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Promotion and protection of the rights of children: promotion and protection of the rights of children

Annual report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children

Summary

The present report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution [78/187](#). The year 2024 marks the fifteenth anniversary of the establishment of the Office of the Special Representative. It is an opportunity to take stock of efforts to address the drivers and manifestations of violence against children, and to ensure the protection and well-being of children as a key dimension for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This is a pivotal moment. Violence against children has reached unprecedented levels, caused by multifaceted and interconnected crises. With six years remaining to keep the promise of the Sustainable Development Goals, the Special Representative emphasizes that it is possible to end violence against children and that it makes economic sense to do so.

* [A/79/150](#).



I. Introduction

1. Guided by General Assembly resolution 62/141, by which the Assembly established the mandate, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children is a global, independent advocate for the prevention and elimination of all forms of violence against children. In its resolutions 76/147 and 78/187, the Assembly reaffirmed its support for the work of the Special Representative. The Assembly recognized the progress achieved and the role of her mandate in promoting further implementation of the recommendations of the United Nations study on violence against children and in supporting Member States in their implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Assembly has also noted with appreciation the Special Representative's leadership in the follow-up to the United Nations global study on children deprived of liberty and has encouraged the Special Representative to continue her work in this regard.

2. The year 2024 marks the fifteenth anniversary of the appointment of the first Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence Against Children. In the present report, the Special Representative takes stock of the progress made and of the interlinked and complex challenges that perpetuate children's exposure and vulnerability to violence. With a forward-looking perspective, the report stresses that ensuring the proactive and sustainable prevention of all forms of violence in all settings, leaving no child behind, is not only possible; it is key to ensuring people-centred development.

II. Strengthening and widening mobilization on many fronts

3. The Special Representative continues to advance children's protection from violence through strengthened advocacy, technical support, networking and bridge-building efforts at the international, regional and national levels. Recognizing the cross-sectoral dimension of child protection and well-being, the Special Representative mobilizes multiple stakeholders at different levels to accelerate progress to end violence against children by 2030.

Member States

4. In her engagement with Member States, the Special Representative has highlighted the urgent need to strengthen integrated approaches to end violence against children, stressing the high returns on investment that can be achieved through proven, cost-effective and cross-sectoral services. She has facilitated the sharing of experiences and expertise in this regard, including through the convening of ministerial-level dialogues. With a view to further supporting States in building the investment case for ending violence against children, she is developing a toolkit for assessing the economic costs of violence and the returns on investment in violence prevention.¹

5. Voluntary national review processes to assess progress on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda continued to offer opportunities to mobilize action to end violence against children as a key dimension of sustainable development. The Special Representative met with representatives of 31 Member States presenting voluntary national reviews in 2024, as well as with representatives of the regional commissions

¹ States that have participated in ministerial-level discussions or otherwise expressed interest in joining the initiative on the investment case include: Andorra, Brazil, Cabo Verde, Chad, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Dominican Republic, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Iceland, Indonesia, Jamaica, Jordan, Latvia, Lesotho, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Mongolia, Morocco, Philippines, Solomon Islands, Spain and Zambia.

and of country teams, as part of identifying promising practices and promoting the involvement of children in such efforts.

6. The Special Representative is encouraged by an increasing number of requests for country visits. Since her previous report to the General Assembly (A/78/214), she has visited Brazil, Costa Rica, Lesotho, Luxembourg, Malta, Thailand and Zambia and has followed up on previous visits to Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, the Dominican Republic, Greece, Indonesia, Jordan, Latvia, Lebanon, Lithuania, Morocco, Oman, Romania, Senegal and Spain.

7. All visits concluded with the development of road maps for action by all partners to strengthen integrated approaches to violence prevention and ensure effective coordination of services for children and their caregivers, leaving no one behind. The Special Representative noted that protection systems for children that are integrated into national development plans, with clear budget allocations, are the ones most likely to make a meaningful contribution to protecting children from violence. She also emphasized the need to fully integrate such systems into United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks.

8. The Special Representative was encouraged during her country visits by political commitments on children's protection and well-being and a noticeable shift from an emphasis on the cost of violence prevention to its value as a sustainable investment.² More Member States are taking steps to integrate children's rights and well-being into public finance and budgeting frameworks. Zambia, for example, has prioritized a cross-cutting approach by investing in social protection, and increasing allocations for its social cash transfer, public welfare assistance, the economic empowerment for women and vulnerable households, free education and school feeding programmes. Its analysis of the cost of violence at the moment of preparation of the present report was estimated at 6.4 per cent of national gross domestic product (GDP). In Lesotho, the Special Representative welcomed the adoption of the national prevention and response plan on violence against children, backed by a commitment to a five-year national plan to reduce violence against children by 75 per cent, by 2028. She also welcomed the inclusion of a cross-cutting agenda on children and adolescents in Brazil's multi-year national development plan, developed by the Ministry of Planning and Budget in consultation with key stakeholders.

9. During every country visit, the Special Representative stressed the need for specific attention to children at high risk of violence. She welcomed the strong commitment of Thailand to advance alternatives to deprivation of liberty for children on the move and to end statelessness. On 9 July, the Government of Thailand took a major step by announcing the withdrawal of the country's reservation to article 22 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, thus extending human rights protection to refugee children. The Special Representative also welcomed constitutional and legislative reforms in Luxembourg to ensure child-friendly justice, including the provision of a multidisciplinary response to children in conflict with the law and to child victims and witnesses of violence. In Costa Rica, the Special Representative welcomed the Government's commitment to a preventive approach, including community empowerment and building a culture of peace in order to tackle armed violence and ensure public safety, notably through the establishment of child- and adolescent-friendly spaces. During her visit to Malta, the Special Representative highlighted the strong measures taken to ensure the participation of children in decision-making processes, including by lowering the voting age to 16 for national and local elections.

² Results in this area are highlighted in the report of the Special Representative to the Human Rights Council (A/HRC/55/58), paras. 16–31.

