United Nations Human Rights Council
34th Session
1st March 2017
Interactive Dialogue with the Independent Expert on Foreign Debt

Joint oral statement by Save the Children, Defence for Children International (DCI), Eurochild and Geneva Infant Feeding Association (GIFA)

Mr. President,

This statement is made on behalf of Save the Children, Defence for Children International (DCI), Eurochild, and the Geneva Infant Feeding Association (GIFA) in response to the report of the Independent Expert on the effects of foreign debt on his mission to the institutions of the European Union in 2016.

The report highlights that too often austerity policies have "gone hand-in-hand with undermining economic, social and cultural rights" resulting in growing wealth and income inequalities across and within the EU member states.

Children have paid a high price as a result of austerity measures: today, a child out of four in the European Union is at risk of poverty or social exclusion.

We call on Member States to uphold the rights of the child and the 2030 Agenda "Leave No One Behind Pledge" to ensure that no child is left behind even in the face of a financial crisis or in its aftermath.

We would also like to remind Member States of HRC resolution 28/19 on 'Towards better investment in the rights of the child' and the guidance of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child General Comment No.19 (2016) on public budgeting for the realisation of children's rights.

We therefore call on Member States and all global leaders to ensure fair financing, equal treatment and accountability to all children so that they have the opportunity to survive and learn, regardless of who they are or where they live.

In particular, we encourage EU Member States to:

- ensure adequate minimum income for families, above the relative poverty threshold
- increase support to children and families living in poverty through child-sensitive social protection and monitor the impact of national social protection interventions on children's wellbeing
- rebalance economic and social priorities within the European Semester

Thank you.