



# HLPF 2018

Report on ChildFund Alliance engagement

## Background: High-Level Political Forum 2018

In September 2015, the United Nations unanimously adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which went into effect in January 2016. The annual High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) is the main space for follow-up and review of the SDGs at the global level. The 2018 HLPF took place at United Nations Headquarters in New York from July 9-18, 2018. The theme for the session was "Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies." The HLPF began with a week-long in-depth review of selected SDGs. This year the following SDGs were examined:

- Goal 6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all
- Goal 7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all
- Goal 11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
- Goal 12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
- Goal 15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss
- Goal 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development

The program for week one also included the launch of the [Secretary General's SDG Progress Report](#) for 2018. In its discussion of SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions, which includes target 16.2: End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children), the report calls attention to the high numbers of children experiencing violent forms of discipline in many countries. It also stated that about one quarter of the world's children still lack access to birth registration.

On the final day of the HLPF, Member States adopted the [Ministerial Declaration](#).

## ChildFund at the 2018 HLPF

ChildFund's 2012-2015 global advocacy campaign "free from violence and exploitation" actively contributed to making child protection a global priority within the SDGs. In our five-year strategic plan "Toward a Safe World for Children" we commit to prevent violence against children, protect children from violence and exploitation, and enable children to participate in decisions related to achieving the SDGs. In order for this commitment to be realized, children and violence against children must be visible in the SDG review processes at national, regional and global levels.

### ChildFund at the 2018 HLPF: Summary of Key Accomplishments

- Co-hosted/supported 4 side events with ChildFund speakers
- Organized 3 bilateral meetings with governments
- Almost all VNR Reports for ChildFund presence countries include a reference to SDG 16.2 and/or ending violence against children
- Advocated for and secured strong language on children in the HLPF outcome document

This year we welcomed staff from four ChildFund member organizations to advocate for children during the HLPF. They participated in meetings with the UN Missions of Australia, Korea and Spain. They spoke at side events to the official meetings, promoting efforts to leave no one behind, protect children from violence and make cities safer for children, while advancing ChildFund advocacy priorities.

Member Organization	HLPF Representation
ChildFund Australia	Philippa Nicholson, Head of Programs
ChildFund International	Stephanie Perlson, Program Coordinator
ChildFund Korea	Sungho Lee, Manager of Global Advocacy and Partnerships Nayoung Kim, Global Advocacy & Partnerships/Advocacy & Policy Advisor
Educo	Jose Faura, CEO Macarena Céspedes, Country Director, Spain

### Advocacy around the Ministerial Declaration

The HLPF issues a Ministerial Declaration each year. Under the leadership of ChildFund Alliance, child-focused organizations in New York [advocated with Member States](#) to include strong language on children in the document. The final agreed declaration touches on the three themes of prevention, protection and participation that frame the work of ChildFund Alliance. Paragraph 17 of the document includes:

- the assertion that children should be free from all forms of violence;
- recognition of young people as agents of change;
- emphasis on the need to invest in children, adolescents and youth;
- commitment to including their perspectives in the development and assessment of strategies and programmes designed to address their specific needs; and
- affirmation of the importance of supporting young people’s participation in the implementation and review of the 2030 Agenda.

### Social Media Advocacy Messaging

In advance of the HLPF, the Secretariat developed a [social media guide](#), which was shared with members. The purpose of the guide was to support ChildFund in promoting advocacy messages and highlight work relevant to the SDGs under review and in the VNR reporting countries. The guide included a timeline of issues/themes under discussion during the HLPF and topics for messaging to address. Sample posts included information relating to work being done by ChildFund Alliance members and members were encouraged to adapt the messaging to their own contexts.

## ChildFund and the 2018 Voluntary National Reviews

Each year when the HLPF meets, governments can volunteer to present reports on national progress towards implementing the SDGs. As Member States prepare their national reports on the SDG progress, they are encouraged to hold consultations with a diverse group of stakeholders.

ChildFund advocates that national SDG review processes should include space for the voices of children to be heard and the national reporting should cover the SDG targets that contribute to the prevention and elimination of violence against children.

In July 2018 during the HLPF, 46 countries presented Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) of SDG progress. Fifteen countries where ChildFund members have a presence presented VNRs. This [background document on the 2018](#)

[VNRs](#) provides an overview of the process and of the ChildFund Alliance key messages for the VNRs. ChildFund members used this opportunity to advocate for several of our advocacy asks encouraging governments to allocate adequate resources to prevent and respond to violence against children; report on targets related to ending violence against children; and implement the INSPIRE strategies.

