



Statement and Call to Action

High-level Political Forum 2021

We are #CovidUnder19, a collective of children, young people, national and international civil society organisations and academics. We believe that children and young people are the backbone of building back better from the pandemic. **Recovery and renewal from Covid-19 requires investing in children and young people and seeing them as key partners in shaping the post-pandemic world.**

Through a global survey of over 26,000 children, we learned that children felt that they were being forgotten and their rights were not being respected by their governments in the responses to the pandemic. But we also learned that children crave safe and uplifting connections to improve their mental health and combat their isolation, and that they want to be seen, heard and involved in creating a better future for all humanity. We honour their voices and are driven by their aspirations.

It is disheartening to see that governments are reluctant to include children in the Ministerial Declaration of the High Level Political Forum 2021. Knowing the importance of children in the project to build back better, we feel that **failing to include children will not only compromise children's right to be heard, as enshrined in Article 12 of the UN Convention on Rights of Child, but undermine other rights in the Convention and the SDGs as well.**

According to Article 4 of the UNCRC, governments must allocate appropriate resources for the realization of children's rights. Moreover, in line with SDG 17, it is important to build partnerships with all stakeholders, including children, for the realization of the SDGs. **The context of the pandemic calls for a new era of partnership with children, including a reinvigoration of child participatory budgeting.**

#CovidUnder19 calls upon governments, civil society and stakeholders to meaningfully involve children and young people in decision-making linked to pandemic recovery and response, in the understanding that any project to build back better cannot be successfully implemented without them. The pandemic has left a disproportionate impact among children and has gravely affected children from marginalised groups. **Governments must ensure that their policies reach out to children who are most severely affected by the pandemic** first to prevent cycles of poverty, exclusion and violence that threaten the next generation.

We also encourage governments to **share accessible information about pandemic recovery and response plans** to enable children to meaningfully engage as rights-holders and call duty-bearers to account in line with their international child rights commitments. We request that governments, data practitioners and civil society to develop appropriate models and involve children in the collection and interpretation of data. Additionally, it is important to foster space for children to strengthen their capacities to use data as an evidence-base for advocacy to empower themselves

In addition, broad partnerships between governments, civil society and the private sector should establish **platforms for meaningful dialogue, intergenerational partnership and peer-to-peer support to ensure children are involved in monitoring mechanisms** like Voluntary National Review Reports and Civil Society reviews. This will enhance access to child-friendly, inclusive information about the planning, implementation and follow-up of budgets to promote transparency and accountability.

It will also enable sharing and transferring knowledge and ideas among children and will contribute to building their capacities as a critical component of achieving the SDGs and respecting children's rights.

Over the next year, #CovidUnder19 will reinforce child & youth participatory action to support the achievement of the SDGs and the fulfilment of children's rights. We will convene global intergenerational partnerships that cascade learning across networks at national and local levels.

If you are a child aged 13-17 and you are interested in getting involved in this movement to establish partnerships and get children's voices heard, join our cohort for the next year!

Let us join hands to ensure that no voice is unheard! We will be coming back to the High Level Political Forum in 2022 to continue claiming children and young people's rightful space in building forward, building stronger and building together for a better, brighter and greener future on this planet.

More information on www.tdh.ch/covidunder19



Child Rights
Coalition Asia



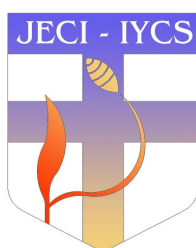
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