

Informal summary report of the expert dialogue on children and climate change

60th session of the Subsidiary Bodies, 04 Jun. 2024, 10:00h - 18:00h, Chamber Hall, WCCB, Bonn.

I. Introduction

1. CMA 5, by decision 1/CMA.5, para 182, requested the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI), at its sixtieth session, to hold an expert dialogue on children and climate change to discuss the disproportionate impacts of climate change on children and relevant policy solutions, engaging relevant United Nations entities, international organizations and non-governmental organizations. Prior to the dialogue, the SBI Chair requested inputs from a range of stakeholders, with 62 inputs being received in total, including 14 from Parties, 6 from United Nations organizations and intergovernmental organizations, 39 from non-governmental and other organizations and three from individual scholars. The dialogue took place on 4 June 2024 during the Subsidiary Bodies meeting in Bonn and was divided into two sessions, the first on the disproportionate impacts of climate change on children and the second on relevant policy solutions.
2. The dialogue was co-moderated by Kitty van der Heijden, Deputy Executive Director, UNICEF and Aysin Turpanci from Türkiye. Nabeel Munir, Chair of the SBI, and Fatima Al Hallami from the COP 28 Presidency provided opening remarks.
3. In his opening remarks, the SBI Chair emphasized the urgent need for climate resilience and robust healthcare infrastructure to protect vulnerable children from the increasingly severe effects of climate disasters, and praised youth engagement in climate discussions whilst acknowledging the insufficient attention given to children's vulnerabilities and rights within the UNFCCC process. He stressed the importance of this dialogue as a crucial step towards addressing these gaps and developing policies that not only safeguard children from climate impacts but also involve them meaningfully in decision-making processes.
4. Fatima Al Hallami reinforced the urgency of addressing children's vulnerabilities in the face of climate change and highlighted the historical significance of the dialogue in focusing on children's unique challenges within the UNFCCC process. She called for inclusive and actionable recommendations to integrate child-specific measures into global climate frameworks, ensuring access to essential services like clean water, sanitation, and education and highlighting the role of children as agents of change in climate action.

II. Session 1: Disproportionate impacts of climate change on children

A. Part I: Disproportionate impacts: complementary perspectives

5. The first session started with keynote presentations from Bronwyn Hayward, one of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Working Group II Sixth Assessment Report Chapter Lead Authors, and Francisco Vera Manzanares, a climate and environmental child advocate from Colombia.
6. Bronwyn Howard highlighted the IPCC's increasing focus on children and youth across its reports, indicating a growing concern for urgent and equitable action in mitigation and adaptation to secure livelihoods, health, and fairness for current and future generations.

7. Key data presented included projections that children aged 10 or younger in 2020 will face a nearly fourfold increase in extreme weather events within their lifetime under a 1.5 °C warming scenario by 2100 or a fivefold increase under 3 °C warming. The sixth assessment report of the IPCC also highlighted available evidence that suggests heat is associated with higher rates of preterm birth, low birth weight, stillbirth, neonatal stress, and adverse child health.

8. Regional impacts were highlighted, noting that over 40 per cent of Africa's population under the age of 15 face increased risks from high temperatures during pregnancy, leading to adverse birth outcomes. Climate change also exacerbates educational disparities, especially for children in marginalized and socioeconomically disadvantaged communities, impacting their access to schooling and overall development opportunities.

9. Bronwyn Howard underscored the role of cities, both as amplifiers of climate risks and as spaces for potential solutions. By 2050, nearly 70 per cent of the world's children will live in urban areas, where issues like heat stress, water scarcity, and inadequate infrastructure disproportionately affect their well-being. Additionally, she emphasized the importance of inclusive governance and climate-resilient development, which integrates actions for both mitigation and adaptation, with active involvement from youth, Indigenous Peoples, and local communities.

10. Francisco Vera Manzanares focused on the profound impacts of climate change on children and advocated for their rights to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment and expressed deep concern that today is one of the hardest times to be a child due to the triple planetary crisis. He began by thanking the organizers for their efforts in prioritizing children's inclusion in the climate agenda and acknowledged UNICEF and various organizations for their historic roles in advocating for children's rights amid global challenges.

11. Francisco underscored that children, despite contributing the least to greenhouse gas emissions, suffer disproportionately from the impacts of climate change, including hunger, displacement, and the loss of hope for a safe and secure future. He pointed out that inadequate and insufficient policies to address the impacts of climate change result in a fundamental violation of children's rights, referencing leaders and international conventions such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. He stressed the interconnected nature of environmental degradation, biodiversity loss, and pollution, which collectively threaten children's well-being and survival.

