policies enhances clarity and transparency, while facilitating the design of follow-up plans and action and decisions on budget allocations, as well as accountability in terms of monitoring and evaluation. Countries should strive to incorporate measurable child-sensitive targets and indicators that reflect their particular needs and rights, as well as indicators related to enabling processes.

EXAMPLES	
CHILD-SENSITIVE TARGETS & INDICATORS <sup>88</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Share and number of children with improved access to sustainable energy</li><li>• Number of children reporting a significant reduction in time spent collecting water or fuel</li><li>• Share and number of children with decreased exposure to water or food insecurity and health-related hazards</li><li>• Share and number of children gaining access to adequate resilient infrastructure (water supply, sanitation, flood protection, housing, schools, energy access)</li><li>• Number and share of children receiving formal and non-formal education on climate change and responses</li><li>• Influence of children increased in design, planning and monitoring of climate action</li><li>• Number of young women and men supported in studies/training on disciplines related to climate risk reduction measures/environmental management</li><li>• Number of children reached by climate-related and child-friendly early warning systems</li></ul>
INDICATORS RELATED TO ENABLING PROCESSES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Seeking children's views</li><li>• Including children's specific needs and capacities in climate vulnerability assessments and planning processes</li><li>• Collecting disaggregated data</li><li>• Conducting child impact assessments</li><li>• Child-sensitive budgeting and finance</li><li>• Incorporating children in the design of mitigation and adaptation measures upon consultation with child rights experts</li><li>• Providing capacity-building to assist with mainstreaming children's rights into sectors where climate change actions are being designed</li></ul>

## Child-sensitive monitoring, evaluation and accountability mechanisms

Establishing effective child-sensitive measures and mechanisms to improve monitoring and reporting systems — based on disaggregated data, and linked to child-sensitive targets, performance and monitoring indicators — is essential for tracking the resilience and well-being of children, and therefore evaluating the impact of climate policies on the ground. Such information and processes are also critical for strengthening accountability to children under both the Paris Agreement and SDG 13 on Climate Action, and the commitment to 'leave no one behind'.

<sup>88</sup> Adapted from various sources including: Green Climate Fund and UN Women (2017), *Mainstreaming Gender in Green Climate Fund Projects*; ADB (2012), *Guidelines for Gender Mainstreaming Categories of ADB Projects*; GenderCC–Women for Climate Justice (2009), *Gender into Climate Policy*, and GAMMA Tool, op. cit.

Additional measures and mechanisms that can be considered within the framework of climate policies to strengthen monitoring, evaluation and accountability include:

- Measures to raise awareness among children, civil society and other key stakeholders of the policy's goals, targets and associated plans and measures, progress with respect to implementation, and opportunities to participate in implementation as well as monitoring and evaluation of programmes and initiatives that affect them. This will entail particular efforts to develop child-friendly and age-appropriate communication, and to reach marginalised children;<sup>89</sup>
- Provisions to support children's access to justice for harm related to climate action (and inaction), such as child-friendly complaints procedures/mechanisms and assistance to access the courts to seek redress. Related measures could include taking steps to:<sup>90</sup>
  - Enshrine the right to a healthy environment and the rights of future generations in national constitutions and legislation;
  - Ratify the Optional Protocol to the UN CRC on a communications procedure;
  - Allow collective and public interest suits ("class actions") on behalf of children;
  - Empower judicial tribunals or administrative bodies to receive complaints and issue injunctions to prevent climate-related harm to children's rights;
  - Support specialised and responsive justice sector professionals, civil society groups and legal mechanisms to provide legal representation to safeguard children's rights and interests; and
  - Facilitate access to effective remedy for children and families whose rights have been violated by the activities of businesses, including those operating extraterritorially when there is a reasonable link between the State and the conduct concerned.

#### IN PRACTICE

##### WALES: WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT

While not explicitly focused on climate policies, the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 provides an interesting and innovative model.

