TASK FORCE ON JUSTICE
PATHFINDERS FOR PEACEFUL, JUST AND INCLUSIVE SOCIETIES

PATHFINDERS
FOR PEACEFUL, JUST AND INCLUSIVE SOCIETIES

Justice for Children
Justice for All

The Challenge to Achieve SDG16+

Responding to children's distinct needs, and realizing their full range of rights and opportunities, to achieve peaceful, just and inclusive societies for all.

OFFICE OF THE SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN
DEFENCE FOR CHILDREN INTERNATIONAL
DÉFENSE DES ENFANTS INTERNATIONAL
DEFENSA DE NIÑAS Y NIÑOS INTERNACIONAL
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CELCIS Centre for excellence for Children's Care and Protection
Inspiring Children's Futures
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The **Call** to **Action**

Leave no *child* behind

Roughly 1 in 3 people across the globe is a child[1]. Yet, while the sustainable development agenda pledges to *leave no one behind*, there is a stark gap when it comes to measuring, understanding, and - most critically - fulfilling this global ambition for children.

We must strive to ensure that, in our collective efforts to achieve the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), we leave no *child* behind.

Children are distinct from adults, and have specific needs, rights and capacities. Responding differently to children in the light of this distinctiveness, including engaging them as agents of change, is essential for the successful delivery of these global goals, for people of all ages.

In 2015, the SDGs, agreed by all nations, set out an ambitious vision to achieve justice for all by 2030.

They provide global coherence and momentum for realising children's human rights, as set out in the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (CRC) and other key international instruments, to ensure children experience the full benefits of justice.

The SDG 16 seeks to "*Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels*".[2]

Five years on, while significant progress has been made to conceptualise and quantify the different aspects of justice, and to monitor progress, it is apparent that one specific group has remained largely invisible: children. Consequently, unless particular attention is directed to children, as a global community we will fail to achieve the bold aim of *leaving no one behind*.

With a strategic vision that actively puts children at the centre, affirms human rights, and is aligned with the SDG agenda, the *Justice for Children Call to Action* is an international, multi-agency project and an essential part of our collective global challenge to achieve SDG 16. It has been commissioned by Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies[3], with the Task Force on Justice.

This *Justice for Children* project[4] is led by CELCIS - Inspiring Children's Futures at the University of Strathclyde; and developed and written with the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children; and the Child Justice Advocacy Group, coordinated by Terre des hommes and Defence for Children International. A Technical Working Group made up of global experts on justice for children has advised and richly informed this work.

1. UNICEF calculation, UN Population Division statistics, 2016: 30.9% of the global population is estimated to be under age 18, https://data.unicef.org/resources/state-worlds-children-2017-statistical-tables/; World Bank, 2017: 26% of the global population is estimated to be under age 14, and 42% aged under 25.

2. See https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg16

This is a *Call to Action* to fulfil our collective global commitment to ensure that all children live peaceful, just and inclusive lives, and are provided with the opportunity to flourish and live to their full potential.

This *Justice for Children Call to Action* offers a new starting point to place children at the heart of an emerging global movement for justice. It is:

- **Advancing a new understanding of justice**, not only aiming to overcome the challenges children face in accessing legal justice, but also promoting justice as an enabler of children's opportunities and development to their full potential.
- **Targeting critical decision makers**, drawing together a range of leaders whose effort and focus ultimately can realise children's human rights. In addition, we are also including—very importantly—those whose primary focus is **not** children, but whose decisions nevertheless have a crucial and significant impact on children's lives, whether directly or indirectly. The crucial role of sustained and focussed political commitment, and the securing of the necessary investment in the appropriate financial resources and skills, underpin these efforts.
- **Building on the growing momentum of national commitments.** There are strong synergies in working coherently alongside the SDG 16 global platforms (*Open Government Partnership; Global Partnership to End Violence against Children; Task Force for Justice Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Society*[3]) to support country-led commitments to deliver better outcomes for children, that will realise their rights, meet their needs and open up opportunities.
- **Sharply prioritising impact on children's outcomes**, this *Call to Action* is maintaining a focus on the end results for children, achieved through highly effective implementation channels to securing sustained change, and addressing our weaknesses to date in accelerating progress to realise the rights, needs and opportunities for children.