10. The Special Representative ensures that there is systematic follow-up on recommendations and continuing support to States that she has visited in previous years. In this regard, the Special Representative welcomed the process in Côte d'Ivoire to define a minimum package of services to ensure the full protection of children, and also welcomed Chad launching its first national integrated child protection policy, along with a results-oriented action plan. The Special Representative continues to follow-up on ongoing deinstitutionalization efforts with Greece and Romania. She also welcomed the launch by the Dominican Republic of a strategic framework to strengthen its national child protection systems, as well as the incorporation of child protection into its national tourism plan.

11. One key element of the Special Representative's mobilization of Member States has been her role as co-organizer of the first Global Ministerial Conference on Ending Violence Against Children, alongside Colombia, Sweden, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), to be held in Bogotá on 7 and 8 November 2024. The unique moment of mobilization will bring together States and other key stakeholders, including children and survivors, from various parts of the world, to help accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

12. At the request of the Board of the former Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children, the Special Representative has, since January 2024, been leading the workstream on pathfinding countries. There are already 38 pathfinding countries, with more States expressing an interest in joining.³ The renewed pathfinding initiative to end violence against children aims to revamp engagement with pathfinding countries and to ensure that the initiative is led and owned by States, in close collaboration with the United Nations system, civil society and other key stakeholders. Consultations and workshops with the pathfinding countries and other key stakeholders are under way to define, in a participatory way, a road map for accelerating and monitoring action to end violence against children, as well as an accountability framework to ensure effectiveness and credibility. The renewed pathfinding initiative to end violence against children will be launched at the Global Ministerial Conference on Ending Violence Against Children, in November 2024.

13. While promoting holistic action and sustainable investment to tackle all forms of violence and the drivers of such violence in her engagement with Member States, the Special Representative has focused on specific areas of particular concern, as outlined in her recent reports to the Assembly and the Human Rights Council. She has continued to promote and advocate the adoption and implementation of child-sensitive climate laws and mitigation policies that are backed by adequate resources and monitoring.⁴ Regarding the protection of children in the digital environment, the Special Representative continues to stress the need for strong legal and regulatory frameworks to ensure children's protection and privacy online.⁵ She has also underscored the importance of ensuring the protection of children from all forms of violence in the context of travel and tourism.⁶

14. Given the unprecedented scale of displacement faced by children worldwide, the Special Representative focused her most recent report to the Human Rights Council on the need to ensure a continuum of protection for children on the move in

³ Armenia, Botswana, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Canada, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Georgia, Guinea, Honduras, Indonesia, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Mexico, Mongolia, Montenegro, Namibia, Nigeria, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, the Philippines, Romania, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sweden, the United Republic of Tanzania, Uganda, the United Arab Emirates, Zambia and Zimbabwe. By July 2024, three additional countries had expressed interest in joining as part of the renewed pathfinding efforts.

⁴ [A/77/221](#).

⁵ [A/HRC/52/61](#).

⁶ [A/78/214](#).

times of crisis.⁷ During her country visits and at regional and international forums, including at the Global Refugee Forum 2023, the Special Representative welcomed specific commitments and pledges by States to ensure the protection of children on the move and their rights. Such measures include: ending immigration detention of children; ensuring access to services and documentation; protecting children from violence, discrimination, exploitation and trafficking; and ensuring that their voices are heard in the search for durable solutions.

Regional engagement

15. The Special Representative expanded and consolidated her engagement and collaboration with regional and subregional organizations through participation in high-level advocacy opportunities, the provision of technical support and guidance, and the creation of connections across regional organizations.

16. The Special Representative worked closely with the African Union Commission to develop guidance on ending child marriage and other harmful practices, and on ensuring the safeguarding of children, as well as on preparations for the International Conference on Female Genital Mutilation, held from 9 to 11 October 2023. She also supported the launch of the African Union's first child participation platform – an interactive space where children and young people can participate in the African Union decision-making processes on issues related to violence against children and gender-based violence.

17. The Special Representative continued to engage with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children on monitoring the implementation of the ASEAN Regional Plan of Action on the Elimination of Violence against Children (2016–2025) and on developing the next Regional Plan. She promoted the need to ensure both connectivity and the protection of children online, including during her engagements at the second ASEAN Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Forum on child online protection, held on 23 and 24 November 2023.

18. As part of her support for the implementation of the European Union strategy on the rights of the child, adopted in 2021, the Special Representative contributed to the development of the European Commission Recommendation on developing and strengthening integrated child protection systems in the best interests of the child and of the European Union Children's Participation Platform. She also welcomed the European Child Guarantee as a key initiative to ensure that every child in Europe at risk of poverty has access to essential services. As an observer to the Steering Committee for the Rights of the Child of the Council of Europe, she continued to advocate investment in integrated, cross-sectoral services for children and families within the Council's member States. The Special Representative also continued to engage with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe on combating child trafficking.

19. The Special Representative participated in a hearing organized by the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights in July 2024 on the impact of corporal punishment on the rights of children in the Caribbean, which included an exchange with children and young people. She also continued her engagement with the UNICEF Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean and its network of country offices in the Latin America and the Caribbean region on ending violence against children.

20. The Special Representative continued her active engagement with the Arab Council for Childhood Development, addressing priority issues for children in the

⁷ A/HRC/55/58.

Middle East and North Africa region, with a particular focus on investing in children and supporting gender equality. She also participated in a regional meeting on the impact of climate change on child labour in the Arab region during the twenty-eighth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, in December 2023.

Parliaments, national human rights institutions and ombudspersons

21. The Special Representative engages systematically with parliamentarians during her country visits, highlighting their key role in overseeing the implementation of policies, legislation and spending on social services for children and families, as well as the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. National human rights institutions and children's rights ombudspersons are also crucial for ensuring effective oversight and monitoring of such measures. In this regard, the Special Representative emphasized the importance of ensuring that their work aligns with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the Paris Principles) and the general comments of the Committee on the Rights of the Child. In all country visits, she pushes for the establishment or strengthening of the mandate and independence of national human rights institutions. The Special Representative systematically provides technical support, shares good practice and connects such institutions with their equivalents in other States to ensure that complaints and investigatory mechanisms are child-sensitive and fully accessible to all children. During the reporting period, she also engaged with national human rights institutions, under the umbrella of the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions, on their role in protecting at-risk children and marginalized children from deprivation of liberty, torture and other ill-treatment.

