



NEW YORK UNIVERSITY

CENTER ON INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

Every Child Deserves a Childhood

Should the UK take a leadership role in delivering post-2015 targets to protect children from violence?

David Steven, in collaboration with UNICEF UK

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Key messages

1. The Millennium Development Goals will be replaced in 2016 by a new set of Sustainable Development Goals that are intended to constitute “an integrated, indivisible set of global priorities for sustainable development.”
2. The new development agenda aims to ensure *the protection, survival and development of children to their full potential*. It will fail to deliver this promise to children unless targets to protect them from all forms of violence, exploitation and abuse are urgently implemented, including through a new generation of global partnerships.
3. A global partnership to protect children from all forms of violence, exploitation and abuse would be a flagship achievement for the new development agenda. Stakeholder consultations have identified clear demand for this partnership, based around the vision that *no child should live in fear*.
4. The United Kingdom has played a leading role in advocating for a focus on protecting children, as part of a broader commitment to promoting peaceful and inclusive societies, providing access to justice for all, and building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.
5. The UK now has the potential to play a leadership role in the new partnership, acting as a pathfinder country and taking action to protect children both domestically and through its foreign policy and international development programmes.
6. At home, this would build on political consensus that more must be done to protect children in light of the failure of state institutions to respond to historic child abuse and recent cases of widespread exploitation and grooming of children.
7. It would also demonstrate the UK’s commitment to the universality of the new development agenda, showing that it is prepared to work to deliver goals and targets at home.
8. Internationally, a partnership to protect children from all forms of violence would help ensure that the new development agenda leaves no child behind, while offering a focus for forms of international cooperation that take the UK’s development programme ‘beyond aid’ and helping the UK work with other countries to tackle emerging transnational threats to children, such as from online sexual exploitation.

Introduction

In October 2014, the Center on International Cooperation published *If Not Now, When? Ending Violence Against The World's Children*, which argued that the replacement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2015 with a new global development agenda offered:

An historic opportunity to unite the world behind a global, national, and local movement to protect children from violence, based on increased political will, a global partnership that will protect children, and the identification of pathfinder countries that will be ready to deliver the new agenda from January 2016.¹

This report explores the potential for the United Kingdom to play a leadership role at the heart of the new partnership, using new targets to end abuse, exploitation and all forms of violence against children as the focus for a new drive to protect children both within the UK as well as globally, through the UK's foreign and development policy.

It is based on an initial consultation with stakeholders from government, political parties and civil society, most of whom are primarily focused on domestic policy and have not yet been involved in the debate about implications of the proposed goals and targets for the UK.

Greater engagement and mobilisation of national stakeholders is critical to the success of the new development agenda, especially in richer countries which are not able to draw on the experience gained from implementation of the Millennium Development Goals. This report is therefore written both for those who have detailed knowledge of the post-2015 development agenda and those who do not, but have an interest in improving the wellbeing of children in the UK and around the world.

The report:

- Discusses the role child protection will play in the new international development agenda that will be finalised by the world's leaders at a summit in New York in September 2015.

- Outlines plans to develop a global partnership and a child protection fund to implement targets to end all forms of violence and abuse against children between 2016 and 2030.
- Discusses the UK's international and domestic policy objectives for protecting children and their relationship to proposed global goals and targets.
- Explores the role that the UK could play within the new partnership and how it can engage with other countries that wish to be at the forefront of ending violence against children.
- Makes recommendations for next steps.

A Global Partnership to Protect Children

Within the United Nations, governments are negotiating a new set of goals and targets to replace the Millennium Development Goals. 17 Sustainable Development Goals have been proposed and 169 targets (see figure 1). The goals will be universal, with all countries committed to achieving them at home.

