



NEW YORK UNIVERSITY

**CENTER ON INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION**



**The Post-2015 Agenda – Delivering its Core Promises to  
Children**

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## **CENTER ON INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION**

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## Key Findings

1. The post-2015 agenda will include 17 goals and 169 targets for the period 2016-2030. The proposed goals aim to promote sustained and inclusive economic growth, social development, and environmental protection.
2. All these goals are relevant to the world's children. Those born in 2016 will have an average life expectancy of more than 70 years. Their lives will be profoundly affected by our ability to establish and maintain patterns of equitable, peaceful, and sustainable development during a century where the global population will reach and surpass 10 billion people.
3. The proposed agenda also contains ambitious goals that focus directly on children's needs, based on the commitment that governments made at the Rio+20 summit to ensure *the protection, survival and development of all children to their full potential*. With little time before implementation of the new agenda must begin, it is time to switch focus to how this vision can be delivered.
4. The proposed goals and targets for children are complex. In order to clarify the scale of the delivery challenge, four resonant and ambitious 'core promises' to children can be drawn from the child-focused targets (two for survival, and one each for protection and development). These are:
  - No child should die from a disease we can prevent.
  - Every child should have the food needed to grow normally.
  - Every child should be able to read and write, and should be numerate.
  - No child should live in fear.
5. The core promises represent minimum levels of wellbeing that children must enjoy if, as adults, they are to contribute to a sustainable future. They are 'zero based' (all children must benefit), universal (requiring action from developed as well as developing countries), and offer an integrated vision for children (a failure to make progress on one promise will compromise delivery of the others).
6. At current rates of progress, none of the core promises will come close to being delivered by 2030:
  - Keeping the promise to end preventable disease requires a second 'child survival revolution' that will deliver unprecedented rates of progress in improving children's health. The health sector had a strong track record in the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) era. It has begun to develop a Global Strategy for the post-2015 era and a five year implementation plan is also being created.
  - The challenge of ensuring children get sufficient nutritious food was neglected during the early years of implementation of the MDGs. The Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) movement was launched to respond to this failure. It has been highly successful in mobilizing political will for nutrition, but has yet to deliver sufficient impact at country level. It must now demonstrate that international action can deliver a substantial reduction in both acute and chronic child malnutrition.
  - Progress towards delivering universal primary education has stalled, while many children learn little in school, with 250 million children unable to read, write, or do basic mathematics. At national and international levels, there is a crisis of confidence in the sector and few credible plans have emerged to deliver the revolution in teaching of literacy and numeracy required to meet the post-2015 target for learning.

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- Keeping the promise to keep children safe requires preventing and responding to the many forms of violence and abuse to which children are subjected. Child protection and violence prevention was not part of the MDGs, and is chronically under-resourced. The sector benefits from growing political will, however, and is beginning the work of developing plans for implementing the post-2015 agenda and designing a global partnership to spearhead their delivery.
7. There is currently no holistic vision for delivering to children across the four promises, with strategies being built on a sector-by-sector basis. This is likely to have the greatest detrimental impact on the most vulnerable children in all countries, especially those living in conflict-affected or fragile states.
8. It is time to make the post-2015 agenda compelling by developing credible plans for financing and delivering the most urgent priorities for children, using the core promises to clarify the mission and increase accountability for delivering it. Governments, international organizations and other stakeholders should:
- Start with a 'whole child perspective' (children cannot be divided into sectors); focus on broad promises to children, not the minutiae of targets and indicators; and take the 'getting to zero' challenge seriously (putting the last child first).
  - Develop a credible analysis of what can be delivered by 2020 and focus on feasible delivery plans for the first five years of the new agenda. This will provide a platform for acceleration in the 2020s.
  - Take action to address the biggest deficits and risks to delivery, financing and implementing credible strategies where they exist, but insisting on a fundamental reappraisal where they do not.
- Put children at the heart of the Financing for Development conference in July 2015 and the post-2015 summit in September, bringing together a series of high impact announcements for children under a *protect, survive, develop* banner.
  - Aim to demonstrate that implementation is well underway in time for the next High Level Political Forum that will be held for Heads of State and Government (2017), which should be a 'Delivery Summit' for the post-2015 agenda.

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## One | Children and the Post-2015 Agenda

### *Why children?*

At the Rio+20 summit, governments committed to agreeing a set of sustainable development goals and associated targets to replace the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). In response to this brief, an Open Working Group, with a 70 state membership, proposed 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets for the period 2016-2030.<sup>1</sup> This proposal has been accepted as the basis for intergovernmental negotiation of the post-2015 development agenda.

Given the need for the new agenda to encompass all three dimensions of sustainable development (sustained and inclusive economic growth, social development, and environmental protection) and to be “universally applicable to all countries,” it was perhaps inevitable that it would prove difficult to agree goals and targets that were “concise and easy to communicate, [and] limited in number.”<sup>2</sup>

While some have argued for fewer goals, a reduction in their number is highly unlikely, though the proposed targets are being assessed for their technical quality and may be reworded during the ongoing negotiations. The Center on International Cooperation (CIC) report *What Happens Now? Time to deliver the post-2015 development agenda* provides a full briefing on the post-2015 negotiations.<sup>3</sup>

The complexity of the emerging agenda makes it important to think creatively about how to communicate the potential of the new goals and targets to deliver meaningful change. It also makes it essential that we switch focus from aspiration to delivery. No agenda will be credible if the willingness of governments and other stakeholders to implement it is weak.

One way to do this is to shine a spotlight on those who have most to gain from the new development agenda. This helps switch focus from arcane debates about the precise wording of goals and targets to real world outcomes. It also underlines the enormous task that lies ahead if the new goals and targets are to be met, given the gulf between our aspirations for 2030 and business-as-usual trajectories.<sup>4</sup>

Children are an obvious, and important, candidate for this focus:

- **There are large numbers of children with urgent development needs.** Approximately 140 million babies will be born in 2016, while 4.2 billion people will be children at some stage between 2016 and 2030.<sup>5</sup> Children are disproportionately likely to be living in poverty and, for obvious reasons, have limited ability to provide their own food, housing, education, and healthcare, or – especially in the case of younger children – to protect their own rights.<sup>6</sup>
- **The MDGs left unfinished business for children.** As will be discussed in more detail, there were substantial improvements in children’s wellbeing during the MDG era, but there is much left to be done. The focus on children has tightened over the past couple of years as momentum has built around initiatives such as Every Woman, Every Child that aim to make as much progress as possible against MDG targets by 2015.<sup>7</sup> It is vital this is not lost during the transition to the new development agenda.
- **A focus on children will resonate with the global public.** There is broad consensus about the need to do more to invest in children and their potential, with child-focused goals offering a powerful means of communicating the potential of the new development agenda, including to children and young people themselves.

