

# Third International Conference on the African Child: Child Poverty In Africa



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Coference Proceedings



The African Child  
Policy Forum





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## Acknowledgement

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Special thanks to H.E. President Girma Wolde Giorgis, President of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia for accepting to be the Guest of Honour and gracing the conference.

Profound gratitude to the excellent team of chairpersons, speakers and discussants for taking their precious time to attend, facilitate and speak at the conference.

To all the participants we are grateful for their participation and for contributing to the achievement of the objectives of the conference and also joining ACPF in the noble cause addressing child poverty in Africa.

Lastly, our special thanks go to Ato Getachew Adem for reviewing and summarising the proceedings of the conference.



## About the African Child Policy Forum (ACPF)

The African Child Policy Forum (ACPF) is an independent, not-for-profit, pan-African institution of policy research and dialogue on the African child.

ACPF was established with the conviction that putting children first on the public agenda is fundamental for the realization of their rights and wellbeing and for bringing about lasting social and economic progress in Africa.

ACPF's work is rights based, inspired by universal values and informed by global experiences and knowledge. Its work is guided by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, and other relevant regional and international human rights instruments. ACPF aims to specifically contribute to improved knowledge on children in Africa; monitor and report progress; identify policy options; provide a platform for dialogue; collaborate with governments, inter-governmental organisations and civil society in the development and implementation of effective pro-child policies and programmes and also promote a common voice for children in and out of Africa.



## List of Acronyms

ACPF	African Child Policy Forum
CBOs	Community Based Organisations
CIS	Common Wealth of Independent States
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
FDRE	Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNI	Gross National Income
ICS	International Child Support
IFPRI	International Food Policy Research Institute
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NEPAD	New Partnership for African Development
AUC	African Union Commission
NGOs	Non-Government Organisations
SAPs	Structural Adjustment Programmes
SEE	South Eastern Europe
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WFP	World Food Programme



## I. Objectives of the Third International Policy Conference on the African Child

The African Child Policy Forum (ACPF) organised and conducted the Third International Policy Conference on the African Child on the theme of Child Poverty in Africa from May 12-13 2008 at the UNECA conference centre in Addis Ababa. The primary objective of the Conference was to bring together policy makers, child rights activists, children's organisations and researchers from within Africa and around the world to address key issues pertaining to child poverty which is thought to be at the forefront of the development agenda in Africa.

The specific objectives of this Conference were to:

- 1) Draw attention to the issue of child poverty in Africa;
- 2) Exchange information on the nature, measurement and dimensions of child poverty and policy experiences and approaches;
- 3) Initiate dialogue on areas for future research and policy work with special attention to issues having the greatest impact on children.



## II. Opening Session

The Conference was attended by representatives of government institutions, pertinent UN agencies and non-government bodies. The opening ceremony of the Conference on 12 May 2008 was honoured by the presence of H.E. Girma WoldeGiorgis, President of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) and other distinguished guests from all over the world. Other distinguished personalities included Professor Yanghee Lee, Chair of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, Madame Magdalena Sepulveda, UN Independent Expert on Human Rights and Extreme Poverty, Mr. Jean-Baptiste Zoungana, Chair African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child; Ms. Marleen Hasselerharm, Programme Director, International Child Support (ICS); Ms. Deepali Khanna, Regional Director, Eastern and Southern Africa, Plan International; Ms Kimberly Svevo, Executive Director, International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect; Ms. Wambui Njuguna, President, The AfricaWide Movement for Children.

During the Opening Ceremony, Dr. Asefa Bequele, Executive Director, ACPF, welcomed all participants. In his welcoming address, he outlined what has been achieved by ACPF since its establishment about five years ago. He noted ACPF's effort to establish pioneering work, including protection against violence, harmonisation of laws, children's legal protection centre, giving to children a voice, such as through children's polling, and promotion of partnerships. As a Pan-Africanist, he expressed his dismay for the failure of African leaders to protect children. In his welcoming remark, he announced the foundation and launch of the AfricaWide Movement for Children on the 11<sup>th</sup> of May 2008. He further observed two important concepts for ACPF as of universalism and internationalism. That is why this conference is given an international stature and presents some of the leading international experts on the topic of child poverty.

Opening Statement by H.E Dr. Salim Ahmed Salim, the UN Special Envoy to the Darfur and former Secretary of the Organisation of the African Union, and also chairperson of the International Board of Trustees of The African Child Policy Forum. His statement was read out by Professor Dharam Ghai.

Through his representative, Professor Dharam Ghai, H. E. Dr Salim Ahmed Salim extended his thanks and appreciation to all partners in supporting ACPF in organising the Third International Policy Conference on the African Child. He apologised for his absence, owing to his responsibilities in Darfur which prevented him from attending the Conference. ACPF is committed to one central tenet - to put African children at the heart of policy agenda. During the past few years, ACPF and its partners have striven to

promote and protect the rights of children through vigorous advocacy in regional and international fore, through the promotion of law reforms, and the pursuit of effective means of legal protection for children. This conference is part of the ACPF's advocacy effort to bring to light problems which are often forgotten and to stimulate research work, policy initiatives and practical action to improve the wellbeing of Africa's children.

He further observed that child poverty is the missing link between poverty and development. Investing in their health, nutrition and education not only improves our children's quality of life but impacts on future generations as well. Enlightened policies must begin with addressing child poverty. It is an illusion to think that the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) of halving extreme poverty by the year 2015 could be achieved without addressing child poverty.

### Opening Remarks by Mr. Jean-Baptiste Zoungrana, Chair African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child

**Mr. Jean-Baptiste Zoungrana** expressed his gratitude to ACPF for inviting him to attend the conference. He appreciated ACPF for its commitment to the work of protecting children's rights. He observed that ACPF's work has been progressing fast since the First International Policy Conference and that he was impressed by the quality of the work that it has been undertaking. He also extended his appreciation to ACPF's partners for their significant contribution to this cause.

According to him, child poverty is measured by parental income. There is a lack of a framework to combat child poverty. This conference is meant to provide some of the answers to important questions such as this. He noted that we all need to work towards rendering Africa a favourable place for children through combating child poverty.

Children suffer from multiple violations of their rights, and this is a major challenge for all of us in Africa and elsewhere. The African Committee on the Rights and Welfare of the Child has been trying to rise to this challenge since its formation. He called upon everyone to take action.

### Opening Remarks by Ms. Marleen Hasselerharm, Programme Director, International Child Support (ICS)

**Ms. Marleen Hasselerharm** observed that she got to know about the work of ACPF since its inception and she was privileged to have witnessed the development of ACPF into its present influential form. ICS is proud to be a partner of ACPF. It is one of the most influential advocates for children's rights in Africa.

Poverty is as unequal as wealth – women's experiences are different from those of men, and children's poverty is perhaps even more striking. If children are denied

sufficient food, they may not develop to their full potential and this loss can never be regained. She noted witnessing about the heartbreaking choices that families who are living on less than a dollar a day need to make, such as choosing between grain and medicine.

She informed participants that although ICS has been around for quite some time, it has only recently entered the arena of child rights programming. According to ICS, children will never be able to claim their rights unless families, schools, communities and society at large accept a child rights agenda and act up on it. Initiatives that are genuinely promoted from within African civil societies will give its children a fighting chance. That is why the ICS philosophy is that of a comprehensive and integrated package to address emerging issues that directly or indirectly are impeding access to quality education. ICS calls this a **'Civic Driven Child Development programme'**. ICS is struggling with the question of how economic development can contribute towards securing livelihoods for children. International policy conferences conducted by ACPF to date have had enormous impacts, especially in the field of violence against girls. Ms. Hasselerharm believed that this conference will also have such an impact and take the whole development community forward in their endeavour against poverty in general and child poverty in particular.

### Ms. Deepali Khanna, Regional Director, Eastern and Southern Africa, Plan International

**Ms. Deepali Khanna** commenced her remarks by observing that by just turning on the television, one can see so many examples of the horrifying and extreme poverty still experienced by so many children in Africa. The issue of poverty is not all about lack of money. Massive resources have been mobilised for many years by putting the faces of children living in poverty in the public eye. But there has not been real change. The real issue is about developing effective policies and institutions, human capital, learning and power relations to achieve social change.

She further observed that child participation at all levels, including poverty analysis is vital. It is only through such participatory approaches that governments could be held accountable. Plan International has placed children, child participation and their best interests at the heart of its work. Plan has moved from the charity approach to a rights-based approach. At the community level, Plan is increasingly playing the role of facilitator to seek answers and engage with issues of poverty at a deeper level. Children do not live in a power vacuum. They are affected by the society around them, including corruption, poor infrastructure, conflict, trade injustice and the debt burden, aid ineffectiveness, environmental degradation, high oil prices, power, gender and minority dynamics, etc. The development of communities harness collective abilities

and establishes strategic partnerships and alliances for advocacy, research and lobbying, and consolidates partnerships with children and the youth. She concluded by saying: **“We have no more excuses – we must realise children’s rights and end child poverty, as we have all committed to doing”**.

Ms. Kimberly Svevo, Executive Director, International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (ISPCAN)

**Ms Kimberly Svevo** observed that ISPCAN was pleased to be represented at this International Policy Conference. She believes that each participant has a role to play, individually and collectively to improve the lives of children. ISPCAN works with professionals in different fields to prevent violence, abuse and neglect of children worldwide. Many children remain invisible due to poverty, homelessness, disability, being part of a minority or refugees. Most of the abuses are largely preventable but both their short- and long-term impacts are very severe and life long.

Children are excluded from opportunities due to abuse and neglect. Getting children recognized in the policy and strategy scene is fundamental. Most abuses and neglect happen for the most part in the home. The repercussions for society are also wide ranging and serious. Some estimates put the direct and indirect costs of child abuse as high as US\$ 69 billion per year in the USA.

Ms. Svevo highlighted that the development community should adopt a comprehensive approach recommended by the UN Study on violence and backed up by the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Although national governments have special roles in protecting children, it is also important to recognize that the civil societies are also duty bearers. With our commitment and partnerships, it is possible to develop child protective systems which will reach and support more and more children and families.

Statement by Ms.. Wambui Njuguna, President of the AfricaWide Movement for Children

**Ms. Wambui Njuguna** started her remarks by noting that children in Africa are facing huge challenges and these challenges should be addressed through multi-sectoral interventions which would require the partnership of all stakeholders working with and for children. In 2006, more than 100 participants working in Africa came together to discuss the possibilities of establishing a movement for children. The steering committee formed then had lengthy deliberations and produced a report. On 11<sup>th</sup> May 2008 (just a day before this conference) another general meeting was held with over 200 participants, which endorsed the movement as an African voice for children

to promote the best interests of the child, accountability, participation and support for children. The Movement's activities will include: facilitating chain of information, supporting child rights advocates, articulating common African positions, promoting solidarity and lobbying for children at all levels.