The Act is world-leading in placing sustainable development at the heart of policymaking, requiring local and national public bodies to show how they intend to improve the social, environmental, economic and cultural well-being of Wales in a manner that ensures that "present needs are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs". In particular, the Act establishes a Future Generations Commissioner, who is mandated to advise and support public

authorities to carry out their duties under the Bill, and to monitor and assess the extent to which these are being met, for example through policy decisions and service delivery.<sup>91</sup> Public bodies are expected to provide information in their annual reports on the steps that they have taken to meet the Bill's objectives, how effective these steps have been, how they are tracking progress, and how they are adopting or adapting new ways of demonstrating progress. The Commissioner works directly with members of the public, with representatives from the private and voluntary sectors, and with the Children's Commissioner for Wales, amongst others.<sup>92</sup>

91 Future Generations Commissioner for Wales (2018), *Well-being in Wales: The journey so far*.

92 Ibid.

89 UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and the Environment (2018), op. cit.

90 OHCHR (2017), op.cit.; UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and the Environment (2018), op. cit.; UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (2017), op. cit.



## SECTION 6

# Examples of good practice

This section contains a brief analysis of different types of national policies and strategies that have been identified as 'good practice' models of child-sensitive climate policies, containing and/or guided by many of the principles, standards and elements set out in previous sections.

## Republic of Fiji: National Adaptation Plan<sup>93</sup>

✓	PRINCIPLE 2: Rights-based
✓	PRINCIPLE 3: Holistic and multi-sectoral
✓	PRINCIPLE 4: Inclusive
✓	Strong enabling environment in terms of political mandate, commitment to capacity-building and awareness-raising
✓	Incorporates child-sensitive measures and supportive tools/processes

<sup>93</sup> Republic of Fiji National Adaptation Plan (2018)

## **Content and approach**

While almost all National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) contain references to children and/or young people in the context of challenges and potential adaptation strategies, the NAP of Fiji stands out insofar as it commits to **operationalise a gender and human rights-based approach** to climate change adaptation planning, including explicit recognition of the rights of children and future generations to a clean and healthy environment and the principle of intergenerational equity. By formally linking these commitments to Fiji's Constitution (2013), which guarantees the "right to a clean and healthy environment, which includes the right to have the natural world protected for the benefit of present and future generations through legislative and other measures", the document adds significant depth and strength to child and youth-related measures contained in the NAP. These rights are used as criteria to assess the validity of prioritized actions and are expected to be integrated within every component of NAP processes and by all entities involved in implementation, execution, monitoring and evaluation.

The NAP focuses in particular on the **context-specific needs** of "low-income and otherwise disadvantaged groups". Importantly, these groups are explicitly identified as children, people with disabilities, elderly, women, and the LGBTQ community. The NAP also recognizes that members of these groups must be identified as "active agents of change", and mandates planning processes "which proactively empower and support disadvantaged groups to be able to assert their rights".

The NAP sets out **specific child-sensitive measures** with respect to needs assessments and action plans, health and protection measures in the context of extreme weather events and climate-sensitive diseases. The adaptation plan also refers to empowerment and awareness-raising for youth, building the resilience of school infrastructure, and places "great emphasis" on the need to update formal and non-formal educational curriculums, including the review and updating of primary, secondary, tertiary and vocational education curricula "that allow and encourage students to participate in research and risk reduction activities in their local area".

In addition, **particular tools and processes are identified as necessary for operationalizing a gender and rights-based approach**, including: institutional capacity assessments and resources for awareness training to national and subnational government representatives to support mainstreaming of this approach; institutional arrangements that are responsive to vulnerable groups' needs (such as "gender-sensitive standard operating procedures"); sex- and age-disaggregated data and responsive reporting; needs assessments and action plans which place particular focus on vulnerable groups, "especially women and children"; and participatory and gender-responsive budgeting.

The NAP was the result of a **comprehensive process of consultation**, including a dedicated event for youth, facilitated by the Ministry of Youth and Sports. Participants were invited to assist in prioritizing actions across various thematic workshops. A final validation workshop, including participation from many youth groups, subsequently took place, including senior-level officials with the authority to make changes 'there and then' on the draft, enabling participants to feel that their voices were genuinely heard.