12. Francisco called for immediate and concrete actions from governments and international bodies to prioritize children's rights and well-being in climate policies. He criticized the insufficient allocation of climate finance to address children's specific vulnerabilities, highlighting that only a small fraction of multilateral climate funds is directed towards their protection and adaptation needs. Francisco also called for enhanced climate resilience in essential social services critical to children's health and development, emphasizing that adaptation measures alone have limits and must be complemented by substantial reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, particularly methane. He also advocated for the creation of a dedicated platform or forum for children to voice their concerns and aspirations directly in global climate discussions.

13. After the keynote presentations, the floor was open for comments and questions where representatives from Togo, Zambia, Nigeria, the women and gender constituency and the Climate Action Network (CAN) took the floor.

14. It was highlighted the need for special focus on children with disabilities, whose unique vulnerabilities are often overlooked. It was also emphasized that regional perspectives are needed to address the specific impacts of climate change on children of different ages, especially those with special circumstances such as nutritional problems and trauma from conflict.

15. The importance of addressing gender impacts was underscored. This includes giving more attention to how climate change affects young girls, both physically and

psychologically, as well as issues related to the specific impacts on adolescent girls. Key areas of concern included gender equality, sexual and reproductive health, negative adaptation efforts (e.g., resorting to contraception due to lack of water), increased gender-based violence, and mental health implications.

16. The importance of collecting data and involving children from marginalized communities in climate discussions was raised. It was emphasized that efforts should be made to create more inclusive and accessible spaces, including by addressing language barriers, and incorporating child-sensitive elements into nationally determined contributions (NDCs). It was also highlighted that current NDCs lack child-centred elements, and only a small percentage involve children in the decision-making process.

17. It was stressed that the ongoing scoping exercise for the next IPCC report provides an opportunity to include reference to children's rights to a stable climate and the need for greater reviews in regional spaces – this can help better reflect the diverse impacts of climate change on children's experiences across different countries and regions, considering the concept of multiple childhoods. It was also reiterated that Parties could issue a request to the IPCC on the need for a greater focus on the disproportionate impacts of climate change on children and the identification of key issues for the next cycle.

B. Part II: Disproportionate impacts: overarching considerations

18. The second part of the first session consisted of expert presentations from Animesh Kumar, UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), Prof. Thomas Tanner, School of Oriental and African Studies, Nicholas Omonuk Okoit, the children and youth constituency (YOUNGO), and Isabelle Kolebinov, Child Rights International Network (CRIN). They discussed and presented on the disproportionate impacts that climate change has on children.

19. One of the co-moderators of the dialogue, Aysin Turpanci from Türkiye, highlighted the significant impact of climate change on children, citing recent IPCC findings, as well as a report by UNICEF, in which they outline three key messages:

- (a) Children urgently need help, as evidenced by UNICEF's work in 190 countries;
- (b) Children are disproportionately affected by climate change due to their physiology;
- (c) Immediate action benefits all vulnerable communities. Stressing that children, representing one-third of humanity and 50 per cent of the world's poor, must be central in future NDCs, encompassing mitigation, adaptation, and loss and damage.

20. The first presentation delivered by Isabelle Kolebinov, Policy and Advocacy Coordinator of CRIN highlighted how climate change impacts the realization of children's rights as per the Convention on the Rights of the Child. She stressed the systemic threat of the triple planetary crisis to children's rights globally.

21. Examples were presented regarding how pollution, extreme heat, and catastrophic weather events threaten children's survival and development, as well as how environmental degradation exacerbate poverty and undermine children's standards of living. The education disruption through school closures and economic pressures due to climate change was emphasised. Additionally, vulnerable groups, including Indigenous children, children with disabilities, and those in climate-prone areas face disproportionate impacts. The need for child participation in climate decision-making was emphasized, supported by climate finance and access to information. She recommended measures from the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child's (CRC) general comment No. 26, such as child rights impact assessments for environmental legislation and urgent mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions. She concluded by urging countries to follow their commitments under the Paris Agreement to respect and promote children's rights and intergenerational equity in climate actions.

22. The second presentation was delivered by Nicholas Omonuk Okoit, YOUNGO representative from eastern Uganda. He presented the direct and indirect impacts of climate change on children's well-being from a personal perspective and described how severe droughts in his region dried up seasonal wells and grazing lands, forcing children like him and his siblings to take longer trips for water and to graze livestock, which affected their ability to attend school regularly.

