



# **UNICEF Toolkit: Child- and youth-sensitive Nationally Determined Contributions**

Guidance for developing Nationally Determined Contributions  
for and with children and young people

## Acknowledgements

### Lead author

Sean Storr, UNICEF Headquarters Climate, Environment, Energy and Disaster Risk Reduction (CEED)

### Technical expertise

Amy Wickham, Jen Stephens, Joni Pegram, Larissa Demel and Yuv Sungkur, UNICEF Headquarters CEED

### Technical input

Clara Leonie Bütow, UNICEF Eastern and Southern Africa; Maria Osbeck, UNICEF Europe and Central Asia; María del Carmen Porras Pérez Guerrero, UNICEF Latin America and the Caribbean; Dinesh Acharya, Rakshya Rajyashwori Thapa and Utsab Phuyal, UNICEF South Asia; David Knaute, UNICEF West and Central Africa; Laura Healy, UNICEF Headquarters Child Protection; Jeremy Sprigge, UNICEF Global Communication and Advocacy; Swathi Manchikanti, UNICEF Headquarters Health; Emma Ferguson, Malvikha Manoj and Zeinab Hijazi, UNICEF Headquarters Mental Health and Psychosocial Support; Rebekka Perdereau, UNICEF Public Partnership; Aifric Lynch Horne and Vincent Petit, UNICEF Headquarters Social and Behaviour Change; Orria Goñi Delzangles, UNICEF Headquarters Social Policy; and Eleonora Gatti, UNICEF Office of Innovation

### External contributions and review

Tatenda Mutasa, Zimbabwe Climate Change Management Department; and Bernardin Bavuge, Rwanda Environment Management Authority

### Guidance

Kitty van der Heijden, Deputy Executive Director, and George Laryea-Adjei, Programme Group Director

### Production Support

Tamara Plush, UNICEF Headquarters CEED

### Design

Paolo Ciampagna

Cover photo:  
A group of Indigenous girls  
plant trees outside their home  
in Guatemala.  
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## Definitions of 'child' and 'youth'

In the context of child- and youth-sensitive climate policies, UNICEF uses the term 'children and young people' to include children (aged 0–17 years), adolescents (aged 10–19 years) and youth (aged 15–24 years).

Different countries define these terms differently.

For the toolkit and our research analysis, when a policy references 'children', 'girls', 'boys' or 'infants', we attribute the reference to 'children'. When an NDC references 'adolescents', 'youth' or 'young people', we attribute it to 'young people'.



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# Making Nationally Determined Contributions deliver for children's rights

Despite contributing the least to climate change, children and young people bear a disproportionate burden of its impacts. Today, almost every single child on earth is exposed to at least one climate or environmental hazard, and approximately one billion children live in countries with extremely high climate risk.<sup>1</sup>

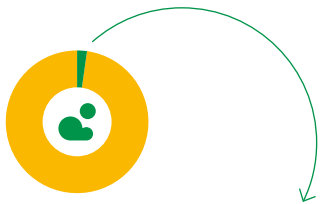
Furthermore, children are especially vulnerable to climate and environmental impacts. Not only are the youngest children the least able to control their exposure to climate risks, but they are also in a critical developmental stage and have different physiologies that make them more susceptible than adults to climate impacts.<sup>2</sup> These impacts are only expected to worsen as climate change continues.

In Guatemala, Raúl André Maldonado or, as he likes to be called, Ciclope, raises awareness of the destruction of Lake Atitlán's ecosystem and the work of local clean water campaigns and associations that he is a part of. © UNICEF/UN0597409/Willocoq



Children and young people are also uniquely positioned to be drivers of change in the fight against climate change. They are the closest to the problem and can play a critical role in identifying and implementing effective solutions. Moreover, all of society benefits when climate policies prioritize children and young people. Increases in social investment, strengthened social services and reduced costs of climate action improve the quality of life for all. For example, improving the supply of reliable and resilient energy improves the learning environments of the nearly 200 million children attending schools without electricity. It can also provide a return on investment of up to 300 per cent and deliver results to other critical sectors (e.g., providing power to health care facilities to deliver life-saving care and creating green jobs through the solar energy market).<sup>3</sup>

Despite the societal benefits of centring children and young people in climate policies through consideration of their specific needs, as well as their perspectives, they are too often excluded from crucial climate policies and policymaking. Today, for example, fewer than half of all Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) are child and youth sensitive; two out of every five NDCs do not address children and young people's unique climate vulnerabilities across core social sectors that are essential for children; and a mere 3 per cent of NDCs mention involving children in the NDC development process.<sup>4</sup> Children are also widely overlooked when implementing climate adaptation and mitigation action.



Despite the many benefits, children and young people are too often excluded from crucial climate policies and policymaking.

Only 2.4% of key climate funds are directed towards child-responsive programmes.

Only 2.4 per cent of key climate funds are directed towards child-responsive programmes.<sup>5</sup> Governments have begun to recognize that this omission must be addressed, notably through the outcome of the first Global Stocktake (GST), which is intended to inform the preparation of subsequent NDCs (see 'Frameworks & guidance for a child-rights approach to policymaking' below). Whilst NDCs are not the only climate and environmental policies countries produce, they are among the most important. Children and young people should be integrated throughout all national and subnational policies, beginning with NDCs as a core strategic document.

This toolkit is the first in a series of resources aimed to support government representatives and decision makers in making their NDCs more child and youth sensitive across the entire policy process. This toolkit supports the writing and development of NDCs, from the planning stages to the finalization of the document. Future resources will provide guidance for other key stages of the NDC process, including, but not limited to, effective implementation of child- and youth-sensitive NDCs and other relevant policies, resourcing child- and youth-sensitive activities, and how to effectively monitor and evaluate child and youth sensitivity.

## Child-critical social services

Child-critical social services are the essential systems, environments, structures and programmes that the youngest generation relies upon to survive and thrive. These services include adaptive health, education, nutrition, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), social protection services and child protection services.

# Frameworks & guidance for a child-rights approach to policymaking

## Paris Agreement

The legally binding treaty affirms State parties' commitments to respect, promote and consider child rights and intergenerational equity in climate action.