Click on the links below to access the full reports, presentation to the HLPF and civil society response (where available) for ChildFund presence countries.

- [Australia VNR / presentation to HLPF](#)
- [Benin VNR / presentation to HLPF](#)
- [Canada VNR / presentation to HLPF / civil society response](#)
- [Ecuador VNR / presentation to HLPF](#)
- [Guinea VNR / presentation to HLPF](#)
- [Ireland VNR / presentation to HLPF / civil society response](#)
- [Kiribati VNR Main messages](#)
- [Lao PDR VNR / presentation to HLPF / civil society response](#)
- [Mali VNR / presentation to HLPF](#)
- Mexico VNR [English](#) [Spanish](#) / [presentation to HLPF / civil society response](#)
- [Paraguay VNR / presentation to HLPF](#)
- [Senegal VNR / presentation to HLPF / civil society response](#)
- Spain VNR [English](#) [Spanish](#) / [civil society response](#)
- [Sri Lanka VNR / presentation and statement to HLPF / civil society response](#)
- [Vietnam VNR / presentation to HLPF / civil society response](#)

Many governments included members of civil society in their official delegations to the HLPF. Some of the European delegations included youth representatives and the Mexican government included a child under the age of 16 supported by Save the Children.

While the process for the VNRs was different in each country, ChildFund member offices engaged in the process where possible at country level during the preparation of the reports. The Secretariat convened calls with members in reporting countries to offer them a space to discuss their experiences with the process. This included participating in government consultations with civil society organizations to inform the content and development of the reports, working in coalition with other civil society organizations to influence the review process, and working in coalition with other civil society organizations to develop shadow reports.

The HLPF also offers opportunities for civil society to respond to government VNRs during their formal VNR presentations. During this year's HLPF, ChildFund members participated individually or through coalitions in the process for developing civil society responses and questions for Australia, Paraguay and Spain. Across the 2018 VNR presentations there was a pattern of governments focusing on the specific SDGs under review. This underscores the opportunity to influence the review process in 2019 when SDG 16 including the target on ending violence against children will be reviewed.

For almost all of the 2018 reporting countries where ChildFund is present, the final VNR reports include reference to SDG target 16.2 and/or ending violence against children. In addition, the reports for Canada, Paraguay and Mexico call attention to Pathfinding status with the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children. Close to two-thirds of the reports mention SDG 8.7 and/or child labor. Almost all discuss education/SDG 4.

More broadly, all of the full VNR reports mention children. However, only two (Canada and Ecuador) contain language on children as agents of change which is so prominently featured in the 2030 Agenda, and a priority for ChildFund.

## Member engagement in regional and subregional preparatory processes

The main regional processes feeding into the HLPF are the Regional Forums for Sustainable Development, organized by the United Nations Regional Commissions. In the lead-up to the 2018 HLPF, representatives of ChildFund Korea and ChildFund Vietnam participated in the Fifth Asia Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD) in March 2018 in Bangkok. Sungho Lee, Manager, Global Advocacy and Partnerships, ChildFund Korea; and Vuong Dinh Giap, Deputy Country Director, ChildFund Vietnam, engaged in the preparatory Asia Pacific Peoples' Forum on Sustainable Development, and the APFSD. Throughout the sessions they promoted child protection within the discussions on the SDGs for review at the 2018 HLPF. They worked to secure language on children in the outcome statement of the APFSD. Access the [full report](#) of their engagement in the Forum.

At the subregional level Sungho Lee represented ChildFund Korea at the North-East Asian Multistakeholder Forum on the Sustainable Development Goals in October 2017 in Beijing. This meeting aimed to strengthen the subregional perspective on the theme of the 5<sup>th</sup> APFSD.

Given the upcoming review of SDG 16 in 2019, the regional and subregional preparatory processes will offer an important opportunity to advocate for ChildFund priorities, with a particular opportunity to position the work of ChildFund Australia and New Zealand in Pacific Island states that will prepare VNRs in 2019.

