

Call for inputs

“Protection of the Rights of the Child and 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”

Deadline 17 October 2016

Your contributions are invited for the report of the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) on the protection of the rights of the child in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

In formulating your inputs, you are invited to consider, as appropriate, the following questions:

1. What key lessons learned from the experience of implementing the Millennium Development Goals should be taken into account to ensure that the rights of the child are protected in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?
 - a. **Too many children are left behind:** while substantial gains were made in realizing the rights of the child in the implementation of MDGs. In [“Fragile States and Post-2015 Development: The Need for Resilience Architecture in the Face of MDG Failure,”](#) Papoulidis points at the failure of the implementation of the MDGs in fragile contexts. “Extreme poverty doubled in fragile states in just five years between 2005 and 2010, and not a single Millennium Development Goal (MDG) has been achieved in low income and conflict affected context.”

ECLT’s experience working in agricultural communities confirms this point and shows that too many children remain ‘invisible’. These include stateless children, children affected by disasters, children of tenant farmers, displaced children/ children on the move and those who cannot attend school due to poverty, disease, lack of registration documents and legal status.

These situations in fragile contexts can challenge a basic assumption of the UNCRC – that the State, as signatory to the convention is positioned as the primary guarantor of the rights and well-being of young people.

- b. **The private sector is part of the solution:** There is a critical role which needs to be played by all actors— states, business and civil society—to abide by human rights frameworks, without which there cannot be inclusive growth. Community members and children themselves interface with business everyday – as workers or as consumers.

It is ECLT’s experience is that the business sector can and wants to contribute to the realization of children’s rights. Engaging business in promoting children’s rights, however, requires governments and civil society to build trusting relationships with the private sector. Opportunities for private sector engagement and active participation need to be clear and developed in an inclusive manner.

- c. **Focus on quality of education:** The focus on free and compulsory basic education during the MDGs was important for the advancement of children’s rights in developing countries. However, it was not matched by increased investments in school infrastructure (e.g. toilets, classrooms), teacher training and educational materials. As a

result, too many children drop out of school or continue to receive poor quality education. Going forward, therefore, a systematic approach to education is required so that gains in one indicator (e.g. increased enrolments) are not negated by losses in another (e.g. poor retention). For instance, ECLT Foundation worked with communities in tobacco growing areas of Malawi to increase school enrolment as a way to address child labour. Average attendance rates in schools in the targeted schools increased from 66% to 92%. However, this resulted in the average number of pupils per classroom deteriorating from 1:115 to 1:128, potentially leading to absenteeism and poor quality of education. See [ECLT Foundation Good Practices in Eliminating Child Labour in Tobacco Growing](#) for more examples.

2. What approaches to implementing the 2030 Agenda would ensure the protection of the rights of all children, and that no child is left behind? Please define your response in relation to the following areas:

a. Equality and non-discrimination

- free and compulsory education policies accompanied by increased investment in education infrastructure, teacher training and learning materials, especially in hard-to-reach areas in agricultural communities
- specific needs of girls need to be taken into account to achieve gender equality. For example, proper sanitation facilities and access to water can often increase girls' access to education by addressing issues of girls not attending school during menstruation or not attending because of responsibilities to provide water to the family
- promote inclusive education
- Incentivise qualified teachers to relocate to rural schools

b. Investing in children

Governments in developing countries often lack the resources or capacity to sustain the gains made by donors and civil society through project work. Cognizant of this, ECLT suggests community-based approaches that empower families, especially mothers, to pool resources and invest in their children on a sustainable basis. ECLT Foundation has successfully implemented Village Savings and Loans Associations in resource-constrained communities, for example. The improved access to finance enables families to send children to school, buy food and clothes for children and meet the cost of education. See [ECLT Foundation Good Practices in Eliminating Child Labour in Tobacco Growing](#) for more examples.

c. Partnerships for implementation

- Promote multi-stakeholder partnerships (e.g. unions, business, civil society, farmers and governments) that address child rights in supply chains. For example, the ECLT Foundation has seen concrete benefits from tripartite social dialogue at national-level to support the development and implementation of National Action Plans on child labour. Involving public, private and civil sectors in planning and implementation phases encourages buy-in at all levels and promotes effective and inclusive action.
- Engage business to establish, implement, monitor and account plans to address and prevent child labour in supply chains.

- Promote shared value initiatives in the informal economy: Poor prices paid for agricultural commodities are often cited as one of the reasons why families and children in developing countries are caught up in a cycle of poverty. In agriculture, for example, shared value initiatives include deliberate targeting of smallholder farmers in the procurement practices of agribusiness firms, transparent contracts, as well as principles and commitments by agribusinesses not to pay below the cost of production.
- d. Accountability and monitoring
- Promote the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs) approach among business. The UNGPs require businesses to have (1) a policy commitment to respect human rights; (2) conduct due diligence in their supply chains; and (3) where adverse impacts occur, to provide for or cooperate in remediation. The ECLT Foundation has done this through the Members Pledge of Commitment, signed in December 2014. Members of the ECLT Foundation signed a shared [Pledge of Commitment and Minimum Requirements](#) on combatting child labour. The ECLT Foundation members comprise a large percentage of the world's tobacco-sourcing supply chain. The Pledge affirms, "ECLT Foundation Board Members respect and recognize the principles and rights enshrined in the International Labour Organization (ILO) Conventions and Recommendations on child labour". The Pledge further affirms a sector-wide commitment to uphold robust policy on child labour, minimum requirements on tackling child labour, and implementation consistent with the United Nations (UN) Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, based on the Ruggie 'Protect, Respect, and Remedy' Framework.
 - Promote multi-stakeholder partnerships (e.g. unions, business, civil society, farmers and governments) that address child rights in supply chains
 - Find concrete ways for private sector to contribute to respect for human rights, since they are perhaps less traditional actors and do not have a blue print on how to engage on human rights issues in supply chains. For example, a [number of countries have developed or are developing national action plans](#) on business and human rights. Such an approach can help the business sector to anchor their efforts in the national context.
- e. Other relevant considerations