The new goals represent a substantial increase in ambition for children. 139 million babies will be born in 2016 and 4.2 billion people will be children at some point between 2016 and 2030. The new agenda will aim to ensure the *protection, survival, and development* to their full potential of all these children.² (A discussion of all targets for children can be found in the CIC paper *The Post-2015 Agenda – Delivering the Core Promises for Children*.³)

The MDGs did not include targets to protect children. Their inclusion in the new agenda is based on growing awareness of the scale of violence suffered by children, with UNICEF and the World Health Organization (WHO) bringing together a growing body of evidence to demonstrate a global problem that has been largely “undocumented and unreported.”⁴ These targets are central to creating a post-2015 world fit for children. They have the potential to become a signature issue that will resonate with the public – and with children – around the world.

Figure 1

Goal 1	End poverty in all its forms everywhere
Goal 2	End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture
Goal 3	Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages
Goal 4	Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
Goal 5	Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
Goal 6	Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all
Goal 7	Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all
Goal 8	Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all
Goal 9	Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation
Goal 10	Reduce inequality within and among countries
Goal 11	Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
Goal 12	Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
Goal 13	Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts
Goal 14	Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development
Goal 15	Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss
Goal 16	Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels
Goal 17	Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

Under the Convention on the Rights of the Child, ratified by the UK in 1991, governments must take “all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse.”⁵ The new goals respond to this with a headline target to “end abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence and torture against children.” It also sets targets for specific threats such as child trafficking, child sexual exploitation, child marriage, female genital mutilation, birth registration, and child labour (see figure 2).

Given the breadth of the internationally accepted definition of violence against children, this creates a far-reaching agenda for the protection of children, covering “all forms of harm” and requiring action to tackle physical, sexual, and mental or psychological violence, and the impact of neglect and negligent treatment.⁶ These targets are supported by others that aim to reduce violence in the societies that children live, to end violence against women, and to ensure that all citizens, children included, have access to justice and to fair and effective institutions.

Debate is now underway on how the new goals and targets should be financed and implemented, with governments committed to building “multi-stakeholder partnerships that mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technologies and financial resources to support the achievement of sustainable development goals in all countries.”⁷

A number of partnerships already exist that focus on child survival and development. For example:

- Every Woman, Every Child aims to deliver the Global Strategy for Women’s and Children’s Health⁸ through “an unprecedented global movement that mobilizes and intensifies international and national action by governments, multilaterals, the private sector and civil society.”⁹
- The Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) movement was launched in the face of a “fragmented and dysfunctional” global response to child malnutrition.¹⁰

- The global vaccine initiative, GAVI, was launched as “an entirely new approach...to bring together the best of what key UN agencies, governments, the vaccine industry, private sector and civil society had to offer in order to improve childhood immunisation.”¹¹

There are many other examples, but the lack of a global platform to end violence and protect children is striking. Following the publication of *If Not Now, When?* and UNICEF reports *Hidden in Plain Sight*¹² and *Children in Danger: act to end violence against children*,¹³ stakeholder consultations have identified demand for this deficit to be corrected, through formation of a new partnership that would be inspired by the vision that *no child should live in fear*.

A global partnership to protect children would:

- Bring together *pathfinder countries* that are prepared to implement new plans to prevent and respond to violence against children from 2016 onwards, while sharing best practice and transferring lessons learned to other countries.
- Build a *powerful movement* at national, subnational and local levels, supporting delivery in pathfinder countries by creating demand for an end to violence and challenging the social norms that tolerate violence and abuse.
- Act as a *global forum* for advocacy and mobilisation around ending violence against children, building political will, setting standards for the services that children should expect to benefit from, investing in data and evidence, and promoting dialogue and accountability.
- Serve as a *catalyst* for finance in a field that is starved of resources, while helping share knowledge and solutions between countries, based on the Fund for the Protection of Children that is being developed with the UK.

In one important respect, this partnership would be different from those that have preceded it. As a groundbreaking report from the UN Secretary-General argued in

Figure 2

Proposed Targets for 2030

Prevent and eliminate violence against children...