United Nations system and international organizations

22. In her role as Chair of the Inter-Agency Working Group on Violence against Children, the Special Representative expanded the membership of the Working Group to include the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), underlining the intersectionality between violence against children and gender-based violence. She has also enhanced the role of the Working Group in the renewed pathfinding initiative to end violence against children, as well in preparations for the Global Ministerial Conference on Ending Violence Against Children to be held in November 2024.

23. As Chair of the United Nations task force on the global study on children deprived of liberty, the Special Representative works closely with Member States, the Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) Panel on Children Deprived of Liberty, academia and other relevant stakeholders to gather, disseminate and promote child rights-based alternative solutions to deprivation of liberty. In this connection, in February 2024, the task force launched an advocacy brief on ending the immigration detention of children.⁸ The Special Representative is coordinating the development by the task force of an advocacy brief on children's deprivation of liberty on national security grounds, which will highlight good practice regarding repatriation and reintegration in this context. The Special Representative has also advocated for and supported States in facilitating the release and repatriation of children detained in the Hawl and Rawj camps in the north-eastern part of the Syrian Arab Republic, in close cooperation with United Nations regional and country teams.

24. The Special Representative continued to co-chair the Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons with the International

⁸ See <https://violenceagainstchildren.un.org/end-immigration-detention-of-children>.

Organization for Migration, integrating child protection as a cross-cutting priority in the Coordination Group's work. In November 2023, a "Call for accelerated action by 2025 to prevent and end child trafficking" was launched by Coordination Group members, proposing 10 priority actions for States and other stakeholders, the implementation of which will be supported by the Coordination Group.

25. The Special Representative has further strengthened collaboration with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict. The two mandates have continued their joint advocacy and coordination on the protection of children from the continuum of violence faced before, during and after conflicts, and that of children who are fleeing conflicts. The Special Representative on Violence against Children has also continued her close cooperation with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, particularly through active participation in the United Nations Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict.

26. The Special Representative coordinates closely with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the regional commissions to ensure that child protection and well-being are key dimensions of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Goals, including in the voluntary national review process and the high-level political forum on sustainable development. She has also continued her close cooperation with resident coordinators and regional and country teams on the preparation of and follow-up to country visits and voluntary national reviews.

27. The Special Representative has continued her close cooperation with the Committee on the Rights of the Child, the Human Rights Council, the special procedures mandate holders and the universal periodic review. She has, in particular, supported the consideration of the relevant outcomes of the universal periodic review – particularly linkages with the recommendations accepted by States – in efforts to end violence against children and to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

28. The Special Representative has deepened her collaboration with the World Bank, both at the global level and in the context of her country visits, around the promotion of child protection and well-being as a key component of building human capital. The World Bank is supporting the development of the toolkit on assessing the economic costs of violence against children and the returns on investment in violence prevention, as outlined above.

29. The Special Representative and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime are following closely the implementation of their joint strategy to address deprivation of liberty of children in the context of national security and counter terrorism; child trafficking; children on the move; and regulation of, and accountability for, information and communications technology (ICT) companies. The protection of children online has also been a key element of the Special Representative's engagement with the Secretary-General's Envoy on Technology, including in the context of the Global Digital Compact and ongoing work by the United Nations on the governance of artificial intelligence.

30. More than 30 partner organizations, including United Nations system entities, the private sector, civil society, child helplines and academic institutions, have joined protection through online participation initiative, led by the Special Representative and the International Telecommunication Union. Drawing on evidence from child helplines in 83 countries that use online channels to counsel children, the partners in the initiative developed guiding principles for child helplines in implementing online services. The principles and recommendations promote the safe use of online protection systems to counsel children and set out guidance on connectivity, inclusivity and accessibility of safe online protection services. The initiative has gathered information from online

platforms to understand children's help-seeking behaviour on those platforms and is shaping principles and recommendations for industry in this regard.

Private sector

31. The Special Representative has continued her engagement with the ICT sector more broadly. Working with key industry and multi-stakeholder alliances, such as the Tech Coalition and the WeProtect Global Alliance, she has continued her advocacy to promote equitable access to a safe digital environment for children and mandatory child safety by design in the development of online products and platforms.

32. Following her report to the General Assembly on the protection of children in travel and tourism,⁹ the Special Representative re-engaged the World Travel and Tourism Council and other key private sector actors to put child protection at the core of the sector's sustainability agenda. To this end, she facilitated the creation of a working group of the World Travel and Tourism Council, civil society and industry to identify and share good practices and develop a joint advocacy strategy. The working group has been expanded beyond companies traditionally associated with the travel and tourism sector to include those involved in retail tourism and online booking platforms, among others.

Civil society, faith-based organizations and traditional leaders

33. The Special Representative has continued her regular engagement with civil society organizations at the global level that are based in New York and Geneva, as well as at the regional and national levels. Over the reporting period, such action has included ongoing consultations related to the renewed pathfinding initiative to end violence against children and preparations for the Global Ministerial Conference on Ending Violence Against Children. The Special Representative has also pursued joint advocacy with civil society partners and coordinated closely in preparing and conducting country visits. In this regard, she has focused on expanding the civil society network with which her mandate engages to include organizations that are working at the national level and that are led by children and young people.

34. The Special Representative engages systematically with religious and community leaders, given their key role in tackling violence against children. She was granted an audience with Pope Francis on 18 March 2024, during which issues of mutual concern were discussed, such as the urgent need to tackle poverty and to protect children from violence in the circle of trust, while they are on the move and in the digital environment, among other contexts. She continued to stress the importance of documenting and disseminating examples of action by religious leaders and faith-based organizations, particularly during preparations for the sixth Forum of the Global Network of Religions for Children, to be held in Abu Dhabi in November 2024. The Forum, for which the Special Representative is a member of the organizing committee, will bring together leaders of diverse faith and spiritual traditions to identify key steps needed to ensure a sustainable, safe and secure world for and with children.

