SDG 10.7: CHILDREN AFFECTED BY MIGRATION

At the 2019 High Level Political Forum (HLPF), the overarching theme will be Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality. Additionally, Sustainable Development Goal 10, Reduce inequality within and among countries, is under specific review and thus reporting states will also report on target 10.7 and indicator 10.7.2 relating directly to migration:

10.7 Facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies.

10.7.2 Number of countries that have implemented well-managed migration policies

30 million children live outside their country of birth. Half of the world’s refugees are children. Tens of millions of children are also left behind by migrating parents. Making migration safe and empowering for children and young people is not only a challenge, but a tremendous opportunity. Well-managed migration that both addresses the drivers and mitigates against the risks of migration is at the heart of an equity-focused development agenda. The close link between sustainable development and international migration is also reflected in the Global Compacts for Migration and Refugees. Migrants make a significant contribution to inclusive growth and sustainable development – for instance, remittances are three times greater than official development assistance.

A dedicated focus on children affected by migration is therefore critical to meet the SDGs commitment to leave no one behind. Too often, migrant children are statistically invisible, excluded from national systems and discriminated against. The 2019 review is a not-to-be-missed opportunity to educate, advocate and support states in accelerating progress for all children, including children affected by migration, across the SDG agenda and ensure that migration policies are child-sensitive.

INVESTING IN THE SDGS TO UPHOLD THE BEST INTERESTS OF CHILDREN AFFECTED BY MIGRATION

The in-depth review of SDG 4, 8, 10, 13 and 16 in 2019, as well as of SDG 17 discussed every year, presents a unique opportunity to consider targeted investments across various goal areas that also benefit children affected by migration:

- **SDG 4 – Education:** Children affected by migration face additional barriers to accessing early childhood development, primary and secondary education and skills training. Challenges include lack of capacity in schools, language barriers and lack of recognition of certifications across borders. In crisis-affected communities, education is often the first service suspended and the last service restored. UNICEF encourages Member States to remove barriers to education for migrant and refugee children, ensure safe places of learning, and increase funding to education, including trained staff, to close the access gap and enable schools to foster inclusive learning.

- **SDG 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth:** Three-quarters of the children who arrived in Italy across the Central Mediterranean route during the second half of 2016 report being held against their will or forced to work without pay. UNICEF encourages Member States to strengthen child protection systems, to build the capacity of frontline workers to identify child victims of trafficking and facilitate cross-border cooperation for eradicating forced and child labour, and enact labour migration policies that enable migrant workers to bring their families.

- **SDG 13 – Climate Action:** With the risk and frequency of natural disasters increasing, millions have been uprooted. Today, over 500 million children live in extremely high flood-risk zones and nearly 160 million children live in high or extremely high drought-risk zones. Developing child-sensitive adaption and resilience strategies and integrating displacement considerations into disaster preparedness can protect the most vulnerable, including internally displaced children.

- **SDG 16 – Peaceful Societies:** Tens of millions of children are uprooted from their homes by protracted conflict and can face different risks, including gender-based violence and trafficking. Enabling safe migration channels, allowing families to migrate together, strengthening child protection systems, ending the detention of children and providing identity documents can keep migrant or forcibly displaced children safe and contribute towards achieving target 16.2 and target 16.9. These actions also support SDG 5 – Gender Equality targets to end trafficking and sexual violence.

- **SDG 17 – Partnerships:** The very nature of migration means that no one state can manage it alone. Effective collaboration between governments, private sector and civil society can develop and scale-up solutions to the issues mentioned above. Data is another key component of this SDG, including partnerships and capacity-building to strengthen data collection and dissemination to support target 17.18.
INVESTING IN CHILDREN, ADOLESCENTS AND YOUTH

In addition to the SDGs mentioned above, achieving target 10.7 for and with children affected by migration or displacement, requires policy and financial investments that consider their specific needs across the SDG Agenda, including when investing in SDG 2 (Zero Hunger); SDG 3 (Health) and in particular access to psychosocial and mental health services; SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation); or SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities).

When countries dedicate social spending to strengthening child protection systems, school systems, early childhood programmes and other services to protect and empower migrant children, they establish a foundation of support and care. When countries invest in migrant-inclusive and robust health systems, all children – and society at large -- benefit. Investments are particularly needed to build the capacity of frontline workers, like social workers, teachers, and nurses, to assess the needs and implement standards of care and protection. These investments help realise not only migrant children’s rights and wellbeing, but also the tremendous potential of migration to sustainable development.

KEY ASKS

UNICEF urges governments and partners take the following actions as part of their SDG implementation: Adopt action plans and invest in the implementation of the child-specific commitments in the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and the Global Compact on Refugees.

Implement a six-point Agenda for Action for Children Uprooted:

- Protect migrant children from exploitation and violence by investing in strong local, national and regional child protection systems, including (i) training of social workers; (ii) appointment of qualified guardians; (iii) legal assistance; (iv) case management; and (v) partnerships with civil society and faith based organisations.
- End the detention of children because of their immigration status by introducing practical alternatives, such as foster care, supervised independent living, or other family- or community-based living arrangements.
- Keep families together and reduce statelessness through stronger policies to prevent the separation of children from their families in transit; faster procedures for reunification, including in destination countries; and through providing all children with a legal identity and registering them at birth.
- Provide comprehensive care and access to services for migrant children through strengthening the capacity of education and healthcare systems (supporting SDG 3 - Health and target 3.8 for universal health coverage), enacting referral mechanisms and implementing firewalls between social services and immigration authorities.
- Protect migrant children from discrimination and xenophobia by speaking out against discrimination, regulating hate speech, enacting hate crimes legislation and strengthening the role of human rights institutions.
- Address the causes that uproot children from their homes through policy and financial investments across all SDG areas, e.g., social protection, youth employment, climate action, peace and justice.

MONITORING THE SITUATION OF CHILDREN, ADOLESCENTS AND YOUTH

UNICEF urges governments to collect age- and sex-disaggregated data and report on all children in national reviews, including non-national children. Reports on SDGs should cover key issues relating to children affected by migration, and the data collection and analysis efforts should be coordinated both within countries and across borders, per a recent call to action for better data by UNICEF and partners.

INCLUDING CHILDREN, ADOLESCENTS AND YOUTH

UNICEF urges governments to enable participation by young migrants in designing and implementing migration policies and programmes, and involve them in the monitoring and review process. Participation is key as children’s first-hand experiences can inform and strengthen national priorities to implement the SDGs, including target 10.7 on well-managed migration.

In addition to the importance of the participation of migrants, governments should work with the public and other partners to foster a public inclusive of migrants, starting with educating children, adolescents and youth on inclusivity. UNICEF encourages national partners to implement SDG-focused learning through the school curricula. The World Largest Lesson is an excellent resource to bring the SDGs to the classroom through multilingual educational content, including teaching materials on SDG 10 and target 10.8 (see specific lessons: Children on the move and Migration is Part of our Shared History).

---