- End abuse, exploitation, trafficking, and all forms of violence and torture against children (16.2)
- Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in public and private spheres, including trafficking, and sexual and other types of exploitation (5.2)
- Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage, and female genital mutilation (5.3)
- End child labor in all its forms including recruitment and use of child soldiers (8.7)
- Provide safe, non-violent, inclusive, and effective learning environments for all (4a)
- Ensure all learners acquire knowledge...[for] promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence (4.7)

...reduce the impact of violence in their families and communities...

- Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere (16.1)
- Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls (5.2)
- Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable (11)



...and ensure access to fair and effective institutions and to justice for all

- Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels, and ensure equal access to justice for all (16.3)
- Provide legal identity for all, including birth registration (16.9)
- Strengthen relevant institutions... preventing violence (16a)

Some targets have been condensed, for the full versions refer to the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals' Outcome Document. Available at http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/4518SDGs_FINAL_Proposal%20of%20OWG_19%20July%20at%201320hrsver3.pdf

2006, “every society, no matter its cultural, economic or social background, can and must stop violence against children.”¹⁴ Violence is a global challenge, not just one for developing countries. Within a new partnership, developed countries must show leadership, not just through their international policy, but through their action at home. The principle of universality – which is central to the post-2015 agenda – is fundamental and inescapable.

The question for the UK is what role it should play in a new partnership to protect children. Is ending violence against children – in all its forms – an important UK priority for implementation of the post-2015 development agenda? And if so, is it prepared to make both domestic and international commitments, and to work with others to mobilise a movement that has sufficient political will, strategy, and finance to ensure *no child should live in fear*?

Protecting Children Around the World

The case for global leadership is strong.

The UK government has been at the forefront of arguing that a commitment to promoting peaceful and inclusive societies should be central to the new development agenda.¹⁵ The High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda, co-chaired by the Prime Minister, called for “a fundamental shift – to recognise peace and good governance as core elements of wellbeing, not optional extras.”¹⁶ It also emphasised that “this is a universal agenda, for all countries.”

The UK has also called for no effort to be spared in providing children with a safer future.¹⁷ The Prime Minister has called for greater focus on the world’s vulnerable children, declaring that “every child deserves a childhood... and to be protected from harm.”¹⁸ This is a non-partisan issue,¹⁹ with all major parties in the UK supporting greater action to reduce the unacceptable levels of violence and abuse that children suffer on a global level, often with a particular focus on violence against girls.²⁰

Public awareness and support is high, driven by high-profile cases such as the attempted assassination of Malala Yousafzai, the kidnapping of Nigerian school girls

by Boko Haram, and the impact of the Syrian conflict on the country’s children; while UK campaigning groups have been at the forefront of advocacy against violence against children, both through broad²¹ and issue-specific campaigns.²²

Violence is a significant threat to the UK’s broader development and international objectives. The post-2015 development agenda aims to *leave no-one behind* by ending the worst forms of poverty by 2030.²³ Achieving this objective is impossible without a substantial increase in progress in fragile and conflict-affected states where those living in absolute poverty, a third of whom are children,²⁴ are increasingly concentrated.²⁵

Instability makes it much harder for a society to create conditions in which all children survive and develop to their full potential, but violence and abuse also has a direct impact on a child’s development outcomes. Victims of violence are less likely to be healthy,²⁶ receive less education and learn less if they are in school, and experience long-lasting damage to their economic prospects.²⁷

Violence also reduces the return on investment in child survival and development, especially in countries such as Nigeria and Pakistan – both priority countries for the Department for International Development – where education and health systems are under violent attack.²⁸ Conflict also wipes out past development gains,²⁹ with the heaviest impact falling on children, and is the epitome of a failure to sustain development.³⁰

The UK already recognises this challenge and is at the forefront of international efforts to tackle violence against children. It has shown leadership in responding to specific threats faced by children, such as child marriage,³¹ sexual violence in conflict,³² female genital mutilation and cutting,³³ online sexual exploitation,³⁴ child trafficking,³⁵ and the violence that prevents children receiving an education.³⁶ On each of these issues, it has played an important role in building political will, promoting new policies and legal frameworks, and expanding and strengthening the coalition to protect children.

However, there is increasing appetite for the UK to go further.

