

INEQUALITIES IN URBAN AREAS IN THE POST-2015 DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

Concept Note – E-discussion on “Disadvantaged Children and Young People living in Urban Areas”

This proposed e-discussion precedes “Urban inequalities and inequities in the post-2015 agenda,” a panel led by UNICEF and The Committee on Social Inclusion, Participatory Democracy and Human Rights of the UCLG. The panel will be part of the World Summit of Local and Regional Leaders, 4th UCLG Congress: Imagine Society, Build Democracy, which will take place in Rabat, Morocco, 1-4 October, 2013.

Background

As the 2015 target date for achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) approaches, there are a growing number of preparations and debates on what a post-2015 agenda and framework will look like. These are occurring both inside and outside of the United Nations system.

In partnership with civil society, the UN is supporting and facilitating over 80 country consultations and eleven global thematic consultations, one of which is on the topic of *Addressing Inequalities*, and led by UNICEF and UN Women. As part of the consultation, a number of e-discussions were initiated on various aspects of inequalities (e.g. gender equality, people with disabilities, etc.) In January 2013, an e-discussion gathered views from a broad range of stakeholders on how to address *inequalities in urban areas*.

For the purpose of continuing and deepening the January discussion, a follow-up e-discussion focusing particularly on *“Disadvantaged Children and Young People living in Urban Areas”* is planned for August 2013. The timing of this is specifically to provide input to the *United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) World Congress*, taking place in October 2013. The results of the e-discussion will be synthesised into a short findings report to be used and disseminated at a side-event panel discussion. The e-discussion will be moderated and the results synthesized by UNICEF and partners including, UN Volunteers and UN-Habitat.

The panel will be tied to both of the two main concepts of the summit, “the contribution of local and regional authorities to the well-being of communities and the role in the post-2015 development agenda” and “the identification of the new challenges and models needed to answer the demand of an increasingly urban population.”

A tentative list of speakers for the panel follows below:

- Mr. Richard Morgan; UNICEF, Senior Advisor on Post-2015 Agenda;
- Mr. David Satterthwaite, International Institute on Environment and Development;
- Ms. Maite Fandos, Deputy Mayor for Quality of Life, City of Barcelona, Spain;

- Mr. Jairo Jorge, Mayor of Canoas, Brazil; Ms. Ewa Samuelsson, Deputy Mayor of Stockholm, Sweden;
- Mr. Luis Armando González Placencia, President of the Human Rights Commission of the Federal District, Mexico; and
- Ms. Johanne Savard, Ombudsman of Montreal, Canada.

The e-discussion will launch on **1 August 2013** and will run for a period of four weeks, ending on **29 August**.

The e-discussion and follow-on panel discussion will help to both gain a deeper understanding of and bring attention to issues faced by children and young people in urban areas and can serve to inform various Post-2015/SDG-related processes.

Audience

The e-discussion is an opportunity for a multitude of voices to be heard from civil society, academia, media, national and international non-government organizations, the private sector, governments, the UN system, etc.

Why a focus on inequalities and children living in urban areas?

Despite many of the successes of the MDGs, they have not managed to fully address the values and principles outlined in the Millennium Declaration, particularly in relation to human rights and equality. Addressing inequalities in the post-2015 development agenda means looking at both equality of opportunities and outcomes (or lack thereof), and entrenched structural factors, that perpetuate various forms of inequalities such as discrimination and exclusion based on ethnicity, gender, age, location, etc.

While cities have long been associated with employment, development and economic growth, hundreds of millions in the world's urban areas live amid scarcity and deprivation. According to UNICEF's *The State of the World's Children: Children in an Urban World*, the world's urban population increases by about 60 million annually. By 2050, 7 in 10 people will live in cities and towns.

Urban children are often invisible from global media, policies and development planning, even though child mortality rates in cities often match or exceed those in rural settings. The poorest children living in cities face multiple deprivations, including poor sanitation, poor quality of education and high food prices that can lead to child stunting and wasting. They are also vulnerable to the negative effects of climate instability and disaster risks, environmental health risks such as outdoor air pollution, high levels of violence and incidences of child labour. Children living in urban areas are also at much higher risk of diarrhoea and pneumonia, the two biggest killers of children under five. Meanwhile, where immunization rates are low and overcrowding is common, children are much more susceptible to vaccine-preventable diseases like measles and tuberculosis.

As demographics shift, the role and influence of federal governments are shrinking, while municipal governments are gaining in importance. Organizations like UCLG, along with Mayors' networks and municipal governments, are becoming increasingly influential on national and global policy engagement. UNICEF must position itself within these powerful networks to ensure that the interests of children and young people are integrated into burgeoning policies and investments.

Objective

The main objective of the e-discussion is to stimulate a wide-ranging discussion on the most-pressing issues and inequalities that children and young people living in urban settings face, and their underlying or structural driving causes; and for the main findings and recommendations from this discussion to be discussed and reflected upon at the UCLG conference and through other means of global dissemination.

What kind of process will it be?

The e-discussion will consist of an online, moderated discussion to take place over four weeks, using the jointly owned civil society/UN online engagement platform www.worldwewant2015.org and other social media channels to engage various stakeholders. A space within the *Addressing Inequalities* consultation space has been set up for hosting the discussion: <http://www.worldwewant2015.org/node/349241>.

What specific questions will be considered and debated?

The e-discussion will focus on the key topics of the upcoming panel, with particular reference to identifying the unique challenges that face children and young people in the face of rapid urbanization. The conversation aims to draw out the answers to the following framing questions:

- Climate-related risks are one of the biggest challenges facing children and young people. Hunger and water shortages and increased disease risks may occur as the world's climate alters, and children will be among the most vulnerable. How can local governments work to ensure that their cities are prepared for environmental challenges like climate change and natural disasters?
- As more young people moving to urban areas to find work, what is the impact of such a demographic migration? How can we ensure that cities provide young people with adequate access to services like health care and education, and ensure workplace protections for the young?
- How can we ensure that girls and boys have equal access to services in urban areas? How can we create and implement policies that protect the human rights of girls, advance gender equality, and prevent abuse, violence, exploitation and trafficking of young people who migrate from rural to urban areas?

- As the *State of the World's Children 2012: Children in an Urban World* notes, urban decision-making and governance on such issues as road safety, land use and air quality can have direct and adverse effects on the lives of both current and future generations of children. How can we work together to promote child-centric innovative urban management practices, establish and strengthen municipal networks, and influence local and national urban policies and programmes?
- Social cohesion and civic engagement: As young people from different backgrounds live together in urban areas, sharing the public spaces as active citizens and agents of change, how can opportunities be increased for them to engage constructively and contribute to shaping their livelihoods and communities through local action?

Outreach

A targeted email blast to key constituencies, networks and individuals, including all those who participated in the previous e-discussion on urban inequalities, will be sent out one week prior to the start of the conversation, and will include the finalized framing questions to consider. A reminder will be sent the day the conversation starts as well as during the four weeks that the discussion continues. The co-hosting partners for the e-discussion will also be asked to post information about the start of the conversation through their website, networks and social media channels.

The role of the co-moderators

The co-moderators will guide and support the conversation and ensure that key people are participating. They will prod discussions if the conversation lulls, solicit inputs from key actors in the field, draft interim summaries of key discussions, and produce a final summary.

More details can be found in the document *Online Moderated Discussion Guidelines*, which was developed for the *Addressing Inequalities* Consultation e-discussions.