

1. Introduction:

In 2011, the population of the world reached the landmark figure of 7 billion people. Based on current projections, that figure will reach an alarming 9 billion people by 2050. **Children constitute one third of the world's population and this figure is set to increase.** Furthermore, in the developing countries where Irish Aid works, children represent an even higher proportion; in 2008 children accounted for 47% of the population in the world's least developed countries (LDCs) compared with 21% in industrialised countries.¹ **Children therefore represent the single largest defined group of recipients of development cooperation.** The cost of neglecting such a numerically significant group of development aid recipients cannot be underestimated. Increasingly, this will have dramatic implications for donor policies and effective government programming.

Accordingly, in this submission to the review of the White Paper on Irish Aid, UNICEF will submit that an ***explicit and stated focus on children*** is required to enable Irish Aid to meet its long-term strategic goals. Specifically, UNICEF recommends the following:

1. That the White paper **expressly recognises** the importance of children in development.
2. That an ***applied rights-based approach*** is incorporated into the aid programme to ensure the **realisation of child rights**. In particular, UNICEF suggests that Country Strategy Papers (CSPs), the Multi-Annual Programme Scheme (MAPS), the Civil Society Fund (CSF) and all bilateral funding are stress-tested against the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. This recommendation is consistent with ensuring that a human rights-based approach is actually implemented as part of the delivery of the aid programme.
3. UNICEF recommends **the adoption of the UNICEF-EU 'Child Rights Toolkit'** (details of which are set out in this document), to guarantee child-sensitive development in the implementation of our aid programme through both government and civil society. The United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child encourages States to provide and to use, as appropriate, technical assistance in the process of implementing the Convention.² The UNICEF-EU toolkit is an example of such technical assistance.

¹ UNICEF, *The State of the World's Children; Special Edition 2009* (2009: p. 65)

² United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, *General Comment Number 5: General Measures of Implementation on the Convention of the Rights of the Child; Article 63* (2003: p. 15)

General Comment Number 5 on the Convention on the Rights of the Child; **Article 61**
'advises State parties that the Convention should form the framework for international development assistance related directly or indirectly to children and that programmes of donor States should be rights-based*.

As a signatory to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), Ireland is required to acknowledge and implement the general comments on the CRC. The CRC is an invaluable basis for ensuring a human rights-based approach to development. From the perspective of development cooperation, the CRC and its protocols represent the only universal set of standards that is agreed by both donor and partner countries with regard to how Governments should treat children. In the broadest terms, **"a child rights approach to development cooperation focuses on enabling societal and governmental changes that guarantees all children without exception the rights of the CRC".³** This submission will detail how this approach can be implemented through the mainstreaming of child rights in all Irish Aid's development cooperation using the UNICEF-EU Toolkit.

In this proposal, UNICEF will also recommend that a child-rights perspective be built into the more upstream and macro-level processes of development cooperation. Irish Aid has long advocated the requirement for a long-term 'results-driven' model for aid delivery and UNICEF submits that the above proposals would be consistent with a long-term rights-based approach.

*The Committee on the Rights of the Child publishes its interpretation of the content of the human rights provisions in the form of general comments on thematic issues. In General Comment Number 5, the Committee outlined States parties' obligation to develop what it has termed 'general measures of implementation'.

³ UNICEF-EU Toolkit (2012)

2. Progress Made:

"Poverty reduction through the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals is set out as the main objective of Irish Aid".⁴

If poverty reduction is measured in terms of progress towards meeting the MDGs; we are invariably measuring progress by the impacts our efforts to alleviate poverty are having, first and foremost, on children. Through establishing goals in child-sensitive sectors such as education, child mortality, maternal health, hunger, equality and HIV/AIDS- the community of nations are implicitly acknowledging that **in order to tackle the intergenerational transmission of poverty, we need to focus on children.**

For the purposes of analysing the progress that Irish Aid has made in alleviating child poverty, UNICEF will focus exclusively on two of Irish Aid's strategic priority areas of nutrition and education.