35. The Special Representative continues to highlight the role of traditional leaders in challenging social norms that condone or support violence, such as female genital mutilation and child marriage, during her country visits and regional engagements. During her country visit to Zambia, for example, the Special Representative visited prominent traditional leaders, Chief Mukuni and Queen Mukuni, who seek a total ban on child marriage, and welcomed the adoption and implementation by the House of Chiefs in Zambia of the "2023 Call to action to end child marriage by 2030 in Zambia".

⁹ [A/78/214](#).

Engagement with children and young people

36. Children’s meaningful participation is a cross-cutting priority for the Special Representative. The Special Representative and her team engaged directly with over 1,200 children from all regions on multiple issues during country and regional visits, and as part of various events, including her reporting to children on the margins of meetings of the Human Rights Council and the General Assembly. Of particular relevance over the past year has been her role in facilitating intergenerational dialogues between policymakers, children and young people on the theme of protecting children on the move, on the margins of meetings of the Human Rights Council and at the Global Refugee Forum.

37. The Special Representative continued to promote the ethical and meaningful participation of children in decision-making processes at the global, regional and national levels, emphasizing the need to ensure representativity and to meet the highest child safeguarding standards. She is working closely with the Assistant Secretary-General for Youth Affairs in this regard, given the complementary roles of their mandates in relation to the participation of adolescents. The Special Representative has also supported good practice in this field by providing guidance for the development of child-friendly resources, which is being used by States and other stakeholders. She has also continued to develop child-friendly resources to empower children with information, including child-friendly versions of her reports to the Human Rights Council and the General Assembly, as well as infographics on specific forms of violence.

III. Fifteen years on: taking stock of progress and challenges

38. The year 2024 marks the fifteenth anniversary of the appointment of the first Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence Against Children, following the establishment of the mandate by the General Assembly as a result of the United Nations study on violence against children, published in 2006.¹⁰ One of the mandate’s key tasks has been to follow up on the outcomes and recommendations of the study.

39. The study provided the first-ever overview of the scale and nature of violence against children worldwide. It set out recommendations to address the pandemic of violence against children and to prevent its devastating and often lifelong consequences. The recommendations included: strengthening commitment and action; prioritizing prevention; ensuring the participation of children; and improving data collection. It also identified the settings in which violence against children occurs and proposed actions to end the violence in each one: the circle of trust; schools and other educational settings; care and justice systems; the workplace; and the community. The study shone a spotlight on a global problem that was hidden, unreported and underrecorded.

40. The study informed the commitment made, in 2015, to end violence against children by 2030 as part of the 2030 Agenda, including the commitment made under target 16.2 to end the abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children, as well as other targets related to the forms and drivers of violence.¹¹ The subsequent United Nations global study on children deprived of liberty (2019) also built on the United Nations study on violence against children.

¹⁰ A/61/299. See also www.ohchr.org/en/treaty-bodies/crc/united-nations-study-violence-against-children.

¹¹ See <https://violenceagainstchildren.un.org/sites/violenceagainstchildren.un.org/files/documents/publications/vnr-report-2023.pdf>.

The tasks of supporting Member States in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and of following up on the global study on children deprived of liberty were added to the mandate of the Special Representative by the General Assembly.¹²

41. With six years until the deadline for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, in the present report the Special Representative takes stock of the continuing and emerging challenges, action taken to date and the opportunities ahead to keep the promise of a world free from violence against children by 2030. She is grateful for submissions received from Member States,¹³ the United Nations (including UNICEF Innocenti – Global Office of Research and Foresight), regional organizations, civil society and children, which have informed the preparation of the report and the illustrative examples shared in this section.

A. Children’s increased vulnerability and exposure to violence worldwide

42. Children’s vulnerability to violence continues to be exacerbated worldwide by multiple and overlapping crises. Such crises include increasing poverty, social and economic inequalities, forced displacement, conflict, climate change, food insecurity, widespread violence, political instability and the evolving nature of domestic and transnational organized crime. Pre-existing vulnerabilities are being magnified while new ones are being generated. Children who are already often left behind are bearing the brunt: children on the move, especially those who are unaccompanied and separated from their family; stateless children; children in institutions; girls; children with disabilities; children from ethnic or linguistic minorities; Indigenous children; children in street situations; children living in poverty; and children living in conflict-affected areas or humanitarian settings, among others.

43. Globally, 333 million children live in extreme poverty, and nearly 1 billion in multidimensional poverty.¹⁴ They include children in the world’s richest countries, where over 1 in 5 children live in poverty.¹⁵ While levels of global hunger and food insecurity stabilized in 2022, 148 million children under the age of 5 suffered from stunting.¹⁶ In addition, the global number of out-of-school children has risen by 6 million since 2021, and now totals 250 million.¹⁷

44. At the end of 2022, more than 450 million children – or 1 in 6 – lived in a conflict zone, the highest number in 20 years.¹⁸ The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees estimated that the number of people forcibly displaced was likely to have exceeded 120 million by the end of April 2024, with children accounting for 40 per cent of these.¹⁹ The climate crisis continues to act as a risk multiplier for violence against children, with around 1 billion children now at extremely high risk of being affected by climate change.²⁰

¹² Resolutions 73/155 and 76/147.

¹³ In response to a note verbale from the Special Representative dated 13 May 2024, contributions were received from: Andorra, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Canada, Cyprus, Ecuador, Greece, Israel, Japan, Lebanon, Luxembourg, Panama, Poland, Qatar, Romania, Slovenia, the Syrian Arab Republic and Türkiye.

¹⁴ See <https://www.unicef.org/social-policy/child-poverty>.

¹⁵ See <https://unric.org/en/over-1-in-5-children-live-in-poverty-in-40-of-worlds-richest-countries/>.

¹⁶ *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2024* (United Nations publication, 2024). Available at <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2024/The-Sustainable-Development-Goals-Report-2024.pdf>.

¹⁷ See <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/250-million-children-out-school-what-you-need-know-about-unescos-latest-education-data>.

¹⁸ See www.ohchr.org/en/speeches/2022/07/children-affected-armed-conflict-and-violence.

¹⁹ See <https://www.unhcr.org/sites/default/files/2024-06/global-trends-report-2023.pdf>.