This *Justice for Children Call to Action* offers a new starting point to place children at the heart of an emerging global movement for justice.

3. The Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies are a group of member states, international organizations, global partnerships, and other partners committed to accelerating the delivery of the Agenda 2030 targets for peace, justice and inclusion (SDG16+).It is convened by the governments of Brazil, Sierra Leone, and Switzerland, with New York University's Center on International Cooperation.

4. For information on the Justice for Children Project please contact: iicf-enquiries@strath.ac.uk https://www.strath.ac.uk/humanities/inspiringchildrensfutures/globalopportunitytoensurejusticeforchildren/

Ensure justice in all its forms meets the rights, needs and opportunities of children

Children face particular challenges in living just and inclusive lives due to their age, maturity and status and because they are dependent on the care of adults and the communities around them.

Children differ from adults in their physical and psychological development, their emotional and educational needs[5], and their evolving capacities. Because children have these distinct needs, they need specialised approaches to fulfil their potential, determine their best interests and realise their rights.

Children can come into contact with the law and justice systems as victims, as witnesses, and when accused of an offence, as an interested party or because intervention is required for their care, protection, health and wellbeing. They require child-friendly and gender-sensitive justice systems that are specialised, meet their needs and ensure access to justice when their rights are violated. This is of greatest importance where children are unheard and for those who experience profound and sustained injustice.

Also, children benefit from justice systems when these are focussed not only on resolution, but on prevention and protection. With justice as prevention, there is greater scope for investment that delivers outcomes that matter to communities and societies, such as fewer and less serious disputes, lowered risk of violence in all its forms, and lowered risk of rights abuses. Prevention provides the platform for human development, impacting areas such as health, education and social protection, which play a pivotal role in delivering better outcomes for children[6].

Justice in all its forms includes criminal, civil and administrative justice, as well as economic, social and cultural justice. To ensure this justice, children need access to universal services such as education and health care, and a justice system adapted to the rights and needs of children to prevent harm, to claim their rights, to seek redress or to complain about the violation of their rights.[7] At the same time, children have a right to be empowered to contribute to, and participate in, justice systems and across all areas of their lives.

However, children do not consistently experience the justice to which they have a right. Children and their specific requirements are often hidden or made invisible by the adults around them. Due to their dependence on others, they often face challenges in accessing justice. Responding effectively to this dimension of inequality will be the only way to ensure in the Agenda 2030 that we *leave no child behind*.

With 30.9% of the global population estimated to be under age 18[8], children and young people account for a huge proportion of our population. Our success in the delivery of the global goals - that relate to all ages - will therefore heavily rely on responding effectively and robustly to the distinct needs and rights of children.

5. There are important references of relevance here incorporated in the CRC General Comment No. 14 (2013), on the right of the child to have his or her best interests taken as a primary consideration (art. 3, para. 1); and General Comment No. 10 (2007), Children's rights in juvenile justice, 'Best interests of the child' (art. 3).

6. New York University, Center on International Cooperation. Challenge Paper: Justice as Prevention. Background paper for the Task Force on Justice. https://cic.nyu.edu/challenge-paper-task-force-on-justice

7. Liefaard, T. (2019) Access to justice for children: towards a specific research and implementation agenda. The International Journal of Child Rights 27:2 https://brill.com/view/journals/chil/27/2/article-p195_195.xml

8. UNICEF calculation, UN Population Division statistics, 2016 at https://data.unicef.org/resources/state-worlds-children-2017-statistical-tables/; World Bank, 2017: 26% of the global population under age 14, and 42% aged under 25.

