

Lapset huomioitava YK:n koronatoimissa

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Pelastakaa Lapset ry:n, Plan International Suomen ja Suomen UNICEFin yhteinen kannanotto Suomen valtiojohdolle YK:n yleiskokouksen korona-pandemiaa käsittelevää korkean tason erikoiskokousta varten

YK:n yleiskokouksen erikoiskokous 3.–4.12.2020 käsittelee COVID-19-kriisin vaikutuksia ja etsii yhteisiä ratkaisuja siitä selviytymiseksi. Suomi on kuluneiden kuukausien aikana ollut aktiivinen koronapandemian hillitsemisessä sekä kriisin negatiivisten vaikutusten ehkäisemisessä ja ratkaisemisessa maailmalla mm. kanavoimalla tukea monenkeskisten toimijoiden ja kansalaisjärjestöjen kautta. On tärkeää, että Suomi ottaa osaa tulevaan YK-kokoukseen, ja ihmisoikeusperustaisuuden puolustajana **pitää esillä maiden ja ihmisten välistä yhdenvertaisuutta kansainvälisen yhteisön koronatoimia suunniteltaessa.**

COVID-19-kriisi vaikuttaa lapsiin erityisen voimakkaasti. Lasten ja nuorten köyhyys lisääntyy, eriarvoisuus on kasvussa, lapsikuolleisuus on lisääntymässä, ja pandemia on heikentänyt terveys-, koulutus- ja lastensuojelupalveluiden tarjontaa. Myönteinen kehitys YK:n kestävän kehityksen lapsia koskevien tavoitteiden saavuttamiseksi on kääntymässä käännteiseksi. Valtioiden tekemät talouden elvytystoimet uhkaavat kehitysrahoituksen investointeja lapsiin ja nuoriin.

Siksi näin kokouksen alla muistutamme [Protect our Children](#) -lupauksesta, jossa 172 valtiota – mukaan lukien Suomi – keväällä 2020 sitoutuivat maailman lasten suojelemiseen koronapandemian keskellä ja sen jälkeen.

Olemme täsmentäneet nämä lupaukset *kuuden kohdan suunnitelmaksi lasten suojelemiseksi*. Nämä kuusi kohtaa ovat linjassa Suomen köyhyyden ja eriarvoisuuden poistamista ja kestävän kehityksen edistämistä koskevien kehityspoliittisten tavoitteiden kanssa:

- 1) Varmistetaan oppimisen jatkuminen jokaisen lapsen kohdalla, ja estetään digitalisoitumisen aiheuttama eriarvoisuus koulutuksessa.
- 2) Varmistetaan pääsy perusterveyspalveluihin, ml. seksuaali- ja lisääntymisterveyspalveluihin, sekä varmistetaan rokotusten saatavuus jokaiselle lapselle.
- 3) Tuetaan ja suojellaan lasten ja nuorten mielenterveyttä. Lapsuuden ajan kaltoinkohtelu, hyväksikäyttö ja sukupuoleen perustuva väkivalta on saatava loppumaan.
- 4) Parannetaan puhtaan veden, hygienian ja sanitaation saatavuutta sekä hillitään ympäristön tuhoutumista ja ilmastonmuutosta.
- 5) Pysäytetään lapsiköyhyyden kasvu ja varmistetaan, että pandemiasta toipuminen toteutuu kaikille yhdenvertaisesti.
- 6) Suojellaan ja tuetaan konfliktien ja luonnonkatastrofien keskellä eläviä lapsia ja heidän perheitään.

Toivomme, että Suomi toiminnassaan kansallisesti ja ulkosuhteissaan sitoutuu näihin suosituksiin lasten suojelemiseksi pandemian aikana ja sen jälkeen, ja tuo niitä kokouksessa esiin. Lisätietoa kuuden kohdan ohjelmasta löytyy viestimme liitteenä.

Kansainvälisellä yhteisöllä ei ole varaa menettää korona-ajan lasten ja nuorten sukupolvia. Siksi koronan aiheuttama, lapsen oikeuksia uhkaava kriisi on ratkaistava vuonna 2021. Toivomme, että Suomi tulevassa kokouksessa johtaa kansainvälistä yhteisöä huomioimaan lapset ja nuoret koronatoimissa.