Key recommendations emerging from this process, which were taken up within the NAP, included the need to formally identify "low-income and otherwise disadvantaged groups", in order to provide a strong policy basis for those groups to demand their rights to contribute to the NAP process and implementation.<sup>94</sup>

## **Enabling/hindering factors:**

- The NAP set outs that it serves to support the fulfilment of the Bill of Rights within the 2013 National Constitution of the Republic of Fiji, providing the strongest possible mandate for its implementation.
- The NAP was formulated following a comprehensive 'stock-taking' process, in which commitments and actions in all national policies were analysed in order to map synergies and priorities aligning with climate change action. This helped to identify opportunities for policy coherence between the NAP, commitments under the Sendai and SDG frameworks, and human rights commitments, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

94 Interview with Dr Adrian Fenton, author of Fiji NAP, August 2019.

- The Ministry of Planning was responsible for coordination of the NAP formulation process, in **recognition of the cross-cutting nature of climate change across sectors**. This was identified as a major factor in its success in facilitating wide participation and consultation among all relevant government entities and stakeholders, helping to achieve greater legitimacy and ownership. In particular, the Ministry of Education was highly engaged in the process, particularly with respect to actions related to climate change awareness and knowledge.
- **Barriers** to integrating a stronger focus on children's rights were identified as: lack of strong international pressure on this agenda (in contrast to gender issues, for example); lack — or the low capacity — of experts on children's rights in the country to engage more fully with the process; and failure to explicitly consult younger children, representing a major gap due to funding constraints.<sup>95</sup> It is expected that the communication strategy for the NAP, currently under development, will incorporate a focus on outreach in schools.

## Government of Kiribati: Nationally Determined Contribution

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>PRINCIPLE 1:</b> Ambitious and urgent
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>PRINCIPLE 3:</b> Holistic and multi-sectoral
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Strong enabling environment in terms of high-level leadership, commitment to capacity-building, awareness-raising and participation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Incorporates child-sensitive measures and supportive tools/processes

### Content and approach

Despite being one of the smallest emitters (representing just 0.0002 per cent of global emissions), and an LDC Small Island Developing State, Kiribati's NDC sets out both mitigation and adaptation targets, and notes that the country has already undertaken significant efforts to reduce fossil fuel imports and increase domestic renewable energy use. Many of the anticipated interventions with respect to mitigation have highly relevant social co-benefits for children, including provision of solar lighting on rural islands, and ambitious plans to increase renewable energy by between 40 and 100 per cent for rural public infrastructure and institutions, including hospitals, schools and households, and to install a solar water desalination plant for vulnerable rural communities (conditional on funding).

In terms of adaptation, Kiribati notes that “**adaptation is not an option – but rather a matter of survival**”, acknowledging that the effects of climate change “are felt first and most acutely by vulnerable and marginalized populations, including women, children, youth, people with disabilities, minorities, the elderly and the urban poor.” In addition, the NDC notes that **violence against women and children is a widespread issue within Kiribati society, and that this can be exacerbated in times of disasters** when social protection systems are weakened. The NDC recognizes that climate variability, climate change and disaster risks affect all socioeconomic sectors.

Furthermore, the NDC notes that the new Kiribati Integrated Environment Policy encourages all government programmes to collect, manage and use environmental data in order to strengthen resilience to climate change and disasters, leaving open the possibility of collecting age- and sex-disaggregated data on areas particularly at risk, and socioeconomic vulnerabilities.

The NDC sets out that the Government is undertaking significant efforts **to pursue a ‘whole-of-nation’ approach with respect to adaptation policies and planning**. Climate change and disaster risk issues are

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

addressed in the Kiribati Development Plan, as well as policies and strategies related to population, water and sanitation, health and the environment. Similarly, disaster risk management is being incorporated in policies and plans related to various sectors, including education and youth.

