

Statement by 64ⁱ Members of the Group of Friends of Children and the SDGs At COP27

Excellencies,

I am honored to deliver this statement on behalf of 64 members of the *Group of Friends of Children and the SDGs*. Since the creation of our Group in 2015, we have continued to advocate for children's wellbeing, child rights as well as children's meaningful participation within the sustainable development agenda in UN intergovernmental processes and beyond.

Today, we address you standing in solidarity with the *most vulnerable* and those *least* at fault for the climate crisis: the world's children. To this end, we call on all of you to reflect on the current state of our planet and to take into account both the current and future generations of children who will inherit this crisis.

As we speak, one billion children – nearly half of the world's children – are residing in countries classified as extremely high-risk to the impacts of climate change. Children are more vulnerable to harm from drought, storms, heatwaves and flooding. The impacts of these environmental shocks last a lifetime, perpetuating and deepening inequality and poverty for generations. Additionally, we remain dangerously off-track to reduce emissions. As we have said before: **the climate crisis is a child right crisis.**

This year marks the 30th anniversary of the UNFCCC Convention. We are at a key moment **to ensure that children are at the center of the climate agenda – in the decisions we take here in Sharm El-Sheikh and the actions, including on national planning, that we will have to take when we return to our home countries.** According to UNICEF's analyses of the latest round of Nationally Determined Contributions, consideration of children's needs and inclusion is increasing, but much more still needs to be done to ensure that climate policies and plans are fully child sensitive.

The *Action for Climate Empowerment (ACE) Plan* provides a critical opportunity to enhance children's education and agency in climate action at all levels. A key opportunity at this year's COP will be for all of us to agree to the development a compilation report on guidelines and good practices concerning child education and empowerment in climate action. However, consideration of children must not stop here – their needs and priorities extend far beyond the Action for Climate Empowerment Agenda. **We need solutions for children, by children.**

At this COP27, we need to increase our focus on adapting the systems children rely on to survive and thrive – especially in the hardest hit countries. These include health, education, nutrition and development. We need to unlock progress on measures to address loss and damage, placing children, such as those displaced by climate-related disasters, at the centre of discussions on action and support.

Climate funding and resource allocation must prioritize children's rights, resilience and needs. And we need to listen carefully to their voices and be accountable to them – at all levels – global and local. This is the right thing to do, and it will make our collective action fairer, more effective, and enduring. The Global Stocktake can play an important role in highlighting what further actions are required for children as a cross-cutting consideration.

As members of the Group of Friends of Children and the SDGs, we hope that you will join this call to drive forward our collective efforts for every child – and in doing so, help achieve the SDGs and goals of the

Paris Agreement for children, and for everyone. This is a decisive moment for the future of our planet. **We need rapid action, and we need it now – the world’s children are counting on us.**

Thank you.

¹ Andorra, Argentina, Armenia, Antigua and Barbuda, Austria, Belgium, Benin, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Croatia, Dominican Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Ecuador, El Salvador, Ethiopia, European Union* (observer), Estonia, Finland, Germany, Ghana, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, Ireland, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Republic of Korea, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Lesotho, Malaysia, Malta, Mexico, Morocco, The Netherlands, Nigeria, Norway, Panama, Pakistan, Peru, Poland, Qatar, Romania, Senegal, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States of America, Uruguay