External Advisors

Soren Ambrose
International Policy Manager of ActionAid International

Roberto Bissio
Executive Director of Social Watch

Michael Cichon
Director, Social Security Department, International Labour Organization (ILO)

Sarah Cook
Director, United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD)

Andrea Cornia
Professor of Development Economics, University of Florence; former Director of World Institute for Development Economics Research of the United Nations University and former Chief Economist at UNICEF

Denys Correl
Executive Secretary of the International Council on Social Welfare (ICSW)

Bob Deacon
Emeritus Professor of International Social Policy, Sheffield University and United Nations University Bruges

Jessica Espey
Development Policy Advisor, Save the Children

Sakiko Fukuda-Parr
Professor of International Affairs at the New School; former Director UNDP Human Development Report Office

Liz Gibbons
Visiting Scientist, FXB Centre for Health and Human Rights, Harvard University and Distinguished Fellow, Kozmetsky Center of Excellence in Global Finance, St. Edwards University; former Deputy Director, Policy and Practice, UNICEF

Amanda Glassman
Director of Global Health Policy and Research Fellow, Centre for Global Development

Duncan Green
Head of Research for Oxfam GB

Ann Jellema
International Director of Policy, Campaigns, Women’s Rights and Education at ActionAid

Sir Richard Jolly
Research Associate, Institute of Development Studies (IDS); former Assistant Secretary General, UNICEF

Steen Jorgensen
Sector Director for Human Development in the Middle East and North Africa Region of the World Bank

Naila Kaaber
Professor of Gender and Development, School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London

Gabriele Koehler
Visiting Fellow, Institute of Development Studies (IDS); former senior staff at UNICEF and UNCTAD

A. K. Shiva Kumar
Visiting Professor of Economics and Public Policy, Indian School of Business and Harvard Kennedy School

Max Lawson
Head of Development Finance and Public Services, Oxfam GB

Nora Lustig
Professor of Latin American Economics, Tulane University; former Director of the Poverty Group at UNDP and Chief of the Poverty and Inequality Unit at the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB)

Allister McGregor
Professor, Team Leader of the Vulnerability and Poverty Reduction Team, Institute of Development Studies

Nuria Molina
Director of Policy and Research, Save the Children

David Mugawe
Executive Director, African Child Policy Forum

Kirsty Nowlan
Director, Public Policy Advocacy & Justice for Children, World Vision International

Thomas Pogge
Leitner Professor of Philosophy and International Affairs, Yale University; Director of Yale’s Health Impact Fund

Frances Stewart
Professor of Development Economics, University of Oxford, and Director of Centre for Research on Inequality, Human Security and Ethnicity (CRISE), UK Department for International Development

Andy Sumner
Fellow, Institute of Development Studies (IDS)

Timo Voipio
Chair, Poverty Reduction Network (POVNET), OECD-DAC Paris, and Senior Adviser for Global Social Policy Finland

Kevin Watkins
Senior fellow at the Centre for Universal Education at the Brookings Institution; former director and lead author of the UNESCO’s Education for All Global Monitoring Report and UNDP’s Human Development Report

DISCLAIMER: The findings, interpretations and conclusions expressed in this report are those of the participants of the consultation and do not reflect the policies or views of UNICEF or of the United Nations. The selection of text in this summary was a choice of the report editors and does not necessarily represent core work of the participants. The text in this document also includes excerpts and concepts from the e-discussion Road to Pratolino, as well as statements made by participants during the consultation.

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From November 2011 to February 2012, UNICEF held a global consultation to identify the upcoming challenges and opportunities for its social policy work, and explore new themes for a forward-looking agenda. The consultation took the form of an open, participatory e-discussion and culminated with a four day meeting in Florence, Italy. The consultation successfully convened a group of prominent external advisors, alongside regional, country and headquarters staff. This report echoes the discussions that took place during those four months of reflection and debate.

Today, as the world is confronted with an economic crisis, growing inequalities and challenges such as climate change, demographic and geopolitical shifts, UNICEF needs to re-energize its strategy to respond in the best interest of children, especially those most disadvantaged. The organization has a tremendous opportunity to make a difference in promoting equitable outcomes for children in all countries, through all its activities. One area in which the organization can achieve this is through its social and economic policy work.

Social and economic policy has a long history in UNICEF, dating back to the 1950s, when renowned economist Hans Singer first made the link between children and economic development, to alternatives to structural adjustment in the 1980s and the current policy advocacy by our economic and social policy officers on national development plans, public budgets, economic reforms, child poverty, vulnerability and social protection. Throughout that time, the organization has consistently underscored how policy decisions and insufficient attention to equity have major consequences for the lives of children.

UNICEF’s work in social and economic policy was institutionalized in October 2004, when a consultation was held in Pratolino, Italy. This brought together UNICEF staff who, through personal initiative and vision, had pioneered social policy work during their career. The purpose of the consultation was to collectively imagine how UNICEF could take the existing, scattered social policy initiatives to organisation-wide scale and – in the context of United Nations reform, the Paris Declaration and changing aid modalities – what this could mean for the world’s children. From the first Pratolino consultation, “Focus Area 5: Policy Advocacy and Partnerships for Children’s Rights” (FA5) was born, and approved by the Executive Board a year later. For the first time ever, UNICEF’s 2006–2009 Medium Term Strategic Plan (MTSP) included a focus area which aimed, among other objectives, to engage the organization in upstream economic and social policy work and to leverage new partnerships and resources for the fulfilment of children’s rights.

The modalities for engaging in upstream policy work were identified as data collection and analysis, and policy analysis and advocacy in macro-level social, economic and judicial policies. While not sector specific in nature, implementation of these modalities creates the enabling environment for achievement of national and international development goals in child survival, education and gender equality, HIV/AIDS and child protection. At the same time, FA5 is a programmatic area in its own right, in which all the modalities interact to advance the universal achievement of women’s and children’s rights.

Further social and economic policy consultations were held in 2006 and 2008. The Pratolino II consultation in February 2006 identified five priorities
for FA5 social policy work in the 2006–2009 MTSP period. This strategic plan was subsequently extended until 2013. These priorities, which have been fostered through a strategic allocation of thematic funding, encompass five substantive domains: child poverty and disparities; social budgeting, together with associated macro-economic frameworks and allocation processes; decentralization; social security/social protection programmes; and holistic legislative reform that incorporate children’s and women’s rights.

In recent years, UNICEF has devoted major efforts to mainstream children’s rights through child-focused development policy, advocacy and partnerships. Since 2004, its work in these areas has expanded massively; for instance, the number of posts for economic and social policy officers increased from less than a dozen in 2004 to 64 in 2007 and rose to 173 in 2011. The organization is currently engaged in social budgeting in 102 countries, social protection in 93 countries, and child poverty/disparities analysis in 54 countries. These initiatives have led to positive policy changes and outcomes for children and their families. Other organizations also recognize the importance of policy advocacy. For example, Save the Children is scaling up and investing in public policy as a distinct area of work to programmes. “Public policy work is expanding in terms of staff, budgets and importance” said Nuria Molina, Director of Policy and Research at Save the Children UK.

Now, seven years after the first consultation took place, Pratolino IV set out to explore new themes for a forward-looking agenda, building on the established social and economic policy work. This report summarises the discussions that took place during these four months of reflection and debate on the importance of investing in economic and social policy work as a catalytic means of achieving equitable and sustainable development for children.

PANEL 1 UNICEF and Social and Economic Policy: Past, Present and Future
Sir Richard Jolly, Honorary Professor and Research Associate, Institute of Development Studies (IDS) and former Deputy Executive Director, UNICEF

UNICEF’s mission has changed significantly since its inception. Originally created to provide humanitarian assistance to children whose lives had been ravaged by WWII, the organization soon realized that while the problems of children in post-war Europe and Japan had been dealt with, children in many parts of the developing world were suffering as badly as any of those children. Early on in its history, UNICEF argued that investment in children is central to economic development, and that for children to receive the priority they deserve, their needs must be part of the economic plans of their countries. This understanding paved the way for UNICEF’s transition from a humanitarian welfare agency to a development agency for children.

A major question for UNICEF in its early days was how to ensure just that: how can children’s issues be brought into a whole development strategy/planning? The first answer to that was the country programme approach, which comprised of three main components: in-country analyses of problems children face; understanding what needs to be done by the country government, NGOs, parents, etc., to solve these problems; and what UNICEF could do with its limited resources to catalytically assist countries.

While Jim Grant was at the helm of UNICEF from early 1980s until the mid-1990s, the organization emphasized the importance of putting children first, arguing that countries should shy away from the idea that only if there is economic growth can resources be allocated for children. He became the leading voice calling for investments in children, advocating that in bad times as well as good, children should have a first call on resources. In the 1980s, UNICEF showed how recession in rich countries can have severe repercussions for children in poor countries. In the renowned study, Adjustment with a Human Face, it demonstrated how it is possible to achieve results for children even during crises and set out specific actions for doing so.

In recent years, UNICEF has stepped up its work on social and economic policy, refocusing its efforts to ensure that public policies give priority to the poorest and most disadvantaged children and families. In this way, UNICEF helps governments realize children’s rights and meet their obligations under the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

In moving forward, UNICEF must use its knowledge of children and fight back in their name. As the global population ages, children are becoming a smaller proportion of the population in many countries. What will that mean for them? We must be bold, determined and passionate to push forward our work. Our cause is not just the cause of children, as if that wasn’t big enough, but it is the cause of civilization.
The Road to Pratolino IV
Suggestions from the blog for UNICEF’s work in economic and social policy

In preparation for the global consultation, UNICEF launched an e-discussion in November 2011 to inform the debate and strategies that would be the focus of the Pratolino IV meeting. This e-discussion, called The Road to Pratolino, provided the opportunity for UNICEF staff as well as external experts to provide their views, contribute, influence and participate in the dialogue. These valuable contributions were presented during the consultation. Below are some excerpts from these rich submissions.

1. Reinforce the centrality of human rights principles to equitable social and economic policy

“This is a time of unprecedented transformation, challenges and opportunities… The origins of the Arab Spring are rooted in long-standing, day-to-day struggles of those living in the region for food, jobs, security, participation and freedom. These unprecedented revolutions united people from all social groups against social and economic systems that created and perpetuated inequalities. The public demands for dignity, freedom, and social justice which rang out in Tahrir Square were echoed across the region.”

– Roberto Benes, UNICEF Regional Office Middle East North Africa

“Thinking of children’s rights over the last 20 years one story stands out: that of Iqbal Masih, who escaped brutal slavery at 10, joined the Bonded Labor Liberation Front of Pakistan, helped free 3000 children from bonded labor, became a worldwide spokesperson against child labor and was murdered in 1995 at age 13.”

– Thomas Pogge, Director of Yale’s Health Impact Fund

“In a moment of crisis which is not just economic and financial but also a crisis of ideas, this debate is encouraging in the amazing way in which the basic principles (human rights, rights of children, equity, sustainable development) have been reaffirmed in order to… provide policy recommendations.”

– Roberto Bissio, Director, Social Watch

2. Be responsive to a volatile, changing world

“This is a time of unprecedented transformation, challenges and opportunities… The origins of the Arab Spring are rooted in long-standing, day-to-day struggles of those living in the region for food, jobs, security, participation and freedom. These unprecedented revolutions united people from all social groups against social and economic systems that created and perpetuated inequalities. The public demands for dignity, freedom, and social justice which rang out in Tahrir Square were echoed across the region.”

– Roberto Benes, UNICEF Regional Office Middle East North Africa

“One very important conclusion of the path breaking Cannes G20 summit was the call made in paragraph 31. ‘We call on international organizations, especially the UN, WTO, the ILO, the WB, the IMF and the OECD, to enhance their dialogue and cooperation, including on the social impact of economic policies, and to intensify their coordination.’

– Bob Deacon, Emeritus Professor of International Social Policy, Sheffield University

“Strengthening UNICEF’s social policy work will require a greater focus on linking social policy actions to results for children. UNICEF needs to foster its capacity not only to react to changes and crises, but also in reading the changes that are about to happen and contribute to agenda setting and prospective planning.”