### *What is meant by a ‘core promise’?*

All sustainable development goals are relevant to the world’s children given the agenda’s focus on promoting sustained and inclusive economic growth, social development and environmental protection.<sup>8</sup> Those born in 2016 will have an average life expectancy of more than 70 years.<sup>9</sup> Their lives will be profoundly affected by our ability to establish and maintain patterns of equitable, peaceful and sustainable development during a century where the global population will reach and surpass 10 billion people.<sup>10</sup>

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The proposed agenda also contains ambitious targets that focus *directly* on children and aim to ensure *the protection, survival and development of all children to their full potential*.<sup>11</sup> This vision for children was drawn from the Rio+20 outcome document, *The Future We Want*, and in turn reflects the commitment to children's rights made in the Convention on the Rights of the Child and other treaties and agreements.<sup>12</sup> Roughly a third of the targets are either focused solely on children or are directly relevant to children's immediate needs.

A strategy is needed to simplify the complexity of these targets, enabling us to cluster them in a way that clarifies the most urgent and fundamental challenges if the *protect, survive, develop* vision is to be delivered. A set of 'core promises' has therefore been drawn from the child-focused targets, each of which is:

- **Resonant** – the promise expresses an important outcome for children in language that anyone can understand.
- **Ambitious** – it requires significant acceleration of progress seen under the MDGs and must be delivered to all children, including the most vulnerable and disadvantaged.
- **Urgent** – implementation must start in 2016 if the world is to have any chance of keeping the promise by 2030.
- Of broad **significance** – the promise can only be kept if we do many other things right (greater political will, stronger systems and institutions, more equitable distribution of resources, etc.)

By accelerating efforts to fund and deliver these promises, governments can demonstrate that the post-2015 development agenda will be more than simply aspirational. Most urgently, they can use them to launch flagship initiatives at two major global events in 2015 – the third International Conference on Financing for Development in Addis Ababa in July, and the UN Summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda in New York in September – increasing the likelihood that these meetings will capture the public's imagination.

## **What are the promises?**

Figure 1 on page 6 sets out the relationship between the post-2015 vision for children, four core promises (two for survival, and one each for protection and development), and the targets that cluster under each promise.

- **No child should die from a disease we can prevent.** Keeping this promise requires a second 'child survival revolution,'<sup>13</sup> not just for those aged under 5, but for older children and adolescents in order to tackle the ill health that is projected to lead to approximately 4.5 million children dying before their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday in 2030.<sup>14</sup>
- **Every child should have the food needed to grow normally.** Keeping this promise means ensuring children receive sufficient nutritious food, but also has major implications for healthcare and sanitation (children cannot absorb food when they are sick), for poverty reduction and social protection (so parents have the resources to feed their children), and for the education of women (which empowers mothers to ensure their children are well fed).<sup>15</sup> With at least 42 million children overweight before their fifth birthday, over-nutrition is also a growing challenge.<sup>16</sup>
- **Every child should be able to read and write, and should be numerate.** Education is the most important investment in a child's development and has been recognized as a fundamental right since the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948.<sup>17</sup> Implementation of the education MDG has primarily focused on access to education, but there is a growing realization that many children learn little in school.<sup>18</sup> Keeping this promise requires getting and keeping all children in school, while making unprecedented improvements to the quality of education.<sup>19</sup>
- **No child should live in fear.** The MDGs did not contain targets to protect children from violence and abuse, and their inclusion offers a striking and important new dimension for the post-2015 development agenda. Keeping this promise requires tackling the many forms of violence and abuse to which children



Figure 1



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are subjected, including physical and sexual abuse; various harmful practices such as child labor, child marriage, female genital mutilation, and trafficking; and the impact on children of conflict and violent crime.

### ***Who are the promises for?***

Taken together, the core promises represent minimum levels of wellbeing that all children must enjoy if, as adults, they are to contribute to a sustainable future. All promises are 'zero based' – they will only be met if we *put the last child first* and ensure that children in the greatest need are not forgotten.<sup>20</sup> They require accelerated action to help the most vulnerable countries on the one hand, and to reach the most vulnerable communities in every country on the other.

This is also a universal agenda. The core promises build on, but can take us beyond, the MDGs, and are relevant to both developed and developing countries. Most countries have challenges with literacy (14% of American adults lack basic literacy skills),<sup>21</sup> while preventable diseases remain a scourge in large parts of the world (almost half of HIV+ pregnant women in Latin America fail to get the medicines they need to prevent transmission to their babies).<sup>22</sup> Hunger is far from defeated in rich countries and poor nutrition is fuelling an obesity epidemic.<sup>23</sup> Violence against children is clearly a problem for all countries, with a wave of scandals creating increased awareness of the extent of the impunity enjoyed by those who abuse children.<sup>24</sup>

The vision offered for children by the core promises is an integrated one. Health and nutrition are fundamental to educational achievement, while education – especially of women – will have a substantial impact on the wellbeing of future generations of children. Violence is increasingly a threat to the delivery of child survival and development targets, whether in conflict zones, due to the impact of crime and gang violence, or from the debilitating impact of exposure to violence in homes, schools, and communities.<sup>25</sup>

Failure to make progress on any one of the promises, in other words, will undermine each of the others. While local, national, and international institutions may focus on their mandates, children need delivery on all the dimensions of the *protection, survival and development* vision.

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## Two | Delivering for Children after 2015

### *Can we keep these promises?*

Keeping the core promises will be exceptionally difficult. In all four cases, business-as-usual trajectories are far from good enough. New strategies are needed for health, nutrition, education and child protection, although some sectors have done more to prepare to deliver the post-2015 agenda to children than others.

#### **Promise 1: No child should die of a disease we can prevent**

Rapid improvements in child survival are one of the success stories of the MDG era. Infant and child mortality has been falling rapidly for over 50 years, including in the world's least developed countries. Progress, however, has been especially impressive in recent years, with the UN Inter-agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation reporting that 17,000 fewer children died every day in 2013 than in 1990.<sup>26</sup>

*The global under-five mortality rate is falling faster than at any other time during the past two decades. The global annual rate of reduction has steadily accelerated since 1990–1995 – more than tripling from 1.2 percent to 4.0 percent in 2005–2013.*<sup>27</sup>

The acceleration in reductions in child mortality began around 1997 (before the MDGs were agreed in 2000–2002), following on from the increased global focus on child health in the wake of targets set at the World Summit for Children in 1990 and major studies such as the 1993 World Development Report.<sup>28</sup>

Improved national and international policy appears to have played a role in promoting child survival, along with the development and diffusion of life-saving technologies (vaccines, drugs, bed nets), higher standards of education for women, and rising incomes. John McArthur estimates 7.5–13.7 million children's lives were saved between 2002 and 2013 when compared to counterfactuals based on progress in the 1990s.<sup>29</sup> The portion of these gains that can be attributed to the MDGs, and other global processes, cannot be quantified, but according to an analysis by

Wang et al, "the attention that has been paid to achievement of the MDGs more broadly, and not merely those directly concerned with health, has undoubtedly helped with progress in the reduction of child mortality."<sup>30</sup>

The proposed post-2015 target to *by 2030 end preventable deaths of newborns and under-five children* represents a substantial increase in ambition. Despite the gains of the MDG era, most developing countries will fail to meet MDG targets on child survival and, on current trends, the child survival MDG will not be met until 2028.<sup>31</sup> A 'zero based' target is even further out of reach, with 3.8 million children predicted to die before their fifth birthday in 2030.<sup>32</sup> Birth rates are highest in the poorest countries and communities where threats to children's health are greatest.<sup>33</sup> The child survival challenge will inevitably become tougher over time as a result.

