



**Submission to inform the Australian Government's *Foreign Policy White Paper*
2017-2027**

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UNICEF AUSTRALIA

1. UNICEF is a multilateral organisation that works in over 190 countries to promote and protect the rights of children. UNICEF supports child health and nutrition, clean water and sanitation, quality basic education for all boys and girls and the protection of children from violence, exploitation, abuse and HIV.
2. UNICEF is a powerful responder during emergencies and provides special protection and life- saving essential services to children, and their families when crisis strikes.
3. UNICEF is unique among world organisations in our rights based and participatory approach to working with children and young people.
4. UNICEF Australia is a National Committee of UNICEF, which advocates for the rights of all children and works to improve public and government support for child rights and international development.

INTRODUCTION

5. UNICEF Australia welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission to inform the Australian Government's approach to international engagement over the 2017-2027 period.
6. The Foreign Policy White paper process is an opportunity for the Australian Government to restate a clear commitment to the world's poorest children and narrowing existing global social and economic inequality. Addressing these challenges is fundamental to furthering stability and prosperity in the region.
7. UNICEF Australia is a full member of the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) and as such, we support their submission to the Department. However, given UNICEF Australia's specific mandate, we further provide this submission, which focuses on the child and human rights dimensions of foreign policy.
8. We commend the Australian Government on significant policy success leveraged off the existing aid program particularly in relation to advancing gender inequality, and the promotion of disability-inclusive development.¹

¹ ¹ Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. 2015-2020. *Development for All 2015-2020: Strategy for strengthening disability-inclusive development in Australia's aid program*, available at: <http://dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Documents/development-for-all-2015-2020.pdf>

9. Gender equality remains a condition for inclusive, democratic and violence-free sustainable development. Similarly, investments in children are important for creating sustained and equitable long-run growth, and maintaining peace.²

PURPOSE

10. The purpose of UNICEF Australia's submission is to share learning based on our global programming for children, and provide a conceptual framework to enhance Australia's international engagement.
11. In this submission UNICEF Australia suggests that the Australian Government:
 - Puts children first in foreign policy decision making
 - Orients foreign policy towards realising the Sustainable Development Goals on schedule
 - Increases the proportion of Australia's child-related Official Development Assistance (ODA)
 - Prioritises equitable development growth
12. Intergenerational and entrenched cycles of disadvantage endanger the futures of millions of children and their societies.³ An investment in children is an investment in our common future and global prosperity.
13. Given the nature of the trends that are likely to affect Australia's security and prosperity over the coming decade, UNICEF Australia argues that it is essential to clearly position aid policy, development cooperation and ODA investment as a primary strategic pillar of Australia's Foreign Policy.

GUIDING FRAMEWORKS AND PRINCIPLES

14. This submission has been informed by the following human rights based guiding frameworks and guidelines:
 - An Agenda for Every Child⁴
 - Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs Agenda 2030)
 - *Education 2030 Framework for Action*

² Rees, N. et al. 2012. *Right in Principle and In Practice: A Review of the Social and Economic Returns to Investing in Children*, available at: https://www.unicef.org/socialpolicy/files/RIGHT_IN_PRINCIPLE_AND_IN_PRACTICE.pdf (accessed 12 February 2017)

³ UNICEF. 2016. *State of the World's Children: A Fair Chance for Every Child*, available at: https://www.unicef.org/publications/files/UNICEF_SOWC_2016.pdf (accessed 12 February 2017)

⁴ UNICEF. 2015. *An Agenda for Every Child 2015*, viewed at: https://www.unicef.org/agenda2030/files/2pager_everychild_FINAL_web.pdf (accessed on 15 February 2017)

- *Addis Ababa Action Agenda (2015)*
- *Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (2011)*
- *New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants*
- *Minimum standards for child protection in humanitarian action*
- *UNICEF Strategic Plan 2014-2017*
- *UNICEF Social Protection Strategic Framework 2012*
- *Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989 (the CRC)*
- *Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees 1951 (the Refugee Convention)*

AUSTRALIA'S STRATEGIC OUTLOOK

15. The Australian Government is tasked with developing contemporary thinking in a complex and uncertain world order, for what may emerge as a new era of global foreign policy. The vision of cooperative international order that emerged post World War II appears to be in flux with shifting priorities signalled from the United States, the pending British departure from the European Union, emerging trends in terrorism, an unstable Middle East, and the protracted global refugee and migrant crisis.
16. In an era of shifting alliances, growing protectionism and potential retreat from a rules-based international order, we encourage the Australian Government to maintain robust international cooperation and contribute to creating relative predictability and stability⁵. It is vital that Australia's international engagement should seek to strengthen the norms and standards that protect children, and subsequently contribute to ending violence against children, extreme poverty, preventable child deaths, gender inequality and discrimination.
17. Australia's strategic and foreign policy interests are regional and global in nature. Australia's strategic influence in the Indo Pacific region and our proximity, make us well positioned to strengthen the capabilities of regional partners to act in support of our shared interests. This includes stability, sustainable economic growth, safe and orderly migration, wherever possible, and a clean natural environment.