– Joaquin Gonzalez-Aleman, Ramya Subrahmanian, UNICEF India; Andrea Rossi, UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia; Beth Verhey, UNICEF Nepal

3. Leverage resources for children

“Since the Paris Declaration we donors have committed ourselves to supporting the capacity of the national and local governments to deliver social services — instead of doing the job for them. Development partners are expected to pull out from field level implementation and to focus on policy making and capacity development.”

– Timo Voipio, Chair OECD-DAC POVNET

“The emergence of a larger group of middle income countries means that aid as resource transfer is becoming less significant over time to many countries as domestic resources evolve… child poverty is increasingly turning from an international to a national distribution problem, and means that UNICEF and other donors have an ‘upstream’ role to play as child advocates and increasingly, having difficult conversations on issues beyond money such as governance and domestic taxation and redistribution policies which becoming more important to child poverty reduction than ‘traditional aid’.”

– Andy Sumner, IDS

“How, with our limited human and financial resources, we can influence decision-makers in what can often be a very complex, large, sophisticated, rapidly changing and decentralized context with great disparities?”

– Niloufar Pourzand, Chief of Social Policy and Monitoring, UNICEF Indonesia
4. Refocus on equity in a broad sense

“Equity is a good principle and critical given all we know about where the benefits of growth have fallen but as Sakiko Fukuda-Parr notes — it is an ambiguous term. It is heartening (and important) in this exchange to see the focus on universalism, since there is a risk that discussion of equity might encourage an overly narrow focus on targeting.”
– Paul Dorman, Senior Policy Advisor, Young Lives

“Assessing poverty from only an economic perspective undermines its multidimensional nature. The UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights has defined poverty as: “a human condition characterized by sustained or chronic deprivation of the resources, capabilities, choices, security and power necessary for the enjoyment of an adequate standard of living and other civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights.”
– Beatrice Duncan, Nicolette Moodie and Nicola Brandt, Gender Rights, UNICEF

“Horizontal inequalities… children in groups that are discriminated against or marginalised. For example, children of unscheduled castes or tribes in India; children of minorities in China; indigenous children in Peru; Roma children in Europe.”
– Frances Stewart, Professor of Development Economics, Oxford

“Equity — what are the implications of an equity strategy for macro-policy, tax policy and impact on the upper levels of income distribution, as well as on those in poverty.”
– Sir Richard Jolly, former Assistant Secretary General, UNICEF

“Responding to governments’ requests to support development of overarching child and youth policies provides opportunity to promote an equity-focus… mainstreaming child and youth focused policies across government sectors”
– Mereia Carling, Social Policy Specialist, UNICEF Pacific

5. Promote child-sensitive social protection

“The series of pilot social cash transfer programmes several UNICEF countries manage in East Africa are examples of team work between country, regional and HQ producing evidence for policy advocacy.”
– Roger Pearson, Chief of Research, Policy and Monitoring, UNICEF Ethiopia

“A strong case for a new type of universal child benefit… of course relates to this year’s efforts on social protection floors. It offers a child-centred, equity policy oriented policy instrument – and might be a politically pragmatic approach for high and middle income countries.”
– Gabriele Koehler, IDS

“This is where I think UNICEF has a unique niche, because you are multisectoral, because you are global and because you have a single goal in mind: the well-being of children, you should be the prime promoter of the global social protection floor.”
– Steen Jorgensen, Director Human Development, the World Bank

“Today, with the impact of the economic crisis, the enormous gap in the distribution of wealth, in the income redistribution from the state (through taxes) and in public benefits (through the access to social services) are growing ever wider, reflecting a general trend that is morally unfair, politically unwise and economically unsound. Is social protection the solution to all this?”
– Remy Pigois, Chief of Social Policy, UNICEF Senegal

6. Strengthen UNICEF’s focus on governance, decentralization and closing the implementation gap

“...it would be critical to place governance and decentralization at the heart of UNICEF’s Social Policy agenda, with a view to translate equity-focused social policies into concrete actions and results for children.”
– Mizuho Okimoto-Kaewtathip, Chief, Social Policy, UNICEF LAO PDR

“Achieving equitable outcomes for children is not only about formulating policy goals, plans and strategies (what needs to be done) but just as much about the process of implementing these (how things are done).”
– Natalia Adler, Knowledge Management Specialist, UNICEF Mozambique

“Under our new Social Policy and Governance programme in Vietnam we are making a modest attempt to address policy governance by introducing a ‘Social Audit Approach’ to the monitoring and evaluation of socio-economic development plans, which are at the core of UNICEF support around an integrated approach to children’s issues.”
– Paul Quarles van Ufford, Chief of Social Policy and Samman J. Thapa, Social Policy Specialist, UNICEF Vietnam
7. Retain economic and social policy as a separate, complementary strand of work

“There is a range of areas of cross-sectoral work that would not likely occur if policy work were only conceived of as part of a sectoral approach… this includes partnerships and advocacy with counterparts in IFIs, Ministries of Finance, analysis of economic trends and development of guidance in areas such as social budgeting, social protection, multidimensional poverty analysis and other of the original Pratolino priorities.”

– Erika Strand, Chief, Social Policy UNICEF Mexico

UNICEF’s policy work is essential to contribute to the fulfillment of its mission… and I would like to call your attention to rising food prices.”

– Nora Lustig, former Director at UNDP and the World Bank

“Since 2009, we have worked with six countries across the Pacific to monitor the impact of external economic shocks on the most vulnerable children and women… food prices were cited as the main cause of financial stress for families. Based on this evidence, UNICEF Pacific was able to generate both public visibility and a regional response. Interest in the issue of food prices was immediate and widespread… The experience demonstrated that UNICEF’s ‘upstream’ work can resonate with the public and supporters in the same way that our health, education and programme and emergency work does.”

– Samantha Cocco-Klein, Chief, Policy Advocacy UNICEF Pacific

8. Continue to challenge the prevailing economic and social wisdom

“Now what is required is a reverse mission creep of the social agencies into the territory of the economic. Conventional pure economic analysis and forecasting and modeling have been found wanting. Debates about alternatives are now the order of the day. UNICEF has a long and honorable tradition in this regard.”

– Bob Deacon, Emeritus Professor of International Social Policy, Sheffield University

“At the global level, our voice on the equity agenda last year was powerful. We should continue to contribute at the forefront of development debate, particularly when the post-MDG agenda is being designed, and at a time when global development cooperation seems most at threat from austerity measures, protectionism, and increasing security concerns.”

– Sarah Hague, Chief of Social Policy, UNICEF Burkina Faso

“While there is a lot of good work on macroeconomic policy in DESA, UNICEF is actually quite unique in continuing to focus on the consequences of macroeconomic policy choices on human well being, distribution and poverty. So I do applaud UNICEF’s work on fiscal austerity. Does anyone know any other UN agency that is working on this issue from the human centered perspective?”

– Sakiko Fukuda-Parr, Professor and former Director UNDP Human Development Report

9. Broaden the scope of social policy work to address the evolving challenges of the changing world

“Other emerging issues include young people and their transition from school to the labour market, the situation of vulnerable groups of children that are often being overlooked such as children with disabilities, as well as the implications of climate change.”

– Petra Hoelscher, Social Policy Specialist, UNICEF Namibia

“But that is not enough… international trade and investment policies; agriculture and commodity price policies… land rights; and also… financial flows, and fiscal and monetary policy… The time is ripe for Unicef to move ahead of the curve and speak with confidence, evidence and passion in international fora on international policy decisions that affect the world’s 7 billion people, and the 2.2 billion children among them.”

– Gabriele Koehler, IDS

“UNICEF’s Social and Economic Policy has played an incredibly constructive role, in four different ways: (a) by clearly strengthening the people-centred – or child-centred – focus of its partners’ thinking; (b) by substantially strengthening equity analytics; (c) by successfully challenging and encouraging the IFIs (IMF and World Bank) to join in the brainstorming for a new shared vision of inclusive, equitable and sustainable development ...; (d) fourthly, thanks to its dense country office network and presence in nearly all countries of the world, UNICEF has been able to draw evidence from country realities and to expose the emerging elements of the new thinking for much needed reality checks in country contexts.”

– Timo Voipio, Chair OECD/DAC POVNET
10. Link research, data and evidence, through advocacy and advice, to decisions and policies

“Research is central to credible evidence and hence to effective policy making. [Evidence knowledge / research findings]… should be fed into the decision making space through use of advocacy architecture like networks and national discourse.”
– Usha Mishra, Chief-Policy, Advocacy and Communication Section, UNICEF Cambodia

“We should also, as conditions permit, be supporting the strengthening of civil society such that it can ultimately take over much of the role we currently need to play, which — once it happens — will mean our role will solely be the broker of international knowledge and expertise.”
– Mark Hereward, Representative, UNICEF Azerbaijan

11. Bring child and youth voices to policy makers… and strengthen UNICEF’s advocacy voice

“UNICEF’s leadership in engaging children and youth in policy making is critical. The CRC provides a solid platform to ensure that children and youth have a seat at the policy making table, and that, as key stakeholders, their voices are heard.”
– Rafael Obregon, Chief, Communication for Development Unit UNICEF

“In order to bring these inequalities to public discussion, as a prelude for legislative, policy and civic action, UNICEF needs to develop and/or use its capacity as a political actor, but one with a non-partisan agenda — i.e. the agenda of the child. Sticking closely to UNICEF’s agenda of universal realization of child rights allows it to be political while being seen to be non-partisan. Political work is most successful with allies, be they in the government itself, in the UN system, with churches and other local actors for social justice, media and academia.”
– Liz Gibbons, former Deputy Director, Policy and Practice, UNICEF

12. Be bold, dedicated and determined

“If we want to be relevant, we need to make sure we are bolder in joining the conversation, even when it may be easier to not say or do anything. We need to make sure, just like the time of James Grant, that we are clearly on the side of the poorest and most vulnerable children. And often, especially these days, our voice and moral stand, far outweighs our programme contribution, especially in shaping the longer term agenda for kids and the type of society they will grow up in. And, if not, then we not only risk failing our mandate but like other parts of UN, be perceived as irrelevant.”
– Shantha Bloemen, Communication Chief, UNICEF Johannesburg
Inequality

World inequalities are staggering. In many developing countries, children in the poorest income quintile are still less than half as likely as those in the wealthiest quintile to have benefited from prenatal care; nearly three times as likely to be underweight; twice as likely to die before their fifth birthday; and, among girls, are three times as likely to get married before the age of 18.

Despite rapid economic growth in recent years, benefits have not necessarily reached the poorest in society, nor translated into significant improvements in terms of human development. This reinforces the idea that while growth is important, it is not and should not be the end of development. While inequalities have increased throughout the world, middle-income countries are amongst the most unequal. The Gini range for middle-income countries as a whole is between 27 and 66. The Gini Index for the so-called BRICs (Brazil, Russia, India and China) ranges between 34 and 59 – a considerably higher bandwidth than for OECD countries, which lies between 25 and 41. Moreover, the number of countries considered “middle income” has increased substantially (from 26 in 2000 to over 100 now). Middle-income countries now account for more than 70% of the world’s poor compared with 7% two decades ago. They are home to approximately 1.6 billion children, and 71% of children and youth, as compared to 18% in lower-income countries.

Within the borders of middle income countries, there are pockets of poverty and deprivation that match or sometimes exceed those of low-income nations. Structural inequalities must be addressed to change these realities. Large equity gaps are seen not just in terms of wealth, but also between rural and urban areas, gender, caste and ethnicity disparities in many parts of the world. These can have very large implications for inequities between districts at the subnational level. Social and economic inequalities are interwoven, severely depriving certain population groups and their children from realizing their human rights and human potential.

