

## ChildFund Alliance 2020 High-level Political Forum (HLPF) Virtual Side Event

### *“Protecting Post-Pandemic Funding to End Violence against Children”*

Thursday, 9 July, 8:00 am – 9:30am EDT

POST-EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

#### **Purpose:**

As the international community responds to COVID-19, ChildFund Alliance—in partnership with the Permanent Mission of Japan to the United Nations—convened member-states, UN agencies, civil society organizations, and a panel of distinguished experts to discuss increased risks of violence against children and potential innovations in funding to protect them from immediate risks, while also safeguarding long-term interventions.

#### **Overview:**

COVID-19 has resulted in an economic crisis that has plunged vulnerable, low-income families further into poverty, increasing the risks of violence against children. During this online forum, speakers discussed the acute challenges we are facing, and the resources needed to address strengthening child protection during and immediately following this pandemic.

Participants included Dr. Howard Taylor, Executive Director of the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children; Mikiko Otani, Member of the Committee on the Rights of the Child; Dr. Najat Maalla M’Jid, Special Representative of the Secretary General on Violence against Children; and Cornelius Williams, UNICEF’s Associate Director of Child Protection, Programme Division. Secretary General Meg Gardinier moderated the event and the Minister to the Permanent Mission of Japan, Yoriko Suzuki, provided keynote remarks.

In opening the program, Meg Gardinier noted that more than 60 percent of all children worldwide are living in countries that have adopted full or partial lockdowns. The quarantine measures—while necessary to stop the spread of the virus—have unfortunately increased financial stress on households. In turn, this has increased the risks of child marriage, and child labor or sexual exploitation to supplement family income. Combined with the closure of more than 60 percent of schools worldwide, confinement measures have cut access to protective services for nearly 1.1 billion children.

Participants noted that this is of particular concern given COVID-19 is hitting developing economies at a critical moment. Prior to the crisis, financing already fell short of the spending required to achieve the SDGs by 2030. In addition, the pandemic risks creating major setbacks in financing for sustainable development.

#### **Common Themes:**

- Children face direct risks of exposure to violence from COVID-19 mitigation efforts, but the real threat to children’s protection result from the long-term socio-economic impacts of the pandemic.
- While many states, civil society organizations and granters are investing millions of dollars in emergency funding to protect children from the immediate risks from COVID-19, there is a large gap in funding necessary to achieve SDG Target 16.2.

- It is precisely during the times of fiscal austerity that are projected for the global economy that donors should increase their funding of efforts to end violence against children.
- The educational future of an entire generation of children and youth are at risk as the economic impacts of COVID-19 increase the risks of child labor, child marriage and sexual exploitation of children.
- Resources are necessary, but success toward achieving Target 16.2 will be determined by innovations, both in evidenced-based interventions, and also in multi-sectoral cooperation.
- It is essential that advocates marshal data and evidence to support both the need and the effectiveness of EVAC interventions.
- Civil society will need to work cooperatively across multiple sectors in a coordinated response to utilize resources more efficiently and to reach the most vulnerable children.
- Children must be involved as active stakeholders in developing innovative solutions.
- Donors and states can expect a substantial return on their investments in evidenced-based, innovative EVAC interventions. These interventions should be seen as smart investments in the future of a community to “build back better.”

**Presenters (in speaking order):**

Meg Gardinier – Secretary General, ChildFund Alliance

- COVID-19 presents not only a health crisis, but also an economic crisis, which increases risks of violence against children.
- Confinement measures resulting from lock-downs affect 1.1 billion children and increase the risks of child marriage, child labor, and sexual exploitation and abuse (online and offline).
- The pandemic could result in major setbacks in financing for sustainable development. The international community must explore innovations in funding to protect children from immediate risk, while safeguarding long-term EVAC interventions.
- In the short term, official development finance must be leveraged to contain the drop in other sources of funding.
- In the medium term, donors need to collaborate to build back better, and safer post-pandemic.

Minister Yoriko Suzuki – Minister, Permanent Mission of Japan to the United Nations

- The Government of Japan is committed to achieving the SDG Target 16.2 and continues to support long-term investments in efforts to protect children and help them reach their full potential.
- Japan is particularly concerned that interventions target the poorest and most vulnerable children, who are often the most exposed to violence, as well as those who are provided the least resources to combat it.
- Japan is actively engaged in ensuring the survival, development and protection of children in a COVID-19 environment. Overall, Japan has committed \$1.54 billion to help countries tackle COVID-19, including the provision of US \$112 million to UNICEF for emergency assistance.