23. Nicholas expressed that untreated water posed health risks, and malnutrition among livestock reduced their market value, impacting the family's income. He stressed the need for more inclusion of children and youth from underprivileged societies in climate discussions. In response to the question of how children can be involved and how can YOUNGO contribute to research, he emphasized the importance of education, especially for unprivileged children and youth facing disproportionate climate impacts and asserted the need for implementation and empowerment at the grassroots to ensure bottom-up engagement. He also suggested that action-packed discussions should replace where necessary and/or complement process-oriented discussions.

24. The third presentation, delivered by Animesh Kumar from UNDRR, highlighted the severe and unique impacts of climate disasters on children's lives compared to adults, noting that 90 per cent of disasters are climate-related, with about 20,000 children displaced daily due to weather-related disasters, and 95 per cent of these displacements over the last six years being caused by floods and storms.

25. Animesh Kumar emphasized the cascading and systemic nature of these risks, which disproportionately affect children. For instance, during the prolonged droughts in Somalia, two-thirds of the displaced were children, with 1.7 million children kept out of school. This disruption in education and other cascading impacts undermine long-term human development, health, and asset building, creating intergenerational risks. Additionally, he called to focus on differential vulnerabilities in climate change adaptation and risk management, in addition to the hazards themselves.

26. Significant data gaps were underlined, with only 59 of 160 reporting countries providing sex and age-disaggregated data. This reinforces the need for better data collection and reporting to guide effective policy measures. The importance of such disaggregation in addressing resource constraints and conflicts aggravated by climate change was also highlighted.

27. One example from Africa was presented, where it was found that every six-centimetre increase in rainfall reduces the propensity for serious conflict by one per cent, showing the link between natural resources and conflict. This relationship further impacts gender-based violence and the vulnerability of girls during such conflicts. Animesh Kumar called for a systemic approach to risk management, integrating data from various sources to address the comprehensive impact of climate disasters on children. In closing, the speaker highlighted that positive steps are being taken, such as revamping the loss and damage tracking system to ensure disaggregated data collection from over 100 countries by year-end.

28. The fourth presentation was delivered by Professor Thomas Tanner, Director of the Centre for Development, Environment and Policy of the University of SOAS. He stressed the importance of incorporating children's agency, voices, and empowerment into research methods to address their unique vulnerabilities to climate change. Prof. Tanner highlighted that traditional approaches often overlook these critical aspects, which are central to effective climate action. He advocated for training young people to collect, analyse, and interpret data to empower and train them to identify risks from their perspectives, which can differ significantly from those of older generations. He emphasized that understanding these differences is crucial for effective governance and political support, as inclusive processes enhance legitimacy and effectiveness while at the same time empowering children psychologically, enabling them to actively participate in addressing climate issues can mitigate long-term trauma from climate-related events.

29. Professor Tanner shared insights from a partnership with Plan International in Southern Africa, where adolescent girls conducted research on climate impacts. Their findings prioritized access to education, emphasizing that climate-proofing infrastructure alone is insufficient. The girls pointed out the need for creating safe spaces in schools to address gender-based violence and called for cultural changes to tackle the root causes of vulnerability. He also emphasized the critical need for financial resources and strategic planning to effectively address children's vulnerabilities to climate change and called for a more proactive approach to ensure that children and youth are prioritized in funding mechanisms such as the Green Climate Fund, and in climate finance negotiations.

30. During the Q&A session, representatives from Parties observer organizations took the floor, highlighting the need to integrate children's issues into national plans and sought guidance on effectively tracking child-sensitive expenditures and indicators within updated national indices. Ethiopia underscored the urgent need to explicitly address children's vulnerabilities to climate change in policy, citing significant impacts like high heat stress affecting nearly 50 per cent of its population who are children. Bangladesh shared concerns over climate impacts exacerbating reproductive health challenges for adolescent girls due to increased salinity, prompting early marriage and malnutrition. Discussions also emphasized marginalized groups such as pastoralists and Indigenous children, calling for holistic approaches that incorporate their cultural and social contexts into climate policies.

31. Concluding remarks of the session stressed ongoing efforts to integrate children's rights into climate negotiations and policy frameworks, advocating for sustained dialogue and action to empower children and youth, ensuring their distinct needs are prioritized and addressed effectively.

C. Part III: Disproportionate impacts: specific thematic considerations

32. The third part of the first session featured a panel discussion on health impacts, access to essential services, climate change's effect on education disruption, and cultural impacts featuring Marina Romanello, Lancet Countdown, Prof. Kathryn Bowen, Melbourne Climate Future, Jack Wakefield, Save the Children International, and Diana Garlytska, IUCN.