- The All Party Parliamentary Group on Protecting Children in Armed Conflict has found that the UK is “currently failing to protect children and address their physical and emotional development and well-being which are often severely disrupted by armed conflict.”³⁷
- In fragile states, violence undermines the UK’s ability to deliver results for children through its development programme. Two of its largest investments in basic education, for example, are in Nigeria and Pakistan, both countries where extremists target schools and the children who attend them.
- More broadly, more work is needed to prepare for the strategic and operational shifts that the post-2015 framework will bring. The UK has fought hard for ambitious targets on reducing violence, strengthening institutions and improving access to justice, but is yet to articulate how it plans to be part of delivering them in a way that will meet the needs of the most vulnerable children, including those who are marginalised and excluded by their experience of violence.

The post-2015 targets on violence against children also offer opportunities for the UK to work constructively with its international partners. The negotiation of the *peaceful societies* goal has often been contentious, given sensitivities about the “securitization of development” and fears that targets on violence, institutions, and access to justice may be used to impose conditionality and dilute country ownership.³⁸

But targets to end violence against children command broad support from UN member states and reflect the General Assembly’s resolve for comprehensive, systematic and multifaceted approaches to protecting children.³⁹ By playing a central role in a new partnership, the UK has the potential to redefine its development cooperation with:

- Major powers such as Brazil, which is acting to strengthen legal safeguards for its children⁴⁰ and which is experimenting with new approaches to protecting children that it believes have global relevance,⁴¹ or Indonesia which has included policies to combat violence against children in its medium-term development plan.⁴²
- Regional groupings such as the African Union which has placed the eradication of violence against women and children at the heart of its common position for the post-2015 agenda.⁴³
- Existing priority countries for UK development assistance, such as Tanzania, which has set up a taskforce on violence against children, led by the Ministry of Community Development and with representatives from the social welfare, health, education, and justice sectors.

Protecting Children Within the UK

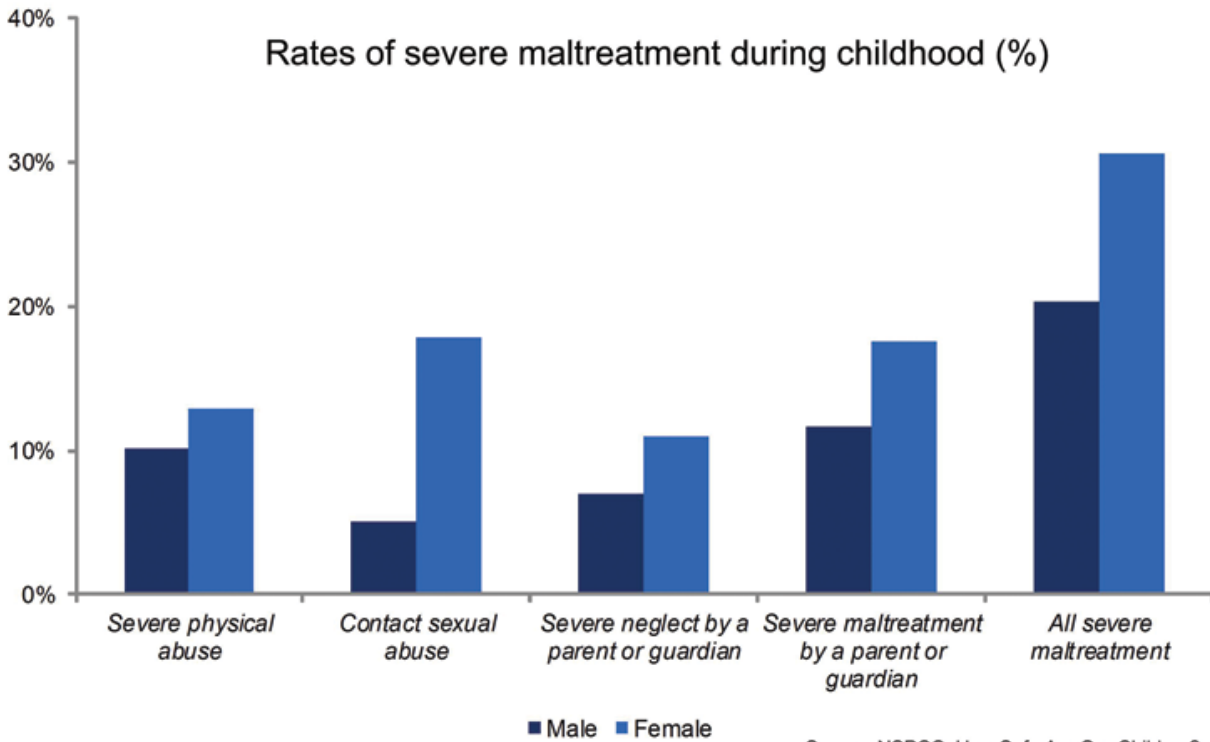
If the UK is to be a credible participant in a new global partnership, however, it must also be prepared to make domestic policy commitments. There is a strong case for it doing so, given the need to respond to a series of scandals that have exposed the failure of child protection systems to prevent or respond to extremely serious abuse.