### Alignment with this toolkit

Fulfilment of the rights-based criteria for child and youth sensitivity in NDCs through guiding question four, "Have you meaningfully engaged children, young people and their caregivers in the NDC development process?"

## United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child's General Comment No. 26 on children's rights and the environment with a special focus on climate change

The General Comment provides authoritative guidance to the 196 states that have ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. It outlines the links between child rights and environmental harm and affirms states' responsibilities to safeguard children from immediate harm and future violations caused by today's actions or inactions. General Comment No. 26 focuses particularly on climate change.

A child-friendly version is also available.

### Alignment with this toolkit

Fulfilment of the holistic and multisectoral criteria for child and youth sensitivity in NDCs through guiding question three, "To what extent have you engaged all relevant line ministries and sectoral experts in the revision process?" and guiding question four, "Have you meaningfully engaged children, young people and their caregivers in the NDC development process?"

## Declaration on Children, Youth and Climate Action

The Declaration has been signed by 52 countries. Among its commitments, the Declaration pledges to recognize children's specific vulnerabilities and critical stakeholder role in climate adaptation and mitigation policies, and to scale up and accelerate child-responsive climate adaptation and mitigation investments. UNICEF is a custodian of the Declaration and works with governments to support its implementation. All Member States of the United Nations are invited to sign.

### Alignment with this toolkit

Fulfilment of all four criteria for child and youth sensitivity in NDCs through the guiding questions for enhancing the child and youth sensitivity of NDCs.

## Outcome of the first Global Stocktake: Expert dialogue on children and climate change

At COP28, under the outcome of the first GST, State parties mandated the first-ever "expert dialogue on the disproportionate impacts of climate change on children and relevant policy solutions". Outcomes of the GST are intended to inform the preparation of subsequent NDCs. The expert dialogue (held during the sixtieth session of the Subsidiary Bodies (SB60) in June 2024) underscored the urgency of responding to children's specific and heightened vulnerabilities in national-level policies, including NDCs and NAPs. The informal summary report is available here.

### Alignment with this toolkit

Fulfilment of all four criteria for child and youth sensitivity in NDCs through the guiding questions for enhancing the child and youth sensitivity of NDCs.

## United Arab Emirates Framework for Global Climate Resilience

The Framework encourages UNFCCC State parties to consider transparent and participatory approaches in adaptation efforts, and to ensure intergenerational equity and social justice when implementing them. This includes considering children and young people. The Framework also encompasses global thematic targets for child-critical sectors, including health, nutrition, WASH and adaptive social protection, in addition to resilient infrastructure and access to continuous essential services for all.

### Alignment with this toolkit

Fulfilment of the inclusive criteria for child and youth sensitivity in NDCs through guiding question four, "Have you meaningfully engaged children, young people and their caregivers in the NDC development process?"





# Enhancing NDCs: From commitments to action

## Measuring child and youth sensitivity in NDCs

A child- and youth-sensitive policy recognizes children and young people's unique strengths, vulnerabilities and roles in the fight against the climate crisis by placing their rights front and centre. This includes protecting the basic services children rely upon, including health, education, nutrition, WASH, social protection and child protection. It also means recognizing children and young people as key stakeholders and creating platforms for them to meaningfully participate. By creating child- and youth-sensitive climate policies, countries are creating policies that enhance the quality of life for everyone, now and into the future.

A boy takes shelter under a tree to protect himself from the sandy wind in Ambovombe, Androy region, Madagascar. © UNICEF/UN0595862/Andrianantenaina








## Child- and youth-sensitive policies

- Strengthen child-critical social services to be more climate and disaster resilient.
- Are inclusive of all children's and young people's rights, participation and roles as stakeholders and drivers of change.

Vanuatu's Revised and Enhanced First NDC serves as an example of a child- and youth-sensitive NDC. In addition to child- and youth-sensitive commitments throughout the document, Vanuatu's NDC includes a dedicated section on youth that identifies adaptation priority areas and commitments for youth, highlights the alignment with Vanuatu's policies and development plans, and provides the level of financing required to enact the commitments (see right).



## Adaptation priority area: youth

Commitment	Sector Policy	Policy Reference	NSDP [National Sustainable Development Plan] Reference	SDG Goal Most Relevant	Conditionality Expressed as %	Finance Required USD
<b>A85</b> Vanuatu commits that every child, regardless of climate and disaster circumstances, must be able to access the education system.	Child Protection Policy	V1	SOC 1.2		90	18,000,000
<b>A86</b> Vanuatu commits that 100% of schools incorporate climate risk management activities in their School Implementation Plans by 2030.	Vanuatu Education Training Sector Strategic Plan	S8	SOC 4.6		60	900,000
<b>A87</b> Vanuatu commits to reduce gaps in relation to climate disaster responsiveness of school facilities.	Vanuatu Education Training Sector Strategic Plan	S8	SOC 4.6		90	7,500,000
<b>A88</b> Vanuatu commits to enable youth to play active leadership roles in adapting to climate change, including promote programmes and projects that create awareness, skills and capacities among youth on climate action.	National Youth Development Policy	4.2.4	SOC 4.6		90	1,200,000
<b>A89</b> Vanuatu commits to introduce concepts of sustainable development in regard to issues involving climate change and the environment at the primary level.	Education Policy Statement	pp7	SOC 4.6		90	650,000



**The child and youth sensitivity of NDCs is assessed according to four key criteria** and are comprised of 21 child-specific indicators, which assess the areas under which the NDC establishes an objective, target or activity.

An NDC must fulfil at least three of the criteria to be considered child and youth sensitive.

#### How to satisfy each criterion



### Holistic and multisectoral

This criterion addresses the specific risks and vulnerabilities of children and young people by including child-sensitive multisectoral commitments in child-critical sectors.



Fulfill **at least two indicators** comprising the criterion



### References

This criterion includes explicit and meaningful references to children and young people, including those who are disadvantaged and marginalized.



Fulfill **at least one indicator** comprising the criterion



### Rights-based

This criterion considers children and young people as rights-holders and includes meaningful references to children's rights or intergenerational justice and equity.