33. The first remarks were delivered by Marina Romanello, Executive Director of The Lancet Countdown, who discussed the significant impacts of climate change on children's health. She highlighted that heat exposure increases the risk of preeclampsia and hypertension in pregnant women and leads to adverse birth outcomes. It also increases the risk of death and disease for children under five years when they're exposed to extreme heat.

34. Marina Romanello highlighted that droughts and heatwaves have led to 127 million people worldwide reporting food insecurity in 2021. This food insecurity disproportionately affects children, increasing the risks of malnutrition, and negatively affecting their physical and mental development. The correlation between climate change and increased exposure to air allergens, which has led to higher rates of asthma and respiratory diseases among children, was underlined, as well as the huge mental health impacts on children, including eco-anxiety, linked to their awareness of environmental degradation. She called for transitioning to healthier, low-carbon diets and redesigning urban spaces to prioritize children's safety, including reducing exposure to air pollution and traffic-related injuries.

35. The second speaker was Kathryn Bowen, Professor of Environment, Climate, and Global Health at the University of Melbourne, Australia, who highlighted the interconnection of food security, health, water scarcity, and nature-based solutions in the context of climate change's impact on children's well-being, emphasizing the need for holistic policymaking to address these challenges effectively. Professor Bowen noted that survival gains for children under five have stagnated since 2015, with 59 countries

projected to miss their Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) targets for under-five mortality. Notably, Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia accounted for 80 per cent of under-five deaths as of 2020. The critical role of strengthening health systems to enhance resilience against climate impacts and advocating for robust nutrition, vaccination, and disease treatment programmes as life-saving measures was stressed.

36. Professor Bowen also discussed the importance of inclusive governance and participatory research involving children in climate solutions, giving examples such as the Climate Superpowers project, which empowers children to contribute to climate action by identifying their strengths and capacities. Kathryn Bowen also highlighted the inadequacy of current multilateral climate financing, noting that less than 0.5 per cent is allocated to health projects, with even less directed specifically towards children initiatives within adaptation plans. She called for greater inclusion of children's voices in national adaptation planning processes and highlighted the slow integration of health concerns, including children's health, in broader climate policy discussions at spaces like the UNFCCC.

37. The third panellist was Jack Wakefield, Global Policy and Advocacy Lead on Climate Change from Save the Children. He addressed the critical disruptions climate change pose to children's access to essential services such as food, water, and sanitation, highlighting children's vulnerability due to their unique physiological and developmental needs, and noting their increased susceptibility to heatwaves, dehydration, and food insecurity. Jack Wakefield explained that over half of the 345 million people facing acute hunger globally are children, and that approximately 95,000 children could die annually due to childhood undernutrition exacerbated by climate change.

38. Regarding water and sanitation, Jack Wakefield highlighted that half a billion children globally live in flood-prone areas, with approximately 1,000 children under five dying daily from diseases related to poor water and sanitation, underscoring the urgent need for targeted interventions to safeguard children's health and well-being. He pointed out that despite these alarming statistics, children's voices and perspectives are often underrepresented in climate policy discussions and decision-making processes and emphasized the importance of engaging children in the development of child-responsive NDCs and national adaptation plans (NAPs), ensuring that climate action is context-specific and respects children's rights. Jack Wakefield also called for increased climate finance directed towards child-critical services and initiatives that empower children to participate actively in climate resilience-building efforts, citing that just 2.4 per cent of climate finance from major multilateral funds is currently directed towards children.

39. The final remarks of the session were delivered by Diana Garlytska, Commission on Education and Communication Regional Vice-Chair for Europe of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). She addressed the impacts of climate change on children's education, emphasizing that global developments such as urbanization, biodiversity loss, and environmental degradation are significantly reducing children's direct experiences with the natural world, crucial for their holistic development.

40. Diana Garlytska called for the integration of nature-based and climate education into school curricula as essential components of fostering children's connection with nature. She underscored the role of academic institutions in raising environmental awareness and engaging youth, proposing investments in high-quality nature-based education as pivotal climate solutions. She also promoted the concept of greening school grounds and outdoor learning initiatives as effective strategies to enhance children's resilience to climate impacts.

41. Diana Garlytska also addressed the mental health challenges exacerbated by climate change, noting that many students experience climate anxiety and emotional distress. She advocated for climate education that includes social-emotional learning techniques to help students cope with their feelings of sadness, anxiety, and guilt about the state of the planet.