The NDC outlines 12 strategies identified in the Kiribati Joint Implementation Plan on Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management (KJIP), which defines the country's priority adaptation measures to address current and ongoing risks from climate change. These include measures to **increase water and food security, strengthen health-service delivery, deliver appropriate education, training and awareness programmes, strengthen early warning systems, promote renewable energy sources and energy efficiency, and enhance the participation and resilience of vulnerable groups**. Each strategy is accompanied by a detailed strategic plan containing key actions, sub-actions, outcomes and performance indicators, lead and support agencies, and "all strategies and actions in the KJIP are inclusive of vulnerable groups, considering gender, youth and children, the elderly and people with disabilities." The NDC subsequently sets out a breakdown of the budget required to implement each of the specific KJIP strategies.

#### **Enabling/hindering factors**

- Coordination of climate change issues among relevant sectors and organizations, as well as capacity-building and awareness-raising, are hosted at the highest possible political level, through a dedicated policy coordination body hosted in the Office of the President.
- The NDC acknowledges that many laws do not take sustainable management concerns, climate change projections and disaster risk into account, and that the Government is seeking to harmonise legislation.
- The NDC underlines the importance of **engaging the widest possible circle of stakeholders** as a cross-cutting priority for climate policymaking, including civil society and the private sector.
- An emphasis is placed on the importance of adaptation mainstreaming that is led by communities. The Government accordingly commits to establish institutional structures and capacities at the community level to support country-wide implementation of community-based vulnerability mapping and adaptation planning, design and implementation of priority resilience measures.

## **Government of Zimbabwe: National Climate Change Response Strategy**

✓	<b>PRINCIPLE 2:</b> Rights-based
✓	<b>PRINCIPLE 3:</b> Holistic and multi-sectoral
✓	<b>PRINCIPLE 4:</b> Inclusive
✓	Good enabling environment in terms of high-level leadership, commitment to intersectoral coordination and policy coherence
✓	Incorporates detailed child-sensitive measures and supportive tools/processes

#### **Content and approach**

The key central documents governing Zimbabwe's climate change policy framework are the National Climate Change Response Strategy (NCCRS), adopted in 2014, and the subsequent 2017 National Climate Policy, intended to provide an enabling policy environment for implementation of the Strategy. The Strategy sets out a comprehensive and strategic approach with respect to risks, impacts, challenges and mainstreaming specific mitigation and adaptation interventions across key sectors. It is accompanied by a detailed Action

Plan, complete with timeframes for delivery, lead and cooperating agencies, potential sources for resource mobilization and a breakdown of estimated costs. Both the Strategy and its Action Plan were generated through extensive consultation with stakeholders, including children and youth.

The Strategy incorporates a **specific and cross-cutting strategic focus on children and youth**, outlined in one of twelve strategic objectives, to “mainstream gender, children and youth, people living with HIV/AIDS and other vulnerable groups into all climate change interventions.” This is further elaborated as a commitment to:

- a. “Understand the impacts of climate change on children and youth in Zimbabwe and to create an enabling environment that protects them from harm; and
- b. Ensure the inclusion of children and youth in the policy formulation process for climate change, and in adaptation and mitigation activities.”

Consideration of the impacts of climate change on children and youth are integrated throughout the strategy, including in **sector-specific analysis and proposed actions**, particularly in relation to energy, natural resources, health, education. A dedicated section on children and youth explores their increased risk to disease, under-nutrition, water scarcity, disasters, and the collapse of public services and infrastructure linked to climate change. It also **recognizes children’s right to participate in decisions** that affect them and calls for children and youth to be **recognized as key actors on the climate change agenda**, rather than as passive observers or victims.

Furthermore, the Strategy calls for **children’s issues to be mainstreamed** in climate change responses, and for children to be put “at the forefront of national climate change adaptation policies and programmes” in particular, including the need to consider young people’s views to ensure climate action which takes account of different children’s needs and stages of development. Finally, it outlines that children and youth must have access to information to support their understanding of climate change and “its impact on their rights, opportunities and responsibilities.”