²⁰ See <https://violenceagainstchildren.un.org/news/the-climate-crisis-and-violence-against-children>.

45. Armed violence fuelled by the circulation of arms, organized crime and widening social disparities is taking a deadly toll on children. Around 15 per cent of homicide victims were children in 2021. The Americas faced a higher risk of intentional killings than any other region, with an estimated rate of 15 homicide victims per 100,000 population, surpassing rates in Africa (12.7), Oceania (2.9), Asia (2.3) and Europe (2.2). Between 2019 and 2021, homicides accounted for approximately five times as many deaths as armed conflict and 20 times as many deaths as terrorism.²¹

46. There is a persistent digital divide in access to the Internet. Even so, greater connectivity and the rapid evolution of technology have placed more children at risk of experiencing violence online. Around 300 million children have been affected by online child sexual exploitation and abuse over the past 12 months.²² New and developing technologies such as generative artificial intelligence present new risks to children's safety online. As many as 15 per cent of children worldwide report cyberbullying victimization.²³ As highlighted in a report of the Special Representative to the Human Rights Council on the topic of protecting children online, there are serious concerns regarding other forms of harm online, including exposure to violent and sexual content; the promotion of suicide and self-harm; hate speech; discrimination, racism and xenophobia; organized crime and the circulation of arms; technology-facilitated trafficking; and recruitment into criminal, armed or violent extremist groups, among other risks.²⁴

47. For many children, physical, emotional or sexual violence is perpetrated by people they trust, including parents and caregivers, peers, neighbours, teachers or other members of the community. In more than one third of countries, at least 5 per cent of young women have reported experiences of sexual violence in childhood.²⁵ Globally, around 1 in 5 adolescent girls have experienced recent intimate partner violence.²⁶ Violent discipline by caregivers remains the most common form of violence against children. Nearly 400 million children under 5 worldwide – or 6 in 10 children within that age group – regularly endure psychological aggression or physical punishment at home.²⁷

48. Harmful practices are declining but not at rates that keep up with population growth. An estimated 640 million girls and women alive today were married in childhood.²⁸ Some progress has been made: the latest data show that, at present, 1 in 5 girls was married before the age of 18, compared with 1 in 4 girls 25 years ago, and that 68 million child marriages were averted during that period. They also show that over 230 million girls and women have undergone female genital mutilation. While some countries have made progress towards ending the practice, new estimates show an increase of 30 million cases compared with eight years ago.²⁹

49. An estimated 246 million girls and boys experience violence in and around schools.³⁰ About 1 in 3 students between the ages of 13 and 15 experience bullying, and about the same proportion are involved in physical fights.³¹ Sexual and gender-

²¹ See https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/gsh/2023/GSH23_ExSum.pdf.

²² See <https://intothelight.childlight.org/executive-summary.html>.

²³ See <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240062061>.

²⁴ A/HRC/52/61.

²⁵ See <https://data.unicef.org/topic/child-protection/violence/sexual-violence/#:~:text=In%20more%20than%20one%2Dthird,unsettling%20of%20children's%20rights%20violations>.

²⁶ See <https://data.unicef.org/topic/gender/intimate-partner-violence/>.

²⁷ See <https://data.unicef.org/topic/child-protection/violence/violent-discipline/>.

²⁸ *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2024*.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ See <https://www.safetolearncoalition.org/media/431/file/STL-Call-to-Action-2023.pdf>.

³¹ See <https://www.unesco.org/en/health-education/safe-learning-environments>.

based violence continue at alarming levels, rooted in gender inequalities and stereotypes. The different forms of school violence are interlinked and form part of a continuum of violence that flows to and from the home, the community and the digital environment.

50. There are worrying trends on the rate of child detention, with a jump from 29 children per 100,000 worldwide in 2020³² to 36 per 100,000 in 2022, and only a small decrease in 2023 to 30 per 100,000.³³ According to UNICEF, an estimated 105 children in every 100,000 were still living in residential care worldwide in May 2023, a rate that climbs to 232 children per 100,000 in Europe and Central Asia.³⁴

51. At present, 160 million children are still engaged in child labour, or almost 1 in 10 children worldwide.³⁵ According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), 3.3 million children are in situations of forced labour on any given day, including 1.7 million children in commercial sexual exploitation, and many are likely to have been trafficked.³⁶ Overall, children account for 35 per cent of all identified victims of trafficking – 18 per cent girls and 17 per cent boys – although underreporting of such trafficking means that this does not reflect the true scale of the phenomenon.³⁷

B. The huge human and economic costs

52. Violence continues to cost children their lives, well-being and futures. The thousands of children that the Special Representative has engaged with directly since taking on her role have, for example, consistently highlighted the devastating impact of violence on their mental health. Their testimony supports consistent research findings that point to violent experiences increasing the risks of depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, borderline personality disorder, anxiety, behavioural disorders, and both suicides and attempted suicides.³⁸ Suicide is the fourth leading cause of death among 15- to 19-year-olds. Every year, almost 46,000 children between the ages of 10 and 19 end their own lives – about 1 every 11 minutes.³⁹

53. In addition to the impact on mental health, there is strong evidence that physical, emotional and sexual violence in childhood increases the risks of injury, disability, HIV and other sexually transmitted infections, early pregnancy, reproductive health problems, and communicable and non-communicable diseases.⁴⁰ Long-lasting and intergenerational impacts arise from delayed cognitive development, poor school performance and dropout, and delinquency and violence, including dating violence and intimate partner violence. In addition, child victims of violence may not reach

³² See https://data.unicef.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Children-in-detention_Estimating-the-number-of-children-deprived-of-liberty_2021.pdf.

³³ See <https://data.unicef.org/topic/child-protection/justice-for-children/#:~:text=Worldwide%2C%20there%20are%20an%20estimated,at%2019%20per%20100%2C000%20children.>

³⁴ United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), "In focus: ending the institutionalization of children and keeping families together", (UNICEF Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia, Geneva, 2024) (forthcoming).

³⁵ See <https://www.un.org/en/observances/world-day-against-child-labour>.