42. After the presentations, there was a Q&A session, during which the impacts of climate change on children's cultural heritage and the role of Indigenous knowledge in developing responsive policies were explored, noting the importance of cultural elements in fostering empathy and connecting communities. Participants also called for improved data collection and monitoring focused on children's health impacts from climate change.

III. Session 2: Relevant policy solutions

A. Part I: Broad range of policy solutions

43. The afternoon session of the dialogue was focused on relevant policy solutions, where countries and organizations presented their good practices and proposals. The first part of the session consisted of a keynote presentation by George Laryea-Adjei, Director of Programmes of UNICEF, on the broad range of policy solutions, gaps and challenges and key enablers.

44. George Laryea-Adjei emphasized the profound impact of climate change on children, drawing from personal experiences during a flood crisis in Pakistan where millions were displaced, highlighting the urgent need for policies that protect children's rights. He outlined five critical points that should guide policy solutions:

- (a) Placing children's rights – to survival, development, health, water and food, housing, education, protection and more – at the centre of climate policy-making;
- (b) Ensuring policies are informed by child-specific data;
- (c) Leveraging climate action to benefit children's well-being;
- (d) Including children's voices in decision-making;
- (e) Targeting interventions and investments to reach the most vulnerable children.

45. George Laryea-Adjei stressed the current gaps in policy frameworks, noting that less than half of NDCs and even fewer sectoral priorities are child-sensitive, adding that financial allocations for children's climate needs are minimal, with only 2.4 per cent of climate finance from multilateral climate funds directed towards children's issues. However, he recognized that international frameworks such as the CRC's general comment provide a legal basis for prioritizing children's environmental rights, urging countries to integrate these rights into national policies. He also noted the tools that can be used to support policy decisions such as the NDCs for Every Child platform data, the Children's Climate Risk Index (CCRI), CCRI Disaster Risk Model, and guidance on child sensitive climate policies. These tools aim to inform targeted climate finance and adaptation measures that consider children's specific needs.

46. George Laryea-Adjei called for actionable recommendations to be integrated into UNFCCC processes, and especially at the upcoming COP 29 and COP 30. This could include mainstreaming children's rights into national plans, enhancing data collection on children's climate vulnerabilities, requesting IPCC to focus on child-specific impacts, increasing investments in essential services like education and healthcare, and ensuring children's voices to shape climate policies.

47. After George Laryea-Adjei's presentation, the floor was open for discussion. There were interventions from Fiji, Saudi Arabia, Mexico, the United Arab Emirates, Dominica, Republic of Korea and CAN, who presented different solutions that collectively stressed the importance of prioritizing children in climate policy and action agendas. They called for integrating child rights into all aspects of climate negotiations, enhancing climate resilience in essential services for children, increasing funding and support for child-sensitive climate projects, and amplifying children's voices and perspectives in both national and international decision-making processes.

48. A representative from the Climate Action Network highlighted the vulnerability of children and the need for mainstreaming children's rights in finance, just transition, and NDCs. A representative from Fiji highlighted experiences in relocating communities due to climate impacts and stressed the need for child-sensitive policies and funding allocations within loss and damage frameworks. The urgency of enhancing multilateral climate funds to better support projects addressing children's vulnerabilities was also emphasized. A representative from Saudi Arabia emphasized the importance of protecting infrastructure critical to children's well-being in developing countries through capacity-building and adaptation measures and underscored the need for mobilizing funds. A representative from Mexico emphasized the importance of integrating youth and children's voices in national climate processes, advocating for intergenerational equity, and underlined the challenges and opportunities in including children's perspectives in national policies while acknowledging the complexities of integrating these voices effectively into international negotiations. A representative from the UAE presented the example of their Youth Representative initiative and others, such as the UAE's child parliament and Supreme Council for Motherhood and Childhood, to empower children in climate action. Finally, a representative from Dominica underscored the disproportionate impact of climate change on children in Small Island Developing States (SIDS), particularly through storms and disruptions to education, emphasizing the importance of considering children's holistic well-being in policy frameworks and highlighting children's awareness and desire for actionable solutions to climate challenges.

B. Part II: Examples and experience

49. The second part of the afternoon session included a panel discussion with Party representatives and experts focusing on relevant examples and experience including presentations from Henrik Hallgrim Eriksen, Norway, Besaida Santana, Dominican Republic, Washington Zhakata, Zimbabwe, Adrián Cerezo, University of Maine, Revati Phalkey, Save the Children International, Susie Ho, Monash Innovation Guarantee, and Viktor Suliandziga-Bagat, Udege Peoples.