She informed participants that custodians have been elected from each sub-region of Africa for a two year term and ACPF will serve as a secretariat. She expressed her pleasure to announce the establishment of The Africa wide Movement for Children and up on being elected as its first president. She invited all interested individuals, experts and organisations to join hands and make history for children in Africa.

Opening Speech by the Guest of Honour, H.E. Mr. Girma Wolde Giorgis, President of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

**H.E. Girma Wolde Giorgis, President of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia**, welcomed all participants to the beloved Ethiopia in the year of the Ethiopian Millennium and extended his thanks to ACPF for bringing together all the distinguished guests to discuss this important issue of child poverty at this point in time.

President Girma observed that poverty means lack of food, clothing, shelter, school fees, basic medicine, books, protection, etc. The situation of children in Africa is alarming. Although we have witnessed some economic growth, we have not seen a corresponding increase in child wellbeing, partly due to the population explosion and the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Poverty locks children into a continuing cycle of exploitation, sickness, lack of education and even abuse. It has far reaching implications for both the child and the society at large. But children with disability, orphans, girls and street children are more vulnerable than others.

President Girma further emphasised the need to recognise and document the problem of child poverty in Africa and realise that family poverty is at the root of child poverty. He raised the importance of addressing specific problems facing vulnerable children as these are often neglected, denied their rights and exposed to abuse. The gender issue is vital since poverty has a woman's face. This needs to change. The current food crisis has shown how problems can reverberate globally. He called upon all to rise to the challenge of preventing the ills of poverty and hunger for children everywhere, and by so doing meet the Millennium Development Goals



### III. Child Poverty: Why it Matters?

Papers on child poverty and why it matters were presented and deliberated on in **Session II and Session III** of the First Day (12<sup>th</sup> May 2008) of the Conference. The discussion in Session II was based on two papers entitled **“The Abolition of Child Poverty and Rights to Social Security: A Possible UN Model for Child Benefit”** by **Professor Peter Townsend**, Centennial Professor of International Social Policy, London School of Economics followed by another paper entitled **“Child Poverty: The Gender Dimension”** by **Professor Merdeth Turshen**, Professor of Planning and Public Policy, Rutgers University. The Session was facilitated by Dr. Martha Santos Pais, Director, UNICEF Innocent Research Centre, Florence, Italy. The key messages of the Session were summarized by Professor Dharam Ghai, Former Executive Director (1987-1997), United Nations Research Institute for Social Development.

The paper presented by Professor **Peter Townsend** underscored the need for a shift from the past in our approach towards addressing child poverty. In order to meet shared objectives on child poverty, there has to be a change in the nature and scale of global anti-poverty strategies. There should be an alternative way to reach children quickly. If universal child benefit was introduced in Africa, it could save nearly 300 million children from severe multiple deprivations. Families with children could be paid in cash or in kind, with costs paid through say, currency transfer tax. Whether measured by household income or multiple material deprivations, poverty and early childhood mortality are interlinked.

The convention on Economic and Social Rights, the CRC and other Conventions

guarantee a decent standard of living. The issue of human rights uncovers another dimension to poverty reduction. Social security in low income countries could contain or reduce child poverty to a substantial degree.

Historically the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund have sponsored safety net programmes and structural adjustment programmes (SAPs). By 1993, 40 of the 53 African countries were involved in SAPs. Poverty reduction strategy papers and the Social Fund are other recent global initiatives. But the resources allocated to these initiatives were insufficient compared to the scale of the problem.

There cannot be effective trickle down from aid to economic growth without social security targeted at children. If countries committed to more spending on schools and other social services and introduce a tax on currency transfer or voluntary or compulsory imposition on trans-national companies' wages costs go towards a UN fund over a period of time, child benefit could be paid even in poor countries in Africa and elsewhere.

According to Professor **Merdeth Turshen's**, the major issue in addressing child poverty is lack of gender disaggregated data. The unit of measurement in most cases being a household, the different experiences of male and female siblings could not be discerned. The majority of those living in poverty are women. The question for researchers and policy makers alike should be what happens from infancy through adolescence to put girls on a different life course from their male counter parts. The answer requires

more than sex-disaggregated data on health, nutrition, education etc. It requires qualitative information on the different roles, social status, economic and political power of women and men in society. It is of no use to blame families for the perpetuation of poverty while there is a possible correlation between the level of mothers' education and child mortality.

Beyond the gender dimension, researchers and policy makers need to track the experience of discrimination on more than one ground. The point here is that racism, patriarchy, economic subjugations, and other discriminatory systems create layers of inequality that structure the relative positions of females and males, racial and other groups.

Most girls face more constraints than boys during wartime and enjoy less protection from families, communities and governments. Families may be displaced or broken up and communities may become more conservative and xenophobic. The question is whether targeted or universal programmes such as social transfers or child benefit are more effective. Many health programmes do not differentiate between girls and boys, while programmes that target gender do not look at poverty. Some examples of differentiated programmes on reproductive health that have been successful include the Young Lives research project in Ethiopia which showed different outcomes for girls and boys.

The discussions following the presentation brought out the following pertinent points: that social security should not be seen in isolation from social protection; that institutional systems in Africa being the

replica of colonial masters have not been responsive to the needs of the vulnerable groups (particularly women and children); that the low level of tax revenues has been the major impediment to introduce in-built social security systems by African Governments; that maintaining the social fabrics is extremely important in the African set up given that the capacity of African governments is very much limited compared to the developed world where companies and faith-based institutions are taking over roles that were formerly played by the governments, to look back on the social contract that led to social inclusion and reduced poverty in other contexts and make them work and happen in Africa.

Lessons could be drawn from the case studies on the experiences of cash transfers in Mexico, Brazil and South Africa. The programmes in those countries have helped reduce poverty and addressing problems of child labour, enhanced school attendance and raised nutrition. They appear to be relatively cheap and not very susceptible to corruption. Thus, they seem to have a great deal of appeal for governments in Africa in reducing child poverty.

Gender disaggregated data on all dimensions of poverty helps to bring out hidden or open discrimination. The importance of creating a level playing field for children was also underscored during the discussion.

**Session III** of the First Day (12<sup>th</sup> May 2008) of the Conference was devoted to **Child Poverty in Africa which started with a documentary film entitled "Poverty through the Eyes of Children"** followed by two papers on

Child Poverty in Africa entitled “**Child Poverty in South Africa**” by Ms. Phakama Ntshongwana, Researcher, University of Oxford and “**Child Poverty in Tanzania**” by Mr. Eric Shemweta Guga, Independent Consultant, Tanzania. Dr. Agnes Aidoo, Vice-Chair of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, facilitated this session. The Documentary and the presentations were followed by discussions and a summary of the key messages of the discussion by Mr. David Muthungu, Country Director, Plan Tanzania.

The 15-minute Documentary film addresses the issue of poverty through the voices and perspectives of African children from across the continent and from different backgrounds. The film signifies a call for action by major actors working in the areas of child rights. The issue of children without parental care was brought to the attention of conference participants. Whether or not institutionalisation should be promoted was put forward as a point of discussion in this session.

According to Ms. Phakama Ntshongwana, **South Africa** has made a number of commitments to tackle child poverty through issuing national legal provisions, drawing a plan of action and ratification of international treaties and conventions. The Child Support Grant is one mechanism that has helped to reduce absolute poverty for children. But it is very limited in scope. Different departments are supposed to work together, but sometimes primary caregivers, especially in rural areas have a problem in accessing this grant owing to lack of birth registration. Lack of or limited availability of data has hindered

research initiated on child poverty. The presentation on South Africa underscored the need for child oriented and participatory research. This is how children influence public policy with their own views and experiences.

According to Mr. Eric Shemweta, in Tanzania, although children accounted for 53% of the total population, policies and programmes aimed at addressing child poverty have not been holistic. Although as many as nine laws are known to have been passed pertaining to children since 1958, they have not been focused, integrated and harmonised to bring about the desired change on the livelihood of children in Tanzania. Analytical work on the various dimensions of child poverty has been hindered by paucity and fragmented nature of statistical data. The quantitative surveys hitherto conducted (five surveys have been conducted so far) have not been able to provide the required information to understand the various dimensions of child poverty. The limited time series data base on child poverty has also hindered trend analysis on child poverty in Tanzania. As a result, it has not so far been possible to establish the proportion of children living in poverty in Tanzania.

The recently launched initiative through support from UNICEF known as the Tanzanian National Plan of Action for Children is a welcome development in bridging the information gap on child poverty in Tanzania. The Plan of Action has been meant to provide information on vulnerable children through disaggregating them by different groups (types of vulnerabilities). Financing this program for full scale implementation has become a challenge.

The way forward in the context of Tanzania is to integrate the various piecemeal initiatives on child poverty and render them sustainable. Another important point emphasized in the presentation is the need to shift from charity work which has been proved unsustainable to a holistic child –focused development approach through investing on children via facilitating their development at household, community and national levels.

The discussions following the presentation on Child Poverty in South Africa and Tanzania brought out the following pertinent issues.

**Firstly,** paucity of data, particularly gender and cohort disaggregated data was indicated as a real challenge. This was demonstrated by citing reports such as the Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) where the 15-18 year-olds are lumped in the broad classification of 15-25 year-olds. As a result, this age has become invisible to policy makers and planners.

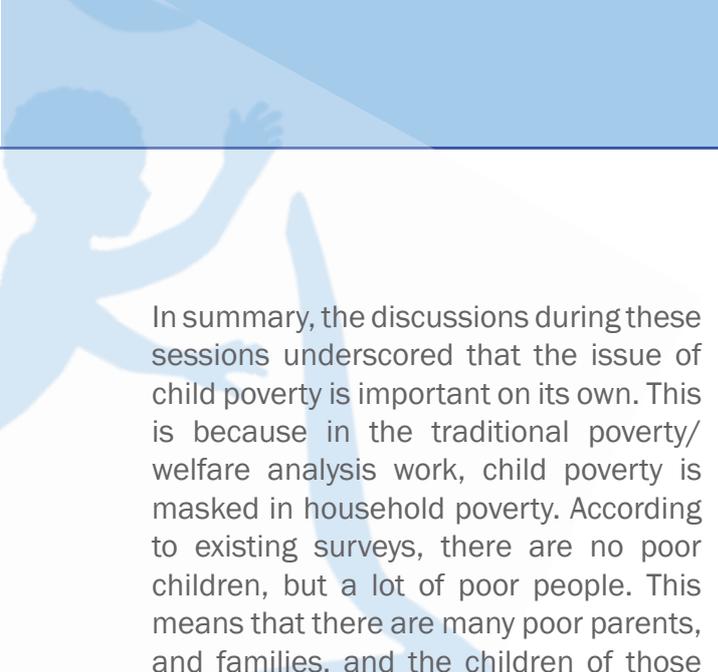
**Secondly,** it was also noted that narrowing the gap between the principles of the rights-based approach to addressing child poverty and its implementation is of paramount importance. The need to put workable mechanisms in place to ensure that rights are translated in to action on the ground was emphasized. The mechanisms to be devised need to focus on how to render politicians accountable to their promises. One way to ensure this could be addressing under spending in sectors that have had direct bearing on child poverty as well as on the need to strengthen coordination among

pertinent actors (both with in and outside of government) working on child related issues.