Fulfill **at least one indicator** comprising the criterion



### Inclusive

This criterion identifies inclusiveness and the recognition of children and young people as important stakeholders for climate action, including in Action for Climate Empowerment.



Fulfill **at least one indicator** comprising the criterion

## Criterion spotlight: Rights-based







### Recognizing and committing to uphold the rights of children and young people in Nigeria's NDC

The rights-based criterion considers references and commitments to upholding children and young people's rights and intergenerational equity. Nigeria's NDC identifies opportunity creation for youth and their protection as a cross-cutting issue. The NDC explicitly acknowledges intergenerational equity as a key principle and recognizes young people's roles as drivers of change by committing to empowering youth "to engage in climate action, through education, training, public awareness, public participation, public access to information and international cooperation."

Source:  
[Nigeria's First NDC](#) (Updated submission) p.30

### The 22 child-specific indicators for NDC assessment

Holistic and multisectoral 	References 	Rights-based 	Inclusive 
Inclusion of child-sensitive commitments on health	Inclusion of references to children and young people	Inclusion of references to child rights or intergenerational justice and equity	Identification of children as drivers of change
Inclusion of child-sensitive commitments on education	Inclusion of references to disadvantaged and marginalized children and young people		Identification of young people as drivers of change
Inclusion of child-sensitive commitments on energy	Identification of children as a vulnerable group		Reference to the inclusion of children in the NDC development process
Inclusion of child-sensitive commitments on food and nutritional security	Identification of young people as a vulnerable group		Reference to the inclusion of young people in the NDC development process
Inclusion of child-sensitive commitments on water			Inclusion of child-sensitive commitments on training
Inclusion of child-sensitive commitments on sanitation			Inclusion of child-sensitive commitments on access to information
Inclusion of child-sensitive commitments on social protection			Inclusion of child-sensitive public participation commitments
Inclusion of child-sensitive commitments to implement or improve information systems and data			Inclusion of child-sensitive commitments on public awareness
Inclusion of child-sensitive commitments on disaster risk reduction			



## Steps for enhancing the child and youth sensitivity of NDCs

The indicators for child- and youth-sensitive NDCs are crucial measures of the commitments in NDCs. The practical guidance, tools and resources provided in this toolkit serve to support policymakers in improving the child- and youth-sensitivity of their NDCs throughout the entire policy drafting process.

There are many opportunities to enhance the child and youth sensitivity of NDCs throughout the various stages of the policy drafting process. It is crucial for State parties to engage children and young people throughout the planning, formulation and finalization stages. By having children and youth participate in the creation or revision of NDCs, State parties can increase the national ownership of their NDCs, and stakeholders can directly improve the child and youth sensitivity of the State party's document. The following are a few tips:

- References to children and young people should be meaningful and substantively contribute to the NDC and its components.
- Commitments must be paired with specific objectives, targets, activities and indicators across relevant sectors that enhance the child and youth sensitivity of the NDC.

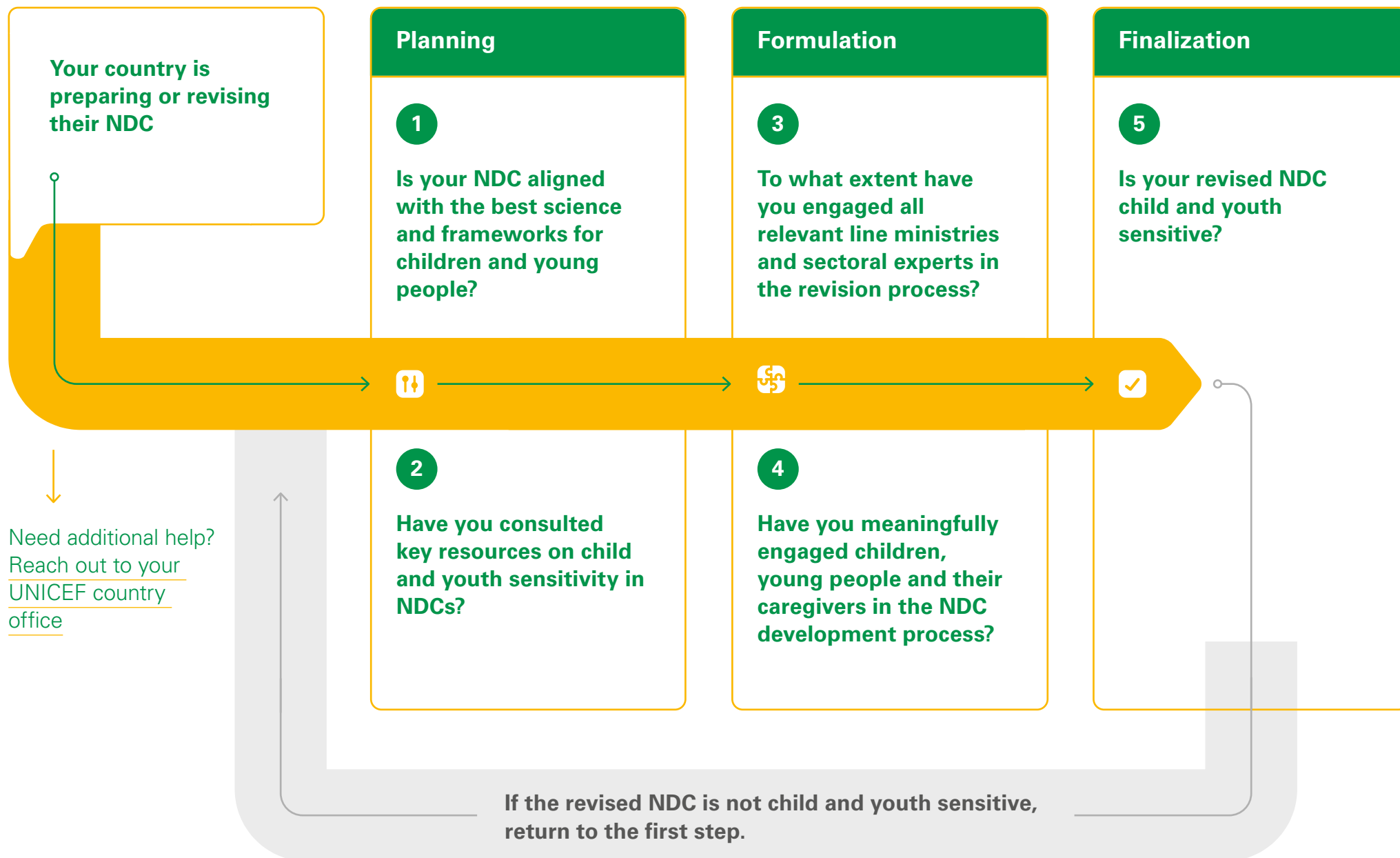
This toolkit includes five guiding questions for enhancing child and youth sensitivity in NDCs. They are designed to be simple and impactful, and are paired with concrete guidance to enhance the child and youth sensitivity of NDCs throughout each stage of the policy drafting process. Because NDCs are country-driven plans, the guiding questions and subsequent actions should be adapted to the unique context and priorities of each State party.