Nutrition and the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Initiative

Since 2008 the hunger agenda has taken centre stage in both Ireland's aid programme and foreign policy. Through its 'Focus on Hunger', Irish Aid has committed Ireland to tackling maternal and child under-nutrition which has subsequently attracted worldwide acclaim for its innovative and dedicated response. **The SUN initiative has provided a vital platform to guide the international community's work on this issue** and is coordinating efforts to support effective, evidence-based actions to improve nutrition. In Tanzania, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Ethiopia, Zambia and Uganda, up to 50% of all children under five are stunted. **By investing heavily in this initiative, Irish Aid has acknowledged the role of children in the long term development of our partner countries.**

Success on this issue can be contributed to the coordinated approach taken at international level; an approach which Irish Aid has championed. **The potential to replicate this international advocacy for child rights is high considering Irish Aid's status as the world's best in terms of aid effectiveness and its ability to take the lead in ground-breaking, child sensitive programming.**

⁴ Consultation Paper for the Review of the White Paper on Irish Aid (2011: p. 5)

Education

In the White Paper, **access to education is recognised as a fundamental right and one which is 'indispensable to the understanding of all other human rights'**.⁵

Uganda is on track to be one of the only countries in Sub-Saharan Africa to reach the MDG on Universal Primary Education by 2015. This has not been an easy task given that **Uganda has the highest dependency ratio in the world, with more than half the population below the age of 15 years**. The number of children in primary school will have risen from 2.4 million in 1996 to over 7.5 million in 2010. Irish Aid have budgeted over €40 million for education in the period 2010-2014 and investment in education and Uganda's children is considered critical to improved outcomes in governance and economic growth.⁶

Three of Vietnam's key development strategies commit to ensuring educational access for disadvantaged and ethnic minority children, including early childhood education. The Ministry of Education and Training has experimented with alternative primary schools for difficult-to-access regions. A total of 95% of beneficiaries of the National Targeted Programme for Poverty Reduction received complete exemption from primary school tuition fees, as did 60% for lower secondary; more than 50% and 30%, respectively, reported exemptions from school contributions which are often the most expensive component of education. **Investment in education in this context is part of building strong and effective public institutions**. Providing equal access to education in the most remote and marginalised regions of Vietnam is essential to countering the impacts of inequality.⁷

Vietnam's Child-Centric Development Strategy

Vietnam represents an excellent example of where macro-level interventions are being reviewed through a child-sensitive lens; the effectiveness of this approach is demonstrated in **Vietnam's consistently high rankings, both in relative and absolute terms, towards achievement of the MDGs**. Vietnam has achieved outstanding poverty reduction and multi-sectoral development with positive impacts on children.

A focus on children has been integrated into national development strategies and sector specific plans and targets. These establish time-bound objectives for children's health, nutrition, education and access to clean water and hygiene, and for reductions in the numbers of children with specific vulnerabilities such as street children and those affected by HIV/AIDS, sexual abuse and trafficking.

Most UN, bilateral and multilateral agencies working in Vietnam are more in favour of supporting the strengthening of economic and institutional development, which is perceived to benefit children indirectly, rather than being aware of **the importance of approaching macro-level interventions through a child-friendly lens**.

⁵ Irish Aid, *White Paper on Irish Aid* (2006: p. 43)

⁶ Irish Aid, *Summary of Uganda Country Strategy Paper 2010-2014* (2010: p. 11)

⁷ ODI and Save the Children, *Progress in Child Well-Being: Building on What Works* (2012: 72)

3. Changing context:

Population Growth

In October 2011, the world's population reached an **unprecedented high of 7 billion people**. Estimates suggest that this will rise by another billion, as little as thirteen years from now. The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) foresees a global population of 9.3 billion at 2050: much of this increase is set to come from the high-fertility countries, which comprise 39 in Africa and nine in Asia. **Sub Saharan Africa is the one remaining region of the world where the population is set to double or treble in the next 40 years.** Aid programmes must maintain their focus on this region as the escape from poverty and hunger is stalled by this rapid population growth.⁸

Children comprise over 50% of the population in a number of Irish Aid's programme countries. With this number continuing to expand; pressure on services, resources and individuals will reach record levels. Irish Aid must respond to this demographic trend to ensure it guarantees the rights and aspirations of children to facilitate their integration and participation in an increasingly complex society.