The post-2015 agenda has triggered a vigorous debate in the global health community about how to intensify the battle against preventable diseases. In a challenge paper on infectious diseases, Dean Jamison and co-authors have underlined the importance of delivering proven interventions, including exclusive early breastfeeding, expanded immunization coverage and treatment for diarrhea, measures to prevent the transmission of and treat malaria and HIV/AIDS, more widespread distribution of micronutrients, more effective steps to prevent stillbirth and neonatal death, and better treatment of acutely ill children.<sup>34</sup>

Karin Stenberg and her co-authors have developed a global investment framework for women and children's health and estimate that "increasing health expenditure by just \$5 per person per year up to 2035 in 74 high-burden countries could yield up to nine times that value in economic and social benefits."<sup>35</sup> This would stop 147 million children from dying, while also preventing 32 million stillbirths and 5 million maternal deaths. Around half of these deaths are prevented by scaling up family planning (at modest cost), while the rest result from more effective health services. Improvements in water and sanitation, nutrition, and education are needed, and action to promote the rights of women.

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The MDG era has provided robust foundations for further improvements in child survival. In 2010, the *Every Woman Every Child* movement was launched by the UN Secretary-General<sup>36</sup> to implement a Global Strategy for Women's and Children's Health which defined the roles that should be played by global, national and subnational policymakers, donors and philanthropists, international organizations, the private sector and civil society, and healthcare professionals and researchers in improving the health of women and children.<sup>37</sup>

*Every Woman Every Child* records 327 commitments from the members of its movements,<sup>38</sup> ranging from national plans to invest in health ("Nigeria is committed to fully funding its health program at \$31.63 per capita),<sup>39</sup> through major donor collaborations (a US, UK, Australia and Gates Foundation alliance to "help 100 million more women satisfy their need for modern family planning by 2015"),<sup>40</sup> to corporate social responsibility programs ("the expansion of Nestlé Healthy Kids Global Program (HKP) to 51 new countries")<sup>41</sup> and market-based interventions (LifeSpring's expansion of its low cost maternal health hospitals in India).<sup>42</sup>

By mid-2014, Every Woman Every Child reported their global strategy had attracted commitments of \$60 billion, with slightly over half of that amount disbursed.<sup>43</sup> While there are concerns over how much of this money would have been committed anyway (and over double-counting), health has seen a significant real-term increase in aid spending, with most of the additional funds directed through multilateral mechanisms such as the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.<sup>44</sup> Domestic resource mobilization for reproductive, maternal and child health has grown by 50% in the priority countries of the Global Strategy, a reflection of robust economic growth in many of these countries, and – arguably – of an increased willingness to invest in children's health.<sup>45</sup>

There has also been a diversification in the sources of financing. New donors have invested in health, including non-OECD countries such as the United Arab Emirates<sup>46</sup> and major philanthropists such as the Gates Foundation (Bill Gates was originally motivated to set up the foundation by the 1993 World Development Report's data on the

scale of preventable deaths of children). New financing mechanisms and partnerships have emerged to develop markets for global public goods such as vaccines,<sup>47</sup> and there has been increased investment in the research needed to demonstrate the most cost effective mechanism for achieving health outcomes for children.<sup>48</sup>

Under the *Every Woman Every Child* banner, and with leadership from the Executive Office of the Secretary-General, work is now underway to develop a new Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health for 2016-2030. It aims to strengthen links between global political will and progress in countries that continue to see slow improvements in health standards, while supporting "the transition from the MDG to SDG agenda."<sup>49</sup>

At the heart of the strategy is the aim to align all partners behind "a single country plan, a single country-owned and driven coordinating mechanism, and a single framework for monitoring and evaluation."<sup>50</sup> There is also a renewed emphasis on delivery, based on the need to build "leadership, governance and management capacities at all levels" in order to create a foundation for delivery of the health-related SDGs for women and children.

Despite increased financial resources, an estimated funding gap of \$30-50 billion has been identified for 2016-2020, approximately half of which is in lower middle income countries and a quarter in lower income countries.<sup>51</sup> A Global Financing Facility has been created to help close this gap in 74 high-burden countries, with the aim of supporting a scale of delivery of health services to children and mothers, while assisting a transition to domestic financing, and increasing investment in global public goods such as vaccines and the registration and statistical systems needed to underpin health.<sup>52</sup>

Various vertical funds and programs have set out their contribution to the broader strategy, with action plans agreed for priorities such as ending preventable deaths from pneumonia and diarrhea,<sup>53</sup> eliminating measles,<sup>54</sup> and reducing the impact of AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria on children.<sup>55</sup> The global vaccine initiative, GAVI, has recently completed its replenishment, raising \$7.5 billion for 2016 to 2020, based on a strategy for that period which

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envisages increasing the proportion of children receiving vital vaccinations from 5% to 50%.<sup>56</sup> Bilateral donors – such as USAID – have also begun to set out plans for the role they can play in ending preventable deaths.<sup>57</sup>

Even with these measures in place, the core promise *no child should die of a disease we can prevent* will prove extremely difficult to deliver. It relies on the development of new vaccines and other technologies. Yet rates of innovation are extremely hard to predict even if sufficient investment is finally secured for those diseases that predominantly affect the poor. Children must gain access to quality healthcare at unprecedented rates, supported by progress in other sectors such as nutrition and sanitation. Global investment and support must also be designed and targeted in a way that adds value to the delivery of health outcomes at a national level, and does not simply displace domestic financing.<sup>58</sup>

There are also risks that have the potential to make progress harder. Epidemics and drug resistance could create a new generation of threats, while it is inevitable that conflict and insecurity will continue to cause large numbers of preventable deaths. Fragile states will find it hard to accelerate increases in child survival without achieving improvements in political stability and governance, which have few precedents in history.<sup>59</sup> While *some* of these states may deliver the rapid improvements in children's health seen in Rwanda in recent years, there is much less prospect they *all* will.<sup>60</sup> Any new episode of sustained conflict, meanwhile, is likely to lead to reversals of the kind seen in Syria, where vaccination rates fell by a quarter in two years and health systems have been seriously undermined.<sup>61</sup>

The strong probability, therefore, is that this promise will not be delivered in full. Even Bill and Melinda Gates – wholehearted optimists about the future pace of poverty reduction – believe it will be possible only to halve child mortality over the next 15 years, not to drive the number of deaths to zero.<sup>62</sup> While arguably over-ambitious, this core promise is not an empty one. Failure is possible due to a lack of political will or financing, from a lack of ownership or from half-hearted implementation, but a stretching target seems set to galvanize meaningful collective action, both globally and within states where children face

the greatest risk of dying, delivering significant improvements to business-as-usual trajectories.

### **Promise 2: Every child should have the food needed to grow normally**

Through MDG target 1.C, governments made a commitment to “halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger.”<sup>63</sup> While this target is close to being met, recent progress has been slower than in the 1990s.