As more and more countries become middle income, overseas development assistance (ODA) is becoming proportionally smaller than other forms of resource transfer. Growing GDP rates and national income makes development a mat-
ter of redistribution, more than traditional aid’. Most governments now have increased capacity to address the needs of children. While for a long time inequality was considered secondary to issues of growth and poverty reduction, it is now firmly back on the international development agenda. Inequality has become a major issue in development circles, the media and amongst the general public around the world, not the least because inequalities perpetuate poverty, but because societies with high levels of inequality tend not to do well in terms of economic and human development. Not only does inequality slow growth, but it results in health and social problems and generates political instability. Inequality is dysfunctional, and focusing on equity, deprivation and poverty will be crucial in addressing the rights and needs of children in middle-income countries in the 21st century.

**Food, Fiscal and Financial Crises**

The last few years have witnessed a sequence of crises which have been unparalleled in the past half century. Available evidence suggests that poor and vulnerable children and households continue to be hard hit on three key fronts: (i) the cumulative and protracted effects of high local food prices; (ii) increasing levels of unemployment and stagnant or falling real incomes; and (iii) eroded government services as a result of fiscal austerity. As a result of the recent food price hikes alone, approximately 44 million people have been pushed into poverty. Given the cumulative effects of the multiple shocks since 2008, evidence indicates that many poor and vulnerable families have exhausted their coping mechanisms and are experiencing deepening hardships. This can have severe and irreversible consequences, especially for infants and young children. Some of the transmission mechanisms by which the global economic crisis is affecting children of poor families in the developing world are:

**Hunger and malnutrition.** In 2012, local food prices are at near record levels in many countries, especially lower-income. A recent paper from the Policy Analysis Section in UNICEF’s Division of Policy and Strategy showed that populations in a sample of 55 developing countries are paying 80% more for basic foodstuffs compared to three years ago. Where disaggregated information is available on price increases in poor areas, such as the slums in Nairobi, it shows that prices for foodstuffs in these areas increased even more than the national average. The increases have been particularly steep in Sub-Saharan Africa and the CEE/CIS region.

Higher food prices, coupled with fewer and lower-paying jobs, have limited household spending on food. As families purchase smaller quantities and cheaper food items—sometimes reducing food intake to just once a day instead of three times—and smaller, less nutritious portions, rising risks of hunger and malnutrition have been reported across developing regions. Households at high risk appear most likely to modify their dietary intake. Available evidence also suggests that children and women are bearing the brunt of alimentary cutbacks.

**REGIONAL SPOTLIGHT** The poor often seek non-formal private care, as demonstrated in several countries in the **East Asia and Pacific Region.** In Cambodia, for example, 45% of the poorest quintile use non-formal private care, while only 22% use the public sector and 33% use the private sector. In Indonesia, 34% of the poorest quintile use non-formal private care, while only 31% use the public sector and 35% use the private sector. However, it remains clear, if we are to address inequity in access to health care, we need to start looking at ways to ensure adequate standards of care are met across different types of service delivery.
Unemployment and fewer decent jobs. A recent World Health Organisation (WHO) survey found that nearly half of the African countries surveyed indicated increases in unemployment rates since the onset of the crisis. Of the 102 countries with updated data, 35 of them continue to have high unemployment rates, with rates surpassing 20%, such as in Macedonia and South Africa. Youth unemployment remains stubbornly high at 12.6% in 2011, a full percentage point above its 2007 level. Regional variations are large: the advanced economies have been hit hardest, with the number of youth unemployed increasing by 27% between 2008 and 2011, more than five times greater than the rise in the overall unemployment rate over the same period.

Contracting budgets and austerity measures. After a brief period of fiscal stimulus, budget cuts are widening and deepening across developing countries: 91 governments are expected to reduce public expenditures in 2012 and 29 are expected to undergo excess contraction, defined as cutting expenditure below pre-crisis level, which puts the achievements of the MDGs at risk. Initial indications are that these budget cuts are resulting in lowered social sector allocations, with possible negative impact on children. A WHO study found that 37% of countries examined in Africa indicated that their health budget had been cut as a result of the current crisis. Similar trends are also observed in the education budgets of many countries. Experience with previous crises suggests that health and education expenditure cuts and lower utilization of social services have serious implications for child and maternal nutrition and health outcomes.

Poor health and weakened access to basic and maternal health care. Additionally to public

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**REGIONAL SPOTLIGHT** The West and Central African Region appears to be suffering from a persistent growth-poverty reduction ‘disconnect’, despite robust economic growth in the past decade. Growth, even during the economic crisis, remained positive (recording the lowest level in 2009 at 2.7%). However, growth has not been sufficiently inclusive or employment-generating.

**REGIONAL SPOTLIGHT** CEE/CIS was hit the hardest by the financial and economic crisis. In many countries, large groups of population are highly vulnerable to shocks, mainly due to low family incomes but also other forms of deprivation – vulnerability was compounded by multiple crises.

**REGIONAL SPOTLIGHT** In the Middle East and North Africa, the Arab Spring overlapped with the impact of the crisis, creating severe economic impact on several countries (such as Egypt, Tunisia, Yemen, Syria, and Libya)

**REGIONAL SPOTLIGHT** The Latin America and Caribbean Region survived relatively unscathed by the crisis, at least partially due to an effective set of countercyclical policies and social protection systems; in fact, income inequality has been decreasing in the region, unlike much of the rest of the world.
budget cuts, families have less money to spend on healthcare and service utilization. This is particularly the case amongst the poorest households.

**Lower school attendance and higher risk of child labour.** An increase in school absenteeism has been observed in a wide range of countries. As budgetary resources are diminishing and teachers’ pay losing value, schooling costs tend to rise, even in countries that have taken steps to eliminate fees. The increasing need to supplement household income has forced many families to put their children to work. Higher rates of child labour have been widely documented.

**Higher risk of domestic violence and unsupervised children.** An additional risk is that financial stresses can increase domestic violence rates. Moreover, the prevalence of children being left at home unattended and unsupervised has also likely increased. In extreme cases, children are reportedly increasingly being abandoned in orphanages and care centres.

**Greater vulnerability to future shocks.** As purchasing power and government support are eroded, households have increasingly resorted to selling assets and borrowing money in order to pay for basic goods and services. Since 2008, families have drawn down savings, sold household possessions such as livestock, and turned to relatives, community groups and, in some cases, banks for financial help. Unfortunately, these important informal safety nets for the poor are easily exhausted, increasing their vulnerability to prolonged or renewed shocks.

**Social instability.** The global crisis has led to an outbreak of protests and civil unrest worldwide, further threatening household well-being. The International Labour Organization’s *World of Work Report 2011* warned that social unrest is being aggravated in 45 of the 118 countries studied.

**Demographic Shifts**

While crises and volatility characterize some global trends, other long-term ones are emerging. Changing demographics affect the very structure of countries and have significant implications, not just for policy, but also programmes and service coverage. Since 1998, the number of young people globally has increased by 157 million (or almost 15%) due to demographic shifts (youth bulge). Around the world, many young people have been left out of the benefits brought by economic growth. The youth unemployment rate is approximately 2.6 times the adult unemployment rate. This is not automatically explained by lack of education; the current generation is more educated than the earlier one but finds less demand for labour. Youth unemployment and poor future career prospects contributes to civil unrest, protests, and political instability, as recently illustrated by recent events in the Middle East and North Africa.

Moreover, in some parts if the world populations are growing at fast rates. In Western and Central Africa, the ‘doubling time’ of the population is up to two times faster than in South Asia and Latin America, and twelve times faster than in Europe. This is likely to sustain very high child dependency rates (reflecting the proportion of children that need to be supported by the working-age population) for a few decades to come in that region. By 2020, 49% of the population will be urban. Faster urbanization rates are also occurring in the countries facing faster population ‘doubling time.’
The urbanization trend is widespread; we are living in an increasingly urban world. Approximately 1 billion children and youth globally (or around 45% of all children) live in urban areas, and this number is growing. Every year, the world’s urban population increases by approximately 60 million people. By 2050, 7 in 10 people will live in urban areas. Most of this growth is taking place in middle-income countries. Asia is home to half of the world’s urban population and 66 out of the 100 fastest-growing urban areas, 33 of which are in China alone. Urban children are particularly at risk of the food price crisis, due to their reliance on the market and cash economy, limited access to agriculture, and compounding effects of the financial crisis and unemployment. This calls for new tools, techniques and data to uncover hidden pockets of vulnerable populations no matter where they are.

We also live in an increasingly mobile world. Today, approximately 214 million people, or around 3 percent of the world’s population, live outside their countries of birth. Climate change, economic crisis and political conflict have encouraged international migration and urbanization. A considerable number of these people are youth. There are 49 million migrants under the age of 25 representing around 23 percent of the total migrant population. Migration and inequality seldom occur separately; lack of opportunities and unemployment may push youth to migrate. Others flee their countries of origin because of natural disasters, persecution, armed conflict, and other violent threats.

Young migrants face difficulties for accessing good and equal education, health care, jobs, social security and opportunities. Implications for children left behind by migrating parents vary – studies have found that they may benefit from the economic pay-off but suffer a social and psychological trade-off. The main drivers of migration have an underlying common denominator: human rights deprivation and exclusion, particularly for children and adolescents.

**Climate Change**

Climate change poses one of the most serious threats to children in the coming decades. The paradox behind climate change is that even though it is the poor who contribute least to the problem, they will bear the heaviest burden. Poor countries consume the least amount of energy, and yet have the least ability to respond and manage natural disasters, floods, and other implications of climate change. As such, it will be even harder for the poorest families to escape poverty; in fact, climate change is a serious risk to poverty reduction and threatens to undo decades of development efforts.

Moreover, environmental degradation limits people’s capabilities in many ways, going beyond incomes and livelihoods to include impacts on health, education and other dimensions of well-being. Populations in developing countries – in particular the poorest – depend heavily on agriculture, the most climate-sensitive of all econom-

**REGIONAL SPOTLIGHT** In South Asia, enrolment in school has increased significantly over the last decade, but still 33 million children of primary school age are out of school, 65% of whom are girls. Across the region, a child from the richest quintile is 31% more likely to attend primary school than a child from the poorest quintile. The region also has the highest rates of early marriage in the world: 49% of women aged 20–24 married before age 18. In rural areas, this figure climbs to 58%. In Bangladesh, 2 out of every 3 young women marry before age 18.
ic sectors, while often have no adequate access to health care and other essential social services. Children, in particular, are disproportionately affected by poverty and are especially vulnerable to climate change because of their time-sensitive developmental needs and their greater exposure and sensitivity to nutritional, health and protection risks, as well as their dependence on caregivers for appropriate preparedness and response.

Policy coherence will be essential to addressing climate change and its negative impacts. Assessing risk and addressing the underlying risk factors open opportunities to support and protect poor people’s livelihoods and assets, preventing them to fall deeper into poverty. Social policy has a crucial role in adaptation and mitigation, and building resilience, as well as in the transition to a green economy. The underlying objective of a green economy is to secure the economic, social and environmental prospects and well-being of future generations. This makes it a perfect complement to the child rights agenda.

The right set of policies can strengthen incentives for environmental management while ensuring the poorest and most vulnerable aren’t burdened with the weight of the transition. As Sarah Cook, Director of UNRISD, pointed out, it is imperative to understand that there are limits to market-centred approaches that have been proposed. Approaches to the green economy that centre on the commodification of nature, or “selling nature to save it,” can be highly problematic from a social perspective.

Since poverty is multi-dimensional, it requires looking beyond income poverty lines, and including economic and social well-being, issues of dignity, freedoms, democracy, equality, empowerment and aspirations. Green policy strategies that address poverty in this way include social protection schemes that are connected to the environmental conservation and restoration in which everyone can derive equal economic benefits; policies that guarantee transparent community participation in decisions related industries; and policies that provide disadvantaged people with the opportunities to build local capacity and fully engage in the ‘green economy’.

However, we have to be careful to avoid what Sarah Cook called a ‘triple injustice’. Poor children are not only likely to be most harmed by climate change, but are also least responsible for causing it. Certain approaches to green economy transition run the risk of converting this ‘double injustice’ into a triple injustice when the costs of transition negatively impact low income groups.