The Economic Context

a. Domestic Economy

The most dramatic and impactful change domestically has been the reduced budget for ODA. Whilst the Irish Government's efforts to uphold their commitment to 0.7% should be commended, a decline of 30% in expenditures between 2008 and 2011 means that more than ever, there is a requirement to focus on value for money in order to ensure we continue to have **the maximum impact regardless of our reduced spend.**

b. Global Economy

In general, there needs to be a wider recognition of the impact of the current global economic crisis on children. The impact on children stems from falling investment in public services, household incomes and purchasing power, increased parental unemployment and migration. Children are also affected by increased domestic tension and violence, heavier workloads for women and reduced capacity for nurture, care and protection. The World Bank estimates **far more people in poverty**

⁸ UNFPA, *State of the World Population 2011* (2011: p. 4-5)

than might have been expected without the crisis and an estimated 30,000-50,000 additional infant deaths in sub-Saharan Africa in 2009 alone.⁹

Policies to achieve key rights outcomes can have a positive impact on growth, consistent with contemporary work on growth determinants. **A human rights-based approach has potential to reduce poverty and deprivation for all persons, lower vulnerabilities and facilitate long-term productivity.** The economic costs of allowing child and youth deprivation to persist can be enormous. For example, girls dropping out of school unnecessarily limits their subsequent contribution as adults to GDP. In Uganda, if girls who currently only finish primary school also completed secondary school, they would contribute an additional 34 percent of current GDP over their working lives. Enhanced capabilities therefore strengthen children's potential to contribute to economic growth.¹⁰

Changing Poverty Landscape and the Post-2015 Development Agenda

Aid is achieving real results but results also indicate that poverty is more persistent and concentrated in particular regions making the need to target the hardest to reach and the most vulnerable, even more pressing. The rate of urbanisation reflects an increasingly changing world whereby 2050, 7 out of 10 people will be living in cities. According to the UNICEF State of the World's Children Report 2012, **this shift to urban areas will disproportionately affect children as they endure poverty and deprivation through lack of access to basic services.**¹¹ A focus on equity will ensure that Irish Aid can reach the most disadvantaged children, wherever they live.

UNICEF advocates a policy of 'Narrowing the Gap' to meet the Millennium Development Goals. While UNICEF has always worked to reach the most disadvantaged and vulnerable children, recent data and indicators have confirmed that **deprivations of children's rights are disproportionately concentrated among the poorest and most marginalised within countries.** Compared with their wealthiest peers, children from the poorest households throughout the developing world are doubly at risk of dying before age five. The odds are similar for stunting, underweight prevalence or being registered at birth.¹² These marked disparities in child survival, demonstrate the fact that the MDGs and other international commitments cannot be fully realized without greater emphasis on children.

⁹ ODI Briefing Paper 56, *Raising the Game: Mainstreaming Children's Rights* (2009:p. 2)

¹⁰ UNICEF and the World Bank, *Integrating a Child Focus into Poverty and Social Analysis* (2011: p.8)

¹¹ UNICEF, *State of the World's Children 2012* (2012: p.2)

¹² UNICEF, *'Narrowing the Gap to Meet the Goals'* (2010; p. 1)

In Uganda, Irish Aid have stated that **income inequality combined with the highest population growth rates in the world have combined to counteract the positive effects of growth on poverty**, with average per capita income growth falling to 2.4%, compared to the Low Income Country average of 2.9%.¹³ This scenario could easily replicate itself in other programme countries therefore efforts must be made to counter this threat.