**Thirdly,** the need to assess the pros and cons of cash transfers and social grants was also underscored during the discussion as these instruments are sometimes seen as causing dependency and compromising dignity in the developing world, particularly in Africa. For instance, the view in South Africa is that the state should be developmental, rather than a welfare state. This limits the amount of social grants given to people, although they have been proven to empower families and lift children out of poverty.

The session facilitator Mr. David Muthungu underscored the need to encourage children's participation in the policy making process in matters that affect them. There is no substitute for this to fulfil the right of children. The film has made it clear that different groups understand poverty very well, including the different ways it affects them.

One of the key issues is to provide evidence to back up demands for children's rights. This greatly enhances efforts to advance evidence-based advocacy to feed in to policy. The South African presentation was an example of a promising practice in regards to bringing children's views to inform public policy. The Tanzanian experience shows the perils of lack of harmonisation and lack of information on policies and legislations. The lesson is that informing stakeholders about existing instruments to tackling poverty will help enhance ownership by duty bearers.

A light blue silhouette of a child's head and arms, reaching upwards with one hand. The silhouette is positioned in the upper left quadrant of the page, partially overlapping the blue header bar.

In summary, the discussions during these sessions underscored that the issue of child poverty is important on its own. This is because in the traditional poverty/welfare analysis work, child poverty is masked in household poverty. According to existing surveys, there are no poor children, but a lot of poor people. This means that there are many poor parents, and families, and the children of those families live in poverty. Thus, there is a need to appreciate the fact that poverty affects children differently from adults. Child poverty is often overlooked in serious research because children have no 'voice' or because of the incorrect assumptions that children respond in the same way as adults to development interventions or that policies, as adult formulations, will always act in the best interests of their children.

It was also noted that paucity of data describing child poverty in its many dimensions has still remained a challenge. Besides, data presented at aggregate level masks regional, local and sub-group differences. It was also noted that data from surveys typically treats family units as homogeneous, lacking child focused measurement. Studies have found that information about the specific needs and problems of children is often lacking in debates on poverty.

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## IV. Addressing Child Poverty & Child Rights: The Need for a Coordinated Approach

The keynote address by **Professor Yanghee Lee** of, *Sungkyunkwan University and Chairperson, UN Committee on the Rights of the Child*, set the stage for understanding child poverty, its nature, dimensions and causes. This session was facilitated by Ms. Etta Tadesse, UNFPA Representative to AU and Economic Commission for Africa.

According to Professor Lee, the major accomplishment of the first 19 years of the CRC is that children have become more visible. Now there seems to be a certain degree of consensus that children are indeed bearers of rights. The four general principles identified by the CRC as fundamental for the realization of all the other rights are: non-discrimination, the best interests of the child, survival and development, and respect for the views of the child. Almost all of the articles in the CRC, either directly or indirectly, address the issue of child poverty.

Professor Lee further observed that poverty must be viewed not only in terms of income poverty or material deprivation. It must go beyond income poverty to include non-income poverty indicators such as outcomes for children living in overcrowded housing, ability to establish and maintain social relationships, ability to feel good about one, and the ability to cope and adapt to external influences as well as internal/psychological influences. Poverty experienced in childhood is different from poverty experienced as an adult. It threatens and undermines all aspects of childhood: physical, intellectual, and socio-emotional development.

In addition, it prevents children from enjoying equal opportunities, and creates social, economic, and gender disparities that ultimately contribute to the vicious cycle of poverty. Therefore, poverty must be viewed and measured differently for children.

Child poverty threatens all aspects of childhood. Poverty in childhood is the root cause of poverty in adulthood. There is a trans-generational aspect to poverty, and it contributes to many different negative consequences, including violence, discrimination, exploitation, disability, and delinquent behavior. These are consequences that are addressed in many provisions in the CRC. More importantly, there is a strong gender implication to poverty. The girl child is faced with the multiple effects of poverty. At the same time, research indicates that educating girls and empowering them is the key to the reduction and ultimate eradication of poverty in general and child poverty in particular.

The MDGs recognize that extreme poverty has many dimensions – not only low income, but also vulnerability to disease, exclusion from education, chronic hunger and under-nutrition, lack of access to basic amenities such as clean water and sanitation, and environmental degradation such as deforestation and land erosion – that threaten lives and livelihoods. Regardless of how one defines poverty, the effects of poverty on children are characteristically the same: very serious and lifelong.

According to Professor Lee, many would agree that the twentieth century is the century of the child. Given that nineteen years has lapsed into the existence of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the twenty-first century should be the century of accountability for all actors involved in the lives of all children. A lot of promises have been made and too many of them have gone unfulfilled. Now is the time to act. There is a consensus that poverty has many faces and that it must be addressed in a multi-faceted manner. This means that promotion of the wellbeing of the child cannot be effected in isolation. There is a need to address the issue of the rights of the child in a holistic and multi-sectoral fashion. The rights of the child cannot be considered without considering the economic, social, political, and attitudinal situation of a particular country. This is because the issues of human rights are highly interrelated and interdependent.

A two-pronged approach is important in addressing child poverty. The need to comprehensively address the multiple dimensions of child poverty on the one hand address it in relation to other issues such as globalization, decentralization, privatization, climate change, soaring prices of oil, and availability and access to basic needs, such as food, water, etc. The need to look at the big picture- "Africa Fit for Children"- rather than overemphasizing the "multi" nature of the problem was also underscored. In Professor Lee's view, the current practice seems to be that everyone has created and worked in "silos", believing that if each did her or his job well, then somehow all the pieces would eventually fit together well. The problem is that the pieces do not and will not fit well without deliberate, focused effort to make them fit together, and fit together well.

Professor Lee gave a simple analogy of the similarities and differences between a mosaic and a simple patchwork to demonstrate the need for a coordinated effort at all levels. Both contain many different pieces. A producer of a mosaic would have an image of their completed product. He, she, or they would use different pieces to complete a "plan". On the other hand, a simple patch worker would use the different pieces haphazardly. The producer signifies political will, social will, and all the stakeholders at the national, regional, and international levels, including children. The pieces symbolise different programs, policies, professionals, organisations, both human and financial resources, etc- an image that is "multi" in every sense of the word. The end products of the two production processes look quite different: a mosaic has all the pieces fitting beautifully, creating a beautiful picture; whereas a simple patchwork simply looks as if different pieces have just been put together.

The desired end product, the big picture is, A "World Fit for Children", a world where every child will be able to realise her or his rights. In this way, the United Nations can help in developing a blueprint for a beautiful mosaic: a blueprint whereby political, religious, and social differences can be put aside and work towards addressing children's causes in a structured and coordinated manner. This is how we will leap one giant step forward into making Africa Fit for Children.

Professor Lee concluded by reminding participants that unlike in a marathon race there is no need for such a thing as a pace maker in the race to reducing child poverty. When it comes to children and child poverty, we cannot pace any longer. Now is the time for a prompt action.

## V. The Impact of the Food Crisis on Child Poverty

**This session has benefited from a presentation on The impact of the global food crisis, by Professor Jeffrey Sachs**, Director of The Earth Institute at Columbia University. His presentation was followed by interventions from four panellists: **Mr. Shahidur Rashid**, Senior Social Policy Specialist, International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), Addis Ababa, **Mr. Alemayehu Seyoum**, Visiting Research Fellow, IFPRI, Addis Ababa, **Mr. Jakob Mikkelsen**, Head, Nutrition and Education Section, UN World Food Programme (WFP), Addis Ababa and **Mr. Harold Alderman**, Social Protection Advisor, Africa Region, World Bank. The Session was chaired by **Mr. Urban Johnson**, Former Regional Director, Eastern and Southern Africa, UNICEF. The Session Summary was made by **Ms. Christine Cornwell**, ACPF Representative to the UN and other international organisations based in Geneva

Professor Sachs pointed out that although we are at the mid-point of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) time frame we still lag far behind from where we need to be. He also noted that rich countries have really failed to scale up financing in meeting the MDGs. But there still is time to make up lost ground as long as there is the political will to do so. The current food crisis caused a huge shock for Africa. This is a dire and overwhelming situation on top of the already severe shortfall in achieving the MDGs.

Food productivity per farmer and hectare is still at its lowest in Africa: the yields of African farmers are on average 1 tonne

of grain per hectare, whereas in other parts of world, including other developing countries, the yield is about 3-5 tonnes. There are many inherent difficulties; for example, 96% of agriculture is rain-fed, and rains are becoming less stable. Fast growth in population has caused land fragmentation and this in turn aggravated chronic under-nourishment. The current food prices are a result of a mismatch in supply and demand. This has been aggravated by a decline in productivity increases from the 1980s level. There are other factors that aggravated the situation including climate shocks and the diversion of food crops to bio fuels. Africa has the potential to increase yields to 2 to 3 tonnes per hectare even with difficulties related to rains with modest improvements in supply of input, high yield seeds and irrigation. Farmers are well aware of this. They need the technologies. But with limited assets and low savings, they can not afford it. This is what made them remain in a vicious cycle of poverty.

The Millennium Villages project, currently working in a dozen countries in Africa in collaboration with UNDP, has helped to at least triple food production by helping small growers to stand on their own. The first thing they do is to provide support to school feeding programmes in their community. These enables children stay healthy and attend school. This also needs to be complemented by increasing investments in schools, scrapping school fees and ensuring hygienic facilities for girls and investing in the health of communities through free point of access health care services. Road development,

electricity, drinking water, sanitation and cell phone coverage need all be addressed. The 0.7% of GNI promised by the developed world is enough to finance what is needed. This is equivalent to US\$ 250 billion a year.

A fund for the African Green Revolution is necessary to finance critical inputs that African farmers need to increase crop production. It has won the support of many experts. The solution to the food crisis in Africa is to grow more food but not by shipping grains from the USA. We must speak out on behalf of Africa's farmers.