## The policy drafting cycle

Although no standard development framework exists for NDC development, State parties should engage in the following phases of policy drafting:







## Guiding questions

1

**Is your NDC aligned with the best science and relevant frameworks for children and young people?**

## Actions

- ✓ Ensure the NDC aligns with international greenhouse gas mitigation targets of limiting the global temperature increase to 1.5° C above pre-industrial levels – which align with each State party's fair share of responsibilities – and pursue the safeguarding of the planet for children, young people and the next generation.
- ✓ Ensure a progression from the previous NDC through enhanced commitments, focusing on improving children's health, well-being and access to climate-resilient child-critical social services.
- ✓ Commit to evidence-based mitigation and adaptation actions that prioritize children and young people's health, well-being and access to climate-resilient child-critical social services based on the best available science.
- ✓ Synergize the NDC with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which includes [17 Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#) that serve as a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure peace and prosperity for all people by 2030.
- ✓ Gather existing age-, gender- and disability-disaggregated data and evidence, and assess children's unique climate risks, vulnerabilities and needs.
- ✓ Engage with the [UNFCCC Action for Climate Empowerment Framework \(ACE\)](#) for meaningful NDC engagement support.

## Outcomes

- ✓ Alignment with the goals of the Paris Agreement to pursue efforts to limit warming to 1.5° C above pre-industrial levels and to enhance adaptive capacity, strengthen resilience and reduce vulnerability to climate change in accordance with the Global Goal on Adaptation.
- ✓ Alignment with key children's environmental rights frameworks.
- ✓ Being informed by age-, gender- and disability-disaggregated data for the greatest effectiveness for all populations, including children and young people.

2

**Have you consulted key resources on child and youth sensitivity in NDCs?**

- ✓ Assess the child and youth sensitivity of your country's latest NDC submission using the ['NDCs for Every Child Data Platform'](#) from UNICEF.
- ✓ Identify priority areas across sectors for enhancing the child and youth sensitivity of your country's NDC.
- ✓ Consult the [NDC 3.0 key child- and youth-sensitivity resources, tools and platforms](#) available in this toolkit.
- ✓ Engage UNICEF and other representatives of child rights organizations in your country's NDC revision process.

- ✓ Understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the previous NDC submission, especially as it pertains to the consideration of children and young people's unique needs, vulnerabilities and perspectives.
- ✓ Familiarization with key resources on child and youth sensitivity in NDCs.

## Resources / tools

**Data:** [Children's Climate Risk Index](#); [Subnational Children's Climate Risk Index-Disaster Risk Model](#); ['Explore Nationally Determined Contributions \(NDCs\)'](#)

**Child and youth sensitivity:** ['NDCs for Every Child Data Platform'](#); [Child-Sensitive Climate Policies for Every Child](#)

# Formulation



## Guiding questions

3

**To what extent have you engaged all relevant line ministries and sectoral experts in the revision process?**

See chart below for sector-specific interventions and tools/guidances

## Actions

- ✓ Support all relevant line ministries in engaging and contributing to the revision process.
- ✓ Invite representatives from international and local non-governmental organizations and community-based organizations representing children's rights into the writing and revision process.
- ✓ Invite representatives from multiple sectors, including child rights experts, to ensure child-critical services become more climate and disaster resilient.
- ✓ Incorporate substantive contributions for and with children and young people into technical working groups engaged in the NDC process across sectors.
- ✓ Address the specific risks, vulnerabilities and needs of children and young people – especially those experiencing disadvantage or marginalization – and the barriers they face, throughout and across sectoral commitments within the NDC.

## Outcomes

- ✓ Representation of experts on child rights and child-critical social sectors for the creation of a holistic NDC.
- ✓ Integration of children and young people into existing NDC processes and structures with experts.
- ✓ Line ministry representatives sensitized to the importance of climate-resilient child-critical social services for consideration in other key strategic sector policies.

4

**Have you meaningfully engaged children, young people and their caregivers in the NDC development process?**

- ✓ Review the guiding resources in the 'Participation with children and young people' resources section of this toolkit for best practices on consulting children and young people.
- ✓ Contact UNICEF, child and youth advocacy networks and other relevant child- and youth-focused organizations through appropriate means for your context (e.g., social media, asynchronously, etc.) to engage children and young people across all age groups while following safeguarding protocols.
- ✓ Consult parents, caregivers and support networks for young children to capture the impacts on and opinions of all age groups of children and young people.
- ✓ Organize workshops and trainings to build children's and young people's capacity to engage with the NDC revision process.
- ✓ Ensure the NDC participatory process is accessible for all children and young people and safeguards their well-being, including based on age, gender, disability, economics, ethnicity and other contextual aspects that may prevent young voices from being heard.
- ✓ Assess existing national participatory structures to identify strategic points of entry for the inclusion of children and young people, or areas of inaccessibility for remedy.

- ✓ Establishment of accessible participatory structures and frameworks involving children and young people.
- ✓ Increase in capacity for children and young people to engage in the development process.
- ✓ Meaningful inclusion of concrete recommendations provided by children, young people and their caregivers throughout the NDC.
- ✓ Incorporation of commitments that address the unique needs and vulnerabilities of children and young people across child-critical social services, as identified by children and young people themselves.
- ✓ Engagement with key child-rights organizations for the NDC development process.