Shifts within the Development Sector

a. Human Rights Based Approach to Development

Through their agreement to treaties and covenants over the past two decades, **governments have adopted the realisation of human rights as the goal of development**. Irish Aid recognised this shift in the 2006 White Paper by declaring that 'spending on development is spending on human rights'.¹⁴ Key to this new way of looking at development is the way that rights-based approaches hold powerful people and institutions accountable for their responsibilities to those with less power. Whilst articulation of children's rights in donor agencies is varied, Article 4 of the CRC calls for the progressive realisation of child rights in line with government resources but within the framework of international cooperation. General Comment Number 5 on the CRC details the practical means of implementing this Article.

b. Harmonisation of Aid

The 2005 Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda for Action 2008 were landmark agreements on improving the quality of aid. The shift from project-based lending to direct budget support and programme sector wide approaches has **realigned power and leadership with recipient countries**. This has served to re-emphasise the importance of Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) and National Development Plans (NDPs).

As the paramount documents for aid cooperation, the NDP/PRSP facilitates child friendly planning and implementation through coordination, budgeting and costing child rights actions and tackling the root causes of poverty. They are also the single overarching planning documents that map out all core economic, structural and social policy. NDPs and PRSPs outline a country's key development objectives and government agenda. The NDP/PRSP objectives- to be results orientated, participatory and long term- highlights the need for a comprehensive and sustainable approach to poverty

¹³ Irish Aid, *Summary of the Uganda Country Strategy Paper 2010-2014* (2010: p. 6)

¹⁴ Irish Aid, *White Paper on Irish Aid* (2006: p. 59)

reduction. Focusing on the attainment of child rights, as well as safeguarding children's long-term development and productivity will ensure this sustainable approach.

Irish Aid has lent itself to general budget support in recent years which has positively impacted its relationship with programme country governments. An avenue has therefore been established which can facilitate increased collaboration in other policy areas. General budget support may be viewed as a vector of change to address child rights in the context of key development challenges and objectives.

Misconceptions of Child Rights

Child rights are often misunderstood to mean little more than a broad commitment to children's welfare in reality, the realisation of children's rights demands a transformation of the way social and governmental institutions work such that they guarantee every child the best that society and government has to give.¹⁰

What does the concept of child rights actually mean for development? Essentially a focus on child rights encompasses the pursuit of poverty reduction through economic growth. A child rights lens

¹⁰ UNICEF, *Keyways: The Data to Meet the Goals Study and Forum for Children: Advancing the SDGs with Early Key Facts (a. 1)*
¹¹ UNICEF (2018) *Keyways*

4. Key Issues:

Children are by their nature, most at risk from inaction or ineffective development cooperation. The following issues need to be resolved before effective child-sensitive development can be implemented-

Child Poverty as distinct from Adult Poverty

Addressing poverty in general may not actually benefit children without a child-sensitive lens, given what we know about the unequal intra-household distribution of resources and decision making. Child-rights based approaches encourage clear differentiation between household members' experience of poverty. Household income is a critical determinant of child outcomes.¹⁵ In recent years, disparities in child mortality and malnutrition rates between the poorest and richest socio-economic groups have increased. This underlines the need for **continued focused attention to particularly disadvantaged households and areas.**

Particularly from a public policy perspective, children's experience of poverty presents significant differences to adult poverty. **The impacts of child poverty are far less immediate, showing up in long-term health problems, stunting or poor educational attainment.** This should be reflected in national poverty situational assessments and translated into measurable targets and indicators to strengthen accountability mechanisms that track progress on child wellbeing. Efforts to compensate for such lack of data include using additional indicators as proxy measures of child poverty, such as those around education, health or access to water to more accurately understand the circumstances of children. The case of Vietnam demonstrates the value in looking specifically at child poverty indicators.

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¹⁵ UNICEF, *Narrowing the Gaps to Meet the Goals Study and Progress for Children: Achieving the MDGs with Equity Key Facts* (p. 1)

¹⁶ UNICEF-EU Toolkit (2012)

looks beyond the income and consumption data and beyond service delivery, to being an understanding of the multidimensional nature of poverty. This allows planners to address key structural, social and political constraints- as well as economic constraints- that operate at the household level and beyond to hinder children's development. That means that **with participation of children, planners can tackle comprehensively the underlying causes of intergenerational transmission of poverty.**

There is an erroneous assumption that funding to realise children's rights flows naturally through aid systems, given the increasingly coordinated focus around poverty reduction and the MDGs, and that correcting any flaws in the system itself will result, automatically, in improved child well-being.