In his intervention, **Mr. Shahidur Rashid** noted that globally many children lived in an enduringly harsh reality even before the on set of rising food prices. However, rising food prices can leave behind dire consequences for poor children and families. Since the poor spend the lion's share of their income on food, it can push more households into poverty; make poor household poorer, aggravate child deaths and school drop out rates. Even short term price hikes can have long term consequences.

Price increases alone cannot explain the consequences. What matters is purchasing power. Income should grow faster than food prices in order to mitigate these economic shocks.

The desired mix of responses should be both short and long term. Short term responses include protecting the vulnerable, expanding food and nutrition related development aid, strengthening safety nets and employment programmes, and child nutrition and education programmes. In the long

term, policies should address trade and markets, through eliminating agriculture trade barriers and export bans and revisiting grain based bio fuels; and promoting agricultural growth, through expanding aid for agricultural research and technology and investing in market fundamentals.

**Mr. Alemayehu Seyoum** started his intervention by noting that consumers and producers are affected differently by the increase in food prices. From the perspective of the consumer, if average prices are higher and some of the elevated levels of food prices are permanent, this could negatively affect consumers if there is no equivalent increase in earnings. The short term impact would particularly affect children, and depending on the age bracket of the child, the impact could be substantial and long lasting. Producers may be affected positively, as their earnings will be higher. In this case, incentives to expand production could be put in place, depending on availability of other resources. Given that many African families are both producers and consumers, the impact can be both positive and negative. Short term price stabilisation policies such as the export ban may reduce market incentives for producers. It is important to balance short term price stabilisation activities with long term market development even when governments regulate markets with good intentions.

According to **Mr. Jakob Mikkelsen**, the wave of food price inflation across the globe which in some cases provokes food riots represents the biggest challenge that the World Food Programme has faced in its 45-years of existence. According to Mr. Mikkelsen, 1.5 million

people have been pushed into poverty world wide. The most at risk countries are those importing high proportion of their food requirements; with limited international reserves; already facing inflationary pressure; whose populations spend a large proportion of household income on food; and those experiencing an additional 'shock', such as extreme weather or conflict.

The increase in food prices could be a major set back in achieving the MDGs. This affects the ability to pay for school feeding which in turn would result in opting for less nutritious foods in an effort to cope with increase in cost of living. There will be a rise in both the depth and incidence of hunger. As a result malnutrition will increase, school attendance will decline, health status will decline, maternal mortality will increase, and people living with HIV/AIDS will have less access to nutrition.

Mr. Mikkelsen noted that increased prices of food and fuel have affected WFP's ability to respond to identified needs. Programmes with children as prime target groups have experienced a 50% increase in programme costs since May 2007. Without increase in funding, the choices are to change to cash-based support (in an inflationary environment) or reduce the number of children receiving support. Financial and material support to programmes assisting children in drought affected areas is urgently needed. Other responses include strengthening the Productive Safety Net Programme; assessing impacts on urban children and ensuring adequate support; and planning for the long term by promoting increased agricultural production and more equal distribution of resources.

In his intervention, **Mr. Harold Alderman**, noted that a short term shock can have long term consequences. There are many factors behind the current crisis, other than the bio fuels that are very often mentioned. The responses in the short run are different from those needed in the long run, and should not put obstacles for long term strategies.

While managing short term crisis, it is also important to look at the long term role of agriculture. When budget priorities compete, the first level response should be to opt for transfer programmes and agricultural development. The NEPAD set a common agricultural policy with four pillars, including safety nets, which reduce the risks of farming for the poor.

Rates of return on investing in child nutrition using the same economic calculus are the same as or higher than rates of return on roads, irrigation and many other growth-enhancing sectors. Ministers of Finance seldom seem to take this on board when making policies. School feeding may be able to get lots of food to school-age children, but this does not address all nutritional needs. It is not holistic in its approach.

The following issues were raised during the discussion that followed the video presentation and interventions by the panellists:

- The need to involve the youth while devising measures aimed at addressing shocks such as the impact of the food crisis on child poverty;
- The need to evaluate the relative importance of the factors cited as causes of the current food crisis such

as bio fuels, oil prices, demand from China and India, drought in Australia, political instability, the need to explore new technologies such as the green revolution technologies to increase yields and assess the feasibility of exploiting them in the African context;

- The need to manage population growth to mitigate its impact on environment and;
- The need to see whether the current food crisis is attributable to failure on the access or affordability front in each individual country circumstances.

In her summary, **Ms. Christine Cornwell** noted that the nature of the food insecurity issue is far more complex and difficult to deal with than being portrayed through the analysis by the presenters. Although the situation may not necessarily be classified as a food crisis, it is clear that this is a serious problem and that Africa is hard hit by the crisis. The impact varies among households

Depending on a host of factors and there is a need to recognise that food and nutrition may not mean the same thing. The task is to formulate the problem in such a way as to strike the right balance in addressing the food crisis.

Another major policy lesson is that interventions need to be tailored both in a short and long term perspective. But it is important that short term policies by no means be taken as a substitute for long-term interventions. The main conclusion is that there are difficult choices to be made and the solution will require both resources and political will to make choices in the best interest of children living in poverty in Africa.



## VI. Policy Experiences

The Session on policy experiences in industrialised countries was based on two papers. The first paper entitled **Child Poverty and Social Exclusion in countries in Transition and in OECD countries** by Dr. Martha Santos Pais, Director, UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, Florence and the Second **Paper entitled Combating Child Poverty and Social Exclusion in EU Countries: Lessons for Policy and Practice by Professor Hugh Frazer, National University of Ireland. The Session was facilitated by Professor Dharam Ghai, Executive Director, UNRISD (1987-1997). The summary of key messages of the Session was made by Professor Jaap Doek, Chair UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (2001-2007).**

According to Dr. Martha Santos Pais no country in the world today can claim that every child is adequately protected. Children growing up in poverty are very often invisible. This is because child poverty is still largely envisaged in the broader context of the total population, under the assumption that children benefit evenly from policy reforms and social support systems. There seems to be a wrong perception that children experience the impact of economic recession or political crisis in a similar manner to adults.

In rich and transition countries, child poverty is not currently accorded the priority attention it deserves. Children have not received distinct and systematic visibility in economic and social policy formulation and in resource mobilisation.

Besides, social transfers to families with young children require a more decisive support by state authorities. This is why child poverty has become an important area of focus in the research agenda of the UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre (IRC).

In spite of recent positive economic recovery, children in South-Eastern Europe (SEE) and the CIS, who faced the highest risks at the start of the transition, have not evenly benefited from economic growth. Poverty levels in those countries are up to ten times higher than in the rest of Europe. Extreme poverty is also becoming more concentrated and poor children are facing multiple deprivations. This is for example the case in large families with children, in minority populations and in rural areas. In addition, disparities in child well-being have increased, both between countries and within countries, with a widening gap in access to and in quality of social services. Overall levels of public spending in health and education have remained quite low in the region. In many cases, this is the first generation where the right to education is not safeguarded. Overcoming child poverty and reducing disadvantage and disparities are fundamental for advancing children's rights in the SEE/CIS region.

During the 1990s child income poverty increased in the majority of OECD countries. The risk of poverty is linked to exclusion and is therefore particular to some groups of children, including children living in rural areas, children placed in institutions, immigrant

children and children belonging to ethnic minorities, such as Roma children.

High government spending on family and social benefits has been clearly associated with low levels of child poverty. Promoting transparent, regular and timely monitoring and analysis has been found critical in addressing child poverty. But monitoring and evaluation systems have been weak. In addition, insufficient efforts have been made to assess the multidimensional nature of child deprivation. Child poverty in rich countries is frequently considered through the lens of income-related indicators only. Equally importantly, children's experiences and perceptions of poverty, deprivation and exclusion, have been rarely taken into account.

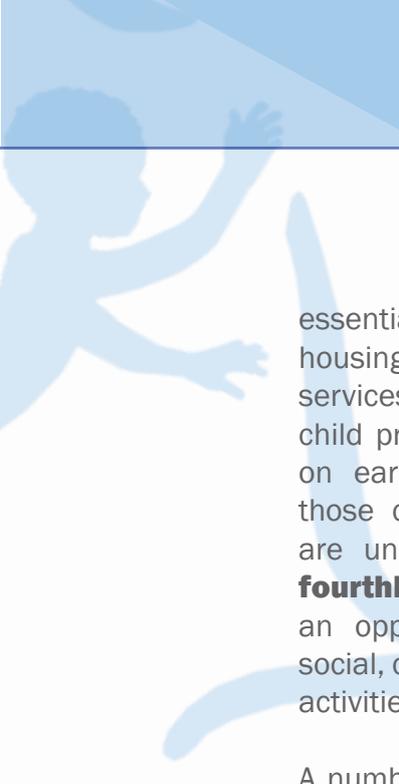
Research through UNICEF has been guided by two important methodological dimensions. Firstly, child poverty is addressed through the lens of human rights. IRC research gives particular attention to children belonging to the most vulnerable groups as the welfare of these children is the best indicator of social progress as a whole. Secondly, IRC research has been committed to highlighting the very different reality of child poverty and deprivation when compared to adults.

Policy experiences of countries surveyed showed that no policy decision can be neutral to children. Social progress can only be achieved when children's rights are high in the political agenda and addressed as a systematic and distinct concern. Improvements are only real when they affect the lives of the most vulnerable children (those at the bottom). This serves as a real and most genuine indicator of social progress.

According to **Professor Hugh Frazer**, in the European Union children are at greater risk to poverty than adults. Since 2001, the European Union has made tackling child poverty a key priority in its overall drive **“to make a decisive impact on the reduction of poverty and social exclusion (in the Union) by 2010”**. In EU member states, child poverty ranges from 9 to 30% based on different assessment. The groups most at risk of poverty are lone parents, large households, unemployed parents, migrants and ethnic minorities, with some smaller categories at more extreme risk, such as street children.

From the EU experience it is clear that a number of preconditions need to be introduced if countries are going to develop effective policies to prevent and reduce child poverty. These include: ensuring child poverty needs are high on the political agenda; the need to mobilise all actors (i.e. national and local government agencies, social partners, NGOs and academics) to work together; the need to foster a commitment to children's rights and non discrimination; the need to mainstream support for children as a priority across all areas of government; the need to develop a strategic approach with clear objectives and targets and the need to collect reliable and timely data pertaining to child poverty.

The EU experience suggests that a comprehensive and holistic approach is needed. The four main elements are: **firstly**, ensuring an adequate income through a combination of employment measures and income support schemes for families with children; **secondly**, improving access for all children to

A light blue silhouette of a child jumping is positioned in the upper left corner of the page. The child's arms are outstretched, and their legs are bent in mid-air, suggesting a joyful leap. The background behind the silhouette is a light blue gradient.

essential services such as health, housing, education, child care and social services; **thirdly**, developing strong child protection services with emphasis on early intervention and support to those children and their families who are under vulnerable situations; and, **fourthly**, ensuring that all children have an opportunity to participate fully in social, cultural, sporting and recreational activities.