**Specific child-sensitive measures** that are identified in the Strategy and Action Plan include:

- Strengthening and mainstreaming climate change education at all levels, including through new and updated education curricula from early childhood level through to secondary school, updated tertiary education sector materials, and in-service training for teachers;
- Calls to establish fora and materials for informal education, to reach out-of-school youths and other vulnerable children not reached by formal education, including materials based on indigenous knowledge and translated into local languages;
- Support to ensure all children are food secure and able to attend and complete schools, and reduce the incidence of disease in children associated with climate change;
- Incorporating children and youth in the climate change governance frameworks;
- Promoting the participation of children and youth in climate policy issues;
- Building the capacity of children and youth for adaptation, and providing resources for their participation in both adaptation and mitigation activities; and
- A total of USD 32 million in estimated costs to implement child- and youth-focused targets in the Action Plan.

The Strategy defines **multi-stakeholder engagement as central to its formulation** and implementation. Extensive consultations were facilitated by the University of Zimbabwe’s Institute of Environmental Studies (IES), which led formulation of the Strategy, under the authority of the Ministry of Environment, Water and Climate (MoEWC).

To support this process, and at the request of the MoEWC, UNICEF Zimbabwe supported one of the first-ever studies in Zimbabwe to assess the impact of climate change and variability on children in the country. The **study solicited the views, knowledge and experiences of more than 1,000 primary and secondary school children across all 10 districts of the country on the impacts of climate change, and how their perspectives and needs should be incorporated into climate change policies, strategies and plans at all levels.** Responses were received through questionnaires and focus group discussions. Youth from all areas of the country were also consulted through a dedicated workshop attended by 43 participants representing 30 different youth organizations, facilitated by the Ministry of Youth and UNICEF.

According to IES, consultation with children and youth was critical for integrating a strong focus on their needs and perspectives, as the initial draft Strategy was much weaker in this respect.

The Action Plan, including **child-focused targets**, provides a clear basis for monitoring and evaluation, although detailed performance indicators have not been elaborated. More broadly, the Strategy underlines that monitoring and evaluation is essential to ensure that implementation is proceeding as planned. In particular, it notes that communities must be involved in monitoring and evaluation of climate interventions. The Strategy sets out recommendations for the MoEWC's Department of Climate Change Management to conduct periodic reviews, and suggests that each line Ministry establish a monitoring and evaluation system to track climate change projects and provide inputs to this reporting. The NCCRS also calls for Zimbabwe's National Statistical Agency, ZIMSTAT, to play a role as a source of socioeconomic analysis and central repository of climate information. Finally, the Strategy calls for ongoing research to inform policy and action, to be guided and overseen by a Technical Monitoring Committee, which would ensure that findings inform decision-making and are communicated to stakeholders such as civil society organizations.

#### **Enabling/hindering factors:**

- The process of formulating the NCCRS was established with the **highest possible level of political support from the Office of the President and Cabinet**. A National Task Team on Climate Change was established, based on recognition of climate change as a multi-disciplinary and cross-sectoral issue requiring a harmonised approach and coordination among sector ministries.
- Nonetheless, the Strategy acknowledges challenges in coordination and complementarity between several institutions, laws and policies of relevance for climate change governance, and calls for more coherence.
- The Strategy's Guiding Principles explicitly call for alignment between the Strategy and Zimbabwe's international obligations and commitments, as well as the **mainstreaming of a human rights-based approach and sustainable development**, access to information, participation and engagement of all stakeholders, and the precautionary principle. Taken together, these principles provide a very strong basis for coherence with Zimbabwe's child rights obligations under the UN CRC.
- On the other hand, the Strategy acknowledges that while Zimbabwe has sound policy frameworks providing for the protection and rights of children and youth, these policies do not sufficiently recognize or address climate change. It calls for the National Youth Policy to support children and young people to direct their "energy and enthusiasm" in climate change mitigation and adaptation activities.



“

“We might not have votes, but we certainly have a voice.”

## SECTION 7

# The way forward

This report sets out the first comprehensive analysis of the degree to which children and children’s rights are integrated into core national climate policies and finds that countries are falling far short of what is required. A lack of guidance, tools and sustained advocacy for child-sensitive climate policymaking has contributed to children being left out of climate policy. But as political attention to the demands and voices of children and youth increases, there is an opportunity — and indeed a moral and legal obligation — for decision-makers to address this glaring gap. The key principles and approaches identified in this paper can inform decision-makers and other key actors involved in climate policy processes on the steps required, contributing to urgent efforts to tackle the climate crisis and ensuring that no child is left behind.

