

Concept note: The transformative potential of expanding child benefits coverage to eliminate child poverty. A side event launching the Global Child Benefits Tracker

Details

Proposed date: 14 February 2024

Time: TBC

Location: UN Headquarters, New York,

Modalities: In-person with live-streaming via UN Web TV

ORGANISERS: ILO, Save the Children & UNICEF

CO-SPONSORS: Global Coalition on Social Protection Floors, Luxembourg (TBC), and Oman (TBC)

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Context

Child poverty is one of the world's greatest challenges to the realisation of the SDGs and children's rights, including the right to survival, learning and protection. In 2022, 330 million children lived in extreme poverty,¹ with children comprising more than half of the world's 1.1 billion people experiencing multidimensional poverty. As countries and households around the world continue to feel the economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, the climate crisis and conflict, child poverty rates are likely to grow without significant and concerted action.

Through the SDGs, world leaders committed to eradicate poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, including by putting in place social protection floors (SPFs) by 2030 and guaranteeing access to quality essential health care for all and basic income security for children, persons with disabilities, older persons and the unemployed.²

In the aftermath of the pandemic, during which the world witnessed an unprecedented surge in temporary investments in social protection systems, a wide range of development and humanitarian actors have called for the prioritization of improved coverage and impact for children in social protection measures, and progressive realization of universal coverage of all children,

¹ UNICEF and World Bank Group, Global Trends in Child Monetary Poverty According to International Poverty Lines, July 2023, <https://www.unicef.org/documents/child-poverty-trends>.

² International Labour Organization, Recommendation concerning National Floors of Social Protection No. 202, Geneva, 101st ILC session, 14 June 2012, [Recommendation R202 - Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 \(No. 202\) \(ilo.org\)](https://www.ilo.org/public/libdoc/iloorg/2012/06/20120601202.htm).

possibly by universal child benefits³ or other highly-inclusive child benefit instruments, as indicated by international social security standards.

What happens with and without inclusive social protection?



With inclusive social protection, children are more likely to enjoy their rights and access the support they need.



Without inclusive social protection, children are at higher risk of other child rights violations and are more likely to be left behind.

All these violations can have long-term impacts on children's health, education and development. For example: opportunities to get work when they are older, increased poverty, malnutrition, or deeper inequalities.

Source: OHCHR, Support Every Child. A child-friendly version of 2023 Report to the Human Rights Council on Child Rights and Inclusive Social Protection, September 2023.

³ See our report [A Foundation to End Child Poverty: How universal child benefits can build a fairer, more inclusive and resilient future](#) ; and blogs [here](#) and [here](#).

While governments have made some progress in building inclusive social protection systems, children are frequently left the furthest behind. For instance, more than 73 per cent⁴ of girls and boys worldwide do not receive any child or family cash benefits at all, leaving them particularly vulnerable and at risk to the irreversible and long-lasting impacts of poverty, stunting and wasting, inadequate access to health and education services on human capability development.

Commented [O11]: This will need to be updated with the new 2024 data coming in mid december

In light of the current circumstances, Save the Children, ILO and UNICEF have partnered to co-create a **Global Child Benefits Tracker**, an online platform to monitor children's access to the right of social protection, more specifically child benefits, identify gaps and effectively advocate with governments and donors to close these protection gaps. The aim of this new tool is to provide a dedicated knowledge management platform to foster progressive and evidence-based dialogue, drawing on best practice, on the need for and feasibility of greater investment in child-sensitive social protection.

By focusing on the rights of children, the **Global Child Benefits Tracker** is an important complement to the knowledge management tools available to advocates of child-sensitive social protection including policy makers in government and international development agencies, social protection practitioners, academia / researchers, civil society and child campaigners.

The platform features official **statistics on child poverty as well as policies, legal and effective coverage, and expenditure on social protection** for children and families at **global, regional and country levels**. To promote greater engagement, it includes a dynamic community page that will feature highlights from key reports, expert commentary, practitioner insights in the form of best practices notes, expert blogs, infographics, country case studies, webinars, podcasts, video documentaries and an events calendar. The platform also includes a child-friendly page designed to support child campaigners.

The tracker can be used by a variety of stakeholders to support joint advocacy and campaign ambition, policy making and scheme design, thereby contributing to **the realization of child-related income guarantee of the Social Protection Floor Recommendation (ILO)**, which has been endorsed by the ILO's 187 Member States. The Child Benefits Tracker will also contribute to **monitoring progress toward** realisation of Article 26 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and **Sustainable Development Goal 1.3** which calls on governments to "implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030."

Event Objectives

To promote awareness and engagement, ILO, Save the Children and UNICEF will launch the Global Child Benefits Tracker at a side event on child poverty and Universal Child Benefits (UCBs) during the 62nd Commission for Social Development (CSoCD62)⁵ in New York on 14th February 2024 (TBC). Child-sensitive social protection, particularly UCBs, are directly relevant to the theme for CSoCD62: *Fostering social development and social justice through social policies to accelerate progress on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to achieve the overarching goal of poverty eradication*. As indicated by the recent report of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in his report to the Human Rights Council, UCBs can be an effective means to

⁴ ILO. 2021. *World Social Protection Report 2020–22: Social Protection at the Crossroads – in Pursuit of a Better Future*. Geneva.

⁵ <https://social.desa.un.org/csocd/62nd>

reduce child poverty and support child development, and is one of the most inclusive, effective and fairest approaches to reach those furthest behind.⁶

The objectives of this side event include:

- i) Highlight the negative impacts of child-poverty on human capabilities, inclusive development and social justice.
- ii) Feature voices of children impacted by poverty, inequality and the climate crisis on the one hand; in contrast to those with greater access to child-benefits.
- iii) Showcase Member States and best practice implementation of universal child-benefits
- iv) Launch the Global Child Benefits tracker by Save the Children, ILO and UNICEF and highlight the strategic importance of partnership in advocating for greater investment in child-sensitive social protection and progressive realization of universal child benefits.

Agenda and Speakers:

Opening Remarks

- Cynthia, Samuel-Olonjuwon, NYC director, International Labour Organization

Keynote speaker

- Philip Alston, the former UN Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights (TBC)

Member State presentations

- Luxemburg (TBC)
- Oman (TBC)

Presentations of the Global Child Benefits

- David, Lambert Tumwesigye, Global Policy & Advocacy Lead, Child Poverty, Save the Children International

Questions and Answers

Closing Remarks

- UNICEF Representative, Jennifer Yablonski (TBC)

⁶ Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Rights of the child and inclusive social protection (Advance edited version), 1 September 2023, A/HRC/54/36, pp. 42 & 44, <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/2023-09/a-hrc-54-36-aev.pdf>.