This has given unprecedented, and much needed, political attention to the violence suffered by children in the UK (see figure 3). A quarter of young people say they have experienced some form of severe abuse or neglect as a child,⁴⁴ while 41% of young women and 14% of young men in England say they have been victims of sexual abuse within their relationships.⁴⁵ Violence has a powerful impact on the wellbeing of children in the UK, with those who are bullied frequently four times more likely to be unhappy than those who are not.⁴⁶

Figure 3

Young People Report Abuse They Suffered

As children...



Source: NSPCC, How Safe Are Our Children?, 2014

In their relationships...

41 PER CENT
Of young women
say they have
been victims of
sexual abuse



14 PER CENT
Of young men
say they have
been victims of
sexual abuse



Source: Safeguarding Teenage Intimate Relationships (STIR), Briefing paper 2: Incidence Rates, 2015

As in most countries, the scale of the epidemic of violence against children has been “hidden in plain sight.”⁴⁷ Recent events, however, have challenged a pervasive culture of denial. Operation Yewtree, launched in the wake of revelations that Jimmy Savile was one of the UK’s most prolific sexual predators, has secured five high-profile convictions, while other celebrities have been convicted as a result of related investigations. Allegations have also been made about the involvement of members of the political establishment, with “serious and organised sexual abuse, and the murder of three young boys” the subject of an ongoing Metropolitan Police Service investigation.⁴⁸ The Home Secretary has said that it is becoming clear that “the very institutions of the state that should be protecting children were not doing so.”⁴⁹ Inquiries have also been completed or are in progress into historic abuse in Scotland, Northern Ireland, and Wales, while the Gary Glitter case⁵⁰ has had significant international ramifications with convictions for offences committed in South-East Asia.

Independent inquiries have uncovered the failure of the political, criminal justice, and child protection systems to respond to systematic abuse faced by children in Rotherham, and continued denial of the seriousness and pervasiveness of the problem.⁵¹ Similar patterns of abuse and official inaction have been uncovered in Oxford,⁵² Rochdale,⁵³ Derby,⁵⁴ Bristol,⁵⁵ and Telford,⁵⁶ and further allegations remain under investigation. Systemic failures have also been identified to protect children from sexual exploitation within gangs.⁵⁷

In Scotland, the government has made a similar commitment to learning from past mistakes, with the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning promising that the Scottish Parliament will stand up for victims of abuse and will work to “fully understand the failures of the past, enabling us to prevent them happening again.”⁵⁸ It is in the process of implementing the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014,⁵⁹ as part of a shift towards measuring outcomes for children (with safety from abuse, neglect and harm one of eight indicators for assessing wellbeing),⁶⁰ while the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child is the foundation of its Getting it

Right for Every Child approach to working with children.⁶¹ The Northern Ireland Executive has also made a renewed commitment to early intervention and prevention,⁶² with the Ministers for Health, Social Services and Public Safety, and of Justice developing a series of recommendations to improve longer term outcomes for vulnerable children and families.⁶³