Transformation to a greener model of growth is crucial, but it must be inclusive, environmentally sustainable and socially-oriented. As the world turns to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) in June 2012, new opportunities will emerge to ensure the rights of children in the transition to a green economy are protected. Unless social dimensions are addressed more centrally and comprehensively, there is a danger that efforts to connect green economy, sustainable development and poverty eradication will fail.

**REGIONAL SPOTLIGHT** Torrential rains, tornadoes, cyclones, droughts, and famine are no strangers to children in regions such as South Asia. These catastrophes destroy livelihoods, homes, schools and infrastructure and cause havoc in the lives of children and women when they strike.
Human Rights

As a human rights-based organization, and as mandated by the Convention on the Rights of the Child and other relevant international rights treaties, UNICEF’s ultimate goal is the realization of the rights of all children. Human rights and child rights principles thus guide the organization’s work in all its activities. As such, UNICEF understands the ultimate purpose of development to be the realization of the human rights of every girl and boy, woman and man, without exception. Through a human rights-based approach, UNICEF seeks to analyze inequalities which lie at the heart of development problems and redress discriminatory practices and unjust distributions of power that impede development progress.

This type of approach is crucial to achieving sustainable progress and results with regard to equity. The situation of deprived children, and the structural causes of exclusion and poverty, cannot be addressed without providing those children with a voice and space to participate in decisions affecting them. Moreover, if inequities are to be overcome, those with the power to shape lives must be accountable to the most deprived.

UNICEF recognizes that in order for the rights of all children to be fulfilled, it is essential that governments—the primary duty bearers of children’s rights—are actively engaged. In this sense, policy analysis is an essential aspect of UNICEF’s work on behalf of children and women. By analysing economic, social and legal policies, the organization can better understand the circumstances and forces that affect the well-being of children and women around the world. From this analysis, it can determine whether, for example, poverty, poor health or the absence of legal protection are being adequately addressed, and in turn develop new policy approaches and actions to improve the results of economic, social and democratic governance programmes and policies for children. In this way, UNICEF helps governments meet their obligations under the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Furthermore, having strong roots in the human rights framework increases the effectiveness of social policies (see Panel 2). This type of framework is important because it requires the active involvement of multiple stakeholders and duty bearers, such as governments, civil society, agencies, and families, that are necessary to fulfill the rights of children. It provides a clear justification for pushing for policies for children, even when rights cannot be legally enforced or fulfilled presently. When a right is recognized, it opens up the possibility and the obligation for society to realize it, regardless of how long it takes for it to be fulfilled. UNICEF’s social policy work can support those who have obligations to respect, protect and fulfil children’s rights by helping them develop their capacities to do so, and those with rights to develop their capacity to claim them.
Identifying the Poorest and Most Deprived

Over the past couple of years, UNICEF has re-focused its work on issues around equity, trying to reach the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children. UNICEF’s social and economic policy has played an incredibly constructive role in the equity-related work, in several different ways, including drawing from a dense network and presence in nearly all countries of the world to analyze the situation of the poorest children.

Addressing inequities begins with identifying the poorest and most marginalized children and communities. Disaggregating national data to identify these groups, examine the types and the extent of the deprivations they experience, and to assess the factors that exclude them are fundamental to designing equitable development policies and programmes. UNICEF-supported multiple indicator cluster surveys (MICS), along with United States Agency for International Development-supported Demographic and Health Surveys, provide a unique opportunity for identifying the most disadvantaged children by generating data for more than 100 development indicators disaggregated by factors such as geographic location, wealth quintile, sex, religion, language, ethnicity and educational attainment. Since 1995, UNICEF has played a leading role in data collection, supporting nearly 230 MICS surveys in more than 100 countries, providing a unique source of statistically sound and internationally comparable estimates for a range of indicators at national and subnational levels in the areas of child and maternal health, nutrition, education, child protection, water and sanitation and HIV/AIDS.

The potential for further advancements in data collection is growing rapidly. New technologies are facilitating more rapid and extensive real time data collection for and by poor and marginalized communities. UNICEF recognizes these new opportunities, particularly relevant to its equity approach, and continues to make progress on efforts to leverage advanced technologies and new methods to monitor social vulnerability. UNICEF, in partnership with the Institute of De-

REGIONAL SPOTLIGHT In the Middle East and North Africa, multidimensional disparities analysis has been systematically adopted by UNICEF Country Offices, involving partners to analyse children’s situation and create policy changes. In Morocco, for example, multidimensional child poverty was institutionalized as a Government measurement methodology. In Iraq, UNICEF supported the government in the preparation of Governorate equity profiles and developed a methodology for equity-based analysis of MICS data.

REGIONAL SPOTLIGHT In CEE/CIS analysis within country systems was institutionalized to reveal disparities and vulnerability, and link with advocacy. For example, based on evidence provided by a UNICEF Child Poverty Study, the Ukrainian government added child poverty as a national MDG indicator for the first time in 2010.

REGIONAL SPOTLIGHT In West and Central Africa, all countries are conducting equity analysis, including real time monitoring in Senegal, and an integrated data management system in Cameroon.
To be effective, social policies must be strongly grounded in the human rights framework. While most policy makers are convinced that poverty and inequality must be reduced, it is still not clear how. A human rights framework is useful because fulfilling the rights of children necessarily requires the active involvement of multiple stakeholders, such as governments, civil society, agencies, and families. Many of the gains for children cannot be achieved by governments alone; multiple actors are needed. This type of framework is also important because human rights exist whether or not makers and interpreters of law have had the opportunity to reflect these rights in actual legislation. Thus, even if these rights cannot be legally enforced or fulfilled in the present, they are still rights, just simply unrealized. When a right is recognized, it opens up the possibility and the obligation for society to realize it, even if it takes a while for its fulfillment.

One of the first requirements of sound social policy is to be a supporter of a rights-based framework. Moreover, social policy should advocate for universal rights and universal coverage. To tackle discrimination in practice, differentiated strategies and approaches within the notion of universal coverage are needed.

Furthermore, in order to be effective, social policy has to realize the interconnectedness between achievements in the different sectors (health, education, water, etc.) and the overall progress of nations. When social policy gets compartmentalized into those sectors, this narrow, sectoral perspectives makes for simplistic, reductionist solutions, leading to preoccupation with technical solutions, and supply-side input-driven interventions (e.g., health, targets of reduction of mortality rate, etc.). These interventions are important, but alone will not yield desired outcomes, namely improved social determinants. For social policy to be effective, changes that are taking place in society must be tracked, and a proper understanding of the social context in which social policy takes place must be developed.

It is also important to recognize power imbalances, understand and address the political economy of public decision-making in order to frame social policy in an effective manner. For this, the question of how agencies influence the politics of policy-making, and how to politicize social issues must be addressed. Public debates, pre-legislative processes, and countervailing forces should be encouraged in order to foster a healthy discussion on what the implications of social policies are.

Finally, in order to be effective, social policy needs a long-term time horizon. Governments and international agencies many times work on short-term goals, but the impact of sound policies may take years to manifest.
It is increasingly evident that compartmentalizing children’s needs through the pursuit of sector-specific targets is insufficient to address the full gamut of their rights—in effect, to take account of a concept advanced by UNICEF itself several decades ago, the whole child. To do so necessitates addressing issues of childhood and pre-adulthood that may fall outside of the current remit of international development goals, and that need to be articulated in the new set of targets currently being formulated in the nascent discussion on the post-2015 international development agenda. The whole-child view is more equitable than compartmentalized or sector-based development goals, as it recognizes that deprivations of children’s rights are more likely to occur simultaneously and to be more serious in socio-economically disadvantaged groups. Only a whole-child approach, which recognizes the interaction of multiple deprivations in myriad ways, can accurately measure the much greater impact of deprivations among social disadvantaged children and the nature of interventions that are required.

Mainstreaming children’s rights into national development plans

As soon as the link between children and economic development was made, it became clear that infusing children’s priorities and rights into national development plans was a critical strategy towards ensuring accountability, sustainability, as well as leveraging resources for children. It is also fundamental to a human rights-based approach, where duty bearers are accountable to rights holders, and rights holders are able to claim their rights. In many countries the main reason why some children are consistently excluded is not lack of resources but rather the lack of attention to the most disadvantaged in high-level policy plans and statements. Hence, in countries with capacity to make and implement their own policies, upstream influencing is necessary to achieve greater equity results for children.

UNICEF is in a unique position to help bring the issues of the most disadvantaged children into national policy planning, as well as facilitate active and meaningful youth participation in those processes. Institutional arrangements or policy regimes vary across countries because they are a product of (i) competing values and social norms; (ii) differences in the weights accorded to market and non-market institutions in coordinating activities; and (iii) differences in power structures and institutions which have evolved historically. UNICEF should not only focus on identifying vulnerabilities, but also on influencing decision-making processes, including macroeconomic and sectoral policies, institutional capacity, financing options, and implementation arrangements that work for children.

Case Study: Child Poverty Analysis in China

Analysis of child poverty has benefited millions of poor children in rural China. The Government of China provides special funds for poverty-stricken districts, focusing mainly on promoting job and income generation. But investments in rural social development have been quite modest. In 2007, UNICEF collaborated with the State Council Leading Group Office of Poverty Alleviation and Development (LGOP) to alleviate child poverty. Under this partnership UNICEF was able to convince the Government to look at child poverty as distinct from adult poverty; conduct research to understand the child poverty situation in China; and design and pilot schemes that identify the dynamics of child poverty alleviation at the local level. As a result of this initiative, from 2011 child poverty will now be included in the new Ten-Year National Rural Poverty Reduction Strategy (2011-2020). A pilot province (Hubei) and an earthquake-hit district have also incorporated child components into their Rural Poverty Reduction Strategy (2011-2020) and Social Economic Development Plan (2011-2015).
The organization has been working with governments to identify policy options that promote child poverty reduction, social inclusion, resilience and equity, presenting alternative policy options for social and economic recovery. In mainstreaming children’s rights and priorities into national political agendas, UNICEF works at several different stages of development planning. This involves utilizing data gathered to perform a diagnosis of social and economic issues affecting children; reviewing effectiveness of current policies; identifying alternative options; examining and influencing budgets to identify fiscal space and financing sources; assisting effective implementation and linking programmes to a multi-annual budget; and monitoring and evaluating the impacts of policies and programmes. Throughout the process, the inclusion and meaningful participation of children is essential. All parts of this process are crucial for the insertion of children in national agendas, and thus the full realization of children’s rights. It is imperative that this work be push forward and remain a major focus of the organization.

As stated by Liz Gibbons, former Deputy Director of UNICEF’s Division of Policy and Practice, in order to bring inequalities into a public discussion, as a prelude for legislative, policy and civic action, UNICEF needs to use its capacity as a political actor, but one with a non-partisan agenda—i.e., the agenda of the child. Sticking closely to UNICEF’s agenda of universal realization of child rights allows it to be political while being seen as nonpartisan. Political work is most successful with allies, as they are in the government itself, in the UN system, with religious institutions and other local actors for social justice, media and academia.

**Social Protection**

Social protection is a crucial policy and programming tool for addressing equity. It strengthens the capacity of families to care for their children and removes barriers to accessing services while reaching those who are the most vulnerable. It thus helps even the playing field and contributes to a fairer distribution of resources.

Social protection systems are considered critically important because they aid in consumption smoothing during times of economic shock and also prevent vulnerable populations from resorting to coping mechanisms that may...
UNICEF is scaling up and strengthening social protection policies in Mozambique. This includes supporting the Government to determine the costs of various policy options as part of the UN’s Social Protection Floor Initiative. Demonstrating that financing more ambitious policy options is feasible has helped expand the scope of the existing cash transfer programme. Now families will receive a higher amount each month, and child-headed households and alternative care families will also receive cash transfers. This policy will assist more than 450,000 families in securing food and basic services. The costing model has also helped stop the scale-up of unsustainable and inefficient fuel and food subsidies that were proposed in response to the global economic crisis.
its Social Protection Strategic Framework. The framework lays out UNICEF’s approach to social protection, as well as key principles that guide its work, including nationally led, integrated systems and the progressive realization of universal coverage. UNICEF’s Social Protection Strategic Framework promotes the development and strengthening of integrated social protection systems as a highly effective approach for addressing the multiple and compounding vulnerabilities faced by children and families.

