



NEW YORK UNIVERSITY

CENTER ON INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION



**If Not Now, When?
Ending Violence Against the World's Children**

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The world faces old and new security challenges that are more complex than our multilateral and national institutions are currently capable of managing. International cooperation is ever more necessary in meeting these challenges. The NYU Center on International Cooperation (CIC) works to enhance international responses to conflict, insecurity, and scarcity through applied research and direct engagement with multilateral institutions and the wider policy community.

CIC's programs and research activities span the spectrum of conflict, insecurity, and scarcity issues. This allows us to see critical inter-connections and highlight the coherence often necessary for effective response. We have a particular concentration on the UN and multilateral responses to conflict.

Table of Contents

If Not Now, When? Ending Violence Against the World's Children

David Steven

Acknowledgements	2
Key Messages	3
Time to End Violence	5
The Scale of the Epidemic	5
Breaking the Cycle	7
A Commitment to Protect Children from Violence	9
From Words to Action	10
Call to Action	13
About the Author	15
Endnotes	16

Acknowledgements

This paper has been prepared as a contribution to debate about implementation of a new global development agenda to replace the Millennium Development Goals from 2016-2030. It focuses on delivery of targets to end the epidemic of violence, exploitation and neglect that blights the lives of children across the world, with greatest impacts on the most vulnerable.

Publication coincides with the launch of a major campaign by UNICEF UK. This paper adds background and further detail to the campaign report. It builds on recent landmark UNICEF publications setting out data on the scale of violence against children and proposing strategies for tackling the problem.

The paper also draws on the Global Violence Reduction Conference 2014, hosted by the World Health Organization and the Violence Research Centre of the University of Cambridge, with support of the UBS Optimus Foundation and participation from the world's leading experts in the violence prevention field.

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Key Messages

A target to **end abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence, and torture against children** has been proposed as part of the post-2015 development agenda.

Support for this target is based on the recognition that **no violence against children is justifiable and all violence against children is preventable**. It forms part of a broader commitment to the role peaceful and inclusive societies play in sustainable development.

At present, **an epidemic of violence undermines child survival and development**, while causing broader economic damage and trapping children into cycles of violence they may not escape as adults. Ambitious post-2015 commitments on children's education, health, and wellbeing cannot be met as long as so many children live in fear.

While the challenge of protecting all children is a substantial one, strategies exist for tackling violence and other forms of abuse. With the right policies and sufficient resources, **substantial improvements in child safety can be achieved in less than a decade**.

Proposed targets to protect, prevent and address violence against children must be included in the final version of the new development agenda, with governments persuaded this is **a signature issue that will resonate with the public around the world**.

But as Nelson Mandela wrote a decade ago, **safety and security don't just happen: they are the result of collective consensus and public investment**. We must now begin **preparing for implementation of new targets**, moving beyond aspirations to credible plans.

We now have 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.

The next twelve months are critical. We must:

1. Secure an unequivocal global commitment to ending violence against children.

Governments must be convinced that tackling violence is an essential and resonant priority that will significantly improve the lives of children. A target to end violence against children must be retained in the post-2015 development agenda.

2. Develop foundations that will allow implementation to begin in January 2016.

An aspiration to end violence must be turned into something more concrete. Priorities include forming the partnership to scale up action to prevent violence and protect children and the coalition of pathfinder countries prepared to act first.

3. Create opportunities for world leaders to pledge support for urgent action to protect children.

Champions are needed to advocate for implementation of targets to end all forms of violence against children. The Financing for Development conference in July and Heads of State and Government Summit in September 2015 should be used to announce ambitious commitments.

In 2016, **139 million babies** will be born, while **4.2 billion people** will be children at some stage between 2016 and 2030.

At Rio+20, leaders made a commitment to ensuring the **protection, survival, and development** of all these children.

UN member states have now proposed a series of targets for 2030 that bring **the protection of children** to the heart of the sustainable development agenda.

This briefing discusses how the world can keep a promise that **no child should live in fear**, alongside other **core promises** that offer all children the chance to reach their full potential.

Vision

The protection, survival, and development of children to their full potential

Core Promises

“ No child should die from a disease we can prevent ”

“ Every child should have the food needed to grow normally ”

“ Every child should be able to read and write ”

“ No child should live in fear ”



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)
- 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.