## High-level Segment of ECOSOC 2018

The second week of the HLPF coincided with the High-level segment of ECOSOC, which took place from July 16-19. The theme was: "From global to local: supporting sustainable and resilient societies in urban and rural communities." During the General Debate of the High-level Segment, Member States presented statements responding to the ECOSOC theme and the theme of the HLPF. During this segment, strong support for empowering and investing in children was expressed in the statement of the [Group of Friends of Children and the SDGs](#), which was presented on behalf of 60 Member States. During the General Debate, only a handful of ChildFund presence countries mentioned children in their statements. Many structured their comments around the six SDGs for review which were not explicitly focused on children.

## ChildFund Engagement in HLPF Side Events

### **July 12: Partnership for building peaceful and resilient societies by ending violence against children**

The side event *Partnership for Building Peaceful and Resilient Societies by Ending Violence against Children* brought together Member States, civil society, UN entities and young people to examine best practices for working together to end violence against children as a foundation for building peaceful and resilient societies. World Vision Japan, Save the Children Japan, the Global Partnership to End Violence against Children Japan Forum and SDGs Japan hosted the event. While the discussion was framed around the experience of civil society in Japan working together with the government to advance efforts to end violence against children, it also brought in wider perspectives from other national contexts as well as the global context.

Philippa Nicholson, Head of Programs at ChildFund Australia, participated on the panel, which also included Nadia

and Maryann, two young women from Marists in Mexico, which organized consultations with children on the SDGs; Howard Taylor, Executive Director of the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children; Andrew Claypole, Senior Advisor from the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) on Violence against Children; Noriko Shibata, Senior Advocacy Adviser at World Vision Japan; and Yumiko Horie, Advocacy Manager at Save the Children Japan. Philippa presented two examples of multi-stakeholder collaboration to end violence against children in Vietnam: Swipe Safe and child-friendly accountability. [Download the event summary.](#)

### **July 12: SDGs Interlinkages to leave no child behind: Eliminating all forms of violence against children**

On the evening of July 12, children and young people, NGOs, governments and UN officials gathered at the UN for the side event *SDGs Interlinkages to Leave No Child Behind: Eliminating all forms of violence against children*. The event was hosted by the Government of Bulgaria, ChildFund Alliance and World Vision. Participants examined interlinkages between those targets in SDGs under review during the 2018 HLPF and targets that are directly relevant to ending violence against children in SDG 16.

Sungho Lee, Manager of Global Advocacy and Partnerships at ChildFund Korea, participated as a speaker, presenting some of the work being done in Korea to engage children to make their cities safer. ChildFund Korea's Yellow Carpet initiative was the result of children working together to identify a common issue and a solution to resolve the issue. The Yellow Carpet initiative responds to the statistic that close to half of child deaths in Korea are due to traffic accidents. Since the project began in March of 2015, about 700 Yellow Carpets have been painted nationwide. [Download the event summary.](#)

### **July 13: Still left behind? Realizing the pledge to Leave No one Behind for the most deprived and marginalized children**

On July 13, *Still Left Behind? Realizing the pledge to leave no one behind for the most deprived and marginalized children* featured an exchange between children, Member States, UN agencies and civil society on how to ensure the pledge to Leave No One Behind is translated into meaningful change for children. The event was co-hosted by the Missions of Australia and Bulgaria, ChildFund Alliance, Plan International, Save the Children, SOS Children's Villages and World Vision International. It took place on the morning before the HLPF conducted its thematic review '*Leaving No One Behind – Are we Succeeding?*'

During the program, Philippa Nicholson, Head of Programs at ChildFund Australia, discussed the work ChildFund Australia is doing with governments and local partners in the Pacific Islands to develop child-focused protection services within the social welfare system that focus on the most vulnerable children, including those with disabilities. This work is outlined in the report [Ending Violence against children in the Asia-Pacific](#). [Download the event summary.](#)

### **July 18: High-level meeting of civil society and other actors on Agenda 2030 in Spain**

A closed-door high level meeting with Spanish government and civil society representatives took place on the morning of July 18, in advance of Spain's presentation of its Voluntary National Review. The purpose of the meeting was to promote a dialogue among different levels of government, civil society and other actors about the mechanisms and policies necessary for implementing the 2030 Agenda in Spain. As a member of [Futuro en Común](#), the network that organized the meeting, EDUCO played a key role in the development of the meeting and José Faura, CEO of EDUCO, was an official speaker.

