



## Children's sector welcomes Government's human rights commitment

Media release

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Children's organisations have today welcomed the Government's decision to accept the majority of the recommendations affecting children made under New Zealand's third Universal Periodic Review (UPR).

Every four years New Zealand looks at how well human rights are protected, and engages with other countries, to identify where more needs to be done to make sure everyone nationwide enjoys their rights.

New Zealand's progress on human rights was reviewed under the UPR process for the third time last year and a raft of recommendations were made, many of which focussed on children's rights.

"The need for New Zealand to do more to ensure all children can enjoy their rights equally – especially tamariki Māori, Pasifika children and children with disabilities – were key themes to emerge from the UPR," says Andrea Jamison, Chairperson of Action for Children and Youth Aotearoa, one of the organisations who prepared a joint children's sector report to the UPR.

"That means all children in Aotearoa being listened to, respected and safe, growing up healthy and well, with equal opportunities to learn and play, amongst family and whānau and friends," says Andrea.

"It's about working together so all children can have good childhoods and teenage years."

Jeni Cartwright, spokesperson for Child Poverty Action Group, says it is vital that income adequacy is recognised as a right of the child in New Zealand, and for policy settings in every sector to reflect this.

“The New Zealand Government has committed to prioritising wellbeing for all, including children, but there is much work to be done to address inequities that result in barriers for many children in accessing adequate healthcare, housing, education and nutrition,” says Jeni.

“We know that reducing poverty and ensuring all children have an adequate standard of living is central to realising their rights to be well, to good healthcare, to education and to know and be cared for by their families.

“The UPR is an important opportunity to reflect on how well we are doing. What needs to continue is concerted effort to not just accept but to address the recommendations made, so that every child has the best opportunity to thrive.

Trish Grant, IHC Director of Advocacy says the UPR process has clearly recognised children with disability as part of the community of all children, with human rights as both children and as people with disability.

“We are especially pleased to see the government accept recommendations on the rights of children with disabilities to quality inclusive education and to increase the provision of reasonable accommodation in primary and secondary schools in line with international standards,” says Trish.

Heidi Coetzee, Chief Executive Save the Children NZ says it’s time now to see some real progress and she’s hopeful that by UPR4 many of the issues of the past will have started to be addressed.

“Every child in New Zealand deserves the right to be happy and safe and to have access to quality education, nutritious food and a healthy home,” says Heidi.

## **ENDS**

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## **About the Children's Rights Report – UPR3**

The [Children's Rights Report for UPR3](#) was prepared by Action for Children and Youth Aotearoa, Child Poverty Action Group, Save the Children NZ, and IHC in consultation with a wide range of civil society organisations and individuals. It is based primarily on the United Nations Convention on

the Rights of the Child (UNCROC), particularly the 2016 Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child.

*Action for Children and Youth Aotearoa (ACYA)* is the coalition of non-governmental organisations that co-ordinates reporting on children's rights under UNCROC and other international human rights instruments. ACYA is New Zealand's UNCROC country focal point.

*IHC* advocates for the rights, inclusion and welfare of all people with intellectual disabilities and supports them to live satisfying lives in their communities.

*Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG)* is an independent charity working to eliminate child poverty in New Zealand through research, education and advocacy. Through research, CPAG highlights the position of tens of thousands of New Zealand children living in poverty and promotes public policies that address the underlying causes of that poverty and its impact on children's economic, social and cultural rights.

*Save the Children NZ* is a non-governmental organisation working to give children a healthy start in life, the opportunity to learn and protection from harm.