Source: DESA UN (2012); OWG (2014)¹

Time to End Violence

The world now has an historic opportunity to accelerate efforts to protect all children from all forms of violence and exploitation.

- 2014 marks the 25th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which guarantees the protection of children from “all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation.”²
- A target to end abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence and torture against children has been proposed as part of the sustainable development goals that will replace the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2016. This would place the protection of children at the heart of the global development agenda.³
- The World Health Assembly has asked the Director General of the World Health Organization (WHO) to prepare the world’s first global action plan for ensuring health systems effectively address and prevent interpersonal violence – in particular against women and children.⁴ The plan will be presented in spring 2016.
- Recent years have seen increasingly powerful campaigns against a number of specific types of violence of children, including corporal punishment,⁵ female genital mutilation,⁶ child marriage,⁷ trafficking of children,⁸ sexual violence in conflict,⁹ and recruitment of child soldiers,¹⁰ as well as broader efforts to strengthen the protection of children,¹¹ including in conflict zones¹² and humanitarian settings,¹³ and to transform social attitudes towards violence against children.¹⁴

Violence against children is a universal challenge for all countries. Tackling it commands broad support from governments, both within the United Nations and the World Health Assembly, while many countries have demonstrated impressive progress in tackling one or more of the many types of abuse from which children suffer. Their citizens also care deeply about this issue.¹⁵

It resonates with parents, other caregivers and children around the world, at a time when the public needs to be convinced that countries are capable of working together to transform the lives of current and future generations.

Civil society has also demonstrated growing commitment to preventing violence. A global movement to protect children from violence, exploitation, and abuse is beginning to gain strength, and demonstrates the potential of campaigners to inject urgency into the struggle to protect children’s rights.¹⁶ The awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize 2014 to Kailash Satyarthi and Malala Yousafzay for their “struggle against the suppression of children and young people” marks an important recognition of the power of moral leadership in this field, and demonstrates the power of the activism and innovation of civil society.¹⁷

But **urgent steps are needed to ensure momentum is not lost.** Credible plans must be developed to deliver steep reductions in the violence children face. Otherwise, the aspiration to keep all children safe will be seen as an empty one, and the opportunity to confront violence will be lost for another generation.

The Scale of the Epidemic

Increasing international determination to protect children more effectively is grounded in a growing awareness of the scale of neglect, abuse, and other forms of violence they suffer.¹⁸

Over the past twenty years, the World Health Organization has raised the profile of violence as a public health issue,¹⁹ with its Director General warning in 2002 that increasingly the world risks saving children from preventable diseases only to:

Let them fall victim to violence or lose them later to acts of violence between intimate partners, to the savagery of war and conflict, or to self-inflicted injuries or suicide.²⁰

In 2006, the UN Secretary-General’s study on violence against children confirmed that violence against them “exists in every country of the world, cutting across culture,

class, education, income and ethnic origin."²¹ The report raised the international profile of the need to protect children, and built on Graça Machel's groundbreaking study of the impact of armed violence on "millions of children in which they are not merely bystanders, but targets."²²

Within the international system, this work has been taken forward by the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children, and for Children and Armed Conflict, and by the Committee on the Rights of the Child which has set out recommendations for overcoming "isolated, fragmented and reactive initiatives to address child caregiving and protection which have had limited impact on the prevention and elimination of all forms of violence."²³

Most recently, UNICEF has integrated a range of evidence into a landmark report that exposes the pervasiveness of a global epidemic of violence that has been largely "undocumented and underreported."²⁴ Violence against children, it found, can "take many forms (physical, sexual and emotional), occur in any setting (including the home, school, workplace and over the Internet) and be perpetrated by individuals (parents and other caregivers, peers, intimate partners, authority figures and strangers) or groups."²⁵ The UNICEF report also demonstrated the serious consequences that violence has for children's health, development and wellbeing, and the corrosive impact it has on the trust that enables a society to function normally.