The challenge is especially urgent for children, given that undernutrition is estimated to account for 2.2 million deaths of children under the age of five, with all nutritional risk factors estimated to be responsible for over a third of all preventable deaths.<sup>64</sup> Those who survive face long-term, and usually permanent, physical, neurological and cognitive impacts; are at greater lifetime risk for a range of diseases;<sup>65</sup> and are less likely to enjoy full and productive lives as adults.<sup>66</sup> A post-2015 aspiration that *every child should have the food needed to grow normally* is currently far out of reach. It is estimated 130 million children will be stunted in 2025 if progress continues on a business-as-usual trajectory. This would be a modest reduction from the estimated baseline of 156 million (or around a quarter of all children) in 2015.<sup>67</sup>

Recent years have seen growing concern at the failure of international and national actors to address the problem of child malnutrition. In 2008, a series of articles in the *Lancet* warned that:

*Nutrition is a desperately neglected aspect of maternal, newborn, and child health. The reasons for this neglect are understandable but not justifiable. When one considers specific actions to improve maternal and child survival, one is drawn to particular interventions—vaccination, oral rehydration therapy, and the treatment of infection and hemorrhage. In recent years, this portfolio of responses has broadened to embrace the health system—human resources, financing, and stewardship. Somehow, nutrition has slipped through the gap.*<sup>68</sup>

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International efforts to address the problem were “fragmented and dysfunctional.”<sup>69</sup> MDG targets for nutrition were badly designed, while data for measuring progress were weak and contested. International programs were not evidence-based and there was a lack of analysis of future trends and challenges. Financing was inadequate, while too much support came in the form of in-kind contributions of food. There was a lack of investment in skilled personnel and research, especially into the implementation of proven interventions. Responsible organizations have serious weaknesses, lacking robust strategies, skilled staff, and the leadership required to drive transformational change.

The Lancet series and related work served as a wakeup call for the nutrition sector, leading in 2010 to the launch of the Scaling Up Nutrition movement (SUN), a new multi-stakeholder partnership.<sup>70</sup> This was the product of intensive discussions between governments, international institutions, foundations, civil society and business about the global architecture needed to deliver “optimal growth of children” among other objectives.<sup>71</sup> Aiming to provide “a platform to enable leaders to pledge to intensify efforts for improved nutrition”<sup>72</sup> SUN launched with five participating countries, and now has 55 members, each of which is supposed to develop and fund a strategy and report against a common results framework.<sup>73</sup>

SUN has helped push maternal and child nutrition up the international agenda. Donors have developed more coherent strategies, a broader range of stakeholders has become involved (business, in particular), and there are signs of increased national commitment.<sup>74</sup> But there are also questions about whether this is yet resulting in improved nutritional outcomes for children. Reviewing progress in 2013, a second Lancet series found “a deeply worrying gulf between country needs and global actions.”<sup>75</sup> SUN’s independent evaluation was published in 2015. The headline conclusion was that the movement had been successful in building political will for nutrition and mobilizing behind its goals, but that there was only “limited evidence that this is leading further towards scaling up nutrition at country level.”<sup>76</sup> There were additional concerns about whether national plans are triggering action at sub-national levels.<sup>77</sup> The evaluation’s national case studies demonstrate the

difficulties of attributing impact in those countries where nutrition is already being taken more seriously (and which are thus good candidates for a leadership role in the movement), and in building momentum where it is not (where the need for mobilization is greatest).<sup>78</sup>

As with health, the proposed post-2015 goal for nutrition represents a significant increase in ambition. One of its targets calls for an end to all forms of malnutrition by 2030, “including achieving by 2025 the internationally agreed targets on stunting and wasting in children.”<sup>79</sup> The 2025 targets, which were agreed by the World Health Assembly in 2012, call for a reduction in stunting by 40% and for wasting to be reduced to below 5%. They will be missed without an unprecedented acceleration in progress over the next decade.<sup>80</sup> The chance is therefore remote that the world will be able to declare an end to childhood hunger and malnutrition just five years later in 2030.

Post-2015 nutrition targets have the potential to galvanize a significant acceleration in progress over the next 15 years, benefiting large numbers of children. A study by Bhutta et al estimates that ten proven nutrition-specific interventions could save the lives of 1 million children in the 34 priority countries where 90% of all stunted children live, alleviating a fifth of the burden of stunting.<sup>81</sup> Parallel improvements in health, sanitation, and better childcare would also make a substantial contribution, given estimates that nutrition-specific interventions may only reduce a third of the height deficit in a stunted child who is too unhealthy to absorb food properly.<sup>82</sup>

Action is needed for children from richer families, as well as for the poorest: in India, only 7% of younger children receive a minimum acceptable diet, sufficient health care, and decent water and sanitation.<sup>83</sup> There is also the question about what to do about the obesity epidemic, especially given “increasing scientific evidence that issues of over- and under-nutrition are intertwined over the life-course and therefore logically inseparable [the so-called double-burden].”<sup>84</sup>

As with all core promises, primary responsibility for delivery of the post-2015 targets on nutrition lies with governments. At global level, the new agenda provides a testing

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ground for the SUN movement to prove itself between 2016 and 2020. It has political will, access to finance, and strategic alignment across a powerful alliance of stakeholders, and is developing a new five-year strategy and a shorter-term operational roadmap for agreement by September 2020.<sup>85</sup> It is not entirely clear whether the movement yet knows how to do more to “increase facilitation and coordination of efforts for achieving impact”<sup>86</sup> while there is recognition that even another five years may be sufficient only to demonstrate results in ‘easier’ countries, not in those where children are most likely to be left behind by the global nutrition agenda.<sup>87</sup>

SUN is, in other words, at a crossroads. In the best case, it will build on and learn from work at national level in countries where it seems to be contributing to its central purpose of ‘scaling up’ of nutrition such as Guatemala, Indonesia, and Tanzania,<sup>88</sup> while helping rationalize the international architecture for nutrition. This will allow it to demonstrate impact at scale in a growing number of its 55 participating countries and the value that greater global coordination can add to national efforts to improve nutrition. It can then use this to build a foundation for further acceleration in delivery from 2020 onwards, at which point it will be clearer how close the world can get to a zero-based nutrition target for children by 2030.

In the worst case, the movement risks finding it is unable to sustain increases in political will if national leaders do not see results to justify their involvement. This will require another fundamental rethink of how and whether global collective action can contribute to improved nutrition, and leave little meaningful prospect that the post-2015 targets will be met in countries where children are least likely to receive the food they need to grow normally.

**Promise 3: Every child should be able to read and write, and should be numerate**

Until 2008, the world was making good progress towards delivering the headline education MDG – universal primary education – but this has subsequently slowed globally and stalled in many countries.