Leveraging Resources for Children

From its early years, UNICEF has worked to ensure that children’s priority needs have a first call on resources in bad times as well as in good. This concept is known as *First Call for Children*. In the 1990s, UNICEF advocated for innovative ways of leveraging resources needed for children, calling for restructuring of existing spending in countries, combined with aid budgets allocated to the same priorities. Over the years, social and economic work in UNICEF has assisted governments in identifying and better allocating resources for children, particularly the most vulnerable. Building on field experience and working in alliance with other United Nations agencies and partners in academia and civil society, UNICEF has worked to stimulate dialogue around macroeconomic and sector policies that guide national frameworks, legislative reform and budgetary allocations that contribute to fulfilling the best interest of the child.

The need for such work is more pertinent today than ever as in many parts of the developing world children and poor households are being hard hit by the cumulative effects of the continued high food prices, economic slowdown and fiscal adjustments. Many governments are facing increased social demands yet decreasing fiscal resources to address them. UNICEF has been working within countries to provide ongoing technical assistance to partner with governments in education, health, social protection and socio-economic policies.

**REGIONAL SPOTLIGHT** In *West and Central Africa*, UNICEF succeeded in leveraging resources through policy advocacy. For example, in Mali, this work contributed to the government’s decision to increase the 2011 education and health budgets by 20% and 12% respectively.

**REGIONAL SPOTLIGHT** In *Eastern and Southern Africa*, the typical policy leverage ratio for investing in children is about 8-10 times our own spending.

**REGIONAL SPOTLIGHT** In *CEE/CIS*, leveraging resources extended beyond national governments. For example, in Kyrgyzstan, UNICEF leveraged EU funding to support the introduction of a new cash benefit for poor families with children and other interventions in preventative social services for children.
In trying economic times, as the organization’s resources become more limited, working with governments and partners to leverage resources for children and families is crucial. Since the Paris Declaration, donors have committed themselves to supporting the capacity of national and local governments to deliver social services instead of doing the job for them. Development partners are striving to pull back from field level implementation and to focus more on strengthening national policy making and capacity development.

UNICEF has been supporting governments to maximize resources for children, assisting in identifying funding sources and fiscal space, creating consensus around the need to invest more in children, and using public finance policies to achieve sustainable progress in the fulfilment of children’s rights. It has assisted governments in finding alternatives to the argument that social and economic investments that benefit children and poor households are not affordable, and tried to show that government expenditure cuts are not inevitable during adjustment periods. Even in the poorest countries there are alternatives, such as re-allocating public expenditures, increasing tax revenues, or adopting a more accommodative macroeconomic framework.

For instance, taxation is a key source of domestic revenue available to governments. Judiciously expanding the tax base and increasing tax compliance ensuring that there is a net welfare benefit to the poor, are important potential strategies to mobilize resources for sustained social spending. Many developing countries are financing social and economic development taxing natural resources extractive industries; for example, Mongolia finances a child benefit from mineral exports. In Mozambique, UNICEF has assisted in building the investment case for children through emerging opportunities in the extractive industries, ensuring that natural resource revenues result in social programmes for children.

The need to increase fiscal space for social and economic investments has never been greater. Just at a time when populations are most in need of public assistance, fiscal contraction is intensifying and spreading quickly across the developing world. Given the significance of public investment in enhancing the prospects for equitable, inclusive economic growth and social development, including achievement of the MDGs, it is critical that governments explore options to ramp up social spending and employment-generating economic investments in support of the recovery. Assisting governments to identify fiscal space for children is thus a main avenue of future policy work for UNICEF.

Similarly, UNICEF is working in several countries analysing budgets, understanding and preparing...
senting patterns of allocations and helping to more effectively channel resources for children, women and poor families. It is engaged in this type of work in 102 countries. While specific initiatives vary from country to country, the several common goals, such as improving equity, efficiency and stability of allocations, contribute to stronger public finance policies for children. In undertaking social budgeting initiatives, UNICEF works with governments, civil society, other development agencies, and the donor community to help ensure that national budget and policy priorities reflect the country’s commitment to ensure the fulfilment of its children’s rights.

UNICEF can achieve much in terms of leveraging resources through its social policy work. A marginal improvement in public budgets can lead to large impacts for children, especially as compared to UNICEF’s own resources. Even in the most supported countries, a 2 percentage point increase in government budget would outweigh UNICEF’s total spending.

**Good Governance and Accountability for Children**

In many parts of the world, grassroots movements are demanding more social justice, equality and accountability of governments. This has involved masses of people, including children and youth, pouring into the streets, protesting and expressing, in different ways, their concerns. Lack of accountability, accompanied by high levels of unemployment, inequalities and lack of social justice in general, can undermine social cohesion and stability. Growth and development will have to be adjusted to facilitate social and economic change.

Social policy and good governance go hand-in-hand. Social policy is just as much part of identifying policy options that benefit children, as it is about ensuring institutions function well so that those policies are implemented correctly. Governance, however, is broader than social policy. Governance is about ensuring that the institutional and political environment is conducive to the development and implementation of effective social policies. It is not, however, only about governments. Governance is about the political arrangements whereby people try to live well together in society. Making governance work better for children involves persuading actors at all levels to act in ways that recognize children’s rights.

A related trend that matters enormously for good governance and equity for children is decentralization, as it is happening throughout the world. Decentralization is the process through which the central government transfers all or part of the decision-making, responsibilities and authority to regional, provincial or local authorities (districts, municipalities and communities). It is based on the notion that local bodies, as opposed to a central governing body, are better able to understand and be more responsive to the needs of the local population. It is presumed to bring positive outcomes in both democratic and developmental terms. The motivations behind decentralizing public services include, among others, increased participation and thus deepened democracy; improvement in the quality of services provided; greater accountability; and improved efficiency and equity. Such positive claims have given rise to a trend towards decentralization in many countries around the world. Yet poorly-designed decentralization schemes can put a greater burden on already marginalized populations.

**REGIONAL SPOTLIGHT** In CEE/CIS, collaboration with IFIs yielded important results. In Tajikistan, UNICEF’s engagement with the IMF was instrumental in protecting critical social spending for children during the crisis. In Macedonia, UNICEF supported the first electronic data system to register interventions by the Centres for Social Work linked to a World Bank sponsored database on social transfers.
Decisions about government and governance should involve meaningful participation of children and youth. Children and youth participation is not only important for good governance, it is one of the guiding principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Children have a right to participate in decision-making processes that may be relevant in their lives and to influence decisions taken in their regard. Participation is also important in advancing positive and holistic child and adolescent development.

Understanding these trends and the importance of child participation is crucial for UNICEF as it can advance this fundamental right by promoting institutionalization (as opposed to ad hoc) of children and young people’s participation in policy development and community life. UNICEF can further promote capacity building of children and adolescents in order to provide them with skills, confidence and maturity for expressing their views and influencing decisions. It is similarly important for UNICEF to understand how to engage in decentralization processes in a way to help improve equity in service delivery for the most disadvantaged children.

**Partnerships**

UNICEF has never worked alone. It is strongest when it works with partners to advocate for the rights of children and families. The challenges facing children and families cannot be met, or at least not as effectively, by individual governments and development agencies alone, without the active involvement of civil society, nongovernmental organizations, the private sector, and other committed players. It is thus important for UNICEF to continue to have positive, productive and coherent partnerships with others without losing its identity and voice. Moreover, it is important that the organization becomes more strategic with its partnerships, especially in times of diminishing resources, when it is pushed to achieve more.

**International Financial Institutions (IFIs)**

Given UNICEF vast presence in the field and expertise on social issues, UNICEF is well positioned to strengthen dialogue and where feasible collaboration with the IMF, World Bank and regional development banks in order to assist governments to design and implement equitable policies that benefit poor households. This type of collaboration was seen, for example, when UNICEF engaged with the IMF in

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**Case Study: Policy Reforms in Serbia**

An assessment of the social impact of a proposed tax reform helped prevent 50,000 people in Serbia from slipping into poverty. To overcome the effects of the global economic crisis, the Government of Serbia considered a variety of measures, including an increase in the Value Added Tax. An analysis of the announced tax reform was conducted by UNICEF in 2010, highlighting the potential negative effects of the proposed changes on the most vulnerable groups, particularly families with children. Overall, it was estimated that during 2010 the combined effects of the economic crisis and tax reform could push the proportion of households living in absolute poverty above 9 per cent. The analysis also estimated that child poverty among children aged 15 and under could increase by 10 per cent. This analysis enabled UNICEF to open a public debate, involving the Ministry of Finance and international financial institutions. These high-level discussions explored the possible costs and benefits of the proposed reform and called for more evidence on its potential impact on vulnerable children and families before proceeding. The original tax reform proposal has yet to be enacted, preventing 50,000 people in Serbia from slipping into poverty. At the same time, UNICEF and partners have put forward child-sensitive tax reform options for policymakers.
11 countries in 2009–12 to try to mitigate the impact of the global economic crisis on children and women. Since the 1980s, UNICEF has engaged with the IFIs, advocating for children’s rights. The current challenges make the time ripe for UNICEF to move ahead of the curve and speak with confidence, evidence and passion about policy decisions that affect the world’s children.

Civil Society

Past decades have seen immense growth in the amount, diversity, quality and influence of civil society organizations (CSOs) at the global, regional and national levels. Civil society deepens and enriches policy dialogue through research, analysis, and advocacy. By raising awareness around children’s issues and proposing innovative policy solutions, civil society actors mobilize political and public support for policies that promote the interests of children and women. UNICEF has an extensive country presence and particular type of access to governments and policy forums that civil society organizations many times cannot match. On the other hand, CSOs have deep community links and the ability to mobilize. By working together, UNICEF and CSOs can make a real difference for children.

UNICEF has a major role to play in helping citizens hold their governments accountable. In many situations, inequalities are not related to income, but to social status, to gender, participation, and discrimination. Civil society plays a significant role in pressing for the fulfillment of children’s needs and rights, and it is more effective when it is well informed and equipped with sound evidence and arguments.

UNICEF has formal agreements with hundreds of NGOs and individual leaders in 160 countries around the world, ranging from large networks, such as the Save the Children Alliance, to village water committees. An opportunity for UNICEF is to develop analytical tools that assist CSOs in identifying and advocating on inequities and social exclusion. It is thus crucial for UNICEF to continue to promote civil society’s active involvement in national initiatives, engaging in child-friendly budgeting and legislative reform.
Social and economic policy work is focussed on strengthening the capacity of governments, agencies and societies to realize children’s rights. This area comprises four key components: the first is data collection, analysis and dissemination; the second, policy analysis and technical advice on economic and social policy and issues. The third is advocacy to inform national policy and expand fiscal space for children; fostering partnerships and civic participation by children and young people is the fourth. The work of UNICEF in this area ensures that governments and donors have a long-term vision for meeting children’s rights under the Convention on the Rights of the Child and through the Millennium Development Goals, and that these priorities are specific, measureable and reflected in legislation, systems, policies, programmes and budgets.

With most of the poor now living in middle income countries, and the limited scope for programmes within those countries, the case for focusing on policy analysis, advice and advocacy has never been stronger. Billions of children – particularly the poorest and most marginalized – are being left behind by recent world trends, and the disparities in key human development indicators among and within countries remain daunting – and in many countries are widening. Enhancing capacity in policy analysis, high-quality technical advice and advocacy, at both the global and national levels, and strengthening linkages between policy advocacy, strategic partnerships and programmatic action on specific sectors and issues, will be critical to the success of the UNICEF refocus on equity.

The challenge of our generation is how to make globalization fairer, greener and more sustainable, in the context of the global economic crisis and concurrent austerity drive, which is squeezing resources for development. Our changing world necessitates renewed and intensified efforts to tackle the primary global risks to development, which include, among others, escalating food prices, sluggish labour markets, climate change, rapid urbanization, migration, social exclusion, and widespread perceptions of unfairness and injustice in many countries. There is evidence of a new willingness among policymakers to seek fresh approaches to the world’s challenges, and place greater emphasis on sustainability and equity in the post-2015 global development agenda.