While the new UNICEF data focuses on interpersonal violence, there is also increased awareness of the heightened vulnerability of children living in fragile and conflict-affected states, as well as in communities that are subject to heightened levels of political or criminal violence. Nearly a billion children live in countries that experienced conflict in 2013 or 2014, an estimated 200 million of these children have been directly affected by these conflicts.²⁶ Children in these situations are at increased risk of all forms of violence and exploitation, often for long periods after hostilities have come to an end. They also bear a crushing indirect burden from violence,

as their families' and societies' capacity to invest in their survival and development is eroded.

Conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo, for example, led to an estimated 2.7 million child deaths with fewer than 1% of the deaths directly attributable to fighting.²⁷ In fragile and conflict-affected states, meanwhile, almost a million more children would survive their first year of life if these states had made the same progress on infant mortality as more peaceful developing countries.²⁸ Millions of children also face deprivation when they flee conflict and instability, becoming more vulnerable to exploitation and other forms of violence. There were 8 million child refugees in 2013, and many more internally displaced.²⁹

Aside from conflict, disasters and other emergencies, and shocks can make children more vulnerable to violence. A flood or earthquake, for example, can leave children orphaned, separated from their parents or forced from their homes or schools, leaving them at risk from a range of abusive and exploitative practices.³⁰ Most recently the Ebola epidemic in West Africa poses a significant threat to children as they become isolated or are abandoned in countries that are fragile or have recent history of conflict, and where there are few effective institutions to protect children.³¹

The costs of failing to protect children are high. A review by the Childfund Alliance estimates the economic damage caused by physical, sexual, and psychological violence at 2-8% of global GDP, dwarfing resources spent on preventing violence and protecting children.³² It finds "a strong case in favor of investing in violence prevention, as adequate preventive actions will help avoid the immediate and long-term negative consequences that violence will have on the lives of children, their families and communities."³³

Violence also decreases the effectiveness of other expenditure in child survival and development, reducing return on investment from domestic resources and international development assistance. In the health sector, for example, annual external financing requirements for polio eradication are currently over \$1 billion for a disease that is now

confined to areas where violence prevents effective vaccination of children.³⁴ In Pakistan, vaccination campaigns absorb the time and energy of health workers, teachers, and other public sector workers. Polio is emblematic of how violence reduces the effectiveness and increases the cost of provision of vital health services.

Meanwhile, education systems have faced attack by armed groups in at least 70 countries around the world in recent years, and parents are reluctant to send children, girls in particular, to schools where they can face abuse by teachers or other students.³⁵ Nigeria, home to 15% of the children not in primary school, provides powerful evidence of the obstacles violence poses to providing a quality education to all.³⁶ As in health, investment in education systems is less effective when levels of violence are high.

Breaking the Cycle

Violence is cyclical and interconnected, with the World Development Report of 2011 highlighting the fate of people who live in communities or societies that are “trapped in a vicious cycle of legacies of violence, low trust, weak institutions, and continuing risk.”³⁷ Children suffer from these cycles, with many experiencing repeated victimization or finding that one form of violence – for example, child labor or marriage – increases their vulnerability to other forms of violence.

Victimization also increases of future offending. As the Executive Director of UNICEF has commented:

*Violence begets violence. We know a child experiencing abuse is more likely to see violence as normal, even acceptable and more likely to perpetuate violence against his or her own children in the future.*³⁸

But these cycles can be broken. We have evidence to demonstrate that reductions in violence are possible. Most Western societies have experienced steep declines in violent crime over the past decade, a trend that is matched by many Asian countries, and is now being replicated in some parts of Latin America and the Caribbean, and in Africa.³⁹ Progress in some cities has been especially

impressive, with the homicide rate in São Paulo falling by more than 60% in just a decade.⁴⁰

Trends in the abuse of children are hard to establish, given a lack of historical data, but evidence from the United States demonstrates that significant gains can be achieved – and in a short period of time. Substantiated cases of child sexual and physical abuse fell by more than a half in 20 years, while cases of neglect fell by 14% (a trend thought to reflect a true decline in levels of abuse).⁴¹

In American schools, meanwhile, adolescents were less than half as likely to report being victims of violence over a 15 year period, and less than a quarter as likely to be victimized outside school.⁴² Levels of violence against American children remain unacceptably high, but these are remarkable – and largely unheralded – improvements in child safety.

