



UN Committee on the Rights of the Child adopts a General Comment on ‘Public budgeting for the realization of children’s rights’

‘The Committee reiterates that prioritizing children’s rights in budgets, at both national and subnational levels, as required by the Convention, contributes not only to realizing those rights, but also to long-lasting positive impacts on future economic growth, sustainable and inclusive development, and social cohesion.’

General Comment on public budgeting for the realization of children’s rights, paragraph 12

The Child Rights Connect Working Group on Investment in Children¹ welcomes the adoption of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) General Comment on ‘*Public budgeting for the realization of children’s rights*’² as a crucial document to assist States to accelerate implementation of all children’s rights as stipulated in the UNCRC and its Optional Protocols.

The realization of children’s rights entails costs. Unless States ensure sufficient resource mobilization, equitable budget allocation and effective spending, child rights related laws and policies will remain empty promises. Resources are required for all children to access education and learn, access quality universal health coverage and adequate food and nutrition, benefit from child-sensitive social protection and be protected from all forms of violence and exploitation. Public budget allocation and spending are the most sustainable ways through which quality services to children can be delivered and all their rights realized.

With the adoption of the General Comment, States will now have access to detailed guidance on how to implement UNCRC Article 4 and utilize public budgets to realize all children’s rights, including the rights of the most excluded groups of children. It emphasizes that States may not discriminate against any child or category of children through resource mobilization, allocation or execution of public funds. In their budgetary decisions, States should consider all factors required for children of different ages to survive, grow and develop. The best interest of the child should be a primary consideration throughout the budgetary process.

The Working Group on Investment in Children also welcomes the General Comment recommendation that ‘*States parties should regularly hear children’s views on budget decisions that affect them, through mechanisms for the meaningful participation of children at the national and sub-national levels*’. The UNCRC provides children with the right to participate in budgetary and other fiscal processes. Consultations

¹ African Child Policy Forum, Child Rights Coalition Asia, Defence for Children International, Eurochild, International Baby Food Action Network, Plan International, Redlamyc, Save the Children, Terre des Hommes International Federation and UNICEF

² UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, General Comment No. 19 (2016) on public budgeting for the realization of children’s rights (art. 4), http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRC%2fC%2fGC%2f19&Lang=en

with almost 2,700 children also confirmed that children want to participate in decision-making about government expenditure. They are convinced that their insights will help states to make better decisions.³

The General Comment will also help States deliver on commitments made to investment in children in the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development⁴, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda⁵, the UN Human Rights Council Resolution on 'Towards better investment in the rights of the child'⁶ and the European Commission Recommendation on 'Investing in Children'⁷.

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³ Centre for Children's Rights (2015), *Towards Better Investment in the Rights of the Child: The Views of the Children*, <http://www.childrightsconnect.org/govtspendingsurvey/>

⁴ Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, paragraph 8, <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld>

⁵ Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, paragraph 7, <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/frameworks/addisababaaactionagenda>

⁶ HRC resolution 28/19 on 'Towards better investment in the rights of the child', http://ap.ohchr.org/documents/dpage_e.aspx?si=A/HRC/28/L.28

⁷ Investing in Children: Breaking the cycle of disadvantage, http://ec.europa.eu/justice/fundamental-rights/files/c_2013_778_en.pdf