Howard Taylor – Exec. Dir., Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children

- COVID-19 and efforts to respond to the virus could increase the risks of physical, psychological & sexual violence against children by as much as a third.
- The ambition of the international community must be greater than simply protecting existing levels of EVAC funding.
- Leaders must be held accountable to their agreements to protect children.

- What is needed is coordinated action across sectors, applying lessons learned in the beginning of the pandemic to move quickly to protect children as the pandemic progresses, and to invest in evidence-based interventions (like the INSPIRE strategies) that have been proven to reduce violence.
- Resources are necessary. Only one-fifth of national action plans to end violence against children are fully funded.
- We will not meet other SDG targets if we fail to achieve target 16.2, to end violence against children.

Ms. Mikiko Otani – Member, UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC)

- If we do not address violence against children during the pandemic, the consequences for children and all of society after the pandemic will be very serious.
- While many governments have adopted national action plans, official monitoring by the CRC only takes place every couple of years.
- Civil society, under the auspices of the Global Partnership, should increase monitoring of specific indicators of violence against children.
- Japan, as an End Violence Pathfinding Country, is drafting a model national action plan that provides opportunities for data acquisition practices to better monitor progress on SDG target 16.2.
- The CRC is collecting and disseminating to member-states model examples of community-based approaches to EVAC.
- Children are totally left out of COVID-19 related decisions; they should be integral to policy decisions.

Dr. Najat Maalla M'jid, Special Representative of the Secretary General on Violence against Children

- The continuing toll of violence against children is undermining progress across the SDGs; the impetus that Agenda 2030 had given to comprehensively addressing violence against children must not be stalled by the pandemic.
- The global post-COVID socio-economic crisis will increase child poverty and vulnerability to violence; poverty is a driver of child trafficking, sexual exploitation and recruitment of children into criminal gangs, and armed groups and forces.
- Child abuse is less likely to be detected during the crisis, as child protection agencies have reduced monitoring to avoid spreading the virus, and teachers are less able to detect signs of ill treatment with schools closed.
- Globally, effective government responses to increased risks of violence against children must ensure social and child protection services are recognized as life-saving and essential services, along with health, mental health and education, as part of an intersectoral and child rights-based response. We need to gather evidence and experience, documenting and demonstrating 5 points:
  1. Children's right to health and protection must be prioritized in the pandemic response and recovery planning.
  2. As governments worldwide reassess priorities, they must make major investments in advancing human development and reducing inequalities, particularly for children.
  3. The key to economic recovery from the pandemic will be investing in strengthening services for the wellbeing and protection of children.

4. The costs to children and to society of not addressing social and child protection in COVID-19 recovery will be high.
5. There is added value by considering children as part of the solution and involving them in the immediate and recovery phase of the pandemic.

Cornelius Williams, Associate Director, Child Protection, Programme Division, UNICEF

- In 81% of OECD countries responding to the pandemic, children have diminished access to child protection services.
- Reopening of economies will not be linear; we will see containment, followed by opening, followed by recontainment, etc.
- This is the time to double-down and use innovative mechanisms to reach out to vulnerable children. In some developing countries in Africa, UNICEF was only able to overcome the child protection crisis and even reach children who were tested and found to be positive by working with families and communities.
- The lockdowns have shown the importance of maintaining children's access to teachers and school-based counselors, and to child-friendly procedures for identifying responsible parties and investigating claims.
- UNICEF's interventions are anchored in the INSPIRE strategies and already showing returns on investment; donors will find similar returns by investing in INSPIRE strategies as well.

#### **Bios for Panelists and Moderator:**

##### **Moderator**

##### **Meg Gardinier**

As Secretary General of ChildFund Alliance since July 2015, Meg provides strategic leadership to increase the impact of the Alliance's 11 members, which serve nearly 16 million children and their families in more than 60 countries. As the chief advocate for the Alliance, Meg works with members to end violence and exploitation against children and to overcome poverty and the underlying conditions that prevent children from achieving their full potential. Prior to joining ChildFund Alliance, Meg held leadership positions in child rights organizations, including as Senior Coordinator of the Elevate Children Funders Group; Director of Arigatou International New York; Managing Director of the U.S. Fund for UNICEF; and Executive Director of the International Catholic Child Bureau North America. She holds a Master's Degree in International Political Economy and Development from Fordham University. She is married to Thomas Lawder and is the mother of three daughters.