A number of key lessons have emerged from the EU process on the successful delivery of policies. These include: ensuring effective coordination and partnerships of all agencies and actors at local level; creating flexible and tailored responses which respond to the particular needs and problems of each child and their family; promoting a community development approach which empowers children and their families and supports people to work together collectively to solve problems; and ensuring rigorous and regular monitoring and reporting on progress. The role of NGOs as advocates can be very influential. As a result of recent experiences, it is now more widely recognised across the EU that preventing and reducing child poverty is an essential task for all countries. It is an investment in both the rights and well-being of children and in the human and social capital of a nation and thus in its future economic, social and cultural well-being.

In his summary, **Professor Doek** noted that child poverty is complex and multifaceted. These presentations have shown us some lessons that developing countries can learn from rich and transition countries, with careful consideration of their contexts. Successful instruments for reducing child poverty include well-targeted social

programmes for families with children under the age of 18.

The biggest challenge is how to get politicians to really make children's rights a priority in terms of budget priorities and policy development. It seems that ranking countries can have an impact in shaming and naming governments to do better, although the evidence for this is currently anecdotal. Assessments are needed to show if ranking is helpful and how it could be put to use. We need agencies and organisations to work closely to convince politicians that it is in their interest and in the interests of their people to do what we all know is right to tackle child poverty.

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## VII. Policy Approaches

The Session on policy approaches benefited from three papers. The first paper entitled Tackling child poverty. Lessons from India by Professor Shiva Kumar, Institute of Human Development, New Delhi, and Adviser, UNICEF India, the Second Paper entitled Cash transfer programmes in Latin America and Africa by Mr. Sudhanshu Handa, Senior Policy Advisor, UNICEF East and Southern Africa Region Office (ESARO), Nairobi and The Government of Kenya's cash transfer programme for vulnerable children: From conception to adolescence 2002-2008 by Mr. Roger Pearson, Senior Social Policy Specialist, UNICEF, Addis Ababa. This session was facilitated by Kailash Satyarthi, Chair, and Global March against Child Labour. The session summary was made by Mr. Stefan van der Swaluw.

As noted by **Professor Shiva Kumar**, there is great interest worldwide in India's economy. An analysis of the Indian experience, especially after the initiation of economic reforms in the early 1990s, reveals that high rates of economic growth and reductions in income poverty do not automatically translate into improvements in the wellbeing of children. There is increasing recognition in India that development cannot happen without also lifting children out of poverty.

India has a demographic advantage of 450 million children. The constitution is progressive and the country has ratified the CRC besides other commitments to observe '**all rights of all children**'. It may be useful to compare India with sub-Saharan Africa. Many Indians believe that

India must be doing better than Africa because the country is less dependent on aid, is less affected by HIV/AIDS and conflict, and has had successful democratic traditions. However, looking at the facts more closely, they are fairly similar in some cases (maternal mortality & sanitation) and in many cases the indicators for children are even worse; especially, in the case of malnutrition. In India, 43% of children are underweight. Gender bias also remains very strong; for instance, the death rate for girls under four years old is about a third higher than for boys, inequalities are very stark and child labour is an issue of significant magnitude.

Economic growth and increases in income do not necessarily lead to reduction in child poverty, or in inequality or discrimination. Five critical links need to be strengthened for ensuring translation of economic growth into the advancement of child welfare and ensuring child rights: increasing public spending on sectors with direct bearing on child wellbeing (for instance, public spending on health was 1% of GDP in India which is one of the lowest rates in the world); improvement in the management of public resources to avoid inefficiency, wastage and leakage; strengthen ownership of child-oriented programmes among communities; create public vigilance – independent monitoring and reporting focusing on the unintended consequence of liberalisation, such as lack of standards in piece rate work for women and its effect on children (as the government collects and analyses the data, the oversight role of the media is

important); and promote public values how society treats its children and understands children's rights.

Child poverty needs to be politicised, supported by movements that are focused around child rights. It requires more than just financial resources. Features of new policy initiatives and institutional reforms at all levels introduced by India could be usefully applied to addressing a number of deprivations that children face in society in the rest of the developing world.

**Mr. Sudhanshu Handa** indicated that holistic and multidimensional programmes are needed for children. Cash transfers are one example of such a successful intervention. Social cash transfers started as a radical transformation in the mid-1990s from food assistance, public work programmes and school feeding. These were considered major shifts in developing countries, and there are now at least eight such programmes in Africa.

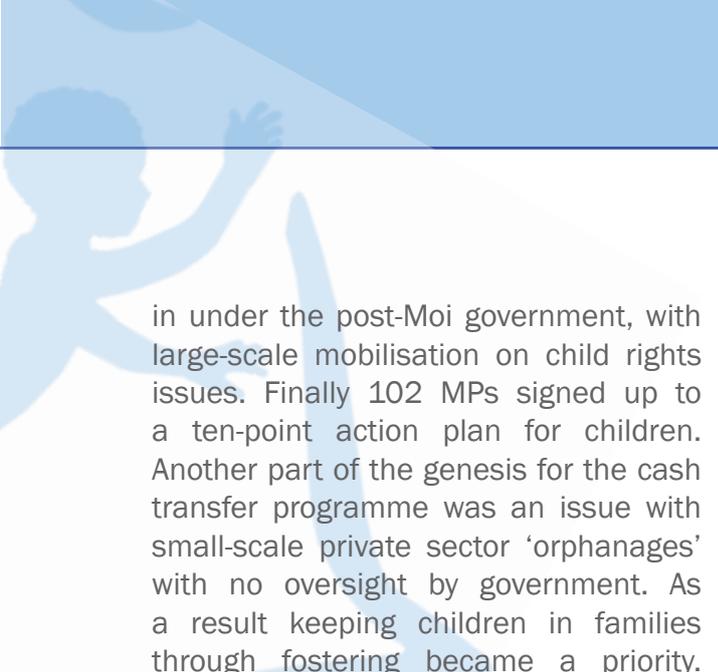
In Latin America, targeting tends to be 'scientific' or technically devised according to indicators of compliance. It is top-down, family-oriented and usually covers the bottom 25%. There are usually certain conditions or responsibilities attached to these targeted grants, such as school attendance, nutrition, health checkups, etc. In Africa, targeting is usually unconditional and countries tend to use a mixture of cash and food, e.g. Productive Safety Net in Ethiopia. Local social protection committees do the selection of potentially eligible households, with second round selection taking place after a transparent process of posting in public. It is bottom-up and focuses on the bottom 10-15%, especially vulnerable children.

Small predictable sums of money handed out to the ultra-poor in Africa – usually 10- 20% of poverty line, or US\$ 13 per month in Malawi, US\$ 20-25 in Kenya have massive quantitative results in reduction of malnutrition and child labour, increased school enrolment and seeking of health services, and improved health outcomes. Even very poor families are able to save some money and use it for productive purposes.

Social cash transfers appear to promote economic growth as well as enhancing children's development with reasonably small costs. They appear to enable the poor to participate in the development process, enhance the human capital of children, help to achieve the MDGs, and provide a minimum 'floor' for the poorest – in short, a 'win-win' development policy instrument that can be achieved with as little as 2% of the national budget in African countries.

**Mr. Roger Pearson** noted that political choices, fiscal capability, capacity to implement and to target were instrumental in the process of developing cash transfers in Kenya. The state of the economy reflected by effective tax collection and rising GDP was important. Cash transfers were one of the five instruments in the government's approach to reducing poverty, which also included infrastructure, especially the trans-African highway, controlling money supply, reducing barriers to business and improving access to credit, including micro credit.

There are great disparities in poverty across the country. It is a political issue to use tax receipts to provide cash transfers to the poorest who are concentrated in certain areas. Public awareness raising and advocacy by civil society really kicked

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in under the post-Moi government, with large-scale mobilisation on child rights issues. Finally 102 MPs signed up to a ten-point action plan for children. Another part of the genesis for the cash transfer programme was an issue with small-scale private sector 'orphanages' with no oversight by government. As a result keeping children in families through fostering became a priority. Cash transfers had to be fed into already existing poverty reduction programmes. There were major questions over how much it was going to cost, but the final message was that it was not going to be unaffordable.

The pilot programme from December 2004 to September 2006 gave a monthly subsidy of Kenyan Shilling (KSh) 500 to 500 households in nine communities, plus KSh 500 per child to local community-based organisations (CBOs) to improve community coping mechanisms for vulnerable children, disbursed through District Children's Officer. The positive results of the pilot included improved access to health and education, little evidence of abuse in expenditures. The impact on undermining traditional coping mechanisms was also limited. However, disbursement via civil servants was burdensome and risky. Communities are of the view that conditions should be attached for grant-receiving households. These lessons were fed into scaled-up Phase II, including the government's commitment to include cash transfers as an item in the budget.

Targeting geographic areas is based on the prevalence of orphans and vulnerable children and overall poverty

levels. Household identification uses a community-based approach based on household poverty, containing orphans or vulnerable children and not being a beneficiary of other cash transfer programmes.

In summary, the Kenyan experience shows that the vital factors in a cash transfer programme are political and societal support, the capacity to implement, and correct targeting.

**The following points were raised during the discussion in this session:**

that the capacity of the community to manage cash transfers such as that of Kenya is questionable, that efforts towards child poverty reduction need to be holistic aimed at addressing inequalities among children; that the disjunction between economic growth and children's wellbeing needs to be addressed; that there is a need to pursue broad-based pro-poor growth with special emphasis on children and women focused growth enhancing programmes and that there is a need to assess the pros and cons of targeting in developing countries where poverty is deep and wide. For instance, the alternative to targeting could be universal or group entitlements. There is also a need to devise techniques to entangle impacts of cash transfers from impacts that may have been brought about as a result of on-going mainstream public programmes. There is also a need for considering public and sociocultural values which are important in fighting child poverty. There is a need to consider very seriously how zero tolerance can be developed by governments and the public at large.

In his summary Mr. Stefan van der Swaluw noted that to be a child and poor is almost seen as a crime. A recent development in how societies are trying to address this problem is through cash transfers. The results appear to have been very encouraging. But it is not by itself enough to end child poverty. A universal benefit, as recommended by Peter Townsend or the powerful but simplistic approach of Jeffrey Sachs will not solve all the problems either. It was a surprise to hear that the recent and rapid economic development in India has not helped in getting children out of poverty. These practices emphasise the need for a holistic approach to address child poverty.