Respond to the call

Justice in all its forms includes criminal and civil justice, as well as economic, social and cultural justice.

The *Call to Action* is a chance to commit to a transformative agenda for this and future generations of children worldwide.

This *Call to Action* highlights the critical, collective and global Responses needed across Ten Challenges that are essential if the rights, needs and opportunities for children are to be addressed sufficiently to ensure we *leave no child behind* in our efforts to achieve the SDGs.

This *Call to Action* urges commitments from international, national and local political leaders, policymakers, and the deliverers of public services, as well as non-state actors to inspire, implement, sustain and monitor solutions that realise justice for children.

It calls for accelerated progress, through a focus on justice for children, towards securing children's human rights as set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and other key international instruments, with Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goal 16, providing global coherence and momentum.

This *Call to Action* is based on the *Justice for Children* background Challenge Paper[9] (June 2019), and is prompting sustained national commitments to achieve *justice for children* across the range of SDG16+ implementation efforts.

Seize the moment

In 2019, we mark the 30th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. There is no better time to demonstrate visionary political leadership, not only on behalf of those who are children today, but for the 1 billion individuals[10] who will be born between now and 2030: the children who will inherit a post-SDG world.

By setting this issue at the heart of the agenda in 2019, this *Call to Action* is an invitation to reconvene in 2020 for the 75th anniversary of the United Nations, and demonstrate that we, as a global community, are delivering on our promise to leave no one behind.

An endorsement to this *Call to Action* for *Justice for Children* is to demonstrate bold and visionary leadership today, to accelerate change for children now.

Our success in the delivery of the global goals will heavily rely on responding effectively and robustly to the distinct needs and rights of children.

9. Davidson, J.; Elsley, S.; Giraldi, M.; Goudie, A.; Hope, K.; Lyth, A.; Van Keirsbilck, B. (2019): Justice for Children, Justice for All: The Challenge to Achieve SDG16+ A background Challenge Paper. CELCIS-Inspiring Children's Futures. Glasgow: University of Strathclyde.

10. World Population Clock: 7.7 Billion People (2019) expected to grow to 8.6 billion by 2030: https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/#table-forecast

A **Call** to **Act:**

Respond to **Ten** Challenges

The Justice for Children *Call to Action* has identified Ten Challenges that need urgent attention and deliberately focussed responses at international, national and local level.

These encompass prevention efforts; the urgent challenges; and the foundations required to drive and sustain change.

Promote justice as an enabler of children's development

1. Guarantee the wellbeing and inclusion of all children.
2. Promote justice systems, whether formal or legally plural, that guarantee equal access, benefit, protection and support to children.
3. Prevent unnecessary contact with the justice system and the criminalisation of children.
4. Ensure the right to a legal identity for all children.

B Accelerate action to respond to the urgent and critical challenges

5. Prevent all forms of violence against children.

6. Safeguard the rights of children who have been recruited, used by or associated with armed and criminal groups, or who have been accused of national security-related offenses.

7. Eliminate arbitrary and unlawful detention and restrict the deprivation of children's liberty to exceptional circumstances.

C Establish and sustain the foundations for change

8. Promote and ensure the empowerment and participation of children in all decisions that affect their lives.

9. Secure sustained political commitment to accelerate the achievement of high-quality justice for children.

10. Ensure responses are based on international standards and evidence-based policies.

Promote justice as an enabler of children's development

Progressive policies, delivered through structured inter-agency collaboration, which strengthen the well-being of the family unit and parents in their care-giving role, and thereby the well-being of children, should be a priority, especially those that bring a self-sustaining and sustainable benefit to the family.

1 Guarantee the wellbeing and inclusion of all children.

The social exclusion and marginalisation of people, especially children and young people, denies their human rights and undermines their wellbeing and development, leading to more vulnerability in society. Despite many years of effort, major shortcomings and failures remain to be addressed: a large number of children and young people's rights and needs go unmet, and have negative experiences such as being abandoned, neglected, abused, exposed to substance misuse and living in marginal circumstances.