## Highlights of selected child-focused HLPF meetings and events

- ChildFund also supported *Promoting Safe and Inclusive Communities for Children: Achievements and challenges in the implementation of SDG 11 in LAC region, ensuring communities free of violence against children*, which took place on July 12. It was hosted by the Government of Uruguay, the SRSG on Violence against Children, and the Latin American and Caribbean Movement for Children. During the event, the Latin American and Caribbean Movement for Children shared its recommendations for the VNRs, available in [English](#) and [Spanish](#).
- On July 16, UNICEF and the Government of Mali hosted *Every Child Alive: Ending preventable newborn deaths through clean, functional health facilities within the reach of every mother and baby*. The event highlighted the findings of the UNICEF report [Every Child Alive: The urgent need to end newborn deaths](#).

## Publications shared at the 2018 HLPF

A number of publications were launched or disseminated at the HLPF. Reports from Educo and ChildFund Australia were distributed to HLPF participants via space shared by UNICEF inside UN Headquarters. The table below contains guidance and publications that are of particular relevance for ChildFund members.

<a href="#">Ending Violence against children in the Asia-Pacific ChildFund Australia</a>
<a href="#">The contribution of Sports to the Achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals: A toolkit for Action.</a>
<a href="#">Checklist: Is your NGO ready to monitor and implement the SDGs?</a>
<a href="#">Guidelines for CSO Shadow Reports Monitoring Implementation of Agenda 2030 at National Level</a>
<a href="#">Everything You Need to Know About the VNR Process</a>
<a href="#">States of Fragility Report 2018</a>
<a href="#">Still Left Behind? Tracking children's progress against the pledge to leave no one behind</a>

## Looking ahead to the 2019 HLPF

In 2019, the United Nations will review the SDGs at both the Ministerial level and the Heads of State Level. The July HLPF review will include an in-depth examination of three SDGs that contain targets relevant to ChildFund's advocacy priority to end all forms of violence against children: 16, 8 and 4.

In July 2019, 51 countries will conduct Voluntary National Reviews. This includes the following countries where ChildFund members work: Burkina Faso, Fiji, France, Ghana, Guatemala, Indonesia, Nauru, New Zealand, Palau, Philippines, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Timor-Leste, and Vanuatu.

In September 2019, there will be a Heads of State review of the SDGs. In addition, November 2019 will mark the 30th anniversary of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

As 2019 will be a milestone year for ChildFund's advocacy, we have an important opportunity to showcase our efforts to end violence against children, including the work being done through child-friendly accountability. It is critical that children's voices and views inform the 2019 review of SDG 16 and related goals and the VNRs.

## Recommendations and opportunities for ChildFund in 2019

The Secretariat will be working with members to develop a plan for engagement in the HLPF and relevant preparatory processes in 2019. The recommendations below are intended to inform the development of the plan.

- Continue to engage in joint advocacy around the language in the Ministerial Declaration, together with the child-focused agencies in New York.
- Consider submitting a joint statement on target 16.2 (with other organizations working to end violence against children) during the General Debate of the High-level Segment. As it would be strategic to engage a larger group of organizations than the child-focused agencies in New York; this could be managed through the CSO Forum of the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children.
- Strengthen engagement in the VNR responses by establishing a structure for more systematic outreach to support offices to input into the civil society responses to the presentation of the VNRs.
- Investigate opportunities to nominate an expert from a ChildFund member organization to participate in the preparatory expert group meetings on SDGs 4 and 16 leading up to the HLPF and also during the experts sessions on those SDGs during the HLPF in July.
- If the ChildFund delegation to the 2019 HLPF is significantly larger than the 2018 delegation, it will be necessary to establish an internal system for determining who participates in the delegation.
- If children will be supported by ChildFund members to participate in the HLPF, it will be important to have a minimum of 4 months advance notice to advocate at country and UN level to get them accepted as members of the official delegation of their country. Planning will need to begin 6 months in advance.
- Develop social media messaging for the 2019 HLPF that incorporates children's voices and perspectives emerging from child-friendly accountability and other ChildFund engagement with young people.
- Work with members of the CSO Forum for End Violence on a joint VNR checklist tool.
- Contribute through the CSO Forum to the report of the Office of the SRSG/VAC.
- Contribute to a policy brief from the CSO Forum on ending violence against children.
- Co-host side events with Member States and other CSOs.
- Continue to work across member offices to pursue opportunities to engage in subregional and regional advocacy.