In 2015, 57 million children are expected not to be in primary school if progress continues at the rate seen in the

past five years, while 67 countries will not achieve universal enrolment (67 countries do not have adequate data to tell).<sup>89</sup> Completion rates have also failed to improve. Although often mischaracterized as an ‘access’ target, MDG2.A calls for all girls and boys to “complete a full course of primary schooling.”<sup>90</sup> According to the Education for All Global Monitoring Report (GMR), only 13 countries out of 106 for which data exist will meet this yardstick by 2015 (at least 97% of children enter school and complete the final grade), of which only two are upper middle income and one lower income.<sup>91</sup> Many countries that have rapidly expanded their primary school systems face significant problems keeping children in school: in Rwanda for example, most children enter primary school but almost two thirds drop out.<sup>92</sup>

Unlike for health and nutrition, the headline education MDG target is already zero-based and illustrates the challenges posed by goals of this type. Ensuring *all* children go to and stay in school is much harder than making it possible for *more* of them to do so. Out-of-school children are increasingly concentrated in countries that are conflict-affected, have weak institutions, and lack the political will required to invest in education systems. Some countries have also seen increasingly violent opposition to the right to education. In 2015, almost a third of the world’s out-of-school children will live in Nigeria and Pakistan, both countries in which students and teachers come under violent attack,<sup>93</sup> and where two cases; the kidnapping of school girls by Boko Haram and the attempted assassination of Malala Yousafzai have brought global public attention to the particular challenges of keeping girls in school.

Increased access to education has also failed to translate into learning for all. Across 31 sub-Saharan African countries, primary school children have reached less than half the expected level for literacy and numeracy, with learning close to non-existent in the poorest performing countries and regions.<sup>94</sup> UNESCO has declared ‘a global learning crisis,’ estimating that nearly 40% of the world’s primary school children are failing to achieve basic literacy or numeracy, with more of these children in school than out of it.<sup>95</sup>

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Combined failures on access and quality have had a disproportionate impact on the most disadvantaged children, leading to the widening of educational inequality. During the MDG era, educational progress has been slowest for the poorest children and those living in the most disadvantaged communities. If current trends continue, by 2060 many girls from poor families will still be out of primary school in 24 of the 28 low income countries for which data exist.<sup>96</sup> On the same basis, by 2080 some children in low income countries will still not complete primary education.<sup>97</sup> Children from the poorest regions also get the worst quality education. In Katsina state in northern Nigeria, only a quarter of those children who finish primary school learn enough even to read a sentence.<sup>98</sup>

As the GMR has argued, “the last mile to universal primary education will not be covered in this generation unless concerted efforts are taken to support the children who are the most disadvantaged.”<sup>99</sup>

Despite difficulties in delivering universal primary education under the MDGs, the Open Working Group has proposed a target for all children to be educated from pre-primary level through to the end of lower secondary school – a massive expansion in the *access* challenge. It has also proposed targets for all children to achieve ‘relevant learning outcomes’ and for “all youth... [to] achieve literacy and numeracy” by 2030.<sup>100</sup> The post-2015 aspiration is for many more children to be in much better schools for many more years.

The selection of indicators to measure ‘relevant learning outcomes’ could result in a further broadening of ambition. The Global Thematic Consultation on Education and the Learning Metrics Taskforce have both argued that a narrow focus on literacy and numeracy should be avoided. The former has called for global agreement on a ‘holistic learning framework’. The latter proposes indicators should be tracked for all children in all countries across seven learning domains: physical well-being, social and emotional, culture and arts, literacy and communication, learning approaches and cognition, numeracy and mathematics, and science and technology.<sup>101</sup> While recognizing the need for a broad and balanced approach to learning,

CIC believes priorities are needed in tackling the learning crisis, and the focus should be on foundational skills. Countries that have not achieved or are not fast-approaching universal literacy and numeracy should focus on building school systems that can support achievement of this basic quality threshold.

On both access and quality, the ambition of the post-2015 education agenda is very great indeed. Worryingly, this appears to be built on shaky foundations.

- *Data are very sparse on learning outcomes making it hard to design programs to increase quality.* 70 countries participate in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), but none are countries facing the greatest learning deficits.<sup>102</sup> 65% of developing countries are reported to have conducted at least one national learning assessment between 2000 and 2013,<sup>103</sup> but these do not offer internationally comparable data, are usually not conducted frequently enough to detect trends, and are often of questionable quality. Data on literacy of 15 year-olds is patchy and largely based on censuses that overstate the ability to read and write.<sup>104</sup> Robust and independent surveys of learning outcomes – such as the ASER survey in India – remain the exception, not the rule.<sup>105</sup> Some have argued that the sector needs not a ‘data revolution’, but incremental improvements in current systems.<sup>106</sup> This assessment seems wide of the mark: we know far too little about where children are failing to learn and why.
- *Strategies are inadequate to respond to the crisis in education.* Unlike in health or nutrition, costed proposals for specific interventions to tackle the education crisis are largely unavailable. It is estimated that it would cost an additional \$1 trillion to deliver universal primary education between 2015 and 2030, while improving learning outcomes, but the quality dimension is based on assumptions whose cost effectiveness is uncertain.<sup>107</sup> To tackle the learning crisis, the GMR has argued that better teaching is the route to quality education and identifies “the 10 most important teaching reforms that policy-makers should adopt to achieve equitable learning for all.”<sup>108</sup> These proposals

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are not costed and lack the specificity found in health or nutrition. A lack of evidence on what works must shoulder some of the blame for this lack of direction. There are remarkably few high-quality studies on strategies to promote literacy and numeracy in developing countries, and little in the way of systematic reviews that collate evidence in a format that can inform policymaking.<sup>109</sup>

- *Partnerships for education are relatively underdeveloped.* The Global Partnership for Education (GPE) aims to deliver “a dramatic increase in the number of children learning and demonstrating mastery of basic literacy and numeracy skills”, has supported “education sector plans within which there is an increasing focus on initiatives to enhance learning”<sup>110</sup> and piloted “promising interventions to improve reading... in ten countries.”<sup>111</sup> It has also undertaken reforms in response to a 2010 evaluation that found little evidence to show that countries performed more strongly after joining GPE, and that it was “a weak partnership, with weak accountability.”<sup>112</sup> In particular, it is attempting to strengthen the link between the national education plans whose development it supports and its equity, learning and efficiency targets, though the greater use of conditionality in the grants it provides.<sup>113</sup> According to researchers from the Brookings Institution, the GPE remains in ‘start-up mode’, and its potential to respond to the demands of the post-2015 era is far from proven.<sup>114</sup> It is possible that GPE has now found the strategic direction that will allow it to play a similar role to Every Woman Every Child. A harsh critic would suggest that it is closer to SUN, but without the ability to mobilize political will and a broader movement.
- *The case for investment is undermined by a legacy of failure.* Of the countries for which data exist, it is estimated 37 are wasting more than half of their education expenditure.<sup>115</sup> The GPE is attempting to raise \$3.5 billion to help fill what it identifies as a “US\$34.4 billion gap for a quality basic education in 66 GPE developing partner countries.”<sup>116</sup> By its own analysis, domestic commitment to invest in education is weak in more than three times as many of its member countries as it is strong, while primary education is a declining pri-

ority within the education budget.<sup>117</sup> Donor financing for education is also falling, with further declines projected in future years.<sup>118</sup> In part, this reflects pressure on aid budgets in the wake of the global financial crisis, but while donors clearly believe education is important, it is far from clear that they are convinced the sector can translate money into results.