50. Henrik Hallgrim Eriksen, the Norwegian representative, provided a comprehensive overview of Norway's approach to integrating children's rights into climate policy, stressing that children not only deserve to have their voices heard but should also actively influence decisions that affect them, highlighting their role as agents of change rather than just vulnerable recipients of impacts. He echoed the need to integrate children's rights in all negotiation streams and underlined Norway's commitment to working on this under the loss and damage and new collective quantified goal on climate finance (NCQG) frameworks. He also highlighted the importance of the Declaration on Children, Youth, and Climate Action as a guiding framework for promoting children's rights globally. Henrik Hallgrim Eriksen also commented on the children's participation in international negotiations and shared Norway's experience of involving children from their climate panel in COPs, encouraging other countries to similarly empower children in climate discussions and highlighting the positive outcomes of such inclusive approaches.

51. From a national perspective, Henrik Hallgrim Eriksen expressed Norway's commitment to climate adaptation through initiatives like the climate vulnerability analysis presented to parliament. This analysis explicitly considers children's vulnerabilities, illustrating Norway's efforts to mainstream children's rights across policy areas rather than treating them as isolated issues.

52. The second presentation was delivered by Zimbabwe's representative, Washington Zhakata, who emphasised the importance of loving and protecting children, stating that despite this sentiment, children often lack direct representation and involvement in decisions that affect them. Washington Zhakata highlighted the absence of specific

policies aimed at counselling and rehabilitating children who presented trauma after climate-related disasters, pointing out the critical need for such interventions.

53. Washington Zhakata underscored Zimbabwe's national climate policy and strategies, which he described as being climate-proofed with respect to children. He highlighted the development of a standalone child-friendly climate policy that specifically addresses children's vulnerabilities and needs. This policy framework, recognized by UNICEF for its child sensitivity, includes the National Climate Change Response Strategy and the National Adaptation Plan, both of which integrate children's issues into their planning and budgeting processes. He also presented the ongoing collaboration with UNICEF to ensure that Zimbabwe's future NDCs continue to be child-sensitive, expressing a commitment to expanding these efforts despite resource limitations and emphasizing the importance of adequate investment in climate action that directly benefits children and young people.

54. The third presentation was made by Susie Ho, Director of the Monash Innovation Guarantee, who highlighted the critical role of education, particularly in the context of climate action and children's involvement, emphasizing the role of the Action for Climate Empowerment (ACE) agenda under UNFCCC in mobilizing societal engagement from local to global scales, including children and youth. Susie Ho underscored that education is pivotal not only for mitigating and adapting to climate change but also for empowering young people to mobilize their communities towards sustainable practices.

55. Susie Ho pointed out significant gaps in current education systems worldwide regarding climate change content in curricula, mentioning that only about half of national curriculum frameworks globally include climate change content, with even fewer references in specific subject curricula. She called for a comprehensive approach to climate education that goes beyond scientific knowledge to include social, emotional, and action-oriented learning dimensions, and highlighted the importance of integrating climate justice and Indigenous knowledge into educational curricula.

56. Building on the upcoming Global Education Monitoring Report co-written by the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the Monitoring and Evaluating Climate Communication and Education (MECCE) Project, Susie Ho outlined key policy recommendations to enhance climate change education globally, including:

- (a) Integrating climate change across all levels of educational policy;
- (b) Supporting climate education through national curriculum frameworks and noted that only about half include climate change;
- (c) Emphasizing collective action over individualized approaches.

57. The fourth presentation delivered by Revati Phalkey, Global Director of Health and Nutrition of Save the Children International, underscored the urgent need for integrated and child-sensitive policies that address the complex interplay between climate change and children's health, noting that while 91 per cent of NDCs incorporate health considerations, only 30 per cent include specific benefits for health sectors such as food, agriculture, and transport, with a mere 29 per cent allocating climate finance to support these actions.

58. Dr. Phalkey shared that although 31 per cent of NAPs include child health-related domains, there's still a gap in addressing child-specific mental health needs across all 160 countries studied by The Lancet. Dr. Phalkey highlighted the pivotal role of health sectorial NAPs, noting that while many are led by environmental ministries, inter-ministerial collaboration is crucial for comprehensive and effective climate action. She also celebrated recent milestones in global health policy, including the endorsement of the Alliance for Transformative Action on Climate Change and Health (ATACH) by nearly 80 countries, and the historic resolution on climate change and health at the World Health Assembly.