Even where data are not available, children (and adolescents, in particular) live more secure lives in any country that has seen a recent reduction in violent crime, given the concentration of this form of violence among teenagers and young people in their twenties. In some countries, children have also benefited from the rapid establishment of social norms that reject violent forms of punishment.⁴³ And just as children are most vulnerable in conflict, they also gained the most from the sustained reduction in the prevalence of civil wars seen in the 1990s and 2000s (although a recent resurgence in conflict has demonstrated the fragility of these gains).⁴⁴

There is also a growing consensus about how violence should be tackled, backed up by a body of evidence on the effectiveness of interventions that protect children, although a great deal of work is needed to understand which interventions are most effective and in which contexts. UNICEF, WHO, NGOs, civil society organizations, academics and other experts emphasize the need for integrated strategies that draw on the resources of all parts of society and that include some or all of the following components:⁴⁵

From problems...

Across the **world**, **124,000** children are murdered each year. **1 in 6** experience severe violent discipline ■ In **Syria**, **10,000** children have died in conflict ■ In **Cambodia**, **26%** of young people witness domestic violence each month ■ In **Mongolia**, **30%** of children are child laborers ■ **El Salvador** has the world's highest child murder rate, almost **7 times** the global average ■ In the **United States**, **270,000** children were involved in gangs in 2011 ■ In **Swaziland**, **1 in 3** girls have been victims of sexual violence

end abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence and torture against children

In **São Paulo**, the murder rate fell **63%** in ten years ■ In 2008 **Egypt** made female genital mutilation illegal, giving legal protection to **15,000,000** girls ■ In **Afghanistan**, a new system for referrals led to a **60%** increase in child protection cases in four years ■ **Jordan's** safe school campaign reduced physical violence by **28%** in a year ■ In **Chile**, lengthening school days reduced juvenile crime by **18%** ■ In **Uganda**, girls reported **50%** fewer rapes when they benefitted from a program boosting their livelihoods

...to solutions

Source: WHO (2014); UNICEF (2014); UNICEF (2013); Ministry of Education (2004); Peres (2014); Berthelon & Kruger (2011); OSRSG (2013)⁴⁷

- Leadership and campaigns that challenge the legality, social acceptance and tolerance of any form of violence against children, establishing a norm that all violence against both girls and boys is unacceptable and must be prohibited and eliminated.⁴⁶
- Laws that protect children from violence, combined with policies and investment that offer them improved access to justice and to fair, legitimate, and effective institutions that advance their rights and interests.
- Support for parents, other caregivers, and families that encourages the creation of safe and nurturing relationships between children and those who look after them, with a focus on both mothers and fathers, and on professionals with responsibility for child welfare.
- Development of children's life skills and resilience, alongside amplification of the voice of children, supporting them to become advocates for their rights, with approaches tailored to the needs of children at various stages of their life cycle - to both girls and to boys, and to child perpetrators of violence.
- Provision of better care and support for child victims and survivors of violence, combined with action to end the denial of their experiences of violence, and to ensure professionals (in the health system for example) take action to safeguard children when they suspect violence.⁴⁸
- Mitigation of risk factors that lead to high levels of violence, such as the abuse of alcohol and drugs, and uncontrolled access to guns, knives, and other weapons (including those associated with self-harm).
- Collection of the data and evidence needed to track trends for all forms of violence and exploitation, establish the effectiveness of protection strategies, and ensure accountability for commitments to end violence.

No-one believes that violence against children can *easily* be reduced. It takes time to shift cultural norms and social practices, and build robust institutions and systems.⁴⁹ Much better prevalence data are badly needed and the evidence base on what works must be developed. But progress can be made that will benefit large numbers of children. The myth of the intractability of violence is not sustainable, with change already taking place in countries across the world.

A Commitment to Protect Children from Violence

The Millennium Declaration included a commitment to ensuring all people lived free from “the fear of violence, oppression or injustice,” but an explicit commitment to protect children was not integrated into the Millennium Development Goals.⁵⁰

That deficit is expected to be corrected as part of the post-2015 development agenda. The 70 countries that formed the Open Working Group of the General Assembly on Sustainable Development Goals agreed that *the protection, survival and development of children to their full potential* should be a core objective of the new agenda. They also emphasized the need for a focus on those who are most vulnerable in a world characterized by inequalities in gender, wealth, opportunities, and power.⁵¹

The new agenda seems certain to make a series of ambitious commitments to children. Negotiations will continue through 2015, but there is already an overwhelming consensus that the world should seek to end childhood deaths from preventable diseases, while ensuring all children receive the food they require for normal development, the resources they need for a decent quality of life, and an education that will allow them to thrive throughout their adult lives.