Awareness has also increased of the prevalence of other forms of abuse against children that were once seen as only affecting other countries. A quarter of the victims of modern slavery in the UK are believed to be children,⁶⁴ with the recently passed Modern Slavery Act.⁶⁵ 20,000 girls in the UK are estimated to be at risk of female genital mutilation,⁶⁶ with the government announcing that it is “absolutely committed to preventing and ending this extremely harmful form of violence.”⁶⁷

There is also heightened concern at the way violent extremists are recruiting British children, with girls as young as 15 enticed to leave their families for Syria through a process that has been described as “ideological and sexual grooming.”⁶⁸ In Northern Ireland, conflict there has added a distinctive dimension to both patterns of abuse and the response to them, with an official inquiry finding that some abusers used “their paramilitary links and the fear it engendered, to exploit children and young people,” while “many offenders [have] been unlawfully dealt with by local paramilitary groups.”⁶⁹

Many leading politicians have been deeply shocked by the reality of abuse, enquiries have been established and commitments made on mandating reporting of abuse and improving the law enforcement process, both in terms of securing justice for and the treatment of victims. There is, moreover, much to build on as the UK attempts to strengthen its child protection system. According to the NSPCC, “in many ways children are safer than they were a generation ago.”⁷⁰ Child homicides and deaths due to assault are falling, as are levels of violent crime.⁷¹ Public awareness of the scale of abuse that children have suffered has been heightened by recent scandals.⁷² This is translating into a greater willingness to challenge the social norms that tolerate violence and abuse, including by children who recognise their right to be protected, and to

report abuse when it occurs. Helplines, for example, have seen substantial increases in demand for their services.⁷³

The child protection systems in the UK also have a long history, many strengths, and a track record of recent improvements. In 2011, the Munro Review found that the “English child protection system has made enormous strides over the past couple of decades, in terms of our knowledge of effective interventions and in embedding the framework for multi-agency working,”⁷⁴ while the Chief Executive of the Children and Families Courts Advisory and Support Service has argued that increased respect for the voice of children has helped create a system that is regarded as a model by other countries.⁷⁵

Similar arguments could be made for child protection systems in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland, with existing institutions and human resources providing a firm foundation on which future reforms can be built. In Northern Ireland, for example, an independent inquiry found “dedication, commitment and innovation” from care, support, health, and education professionals, from police officers, and from activists, “who are passionate about regenerating their communities and supporting and protecting their children.”⁷⁶ The Scottish Government has overseen two comprehensive inspections of its child protection system, finding improved leadership, coordination, willingness to report concerns, and action to protect the most vulnerable children.⁷⁷

There is, however, consensus that ‘more of the same’ will not be enough to bring substantial reductions in the levels of the many forms of physical, sexual, and mental violence children face, and in levels of neglect that are both forms of abuse and the risk factors for further violence, especially given recent and planned cuts in expenditure on the child protection system.⁷⁸

Evidence is mounting for the potential for early intervention and prevention strategies to reduce the long-term costs of a failure to protect children and to prepare them for adulthood (estimated at £17 billion per year for England and Wales).⁷⁹ In addition, “child protection systems need to be geared to identifying and responding to new and emerging threats,”⁸⁰ especially as technology

brings risks to children that may come from far beyond the UK’s territory and jurisdiction. Innovative approaches are badly needed, as is a greater contribution from the private sector in particular.

A New Type of Partnership

Research published by CIC and UNICEF has proposed that a global partnership to end violence and protect children should coalesce around a medium-term strategy for 2016 to 2020 that would reinvigorate existing campaigns and programmes, while building support for the policies and priorities that will be needed to accelerate progress throughout the 2020s.⁸¹ The partnership should combine support for national strategies to end violence with global initiatives that are politically resonant and would give the movement identity and purpose.