Children can be propelled into the justice system by violence at home, poverty, structural violence and risky survival activities. Children who come from poor, marginalised and socially excluded communities are the most affected, with children from ethnic and minority groups over-represented in the criminal justice system.[11]

Progressive policies, delivered through structured inter-agency collaboration, which strengthen the well-being of the family unit and parents in their care-giving role, and thereby the wellbeing of children, should be a priority, especially those that bring a self-sustaining and sustainable benefit to the family. In addition, while poverty remains entrenched, strengthening child and social protection systems is crucial, and can bring positive benefits for the family and the children.

The role of investment in education, health care, and family and community-strengthening programmes is pivotal in securing justice for children. When accorded a high priority, the benefits in both the short and long-term from these investments can be transformative in the lives of children. Over the long term, investing in children through prevention saves money and contributes to reducing poverty and social exclusion, and tackling the discrimination that children experience. This investment improves children's overall outcomes.

Response: Identify the policies, situations, practices and legislation that lead to - and those that can reduce the harm of, as well as eradicate - exclusion, discrimination and anti-social behaviour.

Effectively implement preventative and restorative strategies and programmes, across integrated systems that are, together, supporting children's health, wellbeing, and flourishing, and addressing child and family poverty, exclusion and discrimination.

2 Promote justice systems, whether formal or legally plural, that guarantee equal access, benefit, protection and support to children.

Formal justice systems are different across the world. In some countries, there are specialised justice systems that have been established for children. In other countries, or at an older age during childhood (under 18 years of age), children

11. OSRG VAC (2012) Prevention of and responses to violence against children within the juvenile justice system. https://violenceagainstchildren.un.org/sites/violenceagainstchildren.un.org/files/documents/publications/8._prevention_of_and_responses_to_violence_against_children_within_the_juvenile_justice_system.pdf

come into contact with adult systems that are rarely adapted to their specific needs and rights. Many countries are characterised by legal pluralism. In these countries, the overwhelming majority of children come into contact with justice mechanisms that lie outside of official, formal structures.

More needs to be known about informal justice systems and their decision-making in order to understand their role and how it can complement formal systems in accordance with children's rights[12]. In turn, formal justice systems need to ensure they also meet the rights and needs of children.

Response: Ensure that all systems, formal, semi-formal and informal, are child-friendly, gender-sensitive and rights-compliant.

Develop strategies that bring together the child rights, civil justice and criminal justice communities to facilitate multi-disciplinary approaches.

Make available legal assistance and representation for all children.

3 Prevent unnecessary contact with the justice system and the criminalisation of children.

Across the world, there are children who have contact with the justice system for alleged offenses that should not be regarded as crimes, including being kept in detention. This includes both status offences and allegations of being associated with armed groups or criminal gangs. Many children are held in administrative, preventive, military or prolonged pre-trial detention, without the guarantees of due process, and in violation of their rights as enshrined in the CRC and other international instruments.

The majority of young people's challenging behaviours can be resolved and addressed without the need for punitive intervention. Contact with the justice system and any consequent criminalisation and penalisation of children creates more problems than brings solutions.[13] Such policies bring children into a judicial system that damages them and pushes them potentially into more anti-social or criminal behaviour. Young people are more vulnerable to the negative psychological impacts of harsh punitive measures.[14]

Educational systems, health systems, alongside family and community strengthening efforts are key components of an integrated child justice system. Integrated child protection services which focus on the wellbeing of children and their families have the potential, along with other specialised approaches, to support children and help bring about changes in their behaviour, helping children to assume a constructive role in society which is in the interest of everyone.

Response: Review justice systems for children to identify areas where law, policies, systems and practice discriminate against, or do not meet, the rights of children.

Eliminate practices that drive unnecessary contact with the justice system.

Seek alternatives to arrest and promote non-custodial measures, including during the pre-trial stage, through diversion and restorative justice.