Role for UNICEF

UNICEF has a long history of creating opportunity out of crises. The organization’s efforts to position children at the centre of development policy and planning, particularly in response to the structural adjustment policies of the 1980s and 1990s, had a tremendous impact. Now, given its strong acumen in data collection, analysis and dissemination; in economic and social policy work in low- and middle-income countries; and in strategic partnerships with non-governmental organizations, other agencies and international financial institutions, UNICEF is better positioned than ever to do the same.
**Identifying the poorest:** Addressing inequities begins with identifying the poorest and most marginalized children and communities. Disaggregating national data to identify these groups, examine the types and the extent of the deprivations they experience, and to assess the factors that exclude them are fundamental to designing equitable development policies and programmes. Since 1995, UNICEF has played a leading role in data collection, supporting nearly 230 MICS surveys in more than 100 countries, providing a unique source of statistically sound and internationally comparable estimates for a range of indicators at national and subnational levels. Complementing the work on identifying the poorest children through data collection, analysis and dissemination, the organization’s work on child poverty and disparities in 54 country-offices examines material deprivations in seven critical dimensions: health, nutrition, education, water, sanitation, information and shelter. Furthermore, analysis of multiple overlapping deprivations in these areas is being undertaken in a number of countries, and is beginning to identify more clearly than ever before the extent to which millions of children are denied their rights in many dimensions.

**Mainstreaming children in National Development Strategies and policy reforms:** UNICEF refocus on equity, aiming to lift the most vulnerable children out of poverty, comes at a critical juncture in the organization’s history. A growing number of developing countries are making the transition to middle-income status, and as they do so, policy advice, advocacy and partnerships are increasingly becoming a primary function of UNICEF work. More and more, governments are requesting technical assistance to support national plans. For example, as a result UNICEF analytical work, the Government of China has included child poverty in the new Ten-Year National Rural Poverty Reduction Strategy (2011–2020) for the first time, to ensure the survival, development and protection of millions of children. Assessing the distributional impacts of policy reforms is fundamental to child-sensitive policy making and UNICEF has produced a guidance note with the World Bank; in Serbia, an assessment of the social impact of a proposed tax reform helped prevent 50,000 people from slipping into poverty. Currently, the organization is engaged in legal, institutional and sector policy reforms in 124 countries. Investment in the catalytic economic and social policy work of UNICEF has yielded tangible returns for children – as shown recently by country experiences presented in UNICEF’s *Policy Matters* and *Lessons Learned* compendiums, in work presented at this global Consultation and at the regional level in regional management teams.

**Leveraging resources for children:** Numerous examples from the field show that investing in economic and social policy work is cost-effective for UNICEF, enabling it to maximize its contribution to sectoral programmes and helping ensure that public policies prioritize children. For example, in the Eastern and Southern Africa region, each dollar that UNICEF spends on social and economic policy advocacy typically generates a return of 8–10 times the investment in terms of additional national public expenditure on social sectors related to children. Increasingly, the strength of UNICEF will be in leveraging national resources for children, providing technical assistance, including assisting governments to identify new sources of fiscal pace for children. With national incomes and
private financial flows to middle- and low-income countries growing at a far faster rate than official development assistance, UNICEF resources represent a minute and decreasing share of the total resources needed to address the rights and needs of children. For that reason, the organization’s work on public policy is central to meeting the UNICEF mission for children today – and even more so in future.

Social protection: UNICEF is a global broker on social protection, with 124 programmes in 93 countries, in conjunction with key partners such as ILO. Evidence shows that that social protection is a powerful tool to reduce poverty/inequalities and increase utilization of social services. The development of social protection floors across the globe has been endorsed by the G20 as a necessity to diminish the negative outcomes of shocks. UNICEF is a main partner of the Social Protection Floor initiative and implementing it is critical to bolster the resilience of poor households and children.

The Way Forward: Investing in Data, Analysis, Policy Advise, Advocacy and Partnerships for Children

UNICEF has an enormous opportunity to achieve even greater results for children at scale by building on the strong base of social and economic work that already exists, strengthening:

Data collection and analysis: Deepen understanding of childhood deprivation through enhanced collection, analysis and dissemination of data, and through analyses of global, regional and national economic and social trends, strategies, deprivations and disparities within countries, regions and at the global level. Without the key role of UNICEF in compiling, analysing and disseminating global data, the development community would be unable to assess progress against global development goals and targets. Few people realize the extent to which UNICEF efforts contribute to this global public good.

• Ensure continuity and roll-out of Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS)
• Promote real-time data collection to allow for timely and adequate policy and programmatic responses
• Analyse multiple deprivations affecting children to identify and understand vulnerabilities
• Monitor emerging trends that threaten children’s lives such as high food prices, fiscal crisis, etc.
• Strengthen country Situation Analysis (SitAns)

Policy Advice: Advance the policy advisory capacity of UNICEF, and its ability to provide technical support to and advocacy with Governments, partners and sectoral colleagues on issues important to equity and children, and ensure that national development plans and budgets provide adequate resources to meet children’s rights. UNICEF has a tremendous opportunity to make a difference in promoting equitable results for children, particularly in several core areas:

• Support governments to fulfil their obligations under the Convention on the Rights of the Child through sound policy-making
• Assess effectiveness of existing economic and social policies to promote child wellbe-
ing and equity, identify gaps, and provide alternative policy options

• Assist governments to adequately cost social programmes and identify sources of fiscal space for equitable investments for children
• Design/scale-up cash transfer schemes and support the development of social protection floors

Policy Advocacy: Enhance UNICEF voice as a national, regional and global advocate for child-friendly policies, promoting investments on children – including the most disadvantaged – with Ministries of Finance, Planning and others, and awareness on the urgency to address child rights violations.

• Strengthen dialogue with relevant audiences
• Ensure UNICEF credibility by generating and communicating relevant evidence/research
• Engage with strategic partners and networks that form a broad base for advocacy

Investing in data, analysis, policy advise, advocacy and partnerships for children in UNICEF will require the following internal institutional actions:
(i) Expanding the number of social and economic policy officers;
(ii) Retraining of existing staff to ensure strategic engagement with governments and other partners;
(iii) Strengthening linkages between Headquarters, Regional and Country Offices, as well as between Program and Policy Divisions, to ensure timely and coherent responses;
(iv) Providing funds for identifying/implementing innovative policy options for child equity;
(v) Expanding strategic alliances and partnerships in order to coordinate development efforts and mobilize additional resources;
(vi) Strengthening UNICEF’s profile as a global leader in social and economic policy for children.

Partnerships: Further develop UNICEF country office relations with ministries of finance and planning, international financial institutions, sector ministries, statistical agencies, and civil society organizations through technical support, policy guidance and advocacy, to promote the rights of children, particularly the most disadvantaged. Partnerships with civil society are core to UNICEF’s mission, not only essential in promoting policy change, but also in monitoring and implementing programmes that follow from them. Participation, one of the guiding principles of the Convention, is important in advancing positive and holistic child and youth development. UNICEF aims to advance this fundamental right by promoting the participation of children and young people at all levels in policy development, and especially through their civic engagement.

UNICEF’s vision is inspiring. As stated by Max Lawson, Head of Policy and Advocacy at Oxfam, it is about speaking truth to power. It’s about pushing forward a positive vision of what a good society should look like – a just society that looks after the poor. And now is the time. We are at an incredible moment in history – a moment of change. UNICEF needs to be bold, dedicated and determined. There are also lots of victories to be won for the world’s children, particularly for the most disadvantaged. Investing in social policy, advocacy and partnerships is a crucial means to achieving them.
V | Outcome Statement

Statement of Participants in UNICEF’s IV Global Economic and Social Policy Consultation (‘Pratolino IV’)

Meeting in Florence on 21-24 February 2012, representatives from UNICEF country and regional offices from all continents, UNICEF departments and external experts, considering a four-month e-consultation with all UNICEF country offices and a distinguished panel of 24 senior advisors, state that:

Economic and social policy is an established, expanding area of UNICEF’s work and a critical catalyst for achieving equitable development for children

Social and economic policy has a long history in UNICEF. From the 1950s when renowned economist Hans Singer first made the link between children and economic development, to Adjustment with a Human Face’s alternative to structural adjustment in the 1980s, to the current policy advocacy by our economic and social policy officers on national development plans, public budgets, economic reforms, child poverty, vulnerability and social protection, the organization has consistently underscored how policy decisions and insufficient attention to equity have major consequences for the lives of children.

After four days of reflection and debate on the importance of investing in economic and social policy work as a catalytic means of achieving equitable and sustainable development for children, UNICEF staff and external experts came to a consensus on the key messages and the main directions recommended as follows:

• The Pratolino IV participants consider national social policies to be a fundamental building block for the realization of children’s rights and the achievement of equitable development. A primary purpose of the economic and social policy function is to ensure that national governments have ownership of a long-term vision for meeting children’s rights, especially those related to the most vulnerable, and that these priorities are reflected in legislation, systems, policies, programmes and budgets.

• Together with sectoral colleagues, economic and social policy officers work to embed in national policy proven, cost-effective interventions for children; explore policy options that promote the rights of all children; and leverage resources for all children – especially the most disadvantaged. Specific actions supporting governments include analyzing policy implications of multi-dimensional child poverty and disparities; analyzing the impact of reforms and external shocks, such as those arising from the food and economic crises; technical support to design and scale up social protection policies and programmes; and leveraging national resources and fiscal space for sustained investments in basic services for children.
More and more governments are requesting these types of support, and UNICEF has become a partner of choice in shaping national economic and social policy. Currently, the organization is engaged in social budgeting in 111 countries, in social protection in 88, in child poverty and disparities analysis in 55, and in pro-children equitable policy reforms in 44. In response, the number of posts for economic and social policy officers increased from less than a dozen in 2004 to 64 in 2007, and rose to 173 in 2011. Investment in UNICEF’s catalytic economic and social policy work has yielded tangible returns of improved policies and outcomes for children, as shown by country experiences presented in the Policy Matters magazine, in country and regional presentations made during the Pratolino IV meeting, and at regional level in the RMTs.

Examples from the field show that investing in policy is cost-effective for UNICEF, enabling it to maximize its contribution to sectoral programmes and helping to ensure that public policies prioritize children. This orientation is crucial for middle-income countries since UNICEF typically cannot afford to cover every social sector with a dedicated staff member. For example, in Ecuador, a $250,000 investment in a Fiscal Observatory led – with partner efforts – to a 400% increase in the national health budget. In Mali, UNICEF’s policy advocacy contributed to the government’s decision to increase the 2011 education and health budgets by 20% and 12% respectively. In the Eastern and Southern Africa region, the typical policy leverage ratio for investing in children is about 8-10 times our own spending. In Kyrgyzstan, UNICEF leveraged EU funding to support the introduction of a new cash benefit for poor families with children and other interventions in preventative social services for children. Equally importantly, UNICEF’s analysis and technical advice has increasingly led to better and more equity-focused use of national resources. For instance, in South Africa, a UNICEF-commissioned study on child benefits led to government support for more than 1 million children who had been previously excluded for mainly administrative reasons.

The Pratolino IV participants also note that policy work is a critical element of UNICEF’s future work, particularly as more developing countries move to middle-income status and make gains for children but fail to narrow social gaps. Increasingly, UNICEF’s strength will be in leveraging resources for children, providing technical assistance and advice, and advocating for the most disadvantaged children, in addition to providing some services ourselves.

With national incomes and private financial flows to middle- and low-income countries growing at a far faster rate than official development assistance, UNICEF’s own resources represent a minute and decreasing share of the total resources needed to address the rights and needs of children. In summary, the Pratolino IV participants conclude that work on public policy is central to meeting UNICEF’s mission for children today – and even more so in future.
Economic and social policy work at the field, regional and global levels

National economic and social policy officers

At the field level the economic social policy function serves two purposes. The first is to directly support programme sections to pursue scaling up strategies/approaches for better child outcomes. Economic and social policy officers work directly with colleagues in child protection, education, health, HIV and AIDS, nutrition, and WASH and their partners to ensure that the coverage of programmes is expanded to reach a large group of children – well beyond what UNICEF’s support alone could achieve – in the shortest possible time. Our value-added is specifically around leveraging funding from the State, private sector and other non-state actors, to facilitate scale up proven interventions for achieving child outcomes, systems strengthening, monitoring and evaluation.