The most important recommendation, however, was for an alliance of pathfinder countries to sit at the heart of the new partnership, based on their willingness to lead on implementation from January 2016. This group would act as *laboratories for preventing violence*, and would demonstrate to other countries the most effective approaches to child protection. This would ensure the new partnership was more than a talking shop and would allow it to grow as it demonstrated its worth.

By choosing to act as a pathfinder, the UK could play a leadership role in a partnership with the potential to:

- *Bring together UK stakeholders around a vision that “no violence against children is justifiable; all violence against children is preventable.”*⁸²

The UK needs a fresh approach to protecting its children in the wake of repeated failures of its child protection systems. A new partnership has the ability to bring together governments, civil society, business, citizens, and children to deliver an integrated strategy to prevent and address violence against children.⁸³

- *Move beyond aid to a broader focus on the norms and systems that protect children from violence, abuse and neglect.*

The protection of children is under-funded in comparison to child survival and development, and additional development assistance will be needed, especially in the poorest countries, and in response to conflict and humanitarian emergencies. This is, however, only part of the much bigger task of generating political will to tackle violence in countries of all income levels, transforming social norms, building systems that protect children, and mobilising the domestic resources to support them.

- *Provide a platform that unites the UK's domestic and international commitments to children.*

The post-2015 agenda has the potential to redefine the relationship between rich and poor countries, allowing for greater sharing of models, expertise, and evidence between countries, and creating mechanisms for mutual accountability for delivering the new goals and targets. By playing a leading role in a partnership to protect children, the UK will demonstrate that it takes the principle of universality seriously and is committed to forging a new relationship with its international partners.

The partnership could add value to the UK's international and domestic efforts to end violence against children in three broad ways:

- *Generating and harnessing political will to protect children.*

Ending violence against children requires leadership from across society. It is especially important to challenge the belief that there is little that can be done to prevent violence. A global partnership of countries, with high level political support, would offer a powerful signal that governments and other stakeholders are committed to "building a world where violence has no place."⁸⁴ A partnership would offer leaders from across the UK an international platform on which to make a commitment to children alongside their peers from other countries.

- *Addressing transnational threats to children.*

Many of the threats faced by children cannot be addressed purely through domestic policy. Examples include online sexual exploitation, the trafficking of children across borders, the links between global supply chains and child labour, the spread of cultural practices such as FGM across borders, and the regional nature of many of the conflict and humanitarian emergencies that affect children. A new partnership will provide a forum for more effective responses to these and other transnational challenges.

- *Increasing innovation and knowledge sharing.*

In the UK, recent years have seen significant improvements in the availability and quality of the data needed to track how safe children are, with especially important contributions from civil society organisations.⁸⁵ A new partnership would provide the opportunity to transform this data into a comprehensive system for tracking progress over the next 15 years. It could also act as a focus for collecting and disseminating evidence on what works, drawing on both UK and international resources, and for investing in and evaluating innovative interventions. This would allow the UK to implement models that have been tested overseas, while sharing its child protection experience with others.

While the partnership would take an integrated approach to protecting children and would aim to prevent all forms of violence, the UK could advocate for a thematic focus for 2016-2020 on areas most relevant to its international and domestic objectives. Clearly, this is a matter for further consultation and debate among UK stakeholders, but potential priorities might include:

- *Action to tackle sexual violence against children, building on and extending the UK response to recent failures to prevent abuse and exploitation, and on the responsibilities of both professionals and the public to work together actively to prevent, identify, and respond to sexual violence,⁸⁶ while addressing a*

global threat that is estimated to affect one in ten girls and an unknown number of boys.⁸⁷