³⁶ See https://icat.un.org/sites/g/files/tmzbd1461/files/publications/call_to_action_on_child_trafficking_7.pdf.

³⁷ See www.unodc.org/unodc/en/human-trafficking/Webstories2023/unodc-shines-spotlight-on-causes-and-impact-of-child-trafficking.html.

³⁸ Susan D. Hillis, James A. Mercy and Janet R. Saul, "The enduring impact of violence against children", *Psychology, Health & Medicine*, vol. 22, No. 4 (2016).

³⁹ See UNICEF, *The State of the World's Children 2021: On My Mind – Promoting, Protecting and Caring for Children's Mental Health* (New York, 2021). Available at <https://www.unicef.org/reports/state-worlds-children-2021>.

⁴⁰ See <https://iris.who.int/bitstream/handle/10665/207717/9789241565356-eng.pdf?sequence=1>.

their full education and health potential, which may limit their future income and productivity.

54. In addition to the human cost, violence against children imposes significant economic burdens across countries, regardless of income status, region or cultural context. Governments incur direct costs in responding to the impact of violence on the short- and long-term health of its victims, as well as the costs associated with the response of child protection and justice systems in providing rehabilitation to victims and enforcing the law against perpetrators.⁴¹ There is growing evidence of the economic costs of violence in different settings and contexts. For example, a report published by the World Bank on violence in and around schools highlights an estimated \$11 trillion in lost lifetime earnings.⁴² A global synthesis report on the economic impacts of child marriage has estimated that the welfare benefit to ending child marriage could reach \$566 billion annually by 2030.⁴³

55. Data gathered in the framework of the work on the investment case for integrated child protection services led by the Special Representative highlight that national-level estimates of the overall direct and indirect costs of violence are as high as 10.96 per cent of national GDP. The scale of the cost becomes clear when benchmarked against, for example, total government health expenditures: the annual costs of violence against children exceed annual government expenditure on health in several countries, in some cases up to sixfold.⁴⁴

C. Many commitments, many actions but still not enough progress

56. There have been many commitments to end violence against children and many actions have been taken. This section highlights important steps forward and remaining challenges in this regard. It has been informed by submissions from Member States, United Nations partners and civil society, and builds on key assessments, such as the report by the Office of the Special Representative, entitled *Keeping the Promise: Ending Violence Against Children by 2030*, and the *Global Status Report on Preventing Violence against Children 2020*.⁴⁵ It also draws illustrative examples from the Special Representative's country visits, bilateral engagement with Member States and information gathered on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Goals, including through the voluntary national review process.

57. There has been progress in the legislative and policy landscape at the international, regional and national levels.⁴⁶ The ratification of international and

⁴¹ See https://violenceagainstchildren.un.org/sites/violenceagainstchildren.un.org/files/documents/publications/violence-prevention_dividend_final.pdf.

⁴² See <https://www.end-violence.org/sites/default/files/2023-05/Ending-Violence-in-Schools-An-Investment-Case.pdf>.

⁴³ See https://www.icrw.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/EICM-GlobalSynthesisSummary_Report_v3_WebReady.pdf.

⁴⁴ Relevant data on the economic costs of violence are contained in a forthcoming publication by the Special Representative, which will be made available on the website of the Office of the Special Representative (<https://violenceagainstchildren.un.org/content/investment-case>).

⁴⁵ Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children, *Keeping the Promise: Ending Violence against Children by 2030* (New York, 2019). Available at <https://violenceagainstchildren.un.org/news/keeping-promise-ending-violence-against-children-2030>. See also World Health Organization (WHO) and others, *Global Status Report on Preventing Violence against Children 2020* (Geneva, WHO, 2020). Available at <https://www.who.int/teams/social-determinants-of-health/violence-prevention/global-status-report-on-violence-against-children-2020>.

⁴⁶ *Keeping the Promise: Ending Violence against Children by 2030*.

regional instruments has advanced,⁴⁷ as has their incorporation into domestic law. There has been progress in prohibiting specific forms of violence against children, including in relation to corporal punishment, child marriage, female genital mutilation, sexual violence and violence online, among others.⁴⁸ In many instances, however, the legislative framework is not comprehensive and does not prohibit all forms of violence in all settings. In addition, implementation is often ineffective, with a lack of measures to ensure child-sensitive justice and the prosecution of offenders. As highlighted in the *Global Status Report on Preventing Violence against Children 2020*, only 47 per cent of countries had a perceived enforcement level that was considered sufficient to ensure a high likelihood of sanction for people breaking the laws.⁴⁹

58. In the *Global Status Report* it was also noted, however, that 80 per cent of countries have at least one national action plan to prevent violence against children. Of the countries with national action plans, the majority indicated that the plans address multiple types of violence, while other plans address specific types of violence. Yet just one fifth of countries reported that their national action plans were fully funded. In many instances, there are parallel national plans on ending different forms of violence against children that are not interconnected with each other and that are not embedded into national and local development plans.

59. There is a growing body of evidence on successful and cost-effective interventions that can serve to inform programmatic responses. Such interventions include holistic strategies for preventing and responding to violence against children,⁵⁰ as well as guidance on good practice to address the drivers of violence, which include: poverty and social disparities; barriers to accessing education, health services and social protection; gender discrimination; and harmful social norms.⁵¹ There is also guidance on tackling specific forms of violence in specific contexts, including: violence online; violence in and around schools; armed violence; violent discipline; sexual and gender-based violence; child labour; child trafficking; child marriage and female genital mutilation.⁵² There is increasing evidence about the important ways in which certain forms of violence against children and violence against women intersect, including co-occurrence, shared risk factors and

⁴⁷ See <https://violenceagainstchildren.un.org/content/legislation-and-other-commitments>.