Prioritise reform in areas where children are involved in adult-based rather than child-centred justice systems.

The majority of young people's challenging behaviours can be resolved and addressed without the need for punitive intervention.

12. See, for example, the African Child Policy Forum. Spotlighting the Invisible - Justice for children in Africa (2018) https://app.box.com/s/qchz99m0x9q0iz378a95upnh57nxcu2m

13. For an in-depth, localised example, see: McAra, L., & McVie, S. (2010). Youth crime and justice: Key messages from the Edinburgh Study of Youth Transitions and Crime. Criminology & Criminal Justice, 10(2), 179–209. https://doi.org/10.1177/1748895809360971

14. Centre for Human Rights & Humanitarian Law, Protecting Children Against Torture in Detention: Global Solutions for a Global Problem. (Washington DC: Washington College of Law, American University, 2017).

Violence against children is preventable, and not inevitable

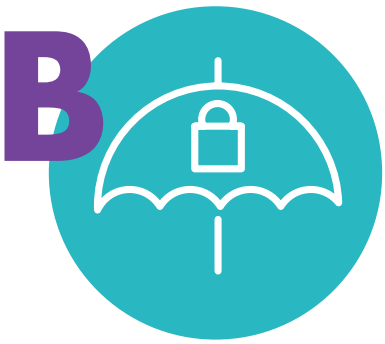
4 Ensure the right to a legal identity for all children.

Legal identity is fundamental to justice for children. Registering a child immediately after birth is the first step in recognizing a person's existence before the law. This is a prerequisite for being able to claim and exercise all other rights. It provides access to a nationality or at least is a key element to prevent statelessness. It plays a pivotal role for the achievement of social inclusion and economic empowerment, and for achieving many of the other SDGs. It is a fundamental and essential step towards ensuring that all individuals are equal before the law, can claim their rights and access the justice system, as well as other basic services such as health and education. Legal identity also supports unlocking equal access to social protection systems and economic opportunity amongst others.

In the context of justice, ensuring that all children have the necessary legal identity and status means that, at least legally, they are able to access mechanisms to enforce their rights. Without this, children face profound barriers in accessing justice.[15] This is a fundamental violation of their rights. Child migrants and refugees are particularly affected by barriers to access legal identity.[16]

Response: Establish and implement a national plan to strengthen civil registration systems to facilitate the process of birth registration immediately after birth, and access to other components of legal identity for all children, to ensure all children are registered and have a legal identity without discrimination.

Remove barriers to civil registration for migrant and refugee children and their families by both host and home States.



Accelerate action to respond to the urgent and critical challenges

5 Prevent all forms of violence against children.

Violence, abuse and neglect of children has long term implications, both for the individual child and society at large. Half of the world's children are victims of violence each year[17]. It is estimated that up to 1 billion children aged 2-17 years have experienced physical, sexual, or emotional violence or neglect in the past year.[18] Two in every five modern slaves are children.[19] However, violence against children is vastly under-reported and often met with a fragmented response or inaction.[20] When left unprotected, children are highly vulnerable to exploitation, abuse, and neglect. But violence against children is preventable, and not inevitable.

Response: Establish legislative and policy measures which ensure children have equal protection from violence under the law. This includes a comprehensive ban of all forms of violence against children, including corporal punishment, as well as adherence to basic human rights principles regarding relevant criminal and civil proceedings.

15. CRIN (2016) Rights, Remedies, Representation: Global Report on Access to Justice for Children. https://archive.crin.org/sites/default/files/crin_a2j_global_report_final_1.pdf

16. See the Global Compact For Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration https://refugeesmigrants.un.org/sites/default/files/180713_agreed_outcome_global_compact_for_migration.pdf

17. Susan Hillis, James Mercy, Adaugo Amobi, and Howard Kress, "Global Prevalence of Past year Violence Against Children: A Systematic Review and Minimum Estimates," Pediatrics. 2016;137(3):e20154079, accessed November 12, 2018, http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/pediatrics/137/3/e20154079.full.pdf

18. WHO https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/violence-against-children

19. International Labour Office, Global estimates of modern slavery: Forced labour and forced marriage. (Geneva: ILO and Walk Free Foundation, 2017).