A strong focus of our work centres on supporting the extension of vital services and systems to the poorest and most disadvantaged children and families. For example, economic and social policy officers work with education and nutrition colleagues to help government provide core early childhood development services for the poorest children at scale in many countries. We also advocate to the Ministry of Education to spend more resources on children in poorly-performing school districts, and assist Ministries of Finance in reallocating financial resources in support of high-impact health and nutrition interventions. In child protection, economic and social policy officers work with child protection colleagues and government officials to provide adequate financing and support for community care workers looking after the most vulnerable children, including those affected by the HIV pandemic. These are but a few examples of the broad scope of economic and social work at the field level.

The second broad function is ensuring strategic policy choices by the State that address the needs of vulnerable children and families. These include expanding social protection to vulnerable children and families; addressing service delivery bottlenecks that cut across several government departments; ring-fencing the social sector budget to avoid periodic cuts; and supporting governments to rigorously evaluate and improve at-scale programmes for child well-being. Economic and social policy officers work closely with the National Treasury or Ministry of Finance and the Planning Commission in scores of countries to ensure that government budgets prioritize the reduction of equity gaps in services that children receive – including efforts to address some of the underlying causes of vulnerability in society. Experience shows that this secondary function yields more benefits for children than any project approach can, both in the short and long term. Many countries have made a lasting impact on child survival and other aspects of children’s development because proven, high-impact interventions were implemented at scale for all deprived areas and groups, supported by adequate leveraging of national resources.
Regional and global economic and social policy advisers

Regional economic and social policy advisors support the country offices in all aspects of their work in these areas. Meanwhile, the economic and social policy global team in UNICEF HQ provides guidance on all key areas and through its catalytic role in policy analysis on global trends and issues, such as child-centred deprivations, food prices, the economic crisis and policies for equity. The global team also provides an enabling framework of collaboration with key partners such as the international financial institutions and the donor community.

Key strands of economic and social policy work

ANALYSIS

• Analysis of Child Poverty and Disparities. Economic and social policy work identifies where the most vulnerable and deprived children live, and in which dimensions they may be deprived through child poverty and disparities analysis. It then explores policies and resources allocations that address these deprivations, highlighting opportunities for responsive national efforts.

• Monitoring and Responding to Emerging Trends. The world is increasingly volatile, and children are directly affected by higher food prices, financial crisis, climate change and other trends. Responding to these trends requires economic and policy work that conducts careful monitoring, and advises governments to undertake child centred, national-level response policies.

• Advancing Situation Analysis. Economic and social policy officers make and/or mobilize core contributors to the SitAn, and facilitate critical strategies e.g. convincing Ministries of Finance to co-author reports and take key responsibility for follow up.

ADVICE

• Mainstreaming children’s rights in national strategies, policies and programmes. Complementing the work of sectoral colleagues, UNICEF economic and social policy work seeks to place children’s issues high on the agenda of the Ministries of Finance, Planning, and the line ministries. Key areas of work include cross-cutting issues such as gender equality, child rights legislation, the impact of user charges and budgets, and emerging threats and risks to children’s health, education, protection and participation related to economic and political shocks.

• Advising on child-sensitive social protection and policy reforms. Governments adapt their policies to changing conditions and priorities. UNICEF economic and social policy work in the field advise governments on how to shape that adaptation to ensure that public policies work in the
best interest of children, with a particular focus to scaling up social protection systems; ensuring that economic and social reforms do not have negative impacts on children; producing evaluations that generate evidence on impact and/or on need for adjustment; and making sure that policymaker and donors are aware of results.

ADVOCACY

• *Leveraging and mobilizing resources for children, to the maximum extent possible.* UNICEF’s economic and social policy work advocates governments on how to scale up resources for children, and create fiscal space for necessary investments in health, education, nutrition, social protection and services. This upstream advisory function is often extremely cost effective, with low outlays leveraging large resources in investments for children and poor families.

• *CRC reporting and compliance.* As part of UNICEF’s mandate, social policy work aims to support governments as they strive to maintain their commitments to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and support efforts to report child rights violations.

• *Policy advocacy to a broad audience.* Economic and social policy work provides a wide range of instruments for policy advocacy, from child rights observatories to child rights indices and social protection policy frameworks. Working with national and local partners, including CSOs, economic and social policy officers make the case for public policies, budget allocation, legislation and its enforcement, and administration that best serve children’s rights.

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

• *Working with international financial institutions.* In many countries, UNICEF is collaborating with the IFIs and large donors such as the EU to ensure that national development plans, adjustment programmes, poverty reduction strategies and annual budget allocations reflect the imperative of meeting children’s rights, particularly the poorest and most marginalized. This work is complemented by increasingly cooperative engagement on these issues at the global level as well.

• *Working with civil society.* UNICEF country offices work with civil society organizations to formulate equitable policies for children and jointly generate data and analysis, research and policy recommendations.
A forward-looking economic and social policy function in UNICEF

The Pratolino IV participants believe that there is an enormous opportunity to achieve even greater results for children at scale by building on the strong base of economic and social policy work that already exists. This aim must be fourfold:

1. **Analysis**: Deepen understanding of childhood deprivation through analyses of trends, strategies, deprivations and disparities within countries (advancing UNICEF’s Situation Analysis), regions and at the global level.

2. **Advice**: Deepen understanding of childhood deprivation through analyses of trends, strategies, deprivations and disparities within countries (advancing UNICEF’s Situation Analysis), regions and at the global level.

3. **Advocacy**: Continue to serve as a national, regional global advocate for child-friendly policies, promote investments on children – including the most disadvantaged – with Ministries of Finance, Planning and others, and promote awareness on the urgency to redress child rights violations. Our advocacy must also strengthen in emerging areas of work, such as extractive industries, urbanization and the impact of climate change on children.

4. **Strategic Partnerships**: Further develop our relations with Ministries of Finance, International Financial Institutions and civil society organizations through technical support, policy guidance and advocacy, to promote the rights of children, particularly the most disadvantaged.

The Pratolino IV participants see two broad advantages to such an approach, bringing a substantial contribution to the organization’s strategic goals.

- One advantage for UNICEF is tactical: supporting sectoral programmes with social and economic policy is a good way to maximize investments and outcomes for children, and ensure that gains are protected against emerging risks. Only policies, legislation and budgets that are centred on children as a high priority can guarantee that progress will be sustainable.

- There is also a strategic advantage: the better governments function, the more they become reliant on social and economic policies to spur sectoral engagement. Social policy work has not only helped to generate more public finance for children, but it has also assisted governments in spending this more wisely on proven programmes to improve children’s lives. Maximizing the impact of available resources is imperative in these fiscally straitened times.

- Solutions that economic and social policy work has provided, including social protection, are increasingly accepted as cost-effective measures to spur equitable investments in human de-
Development and progress towards the Millennium Development Goals. Evidence on the impact of UNICEF-supported and leveraged social protection programmes points to significant gains in child protection, educational attainment and child health. Further, the financial assistance social protection provides often serves as a key lifeline supporting livelihoods and local economic development.

The Pratolino IV participants believe that to realize the full potential of economic and social policy work, and to stay relevant as more and more developing countries transition to middle-income status, UNICEF must invest further in this area. With greater resources and attention applied to this function and better deployment, with closer integration with sectoral work, and with enhanced cross-country sharing of validated lessons learned in the policy field, UNICEF could begin to further assert its unique contributions in the fiscal arena, and help to close the implementation gaps in service provision and create protective environments for children. Further, UNICEF will need to create the evidence and policy foundations for emerging areas of work such as extractive industries, urbanization, migration, youth, demographic transitions, the green economy and the impact of climate change on children and livelihoods in poor communities.

Finally, UNICEF has been nominated as the lead UN agency on the issue of inequality for consultations on the post-2015 international development agenda. This affords us an opportunity to help shape this agenda for children, particularly the poorest and most disadvantaged. We are in a strong position to fulfil this role, building on the base of what already exists, deploying our economic and social policy capacities to help ensure that equitable investments in the social sectors – particularly for the poorest and most vulnerable children and households – become core to Millennium agenda, both now and in the post-2015 era.
DAY 1: TUESDAY 21 FEBRUARY
EXTERNAL PERSPECTIVES

POLICY CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES: EXTERNAL PERSPECTIVES

Welcome and opening remarks
Richard Morgan, Director, DPP, UNICEF

Keynote Presentation/Discussion: Reflections on policy for children – Past, present and future
Presenter: Sir Richard Jolly, Honorary Professor and Research Associate of the Institute of Development Studies at the University of Sussex

Suggestions from the blog for UNICEF’s work in economic and social policy
Presenter: David Anthony, Chief, Policy Advocacy Policy and Practice, UNICEF

The evolving agenda of inequality: Managing crisis and promoting equitable outcomes for children
Presenter: Allister McGregor, Professor, Institute of Development Studies
Discussant: Isabel Ortiz, Associate Director Policy and Practice, UNICEF

Addressing policy priorities for children: Key action areas
Presenter: Nuria Molina, Director of Policy and Research, Save the Children
Discussant: Richard Morgan, Director, DPP

Effective policies to reduce child poverty and inequities
Presenter: Shiva Kumar, Professor of Economic and Public Policy, Harvard Kennedy School; and Visiting Professor, University of Hyderabad
Discussant: Jingqing Chai, Chief, Social and Economic Policy Analysis, DPP UNICEF

Launch: UNICEF’s Social Protection Framework

Engaging in national policymaking processes
Presenter: Steen Jorgensen, Sector Director for Human Development in the Middle East and North Africa region, World Bank
Discussant: Christian Salazar, Deputy Director, PD
DAY 2: WEDNESDAY 22 FEBRUARY
PERSPECTIVES FROM UNICEF’S REGIONS

POLICY CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES: REGIONAL PERSPECTIVES

**Perspectives from ESARO and WCARO**
Presenters: Gaspar Fajth, Regional Social Policy Officer, ESARO; Shalini Bahuguna, Chief, Social Policy, UNICEF Nigeria
Discussants: Lisa Kurbiel, Social Policy Officer, UNICEF Mozambique; Gustave Nebie, Chief, Social Policy, UNICEF Mali

**Perspectives from EAPRO and ROSA**
Presenters: Mahesh Patel, Regional Social Policy Officer, EAPRO; Andrea Rossi, Regional Social Policy Officer, ROSA
Discussants: Richard Bridle, Representative, UNICEF Cambodia; Joaquin Gonzalez-Aleman, Chief, SPPME, UNICEF India

**Perspectives from TACRO, CEE/CIS and MENA**
Presenters: Enrique Delamónica, Regional Social Policy Officer, TACRO; Roberto Benes, Regional Social Policy Officer, MENA; Sonia Ruiz Bunschwig, Regional Social Policy Officer, CEE/CIS
Discussants: Layle Moshiri, Representative, UNICEF Tajikistan; Susana Sottoli, Representative, UNICEF Mexico, Leonardo Menchini, Chief, SPME, UNICEF Egypt.