**The Second part of the Session on Tackling Child Poverty: Reports from Asia, Latin America and Africa benefited from four papers and subsequent discussions. The papers include: Child budgeting in Southern Africa by Mr. Mario Claasen**, Institute for Democracy in South Africa (IDASA), South Africa, **Lessons from Ethiopia by Dr. Tedbabe Degefie**, Save the Children US and **Mr. David Throp**, Save the Children UK, Ethiopia, **Breaking the cycle of child labour and child poverty by Mr. Frank Hagemann**, Senior Policy Analyst, International Labour Organisation (ILO), Geneva and **Child malnutrition: Changing perceptions and policy implications by Dr Urban Jonsson**, International Consultant on Human Rights and Development, The Owls, Nairobi and Regional Director, UNICEF ESARO (1998-2003). This Session was facilitated by **Mr. Fassil G/Mariam**, Regional Coordinator, Eastern Africa, Oak Foundation, Addis Ababa. The Session summary was made by **Mr.**

**Oyebisi Babatunde Oluseyi**, Nigeria Network of NGOs

**On Child budgeting in Southern Africa Mr. Mario Claasen** noted that the Imali Ye Mwana (Money for Children) Network was established in December 2004 after the Global Seminar on Child-focused Budgeting. It aims to advocate for increases and efficient use of public resources for the fulfilment of children's socio-economic rights, with current focus on children's right to education. The membership includes child rights organisations from South Africa, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Swaziland and Botswana.

The network is not advocating for a separate child budget, but rather for government policies and budgets to reflect priority allocations and expenditure for the advancement of child rights. The child rights budgeting framework provide tools to monitor government's policy, budget and implementation commitments to realise children's rights.

One example of child participation in this process is that of South Africa. The Children Participating in Governance Project uses four existing children's organisations in four provinces and a peer facilitator model of training children. Twenty peer facilitators were selected. They in turn trained child budget monitors in their respective organisations. Training changed children's perceptions of themselves: **"I learnt that children do have a voice and that there are people willing to listen to us", "I learnt to use my power", "I've become confident around a lot of people"** are some of the quotes from the trainees.

Challenges in child rights budget (CRB) work include lack of reliable and disaggregated information on children and budgetary expenditures. Expanding CRB is not easy as it is not mainstreamed in civil society organisations. There is also mistrust between civil society and government officials.

Lesson learned regarding CRB include: it is more successful when it is linked to a broader advocacy campaign rather than just for academic purposes; capacity-building initiatives should target both beneficiaries and decision-makers; networks and alliances are important to have advocacy impact; mainstreaming of CRB in civil society ensures sustainability; and child participation unlocks the potential of children and makes policy makers aware of the needs of children.

**On Lessons from Ethiopia, Dr. Tedbabe Degefie and Mr. David Throp underscored that**

equity matters for child survival. For faster progress, there is a need to look at issues of inequity. Using existing, low-cost tools and knowledge, it is possible to save more than 6 million of the 9.7 million children who die every year from easily preventable or treatable diseases. A child's chance of making it to his or her fifth birthday depends to a greater extent on the country where the child is born and its level of family income. Levels of per capita income may not matter much when it comes to child mortality. For example, Angola's per capita income is around three times that of Sierra Leone, but their child mortality rates are similar. In general, death rates among the poorest quintile are higher than the richest quintile. Studies indicate that, in Ethiopia, if all children had the same mortality rate as the richest, then

death rates would be reduced by a fifth. Attempts to reduce child mortality without addressing inequity will fail to reach the highest risk children and is likely to be ineffective.

To address issues of inequity there is a need to design health care programmes to better target the poorest and most marginalised mothers and children and strengthen basic health systems to ensure universal coverage. It is also important to deliver basic package of maternal, newborn and child health care that takes into account the realities of poor people in developing countries. It is also critical to invest in community health care workers to enable them reach out to the poorest of the poor with essential lifesaving care as well as increase government support that helps save children's lives.

Although Governments around the world are committed to meeting the MDGs (especially MDG 4 on child survival); the goal of reducing under-five mortality by two-thirds may not be globally achieved by 2015 at the current rates of progress. If we are to close the child survival gap, additional resources are required. For this to be realized development partners need to fulfil their commitments on time.

On breaking the cycle of child labour and child poverty, **Mr. Frank Hagemann** indicated the glaring nature of the problem through citing evidences. At present, there are 218 million child labourers worldwide. About half of them combine work with schooling, with negative educational outcomes. Around 126 million children are in work that seriously endangers their health and 8 million are employed at unconditional

worst forms of labour, such as bonded and forced labour, child prostitution and armed conflict. He indicated that the end of child labour is within reach and can potentially be eradicated within ten years. Global efforts to end child labour have resulted in significant and measurable progress. There is massive worldwide commitment to implement ILO child labour conventions. The ILO has the mandate to produce estimates of child labour every two years and believes that child labour has declined by 11% from 2000 to 2004. The status of data on child labour in Africa is quite good. Although it is under analysed, there is a wealth of data, which allows us to measure the extent of child labour fairly accurately. It is declining as in the rest of the world. Most countries have ratified the relevant treaties on child labour.

Child labour concerns can be mainstreamed, but they should not and cannot be treated in isolation. Cash transfers have been one of the effective tools in the fight against child labour, especially in Latin America. Latin America has witnessed a significant decline in child labour.

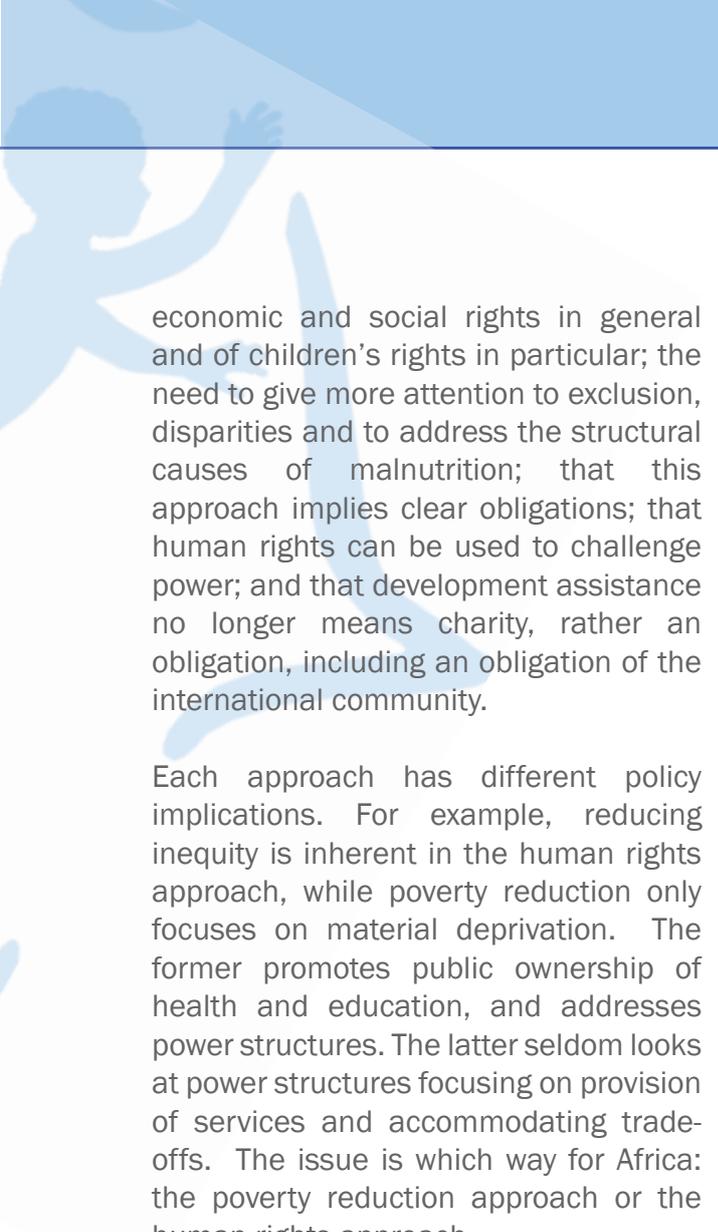
The cost of addressing child labour is affordable. It amounts to less than 10% of annual debt service in the developing world. Good social policy is also good economic policy. It is estimated that each extra year of schooling yields an extra 11% in future earnings. Thus, investing in eliminating child labour is investment in both human and economic capital.

*On Child malnutrition: Changing perceptions and policy implications, Dr. Urban Jonsson* noted the existence of eight main paradigmatic shifts in the field of nutrition over the years. There was an

important shift from mono-causality to multi-causality. Increasingly scholars and practitioners thought that the science of human nutrition was too narrow to tackle the problem of malnutrition, and that there was a need to develop a 'new' science of addressing problems of nutrition in society. This was a reflection of the general shift in development thinking towards a strong emphasis on economic, social and political factors.

The consensus developed between 1985 and 1995 was that people who are poor should be recognised as the key actors in their own development, and that development means both the achievement of desirable outcomes and a process that ensures sustainability. Local ownership of programmes and projects is important. Programmes should contribute to reductions in poverty and disparity. Partnerships should be explored, and analysis of key immediate, underlying and basic or structural causes is essential. From 1995 to 2005, there was a renewed interest in mono-causality and micronutrient malnutrition programmes. Since 2005, a period when renewed interest in nutrition has been witnessed, two competing paradigms have emerged: investment in child nutrition (launched by the World Bank in 2006, 'Repositioning Nutrition as Central to Development') and nutrition as a human right.

The alarming scale of the malnutrition problem in the face of the high economic growth witnessed in recent years in Africa particularly in the Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) shows that the nutrition approach has not borne much fruit. Arguments for the human rights-based approach include the increased recognition of

A decorative graphic in the top left corner of the page features the silhouettes of children in various playful poses, such as jumping and reaching, set against a light blue background.

economic and social rights in general and of children's rights in particular; the need to give more attention to exclusion, disparities and to address the structural causes of malnutrition; that this approach implies clear obligations; that human rights can be used to challenge power; and that development assistance no longer means charity, rather an obligation, including an obligation of the international community.

Each approach has different policy implications. For example, reducing inequity is inherent in the human rights approach, while poverty reduction only focuses on material deprivation. The former promotes public ownership of health and education, and addresses power structures. The latter seldom looks at power structures focusing on provision of services and accommodating trade-offs. The issue is which way for Africa: the poverty reduction approach or the human rights approach.

The following issues were raised during the discussions among participants: that African governments have to bridge the gap between the rights based-approach and its enforcement and implementation on the ground; that developed countries should not prescribe policies to the developing world and development aid should not be tied to policy, that policy coordination at both global and country level is important in addressing child poverty; that mass mobilisation and social activism by and with children themselves is the way out. The case in point is the Global March on Child Labour and the Global Campaign for Education which has proved to produce concrete results. Addressing inequity is critical in the effort to eradicate child poverty. The discussion on poverty in general and child poverty

in particular need to focus on inequality. The MDGs themselves being inequality neutral the dimensions on achieving the MDGs need to be augmented by focusing on inequalities.

