



OFFICE OF THE SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON  
**VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN**

Townhall Meeting  
Building Back Better and Advancing the SDGs  
Tuesday, 5 July 2022  
10:00 - 13:00

Intervention by  
the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on violence against children

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**Final Draft**  
**Check against Delivery**

Excellencies, Distinguished delegates,

Investing in building back better and beyond in an inclusive, just, resilient and safe recovery for all children worldwide and leaving no one behind is needed more than ever.

*1. Too many children worldwide are still left behind*

More children than ever are experiencing violence in all settings. More children than ever are facing extreme poverty, discrimination, and social exclusion. More children than ever are forcibly displaced, fleeing conflicts, climate change and natural disasters, widespread violence, food insecurity. Criminal networks are increasingly taking advantage of these vulnerabilities to sell, buy and exploit children

No country is immune, and no child is immune!

*2. The human and economic costs are big but the economic benefits of investing in child protection, development and wellbeing are even bigger*

Research shows that

- If all children stayed in school, the earnings of national workforce will be higher by 4 to 14% of national GDPs.<sup>1</sup>
- In countries studied, ending child marriage could save up to \$17 billion per year by 2030, which can be used to improve public education and will help create a world where women and girls are equal to boys and men
- Ending violence against children, will save as much as 8% of GDP in welfare, health, education and other services.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [Ending-Violence-in-Schools-An-Investment-Case.pdf](#)

<sup>2</sup> [ODI Report The cost and economic impact of violence against children.pdf \(childfund.org\)](#)

Investing in children from an early age and through a life cycle approach is vital for resilient and sustainable social, human, and economic growth.

#### *4. Investing in children also means involving them as part of the solution.*

Worldwide, children are increasingly at the forefront of initiatives for positive and sustainable social change.

If we invest in empowerment of ALL children including through their active participation and engagement, we can bring enormous gains not only for children, but for societies at large.

#### *5. The clock is ticking - less than 8 years remain to keep our promise by 2030*

Governments which direct resources towards children, leaving no one behind, are upholding children's rights to survival, development, and protection. Such investments are essential in adhering to their pledge to build a "just, inclusive and free from fear and violence" world by 2030.

A paradigm shift is very much needed. We need to move from siloed and multiple plans that are not duly implemented to a cross-sectoral child and people-centred development, that is an integral part of the economic growth and national and local development plans.

Cooperation needs to move from donor driven approach to a context specific, results-oriented, and mutual partnerships that foster south-south, north-south, and triangular cooperation.

Excellencies, we know that to do, we know how to do it. Let's act now with and for children.