These targets are zero-based and can only be met through a willingness to “put the last child first.”⁵² That means tackling deprivation and inequality across many dimensions. A continuation of the status quo – where violence entrenches poverty, malnutrition and ill health,

a lack of education, and other forms of disadvantage – will lead to the inevitable failure of the commitments to children that will be made in the post-2015 agenda as a whole.

The Open Working Group’s proposal, which has been accepted as the basis for intergovernmental negotiations in 2015, accepts this imperative. It:

- Covers all forms of violence against children and is consistent with the principle that “no violence against children is justifiable; all violence against children is preventable.”⁵³
- Makes special mention of the need to eliminate abusive and harmful practices such as the trafficking of children, child marriage, female genital mutilation, child labor, and the recruitment of child soldiers.
- Recognizes that action is needed in all countries, as part of a universal agenda that will protect the rights of children to freedom from violence wherever they live.
- Emphasizes that no one can be left behind – requiring the greatest focus on the most vulnerable children, many of whom experience violence on a regular basis, and support for the families, communities, and countries in which they live.
- Embeds this in broader commitments to building peaceful and inclusive societies, including a reduction in violence against adults of all ages.

Together, these visionary targets, which are summarized in the diagram on page 4, add up to a promise that *no child should live in fear*. This promise sits alongside, and underpins, other ‘core promises’ made by the proposed sustainable development goals of which the three most noteworthy are: *no child should die from a disease we can prevent; every child should have the food needed to grow normally; and every child should be able to read and write*.

All of these promises are exceptionally ambitious, but the commitment to preventing violence and protecting children requires the most urgent preparation for implementation, given that it has not previously been

included in the global development agenda. The challenge is to understand how interventions can be delivered at a scale required to achieve transformative rather than piecemeal change. There is also an urgent need to tailor approaches to countries and communities with weak capacity to respond to the high levels of violence to which their children are exposed.

Meeting this challenge demands sustained political will. It requires the animation of a new alliance that reaches across all sectors of society with the capacity and resources to develop and implement a global strategy to protect children. And it needs a coalition of pathfinder countries to come together; countries that are prepared to act first, and then to convince the rest of the world that rapid improvements in child safety are within reach.

From Words to Action

Political Will

Leadership is essential.

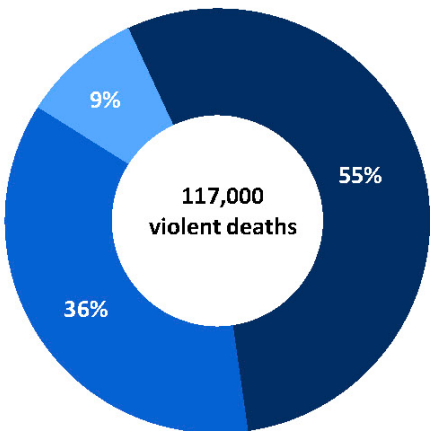
In the past, the vulnerability of children has been exacerbated by widespread denial of the violence they suffer and by impunity for perpetrators. Most governments have failed to make sufficient investments in protecting children from violence, while the least peaceful communities and societies have been starved of public services due to their marginalization and the obstacles that violence itself creates to the delivery of services to children.

At a global level, many forms of violence against children will not drop by substantial amounts without greater commitment from policymakers. We therefore need international and national leaders to signal their personal commitment to protecting children, and to early and sustained action to meet proposed targets for the new development agenda. Combined with advocacy from other champions of children’s rights, the aim should be to build local, national, and global movements that are committed to keeping children safe.⁵⁴

