

# JOINING FORCES: CHILD RIGHTS NOW!

## 'A SECOND REVOLUTION' REPORT LAUNCH

### PRESS RELEASE

## LEADING CHILD RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS CALL FOR A SECOND REVOLUTION IN CHILD RIGHTS

THIRTY YEARS AFTER GLOBAL LEADERS ADOPTED THE CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD, MILLIONS OF CHILDREN LACK RIGHTS AND PROTECTIONS NEEDED TO THRIVE

**NEW YORK, 26 June 2019** – Thirty years after global leaders promised to protect the rights of all children, millions are not in school, face poverty, exploitation, violence, neglect, and abuse. A new report, *A Second Revolution: 30 years of child rights, and the unfinished agenda*, says it is time for the global community to fulfil the broken promises of the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child (UN CRC).

Produced by the Joining Forces Alliance — an alliance of the six leading child-focused organizations — the report makes the case for a new era of commitment for children. Alliance members assert that governments must take bold action to target the children who continue to suffer, often the result of discrimination based on gender identity, race, caste, religion, disability or sexual orientation.

“There has been remarkable progress for children since the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, but we cannot overlook the millions who have been left behind,” said Meg Gardinier, Chair of the Joining Forces CEO Oversight Committee. “It is the most vulnerable children the world overlooks – those facing extreme poverty, the young living in fragile states, refugees, and children with disabilities. When it comes to translating commitments into lasting change, we have fallen short and we must do better. This is a moral, legal and economic failure that the world can ill afford.”

Global statistics reflect the challenges that remain. Each year:

- Over 5 million children die from preventable causes, and nearly half of these deaths are attributable to undernutrition;
- 95,000 children a year – 70% of them boys – are murdered, and 15 million adolescent girls report experiencing forced sex;
- And 64 million children lack access to primary education.



The report highlights key factors that contribute to the gaps in progress, including a lack of investment in services that are critically important for children. For example, most countries fall well short on spending the 5-6% of GDP to ensure universal coverage of essential health care. And foreign aid, which many of the poorest countries rely on, is falling short in critical areas such as health and education.

Another factor is the lack of quality data. Governments tend to rely on data that reflects national averages, making it difficult to identify the needs of specific children and to monitor progress. Disaggregation of data by gender, age, disability and locality, is increasingly important as many rights violations are concentrated amongst disadvantaged groups of children.

The Joining Forces Alliance is calling on governments to embrace and act on all parts of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. This must include:

- Implementing legislation, policies, budgets, and programmes that are inclusive of all children;
- Promoting the rights of all marginalised children and championing gender equality;
- And supporting children's meaningful participation and upholding their rights to freedom of expression and opinion.

Giving children a real voice and listening to and heeding their views will be crucial for progress. Children are still widely treated as passive recipients of decisions taken by adults, despite that fact that children's right to participate is one of the core principles of the UN CRC. Barriers exist at every level of society, from a lack of recognition in law and policy; limited adult capacity to facilitate child participation in meaningful ways; and a lack of access to justice for children needing to challenge violations of their rights.

"Listen to us," said Lucia, a young person from Spain who was interviewed as part of the report process. "There are many people who think that when you are a child, your opinion will be ridiculous. Or that it doesn't make sense, or that it isn't worthy. Even if it's good. Because as you're a child, your opinion isn't worth it."

To read the full report and recommendations click here: <https://child-rights-now.org/>

## ENDS

'Joining Forces' is a collaboration between the six leading NGOs working with and for children under the age of 18 (ChildFund Alliance, Plan International, Save the Children International, SOS Children's Villages International, Terre des Hommes International Federation, and World Vision International). Joining Forces currently focuses on two work streams: Child Rights Now! of which this report is a part, and Ending Violence Against Children. Visit [child-rights-now.org](http://child-rights-now.org) for more.

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