



EMBARGOED TO 00.01 (BST) Wednesday 19th OCTOBER 2022

KIDSRIGHTS INDEX REVEALS THAT THE LIVES OF 1 BILLION CHILDREN ARE AT STAKE DUE TO CLIMATE CHANGE

- Climate Change is named as the biggest global threat to children's futures, as 1 billion are found to be at extremely high risk of being negatively affected, whilst 920 million are already affected by water scarcity and 820 million are highly exposed to heatwaves
- On its 10th anniversary, the KidsRights Index reveals that there has been no significant progress in the standards of children's lives over the last decade, while standards amongst the lowest ranking countries have even dropped further
- The aftershocks of the Covid-19 pandemic have also led to a setback in the advancement of children's lives and rights around the world with its full impact yet to be accounted for
- KidsRights Founder and Chair, Marc Dullaert, is calling on governments to act now in order to invest in and reprioritise children's futures

Wednesday 19th October 2022: There has been no significant progress in the standards of children's lives and rights across the world over the last decade, according to international children's rights organisation KidsRights, upon the release of its annual KidsRights Index Report for 2022 made in co-operation with Erasmus University. The KidsRights Index is the first and only ranking that annually measures how children's rights are respected worldwide. Climate Change is also set to severely impact one billion of the world's future generations - half of all children globally - over the next ten years.

In its 10th anniversary year, the KidsRights Index Report has also revealed that the devastating effects of the Covid-19 pandemic have led to the loss of up to 286,000 lives of children under the age of 5, due to severe disruptions in food and medicine deliveries, the closure of health clinics and delays to child vaccination programmes.

The situation could also be much worse than first feared when the full impact of the Covid-19 pandemic is realised.

Marc Dullaert, KidsRights Founder and Chair, is calling on governments across the world to focus efforts on investing in children and their future for the betterment of the planet:

"This year's report is alarming for our current and future generations of children. There has been no significant progress in the standards of children's lives over the last decade, and on top of that their livelihoods have been severely impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic.

A rapidly changing climate is now threatening their futures and their basic rights. As Governments around the world meet for COP27 this year, decisions must be made to invest and act now to take vital action for change.”

Ten years of reporting exposes a stagnation and slight decline in children’s rights:

A decade of the annual KidsRights Index reveals a static picture, where many countries have remained in the same general performance ‘clusters’ of nations as their general performance has remained comparable over the last ten years. Alongside this, the situation in the group of lowest ranking countries such as Afghanistan, Democratic Republic of Congo, or Papua New Guinea declined.

Some countries, however, have made clear progress over the last decade in the specific domains measured within the report - life, health, protection and enabling environment for children’s rights - such as Angola on the right to life, or Bangladesh on the right to health. However, other countries have witnessed a clear decline, such as Nigeria on its maternal mortality ratio and Montenegro on child immunisation levels.

The destructive effects of the Covid-19 pandemic are now beginning to be unveiled:

Up to 286,000 children under the age of five died due to the indirect effects of recessions relating to the Covid-19 pandemic, owing to disruptions in food and medicine deliveries, the closure of health clinics and disruptions to vaccination programmes during lockdowns.

25 million children under the age of one did not receive basic vaccinations – the highest number since 2009 – whilst the number of completely unvaccinated children increased by 5 million since 2019.

For the first time in two decades, the number of child labourers has risen to 160 million, representing an increase of 8.4 million over 4 years.

In almost three quarters (72%) of 130 countries surveyed in 2020, mental health services for children and adolescents were disrupted and a recent estimation predicts a USD \$17 trillion loss in lifetime earnings among today’s generation of schoolchildren if corrective action is not urgently taken.

The global threat of Climate Change:

The 2022 KidsRights’ Index Report has also concluded that Climate Change represents a clear and present danger, as close to half of all children in the world (1 billion) are at extremely high risk of being seriously affected.

More than a third of the world’s children (820 million) are already highly exposed to heatwaves, while more than one in six (400 million) children are exposed to cyclones. Worryingly, nearly 90 per cent of all children across the globe are also subjected to air pollution.

With Climate Change continuing to intensify, the situation is bleak for the world’s future generations in the decade to come.

This year’s rankings and domain scores reveal a mixed picture:

In 2022, Iceland continues to top of the KidsRights Index Report, which has been the case for the last four years, whilst Chad remains the lowest scoring country in the Index Report.