Lack of Appropriate Tools and Fora to Mainstream Child Rights Programming

The toolkit, as detailed in the following section, focuses on building a child-rights perspective into the more upstream and macro-level processes of development cooperation. This places increased attention to the systemic determinants of development outcomes. By **tackling the root causes of child poverty, governments are enabled to design and deliver more strategic national level policy and programmes.**

New and linked processes for aid delivery demand new and linked negotiations among donors, group of donors and government, particularly in fora where child well-being may fall off the agenda through lack of common agreement and support. The Paris agenda impacts, not only the means of delivering aid, but the very content of that aid. While children may be visible in donor cooperation, only modest amounts of attention have been paid to monitoring and evaluation or records of investment. Donors need to safeguard the attention children receive in the new international aid architecture by **establishing a cross-donor working group on child rights at country, regional, OECD-DAC or other collaborative levels to enhance donor understanding and coordination**, in line with the Paris Declaration of alignment and harmonisation.¹⁷

¹⁷ ODI Briefing Paper 56, *Raising the Game: Mainstreaming Children's Rights* (2009:p. 2)

5. Ways of Working: Recommendations 2 and 3

UNICEF-EU Toolkit

UNICEF and the EU have collaborated to produce a toolkit addressing child rights in development and humanitarian cooperation and government programming. The toolkit was drafted in response to **a failure by donors to adopt a comprehensive approach to children in their policies, programming and budgeting. This has resulted in piecemeal and often contradictory approaches to children.** UNICEF recommends the use of this toolkit by Irish Aid to firstly, identify and address child rights issues in their work and secondly, to support them to better integrate children's rights into a whole range of relevant political, legal, budgetary and programmatic actions and structures.

According to the International Development Association, in 2001-2005, an average of 33 donors operated per partner country.¹⁸ This is indicative of **the integral and influential role that donors, and hence their respective child and youth approaches, play in the transformational potential of PRSPs/NDPs;** however, these roles are highly variable depending on the countries' individual trajectories yet donors have a responsibility to advise governments on child rights approaches, child rights policy and planning in accordance with the CRC.

An executive summary of the toolkit has been attached which includes guidance on the nine tools. For the purposes of this submission, UNICEF will recommend the use of two tools. These tools are used in the two phases of the programme cycle which demand particular attention when attempting to incorporate a child-rights based approach: namely the stage of conducting a **'child rights situation analysis'** and a **'child rights impact assessment'**. The UNICEF-EU toolkit has provided guidance on the use of both of these high-quality tools-

a. Child Rights Situational Analysis (CRSA)

There is a general concern that a critical child rights situation analysis section is missing in all donor country situation analyses. As a result mainstreaming children into the aid agenda depends mainly on individual donors' doing this voluntarily rather than fulfilling responsibilities identified in development assistance strategies.

Understanding the development context is vital to achieving good outcomes for children. **CRSA is about asking the 'right' questions so that children stay at the centre of the analysis.** This involves

¹⁸ IDA, Aid Architecture: An Overview of the Main Trends in Official Development Assistance Flows (2007, p. ii)

the gathering of data on a specific social or economic situation in a country or region, thereby taking stock of what services and amenities are currently available for vulnerable groups such as children. For the purposes of informing the PRSP/NDP documents, such analyses have focused on national poverty dynamics to enable strategic and targeted policies.

b. Child Rights Impact Assessment (CRIA)

As a very concrete method of ensuring that governments take children into account, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child recommends that all countries conduct an ex-ante “child rights impact assessment” on decisions being made by government that will have an impact on children. **One of the key purposes of conducting a CRIA is to put children at the forefront of the political and decision making agenda.** It is a process that examines the potential impacts on children of policies and programmes as the policy is being developed, rather than waiting until policies or programmes are evaluated on an ex-post basis.