⁵ Dewar, S. 2015. *Australia and China and the United States: Responding to Changing Power Dynamics*, viewed at: http://ciw.anu.edu.au/publications/au_ch_and_us.pdf (accessed 13 February 2017)

18. The October 2016 Defence White Paper⁶ identifies the security and stability of Australia's neighbourhood as Australia's most important strategic priority, after the defence of Australia. Other shared interests include economic growth, private sector development, strengthening human development, realising the opportunities for a demographic dividend in countries experiencing a youth bulge, and addressing imbalances caused by extreme inequality.
19. Indo-Pacific countries are currently in a wave of economic growth and this is predicted to continue. However, growth is likely to be coupled with persistent challenges including natural disasters, environmental degradation, natural resource scarcity, rapid population growth, territorial conflict, gaps in governance, ethnic tensions, inequitable distribution of the benefits of growth and increased mixed and irregular migration movements⁷.
20. One of the most notable demographic trends in the region has been the peak and impacts of the youth bulge.⁸ Youth bulges provide an opportunity for countries to make significant development gains. UNFPA identifies that in order for countries to realise the opportunity of a demographic dividend⁹ presented it is essential that the working age population has good health, quality education, and decent employment. Continued investment in children and young people is necessary to improve their lives, build human capital and strengthen regional economies.¹⁰
21. Historically Australia has made positive contributions to the international order through its aid program, and demonstrated important leadership in norm and rule making, institution building and peacekeeping. Australia has traditionally been regarded as a balancing voice in the world.
22. It is important to note however that Australia's declining volume of Official Development Assistance (ODA) is currently discordant with the overall aid trajectories of many OECD countries, including emerging major donors (and growing powers) such as China and India.¹¹ In fact Australia's ODA investment has continued to starkly trend downwards as compared to our OECD counterparts. We

⁶ Department of Defence, Australian Government 2016. Defence White Paper, viewed at: <http://www.defence.gov.au/whitepaper/Docs/2016-Defence-White-Paper.pdf> (accessed 4 February 2017)

⁷ Dr. Hill, C. 2015. Australia in the Indo-Pacific Century: reworks, risks, relationships, viewed at: http://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/pubs/BriefingBook44p/IndoPacific (access 30 January 2017)

⁸ United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs Population Division. 2015. *Population Facts*, viewed at: http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/publications/pdf/popfacts/PopFacts_2015-1.pdf (accessed 2 February 2017)

⁹ UNFPA defines a demographic dividend as the economic growth potential that can result from shifts in a population's age and structure. In particular, where the share of the working age population (15-64 years) is larger than the non-working age share of the population.

¹⁰ UNFPA. 2014. *The Power of 1.8 Billion: Adolescents, Youth and the Transformation of the Future*, viewed at: http://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/EN-SWOP14-Report_FINAL-web.pdf (accessed 8 January 2017)

¹¹ Davies. R. 2014. *Never dive alone: Australia's aid cuts in a global context*, viewed at: <http://devpolicy.org/never-dive-alone-australias-aid-cut-in-a-global-context-20141218-2/> (accessed on 10 January 2017)

should reasonably expect over time that Australia's shrinking ODA investment may result in a reduction of our regional credibility and influence.

23. UNICEF Australia further notes that the disbursement of ODA has not been properly geared towards a regional surge in the youth population. Our preliminary analysis shows that while approximately 41 per cent of the population in the Asia Pacific region are children, only 26 per cent of ODA is directed to investments that are broadly classified as child related.¹²
24. UNICEF Australia acknowledges that foreign policy has multiple drivers and this requires governments to carefully balance national, geo-political, security, economic/commercial and human rights based interests.
25. We emphasise the ongoing importance of Australia's development policy, international development cooperation and ODA investment as principal elements of foreign policy, which is profoundly linked to regional economic growth, security and stability.
26. UNICEF Australia has limited experience in climate policy and as such this submission does not focus on the impacts of climate change for people in Australia and the Asia Pacific region. UNICEF Australia's position however, in accordance the global *Unless We Act Now Report (2015)*, is that the trajectory of climate change presents a grave threat to the world's poorest children. Children are at the front line of climate change, which will degrade the environment, increase the frequency and intensity of disasters, deepen inequalities and drive displacement.¹³
27. UNICEF Australia proposes that there are two key domestic policy issues that skew our foreign policy credibility and positioning. First, Australia is the only western democracy that does not currently have some form of national Human Rights Act or Bill of Rights. This is incongruous with one of the stated objectives of our foreign policy, to promote human rights abroad. In 2009 the National Human Rights Consultation Committee chaired by Mr Frank Brennan observed that, "there is a patchwork of human rights protections in Australia. The patchwork is fragmented and incomplete, and its inadequacies are most keenly felt by the marginalised and the vulnerable"¹⁴. This domestic safeguarding would benefit children, and all people

¹²This data was produced from research commissioned by UNICEF Australia and World Vision on (a.) the economic benefits of investing in children in a development context and (b.) trends in ODA expenditure on projects relating to children by Australia in the six focus countries. This will include time series analysis relying on the OECD Development Assistance Committee Creditor Reporting System (CRS) from 2002 to 2014. Each of the over 4,200 line items in the OECD CRS for these countries and years will be individually coded by how focused the project is on child development.

¹³ UNICEF. 2015. *Unless we act now: the impact of climate change on children*, viewed at: [https://www.unicef.org/publications/files/Unless we act now_The impact of climate change on children.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/publications/files/Unless_we_act_now_The_impact_of_climate_change_on_children.pdf) (accessed 14 January 2017)

¹⁴ Brennan, F. et al. 2009. *National Human Rights Consultation report*, viewed at: http://apo.org.au/files/Resource/nhrc_report.pdf (accessed 15 January 2017) pp. 32.

in Australia. It would further better position Australia to promote comprehensive models for human rights protections

28. Second, the acute, medium term breaches of international human rights law and international humanitarian law (IHL) in relation to asylum seekers who arrive by sea have sharply undermined Australia's foreign policy credibility and influence. The Australian Government's lack of cooperation in relation to engagement with special procedures mechanisms has similarly, and considerably, diminished our international reputation. Inadequate observance of the *Convention Against Torture, Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment* and the strict prohibition on non-refoulement are indeed serious violations, but also undermine Australia's genuine efforts to strengthen rule of law in the region.

RECOMMENDATIONS

29. UNICEF Australia recommends that:

1. *The SDG 2030 Agenda remains a core framework to anchor and orientate Australia's foreign policy and aid investments.*

- Recognising that we need leadership from governments, business and civil society to achieve the SDG's 2030 on target.