Switzerland experienced a significant drop in its overall ranking this year, dropping from 2nd down to 31st, due to the nation's insufficient implementation of the principle of the 'best interests of the child' in decisions that affect children, as well as its score on implementing children's rights and for economic, social, and cultural rights to do so "to the maximum extent of their available resources".

Whilst the report has revealed significant issues for children globally, there have also been signs of positive progress in countries, relating to the specific domains measured.

On the 'right to life':

Angola has significantly improved its score on children's 'right to life' over the past decade, as its under-five mortality has more than halved, alongside maternal mortality rates, whilst life expectancy at birth has increased by ten years, or nearly 20 per cent. These are likely to be the results of deliberate government policy, as was explained by the government of Angola in the latest state report that it submitted to the CRC Committee.

On the other hand, Nigeria has fallen significantly in the same domain, as its maternal mortality ratio has substantially increased from 550 to 920 per 100,000 live births.

On the 'right to health':

A remarkably positive example in the domain of 'right to health' in this year's report is Bangladesh, owing to the government's purposeful policy efforts to strengthen the health record of its child population, with a special emphasis on sanitation.

Over the last ten years, Bangladesh has reduced the number of underweight children under five years old by almost 50 per cent, whilst the percentage of its population using improved drinking water increased from 85 per cent to 98 per cent.

On the 'right to protection':

Over the last ten years, Bolivia has achieved significant reductions in incidences of child labour nearly halved, whilst birth registrations improved to represent 92 per cent of the country's children, reportedly owing to monetary incentives such as the country's conditional social cash transfer programme.

A substantial rise in the adolescent birth rate in Iraq, from 70 to 240 per 100,000 young women aged 15 to 19, has reduced its score in the 'right to protection' domain. A lack of access to reproductive health services are cited as a potential cause.

On the 'enabling of environment for children's rights':

Since 2013, 4 states have significantly improved the indicators within this domain, with 12 countries located in the Middle East demonstrating a significant improvement over the last ten years.

Oman's efforts in recent years to cooperate with the UN has helped to improve its score in this domain, which has largely been due to the development of budgets that are allocated specifically for children's rights and education. However, there remain concerns on the arbitrary detention and

harassment of civil society activists in the country, which has also led to a fall in its score on State-Civil Society Co-operation.

KidsRights is an international non-governmental organisation that promotes the wellbeing of very vulnerable children across the world and advocates the realisation of their rights. The KidsRights Index is produced in cooperation with Erasmus University Rotterdam, Erasmus School of Economics, and the International Institute of Social Studies. It sits alongside the Foundation's prestigious and acknowledged International Children's Peace Prize, endorsed by the Nobel Peace Laureates, whose recipients have included Malala Yousafzai.

The KidsRights Index may be found here: www.kidsrights.org

Ends

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Editor's Notes

Link to assets:

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About KidsRights

KidsRights is an international non-governmental organisation that strives for a world where all children have access to their rights and are enabled to realise the great potential they carry within them. KidsRights sees children as changemakers with the power to move the world, and facilitates in voicing their opinions and taking action in order to bring about change. KidsRights supports children by commanding global attention for the realisation of children's rights and acts as a catalyst to ignite change, together with children and youth. KidsRights is the founder of the prestigious International Children's Peace Prize, the world's first borderless state State of Youth and the organisation behind the first and only global annual KidsRights Index.

Please visit our website to find out more about KidsRights: www.kidsrights.org

About Erasmus School of Economics

Erasmus School of Economics is a leading centre for scientific research and education in economics and econometrics. The activities of this internationally acclaimed School of Erasmus University Rotterdam contribute to understanding current and future economic developments in the world and to answering questions related to the roles of government and business policy.

About the International Institute of Social Studies

The International Institute of Social Studies (ISS) is a graduate school of critical policy-oriented social science. Established in 1952, ISS focuses in particular on research, teaching and public service in the field of development studies and international cooperation. Its students, staff and knowledge partners are both from the Global South and the North. Interdisciplinarity and co-creation are among the key features of the work of the Institute. ISS is part of Erasmus University Rotterdam but based in The Hague.

Author:

The KidsRights Index has been published annually since 2013. It is the first and only worldwide children's rights index. It ranks countries on how good they are at realising children's rights to the best of their resources and if they adhere to children's rights.