20. UNICEF. Multi Country Study on the Drivers of Violence Affecting Children https://www.unicef-irc.org/research/violence-affecting-children/

Implement programmes which prevent violence, with a focus on children and including early interventions and support to families; on community and school-based interventions; and on addressing the causes of anti-social and criminal behaviour. Apply the comprehensive evidence-based strategies entitled INSPIRE[21] for the effective prevention of violence against children and to respond well to children who have experienced violence.

6 Safeguard the rights of children who have been recruited, used by or associated with armed and criminal groups, or who have been accused of national security-related offenses.

While the recruitment of children by armed groups and criminal gangs has a long history, the increased trend of children accused of national security-related offences is a more recent phenomenon that poses a new challenge to the rule of law.[22] Children can be treated primarily as victims while still being held accountable for their actions, rather than their associations, by following international standards and guidelines applicable to juvenile justice, armed conflict, and reintegration.[23]

There should be national commitments to treat all children as children, regardless of their associations and actions. These commitments should include avoiding taking actions which create grievances, which can make them vulnerable to re-recruitment or recidivism, which in turn has high costs for States.[24]

Response: Ensure children are viewed as children in these situations; end their criminalisation and demonisation; and focus on their protection, rehabilitation and reintegration in line with their rights under international law.

Put in place early prevention approaches and services to decrease children's vulnerability to such recruitment and re-recruitment, and address the drivers that make children vulnerable to these situations.

7 Eliminate arbitrary and unlawful detention and restrict the deprivation of children's liberty to exceptional circumstances.

Deprivation of liberty is one of the most harmful violations of children's fundamental human rights. In many places, its use is not only of concern but growing, with children being deprived of liberty in the context of migration, armed conflict or terrorism.[25] It occurs very often in harmful conditions, and with children detained with adults.

Depriving a child of their liberty impacts on their wellbeing and continues into adulthood. The negative consequences contribute to poor physical and mental health, lack of access to education, a high rate of recidivism, family breakdown and unemployment. These result in higher costs for the State in the long term.

Response: Drastically reduce the number of children deprived of liberty: Ensure that detention is only used as a matter of last resort, in exceptional circumstances and for the shortest possible period. In situations of immigration, do not detain children due to their immigration status.

The Global Study on Children Deprived of Liberty[26] will be presented to the United Nations General Assembly in October 2019. Its conclusions will be instructive in our efforts to realise justice for children.

21. WHO https://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/inspire/en/

22. See United Nations Security Council Resolution 2427, paragraph 20, http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/doc/2427 See for example: UN Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee https://www.un.org/sc/ctc/focus-areas/countering-violent-extremism/

23. See for example the CRC Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict (A/RES/54/263 of 25 May 2000) - https://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/OPACCRC.aspx; and Paris Principles and Guidelines on Children Associated with Armed Forces or Groups (2007) https://www.unicef.org/emerg/files/ParisPrinciples310107English.pdf See also: UN Secretary-General's note to the General Assembly, A/C.5/59/31.The integrated disarmament, demobilization and reintegration standards https://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/documents/cpr/documents/ddr/SG_Report_on_DDR_to_GA_s-60-705_March_2006.pdf

24. UNU. Cradled by Conflict: Child Involvement with Armed Groups in Contemporary Conflict https://collections.unu.edu/eserv/UNU:6409/Cradled_by_Conflict.pdf

25. See the United Nations Global Study- CHILDREN DEPRIVED OF LIBERTY. https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CRC/StudyChildrenDeprivedLiberty/Pages/Index.aspx

26. United Nations Global Study on Children Deprived of Liberty https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CRC/StudyChildrenDeprivedLiberty/Pages/Index.aspx

Establish and sustain the foundations for change

All forms of justice can be more effective if they are informed by children's views and experiences, and build on children's effective participation.