59. Dr. Phalkey highlighted three key strategies:

- (a) Optimizing existing financial resources to better address children's health and climate needs;
- (b) Policy alignment across different contexts, particularly in fragile states and humanitarian settings where 77 per cent of child mortality occurs;
- (c) Need for synergies across global health and climate policies, underscoring the intersectionality of child health, nutrition, and climate resilience.

60. The next presentation was delivered by Adrián Cerezo, Senior Research Fellow of the University of Maine Portland Gateway, bringing the early childhood development (ECD) perspective and its critical role in climate change adaptation and sustainable development. He emphasized that the earliest years of a child's life, particularly from birth to age three, are not only the most vulnerable but also represent a pivotal window of opportunity. Policies and programmes targeting ECD, when integrated effectively with climate action, can yield many benefits, including supporting lifelong human potential, enhancing community resilience, and towards the achievement of the SDGs.

61. Adrián Cerezo underscored that investments in ECD are cost-effective, immediate, and have enduring impacts across multiple dimensions of development. These investments not only support individual children but also strengthen the social networks and nurturing care environments essential for their growth and resilience. He referenced the Marshall Islands as a leading example where ECD has been integrated into national climate policies. Adrián Cerezo also stressed the importance of early intervention, equitable distribution of resources, and collaboration across sectors. He noted the growing interest among other countries, including the Dominican Republic, in adopting similar approaches.

62. Remarks were delivered by Besaida Santana, representative of the Dominican Republic, who also emphasized the importance of integrating early childhood perspectives into climate policies. She highlighted the necessity of involving parents, caregivers, and local communities in the design and implementation of climate initiatives to ensure they address the most relevant needs.

63. Besaida Santana shared several best practices and policy solutions from the Dominican Republic, including the promotion of family spaces where concerns can be heard and needs identified but that local participation models can inform the design of effective climate policies. Another example she shared was the use of games and art in children's spaces that allows them to express their experiences with climate change, with such insights being used to develop practical solutions. Didactic gardens are another solution shared by Besaida Santana, where children can learn how to cultivate the land and understand the process from farm to table, giving them hands-on experience for a deeper connection with the environment and a better understanding of sustainability. Lastly, she underscored the need to teach children practical skills to protect themselves, sharing the example of the Dominican Republic working with the National Red Cross to provide early childhood training in first aid tailored to their level, equipping them with essential self-protection tools.

64. Lastly, Viktor Suliandziga-Bagat, representative of the Udege Peoples, shared a key concept adopted by his community, the Seventh-Generation Principle. This principle involves considering the impacts of decisions on both ancestors and future generations. He explained that in decision-making, they reflect on their ancestors' actions and experiences to guide their choices and strive to think about the well-being of the next three generations: their children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. This principle promotes the sustainable use of natural resources and can be applied in negotiations among Parties. Victor encouraged all Parties to adopt such principles, emphasizing the importance of learning from past experiences and mistakes, whether from their governments, parents, or grandparents.

C. Part III: Way forward

65. The third and last part of the dialogue consisted of breakout group discussions on the way forward. The participants were divided into four groups: 1. Cross-cutting enablers, 2. National policies, 3. Data and evidence, and 4. UNFCCC processes.

66. The first group on cross-cutting enablers focused on identifying the gaps and challenges in creating child-responsive policy solutions and child-centred climate initiatives. Key challenges included the political marginalization of children as non-voters, the dominance of economic priorities over children's health and well-being, and time constraints due to the urgency of emission cuts by 2030. A lack of coherence among negotiators and across different ministries further complicates the integration of child rights into climate policies. To empower children as agents of change, the group suggested including more youth delegates in delegations, enhancing negotiators' capacity to incorporate children's rights, and utilizing frameworks like general comment No. 26. The group stressed the need for methodologies to include children's needs in national climate plans (NDCs and NAPs), enhancing the human rights aspect of climate policies, and leveraging existing guidelines. The importance of good practices in capacity-building for children and key stakeholders was highlighted, along with the necessity of making participatory processes more accessible to children, considering their diverse vulnerabilities and barriers.

