UNICEF’s renewed ambition to ending child poverty

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Child Poverty: Global Challenge

- **1 billion** children worldwide are living in multidimensional poverty

- 1 in 6 children live in extreme monetary poverty

- Extreme child poverty is increasingly concentrated in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia

- Child poverty is a **global phenomenon**. Child poverty is not confined to low-income countries; most children living in poverty are in **middle income contexts**

- In the European Union, one in four children live at risk of poverty and social exclusion

- In many OECD countries, the depth as well as breadth of poverty has increased in recent years.
Exclusion and long-term impacts

Severe and long-lasting consequences of growing up in poverty:

• Less access to health care; twice as likely to die in childhood
• More likely to experience malnutrition and stunting and wasting; impact on cognitive and physical development and their life-long earnings.
• Less likely to complete primary or secondary school

Groups of children who are particularly vulnerable to poverty:
• Households raising children with disabilities; displaced and migrant families
• Girls and women; disproportionally represented in informal jobs
• Children in fragile and humanitarian crises
  • It is estimated that by 2030 up to two-thirds of the world’s extreme poor could live in contexts of fragility, conflict, and violence
COVID-19, Climate and Conflict: main drivers of poverty

- At onset of the pandemic: 2 out of 3, or 76% of households with many children reported experiencing total income loss, versus 55% of households with no children (WB/UNICEF)

- An **100** million additional children were living in multidimensional poverty at the end of 2021, as a result of the pandemic.

- Impacts of **war in Ukraine** globally + Eastern Europe and Central Asia
  - An additional 10 million people – including about **4 million children** – will be pushed into poverty

- **NEW PROFILES** of children in poverty:
  - Increase in **urban areas**
  - Among those with **more basic assets**,
  - Non-agriculture sectors and care economy
Limited but some Progress before COVID…

- The SDGs provided the first global commitments on eliminating child poverty
- Important progress on child poverty reduction, prior to the pandemic – albeit a slow one:
  - 30 million fewer children were living in extreme poverty in 2017 compared to 2013
  - In the 20-year period between 2000 and early 2020, multidimensional child poverty fell in developing countries from around 70% to 45%.
- In many countries child poverty has reduced drastically: eg: Nepal, Mongolia, Sierra Leone, Lesotho
- **BUT**, poverty reduction has been slower for children
  - Extreme poverty is becoming increasingly concentrated among large households with young children.
- **Overall message:** an ever-increasing share of the global poor are children.
Case is clear; investments are still not enough

- Slow commitment to **monitoring** child poverty

**Too little, too late**
- Per capita expenditure on children is lowest in earlier years
- Expenditure in LICs concentrated in education; children under 6 do **not** benefit from public support

- Absorption capacity and national and subnational levels

- Limited **alignment** of climate, humanitarian and development financing

- Limited investments in **preparedness** across social sectors

- **Trade-offs** between climate adaption and poverty reduction not always explicitly

- **Debt repayments** outweigh education, social protection and health combined*
Challenges: Social Protection*

Social protection is a key policy lever for reducing child poverty. Critical pillar of COVID-19 response, and multiple crises. BUT critical gaps remain:

Coverage
- **Children**: including those in specific groups such as children on the move, ethnic groups, urban areas, disability and fragile contexts
  - 1.5 billion children below the age of 15 years currently have no access to social protection
  - Progress has stalled since 2016.

Sustainable Financing Gap
- Current fiscal space allowed for an unprecedented **but short-term response**
- Expenditure remains far too low to fill the financing gap for social protection for children, with upper-middle-income countries spending just 0.5 per cent and lower-income countries 0.1 per cent of GDP on social protection for children.

Adequacy
- Disaster risk/ Risk informed and shock responsive systems
- Programming in Urban areas
- Going beyond UCTs/CCTs: *Care economy, health insurance, other?
Opportunities

Ending child poverty is a policy choice

We know what works to address and end child poverty:

• Having clear national support for ending child poverty, including routine measurement and including child poverty as appropriate in national budgets, policies and laws.

• Improving universal access to quality social services, such as health care, nutrition, WASH, and education, particularly for children living in poverty.

• Expanding inclusive and shock-responsive social protection systems and programmes, including child benefits, paid maternity and parental leave, childcare services, and policies that enable women to work in the formal and informal economy.

• Promoting a decent work and inclusive growth agenda.
Momentum: Global Accelerator on Social Protection and Jobs for Just Transitions

The accelerator:
- An SG initiative that aims to support the creation of 400 million decent jobs, the extension of social protection to the 4 billion people
- Strong focus on green transitions
- Strengthen effective and coordinated multilateral cooperation.
- agreed implementation plan, a strong interagency coordinating body in place

Next steps:
- development of detailed roadmaps at the national level in possible pathfinder countries,
- the identification of new pathfinder countries committed to accelerating progress
- the development of interagency structures for the technical support facility.

The success of the accelerator depends on strong country-level leadership and vision.
Muchas gracias