- *The response to new challenges and risks is inadequate.* The problem of fragility and conflict remains pressing, especially when children and schools are deliberately targeted, but we lack tailored approaches to delivery where political will and capacity are lacking. Technology, meanwhile, offers new opportunities for innovation in the education sector, but few countries are yet to exploit them effectively, beyond schemes such as ‘a laptop for every child’ that have not demonstrated an impact on learning.<sup>119</sup> Most pressing is the challenge posed by the flight that is underway in many countries from public education systems to the low-cost private sector. In Pakistan, the private sector accounts for 27% of enrolment in rural and 61% in urban areas.<sup>120</sup> While the private sector on average provides a higher quality education at a lower cost than government schools, some experts maintain it exploits teachers and exacerbates inequality, calling for a renewed focus on government schools.<sup>121</sup> It is far from clear, however, whether a policy of disengagement from such an important provider of education can be sustained if such large numbers of parents continue to go private.

While valuable work is underway in the education sector, post-2015 targets for both access and quality reveal the chasm between the sector’s aspirations and its ability to deliver for children. Nor has the education sector yet engaged in an open and wide-ranging debate about the failures of the MDG era, or what changes are needed for the much greater demands of post-2015.

Education “is drifting steadily down the international agenda” according to the UN Special Envoy for Global Education, despite survey evidence suggesting that it remains the highest priority of the global public for the post-2015 agenda.<sup>122</sup> A fresh start is therefore badly needed to close



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the gap between aspirations and delivery, or the promise that *every child should be able to read and write, and should be numerate* will prove a hollow one.

#### **Promise 4: No child should live in fear**

The CIC report *If Not Now, When? Ending Violence Against the World's Children* explores the delivery of post-2015 targets to protect children from violence, exploitation and neglect.<sup>123</sup> It makes the following points:

- There is growing awareness of the scale of neglect, abuse, and other forms of violence suffered by children, with UNICEF and WHO bringing together a growing body of evidence to demonstrate a global problem has been largely “undocumented and unreported.”<sup>124</sup>
- As with health, children must be protected from extremely diverse threats. According to UNICEF, violence against children can “take many forms (physical, sexual and emotional), occur in any setting (including the home, school, workplace and over the internet) and be perpetrated by individuals (parents and other caregivers, peers, intimate partners, authority figures and strangers, or groups).”<sup>125</sup>
- This failure has had disastrous consequences in terms of children’s rights. Those who survive violence or abuse often suffer lifelong damage to their physical and psychological health, development, and economic potential. Childfund Alliance has estimated that “the global economic impacts and costs resulting from the consequences of physical, psychological and sexual violence against children can be as high as \$7 trillion... [while] the annual global costs of the worst forms of child labor are approximately \$97 billion, and those resulting from children’s association with armed forces or groups can be up to \$144 million annually.”<sup>126</sup>
- A commitment to protect children was not included either as a goal or target within the MDG framework, while data are of insufficient quality to provide a clear understanding of trends in various forms of violence and abuse. As with nutrition in the late 2000s, there is a growing acceptance that current responses are in-

adequate. The Committee on Rights of the Child has criticized “isolated, fragmented and reactive initiatives to address child caregiving and protection which have had limited impact on the prevention and elimination of all forms of violence.”<sup>127</sup>

In response to the scale of violence suffered by children, the Open Working Group has called for an integrated approach to ending all forms of abuse. It has proposed:

- A headline target to “end abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence and torture against children.” (16.2)
- Related targets on violence against girls (5.2), child marriage, female genital mutilation and other harmful practices (5.3), child labor and the recruitment and use of child soldiers (8.7), non-violent learning environments (4a), the promotion of a culture of non-violence (4.7), and birth registration (16.9).

These targets offer an opportunity to integrate the rights set out in the Convention on the Rights of the Child – just past its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary – with the international development agenda. In addition, the World Health Assembly has asked the World Health Organization to prepare the first global action plan for strengthening the capacity of health systems to prevent violence, especially against women and children, and as part of a broader multi-sectoral response.<sup>128</sup> Recent years have also seen the emergence of powerful campaigns that target specific types of violence or seek to transform social attitudes to violence against children.<sup>129</sup>

In *If Not Now, When?* CIC argued that together these initiatives offer:

*An historic opportunity to unite the world behind a global, national, and local movement to protect children from violence, based on increased political will, a global partnership that will protect children, and the identification of pathfinder countries that will be ready to deliver the new agenda from January 2016.*<sup>130</sup>

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This partnership does not yet exist, although UNICEF has begun the process of convening potential partners and exploring options for its architecture, strategy and financing, while the United Kingdom has announced a £50m pledge that will form the basis of a global child protection fund.<sup>131</sup> Work is also beginning to explore the feasibility of national implementation, including in developed countries, demonstrating the potential for this promise to act as test case of the universality of the new agenda.<sup>132</sup>

The challenge posed by post-2015 targets to protect children is partly programmatic (how can international action support national delivery of plans that aim to prevent violence and protect children?), but political support, the promotion of norms, and behavioral change are all of critical importance, even more so than for health, nutrition or education. People know children need to be protected from disease and fed, while the overwhelming majority of parents also support education for both girls and boys (although some will keep their children out of school when quality is poor or education systems are unsafe).<sup>133</sup>

By comparison the consensus is relatively weak that, in a memorable phrase from a report commissioned by the UN Secretary-General, *no violence against children can be justified; all violence can be prevented*.<sup>134</sup> Children's vulnerability is exacerbated by widespread denial of the violence they suffer and by impunity for perpetrators, with social norms tolerating or even encouraging abuse. Most governments have failed to make sufficient investments in protecting children from violence, while at a global level, too few have been prepared to push the protection of children to the top of the development agenda.

To be effective, a global partnership would therefore need to operate on two levels. First it would need to offer a global forum capable of:

- Strengthening norms and building the political leadership needed to protect children from high levels of violence and abuse in countries of all income levels, while making the case that it is possible to implement policies and programs that prevent violence.

- Setting standards and informing strategies in the fields of violence prevention and child protection, while investing in data and evidence, and promoting dialogue and accountability.
- Serving as a catalyst for finance in a field that is starved of resources, based on the proposed fund for the protection of children.

This would increase the ability of the partnership to:

- Bring together potential *pathfinder countries* that are prepared to implement new strategies and plans to prevent and respond to violence against children from 2016 onwards, while sharing best practice and transferring lessons learned to other countries.
- Link the global movement to powerful *movements* at national, subnational and local levels that create demand for an end to violence and challenge the social norms that tolerate violence and abuse.

While a global multi-stakeholder partnership would provide a mechanism for delivery of the core promise that *no child should live in fear*, what exactly would this mean in terms of implementation? The child protection sector has some, but far from all, of the answers. There is reasonable consensus among international organizations, civil society and experts on the broad components of a cross-sectoral attempt to protect more children (for more details, see *If Not Now When*, page 7).<sup>135</sup> The sector, however, lacks a robust evidence base or costed proposals for interventions that could reduce violence and abuse in different contexts, while limited data mean it is impossible to make projections of likely reductions in levels of violence under various scenarios.

This makes it hard to assess what progress could be made by 2030. Clearly all forms of violence, abuse and exploitation cannot be ended in just 15 years, but nor is yet possible to gauge what pace of reduction is plausible, how much this might cost, and who would need to be involved in delivery. Many countries that might join a partnership have either weak child protection systems or are confronting the failure of these systems, while few

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have yet to develop a systematic approach to violence prevention. The task confronting them is not an easy one.