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unicef 

jokaiselle lapselle

Jakelu: Tasavallan presidentin kanslia, Pääministeri, Ulkoministeri, Kehitys- ja ulkomaankauppaministeri, Suomen YK-edustusto, UM:n YK- ja yleisten globaaliasioiden yksikkö.

Liite – Kuuden kohdan suunnitelma lastemme suojelemiseksi (englanniksi)

A Six Point Plan to Protect our Children

Governments around the world have mobilized billions of dollars to save their economies. But there is another impending and devastating loss if we do not act: a lost generation of children. Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals is slipping backwards, and children are the hardest hit. Not only does this have grave consequences for children now, it is a threat to their future and our shared humanity.

Building on the Member State pledge to [Protect Our Children](#), initiated by the EU, GRULAC and Members of the Group of Friends of Children and the SDGs, the *Six Point Plan to Protect our Children* includes urgent action to prevent, mitigate and respond to the worst effects of the pandemic as it continues to spread around the globe. It also proposes a set of practical and concrete actions to safeguard child rights now and to reimagine a better future. It aims to bring the world back together around a common cause: the health and wellbeing of current and future generations and the full realization of the SDGs and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

In all the below six points, decision makers must prioritize one critical step: **listening to children and young people and including them in decision-making**. They will be living with the impact of this pandemic for years to come and must be included in decisions that affect their future. To fulfill our shared SDG pledge to *Leave No One Behind*, any action taken must prioritize **the needs of the most marginalized children and young people – including girls; those facing poverty, exclusion, or violence; children with disabilities; children affected or displaced by humanitarian crisis; or children without parental care**.

1) Ensure all children learn, including by closing the digital divide
Issue: *At their peak, nationwide school closures disrupted the learning of [91 per cent of students worldwide](#). Marginalized children are paying the heaviest price; [some 463 million young people were not able to access remote learning](#) during school shutdowns and previous shutdowns demonstrate that [children who are out of school for extended periods, especially girls, are less likely to return](#).*

Asks:

- Prioritize reopening schools. Take all measures possible to reopen schools safely and keep them open.
- Increase education funding and ensure equal access to quality, violence-free education so every child learns. This will require a focus on the most marginalized children, including girls; children under attack and on the move; children with disabilities; and children living in rural communities or without access to the internet.
- Close the digital divide by connecting all children and young people to the internet by 2030 and reaching 3.5 billion children and young people with safe, quality, accessible and equitable online learning.
- Protect schools and places of learning from attack and hold perpetrators of these attacks to account.

2) Guarantee access to primary health care, including essential sexual and reproductive health services, and make vaccines affordable and available to every child
Issue: *A [child survival crisis looms](#), with the children at greatest risk of hunger and disease seeing their already fragile health and food systems buckle under the strain of COVID-19. A [fragmented and inequitable response to COVID-19 diagnostics, therapeutics and a vaccine also risks prolonging the pandemic](#).*

Asks:

- Urgently ensure the continuity of key health and nutrition services, including to SRHR, for children and young people – especially routine immunization, prioritizing the hardest to reach.

- Unite to fight the spread of misinformation and build back confidence in routine immunization.
- Collect gender, age, and disability disaggregated data on children and young people, including when contracting COVID-19, and invest in research to better understand its impact on their health and wellbeing.
- Ensure every child and young person has equal and affordable access, regardless of where they live, to COVID-19 diagnostics, therapeutics and vaccines as part of a comprehensive package of essential care.
- Ensure any new funding expands access to other essential health services for children and young people – including training and supporting healthcare workers.