## Resources / tools

**Child and youth participation:** [Aiming Higher: Elevating meaningful youth engagement for climate action \(UNDP\)](#); [Engaged and Heard! Guidelines on adolescent participation and civic engagement](#); [Engaging Children and Youth in Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience Building \(UNDRR\)](#); [Young People's Participation and Mental Health: A protocol for practitioners](#)



# Child- and youth-sensitive sectoral interventions

## Education



Interventions at the primary/secondary level to develop or strengthen environmental/climate curricula; to improve the resilience and sustainability of learning facilities or associated infrastructure that enable learning; or to develop the skills and knowledge of educational staff on climate, environment and disaster risk reduction (DRR).

### Tools/guidance

[Comprehensive School Safety Framework \(GADRRRES\)](#); [Risk-Informed Education Programming for Resilience](#)

## Health



Interventions to improve the health of children, young people, families or communities; to improve the resilience and sustainability of health care facilities and systems; and to develop responsive primary care that incorporates children's environmental health.

### Tools/guidance

[Children's Environmental Health Collaborative](#)

## Social protection



Interventions that specifically address or consider shock-responsive actions against poverty, such as cash transfers in favour of children and young people; implementation of social insurance for children, youth or families; support for childcare services; and youth employability and development.

### Tools/guidance

[Programme Guidance: Strengthening shock responsive social protection systems](#)

## Water



Interventions that address or consider water resources from a human-right-to-water perspective; increase access to safe drinking water in households, communities, or sectors on which children depend; contribute to WASH systems to build community resilience and increasing capacity to adapt to climate change; or implement efforts to monitor and manage drinking water resources.

### Tools/guidance

[WASH Climate Resilient Development](#)

## Sanitation



Interventions to ensure sanitation infrastructure, services and behaviours are sustainable, safe and resilient to climate-related risks; increasing access to proper sanitation solutions in households, communities or sectors on which children depend; or contribute to WASH systems to building community resilience and increasing capacity to adapt to climate change.

### Tools/guidance

[WASH Climate Resilient Development](#)

## Disaster risk reduction



Interventions include the development and strengthening of preparedness, response and resilience capacity of children, young people, families and the services and systems on which they depend.

### Tools/guidance

[Engaging Children and Youth in Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience Building \(UNDRR\)](#); [Every Country Protected – Every Child Resilient](#)

## Food and nutrition



Interventions to enhance the food and nutritional security of children, young people or families, with direct benefits for children.

### Tools/guidance

['The Global Climate Crisis is a Child Nutrition Crisis'](#)

## Energy



Interventions to facilitate access to clean energy solutions at the household or community level or in sectors on which children depend.

### Tools/guidance

[A Brighter Life for Every Child with Sustainable Energy](#)

Sectoral interventions source:

[Falling Short: Addressing the climate finance gap for children \(CERI\)](#).

# Finalization



## Guiding questions

5

**Is your revised NDC considered child and youth sensitive?**

## Actions

- ✓ Check that the revised NDC is more child and youth sensitive than the previous submission.
- ✓ Ensure that the updated NDC meets at least three out of four criteria for child and youth sensitivity to be considered child sensitive, with the ultimate goal of fulfilling all four criteria.
- ✓ Confirm that the commitments in the updated NDC encompass the six elements of ACE.
- ✓ Design specific targets, measures, funding commitments and indicators to operationalize child- and youth-sensitive commitments that are attainable and implementable according to your national circumstances and capabilities (for examples, see [We Deserve to Live in a Thriving World: Child-centred indicators for climate change](#)).

## Outcomes

- ✓ Confirmation that the updated NDC is child and youth sensitive.
- ✓ Assessment of outstanding weaknesses in the child and youth sensitivity of the updated NDC for further strengthening, if necessary.
- ✓ Establishment of measurable outcomes to translate commitments into action and unlock financing.

## Resources / tools

**Child and youth sensitivity:** [‘NDCs for Every Child Data Platform’](#); [Child-Sensitive Climate Policies for Every Child](#)

# Criterion spotlight: Holistic and multisectoral



## Examples of child- and youth-sensitive sectoral commitments

Country	Sector	Commitment	Contribution to child- and youth-sensitive adaptation and/or mitigation
<b>Antigua and Barbuda</b>  <a href="#">First NDC</a> <a href="#">(Updated submission)</a> , p.21	<b>Education</b>	An unconditional target for “all students from primary to tertiary level to have access to relevant climate change education” by 2030.	This commitment bolsters children’s and young people’s resilience and adaptive capacity by equipping them with key knowledge and tools. This can help to protect them from climate impacts, gain green skills, innovate for climate solutions and become environmental champions.
<b>Cambodia</b>  <a href="#">First NDC</a> <a href="#">(Updated submission)</a> , p.70	<b>Food and nutritional security</b>	“Development of Horticulture and other food crops for increase production [sic], improved quality-safety; harvesting and post harvesting techniques and agro-business enhancement”.	Cambodia’s NDC notes that youth comprise 47.1 per cent of the agricultural sector. This commitment enhances the country’s agricultural capacity and offers business development training for youth, reducing food insecurity and supporting economic opportunities for young people.
<b>Jordan</b>  <a href="#">First NDC</a> <a href="#">(Updated submission)</a> , p.36	<b>Water</b>	“Increasing community awareness, behavioral change and adoption of water conservation measures through WASH centred community behavioral change initiatives.”	This commitment promotes local action to increase children’s access to safe water resources that are resilient to climate impacts.
<b>Papua New Guinea</b>  <a href="#">First NDC</a> <a href="#">(Updated submission)</a> , p.49	<b>Health</b>	“Maintain high coverage of LLINs [long-lasting insecticidal nets] and increase the utilization of appropriate malaria prevention measures”, measured, in part, by the percentage of “people/ children <5/pregnant women who slept under an LLIN the previous night”.	Papua New Guinea’s NDC notes that climatic changes are driving increased rates of malaria, worsening its effects. This commitment increases access to key malaria prevention technologies and strategies for children and pregnant women to reduce their exposure to the disease.