2. *The Australian Government escalates efforts to achieve the SDG's on schedule through:*

- Increasing the proportion of child focused ODA in the Asia Pacific region and ensuring these investments are more coherent and better targeted within a child rights framework
- Restoring multilateral funding cuts to UNICEF¹⁵ given our important role in protecting children in emergencies
- Committing to a timetable to measure progress
- Investing in programming for, and monitoring *equitable* development outcomes.

3. *The Australian Government prioritises children in our aid program through:*

- Specifically identifying children as a thematic priority, while also ensuring explicit, cross cutting focus on addressing child rights across relevant sectoral areas
- Identifying and addressing data gaps for children (including adolescents)

¹⁵ DFAT. 2015-16. Development Assistance Budget Summary, view ed at: <http://dfat.gov.au/about-us/corporate/portfolio-budget-statements/Documents/2015-16-development-assistance-budget-summary.pdf> (accessed 13 January 2017)

- Developing mechanisms in Australia and the Asia Pacific region for youth participation in measuring SDG progress.

4. The Australian Government commits to progressively rebuild our aid budget to better align with OECD standards:

- Develop a schedule to restore the aid budget to its pre-existing level \$5.5 billion (or 0.3 percent of GNI) within the current Parliamentary term
- Position Australia on a trajectory to ensure that aid levels reach 0.7 per cent of GNI by 2030.¹⁶

5. The Australian Government maintains its position as a good international citizen through promoting the legal frameworks that protect the most vulnerable children.

- Promoting comprehensive national human rights protections
- Building capacity and promoting compliance with international human rights law
- Conduct proactive international diplomacy and advocacy to prevent the erosion of international humanitarian law.
- Endorse the *International Safe Schools Declaration and Guidelines*
- Commit to a National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights which strengthens corporate accountability in Australia and overseas.

6. The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade develops a comprehensive whole of government policy to prevent forced displacement in the region.

- Increase focus and investment on addressing the drivers of forced migration more comprehensively through targeted ODA investment
- Integrate policy responses to the multiple drivers of forced migration (e.g. extreme poverty, climate change, persecution)
- The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade convene a regular dialogue with civil society groups and others¹⁷ to discuss options to strengthen protection for forcibly displaced persons in the region.

PRINCIPLES TO INFORM AUSTRALIA'S FOREIGN POLICY APPROACH

- Put children first in foreign policy decision making, and identify them as a stand-alone investment priority within Australia's aid program
- Equitable and inclusive development
- Continued good international citizenship

¹⁶ ACFID. 2016. ACFID Submission to the 2016-17 Budget Submission, View ed at: https://acfid.asn.au/sites/site.acfid/files/ACFID_per_cent_20Budget_per_cent_20Submission_per_cent_202016_per_cent_20-per_cent_20FINAL_0.pdf (accessed 5 February 2017)

¹⁷ Academics, senior government officials, particularly from the DIBP, and key partners from the region should also be included in scheduled dialogues.

- Quality child participation to inform and measure aid programming and impact.

INVESTING IN CHILDREN ACROSS THE LIFECYCLE FOR HIGH IMPACT AND RETURNS

30. UNICEF's global experience demonstrates that focussing investment towards the realisation of children's rights is pivotal to achieving development gains over the short, medium and long term. We propose in this submission that investments are best focussed across the life cycle and should concentrate explicitly in three areas: (I) Early Childhood Development; (II) Adolescence; and (III) preventing Violence against Children.

Early Childhood Development

31. All children have the right to survival and healthy development and this is articulated through Article 6 of the CRC and as one of its fundamental, guiding principles. Healthy development should be interpreted as broadly as possible to support children reaching their maximum potential.

32. SDG Target 4.2 aims to increase the percentage of children under five years of age who are developmentally on track across health, learning and psychosocial well-being domains. Early childhood presents an unparalleled window of opportunity to make a positive difference in a child's life. Inequity begins in the first days of life for newborn babies and so must our efforts to close the gaps that prevent millions of children from realising their right to development.

33. UNICEF's case for investing in children is both a broad principle of good economic policy making, and for building equitable and fair societies. Early investment can, in practical terms, prevent children from living a lifetime of disadvantage and crisis.¹⁸

34. According to decades of research from UNICEF, the World Bank and the World Health Organisation (WHO) investing in young children is one of the best investments a country can make. In 2015, the Chief of the World Bank, Mr Jim Yong Kim stated, "both science and economics clearly demonstrate that investing in the first 1,000 days of a child's life is critical for them to grow, learn and earn".¹⁹

¹⁸ UNICEF. 2016. State of the World's Children: A fair chance for every child, viewed at: https://www.unicef.org/publications/files/UNICEF_SOWC_2016.pdf (accessed 2 February 2017)

¹⁹ World Bank. 2016. *Remarks by World Bank President Group Jim Yong Kim on Early Childhood Development*, view ed at: <http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/speech/2016/04/14/remarks-world-bank-group-president-jim-yong-kim-early-childhood-development> (accessed 2 February 2017)

35. "The Chief of the World Bank further elaborated that "investments in the early years offer a cost-efficient way to produce a well-trained and capable workforce and lead to better outcomes for those at greatest disadvantage."²⁰ The World Bank found that a 50 per cent increase in pre-school enrolment for children in low- and middle-income countries would increase lifetime earnings gains by USD \$15 to \$34 billion.
36. An investment in early childhood development (ECD) is an investment in both children and in broader economic growth. According to UNICEF and the World Bank an additional dollar invested in ECD programmes yields a return on investment of between six and seventeen dollars.²¹
37. An estimated 43 per cent or 249 million children under five in low and middle-income countries are at an elevated risk of poor development due to extreme poverty according to the 2016 Advancing Early Childhood Development from Science to Scale²². The science of child development clearly illustrates that adversity and deprivation experienced by infants can have irreversible effects on their future capabilities, their social and economic participation, and in turn, a nation's future prospects. Low-income countries are least able to afford to lose the current and future potential of over 40 per cent of their young citizens and future workforce.
38. According to the International Labour Organisation (ILO) in 2016, 71 million young people were unemployed globally. This meant that they comprised over 40 per cent of the global workforce.²³ Young people are the future workforce, and the engine of sustainable growth.
39. Lower educational attainment has continuing and life-long negative impact on employment and consequent loss of earnings in adulthood. Cumulatively, these losses equate to an economic cost to broader society. Adolescence is a pivotal period during which the gains of childhood can either be consolidated or lost.²⁴ The second decade of life presents an opportunity to build on these gains and to invest in programmes that contribute to healthy, safe, informed and empowered transitions to adulthood. Unfortunately it can also be a forgotten stage.²⁵