67. The second group on national policies identified significant gaps, echoing earlier discussions, particularly the lack of holistic inclusion of children's rights in NDCs. They noted gaps in social protection, education, health, and existing mechanisms for children's participation, emphasizing the unique vulnerabilities and diverse needs of children. The group shared examples of good practices from Parties and observers, highlighting infrastructure and capacity-building initiatives that include children, parents, and educators in national climate policies. For the way forward, the group proposed three concrete solutions:

- (a) Creating a methodology for Parties to include children in NDCs and NAPs;
- (b) Enhancing the human rights aspect of climate policies for policy coherence;
- (c) Using existing guidelines, like those from the International Labour Organization, to address social protection gaps.

68. The third group on data and evidence highlighted significant gaps and needs in research, including the need for research on the impact of loss and damage on children, energy accessibility, the just transition, and health impacts, emphasizing the need for integrated data. The group pointed out the lack of adolescent girls' disaggregated data on health, education, and climate disasters, and stressed the importance of economic indicators related to impacts on children. They also highlighted the need for data on displacement and the connections between biodiversity loss and land degradation. Regarding entry points, the group saw opportunities both within and outside the UNFCCC processes. Outside, they suggested starting discussions on post-2030 SDG indicators, possibly at the Summit of the Future. Within the UNFCCC, they suggested incorporating qualitative data from children's stories into national policies, particularly within the health section of the global goal on adaptation (GGA). They also emphasized the importance of including child-specific data in NDCs and NAPs, and the need for guidance in national reports. For the way forward, the group agreed that children's issues should be an overarching agenda across all negotiation streams, proposing that child rights be integrated within each negotiation stream. They highlighted specific suggestions for the IPCC's Seventh Assessment Cycle to include a publication or issue on children, as well as tangible information on using case studies and the costs and impacts of implementing child-oriented climate policies to engage other countries.

69. The fourth and last group on UNFCCC processes discussed incorporating child perspective into the work of the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage

(WIM), particularly concerning non-economic losses and displacement. The UAE–Belém work programme on indicators was identified as another opportunity to include child-specific indicators and metrics, especially those related to health. The group highlighted the importance of the Lima work programme on gender in addressing the connection between women and children, suggesting a greater focus on children within gender discussions. They also emphasized the need for updated technical guidelines from the Least Developed Countries Expert Group (LEG) to address disproportionate impacts on children and ensure their participation. It was also highlighted that lessons could be drawn from processes beyond the UNFCCC, such as the voluntary national reviews (VNRs) under the SDGs. They called for child-specific funding windows in climate finance, advocating for age- and child-responsive criteria similar to gender criteria. The Glasgow work programme on ACE and its action plan were cited as examples where children are already a focus but could be further enhanced. The role of the Presidency youth climate champion was highlighted as a mandated position to bring focus to children and youth. Participation challenges for children in the UNFCCC processes were noted, with calls for more national-level consultations, intentional communication back to children, and the inclusion of child delegates. Safeguards were suggested to ensure safe participation for children, along with necessary funding and investment. Finally, the group underscored the need for mainstreaming children’s issues as a cross-cutting priority and urged Parties to integrate these discussions into their positions moving forward.

IV. Closing

70. After the group discussions and presentations, the COP 29 Presidency youth climate champion, Leyla Hasanova, gave remarks where she outlined four key focus areas of her work:

- (a) Enhancing the inclusion, participation, and representation of children and youth in climate policy and action through advocacy and awareness-raising;
- (b) Empowering young people to contribute meaningfully to decision-making processes through capacity-building and education opportunities;
- (c) Elevating and amplifying the voices of children and youth on climate policy within the COP Presidency, UNFCCC and beyond;
- (d) Catalysing action by leveraging COP mechanisms to advance, resource and monitor youth-led climate action.

71. Leyla underscored the multifaceted impacts of climate change on children, citing examples such as respiratory illnesses exacerbated by air pollution, psychological stress from extreme weather events, and food insecurity leading to malnutrition and stunted growth. She committed to integrating the information from the dialogue into her future work and called for continued global unity to ensure that every child's potential is fully realized and celebrated in climate action, pledging unwavering support to elevate children's issues to the COP 29 Presidency and urged all participants to carry forward the dialogue's important insights into future negotiations and events.

72. Nabeel Munir, Chair of the SBI, closed the event, extended thanks to moderators, presenters, and participants and clarified that while there's no current mandate for further dialogues, the momentum must be sustained beyond the event. The SBI Chair emphasized the importance of integrating children's issues into ongoing negotiations and policy discussions, urging participants to ensure that children's vulnerability and policy solutions remain prominent in negotiating texts. Optimistically, the SBI Chair expressed hope that the dialogue marks the beginning of an ongoing journey rather than a singular event and expressed a desire for continued engagement on children and climate change issues in future sessions.