A CRIA is an essential tool for enabling donors to ensure that they are implementing their policy commitments to children’s rights in their development and humanitarian policy. Within the context of promoting the uptake of the CRC with partner countries, a CRIA can be seen as an effective means to enhance accountability, to build institutional capacities, to work towards effective governance and to encourage broad participation.

Some donor governments have ensured that a proportion of their international development assistance is earmarked for the implementation of child rights such as the Canadian International Development Agency and the European Union. To date, delivery on those commitments have often been assured through policy commitments and tallying how much has been spent on child-specific projects and programmes. **A CRIA would provide a far higher level of assurance that overseas development assistance is having a beneficial impact on children.**

Most importantly, as donors move more towards general and sector budget support, they are less able to specifically direct their development assistance to specific outcomes for children. **By carrying out a CRIA on the budgeting process itself or the laws or policies that are developed using general or sector budget support, a CRIA may be one of the few tools donors have to ensure that the subsequent government actions using their funds will have a positive impact on children.**

6. Other Comments:

Lessons Learned from Efforts to Mainstream Gender Issues

It is vital that the impact of policy choices on children is internalised in government and aid agency policies. Progress has been made in gender markers to promote gender-sensitive policy and programme development and UNICEF are calling for similar initiatives to be implemented for children and young people.

NGOs and donors have well-coordinated international networks focusing on gender equality at the level of the OECD-DAC and there exists no comparable global network for the child rights community. There are large child rights orientated NGOs such as Save the Children, Plan and World Vision but **coordinated initiatives to address the child-specific impacts of mainstream macro-policy issues have been limited.**

A number of lessons have been learnt from the efforts to mainstream gender issues. **Cultural and organisational attitudes were a major institutional challenge** which resulted in significant gaps between policy commitments and limited resource allocations. The debate needed to be framed so it resonated with broader development discourses. There has been a tendency to equate gender equality narrowly with women's participation in development programmes or social sectors such as girls' education and maternal health, at the expense of a broader focus in the areas of economic opportunities. However, more recent efforts, such as the World Bank's focus on investing in gender equality initiatives because it constitutes 'smart economics' and UNICEF's call to capitalise on the 'double dividend' – i.e. **promote women's empowerment in order also to achieve better child outcomes** – highlight the power of integrating gender considerations into the core business of existing development paradigms.

Systematic data collection and analysis, including monitoring and evaluation efforts have been vitally important. Over the past 20 years, there have been increasing efforts to address the serious gaps in the availability of sex-disaggregated gender data and indicators of progress that help to mainstream gender issues. **Other key developments include the OECD-DAC's gender marker to track official development assistance expenditure on gender equality objectives** and the recent initiative by Germany to introduce a gender marker in its assessment of all development projects,

such that the onus is on project and section leads, to demonstrate where they think that gender is not relevant before they can receive project and funding approval.¹⁹

The Process of Implementation

The child rights approach would focus initially on framing debates and agenda setting. Examples include mainstreaming children in public policy debates, sensitising authorities to their differential needs and **drawing attention to how children can be equally, if not more, affected by macro-level policies (e.g. governance reforms, free trade agreements) than by obviously child-oriented sector-specific policies such as education and health.** Child-focused advocacy initiatives in Ethiopia have spotlighted the detrimental effects that agriculture-led industrial development can have on child labour, at the expense of school attendance.

As a result of this evidence, efforts to promote discursive commitments from states and policy actors are more likely to succeed. While such commitments may not automatically translate into concrete impacts in children's lives, they often **constitute an important source of leverage for promoting future policy and behavioural changes.** A good example of such commitments is the recent announcement by the transitional government in Somalia that it will ratify the CRC.²⁰

Irish Aid's Credibility in the Donor Community

The guiding strategies by which IA deliver bilateral support to its' partner countries, as expressed in the CSPs, provide the clearest example of the limited attention accorded to children's rights issues. This CSP is the product of 18 months of intensive analysis and design, involving consultations between the country team, HQ colleagues, government, donor partners and civil society. The process by which these 5 year strategies come to be accepted is very extensive and provides an opportunity to begin using some of the tools suggested in the course of this submission.

