

Our message to Parties on the First Global Stocktake

UNICEF calls for a **stronger inclusion of children and intergenerational equity into all relevant agenda items**. The GST has the best available science and equity as core principles. **There is no equity without the inclusion of children.**

The GST output must

- **Place children’s rights and intergenerational equity at the heart of the GST output, underpinned by their right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment – including a focus on their specific and heightened vulnerabilities, the resilience of child-critical essential services, and ensuring that their voices are heard.**

Addressing children and future generations’ needs should be at the heart of all mitigation, adaptation and loss and damage efforts. Children are more vulnerable to climate and environmental shocks than adults and disproportionately impacted by climate change. They have specific mental, psychosocial and physiological needs, which are critical, and are often most at risk during and after disasters. There is a high risk of excluding children from climate action, and thereby not addressing their needs or strengthening the social services they rely on.

Parties should invite the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child to present the General Comment No 26 on Children’s Rights and the Environment with a focus on Climate Change at COP28 with a view to ensuring coherence and integrating most relevant recommendations into the GST output, and as a basis for further dialogue among Parties on the relationship between children’s rights and climate change

Climate finance flows are far short of what is needed to limit and adapt to warming of 1.5°C. International adaptation finance flows to developing countries are 5-10 times below estimated needs and the gap is widening. Estimated annual adaptation needs are USD 160-340 billion by 2030 and USD 315-565 billion by 2050.

Current estimates of adaptation costs do not include the significant climate bill facing the social sectors. Social services have been significantly challenged over the last few years. In some regions, such systems were already on the edge of collapsing, extreme events accelerate their potential failure, leaving many children at risk. Forthcoming research from UNICEF and partners finds that climate finance from the key Multilateral Climate Funds is not currently child-responsive.

To be equitable, investments must be made to benefit the most vulnerable children and communities, climate finance needs to be accessible and a much greater proportion of it must be dedicated to adaptation action that is focused on increasing the resilience of essential child services including health, water and sanitation, nutrition, education, social protection, and child protection, including capacity-building projects for communities. Investment must also include quality, inclusive climate, environmental education to support children with the knowledge and skills for enhanced adaptive capacities and pro-environmental behavior.

While the youth constituency is increasingly engaged in the UNFCCC process through agenda items, decisions and formal engagement mechanism, children under 18 remain to be heard. There is no formal process to include the voicing of the challenges they face and the potential health, economic and social risks of climate change on this key population group representing one-third of the global population. Parties should establish child-friendly engagement mechanisms or consult child rights experts to inform the UNFCCC process, in particular on the health and socio-economic impacts of climate change on children, and develop appropriate response, measures and policies

Parties should also ensure children have access to quality, inclusive climate education and age-, gender- and ability-responsive information they need to support their participation. Particular attention should be paid to ensuring meaningful and effective participation of marginalized groups of children that face intersecting forms of discrimination, and who are particularly at risk of the impacts of climate change.

UNICEF already compiles evidence on the impacts of climate change on children and will deliver policy recommendations for consideration by Member States. Parties may request UNICEF to share such evidence, data and knowledge in the format they deem the most appropriate in order to inform the GST.

UNICEF is at the forefront of the response to climate change working with children and communities.

UNICEF implements programmes in development and humanitarian settings including in areas affected by extreme events and disasters (droughts, floods, etc.). UNICEF’s response to climate change entails rebuilding schools and health centers, providing psychosocial support to children after extreme events, solarizing health and school facilities, adapting water facilities, greening schools and other infrastructure.