⁴⁸ *Global Status Report on Preventing Violence against Children 2020*. See also UNICEF, *Legislating for the Digital Age: Global Guide on Improving Legislative Frameworks to Protect Children from Online Sexual Exploitation and Abuse* (New York, 2022), available at <https://www.unicef.org/reports/legislating-digital-age>. See also <https://endcorporalpunishment.org/countdown/>; [https://www.unicef.org/documents/preventing-and-responding-child-sexual-abuse-and-exploitation-evidence-review#:~:text=The%20review%20involved%20desk%2Dbased,income%20countries%20of%20the%20world](https://www.unicef.org/documents/preventing-and-responding-child-sexual-abuse-and-exploitation-evidence-review#:~:text=The%20review%20involved%20desk%2Dbased,income%20countries%20of%20the%20world;); and <https://spotlightinitiative.org/publications/compendium-innovative-and-good-practices-and-lessons-learned>.

⁴⁹ *Global Status Report on Preventing Violence against Children 2020*.

⁵⁰ See <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789241565356>.

⁵¹ See www.unicef.org/media/65161/file/Child-Poverty-SDG-Guide-EN.pdf; and www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2024-05/are-we-getting-there-a-synthesis-of-un-system-evaluations-of-sdg-5-en.pdf.

⁵² See <https://www.weprotect.org/model-national-response/>; www.unicef.org/media/101891/file/CSAE-Programme-Review-2021.pdf; ILO, *Ending Child Labour by 2025: A Review of Policies and Programmes* (Geneva, 2018), available at www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed_norm/@ipecc/documents/publication/wcms_653987.pdf; <https://endcorporalpunishment.org/resources/research/>; Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children, “Protecting children affected by armed violence in the community” (New York, United Nations, 2016), available at https://violenceagainstchildren.un.org/sites/violenceagainstchildren.un.org/files/documents/publications/2._protecting_children_affected_by_armed_violence_in_the_community.pdf; and www.togetherforgirls.org/en/campaigns/what-works-to-prevent-sexual-violence-against-children.

intergenerational effects.⁵³ It is now widely known that children’s exposure to domestic violence has negative consequences on their health, development and well-being, whether or not they experience violence directly.⁵⁴ This greater availability of evidence is gradually increasing coordination across the fields of violence against children and violence against women and expanding the number of interventions that aim to reduce both forms of violence simultaneously.⁵⁵

60. The *Global Status Report* highlights that among the prevention approaches covered in the report, only school enrolment was considered by over half of countries as being sufficiently supported to reach all in need. Among the response approaches, child protection services, identification and referral mechanisms were rated as sufficiently supported by just one third of government respondents. Social protection – a key component for child protection and well-being – increased substantially during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, yet 1.4 billion children today still lack social protection coverage.⁵⁶

61. There has also been progress on gathering data on violence against children. In all, 83 per cent of countries covered by the *Global Status Report* indicated that they had conducted at least one nationally representative survey measuring violence against children in the previous five years, with school-based surveys by far the most frequently reported type. Nevertheless, many gaps remain as a result of a lack of investment in data collection, the lack of access to child-friendly complaint and reporting mechanisms, and the lack of reporting linked to stigma, fear and taboos. In addition, the data that exist are rarely disaggregated or regularly updated. Very few national plans of action on ending violence include indicators with baselines and targets, for which data are crucial to ensure monitoring.

62. Despite the many actions taken to address violence against children worldwide, progress has not reached the scale or speed required. To address the complex and evolving nature of violence against children and the interlinkages between the drivers and forms of violence, a change of approach is needed.

D. Ending violence against children is possible and makes economic sense

63. To end violence against children, there is a need to move from a siloed approach to an integrated, cross-sectoral and multistakeholder approach. There are powerful examples of States and other key stakeholders adopting such an approach, which demonstrate that the necessary paradigm shift can be achieved.

64. Political commitment is crucial. However, it must be translated into sustained investment in integrated child-sensitive and gender-responsive services. While ministries with responsibilities for child protection and well-being play a leading role, it must be a government-wide priority. It is essential to have a truly integrated, whole-of-government approach that includes various sectors, including child protection,

⁵³ Alessandra Guedes and others, “Bridging the gaps: a global review of intersections of violence against women and violence against children”, *Global Health Action*, vol. 9, No. 1 (2016).

⁵⁴ Megan R. Holmes and others, “Nearly 50 Years of Child Exposure to Intimate Partner Violence Empirical Research: Evidence Mapping, Overarching Themes, and Future Directions”, *Journal of Family Violence*, vol. 37 (2022).

⁵⁵ Loraine J. Bacchus and others, “Interventions that prevent or respond to intimate partner violence against women and violence against children: a systematic review”, *The Lancet Public Health* 2024, vol. 5, No. 9 (May 2024).

⁵⁶ *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2024*.

health, education, social protection, justice, law enforcement, labour, budget and planning.

65. An increasing number of countries across regions are implementing integrated legal and policy frameworks to achieve such a shift. Wide-ranging law reforms that encompass prevention, prohibition, protection and prosecution have been introduced, for example in Malawi, Mexico, Nepal and Spain. Important steps have also been taken to embed child protection and well-being into national and local development plans, and as a cross-cutting dimension of the planning and budget process, including in the Dominican Republic, Ethiopia and Morocco.

66. Undertaking a mapping of services allows for defining, in a context-specific manner, the minimum package of services needed to ensure the protection and well-being of children, matching the services to the rights and needs of children and families. The process of defining cross-sectoral services to prevent and respond to violence against children has been or is being undertaken in Côte d'Ivoire, Indonesia, Jamaica and Romania. Such an approach can also allow for clearly defining the role and responsibilities of key services at the central and local levels, as well as ensuring quality, accessibility, coordination and accountability through regular monitoring and supervision.

67. More States are strengthening their information management systems and using information from data sources, such as surveys on violence against children and multiple indicator cluster surveys, to inform, orient and measure the impact of their actions. The use of such data and systems supports the development of realistic indicators and benchmarks to assess progress, which is essential for effective coordination and accountability in the delivery of services, as well as for effective budget execution. In addition, some States are connecting indicators related to ensuring child protection and well-being specifically to relevant Sustainable Development Goal targets, including Bhutan, Brazil, Costa Rica and Switzerland.

68. Investing in violence prevention has a high return and makes economic sense, despite the fiscal constraints faced by many States. In order to demonstrate the need to increase resources for violence prevention, assessments of the economic costs of violence have been undertaken in Fiji, Iceland and Solomon Islands, among other States. Costing the implementation of laws and policies on child protection – as undertaken by Jordan and Kenya – can also provide a powerful tool to build the investment case.