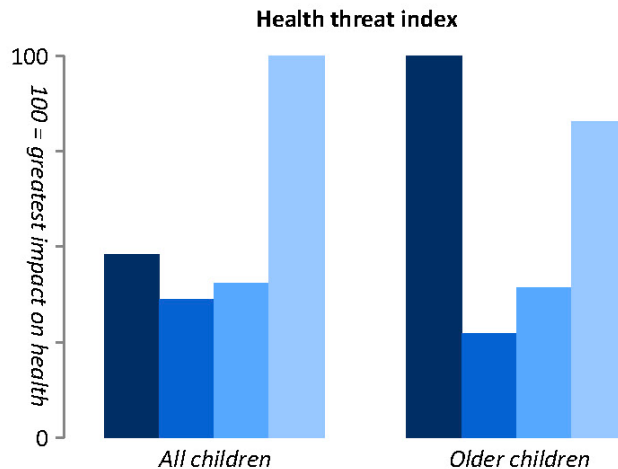
The voice of children should also be amplified, especially those of child survivors of violence, given their role in

Violence and Children in 2030

According to WHO projections, violent deaths are not on track to fall between 2015 and 2030. The burden of violence – including deaths and injuries – also remains high, with violence a leading health problem for children, and adolescents in particular.



■ Interpersonal violence ■ Self harm
■ Collective violence



■ Violence ■ Tuberculosis
■ Cancer ■ HIV/AIDS

Source: WHO (2014)⁵⁶

forcing societies to confront this agenda head-on, and the moral authority of children who have experienced violence and now campaign to prevent others suffering the same fate. When consulted, children have also strongly supported their involvement in preventing and responding to violence.⁵⁵ Children have an important role to play in supporting peers who are victims of violence and challenging the values and behaviors that encourage violent behavior.

Partnership and Strategy

Leadership is also required to mobilize a new movement to take on the mission of ending violence and protecting children.

Lessons can be drawn from other sectors, which offer a number of possible models. In child nutrition, for example, a powerful critique of ‘fragmented and dysfunctional’ global responses led to the formation of a movement that aligned government, civil society, and business around

nationally-led plans to scale up nutrition.⁵⁷ For energy, a global partnership has developed a costing for delivering a target of providing universal access to modern energy sources and is “helping create the conditions that will enable a massive scale-up of private investment” needed to achieve universal access.⁵⁸

A full review of these and other partnerships is needed, although the best solution for protecting children will, of course, be shaped by the very different challenges posed by violence prevention. Similar ambition is critical, however. At a minimum, an integrated approach will be needed across the child welfare, health, education, and justice fields – each of which has a unique role to play in protecting children. Over time, joined-up approaches will be needed with those working in areas such as family support, gender-based violence (given the strong links between violence against women and children), peace and state building (given the heightened vulnerability of children in these societies), governance (given the need for stronger justice and other institutions), and urban

development (especially in countries experiencing, or at risk of experiencing, an urban crime wave).

This partnership should coalesce around a medium term strategy (perhaps for 2016 to 2020) that reinvigorates and scales up existing campaigns and programs, while building support for priorities and policies that will build the foundations for accelerated progress throughout the 2020s. Broad strategies for national action have been identified on page 9 and should guide the partnership, but there would also be potential for exploring global initiatives that would be politically resonant and could help inspire the movement.

For example (and, in order to stimulate discussion rather than to offer a definitive list of suggestions), the following areas could be explored:

- Development of a Child Violence Index (or a Child Protection Index), given that such a measure would have significant normative power and would attract the attention of policymakers, the media, and the public.⁵⁹
- National targets or indicators to reduce the number of offenses that go unreported and uninvestigated, or fail to lead to a successful prosecution, challenging the impunity enjoyed by those who commit violence against children.
- Establishment of minimum standards for child protection to ensure all children have access to social workers and other professionals on the frontline of securing children's rights. This standard would be tailored to capacities of countries in different income groups, and could be combined with renewed investment in training these professionals in the protection of children.
- A mission to ensure that *every child in the world can pick up the phone and talk to someone they trust*. This would help strengthen a piecemeal system of helplines, while raising standards and ensuring growing numbers of referrals to strengthened child protection systems.