##### **Panelists**

##### **Dr. Howard Taylor**

Howard Taylor is Executive Director of the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children, an innovative public-private partnership launched by the UN Secretary-General. Howard has lived in Africa, Asia, Europe and the US. He has led a global corporate foundation, established a creative social enterprise, built government teams, and led a UN-hosted global partnership—all to improve the lives of millions of people. As Vice-President and Managing Director of the Nike Foundation, Howard was the driving force behind the successful spin-out of Girl Effect as an independent, creative social enterprise that uses branded media, technology and data to tackle negative social norms and change behaviours. Prior to Nike, Howard held senior roles across the UK Government, including at the Department for International Development (DFID), Cabinet Office and Foreign Office. He was Chief of Staff to two Secretaries of State and led DFID's largest country programmes in India and Ethiopia. In Ethiopia, he co-chaired the Development Assistance Group, responsible for coordinating the most impactful investment of over \$3 billion/year of development finance. Howard is married with two children and enjoys sports, arts, politics, and pursuing inspirational ideas that can change the world.

### **Mikiko Otani**

Mikiko Otani is a Member of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child and an international human rights lawyer based in Tokyo where she practices family law with a focus on women's and children's rights including human rights education, early childhood development, child participation, girl child, child marriage, human trafficking, migrant children and access to justice. She is currently a Council Member of the International Bar Association's Human Rights Institute, a Commissioner of the International Commission of Jurists and the country representative of Japan for the Family Law and Family Rights Section of LAWASIA (The Law Association for Asia and the Pacific). Ms. Otani is active in academic, research and teaching works. As a leading woman lawyer representing civil society in Japan, Ms. Otani was an Alternate Representative of Japan to the 60th and the 61st sessions of the UN General Assembly's Third Committee (2005-2006) and an Advisor of the Delegation of Japan to the 53rd UN Commission on the Status of Women (2009). She has served in numerous roles including as a Vice-President of the Japan Women Bar Association (2004-2006), Chair of the Committee on International Human Rights of the Japan Federation of Bar Associations (2015-2017), and a Regional Council Member of the Asia-Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (2005-2014). She was admitted to the Tokyo Bar Association in 1990. She holds Bachelor of Law from Sophia University in Tokyo (1987), a Master of International and Public Affairs from Columbia University (1999), a Master of Law from the University of Tokyo (2003), and a Doctor of Law from Aoyama Gakuin University.

### **Dr. Najat Maalla M'jid**

Dr. M'jid, the Special Representative of the Secretary General on Violence against Children, is a medical doctor in paediatrics, who for over the last three decades has devoted her life to the promotion and protection of children's rights. She was Head of the Paediatric Department and Director of the Hay Hassani Mother-Child hospital in Casablanca, a member of the Moroccan National Council on Human Rights, and founder of the non-governmental organisation Bayti, the first programme addressing the situation of children living and working in the streets of Morocco. From 2008 to 2014, she served as United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography. Dr. M'jid also works as an Expert-Consultant for national and international projects, strategies and policies relating to child rights' promotion and protection. She has participated in the development of national policies on the protection of the child, and has worked with governments, non-governmental and inter-governmental organisations. She also works as a lecturer in Moroccan and international universities on child rights' protection, promotion, programming and monitoring, as well as social and development policies. Dr. M'jid is also involved in the training of social workers, law enforcement, teachers, judges, and medical staff. Dr. M'jid holds a Doctorate in general medicine from the University of Rabat, a specialization in paediatrics and neonatology from the University of Bordeaux II and a Master of Human Rights from the Human Rights Institute, Geneva. She is the recipient of numerous awards and honours for her strong commitment to protecting the rights of the child.

### **Cornelius Williams**

Cornelius Williams is Associate Director and Global Chief of Child Protection for UNICEF's Programme Division. For over 30 years, Cornelius has managed child protection programmes with UNICEF and Save the Children. He has been involved in advocacy that led to improved protection of children from sexual exploitation and abuse in humanitarian settings, reduced recruitment and use of children by armed forces and increased access of children to identity documents/ birth certificate and social assistance. Cornelius represents UNICEF on the Advisory Boards of the WePROTECT Global Alliance to End Child Sexual Exploitation Online, ID4Africa, CPC Learning Network and Changing the Way We Care. Mr. Williams is a national of Sierra Leone and holds a Masters from the University of East Anglia, UK.