8 Promote and ensure the empowerment and participation of children in all decisions that affect their lives.

International law stipulates that children have the right to be heard and their views should be given "*due weight in accordance with the age and the maturity of the child*" (Article 12, CRC). Children in need of justice have specific requirements to be heard and their views should be taken into account in line with the CRC and other international treaties and guidelines. However, this commitment is not consistently built into justice systems. For example, at all stages, from encountering the police to the implementation of measures, including in institutions and custodial settings, children's views and experiences continue to be poorly heard across the world. Likewise, in civil justice decision-making, for children who are at risk of being, or unable to live with their parent(s), effectively determining the necessity of alternative care for that child, and their most suitable care option, relies on practitioners ensuring the views of the child are sought, heard and genuinely taken into account.[27] This is far from yet being the norm.[28]

Children accessing justice systems often do not have access to legal advice, representation and advocacy and over one quarter of courts fail to let children give evidence, a basic legal requirement, due to their age or because evidence from children is not given due weight in court proceedings.[29]

All forms of justice can better meet the rights of children and be more effective if they are informed by children's views and experiences, and build on children's effective participation.

Responses: Examine formal, semi-formal and informal justice systems to assess how children are empowered and able to meaningfully participate in line with international commitments.

Make available specialised and age-appropriate legal assistance and representation, especially trained to deal and communicate with children, for all children. Children should have active and meaningful roles in justice reform, particularly children who have been in contact with prevention and justice systems.

9 Secure sustained political commitment to accelerate the achievement of high-quality justice for children.

Every Government at national and local level requires sustained, high levels of political commitment to implement justice for children. This needs to be underpinned by the rigorous prioritisation

27. See the United Nations' Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/673583 and the application of the necessity/suitability principles in Moving Forward: Implementing the Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children http://www.alternativecareguidelines.org

28. EU (2018). Towards the Right Care for Children: Orientations for reforming alternative care systems Africa, Asia, Latin America. https://www.celcis.org/knowledge-bank/search-bank/towards-right-care-children/

29. CRIN (2016) Rights, Remedies, Representation: Global Report on Access to Justice for Children https://archive.crin.org/sites/default/files/un_a2j_global_report_final_1.pdf

of the financial and human resources necessary to resolve the prevailing challenges, as well as effective approaches to implementation. Without these prerequisites, progress towards securing justice for children is inhibited and delayed.

Highlighting the significant potential returns to investment in ensuring justice for children is critical in generating political support within States for both the overarching vision for reform and detailed change programmes. These returns accrue both directly to children as they benefit from leading lives to their full potential in a just society, and less directly from the net benefits that accrue to the wider community and nation. The latter are generated from the greater contribution of the children to society, and from the cost savings that result from the positive impact of greater justice on the demands of the child on society, and the reductions in service provisions to manage the impact of these injustices.

Response: Ensure that there is support and leadership from key decision-makers in government, primarily the Ministers for Justice, Finance, Education and Internal Affairs, as well as, naturally, the Minister for Children, or their equivalents, to implement justice for children.

Ensure that there is an awareness and understanding of the significant benefits and savings to wider society of investing in justice for children, as well as the direct benefits to the child.

Accord a high priority to prevention budgeting to reduce costs in the future and produce wide social, economic and environmental benefits.

Every Government at national and local level requires sustained, high levels of political commitment to implement justice for children.

10 Ensure responses are based on international standards and evidence-based policies.

The Agenda 2030 commitment to leave no one behind requires that children should be specifically included and identified in the way quantitative and qualitative data and evidence are gathered and used to improve justice for all, including children. The SDGs are particularly relevant for those people who are on the margins, overwhelmingly the position of children, because children are virtually invisible in the creation and functioning of justice systems.