69. Investing in child protection and well-being also means strengthening the capacities of institutions and professionals working with children – as seen in Lithuania, Viet Nam and Zambia – including through providing relevant training as part of professionals' core curricula. To ensure effective cross-sectoral work, integrated “one-stop-shop” approaches are crucial, bringing together professionals from key sectors under one roof.⁵⁷ There are examples where such integrated services for child victims of violence are co-located with services for women. The challenge has been to ensure that these integrated services are scaled up and are physically, culturally, economically and geographically accessible.

70. Ending violence against children requires not only a whole-of-government approach but also a whole-of-society approach, involving religious and community leaders, civil society, children and young people, the private sector and other key stakeholders. The mobilization of religious and community leaders is indispensable to promote positive social norms, tackle harmful norms and behaviours and build a culture of peace. The Special Representative has engaged with community and faith-

⁵⁷ UNICEF, *Global Annual Results Report 2022: Goal Area 3 – Every Child is Protected from Violence and Exploitation* (New York, 2023).

based organizations during her country visits and has shared their promising practices, including those of the Qudwa initiative and Adyan Foundation (Lebanon), the Cadre des Religieux pour la santé et le développement and the Federation of Koranic Schools (Senegal), the Pacific Conference of Churches (Fiji), and Rabita Mohammedia des Oulémas (Morocco), and the House of Chiefs (Zambia), among many others.

71. The role of civil society organizations is increasingly crucial in advocacy and service provision. They are undertaking evidence-based advocacy to tackle the drivers and forms of violence in all settings, to invest in violence prevention, and to address the pushback on child rights. Civil society organizations continue to amplify children's voices and support child and youth participation, empowering children and protecting them as human rights defenders. Civil society partners at the global, regional and national levels continue to be in the vanguard of the protection of children and their rights despite the many challenges they face, including decreasing resources.

72. A mapping undertaken by the Special Representative highlights powerful examples of children and young people worldwide taking action to tackle violence and participating in decision-making processes.⁵⁸ There have been encouraging developments in terms of regional and national platforms for their involvement. In Andorra, for example, the Child Friendly Parishes initiative supports children's involvement through Children's Councils; a child-friendly budget; data collection; and the development of a national plan for children. In Chad, the "Super Banats" are young girls who are raising awareness of sexual and reproductive health, as well as the prevention of gender-based violence and child marriage. In Colombia, through the creation of the civic spaces of "Voces De Poder" (Voices of Power), more than 800 children are involved in creating better opportunities in communities affected by violence, including through a manifesto of peacebuilding demands. In the Philippines, the Cameleon Youth Advocates are raising awareness and advocating for children's rights, young people's reproductive health, and the elimination of child sexual abuse. Regarding climate litigation, by late 2022 children and young people had launched more than 30 legal cases worldwide, based on their special vulnerability to climate harm and on the principle of intergenerational equity.⁵⁹

73. Diverse parts of the private sector – including travel and tourism, banking and information and communications technology – are incorporating child safeguarding and child rights principles into their business models, as outlined by the Special Representative in her reports to the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council.⁶⁰ Those developments are occurring in tandem with stronger action by some States to ensure robust regulatory environments for industry.⁶¹

74. The aforementioned examples of multi-stakeholder action to prevent and respond to all forms of violence against children show that change is possible. There is still a need, however, for consistent and reliable sources of funding and sustainable and context-specific development cooperation in order to take solutions to scale. In addition, stronger transnational collaboration is required to address the increasingly complex and cross-border nature of violence and crimes against children.

⁵⁸ See <https://childparticipation.un.org/>.

⁵⁹ United Nations Environment Programme, *Global Climate Litigation Report: 2023 Status Review* (Nairobi, 2023).

⁶⁰ [A/78/214](#) and [A/HRC/52/61](#).

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

IV. Ending violence against children cannot wait

75. Less than six years remain to achieve the Goals of the 2030 Agenda. While important advances have been achieved over the past 15 years, we are not on track to keep the promise of the Sustainable Development Goals to end violence against children by 2030. At a time of spiralling crises and unprecedented levels of violence, investment in child protection and well-being is needed more than ever.

76. Worldwide, too many children are left behind. No child is immune and no country is immune. The data that we have on the prevalence of violence against children are alarming. But we know that even these figures are largely underestimated, as violence against children continues to be underreported and underprosecuted. The impact of violence against children is devastating and long-lasting. The human and economic cost is huge.

77. The findings presented herein highlight not only the urgent need for action, but also the need to act both collectively and differently. We know that there must be a shift from a siloed to an integrated approach, given the cross-sectoral dimension of violence against children and its intersectionality with gender-based violence. We know what the barriers and the solutions are. We know that violence prevention makes economic sense. And we know that investment in child protection and well-being from early childhood and across the life span is key for sustainable, people-centred development. Spending on integrated child protection services must, therefore, be seen as a sound investment with a high return, and not as an additional expense.

78. Multilateralism based on the principles of inclusivity, equality and cooperation, is needed to address ongoing crises – including conflicts, the climate crisis, forced displacement and poverty – and to address the increasingly complex and cross-border nature of violence and crimes against children, which has been facilitated by the rapid development of technologies.

79. The renewed pathfinding initiative to end violence against children, led by the Special Representative, aims to be a game changer. It will revamp and re-energize engagement with existing and future pathfinding countries in order to drive policy change and to support States in translating strong commitments into action. It will widen multi-stakeholder mobilization, including of the United Nations system, civil society, financial institutions, donors, the private sector, the media and faith-based organizations, as well as of children, young people and the survivors of violence. It will provide forums to exchange knowledge, to share proven, cost-effective interventions to prevent and address all forms of violence, and to support multidisciplinary training. It will also strengthen context-specific and sustainable bilateral, multilateral and cross-border cooperation.

80. Children are not a problem to solve but an asset to invest in. Through the leadership of States and effective multilateralism, it is possible to build momentum towards a world free from violence against children, leaving no child behind.