According to the OECD-DAC Peer Review, Irish Aid's approach to mainstreaming its priority issues – namely gender, environment, HIV/AIDS and governance – is a strong, though evolving, feature of its aid programme which already provides lessons that could be shared with other donors. Irish Aid is encouraged to improve reporting on mainstreaming and focus on measuring development impacts to enhance its own learning as well as that of other donors.²¹ UNICEF echoes this recommendation

¹⁹ Working paper 318; Opportunities and Challenges in Promoting Policy- and Practice- Relevant Knowledge on Child Rights (2010: 33)

²⁰ Ibid. (2010: 33-34)

²¹ OECD, DAC Peer Review of Ireland (2009, p.13)

and presents the UNICEF-EU toolkit as the basis for the future mainstreaming of child rights throughout Irish Aid's development assistance.

CONCLUSION

In his address to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Foreign Affairs on April 18 2012, Minister of State Joe Costello articulated the primary basis of our aid policy:

'Everywhere we have gone we have always asserted and articulated that the underlying principle of our programmes is human rights'.²²

UNICEF commends the emphasis that Irish Aid has placed on human rights. To implement this overarching commitment, UNICEF submits that the tools for implementation of this policy, such as contained in the UNICEF-EU Toolkit, need to be incorporated into the White Paper on an **applied basis** to ensure compliance with the CRC.

UNICEF's work is guided by the CRC and similarly, by ratifying the Convention, the Irish Government has agreed to adopt it as a guiding mandate. The UNICEF-EU Toolkit will enable Irish Aid to implement an applied child rights-based approach, ensuring the best possible outcomes, not only for children but for programme countries more generally. The programmes of support at the country level comprise the most important partnerships between Ireland and developing countries and therefore, we should capitalise on the strength of these relations to promote the rights of children.

²² JFAC Review of White Paper on Irish Aid: Discussion (April 18, 2012)

step-by-step guide to conducting a child rights impact assessment for policies and programmes. The tool will suggest a basic set of core indicators on child rights specifically for development programming to track and assess impacts on children.

TOOL 5 **Guidance on Child-friendly Budgeting** will identify and develop ways to systematically assess the impacts of budgetary allocations and leveraging a larger proportion of the national budget for the implementation of the CRC. The tool will provide recommendations that will assist national stakeholders in taking all necessary measures, including allocation of required resources, both human and financial, and in considering options for appropriate distribution of resources at the central, state and local levels, and where needed, within the framework of international co-operation.

TOOL 6 **Guidance on Including Child Rights in Emergencies and Post-Crisis Transition Policy and Programming** will address child rights across a range of crisis situations, conflict-affected fragile states and post-crisis transition. It will pull together a coherent picture of key child rights issues in these circumstances, and provide strategies on how to implement the human rights based approach to programming in emergency situations.

TOOL 7 **Guidance on Legislative Reform for Child Rights** will give the instruments and policy frameworks to ensure harmonization of legislative reforms with international human rights treaties (CRC and CEDAW in particular). It will identify common opportunities, as well as the difficulties encountered, in integrating child rights into policy and legislative reforms. It will highlight the nature of laws and the various types of legislative reform.

TOOL 8 **Guidance on Children's Participation** will draw on good practices of engaging and empowering children and young people to take part in policies and programme development, reflecting their right to be heard and participate in the decisions that impact their lives as laid out in Article 12 of the CRC. It will provide a practical guide for those working with children to help children develop their capacities for participation, highlighting at the same time the benefits of participation for policy makers as an audience.