Children and young people are heavily reliant on justice systems to protect and promote their rights, yet legal needs and victimization surveys are not designed to capture their justice needs, and other evidence suggests they face an even wider justice gap than adults.[30]

The justice gap needs to be measured in a way that consistently ensures a focus on children and ensures that justice systems and services meet international human rights standards.

Response: Methodically and strategically collect, analyse and use data and evidence to accelerate better policy identification and innovative changes that will make a positive difference for children. This should include data generated by, and with, children.

Promote and share strategies and indicators to measure success and outcomes on justice for children.

Develop new knowledge through research on effective approaches to preventing and responding to children in conflict with the law or in contact with the justice system.

30. The Taskforce for Justice Report, Justice for All (Chapter 1) explains the Justice Gap in detail. See https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/6c192f_f1e29f70bfed4f0580d6943332e377d0.pdf

The Plan for Delivering the Call: Creating the environment to achieve *Justice for Children*

The success of this *Call to Action* rests on securing national commitments, and implementing local change to achieve justice for children globally. It depends on decisions and actions in those countries, communities, families and between individuals to effect this change.

This *Call to Action* challenges us all to rethink our '*business as usual*' efforts and appeals to a wide range of actors to make decisions and act in ways that will more effectively achieve justice for children.

With aligned partnerships and coherence across our many efforts, we must galvanise leaders and other actors globally - including the international donor community of multilateral and non-government organisations and national governments - to implement solutions that realise *Justice for Children* in the following ways:

Inspiring others to take up the Vision:

- With the Pathfinders for Peace, Just and Inclusive Societies, embed the *Justice for Children* vision within the overarching global justice vision, as set out in Agenda 2030.
- Harness the Global Platforms by aligning *Justice for Children* with the existing platforms advancing Agenda 2030 and the UN SDGs, including the Task Force on Justice, the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children and the Open Government Partnership and work in partnership to deliver the vision.
- Pursue global, regional and national opportunities to drive forward the vision, strategy and priorities to deliver *Justice for Children*.

Galvanizing courage and leadership:

- Establish a *High Level Implementation Group* of global ambassadors and champions of *Justice for Children* to inspire global and national commitment and action, and to raise awareness more widely—especially across the range of institutions and actors that are not normally associated directly with delivering these priority outcomes for children, but which have a powerful, albeit less direct, impact on justice for children. They are essential to injecting sustained momentum into securing these outcomes.
- Support networks of children themselves working alongside the *High Level Implementation Group* as agents of change to inform the *High Level Implementation Group* and the wider project.

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Enabling real change for children:

- Facilitate conversations with leading global and regional organisations to explore the importance of *Justice for Children* to their interests and determine their role in delivery.
- Convene a series of regional and local roundtable events to disseminate to, and explore the implications of, the Call to Action with key policy-makers and delivery agents in those regions.
- Explore how to support national leaders in their pursuit of bedding in the *Justice for Children* vision in their national communities, and implementing quality nationally-tailored programmes.
- Working with and through others, secure commitment from national and local stakeholders to implement and monitor solutions that realise *Justice for Children*.

Learning together to get better:

- Collectively undertake activities that generate new knowledge, inspire political will and bring greater focus on each of the Ten Challenges and Responses.
- Convene partnerships to develop a clear framework to measure progress over time, based on concrete and quantified goals and actions, with meaningful indicators and data.
- Identify and tackle the real world obstacles and inhibitors of progress, and act to lessen their power on progress for *Justice for Children*.
- Explore with key national governments already engaged in taking forward the *Justice for Children* vision, their potential roles as Global Exemplars.
- Identify successful examples of practice in national and local settings and support their appropriately adapted implementation.

Explore how to support national leaders in their pursuit of bedding in the *Justice for Children* vision in their national communities, and implementing quality nationally-tailored programmes.

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www.InspiringChildrensFutures.org

https://justice.childhub.org/en/sdg16j4c

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