At best, the post-2015 agenda offers the promise of a sustained increase in the political will, knowledge, resources, campaigns and programming needed to reduce violence. Exploratory work during the first five years of the new agenda could build a foundation for delivery throughout the 2020s, with a growing number of countries seeing violence prevention as an important objective for social policy. It could also demonstrate the potential for an ambitious approach to building a movement capable of achieving cultural and attitudinal change, and of a partnership that has a more equal relationship between developed and developing countries than those from the MDG era.

On the other hand, the promise that *no child will live in fear* could be seen as aspirational and not achievable in many or most countries, with child protection and violence prevention remaining on the margins of the mainstream agenda for children. This will have a significant impact on other objectives for children, given the role violence plays in threatening child survival, and depriving children of the opportunities they need to thrive.

### ***What does it all add up to?***

As part of the post-2015 agenda, governments say they want to be *much* more ambitious than under the MDGs, promising to ensure the protection, survival and development of all children. To date, debate has primarily focused on the number and composition of potential goals and targets for children, rather than how these goals and targets can be delivered in just 15 years.

As this review has shown, prospects of delivery vary across the four core promises:

- The health sector has the strongest track record of delivering to children and the most robust evidence base on what is needed to deliver a second ‘child survival revolution.’ It has begun to develop plans for ending preventable deaths that draw on the strengths of both international and national actors.

- The nutrition sector has recognized the need for new approaches and must now demonstrate that international action can deliver a substantial reduction in both acute and chronic child malnutrition.
- Education systems are in crisis, failing to deliver on both access and quality objectives, and have insufficient credible plans to deliver rapid improvements in standards of literacy and numeracy. Fresh thinking is badly needed.
- Child protection benefits from growing political will, while violence prevention is beginning to establish itself as an international priority. A credible global partnership must be built from a standing start; otherwise violence against children will continue to be a neglected issue.

Across the four promises, the lack of a holistic vision for delivering to children is striking.<sup>136</sup> Strategies are being built on a sector-by-sector basis, rather than based on a rounded assessment of how to meet children’s most urgent needs. This is likely to have the greatest detrimental impact on the most vulnerable children and especially on those living in fragile states that have limited capacity, and in some cases, political will to invest in their protection, survival, and development. Fragmentation remains a largely unacknowledged threat to effective implementation.

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## Three | Conclusions

The prospect of a transformation in the lives of children has the potential to make a major contribution to the post-2015 vision and narrative. By putting children at the heart of the new development agenda, governments can explain how the world's countries plan to come together to change the lives of current and future generations.

The proposed agenda includes a large number of targets for children. In order to create a more resonant narrative, this paper has argued for a focus on a smaller set of headline objectives that take us to the heart of what it is the new agenda promises children. These core promises must be more than a communications device, however. They should sharpen the focus on delivery, ensuring that implementation begins rapidly in 2016 and that, by 2020, the new agenda for children is sufficiently robust to support a significant acceleration from business-as-usual trajectories for child protection, survival, and development outcomes.

So far, governments and international organizations have been slow to explore delivery challenges. The most potent criticism of the post-2015 agenda for children is not its breadth, lack of focus, or over-ambition, but that it includes promises that we are not even going to *try* and keep. In the worst case, children could even find progress slowing after the end of 2015, as the pressure that has been imposed by the MDG deadline is lost.

It is therefore time to make the post-2015 agenda compelling for children by setting out credible plans for financing and delivering the most urgent priorities, using the core promises to clarify the mission and increase accountability for delivering it. We should:

1. Start with a 'whole child perspective'

It is hard for professionals to see children as children, rather than as a series of problems determined by the preoccupations of different sectors. The same is true at national level. One ministry is responsible for a child's health, another for her food, a third for her education, and three or four may take some kind of responsibility for protecting her from violence.

Rio+20 sets out an integrated vision for *the protection, survival and development of all children to their full potential*.<sup>137</sup> Sectoral goals and targets, partnerships and funds, strategies and toolkits are all necessary, but we must fight to bring them together under a single banner. Children have a single set of interrelated needs (and rights) – a fact that matters for strategy and delivery, as well as for communications and advocacy.

The first step, then, is to launch a strategic conversation that brings together the heads of major child-focused agencies and partnerships, other international and national leaders who are prepared to champion children within the post-2015 agenda, and experts who understand how to accelerate delivery. This does not mean creating a cumbersome and centralized plan, but rather in following Ludwig Wittgenstein's advice to "take flight to where there is a free view over the whole *single* great problem, even if this view is still not a clear one."

2. Focus on delivery plans for the first five years of the new agenda.

By 2020, we will know whether the post-2015 agenda has any realistic chance of transforming the lives of the world's disadvantaged children. Leaders must therefore focus on this as their delivery horizon.

With this in mind they should launch a five year process to accelerate international and national efforts to deliver for children, bringing together international institutions, governments, business, and civil society. This should not mean starting from scratch, but be a process of synthesizing existing strategies and initiatives, identifying gaps and cross-cutting opportunities, offering a platform that puts children at the center and does not divide their needs across artificial sectoral and organizational boundaries.

A Special Representative of the Secretary-General could orchestrate this work, with the support of international organizations with a mandate for child protection, survival or development, and of existing SRSGs who work on violence against children, and children and armed conflict.

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3. Take the 'getting to zero' challenge seriously.

There is a yawning gap between the core promises and business-as-usual trajectories. Success will also make progress harder to achieve, not easier – the most vulnerable children must be reached if the new agenda is to fulfill its commitment to the protection, survival and development of all children to their full potential. The education MDG demonstrates that zero-based goals pose operational and strategic challenges that can easily be underestimated, especially in fragile situations, in conflict and humanitarian emergencies, and for children who live in communities that face high levels of discrimination.

Zero-based goals for child survival and protection will face similar problems in the post-2015 era. It is therefore time to turn *leave no child behind* from a feel-good slogan into a stimulus for strategic thinking and operational planning that addresses what it means to put the last child first.

4. Take action to address the biggest deficits and risks to delivery.

In health and nutrition, a reasonable foundation exists for delivering to children between 2016 and 2020. The challenge is now to finance and implement agreed strategies, and – in particular – to bridge the gulf between global aspirations, national ownership, and local delivery to children and their families.

At present, there appears to be little consensus on how to respond to the crisis in learning. African governments have called for “a rethinking of policies, strategies, and target setting to respond to the new priorities in the African context” and have set out a nine point plan for improving quality.<sup>138</sup> It is difficult, however, to find a coherent plan to teach all children to read, write and do at least basic mathematics in the Education for All Framework for Action to 2030.<sup>139</sup> There have also been calls for reform of partnerships for education. The zero draft of the Addis Ababa outcome document called for the Global Partnership for Education to be focused primarily on fragile and conflict-affected states,<sup>140</sup> a suggestion withdrawn in the

revised draft.<sup>141</sup> Others have called for a Global Fund for Education.<sup>142</sup> Further changes to the GPE *may* be part of the answer, but only if it is accompanied by a fundamental reappraisal of the sector as a whole and the kind of debate that was seen in nutrition in the latter years of the last decade.