²⁰ Ibid

²¹ Ibid

²² The Lancet Series. October, 2016. *Advancing Early Childhood Development from Science to Scale*, viewed at: http://www.who.int/maternal_child_adolescent/documents/ecd-lancet-exec-summary-en.pdf?ua=1 (accessed 10 February 2017) p.35

²³ ILO. 2016. *World Employment and Social Outlook for Youth 2016*, view ed at <http://www.ilo.org/global/research/global-reports/youth/2016/lang-en/index.htm> (accessed 10 February 2017)

²⁴ UNICEF. 2011. *The State of the World's Children: An Age of Opportunity*, view ed at:

https://www.unicef.org/adolescence/files/SOWC_2011_Main_Report_EN_02092011.pdf (accessed 23 February 2017).

²⁵ UNICEF. 2013. *Advocacy tools and arguments for investment in adolescents*, view ed at:

[https://www.unicef.org/lac/INVERSION_EN_ADOLESCENTES-eng\(5\).pdf](https://www.unicef.org/lac/INVERSION_EN_ADOLESCENTES-eng(5).pdf) (accessed 2 February 2017)

Adolescence

40. Adolescence is a pivotal period during which the gains of childhood can either be consolidated or lost.²⁶ The second decade of life presents an opportunity to build on gains made in childhood and to invest in programmes that contribute to healthy, safe, informed and empowered transitions to adulthood. Unfortunately it can also be a forgotten stage.
41. There is strong cumulative evidence that illustrates the heightened protection risks experienced during adolescence.²⁷ However traditionally there is a global lack of investment in this important phase, sometimes due to limited resources or political, cultural or social sensitivities.
42. Inequities frequently become starkly pronounced during adolescence. During this period children who are poor or marginalised are considerably less likely to transition to secondary education and may be more likely to experience early sex, child marriage, conflict with the law, violence, hazardous work and domestic labour. Adolescence creates new vulnerabilities and risks for girls in particular. The intergenerational transmission of poverty is also most apparent among adolescent girls.
43. Violence against children, abuse and exploitation impedes the healthy growth and development of children and adolescents and have high costs across the lifecycle. Evidence supports the principle that prevention pays in relation to children and young people. A 2014 study conducted by the Overseas Development Institute found that:²⁸
- the global costs related to physical, psychological and sexual violence estimated by this study are between 3 per cent and 8 per cent of global GDP
 - the estimated global economic costs resulting from the consequences of physical, psychological and sexual violence against children is US \$7 trillion

²⁶ There is no universally accepted definition of adolescence; however the United Nations defines it as the period from 10 to nineteen years. However, UNICEF recognises that the development is highly specific to an individual child, their culture and specific context.

²⁷ UNICEF. 2011. *The State of the World's Children: An Age of Opportunity*, viewed at: https://www.unicef.org/adolescence/files/SOWC_2011_Main_Report_EN_02092011.pdf (accessed 23 February 2017).

²⁸ Overseas Development Institute. 2014. *The costs and economic impacts on violence against children*, viewed at: <https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/9177.pdf> (accessed 15 February 2017)

- the economic costs of the worst forms of child labour is estimated at US \$97 billion, and costs associated with children involved in armed conflict is up to US \$144 billion.
44. The Copenhagen Consensus is an international think tank with specialised economists who are dedicated to costing and resolving complex global problems. In 2015, Copenhagen Consensus consultants costed the global direct and indirect costs of VAC at US \$9.5 trillion dollars or 11 per cent of global GDP. Violence specifically against children, including homicide, child abuse and child sexual violence was estimated at US \$3.7 trillion or 4.3 per cent of global GDP.²⁹
45. Violence against young children results in long-term exposure to toxic stress and this is known to inhibit optimal brain development. This has potentially irreversible impact on the young developing brain can lead to a failure to thrive among affected children and poorer performance once the child enters the educational system.
46. Children affected by armed conflict have their lives severely disrupted and their development impeded. As of 2014, 24 million children in crisis affected areas were out of the school.³⁰ According to the Global Education Commission, if current trends continue, by 2030 over three-quarters of a billion young people in low and middle-income countries will not be on track to acquire basic secondary-level skills, putting the trajectory towards achieving the SDGs at serious risk.³¹
47. In low-income countries, only one out of 10 will be on track. Without urgent change, more than 1.5 billion adults will have no education beyond primary school in 2030. This potential outcome is in stark contrast to the stated intention of SDG Goal 4.
48. UNICEF's historical analysis shows that low educational attainment consistently predicts the outbreak and continuation of violent conflict. Inequality fuels unrest and when educational inequality doubles, the probability of conflict more than doubles.
49. UNICEF Australia supports increased investment in education in emergencies as a strategy to protect and develop children, and create generational stability. In addition, we invite the Australian Government to consider endorsing the International Safe Schools Declaration and Guidelines to protect children and their right to education, and strengthen respect for IHL.

²⁹ Special Rep to the SG on VAC: http://srsg.violenceagainstchildren.org/viewpoint/2015-07-13_1307

³⁰ UNESCO Institute for Statistics. 2015. *A growing number of children are out of school and adolescents are out of school as aid fails to meet the mark*, viewed at: <http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Documents/fs-31-out-of-school-children-en.pdf> (accessed 20 February 2017).