Australian child human rights defenders and environmental activists meeting with the Committee on the Rights of the Child.



# Criteria for child-sensitive climate policies

## **Principles: 1. Ambitious and urgent, 2. Rights-based, 3. Holistic and multi-sectoral, 4. Inclusive**



### KEY CRITERIA

Is the ambition of the policy aligned with the Paris Agreement target of limiting warming to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels?

Does the policy also contain a focus on urgent and ambitious adaptation measures?

Is the private sector adequately regulated to prevent climate-related harm to children?

Does the climate policy explicitly address children and youth?

How is this reference expressed?

- Limited to descriptive/superficial reference, e.g. in the introduction or national context sections?
- As a vulnerable group, as beneficiaries, as stakeholders, as rights-holders?
- In relation to specific measures in one or more areas (e.g. mitigation, adaptation, capacity-building)?
- As a cross-cutting policy priority?

Are particularly marginalized and disadvantaged children considered and prioritized?

Does the policy address priorities/sector-based interventions that are most material to children's needs and rights?

- Have the social co-benefits of mitigation measures for children been identified?
- Are adaptation measures focused on building children's resilience?

Does the policy commit to consult and act on children's views in climate change planning, implementation and monitoring and evaluation, and set out a process/mechanism for this? Are particular efforts made to engage children most affected, with consideration for children of different ages, gender and social background?

## Enabling environment



### KEY CRITERIA

Is there political support and high-level leadership for the full implementation of the policy, and children's stake in this?

Are efforts made to ensure coherence between national policies and strategies addressing climate change, sustainable development, disaster risk reduction and children's rights?

Has a dedicated institutional body/mechanism on climate change been established for cross-sectoral coordination and implementation?

- Are institutions and policy-makers responsible for children and youth part of this body?

Are climate policy-makers aware of the linkages between child rights and climate change?

- Are provisions and resources in place for sensitization and capacity-building to underpin child-sensitive policymaking?
- Are key external stakeholders, including civil society, child rights experts and community-based organisations routinely consulted and provided with opportunities to participate in climate-related policymaking?

Is quality formal and/or informal environmental education on climate change in place for children?

Is there a high level of public awareness on climate change issues and impacts on vulnerable groups more broadly?

Is UNICEF and/or other child-focused organizations active and engaged in national discussions on climate change?

Is funding available and allocated for child-sensitive measures?

- Are child-sensitive criteria applied to funding decisions?
- Are resources available to cover costs of 'child-screening' climate plans and measures and 'climate-screening' of child-focused policies/plans?
- Is funding available to facilitate child-sensitive implementation, monitoring and evaluation?
- Is funding available for community-led climate initiatives, with a dedicated focus on children?

## Measurement, targets and impact



### KEY CRITERIA

Has disaggregated data based on age, sex and other socioeconomic characteristics informed the climate policy, and/or are provisions in place to collect and use such data for child-sensitive climate planning, e.g. climate vulnerability assessments?

Has a child impact assessment informed the climate policy?

- If not, did an environmental and/or social impact assessment incorporate consideration of children?
- Are provisions in place for climate-related plans and initiatives to be screened through a child-sensitive lens, and modified if required?

Does the policy contain child-sensitive targets and performance indicators, and/or make these a requirement for subsequent strategies/plans?

Does the policy establish, or is it accompanied by, child-sensitive monitoring and reporting systems to track the resilience and well-being of children?

Does the policy set out, or is it accompanied by, measures to raise awareness among children and other key stakeholders of the policy's goals, plans and progress, as well as opportunities and their rights to participate?

Does the policy integrate, or does it foresee, child-friendly complaints procedures/mechanisms for national/sub-national policies and plans?

Are supportive legislative frameworks in place?

- Does the national Constitution/legislation enshrine the right to a healthy environment and/or the rights of future generations?
- Has the country ratified the Optional Protocol to the UN CRC on a communications procedure?

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