

## **Statement of ChildFund Alliance: Second Regular Session of the UNICEF Executive Board**

### **12 September 2019 Agenda Item 8:**

Mr. President, Executive Director Fore, and Distinguished Members of the Board: On behalf of the members of ChildFund Alliance and Joining Forces, I wish to thank ED Fore for her keynote at our Child Rights Now launch on June 26. Our event highlighted the progress made since the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child—as well as the work that remains to ensure no child is left behind. We are grateful for ED Fore’s supportive remarks and for UNICEF’s ongoing work to make ending violence against children a top priority.

As a global network of 11 child-focused development organizations in more than 60 countries, ChildFund Alliance is fully committed to achieving SDG 16.2 and to promoting the meaningful participation of children in decisions that greatly affect them. To further this goal, we conducted a comprehensive survey of nearly 5,500 children in 15 countries, on their perceptions about violence against children. Through questionnaires, meetings, and interviews we documented their opinions and ideas. Just last week, we released the findings in our report, *Small Voices Big Dreams 2019*.

Our study gives important insights into the perceptions of children, revealing that more than 40% believe they are not adequately protected. They highlighted three main causes of violence: their own defenselessness, the cycle of violence, and adults’ loss of self-control due to substance abuse. They also shared boys and girls are susceptible to different forms of danger, with boys at greater risk of being kidnapped, robbed, or involved in organized crime or child labor, and girls more likely to be victims of sexual abuse, rape, forced marriage, and domestic work.

Only 18% believe people who govern act to protect them and one in two said adults do not listen to their opinions on important matters. This is a missed opportunity, because elevating children’s voices, heeding their input, and treating them as active participants with full rights is key to making real progress in creating a world for children that is free from violence.

This year, as we prepare to mark the 30th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, we look forward to collaborating with UNICEF, and others, to prioritize listening to children and responding to their voices in all we do. In *Small Voice Big Dreams*, nine in ten children said the most important thing adults can do to end violence against children is to love them more. Together, let us work to make this a reality for all children throughout the world.

Thank you.