TOOL 9 **Guidance on Working with Civil Society on Civil Rights** will bring together good practice in engaging non-governmental partners in supporting and promoting child rights. It draws lessons from working in partnership with trade unions, business associations, cooperatives, employers' associations, faith groups, trade associations, recreational groups and think tanks. It will highlight the role of civil society in development, and identifies key areas where development partners can work with and through civil society to promote the realization of the CRC and MDGs.

For more information contact:

UNICEF
Gender and Rights Unit
Three United Nations Plaza
New York, NY 10017 USA
Rada Noeva: rnoeva@unicef.org

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Designed by Steven Bernholz



CHILD RIGHTS TOOLKIT

**A Comprehensive Toolkit
to Address Child Rights
in Development and
Humanitarian Cooperation
and Government Programming**



WHY A CHILD RIGHTS TOOLKIT?

Governments around the world have made repeated commitments to improve the lives of children – through the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the most widely ratified human rights convention, the 2002 UN Special Session on a World Fit for Children (WFFC), and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to name just a few. Yes, it is clear that despite significant progress, for many children their rights are still not their realities.

Despite being the majority of the population in many developing countries, children's voices are seldom heard by their own governments through formal democratic structures, nor are they often the focus of concerted action and attention by donor governments. Few donors take a comprehensive approach to children in their policies, programming and budgeting with a resulting piecemeal and perhaps even contradictory approach to children that often fails to deliver on commitments made.

UNICEF, as the mandated UN children's agency, is partnering with the EC to develop a comprehensive **'Child Rights Toolkit'**, designed for donors and partners in developing countries, to effectively include children's rights in development, humanitarian and security cooperation. UNICEF brings its normative expertise, field experience and partnerships, including relations with both donor and developing country governments, to this work.

WHAT IS ITS OBJECTIVE?

The overall objectives of the Toolkit are to contribute and support the implementation of the CRC as a whole, including through better participation of children in policies and strategies concerning them directly or indirectly, and

through improving the achievement of the Millennium Declaration and its goals.

The Toolkit will comprise of high-quality tools and a training package around a whole series of child rights issues for the purpose of improving the capacity of targeted stakeholders and key actors to:

Identify and address child rights issues in their work;

Better integrate children's rights into a whole range of relevant political, legal, budgetary and programmatic actions and structures that:

- Development practitioners can apply when advocating and programming around children
- Donors can use in addressing development cooperation and humanitarian interventions
- Governments can use in making policy choices and implementing national policies

WHAT IS THE CHILD RIGHTS TOOLKIT?

A compilation of high-quality tools, guidance and a training package that will equip stakeholders to incorporate child rights into their work in the following areas:

TOOL 1 **Child Rights Resource Handbook** will provide an overview of the international framework for child rights and supporting institution, as well as links to recent studies, emerging policy debates, child rights case studies and commissioned work. This expert collection of material and sources will highlight key areas of child rights and emerging debates that are relevant to development professionals and national governments in developing countries.

TOOL 2 **Child Rights and Governance** good

governance has been a main focus of multilateral and bi-lateral donors and other actors in development and emergency settings since the early 1990s. The CRC measures of implementation make clear the imperative of engaging the process of governance to fulfill child rights, yet to date there has been little connection between child rights and governance constituencies. This component will assist child rights and governance experts to make the links between good governance and the realization of child rights, and provide strategies on how governance theories and structures can both be better utilized for the realization of, and be made more responsive to, children's needs and rights.

TOOL 3 **Guidance on including Child Rights in Development and Poverty Reduction policy and in the Programming Process**

within the context of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the MDGs, this tool will develop methodologies and guidance for bringing child rights principles into both the content and the process of developing Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRS), Sector Wide Approaches (SWAps), and National Development Strategies (NDS) as well as National Plans of Action (NPA) for children, women or orphans and vulnerable children. Applying human rights principles to the process of developing these plans will also be covered, with particular guidance and case studies on child participation in PRSs and development plans.

TOOL 4 **Child Rights Impact Assessment and Child Rights Indicators** will recommend

methodologies for conducting impact assessments to determine the effects policy and programmes may have on children and the enjoyment of their rights. It will provide a