- Formation of a coalition of cities, with personal commitment from their mayors, dedicated to reducing the impact of organized and other forms of violent crime on young people, through the sharing of expertise in areas such as access to justice, policing, and community development.[†]
- A parallel initiative to strengthen international knowledge-sharing networks in a way that would emphasize the need for mutual learning between countries of all income types (between police forces, for example, or groups educating parents, or those running school safety programs).
- Development of a comprehensive 'map' of legislation in every state and territory relevant to the protection of children from all forms of violence, of the legal reforms needed for effective protection, and of mechanisms for improving accountability.⁶⁰
- Launch of an annual campaign to promote global and national remembrance of child victims of violence and to amplify the voice of survivors, as part of a broader effort to involve all children in actions to end violence.
- Creation of an expert commission charged with assessing the determinants of violence, exploring the benefits and costs of various interventions to protect children, and of providing initial estimates of likely costs for reducing violence at global, regional, and national levels.
- Research into the cost and effectiveness of interventions to prevent violence, leading to a 'Solutions Summit' that would mark a step forward in the development of evidence-based policymaking.⁶¹

Pathfinder Countries

The most important question is which countries will be first to answer this call to action and to agree to lead on implementation of the new strategy from the 1st January 2016.

⁵⁹Compare to the Human Development Index, which was designed as "just one number" that would place people at the heart of international development.

[†]Compare to the C40: "a network of the world's megacities taking action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions." <http://www.c40.org/>

An alliance of pathfinder countries would require representation from rich, middle-income, and poorer countries, and from those facing a range of child protection challenges. Large cities or conurbations could also be included. This group would act as *laboratories for preventing violence*, based on:

- An unequivocal commitment from each head of state/government, from relevant ministers, and from other national, provincial and city leaders.
- Development of an *ending violence* road map, with an emphasis on actions for 2016-2020 and clear identification of domestic and international funding needs.
- A willingness to share best practice and, for those with resources, to support actions in countries with limited capacity. To be clear, richer countries would also be required to take domestic action in line with the universal nature of the post-2015 agenda.⁶²
- Urgent preparations to pilot new data collection approaches in line with indicators developed for the post-2015 agenda and to explore the feasibility of a Child Violence Index.
- Development of a mechanism for transferring lessons from pathfinder to other countries, allowing for rapid growth of the movement.

A fund would also be needed to provide external support for countries that need it, and also to support innovation, development of the evidence base, and the dissemination of best practice. This would provide a tangible and early contribution to broader efforts to fund the post-2015 agenda, and could be developed through the extension of an existing mechanism or the creation of a new vehicle.

Call to Action

The proposal for a target to *end abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence and torture against children* has created a window of opportunity, but this window will not remain open for long.

Following the publication of the Open Working Group's proposal, attention has begun to turn towards the implementation and financing of new sustainable development objectives (though negotiation of goals and targets will continue in 2015). The Secretary-General's synthesis report will bring further attention to these questions, while the International Conference on Financing for Development in July 2015 and the Heads of State and Government Summit that will finalize the new agenda in September are opportunities to crystalize commitments. Delivery of the new agenda must begin in just a year's time.

During this period, urgent action is needed to:

1. Secure an unequivocal global commitment to ending violence against children.

There is broad support for inclusion of a target to end violence against children in the post-2015 development agenda. However, this target could be lost if the number of goals and targets is reduced to fulfil the Rio+20 mandate for a goal framework that is "action oriented, concise and easy to communicate."⁶³ Governments must be convinced that tackling violence is an essential and resonant priority that will significantly improve the lives of children. The priorities are to:

- Ensure that the target to end violence against children is retained as part of the final post-2015 agenda and that it is not removed or folded into another target.
- Highlight the protection of girls and boys as one of the core promises that should form part of the vision and narrative for the new development agenda, communicating its transformative potential to caregivers and children across the world.
- Make the case for why child protection underpins other core promises that must be delivered to all children by 2030 (survival, nutrition, learning, etc.) and why implementation cannot be delayed.
- Explain the importance to child protection of broader action to 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 16 in the Open Working Group proposal).

- Develop indicators and invest in data collection, as part of a broader data revolution, to enable governments to be held accountable for protecting children, while working with national statistical commissions to increase capacity for measurement.