- *Responding to a new generation of threats to children*, building on the UK's commitment to tackling online sexual exploitation, an initiative that involves 48 countries and international organisations and that is notable for engaging non-traditional stakeholders that have a growing role in child protection, such as the technology and communications industry which has a key role in combating the use of the internet to harm children.⁸⁸
- *Reinvigorating the professional response to violence against children* by building commitment to an evidence-based programme of prevention and early intervention, to putting the needs of the most vulnerable children first, and to strengthening the social welfare workforce in the UK and elsewhere (and to scaling it up in countries where it is weak or non-existent).
- *Putting children first in conflict and humanitarian emergencies*, given the need to ensure that 'first responders' in emergencies are prepared to respond to the needs of children,⁸⁹ to build safe spaces and support networks for children and for women,⁹⁰ and to bridge the humanitarian and development divide in order to meet the longer-term needs of children for access to safe schools, and health and social protection systems.⁹¹

Building the Partnership

The work to design the post-2015 agenda has created a window of opportunity to protect children, but this window will not remain open forever. With 17 goals and 169 targets, the proposed agenda is both broad and extremely ambitious. Only those parts of it that drive implementation will gain credibility and remain relevant in the 2020s.

A vision of the new agenda is to ensure *the protection, survival, and development of children to their full potential*. Partnerships for child survival and development already

exist, backed up by sizeable domestic and international investment in sectors such as health, nutrition, water and sanitation, and education. In contrast, the child protection sector must act fast to demonstrate that the new agenda can transform our ability to protect children from danger.

It is expected that the partnership will include representative governments, international and national civil society organisations, academics and researchers, the private sector, foundations, leaders from faith-based communities, children and youth, and members of the United Nations family. It will be led by a global steering group composed of senior representatives from partner organisations and supported by a small secretariat that will be responsible for day-to-day operations. The partnership will not replace existing activity, whether at global, regional or national levels, but will help catalyse accelerated action to protect children.

Based on the experience of other multi-stakeholder partnerships, however, there are a number of potential governance models for the partnership, while a strategy must be developed that ensures it can deliver transformational change commensurate with the ambition of the post-2015 targets. An intensive process is therefore needed to agree the principles and architecture for the new partnership, develop a strategy to 2020 and roadmap for 2030, consult with stakeholders and funders, and prepare it for launch within 100 days of the UN Summit to adopt the post-2015 development agenda in New York at the end of September 2015. The new Child Protection Fund, which already has UK support, should be launched at the third International Conference on Financing for Development in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in July 2015.

At an international level, the UK has the potential to collaborate with other 'founding partners' to help design the partnership, while working nationally to prepare for participation in the partnership as a pathfinder country. It needs to:

1. Build national foundations for domestic implementation.

- Form a UK steering group, with sub-groups for England, Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland.
- Map existing data and evidence on child protection, building on the work on indicators already underway through the Office of National Statistics and bringing together the growing body of national and international evidence on what works to protect children.
- Develop a 'straw man proposal' for the contribution that could be made at UK level and by each of its four constituent countries.
- Hold a stakeholder forum to debate this proposal and to agree next steps for finalising the UK's pathfinder strategy.

2. Support the development of the global partnership.

- Develop a comprehensive child protection strategy for using the UK's foreign policy and development programmes to end violence against children, while mainstreaming this objective into health, education and other social programmes, and the UK's approach to conflict, fragility, and humanitarian emergencies.
- Provide political, technical and financial support to a design phase for the global partnership working with UN special representatives, international organisations, civil society, foundations, and the private sector.
- Promote the partnership to other countries, encouraging them to launch a national process to explore the potential for them to play a role as a pathfinder. Share experience with and learn from other potential pathfinders.
- Promote the Fund for the Protection of Children to other government donors, while exploring the potential for foundations, philanthropists, and the private sector to contribute, and for the use of

innovative forms of finance such as social impact bonds.⁹²

3. Political support.

- Support the development of the partnership within the UK and internationally, with the involvement of the Prime Minister and relevant ministers (governments in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland could make an earlier commitment).
- Launch the Fund for the Protection of Children at the Financing for Development conference in July, with the participation of a senior minister such as the Chancellor of the Exchequer.
- Promote action to end violence against children as a flagship achievement for the new development agenda, ensuring 2015 will be remembered as a year of hope for children.
- Support the launch of a global partnership to protect children from all forms of violence, exploitation and abuse, with the participation of the Prime Minister.

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