³¹ Global Education Commission 2015. *The Learning Generation: investing in education for a changing world*, viewed at: file:///C:/Users/alamoin/Downloads/Learning_Generation_Exec_Summary.pdf (accessed 10 February)

7. AUSTRALIAN BUSINESS ABROAD

50. Australia must pursue economic opportunities in a manner that is sustainable and that meets out state based obligations to children. This requires Australian Foreign Policy to be coherent and consistent across development and trade objectives, with the protection and promotion of human rights, and the Sustainable Development Goals, being reinforced by policy and practice in both areas. Good progress made through development efforts risk being undermined unless and until international trade and investment negotiations and activities of the Australian Government, and activities of Australian businesses abroad, reinforce and support practices which ensure respect for the human rights of local communities and affected groups.
51. Within our own region for example, Asia-Pacific is home to the largest number of child labourers, with approximately 78 million children (one in ten) engaged in work which is harmful to their development.³² For Australia to play its part in the elimination of such practices, all causal drivers resulting in child labour must be understood and addressed.
52. This includes, for example, ensuring Australia's development program supports universal access to quality education for children and poverty alleviation measures for families through cash transfers on the one hand, with appropriate regulatory measures and practical supports to businesses to ensure international supply chains are managed in a responsible, sustainable and transparent manner so as to minimise labour abuses. Only through such consistency and coordination will progress be made toward the Sustainable Development Goals, including the elimination of child labour, forced labour and modern slavery by 2025 (Goal 8.7) and securing decent work for all by 2030 (Goal 8.4).³³
53. The commitment of the Australian Government to conduct a consultation on the implementation of the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights presents an opportunity for community and stakeholders to advise Government on what this should look like in practice. Relevant for Australia's foreign policy over the next ten years and beyond, fully realising the UNGPs requires, amongst other things, that Government trade activity (negotiating trade opportunities

³² ILO, *Marking progress against child labour – Global estimates and trends 2000-2012*, p. 3.

³³ *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, GA Res 70/1, 70th session, UN Doc. A/RES/70/1 (21 October 2015), pp. 19-20.

or facilitating Australian businesses) does not directly or indirectly facilitate any infringement of human rights.

54. For example, human rights due diligence (which includes special attention to children's rights) should be a condition of eligibility for businesses receiving public finances or support, both domestically and abroad (for example, through the award of significant procurement contracts, support through AusTrade and EFIC). Embassies and trade missions should reinforce these expectations and assist Australian businesses understand local risks to human rights presented by business operations. Commonwealth procurement, and development funding, must expect that recipients of public sector contracts know and show that they respect human rights in practice. Not only will such stipulations will help ensure that businesses practices aid the achievement of development objectives, but they will help promote an Australian brand that is ethical and support business practices domestically and abroad that are sustainable in the long term.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES FOR DIRECTING ODA INVESTMENT

55. This section outlines four key priorities to inform Australia's foreign policy direction, in particular the allocation of ODA contribution and how it can be leveraged to improve the lives of children, generate growth in the region and achieve the SDGs by 2030.

56. The identified priorities are overlapping and interconnected - and focus on the positive returns that are leveraged by investing in children over the short, medium and long term.

Priority 1: Investing in children as a central building block for sustainable development, equality and equitable growth.

57. This priority capitalises on important gains achieved under the Australian Government's Gender equality and women's empowerment strategy 2016, appointment of an Ambassador for Women and Girls and financial investments in development outcomes for girls. It also capitalises on the existing investments that the Australian Government has made in child related ODA in the Asia Pacific region, particularly in education and health sectors. An estimated AUD \$408 million out of a total of AUD \$1.7 billion was allocated to investments that can be broadly classified

as child-related ODA in 2015.³⁴ There is significant opportunity to retain, deepen and build on these investments.

58. In 2015, 26 per cent of Australia's total ODA or \$1.16 billion was dedicated to projects that can be broadly classified as child related. This is a reduction from \$1.5 billion (or approximately 24 per cent) at the peak period of investment in 2012. During the same period, all other ODA from Australia declined 17 per cent, demonstrating that child-related ODA has declined disproportionately to other aid.³⁵
59. While Australia has a significantly high proportion of its current ODA allocation dedicated to child-related investments, it has declined disproportionately to other aid. From 2012-2015, child related ODA decreased by 24 per cent as compared to 17 per cent for all other ODA from Australia.³⁶
60. With a significant reduction in ODA contribution since 2012, it is critical for Australia to carefully consider strategies to increase the impact of their investment. Reduced overall ODA heightens the requirement for more efficient programs with greater returns on investment. There is an opportunity to increase the impact of these investments by developing a policy framework that more explicitly and holistically prioritises advancing the rights of children and accelerating their development. As discussed in *section 6*, investing in children produces high returns and has powerful long-term impacts.
61. Significant development gains were made under the Millennium Development Goals framework globally, particularly in relation to improving maternal health and child vaccination rates, and decreasing child mortality. However, progress for children overall was significantly uneven.
62. UNICEF's State of the World's Children Report 2016 identifies progress for the most disadvantaged children as the defining condition for delivering on the SDG's 2030.³⁷ In the report UNICEF defines equity as "all children having the same opportunities to survive, develop and attain their full potential"³⁸
63. Achieving equitable growth and development requires policy platforms that focus explicitly on those children, families and communities who are being left behind. Equity is also a critical and cross cutting component of the SDG 2030 Framework in:

³⁴ This data was produced from research commissioned by UNICEF Australia and World Vision on (a.) the economic benefits of investing in children in a development context and (b.) trends in ODA expenditure on projects relating to children by Australia in the six focus countries. This will include time series analysis relying on the OECD Development Assistance Committee Creditor Reporting System (CRS) from 2002 to 2014. Each of the over 4,200 line items in the OECD CRS for these countries and years will be individually coded by how focused the project is on child development.

³⁵ *Ibid*

³⁶ *Ibid*

³⁷ UNICEF. 2016. *State of the World's Children: A fair chance for every child*, viewed at: <https://www.unicef.org/sowc2016/> (accessed 10 February 2017)

³⁸ *Ibid* p 7.