For child protection, the challenge is to build a new partnership from scratch and quickly develop a portfolio of approaches to preventing violence. This requires a commitment of human and financial resource for what has been a marginalized sector. The question of universality is a pressing one.<sup>143</sup> Are developed country governments prepared to act at home, working on an equal footing with developing countries? Or do they still expect to lecture others and contribute only through aid?

Greater commitment should be also made to exploring innovative mechanisms for financing and delivery. A development impact bond, for example, could be used to create incentives to get children reading to an agreed and credible international standard (the *Teach the World to Read* bond).<sup>144</sup> Technology should now make it possible for every child in the world to be able to pick up a phone and talk to someone they trust and who can get them the help they need.<sup>145</sup> More of the same and incremental improvements will never be enough to deliver the core promises.

5. Put children at the heart of the Financing for Development conference and post-2015 summit.

Successful international meetings are about far more than the words in a declaration. At the moment, much more energy is being put into negotiating outcome documents than working out how finance ministers in Addis and heads of state/government in New York can be part of linked political ‘moments’ that bring the sustainable development agenda alive.

Children should not be the only focus of these meetings. Governments also need to answer the questions of what the agenda can deliver to young people (an economic transformation), to women (a fair share in the future), and to future generations (not wrecking

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the planet), while explaining who needs to contribute what to the new agenda to make it truly successful (a revitalized global partnership).

But children offer part of the answer to the post-2015 agenda's missing narrative. Rather than holding a series of disparate and unconnected side events on children's issues, the UN needs to bring them together under a single *protect, survive, develop* banner – a day of commitment at each event that will demonstrate to the world (and to the media) that the new agenda offers children ambition backed up by substance and political will. This would be an opportunity to celebrate recent successes (e.g. GAVI replenishment), as well as new developments (the new global strategy for health, or partnership for protecting children).

At Addis, the focus should be on the 'quick start' package that will provide the investment needed to ensure that *something* new happens in the early years of the new agenda. At the post-2015 summit, leaders should commit to what can be delivered by 2020 on the core promises themselves.

All this requires a political strategy that goes beyond the post-2015 summit in September and incorporates opportunities to cement the delivery of the new agenda in 2016 and beyond (the G7, G20, High Level Political Forum, Davos, etc.).

6. Explore the potential for a mechanism to drive implementation for children.

The international system lacks a forum that brings together those responsible for delivering to children at international, national and subnational levels (in contrast the Commission on the Status of Women is responsible for "promoting women's rights, documenting the reality of women's lives throughout the world, and shaping global standards on gender equality and the empowerment of women").<sup>146</sup>

While one hesitates to propose yet another international body, a regular meeting could feed into the High Level Political Forum or whichever mechanism is

agreed on as the apex body for leaders and ministers to be accountable for the delivery of the SDGs.

In the interim, major international actors with a child-focused mandate should begin planning for the next High Level Political Forum that will be held for Heads of State and Government, in 2017. CIC has proposed that this meeting should be a 'Delivery Summit' for the post-2015 agenda.<sup>147</sup> This offers a milestone for all those working for children to aim for – an early opportunity to show that implementation is on track.

They need to begin planning *now* for a major meeting in advance of this Forum or in parallel with it to review progress in beginning the implementation of the protection, survival, and development agenda for children. The Children's Summit in 1990 was the beginning of a process that led to the MDGs; a successor could have similar influence over whether a new set of promises to children will ever be delivered.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>Open Working Group (2014), *Open Working Group Proposal for Sustainable Development Goals*, available at <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/1579SDGs%20Proposal.pdf>

<sup>2</sup>United Nations (2012), *The Future We Want: Outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development*, available at <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/733FutureWeWant.pdf>

<sup>3</sup>See remarks delivered by Co-Facilitators at the Stocktaking session of the negotiations on the post 2015 development agenda, 21 January 2015, available at [https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/5913Summary%20of%20IGN%20Stock%20Taking%20Mtg%2019\\_21%20Jan%202015.pdf](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/5913Summary%20of%20IGN%20Stock%20Taking%20Mtg%2019_21%20Jan%202015.pdf); and Alex Evans and David Steven (2015), *What Happens Now? Time to deliver the post-2015 development agenda*. New York: Center on International Cooperation

<sup>4</sup>Alex Evans and David Steven (2013), *The Future is Not Good Enough: Business as Usual after 2015*. Paper submitted to the High Level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda, available at <http://www.foresight-fordevelopment.org/sobipro/55/1102-the-future-is-not-good-enough-business-as-usual-after-2015>

<sup>5</sup>138,964,000 children will be born per year between 2015-2020, see Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations (2012), 'World Population Prospects: The 2012 Revision', available at <http://esa.un.org/wpp/> [accessed 3 October 2014]; Total child population for 2016-2030 was calculated by taking the estimated child population (0 to 17) for 2015 (assuming an even distribution of population for the age group 15-19) and adding the estimated number of children born each year between 2016 and 2030.

<sup>6</sup>Pedro Olinto, Kathleen Beegle, Carlos Sobrado, and Hiroki Uematsu (2013), 'The State of the Poor: Where Are the Poor, Where is Extreme Poverty Harder to End, and What is the Current Profile of the World's Poor?' *Economic Premise*, October 2013, Number 125. Washington DC: The World Bank, available at <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXT-PREMNET/Resources/EP125.pdf>

<sup>7</sup>'Saving the lives of 16 million women and children, preventing 33 million unwanted pregnancies, ending stunting in 88 million children, and protecting 120 million children from pneumonia by 2015.' See <http://www.everywomaneverychild.org/>

<sup>8</sup>Open Working Group (2014), 'Introduction to the Proposal of the Open Working Group for Sustainable Development Goals' available at [http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/4518SDGs\\_FINAL\\_Proposal%20of%20OWG\\_19%20July%20at%201320hrsver3.pdf](http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/4518SDGs_FINAL_Proposal%20of%20OWG_19%20July%20at%201320hrsver3.pdf)

<sup>9</sup>Life expectancy at birth for children born in the period 2015-2020 is 71 years see, see Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations (2012), 'World Population Prospects: The 2012 Revision', available at <http://esa.un.org/wpp/> [accessed 3 October 2014]

<sup>10</sup>Currently projected for the early 2060s, see Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations (2012), op cit. available at <http://esa.un.org/wpp/> [accessed 3 October 2014]

<sup>11</sup>United Nations (2012), *The Future We Want: Outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development*, available at <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/733FutureWeWant.pdf>

<sup>12</sup>United Nations (1990), *The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*, available at [http://www.unicef.org.uk/Documents/Publication-pdfs/UNCRC\\_PRESS200910web.pdf](http://www.unicef.org.uk/Documents/Publication-pdfs/UNCRC_PRESS200910web.pdf)

<sup>13</sup>The first 'child survival revolution' was an initiative launched in 1982 in the State of the World's Children report, see United Nations Children's Fund (1996), 'The 1980s: Campaign for child survival' in *The State of the World's Children 1996*. New York: UNICEF, available at <http://www.unicef.org/sowc96/1980s.htm>

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