**Working Groups**
Future Vision, Internal Organization, Evidence and Data. Medium-Term Strategic Plan (MTSP)
DAY 3: THURSDAY 23 FEBRUARY
OPERATIONAL ISSUES TO STRENGTHEN THE POLICY FUNCTION IN UNICEF

PUTTING CHILDREN AT THE CENTRE OF THE EMERGING POST-2015 AGENDA

Report Back on Working Groups
Presenters: Richard Bridle, Lisa Kurbiel, George Laryea-Adjei, Enrique Delamonica

UN Ideas that Changed the World
Presenter: Sir Richard Jolly, Honorary Professor and Research Associate of the Institute of Development Studies at the University of Sussex

Gender and Rights
Presenter: Rina Gill, Associate Director, Gender Rights & Civic Engagement, UNICEF

Children, sustainability and the post-2015 agenda
Presenter: Sarah Cook, Director, United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD)
Discussant: Evgeny Stanislavov, Senior Advisor, UN & Intergovernmental Affairs, GMA

Rights, gender, adolescents and youth
Presenter: David Mugawe, Director, African Child Policy Forum
Discussant: Judith Diers, Chief, Adolescent Development and Participation, DPP

Perspectives from High Income Countries
Presenter: Chris De Neubourg, Chief of Social Policy
Discussant: Bo Viktor Nylund, Senior Adviser, PFP

Building the investment case for children: Emerging opportunities in the extractive industries
Presenter: Lisa Kurbiel, Sr. Social Policy Specialist, UNICEF Mozambique

Working Group Discussion: Operational strategies to strengthen the policy function in UNICEF
DAY 4: FRIDAY 24 FEBRUARY
REVIEW AND NEXT STEPS

Research for Social Policy
Presenter: Gordon Alexander, Director, Office of Research, UNICEF

The Importance of Policy Advocacy
Presenter: Max Lawson, Head of Advocacy and Public Policy, OXFAM, GB
Discussant: David Anthony, Chief, Policy Advocacy, Policy and Practice, UNICEF

THE WAY FORWARD

Summary of emerging areas of consensus; Key issues going forward; Strategies and ways of working for Focus Area 5/Social and Economic Policy in UNICEF

Feedback from Groups: Mahesh Patel, Rina Gill, Gaspar Fajth, Roberto Benes, Enrique Delamonica

Why Social Policy and Governance for Children Matter to UNICEF
Presenter: Julianna Lindsey, Chief Advocacy, Communications, M&A, UNICEF Ghana

Closing remarks
Enrique Delamonica, Regional Social Policy Advisor, UNICEF TACRO
Steen Jorgensen, Sector Director for Human Development in MENA, World Bank
Max Lawson, Head of Policy & Advocacy, Oxfam
Richard Morgan, Director, Division of Policy and Practice, UNICEF
Geeta Rao Gupta, Deputy Executive Director, UNICEF (via teleconference)
Isabel Ortiz, Associate Director, Division of Policy and Practice, UNICEF
Mahesh Patel, Regional Social Policy Advisor, UNICEF EAPRO

Moderator: David Anthony, Chief, Policy Advocacy, Policy and Practice, UNICEF
## Conference Participants

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<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
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<tr>
<td>Gordon Alexander</td>
<td>Director, Office of Research Innocenti, UNICEF Florence</td>
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<tr>
<td>Allyson Alert</td>
<td>Editor, Innocenti Research Center, UNICEF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Anthony</td>
<td>Chief, Policy Advocacy, Division of Policy and Practice, UNICEF</td>
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<td>Shalini Bahuguna</td>
<td>Chief, Social Policy, UNICEF Nigeria</td>
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<td>Prerna Banati</td>
<td>Senior Planning Specialist, UNICEF Florence</td>
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<td>Roberto Benes</td>
<td>MENA Regional Social Policy Advisor, UNICEF</td>
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<td>Richard Bridle</td>
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<td>Sonia Ruiz Brunshwig</td>
<td>CEE-CIS Regional Social Policy Advisor, UNICEF</td>
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<td>Jasmina Byrne</td>
<td>Child Protection Specialist, UNICEF Florence</td>
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<td>Jingqing Chai</td>
<td>Chief, Social Policy and Economic Policy Analysis, DPP, UNICEF</td>
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<td>Michael Cichon</td>
<td>Director, Social Security Department, International Labour Organization</td>
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<td>Enrique Delamonica</td>
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<td>Judith Diers</td>
<td>Chief, Adolescent Development and Participation, UNICEF</td>
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<td>Susan Durston</td>
<td>Associate Director, Education Cluster, UNICEF</td>
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<td>Paloma Escudero</td>
<td>Advocacy Focal Point, Spanish National Committe, UNICEF</td>
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<td>Gaspar Fajth</td>
<td>ESARO Regional Social Policy Advisor, UNICEF</td>
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<td>Patrizia Faustini</td>
<td>Senior Communication Assistant, UNICEF Florence</td>
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<td>Joaquin Gonzalez-Aleman</td>
<td>Chief, Social Policy, Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation, UNICEF India</td>
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<td>Adriano González-Regueral</td>
<td>Representative, UNICEF Guatemala</td>
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<td>Rina Gill</td>
<td>Associate Director, Gender Rights &amp; Civic Engagement, UNICEF</td>
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<td>Jean Gough</td>
<td>Representative, UNICEF Occupied Palestinian Territory</td>
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<td>Richard Jolly</td>
<td>Research Associate, Institute of Development Studies (UDS)</td>
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<td>Steen Lau Jorgensen</td>
<td>Sector Director, Human Development, Middle East and North Africa Region, World Bank</td>
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<td>A. K. Shiva Kumar</td>
<td>Visiting Professor of Economics and Public Policy, Indian School of Business and Harvard Kennedy School</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lisa Kurbiel</td>
<td>Senior Social Policy Specialist, UNICEF Mozambique</td>
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<tr>
<td>Catherine Langevin-Falcon</td>
<td>Chief Publications, Division of Communication, UNICEF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Laryea-Adjei</td>
<td>Chief Social Policy, UNICEF South Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Max Lawson</td>
<td>Head of Policy &amp; Advocacy, Oxfam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julianna Lindsey</td>
<td>Chief Advocacy, Communications, M&amp;A, UNICEF Ghana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alison Marshall</td>
<td>Public Affairs Office, UK National Committee, UNICEF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marie Claude Martin</td>
<td>Associate Director, Knowledge Management, UNICEF Florence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jens Matthes</td>
<td>Chief PFP, Partnerships, Child Rights Advocacy &amp; Education, UNICEF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrew Mawson</td>
<td>Chief, Child Protection, UNICEF Florence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allister McGregor</td>
<td>Professor, Team Leader of the Vulnerability and Poverty Reduction Team – Institute of Development Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leonardo Menchini</td>
<td>Chief, Social Policy, Monitoring &amp; Evaluation, UNICEF Egypt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nuria Molina</td>
<td>Director of Policy and Research, Save the Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roeland Monasch</td>
<td>Representative, UNICEF Georgia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richard Morgan</td>
<td>Director, Division of Policy and Practice, UNICEF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laylee Moshiri</td>
<td>Representative, UNICEF Tajikistan</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Bethlehem Moulat</td>
<td>JPO, Social and Economic Policy, UNICEF Florence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Mugawe</td>
<td>Executive Director, African Child Policy Forum, Addis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gustave Nebie</td>
<td>Chief, Social Policy, UNICEF Mali</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chris de Neubourg</td>
<td>Chief, Social and Economic Policy, UNICEF Florence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yoshimi Nishino</td>
<td>Chief, Social Policy, UNICEF Myanmar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kirsty Nowlan</td>
<td>Director, Public Policy Advocacy &amp; Justice for Children, World Vision International</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bo Viktor Nylund</td>
<td>Senior Adviser, PFP - Corporate Social Responsibility Section, UNICEF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isabel Ortiz</td>
<td>Associate Director, Division of Policy and Practice, UNICEF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mads Oyen</td>
<td>Humanitarian Policy Specialist, EMPOS, UNICEF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mahesh Patel</td>
<td>EAPRO Regional Social Policy Advisor, UNICEF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smaranda Popa</td>
<td>Chief, Child Protection Section, UNICEF Pakistan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicholas Rees</td>
<td>Policy Analysis Specialist, Division of Policy and Practice, UNICEF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrea Rossi</td>
<td>ROSA Regional Social Policy Advisor, UNICEF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian Salazar</td>
<td>Deputy Director, Programme Division, UNICEF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vanessa Sedletzki</td>
<td>Child Rights Specialist, UNICEF Florence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Susana Sottoli</td>
<td>Representative, UNICEF Mexico</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evgeny Stanislavov</td>
<td>Senior Advisor UN &amp; Intergovernmental Affairs, UNICEF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jennifer Yablonski</td>
<td>Programme Specialist Social Protection, DPP, UNICEF</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## E-Discussion Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>TITLE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Natalia Adler</td>
<td>Social Policy Officer, UNICEF Mozambique</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roberto Bissio</td>
<td>Executive Director of Social Watch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicola Brandt</td>
<td>Gender Rights and Civic Engagement, UNICEF NYHQ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shantha Bloemen</td>
<td>Chief of Communications, UNICEF Johannesburg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mereia Carling</td>
<td>Social Policy Officer, UNICEF Pacific</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samantha Cocco-Klein</td>
<td>Chief of Policy, Advocacy, Planning and Evaluation, UNICEF Pacific</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jingqing Chai</td>
<td>Chief, Social Policy and Economic Analyses, UNICEF NYHQ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bob Deacon</td>
<td>Emeritus Professor of International Social Policy, Sheffield University and United Nations University Bruges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beatrice Duncan</td>
<td>Gender Rights and Civic Engagement, UNICEF NYHQ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles Dzradosi</td>
<td>Social Policy Specialist, UNICEF Ghana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jessica Espey</td>
<td>Senior Research and Policy Adviser, Save the Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martin Evans</td>
<td>Social Policy and Economic Analyses, UNICEF NYHQ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sakiko Fukuda-Parr</td>
<td>Professor of International Affairs at the New School;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>former Director UNDP Human Development Report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liz Gibbons</td>
<td>Visiting Scientist, FXB Center for Health and Human Rights, Harvard University;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>former Deputy Director, Policy and Practice, UNICEF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joaquin Gonzalez-Aleman</td>
<td>Chief, Social Policy, Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation, UNICEF India</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amanda Glassman</td>
<td>Director of Global Health Policy and Research Fellow,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Center for Global Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarah Hague</td>
<td>Social Policy Specialist, UNICEF Burkina Faso</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark Hereward</td>
<td>Representative, UNICEF Azerbaijan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petra Hoelscher</td>
<td>Social Policy Specialist, UNICEF Namibia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richard Jolly</td>
<td>Research Associate, Institute of Development Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steen Jorgensen</td>
<td>Sector Director for Human Development in Middle East and North Africa, WB;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>former Director Social Development, WB;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gabriele Koehler</td>
<td>Visiting Fellow, Institute of Development Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lisa Kurbiel</td>
<td>Social Policy Officer, UNICEF Mozambique</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nora Lustig</td>
<td>Professor Latin American Economics, Tulane University;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>former Director/ Chief UNDP’s Poverty Group and the Poverty and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inequality Unit IADB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicolette Moodie</td>
<td>Human Rights and Gender, UNICEF NYHQ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gustave Nebie</td>
<td>Chief, Social Policy, UNICEF Mali</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rada Noeva</td>
<td>Gender Rights and Civic Engagement, UNICEF NYHQ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mizuho Okimoto-Kaewtathip</td>
<td>Chief, Social Policy, UNICEF Lao PDR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roger Pearson</td>
<td>Social Policy Specialist, UNICEF Ethiopia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remy Pigois</td>
<td>Chief, Social Policy, UNICEF Senegal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niloufar Pourzand</td>
<td>Chief, Social Policy, UNICEF Indonesia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrea Rossi</td>
<td>Regional Social Policy Officer, UNICEF ROSA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhea Saab</td>
<td>Social Policy and Economic Analyses, UNICEF NYHQ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andy Sumner</td>
<td>Fellow, Institute of Development Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evgeny Stanislavov,</td>
<td>Senior Advisor, UN &amp; Intergovernmental Affairs, UNICEF GMA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frances Stewart</td>
<td>Professor of Development Economics, University of Oxford</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erika Strand</td>
<td>Chief, Social Policy, UNICEF México</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ramya Subrahmanian</td>
<td>Social Policy Officer, UNICEF India</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samman J. Thapa</td>
<td>UNICEF Vietnam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul Quaries Van Ufford</td>
<td>Chief, Social Policy, UNICEF Vietnam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beth Verhey</td>
<td>Chief, Social Policy, UNICEF Nepal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>