3) Support and protect the mental health of children and young people and bring an end to abuse, gender-based violence, and neglect in childhood

Issue: *Prior to COVID-19, [the world was waking up to the extent and lasting impacts of child abuse and neglect](#). This has been exacerbated by the pandemic, as children are cut off from key support services at the same time as suffering the additional stress placed on fragile households. Girls are particularly vulnerable, with [child marriage and adolescent pregnancy already on the rise](#).*

Asks:

- Integrate sustainable child mental health and psychosocial support funding in all global humanitarian responses and commit to increased multi-year funding to better meet the protection needs of children in crisis.
- Prioritize the prevention of and response to Gender-Based Violence (GBV) in all global humanitarian action, increasing funding for gender-specific interventions.
- Invest in gender-sensitive mental health and psychosocial support for children, young people, and their caregivers:
 - Provide parenting support to all those who need it and strengthen child helplines and other child-focused reporting mechanisms.
 - Designate and protect formal and informal social service workers and services – including GBV, child protection, and sexual and reproductive health services – as essential.
 - Invest in gender-sensitive mental health and psychosocial support services for children, adolescents and their caregivers, including through schools, social services and communities.

4) Increase access to clean water, sanitation and hygiene and address environmental degradation and climate change

Issue: COVID-19 may not have been directly caused by [climate change and environmental degradation](#), but there are strong linkages pointing to [environmental degradation as a common underlying risk factor](#). Unreliable access to safe water due to changes in climate also limit people's ability to [practice life-saving hygiene measures like handwashing](#). Humanity has been on an unsustainable collision course with nature, and the emergence of this pandemic, as well as our vulnerability to similar risks in the future, means this will only hasten if we continue.

Asks:

- Guarantee universal access to clean water and handwashing for children and families, through national policies, private sector cooperation, community engagement and behaviour change.
- Invest in climate-resilient water, sanitation and hygiene services in homes, schools, hospitals and public spaces to make communities better prepared for future pandemics and other shocks.
- Integrate child rights into key national climate change and adaptation strategies, policies and planning documents, including the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), as well as COVID-19 response and recovery plans and budgets.
- Continue to pursue, implement and monitor climate and environmentally focused targets outlined in the SDGs and the Paris Agreement.

- Teach children and young people about climate change, the environment and responsible and sustainable consumption and production.

5) Reverse the rise in child poverty and ensure an inclusive recovery for all
 Issue: *The economic crisis caused by COVID-19 threatens to hit children the hardest, [with the number of children living below their national poverty lines soaring by 117 million](#). Economic crises are often followed by cuts to government spending, including on programmes for children. If the world repeats this pattern in the wake of COVID-19, poverty and deprivation among children will continue to rise, even after the immediate crisis has waned. We urgently need an inclusive recovery plan to prevent countless more children and their families reaching levels of poverty unseen for many, many years.*

Asks:

- Marshal global resources to ensure an [inclusive, gender-sensitive recovery](#) and support national fiscal responses that prioritize children and families:
 - Maintain or increase overseas aid commitments, identifying context-specific new financing options, and direct funding to those countries most affected and least able to take on new lending.
 - Act on debt relief, including extending current debt service suspension to middle income countries. Ensure coordinated action covering all creditors to restructure and, where necessary, reduce debt.
 - Include investment in key services for children and young people as part of domestic stimulus packages and ring-fence existing spending on the most vulnerable children.
- Expand resilient social protection programmes for the most vulnerable children, as well as families with children, including cash transfers for every child and child-friendly services like affordable, quality childcare.

6) Redouble efforts to protect and support children and their families living through conflict, disaster and displacement

Issue: *This year [was already set to see more people than ever in need of humanitarian assistance](#), and the pandemic has only compounded the vulnerabilities of children on the move or living in crisis-affected countries. And whether the result of deliberate action in conflict, or new pandemic restrictions, [it is becoming harder to reach the most vulnerable children and families](#). COVID-19 must not become an excuse to divert attention from these children.*

Asks:

- Increase and maintain funding for emergencies, to prevent multiple, catastrophic and protracted crises and to save children's lives, alleviate their suffering and preserve their dignity. In all humanitarian response, prioritize child rights and child protection, in line with the [Core Commitments for Children](#).
- Ensure immediate and unimpeded humanitarian access.
- End attacks on children, including civilian infrastructure critical for their survival, such as water, sanitation, and healthcare facilities and personnel. Hold perpetrators of these attacks to account.
- Include internally displaced, refugee and migrant children in national systems, policies and plans – starting with COVID-19 recovery and response efforts.
- Fight the virus not each other: implement and uphold the Secretary General's call for a global ceasefire.

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