- SDG 3 (health and well-being for all ages)
- SDG 5 (achieve gender equality and empowerment)
- SDG 10 (reduce inequality within and between countries)
- SDG 17.18 (countries to increase availability of data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location by 2020)

64. Children make up to close of half of the world's extreme poor with nearly 900 million people living under the international poverty line of US \$1.90 per day.³⁹ These deprivations leave a life-long imprint. In 2014, 160 million children globally were stunted.⁴⁰

65. If we don't act now to increase the rate of progress to achieve the SDG's and address inequity, projections are that in 2030:

- 167 million children will live in extreme poverty in 2030
- 69 million children will die before the age of five between 2016 and 2030
- 60 million children of primary school will be out of school.⁴¹

66. The SDG Index and Dashboards report (2016) ranks Australia as 20th in regard to progress to achieve the SDGs by 2030.⁴²

67. The Australian Government could usefully prioritise mobilising additional resources to address financing gaps in underfunded SDG priority areas with the greatest impacts for children. *The Index identifies that greater action is required in Australia to reduce inequality, and to achieve environmental goals.*

68. In accordance with Article 12 of the CRC, UNICEF Australia supports greater direct participation from children domestically and across region to bolster improved progress towards achieving the SDG's 2030 on schedule. The Australian Government could also increase their focus on the equity dimension of the SDG's Framework holistically through country level programs, monitoring, accountability measures and advocacy.

Priority 2: Safe migration pathways for children and families.

69. The refugee and migrant crisis, and the forced movements of people more broadly track the stress lines of the world. New migration dynamics are multi-factorial, the result of conflict, country instability/fragility, extreme poverty and climate change.

³⁹ Ibid

⁴⁰ Ibid p 45.

⁴¹ SOWC 2016

⁴² Sustainable Development Solutions Network. 2016. Sustainable Development Index and Dashboards: Global Report, viewed at https://www.dropbox.com/s/gv2znh9065v0mr5/SDG_Index_Dashboard_full.pdf?dl=0 (accessed 12 January 2015)

70. Protecting Children on the Move (CoM) is a global priority for UNICEF. We are responding to the global refugee and migrant crisis through conducting outreach to meet children's needs in contexts of shifting migration routes, prolonged displacement, food insecurity and extreme weather conditions. In countries of destination, UNICEF's technical assistance has focused on family reunification, improving standards for care and the reception, and promoting social inclusion and access to education.

71. In *Uprooted*, a global report on child migration and displacement, UNICEF published the following headline data:

- Children comprise half of the world's total refugee population
- 31 million children live outside their country of birth, including 11 million child refugees and asylum seekers
- 28 million children have been forcibly displaced
- Nearly 1 in every 200 children globally is a refugee
- Nearly two times the total number of child refugees in 2015, than in 2005
- Asia is home to 2 in 5 of the world's child migrants⁴³.

72. In the *Uprooted* report, UNICEF identified six policy goals to protect child refugees and asylum seekers:

One: Protect child refugees and migrants, particularly unaccompanied children from violence and exploitation.

- Strengthen child protection systems
- Appoint guardians
- Prevent the return of children to situations of harm
- Better information to children regarding their own situation
- Best interest decision making

Two: End the detention of children seeking refugee status or migration.

- Introduce practical alternatives to detention wherever children or families are involved (e.g. foster care, supervised independent living, or regular reporting requirements).

Three: Keeping families together as the best way to protect children and give them legal status.

⁴³ UNICEF. 2016. *Uprooted: The growing crisis for refugee and migrant children*, viewed at: https://www.unicef.org/publications/files/Uprooted_growing_crisis_for_refugee_and_migrant_children.pdf (accessed 15 February 2017) pp3-8.

- Develop clear policy guidance to prevent children from being from their parents during border control processing or during legal processes.
- Speed up procedures to make it easier for children to be reunited with families/extended families in destination countries
- Provide birth registration and identity documents to prevent child statelessness

Four: Keep all refugee and migrant children learning and give them access to health and other quality services

- Increased collective effort required by governments, NGOs and the private is needed to provide education, health, shelter, nutrition, WASH, sanitation and access to legal and psychosocial support.
- Decision makers do not discriminate based on a child's migration status, or the status of their parent/s.

Five: Press for action on the underlying causes of large-scale movements of refugees and migrants

- Increase access to education and social protection
- Expand opportunities for family income and youth employment
- Governments should facilitate community dialogue and engagement towards peaceful conflict resolution.

Six: Promote measures to combat xenophobia, discrimination and marginalization in transit and destination countries

- Government's, community and religious leaders, and coalitions of NGOs take responsibility for positively influencing public opinion and preventing the rise of xenophobia and discrimination against refugees.

73. While UNICEF is advocating globally for the above identified six policy platforms to be implemented, it does so against a backdrop of trends and symptoms in the international system that generate due cause for serious concern:

- Instead of meeting their obligations under *Refugee Convention 1951*, and the CRC many states, including Australia⁴⁴, have relied heavily on deterrence measures.
- There were limited concrete commitments from states following the World Humanitarian Summit and the subsequent New York Summits on Refugees and Migration.

⁴⁴ The Australian Government has a formal policy of intercepting and turning back vessels that are transporting asylum seekers. UNICEF Australia does not consider this approach as compliant with international law. We acknowledge however that the Australian Government continues to be a generous resettlement program through the national Refugee and Humanitarian Resettlement Programme.

- Armed conflicts are becoming more deadly and more frequent, with a declining observance of IHL and its principles
- There is a general decline in international respect for human rights law
- Widening humanitarian funding gaps
- An international peace and security apparatus that may not be adequately equipped to respond to a complex, insecure, and threatening world.

74. In the *Planning from the Future* (2016) report the authors identified that genuine reform, or transformation of the international system could only occur following a major shock.⁴⁵ Authors then acknowledge climate change, the scale of the global refugee and migrant crisis and the changing international order as providing a sufficient shock to enable deep reflection and transformative change. The current context though daunting, presents potential for wholesale change.

