

Ending Violence against Children: Key Messages to the OWG Member States in Response to the OWG Focus Areas Document

World Vision welcomes the recognition that reducing all forms of violence, abuse and exploitation against children is a critical for realization of the sustainable development agenda. The problem of violence is universal as it affects every country, every region and every level of society. Regardless of where it happens, children are the most vulnerable section of society. The fact that, according to the Global Survey on Violence, every year between 500mil and 1.5 billion children experience some form of violence fundamentally undermines the chances for human progress, stability and sustainable development.

Violence against children takes many forms – from harmful traditional practices like child marriage to physical and sexual abuse, labour exploitation and forced recruitment into armed forces. The cost of violence goes beyond the effect it has on individuals; it slows economic development and erodes nations' human and social capital. Countries affected by violence tend to correlate with other developmental challenges such as higher levels of poverty and malnutrition, poor health and school performance. Failing to address violence against children prolongs the conflicts and fragility creating a dangerous inter-generational cycle. Eliminating violence is not only a legal and moral imperative it is a crucial investment in sustainable development.

World Vision recognizes the progress made by the OWG member states in recognizing critical important benchmarks to bring the end to all forms of violence against girls and boys by specially including targets on ending violence against girls in all its forms, ending child, early and forced marriage, and ending child labour by 2030. We further encourage OWG member states to further strengthen this commitment in the next draft, including by addressing specific suggestions bellow:

Goal 3

Suggest rewording this target in keeping with the recent WHA resolution on preventing violence against, women, girls and children as follows: “by 2030 reduce by x% premature deaths from non-communicable diseases (NCDs), reduce deaths from injuries, including halving road traffic deaths, promote mental health and wellbeing, strengthen prevention and treatment of narcotic drug and substance abuse and **address physical and sexual violence against women and children.**

Goal 4

4.8: **Affirm** the recognition of importance that safe learning environment has on enrolment and educational outcomes. **Suggest** strengthening the target by including explicit reference to safety from all form of violence as follows: “by 2030 ensure that all schools and other educational institutions provide safe, **violence free**, healthy, non-discriminatory and inclusive learning environments for all.

Goal 5

5.2: **Affirm** the target for eliminating all forms of violence against girls and women and suggest rewording of the target to include **violence against boys** thus recognizing that violence, including gender based, affects both girls and boys. Reducing violence against boys is also critical precondition for breaking cycles of violence at home and in community, as well as significant stepping stone for achieving target 5.11 on engaging men and boys in efforts to promote and achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.

5.3: **Affirm** the focus on eliminating all harmful practices, including child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilations as critical to achieving gender equality.

Goal 8

8.13 **Affirm** commitment to end child labour by 2030.

Goal 10 Suggest specific child focused target to affirm the importance of investing in children as critical strategy to reduce inequalities. Suggested wording: **Increase investment in vulnerable children to ensure equality of opportunity for all**

Goal 16

16.2 **Commend and strongly affirm** the inclusion of separate target focused on **ending abuse, exploitation and violence against children** and suggest to strengthen the target by ensuring that it focuses on **'all forms'** of violence, abuse and exploitation in **"all settings"**.

16.13: **Affirm** target on legal identity for all, including birth registrations.