Country	Sector	Commitment	Contribution to child- and youth-sensitive adaptation and/or mitigation
<b>Republic of Moldova</b>  <a href="#">First NDC</a> <a href="#">(Updated submission),</a> p.42	<b>Social protection</b>	“Increase climate resilience of rural livelihoods through social protection programmes” such as “increas[ing] the uptake and adoption of climate-resilient technologies that will lead to job creation for both women and men, rural youth [sic].”	This commitment, accompanied by commitments to skills development and incentivization, aims to reduce poverty by advancing economic opportunities through sustainable job creation, focusing on youth in rural communities.
<b>Seychelles</b>  <a href="#">First NDC</a> <a href="#">(Updated submission),</a> p.19	<b>Information systems &amp; data</b>	“Include the development and application of disaggregated population data, particularly for its climate change adaptation actions.”	This commitment enables effective policy and programming by providing decision makers with critical disaggregated data to respond to the needs of children and young people at various developmental stages.
<b>Sierra Leone</b>  <a href="#">First NDC</a> <a href="#">(Updated submission),</a> p.38	<b>Energy</b>	“Expand women’s and youth employment opportunities and participation in the management of off-grid solar energy interventions”.	This commitment promotes youth involvement in the energy sector, provides sustainable economic opportunities and reduces greenhouse gas emissions from energy creation through renewable energy uptake.
<b>Uganda</b>  <a href="#">Uganda’s Updated NDC,</a> p.44	<b>Sanitation</b>	“Improving cooking and sanitation conditions of schools through use of bio latrines (biogas digesters).”	Uganda’s NDC notes that 18 per cent of the population has access to basic sanitation. This commitment provides a sustainable sanitation solution in schools, which are critical environments for children and young people as well as educational service providers.
<b>Vanuatu</b>  <a href="#">Vanuatu NDC Revised and Enhanced,</a> p.26	<b>Disaster risk reduction</b>	“Vanuatu commits that 100% of schools incorporate climate risk management activities in their School Implementation Plans by 2030.”	This commitment educates most children on the climate risks they face and appropriate risk management measures. It thereby increases their resilience and capacity to lower risks to hazards, shocks and disaster impacts.



### Additional policy recommendations

- Create monitoring and evaluation frameworks to track the implementation and effectiveness of the child- and youth-sensitive commitments in the NDCs. Child- and youth-sensitive indicators for monitoring and evaluation are those that monitor the climate and disaster resilience of child-critical social services at the population level but disaggregate by age and/or is child-specific and/or is inclusive because it was developed with the participation of children and young people.



- Outline ambitious mitigation and adaptation measures for children and their communities, including investment plans for these commitments.
- Integrate an equity lens throughout the NDC, recognizing acute risks and barriers to climate action faced by certain groups of children, including infants, girls, pregnant women, Indigenous children, children with disabilities and children on the move, and set out funded measures to address them.
- Design a participatory approach to NDC development across all key stakeholders, including children, young people and their caregivers, particularly those experiencing discrimination or marginalization.
- Dedicate greater attention to sustainable energy for social sector infrastructure and services, with particular attention to those that are essential to child development and well-being.
- Commit to child-responsive data, monitoring and information systems, such as multi-hazard early warning systems, to protect children, young people and their communities.
- Include children and young people in implementing and monitoring NDC commitments on the ground.

In Egypt in 2022, a student participates in a summer camp on the environment and climate change before COP27 was held in the country.  
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## Criterion spotlight: **Inclusive**



### Child and youth engagement in Ecuador's NDC development

With the support of the Ministry of Environment, Water and Ecological Transition (MAATE) and UNDP, UNICEF Ecuador engaged children and young people to meaningfully participate in the country's NDC development process. Forty young people aged 13–28 (including Indigenous Peoples, migrants and youth with disabilities) participated in a workshop entitled 'Youth Participation – On the Road to NDCs', which provided training on climate change and child- and youth-sensitive climate policies.

During the workshop, young participants collaborated with experts from UNICEF, UNDP, the Undersecretariat of Climate Change, and teams from Ecuador's National Climate Change Mitigation Plan and National Climate Change Adaptation Plan, to suggest commitments for inclusion in the new NDC. The young people suggested topics including environmental education, risk and disaster management, health, energy transition, sustainable agriculture and the increased promotion of youth participation in formal spaces of the national climate agenda. The young people submitted these recommendations to MAATE through an [official letter](#) for consideration.

Following the training, youth representatives participated in technical workshops conducted by MAATE to formulate Ecuador's Second NDC alongside civil society actors, the private sector, the public sector and academia. This was the first time in Ecuador's NDC development history that children, adolescents and young people participated.



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See '[Ecuadorian Youth in Climate Action: A call for change](#)' for more information.



# Exploring current NDCs and their child and youth sensitivity



Muhammed Arshad shares a refreshing moment with his 4-year-old daughter, Ayesha, as they splash in the canal, finding relief from the scorching 47 degree Celsius heat in Faisalabad, Punjab, Pakistan. © UNICEF/UNI585369/Khalid

## UNICEF study of child and youth sensitivity in NDCs

To identify opportunities to strengthen the child and youth sensitivity of NDCs, UNICEF has been conducting an ongoing study of all NDC submissions since September 2019. The study analyses 47 individual indicators, 21 of which are used to measure the child and youth sensitivity of NDCs specifically, and 25 of which are used for assessing the general commitments.

The study was developed to provide governments, advocates and other key stakeholders with evidence for successful and effective decision making. In particular, the data can be used across five areas of climate action and policymaking (see figure).



For more information on the study, visit the UNICEF [‘NDCs for Every Child Data Platform: Methodology’](#) page.



### Act

Identify gaps and opportunities for greater child-sensitive policies and action, with the inclusion of children’s and young people’s voices and needs.



### Inform

Use evidence for decision making in climate, environment, energy and DRR planning for more child-sensitive action plans.



### Invest

Identify areas for increased climate financing in child-critical social services, especially in countries with high children’s climate risk.



### Monitor

Observe areas that could be more child sensitive in commitments and action to advocate for and track improvement. This includes using the NDCs and Child Sensitivity platform data to visualize and track global, regional and national progress towards the inclusion of children and youth in climate policy and action.