2. Develop foundations that will allow implementation to begin in January 2016.

The post-2015 agenda is likely to be broad and (as happened with the MDGs) only those parts of it that drive accelerated implementation will still be relevant in 2030. Urgent work is therefore required to turn an aspiration to end violence into a local, national, and global campaign to protect children. Priorities are to:

- Ask the Secretary-General to create an advisory forum with a mandate to lay the groundwork for a new or reinvigorated movement or partnership to prevent violence and protect children, with support from across the international system and with participation from eminent leaders and experts from outside government.⁶⁴
- To inform the development of an implementation strategy and delivery plan, request UNICEF, WHO, and other relevant international and national organizations to develop a joint analysis of what it will take to prevent violence and protect all children by 2030.⁶⁵
- Work with the advisory forum to mobilize national governments, international organizations, the private sector, foundations, civil society, and other stakeholders to contribute to the new partnership.
- Ensure full integration with the work that WHO is already conducting to develop a global plan of action to strengthen the role of the health system to prevent violence against women and children, while securing a full contribution from all other relevant sectors.

- Begin work to form the coalition of pathfinder countries to lead on this agenda through domestic and international action, with a balanced representation from countries of all income groups.

3. Create opportunities for world leaders to pledge support for urgent action to protect children.

Political will is important for all development challenges but essential for child protection, given the depth of denial that has surrounded all forms of violence against children, combined with the influence of international norms in reducing violence. Commitment is needed both for the protection of children in isolation and also as part of delivery of a broader set of core promises to children between 2016 and 2030. The priorities are to:

- Gain the support of a champions group, prepared to advocate at global and national levels for early implementation of post-2015 targets that aim to protect children.
- Hold meetings to brief political leaders and other influencers, debate implementation, and secure pledges of support, including at major events in 2015 such as Davos (January), G7 Summit (Germany, June), G20 (Turkey, tbc), and the BRICs summit (Russia, July).
- Hold an event for ministers as part of the Financing for Development conference to set out commitments to the financing and implementation of the post-2015 agenda's core promises to children, with a leading role for violence prevention and the protection of children.
- Hold a high level event as part of the post-2015 summit in September at which leaders launch a plan of action for delivering the core promises to children, including announcements from pathfinder countries of their commitment to violence prevention and child protection.
- Support with an advocacy and communications strategy focused on creating political space and building momentum for this agenda.

About the Author

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David is also a Nonresident Senior Fellow in the Foreign Policy program at the Brookings Institution, where he is part of the Project on International Order and Strategy. His new book – *The Risk Pivot: Great Powers, International Security, and the Energy Revolution* – co-authored with Bruce Jones, will be published by Brookings Press in late 2014.

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Endnotes

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¹³See, for example, Child Protection Working Group, see <http://cpwg.net>

¹⁴See, for example, UNICEF's #ENDViolence campaign, <http://www.unicef.org/endviolence/>

¹⁵See for example MY World survey, <http://data.myworld2015.org/>

¹⁶The campaign is led by UNICEF, with the following partners Bell Bajao, Bernard Van Leer, Child Fund Alliance – Free from Violence, Child Helpline International, Cure Violence, Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children, Human Rights Watch, International Rescue Committee, The Oak Foundation, Oxfam International, One Billion Rising, ONE in FIVE – Council of Europe, Plan International, Raising Voices, Save the Children International, 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence, 19 Days of Activism Campaign Children and Youth – Women's World Summit Foundation, SOS Children's Village International, SRSG on Children and Armed Conflict, SRSG on Violence against Children, Terre des Hommes International Fédération, Together for Girls, Tostan, UN Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict, UNFPA, UNiTE to End Violence against Women, UN Women, World Day of Prayer and Action for Children, World Health Organization, and World Vision International. See: <http://www.unicef.org/endviolence/>

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⁶⁰The author is grateful to Peter Newell for this suggestion.

⁶¹The author is grateful to Lisa Witter for this suggestion.

⁶²General Assembly (2012), 'Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 27 July 2012: 66/288. The future we want,' A/RES/66/288, available at http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/66/288&Lang=E

⁶³General Assembly (2012), op cit

⁶⁴Scoping for the SUN movement, for example, was conducted by "the World Bank, some UN organisations, the Gates Foundation and others formed a small committee which hired two consultants to draft what became the first SUN document." See Mokoro (2014), op cit.

⁶⁵There are number of existing models and groups on which this initiative could draw. For example, members of the Child Protection Working Group for violence against children in humanitarian settings, see <http://cpwg.net/cpwg/>; or the #EndViolence campaign, see <http://www.unicef.org/endviolence/>; or the Global Alliance for Children, see <http://globalallianceforchildren.org>



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