75. The Australian Government has a sound opportunity to consider how it will position, influence and invest to contribute to a humanitarian system that is agile, anticipatory, adaptive and accountable. It also has scope to consider Australia's role in the Asia Pacific region in a time of growing complexity, interdependence and transnationalism. There is a mounting need for Australia, with its ties to the Pacific, to advance alignment and integration across a number of policy domains relating to promote human security including: international development, migration/displacement and climate change, with respect to our foreign policy.

76. Though the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade has an existing departmental policy on displacement, it is limited in scope. It focuses on providing assistance only to those persons who are impacted by development-induced displacement.

77. As the Department is aware, migration and displacement have multiple and complex drivers, and are defining characteristics of this century. In the Asia Pacific region there are an estimated 7.7 million displaced persons. They include 3.5 million refugees, 1.9 million internally displaced and 1.4 million stateless people.⁴⁶ There is a need for a whole of department, coordinated policy position on displacement as a consequence of conflict, extreme poverty, violence and climate change (and human rights based approaches to migration/migration management).

78. The Australian and Indonesian Governments have co-chaired the Bali Process since 2002. Despite this ongoing commitment and leadership there has been little progress

⁴⁵ Kent, R. et al. *Planning from the Future: Is the Humanitarian System Fit for Purpose?* viewed at: www.planningfromthefuture.org/uploads/4/5/6/0/45605399/pff_report_uk.pdf (accessed 19 February 2017).

⁴⁶ UNHCR. 2017. *Projected Global Resettlement Needs 2017*, viewed at: <http://www.unhcr.org/protection/resettlement/575836267/unhcr-projected-global-resettlement-needs-2017.html> (accessed 26 February 2017) p 26.

in relation to developing a regional protection or cooperative framework to protect those who have been forcibly displaced.

79. UNICEF Australia notes the potential of the non-binding Regional Cooperation Framework (RCF) drafted by the UNHCR and endorsed at the 4th Ministerial Conference. Should members of the Bali Process want to strengthen their commitment to regional protection, the framework provides a blue print for states to:

- build capacity to process mixed flows of people in the region
- share the collective responsibility for displacement while respecting sovereignty and the national security of concerned States
- address root causes of irregular movement and promote population stabilisation;
- promote orderly, legal migration and provide appropriate opportunities for regular migration.⁴⁷

80. If both nations intend to continue their co-chairing arrangement, consideration must be given to increasing protections for displaced people across the region and providing them with workable interim solutions prior to their resettlement. A number of options to increase the practical protection and support for refugee and asylum seeker children (and their families) in the region are set out in the *At What Cost Report* produced by UNICEF Australia and Save the Children Australia.⁴⁸ Strong emphasis is placed on access to education and health services at a minimum, and securing working rights for young people and parents.

81. UNICEF Australia encourages the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade to engage with United Nations bodies, civil society groups, academics, and senior officials at the Department of Immigration and Border Protection and formalise a dialogue on options to progress a Regional Cooperative Framework.

82. Following on from the Andaman Sea crisis and the subsequent independent review, it would be appropriate for the Australian Government in its capacity as co-chair of the Bali process to open a dialogue on operational planning for future crises where there may be large-scale flight by sea. Such operational planning should set out clear country responsibilities for rescue, and follow up support in the event of an emergency.

⁴⁷ UNHCR. 2010. Regional Cooperative Approach to Address Refugees, Asylum-Seekers and Irregular Movement, viewed at: <http://www.refworld.org/pdfid/4e92d7c32.pdf> (accessed 2 February 2017)

⁴⁸ Save the Children Australia and UNICEF Australia. 2016. *At What Cost? The Human, Economic and Strategic Costs of Australia's Asylum Policies and the Alternatives*, viewed at: http://www.savethechildren.org.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0009/159345/At-What-Cost-Report-Final.pdf (accessed 27 February 2017).

83. UNICEF Australia endorses a recent report⁴⁹ by the Australian Human Rights Commission that provides a suite of practical measures on how Australia can enhance its foreign policy strategies on migration in the Asia–Pacific region by “coordinating development aid, diplomatic efforts and humanitarian response to address the needs of displaced people.”⁵⁰

Priority 3: Children’s participation as a driver and determinant of aid effectiveness.

84. At the Rio +20 Member states agreed, that “sustainable development must be inclusive and people-centred, benefitting and involving all people including youth and children”⁵¹ They further stressed the importance of the active participation of young people in decision-making processes, an intergenerational dialogue.

85. The right of a child to express their views freely and for those views to be heard by decision makers is both an Article (12) and a fundamental principle in the CRC. In *General Comment No.12*, CRC Committee members elucidate the right to be heard as both the right of the individual child and a right of groups of children.⁵²

86. UNICEF Australia notes that states as duty bearers, and development and humanitarian actors as agencies accountable to children, are required to create enabling and safe environments where children can be heard.

87. The voices of children and young people have been invaluable for the development of the SDG’s and will be equally important to (ground-up) monitoring and accountability mechanisms.

88. Unlike other marginalized groups identified in Agenda 2030, children have no existing mechanism in the current ECOSOC system where progress on meeting child related targets can be tracked. The Australian Government could support an annual, regional forum to focus on how children in the Asia Pacific region are faring with regard to SDG implementation.⁵³ In addition to tracking progress, identifying data gaps and reviewing best practice, this exercise would track progress, identify gaps, review best practice, and contribute to a shared learning. Furthermore, it would enable early identification of emerging issues and build and maintain momentum on SDGs for children. Importantly,

⁴⁹ Australian Human Rights Commission. 2016. *Pathways to Protection: A human rights based response to the flight of asylum seekers by sea*, viewed at: http://www.humanrights.gov.au/sites/default/files/20160913_Pathways_to_Protection.pdf (accessed 26 February 2017).

⁵⁰ *Ibid.* p.39.