In his summary, **Mr. Oyebisi Babatunde Oluseyi**, reminded all concerned to enhance commitment towards greater action for children. The child rights budgeting initiative is one way to see results for children in terms of priorities in setting budgets which are key in implementing policies.

There are lessons to be drawn from Ethiopia regarding child survival and inequality. There is also a need to break the cycle of child labour and child poverty. All indication is that the end of child labour is within reach. The human right approach to nutrition should hold to the conviction that charity is obscenity. For all these promises to be realised, both political and parental will are critical.

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## VIII. Conclusions

The Two-day Conference on Child Poverty culminated with concluding deliberations in three sessions: **Session VIII, Session IX and Session X. In Session VIII a concluding Key Note Speech titled “Claiming the Future: An International Perspective”** was delivered by Mr. Stephen Lewis, Codirector, AIDS-Free World. This Keynote address was facilitated by Dr. Assefa Bequele, Executive Director, ACPF.

The concluding discussions and deliberations in Session IX benefited from papers presented under the Theme **“Child Poverty and Public Policy”**. **The papers presented included: Child poverty, Budget and Economic Policy by Dr James Gesami, Assistant Minister of Health, the Republic of Kenya; Human Rights, Extreme Poverty and Public Policy by Ms. Maria Magdalena Sepúlveda Carmona, The UN Independent Expert on Human Rights and Extreme Poverty; and Children and Urban Poverty in Africa: Trends and policy options by Dr Moussa Sissoko, President, Coalition of NGOs Working for Children in Africa (CONAFE)**. This Session was facilitated by Dr. Ben Kioko, Chief Legal Council, African Union. Session Summary was made by MS. Stella Ayo Odongo, National Coordinator, Uganda Child Rights NGO Network.

The Last Session of the Conference (Session X) was devoted to a Conversation on **“What needs to be done?”**. This Conversation Session benefited from statements made by **Dr. Agnes Akosua**

**Aidoo**, Vice-Chair, UN Committee on the Rights of the Child; **Prof. Peter Townsend**, Centennial Professor of International Social Policy, London School of Economics; **Dr. Marta Santos Pais**, Director, UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, Florence and **Mr. George Nyakora**, Director, Regional Training and Resource Centre, SOS-Kinderdorf International which culminated with the **Addis Ababa Statement by Professor Rose September**, Director, Child and Youth Research, University of the Western Cape (**See the full text of the Addis Ababa Statement in Annex III**). This Session was facilitated by **Adv Bience Gawanas**, Commissioner for Social Affairs, African Union.

The key messages of the three concluding sessions are outlined in turn below.

The central message of the key note speech (Session VIII) by **Mr. Stephen Lewis** is that the series of conferences conducted particularly within the UN system have not yet produced tangible results in addressing child poverty. Despite these conference circuits, children are still at the bottom of the global development agenda. The international community has so far failed to meet its solemn commitments. They have never run short of commitments, but there is still a vacuum of response. Except few countries, the rich countries have not yet delivered on their 0.7% of GNP commitment to poor countries to enable them meet the MDGs in the spirit of the global partnership (Goal 8 of the MDGs). If additional ODA is not forthcoming in the spirit of the MDGs and the Gleneagles

Summit commitments (to doubling aid to Africa), the cash transfer programmes widely discussed during this conference could not be implemented. He also noted how child poverty has been exacerbated by the HIV/AIDS and vice versa through citing facts. According to him, Sub-Saharan Africa accounting for about 68% of AIDS cases, 90% of infected children and 76% AIDS related deaths in the world is hard hit by the pandemic. In Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), women account for 61% of HIV/AIDS cases. This pandemic is driven by gender inequality. Given the scale of the problem, the knowledge gap on HIV/AIDS among the youth is still huge. Access to ART to prevent mother-to-child transmission is low and has only reached to less than one-third. If the solemn promises that have been made were kept, the resource would have been enough to support children and mothers. Mr. Stephen Lewis reiterated the need to be strong and tough advocates for children's causes to enable them claim the future.

The key issues that emerged from the papers presented and the deliberations that followed in **Session IX under the Theme "Child Poverty and Public Policy"** are that poverty is multidimensional and there are disparities across regions and there is a need for multifaceted strategies to tackle them.

The paper on **Child poverty, budget and economic policy by Dr. James Gesami** underscored the importance growth-oriented poverty reduction strategy and the need for aligning it with appropriately designed public sector reform programmes in the social sectors. The remarkable achievements witnessed

in access to primary education and health service delivery have been triggered by the significant increase in the budget allocated to health and education in Kenya in recent years. It was, thus, indicated that Kenya is likely to achieve MDG Goal 2 and Goal 6 and there is progress towards MDG 3. It was further noted that with increased funding and better policies it may be able to achieve No 7. Pro-poor economic growth is vital in order to achieve all the goals. The paper concluded that matters relating to child survival require political leadership and stewardship. Short of that nothing substantial can be achieved.

The paper on Human Rights, **Extreme Poverty and Public Policy by Ms. Maria Magdalena Sepúlveda Carmona** underscored that the human rights approach alone is not enough to address child poverty. It requires a multifaceted approach to produce tangible results. The importance of pressing on national governments and their leadership was also emphasised in the presentation by Ms. Maria Magdalena Sepúlveda Carmona. The most important message conveyed through this paper is that "not to wait for leaders to make changes, but to force them to make changes".

The Paper on **"Children and urban poverty in Africa: Trends and policy options"** by **Dr. Moussa Sissoko** noted how urban growth compounded by the demographic explosion contributed to the influx of children from rural to urban areas. As a result, the urban situation in terms of providing essential social and infrastructure services has become unmanageable for most African governments and the rest of the developing world alike. This situation has

A blue silhouette of a child jumping is positioned in the top left corner of the page. The child's arms are outstretched, and their legs are bent in mid-air, suggesting a joyful leap. The background behind the child is a light blue gradient.

naturally exposed children to exploitation (such as child labour) and abuse. The case in point is the situation of street children. Dr. Moussa Sissoko, indicated two interrelated approaches to address child poverty in urban areas: firstly, allow children to participate in the design of strategies and programmes specifically designed to address children's issues and secondly, create awareness among parents and all other actors on the rights of children. There should be strong linkages between schools and family and all stakeholders should act for and with children to achieve the goal of an **"Africa Fit for Children"**. The UN should issue progress reports on sub-Saharan Africa on the issues of political and budgetary allocations for children, and on progress on the most vulnerable children.

**The discussions in Sessions VIII and IX culminated with a conversation session (Session X) on "what needs to be done?"**. One of the key points that came out from the conversation is that the discussion on poverty should not be confined to lack of income only. Rather there is a need to take a holistic approach in tackling the multidimensional aspects of poverty. Recognising the critical role that the extended family and kinship system plays in the welfare of children in Africa was also noted. It was also noted that there is no substitute for the support and care extended by the family and kinship system in the African set up. This is unique to Africa. In African societies, children can stay as part of the family system up to the age of 25. Below the level of Government and civil society, the family system is an invaluable institution in the African set up. It, therefore, needs to be revitalized.

The Right based approach being a way out in addressing child poverty from its roots, the Session also noted the need to focus on all forms of rights not just civil and political rights. A piecemeal approach will not get us anywhere in getting rid of child poverty in Africa. It was also noted that the legal systems in Africa is particularly alienating. The legal system discriminates between different groups (e.g., children born out of wedlock) and the importance of addressing such practices was duly emphasised.

The need for complementing growth with multi-sectoral policies was also observed during the deliberations. That economic growth does not necessarily translate in to meaningful poverty reduction was also well recognised. The importance of social mobilisation through engaging all relevant stakeholders to unpack political will was also noted. This is considered to be the way out to render national governments accountable to their citizens, particularly children.

The importance of a well functioning comprehensive monitoring, evaluation and reporting system to render stakeholders accountable was also underscored. The need for a set of robust indicators to monitor progress towards set targets and ensure accountability of the various actors including government was also noted. It was also noted that while the effort waged to render governments transparent and accountable is important, the need for civil society to be transparent and accountable for itself has also been pointed out as equally important.

**The Two-Day Conference was concluded through closing remarks by Dr. Assefa Bequele, Executive Director, The African Child Policy Forum.**

Dr. Assefa Bequele observed that all participants had listened to the key messages through the conference and all participants in their various capacities will respond in the coming days, months and years to the calls that have been made during the Conference. He further stated that the 'contagion' is very pressing and needs immediate and priority interventions.

He expressed his satisfaction in observing that discussions and partnerships have already started in terms of research and Collaboration: launching of the movement on May 10<sup>th</sup> 2008 pertaining to issues regarding political will and social mobilisation and how this could be achieved through collaborative effort and establishment of a network of researchers to pursue work on child poverty. In this regard, he indicated that 80 organisations have already expressed interest to establish such a network.

He thanked all participants for attending the conference and for the very lively and productive discussions. He also noted that the number, profile and level of participation were beyond his expectations and the ideas that have come out will inspire us for years to come. He extended his deep gratitude and thanks to the distinguished speakers who have come from afar, some without any costs incurred. He also extended his thanks and appreciation once again to the ICS and Plan and the UNECA.

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## IX. Policy Recommendations: A Call for Action

The following **7 key policy recommendations** were put forwarded at the Third International Conference on the African Child held in Addis Ababa from May 12 to 13 2008:

- 1) Enhanced **political commitment** at the highest level is the single most important precondition for success in the fight against all forms of child poverty. As it stands now children's issues seems to be diluted with in a statistical unit called ' household'. Child poverty needs to be clearly articulated as a **priority area in national development plans**, separate from other agendas. All actors need to create a greater understanding of what is required and who deserves priority attention. Promoting coordination and synergy between governments, civil society, multilateral institutions, NGOs, academic institutions, etc., is vital for successful implementation of child and women focused development programmes. True partnerships are extremely critical in concurrently addressing child poverty.
- 2) There is an urgent need for **in-depth research** on issues pertaining to child poverty in Africa. There is a need for a thorough understanding of the multidimensional nature of child poverty. Moreover, creative ways of funding research need to be developed. For instance, taxing trans-national companies for research needs to be explored. Besides, the issue of corporate social responsibility needs to be taken up further. The idea of establishing a network of researchers on poverty from all over the world who would undertake research study on Africa and other regions of the developing world so as to share experiences and build capacity is a welcome development.
- 3) A well functioning and transparent national **Monitoring & Evaluation system** equally observed by both state and non-state actors needs to be put in place and be further strengthened in each country. Monitoring, evaluation and streamlining reporting systems are important to hold stakeholders accountable. It is also important that for civil societies to be a watchdog on national governments, they themselves need to be transparent and accountable, not just only point fingers at governments;
- 4) **Inequality** in its various facets is another important dimension of poverty. It is important to address inequalities. All available evidence shows that inequality is growing between and within countries in Africa and elsewhere. To decently implement programmes to alleviate poverty, there is a need to simultaneously tackle inequality. Thus, governments in Africa need to pursue broad-based pro-poor growth policies with particular focus on women and children. Recognising that economic growth does not necessarily translate in to poverty reduction, a holistic approach to tackling child poverty needs to be pursued;
- 5) The centrality of the **family and the community** need to be recognised in alleviating child poverty in Africa.