### Partner

Develop partnerships that increase the child sensitivity of climate commitments and action. This includes engaging with children and young people as stakeholders, rights-holders and agents of change, especially those from vulnerable populatio

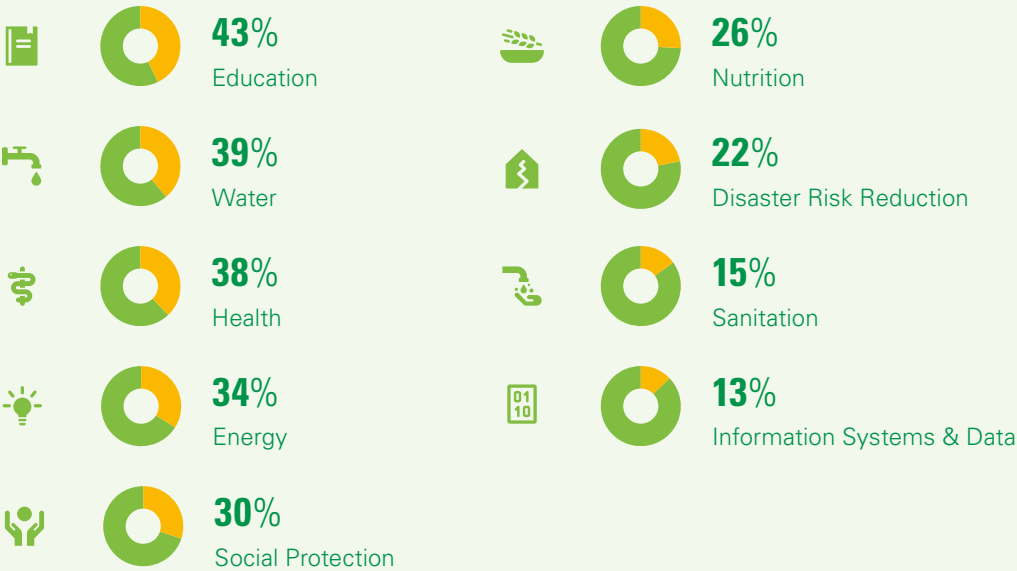
UNICEF research data on NDCs

UNICEF research data on child and youth sensitivity in NDCs are publicly available on two online visualization platforms: the ‘[NDCs for Every Child Data Platform](#)’ from UNICEF (in English and Spanish) and the ‘[Explore Nationally Determined Contributions \(NDCs\)](#)’ data platform from the World Resource Institute, hosted on the ClimateWatch platform. Both platforms visualize the analysis of each country’s latest NDC data on interactive maps. The ‘Explore Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)’ data platform offers a broad range of NDC analysis data. This includes sectoral mitigation measures by country alongside a limited subset of child- and youth-

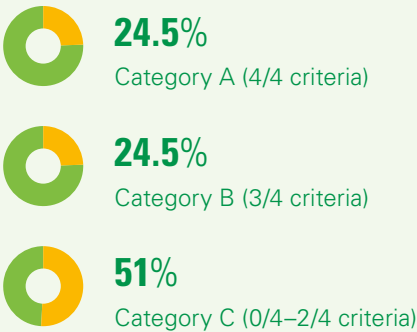
sensitivity indicators. The ‘NDCs for Every Child Data Platform’ is solely dedicated to visualizing data from the study on child and youth sensitivity in NDCs and is updated regularly.

The UNICEF platform contains data on 47 indicators analysed through the study. The site also contains UNICEF resources for understanding and enhancing child and youth sensitivity in NDCs. This includes the ‘[Toolkit for Young Climate Activists](#)’ and recent stories from around the world highlighting how countries have included children and young people in their NDCs.

Percentage of NDCs with child- and youth-sensitive commitments by sector\*



Percentage of NDCs in Categories A, B and C\*



As the climate crisis continues to impact children and young people first and often worse, the time to take action on NDCs for every child is now.

\*As of September 2024  
Source: [NDCs for every child Data Platform](#) (UNICEF)

# Resources



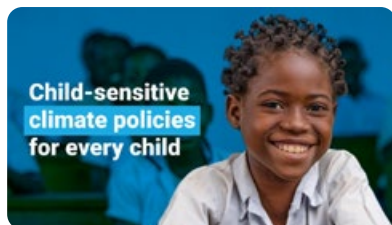
Many resources highlight where governments are making progress in incorporating child- and youth-sensitive commitments in their NDCs, where commitments need to be strengthened and examples of best practices for including children and young people in NDCs. The following can assist in your NDC development process.

## Spotlight: NDC data platform

### **'NDCs for Every Child Data Platform'**

#### **'NDC y su sensibilidad a la niñez'**

This platform displays findings from a UNICEF analysis of all NDCs submitted after 2019. It covers 47 indicators, which provide context and/or determine the child and youth sensitivity of NDCs. The platform presents and visualizes these indicators on its interactive dashboards and maps. It is available in both English and Spanish.



## NDC 3.0 key resources, tools and platforms

### **Child-Sensitive Climate Policies for Every Child**

This UNICEF study from 2022 provides evidence of the value of child-sensitive climate policies, encourages greater prioritization of young citizens in NDCs and highlights case studies of youth engagement in NDC processes.

### **'Explore Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)'**

This interactive platform, developed by ClimateWatch, includes UNICEF data on child and youth sensitivity in NDCs as well as additional analyses of NDCs, such as finance and adaptation commitments.

### **'NDC 3.0 Navigator'**

This interactive tool supports the development of NDCs by providing examples of opportunities in NDC development and strategies to enable those opportunities, showcasing country case studies and providing links to further resources.

### **NDC Partnership 'Climate Toolbox'**

The 'Climate Toolbox' is a searchable database that gathers leading institutions' tools, guidance, platforms and advisory support to help countries plan and implement their NDCs. The NDC Partnership promotes youth engagement and has a Youth Engagement Plan (YEP).

### **UNDP Climate Promise**

The Climate Promise is the world's largest offer of support to countries on NDCs. The Climate Promise brings partners together to scale up and solidify countries' ambitions and ensure whole-of-society engagement.