⁵¹ Resolution Adopted by the General Assembly on 27 July 2012. *The future we want*, view ed at: http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/66/288&Lang=E (accessed 20 February 2017)

⁵² CRC Committee. 2009. General Comment No.12. *The right to be heard*, view ed at: <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/docs/AdvanceVersions/CRC-C-GC-12.pdf> (accessed 19 February 2017) p5.

⁵³ United Nations Major Group for Children and Youth 2016 High level political Forum. 2016. *Leave No One Behind*, view ed at: https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/10112MGCY-HLPF_per_cent_20Paper_per_cent_202016.pdf (accessed 10 February 2017)

it can position young people at the centre of a dialogue as stakeholders, knowledge holders, leaders and entrepreneurs.

89. Children's participation in emergency response has not traditionally featured as a priority for relief agencies. UNICEF has significant global learnings in relation to the fundamental importance of children being actively engaged at every phase of emergency response, particularly following the Asian Tsunami response in 2004.⁵⁴
90. Children and young people make valuable contributions during crises as first responders (in their own communities), carers, peer support and social entrepreneurs. The voices of children have been critical generationally in maintaining peace in post conflict societies. Education is central to this process because it is identity forming for individual children and contributes to state-building over time. Education can equip children with the knowledge and skilling to exercise leadership, problem solve complexity and build cohesive societies.
91. UNICEF research over the last decade indicates that meaningful child participation can increase the quality and reach of emergency response, saves lives and improve the protection of families and whole communities.⁵⁵ Specifically it enhances risk identification, assessments, data collection, program responses, information delivery and ultimately recovery.
92. Involving children affected by crisis in relevant planning and decision-making should a measure in enhancing the accountability and effectiveness of Australian aid. Young people themselves can play a role in participatory monitoring through (I) providing input into what data should be collected and (II) being directly involved in data collection.

Priority 4: Driving change for children through data.

93. The SDG 2030 Framework requires that we have sufficient data sets to ensure that the most vulnerable children are counted. UNICEF knows based on our global programming experience that unmeasured problems frequently go unresolved. When the most vulnerable children fall off our statistical maps, it is impossible to accurately measure progress for them, or to measure equitable development.

⁵⁴ UNICEF. 2007. *The Participation of Children and Young People in Emergencies: A guide for relief agencies based largely on experiences in the Asian tsunami response*, viewed at: https://www.unicef.org/eapro/the_participation_of_children_and_young_people_in_emergencies.pdf (accessed on 10 February 2017).

⁵⁵ Ibid

94. In the *Is Every Child Counted?* Report UNICEF identifies that data availability for over half of the child-related SDG indicators is unavailable, limited or poor.⁵⁶ This means in practice that there is no reliable baseline from which to measure progress for a number of goals. In addition to our own domestic responsibilities in relation to the SDGs, as a leading donor in the region we should cooperate with recipient states to (I) organize existing data sets and (II) and generate (reliable) data and evidence where required. These steps may require a strengthening of our data systems for children and are necessary to create alignment with SDG metrics.
95. UNICEF Australia notes that availability of data sets exists predominantly with OECD country and that there are many missing data points for low and middle-income countries, including Pacific Island Countries.
96. Globally national and international data information systems for children focus mostly on the early years, where data may be available through school attendance. The scope for having more and better information regarding children remains considerable with persistent data gaps in relation to children with disabilities, adolescents, all forms of violence, child labour, and child marriage. Notably, according to the UNICEF Division of Data, Research and Policy identifies that:
- One in three countries does not have comparable measures on child poverty and 77 out of 155 (monitored) countries do not have adequate poverty data.⁵⁷
 - Every child has a right to a name and a nationality however one in four births under the age of five globally is not registered (contributing the population of stateless children).⁵⁸
 - There is a shortage of accurate and comparable data on the number of children with disabilities in almost all countries.
 - Every day over 800 mothers' die of complications related to childbirth, yet there are persistent data caps relating to the quality of maternal care.
 - Stunting denies children a fair chance of survival and development, yet 105 out of 197 countries do not have recent data on stunting.⁵⁹
97. Further there are persistent and critical gaps in relation to gender data⁶⁰:

⁵⁶ UNICEF. 2016. *Is Every Child Counted?*, view ed at: <https://data.unicef.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/SDGs-and-Data-for-Children-Brochure.pdf> (accessed 2 February 2017)

⁵⁷ World Data Forum. 2016. *Fact sheet*, view ed at <http://undataforum.org/WorldDataForum/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Fact-Sheet-20170106.pdf> (accessed 20 February 2017) pp2-3.

⁵⁸ UNICEF. 2017. *The births of nearly one fourth of the global population under five have never been registered*, viewed at <http://data.unicef.org/topic/child-protection/birth-registration/> (accessed 3 February 2017).

⁵⁹ <http://undataforum.org/WorldDataForum/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Fact-Sheet-20170106.pdf>

⁶⁰ *ibid* p.5

- Approximately 120 million girls aged under 20 years are estimated to have been subjected to forced sexual acts. Boys also experience risk, but almost no data is available.
- Only 41 per cent of countries produce ongoing data sets on violence against women. There is a need for OECD Governments as the leading donor countries in particular to consider how new information technologies and existing data infrastructure can be positively leveraged.

98. UNICEF Australia notes the recommendations outlined in the *A World that Counts: Mobilising Data Revolution for Sustainable Development*⁶¹ report and its recommendations in relation to accessible data, data literacy, the importance of measuring progress for all groups (or quality disaggregated data) and data innovation.

10 UNICEF Australia Focal point

99. For further information regarding this submission please contact: Nicole Breeze,
Head of Policy and Advocacy Team, UNICEF Australia [REDACTED]

[REDACTED].

⁶¹ Data Revolution Group. 2014. *A World That Counts: Mobilising the Data Revolution for Sustainable Development*, viewed at: <http://www.undatarevolution.org/report/> (accessed 2 February 2017)