The traditional African family system (the extended family system) which is currently breaking down needs to be maintained for the betterment of African children. Traditions and cultures should be respected as that has created the warmth and the love for children in the context of Africa;

**6) Child participation** in the assessment of the poverty situation of children is an encouraging step. There is a need to take children's perspectives seriously. We cannot continue to talk about poverty without listening to their opinions on how it affects their lives. There is also a need to involve children in assessing how policies have worked towards their specific needs and requirements and on how duty bearers at different levels (global, regional, national and community levels) discharge their responsibilities;

**7) The right-based approach (RBA)** towards addressing child poverty calls for a comprehensive approach in making the legal system of African countries work for children. The focus needs to be on all rights, not just civil and political rights. Without such a holistic approach, child poverty could not be squarely addressed in the context of Africa. The child rights-based approach at national level should be accompanied by a strong international solidarity (as expected under the CRC) and effective international cooperation. It remains crucial that the OECD countries meet their repeated commitments to allocate 0.7 per cent of their GNP on Official Development Assistance (ODA) in the spirit of Goal 8 of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).



## Annex I Programme for the Conference

Monday 12 May 2008

### Opening session

#### Opening statements:

**Dr. Assefa Bequele**, Executive Director, The African Child Policy Forum (ACPF)

**H.E. Dr. Salim A Salim**, African Union (AU) Special Envoy and Chief Mediator for the Inter-Sudanese Peace Talks on Darfur, Secretary-General, Organisation for African Unity (OAU) (1989-2001), International Board of Trustees, The African Child Policy Forum

**Mr. Jean Baptiste Zoungrana**, Chair, African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child

**Ms. Marleen Hasselerharm**, Programme Director, International Child Support (ICS)

**Ms. Deepali Khanna**, Regional Director, Eastern and Southern Africa, Plan International

**Ms. Kimberley Svevo**, Executive Director, International Society for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (ISPCAN)

**Guest of Honour** ***HE Girma Wolde Giorgis, President, Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia***

### Session I: Keynote speech

**Chair: Ms. Etta Tadesse**, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Representative to AU and Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)

**Child rights, child wellbeing and child poverty Prof. Yanghee Lee**, Chair, United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child

## Session II: Child poverty: The world scene

**Chair: Prof Tilahun Teshome**, Faculty of Law, Addis Ababa University  
**The abolition of child poverty and rights to social security: a possible UN model for child benefit** **Prof Peter Townsend**, Centennial Professor of International Social Policy, London School of Economics  
**Child poverty: The gender dimension** **Prof Meredith Turshen**, Professor of Planning and Public Policy, Rutgers University

### Discussion

**Session summary: Prof Dharam Ghai**, Executive Director, United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) (1987-1997)

## Session III: Child poverty in Africa

**Chair: Dr. Agnes Akosua Aidoo, Vice-Chair**, UN Committee on the Rights of the Child  
**Poverty: Through the Eyes of Children – A documentary**

### Child poverty in Africa: Country experiences

- Child poverty in South Africa, Ms Phakama Ntshongwana, Researcher, University of Oxford
- Child poverty in Tanzania, Mr Eric Shemweta Guga, Independent Consultant, Tanzania

### Discussion

**Session summary: Mr David Muthungu**, Country Director, Plan Tanzania

## Session IV: The world food crisis

**Chair: Mr Per Engebak**, Regional Director, Eastern and Southern Africa, UNICEF  
**The impact of the global food crisis** **Prof Jeffrey D Sachs**, Director, The Earth Institute at Columbia University

### Panel of discussants:

**Mr Shahidur Rashid**, Senior Social Policy Specialist, International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), Addis Ababa

**Mr Alemayehu Seyoum**, Visiting Research Fellow, IFPRI, Addis Ababa

**Mr Jakob Mikkelsen**, Head, Nutrition and Education Section, UN World Food Programme (WFP), Addis Ababa

**Mr Harold Alderman**, Social Protection Advisor – Africa Region, World Bank

**Discussion**

**Session summary:** Ms Christine Cornwell, ACPF Representative to the UN and other international organisations based in Geneva

Tuesday 13 May 2008

### Session V: Policy experiences in industrialized countries

**Chair: Prof Dharam Ghai**, Executive Director, UNRISD (1987-1997) Child poverty and social inclusion in countries in transition and in OECD countries

**Dr. Marta Santos Pais**, Director, UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, Florence Combating child poverty and social exclusion in EU countries: Lessons for policy and practice Prof Hugh Frazer, National University of Ireland

**Discussion**

**Session summary:** Prof Jaap Doek, Chair, UN Committee on the Rights of the Child 2001-2007)

### Session VI: Tackling child poverty: Reports from Asia, Latin America and Africa

**Chair: Mr Kailash Satyarthi**, Chair, Global March against Child Labour  
**Tackling child poverty: Lessons from India Prof Shiva Kumar**, Institute of Human Development, New Delhi, and Adviser, UNICEF India

**Cash transfer programmes in Latin America and Africa Mr Sudhanshu Handa**, Senior Policy Advisor, UNICEF East and Southern Africa Region Office (ESARO), Nairobi

**The Government of Kenya's cash transfer programme for vulnerable children: From conception to adolescence 2002-2008 Mr Roger Pearson**, Senior Social Policy Specialist, UNICEF, Addis Ababa

**Discussion**

**Session summary:** Mr Stefan van der Swaluw, Regional Director, ICS, Nairobi

## Session VII: Tackling child poverty: Reports from Asia, Latin America and Africa.....(continued)

**Chair: Mr Fassil G/Mariam**, Regional Coordinator, Eastern Africa, Oak Foundation, Addis Ababa

**Child budgeting in Southern Africa Mr Mario Claasen**, Institute for Democracy in South Africa (IDASA), South Africa

**Lessons from Ethiopia Dr. Tedbabe Degefie**, Save the Children US and Mr David Throp, Save the Children UK, Johannesburg

**Breaking the cycle of child labour and child poverty Mr Frank Hagemann**, Senior Policy Analyst, International Labour Organization (ILO), Geneva

**Child malnutrition: Changing perceptions and policy implications Dr. Urban Jonsson**, International Consultant on Human Rights and Development, the Owls, Nairobi and Regional Director, UNICEF ESARO (1998-2003)

### Discussion

**Session summary:** Mr Oyebisi Babatunde Oluseyi, Nigeria Network of NGOs

## Session VIII: Keynote speech

Claiming the future: An internationalist perspective, Mr Stephen Lewis, Codirector, AIDS-Free World

### Discussion

## Session IX: Child poverty and public policy

**Chair: Mr Ben Kioko**, Chief Legal Counsel, African Union

**Child poverty, budget and economic policy Dr. James Gesami**, Assistant Minister of Health, The Republic of Kenya

**Human rights, extreme poverty and public policy, Ms.. María Magdalena Sepúlveda Carmona**, The UN Independent Expert on Human Rights and Extreme Poverty

**Children and urban poverty in Africa: Trends and policy options Dr. Moussa Sissoko**, President, Coalition of NGOs Working for Children in Africa (CONAFE)

**Discussion**

**Session summary:** Ms.. **Stella Ayo Odongo**, National Coordinator, Uganda Child Rights NGO Network (UCRNN)

**Session X: What is to be done?: A conversation**

**Chair: Adv Bience Gawanas**, Commissioner for Social Affairs, African Union

**Dr. Agnes Akosua Aidoo**, Vice-Chair, UN Committee on the Rights of the Child

**Prof Peter Townsend**, Centennial Professor of International Social Policy, London School of Economics

**Dr. Marta Santos Pais**, Director, UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, Florence

**Mr. George Nyakora**, Director, Regional Training and Resource Centre, SOS-Kinderdorf International

**Addis Ababa statement Prof Rose September**, Director, Child and Youth Research, University of the Western Cape



## Annex II The Addis Ababa Statement

### The Addis Ababa call to end child poverty in Africa



**We**, participants of this Third International Policy Conference on the African Child, **recognise** that poverty is a deplorable human condition and a global problem. It shames entire nations and robs people of their dignity. **Children are hardest hit**. Poverty denies children the enjoyment of their rights as recognised in the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and thereby of their childhood and their future.

**We deplore** the dire consequences of child poverty in Africa and its impact on children's survival and wellbeing, such as:

- the 1 million babies who are stillborn every year and tens of thousands who die every day of preventable diseases
- the hundreds of millions of children who remain excluded from basic social services such as primary health-care, water and sanitation and quality education
- the millions of children who suffer the devastating impact of HIV and AIDS

**We appreciate** the recent efforts being made on the continent to accelerate economic growth and the increasing commitment to improve child survival and wellbeing. But an enormous and visible gap remains.

**We underscore** the tremendous moral, economic and social urgency for tackling child poverty now.

We **urge all stakeholders** worldwide to make the eradication of child poverty a high priority.

We specifically **call upon all countries** in Africa to develop time-bound plans of action to end child poverty and ensure periodic and transparent monitoring of progress.

We **urgently call upon all stakeholders** to:

- Recognise the serious problem of child poverty and build knowledge on its causes and effects
- Ensure that poor families and their children are benefited by economic growth through reducing inequalities, overcoming marginalisation and securing livelihoods
- Put in place comprehensive child protection and social security systems that provide benefits for all children
- Identify and improve the conditions of especially vulnerable children who experience multiple deprivation such as orphans, street children, children with disabilities and girls
- Ensure for all children, access to food and basic social services including free primary healthcare, sanitation, clean water and adequate shelter
- Provide free universal access to anti-retroviral drugs to prolong the lives of parents and children and to avert mother-to-child transmission and embark on prevention programmes
- Ensure comprehensive early childhood development programmes, free and compulsory primary and secondary education
- Increase government budget spending on healthcare, education and other social services for children to the agreed international standards.

**WE HEREBY COMMIT TO SUPPORTING ALL NATIONAL AND GLOBAL  
EFFORTS TO END CHILD POVERTY**



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