### **UNFCCC NDC Registry**

The UNFCCC NDC Registry is a publicly accessible repository of all NDCs submitted, including translated documents and additional supplemental documents where applicable.

### **UNFCCC NDC 3.0 Page**

Description: The UNFCCC NDC 3.0 Page is a public website that provides governments and broader stakeholders with relevant information related to the support of NDCs 3.0.



## Participation with children and young people

### **Aiming Higher: Elevating meaningful youth engagement for climate action (UNDP)**

This guidance explores what meaningful youth engagement in climate action looks like, conceptually and practically. It identifies dimensions and pathways that support meaningful youth participation and provides actionable recommendations for climate action in general, including NDC implementation.

### **Engaged and Heard! Guidelines on adolescent participation and civic engagement**

These consultation guidelines support the design of meaningful and equitable adolescent participation and civic engagement. They provide information on the 'why,' 'what' and 'how-to' of these activities. The main sections include guidance on conceptual understanding, primary strategies and critical interventions, organizational commitment and processes, and monitoring and evaluation.

### **Engaging Children and Youth in Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience Building (UNDRR)**

This guide offers access to global expertise, communities of practice and networks of practitioners with specific advice on how to support and engage children and youth.

### **The NDC Partnership's Youth Engagement Plan**

This plan is a framework for actions to meaningfully engage young people in their country or institutional context. It includes designs for youth-inclusive NDC processes at the country level and support for the development of youth-led NDC implementation projects.

## **Young People's Participation and Mental Health:**

### **A protocol for practitioners**

This resource encourages reflection and critical thinking on how to best ensure the safe and meaningful participation of young people while also protecting their mental health and helping to put safeguarding systems and supports in place.

## Data tools on children and young people

### **Children's Climate Risk Index (CCRI)**

The CCRI provides the first comprehensive view of children's exposure and vulnerability to the impacts of climate change. Through a report and an interactive atlas, the CCRI presents a conceptual framework, a tool and an initial assessment at a global level of children's climate exposure and vulnerability to help prioritize action for those most at risk.

### **Children's Climate Risk Index-Disaster Risk Model (CCRI-DRM) subnational risk assessment**

The CCRI-DRM, which builds upon the global CCRI as its main reference, generates foundational evidence to assess climate and disaster risks at a subnational level across key indicators identified by national stakeholders. The completed subnational models, their underlying indices and the indicator data are publicly available to all.

### **Children's Environmental Health Country Profiles**

This tool provides the first comprehensive view of children's exposure and vulnerability to the impacts of environmental degradation and climate change at the country level. These profiles are based on United Nations estimates; when such estimates are not available, data are sourced from the Global Burden of Disease.



## Child- and youth-sensitive sectoral guidance and frameworks

### **A Brighter Life for Every Child with Sustainable Energy**

This publication highlights UNICEF's sustainable energy efforts around the world within and across multiple sectors, showcasing best practices, lessons learned and investment cases.

### **Children Displaced in a Changing Climate: Preparing for a future that's already underway**

This report analyses the most common weather-related hazards that lead to the largest number of displacements, helping governments, United Nations agencies, civil society and affected communities to protect children's futures from the impacts of displacement as the climate continues to change.

### **Children's Environmental Health Collaborative**

This tool provides a baseline knowledge of the current situation in each country across critical factors affecting children's health, including climate change, pollution, the built environment, injuries, antimicrobial resistance and occupational health.

### **Comprehensive School Safety Framework for Child Rights and Resilience in the Education Sector (GADRRRES)**

This framework provides strategic guidance to duty-bearers and their partners to promote safe, equitable and continuous access to quality education for all.

### **Every Country Protected – Every Child Resilient**

This report showcases UNICEF's efforts in ensuring child-sensitive programming is incorporated in DRR and CCA plans, protocols and policies; providing technical expertise to government leaders and line ministries on multiple hazards (including in fragile and risk-prone contexts); promoting age- and gender-disaggregated research to inform decisions; and supporting children and young people to participate and lead in reducing risk at home, school and in their communities.

### **'The Global Climate Crisis is a Child Nutrition Crisis'**

This agenda and its actions leverage the policies, actors and resources of the systems relevant to the nutrition of children, adolescents and women, in development, fragile and humanitarian settings.

### **Guidance on Risk-Informed Programming**

This UNICEF guidance document explains how to integrate an analysis of risk into child-rights-focused planning and programming, in order to strengthen resilience to climate and environmental shocks and stresses, and reduce disaster risk.

### **'Guiding Principles for Children on the Move in the Context of Climate Change'**

These guiding principles are intended to be used by local and national governments, international organisations and civil society groups to safeguard the rights and well-being of children on the move in the context of climate change.

### **Programme Guidance: Strengthening shock responsive social protection systems**

This guide outlines UNICEF's approach to shock-responsive social protection, and provides practical tools, resources and case studies for UNICEF staff, policymakers and partners to build and strengthen shock-responsive social protection systems.

### **Risk-Informed Education Programming for Resilience**

This guidance note provides information on how to analyse risk and adapt education policies and programmes to take risk into account, so that education populations and systems are more resilient and all children and youth are in school and learning.

### **WASH Climate Resilient Development**

This strategic framework outlines principles and practices to complement and strengthen ongoing national and sectoral adaptation planning processes to provide sustainable WASH service delivery, both now and in the future.

## Endnotes

- 1 United Nations Children's Fund, *The Climate Crisis is a Child Rights Crisis: Introducing the Children's Climate Risk Index*, UNICEF, New York, August 2021.
- 2 Ibid.
- 3 Economist Impact, 'Powering progress: measuring the socioeconomic costs and benefits of investing in energy resilience for healthcare, education and water', Economist Impact, New York, 28 May 2024, <<https://impact.economist.com/sustainability/resilience-and-adaptation/sustainable-energy-in-emerging-economies>>, accessed 4 October 2024.
- 4 United Nations Children's Fund, 'NDCs for Every Child Data Platform', <<https://ndcsforeverychild.unicef.org>>, accessed 4 October 2024.
- 5 Children's Environmental Rights Initiative, *Falling Short: Addressing the climate finance gap for children*, CERl, Osnabrück, Germany, June 2023.

