

it's  
about  
**US!**

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Dublin Declaration on  
Children & Youth 2014  
**#itsaboutus**

We, the young people of Ireland, have gathered in Dublin Castle on Friday, 19 September, at the “It’s About Us” National Youth Summit, to affirm our commitment to children’s rights and well-being. As active, digital and global citizens, we stress the importance of the inclusion and meaningful participation of children and young people in decision-making.



We are voicing our concerns and initiating action, not only to influence the present but also to take responsibility for our shared future.

Today, we are contributing to sustainable development by raising awareness of the issues that matter most to us with our government, our schools, our communities, and each other. Being heard is the first step in engaging us in solutions at the local, national and international level.

Empowering children and young people means providing us with quality education, skills, information, values and opportunities for participation in sustainable development.

Our creativity, capacity and appetite for change enables us to positively contribute to the design, implementation and monitoring of the post-2015 agenda.

Today, we pledge to make a decisive difference to the futures of children and their families across the world, in societies both rich and poor.



## Priority Areas for Action:

Presenting the '*Dublin Declaration on Children & Youth 2014*', a result of consultations and polling of young people throughout Ireland, on our priorities in relation to the current and future development frameworks. These ten thematic areas reflect the issues that matter most in our lives.

We affirm that all children, everywhere, in all situations, should have a fair opportunity to live full and healthy lives and reach their potential. By focusing on each of these areas, we will guarantee better outcomes and brighter futures for all of society.

**1689**  
**VOTES**



**Ensure children have equal access to healthcare, nutritious food, clean water and sanitation.**

## Health

Every child's right to survival and development can be protected by investments in basic health services, clean water and safe sanitation.

Investments in care at birth could save the lives of 3 million babies and women each year who die needlessly around the world. We are speaking today on behalf of those newborns that remain voiceless, many of them uncounted - hanging in the balance are the lives of 35 million children whose lives could be lost between 2015 and 2028.

Every day, 18,000 children die from preventable causes before reaching their fifth birthday. Around 800 women died per day in 2013 due to

risks in pregnancy and childbirth. We need to get to zero.

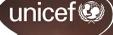
We must make sure to continue the fight against the epidemics of HIV/ AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria. Access to health services; including reproductive health and HIV prevention, care and treatment for adolescents are essential.

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VOTES



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Ensure equal access to free quality education for all children.

## Education

By ensuring inclusive and quality education for all boys and girls, all children will have the opportunity to develop to the best of their ability. We should aim for the successful completion by all children, from all backgrounds, of quality education that promotes lifelong learning.

Between 1999-2011, the number of children out of school fell by almost half. However, children in conflict areas, girls from poor rural households and children with disabilities are still most likely to be out of school.

We encourage expanded education and training opportunities for older children and youth, especially those who dropped out of school before securing the basic skills necessary to

fulfill their potential. 126 million youths worldwide still lack basic literacy and numeracy skills and more than 60% of those are women.

Investments in education, particularly for girls, have benefits for individuals, families, communities and society as a whole. An educated girl is more likely to increase her personal earnings, more likely to delay marriage and pregnancy, more likely to access health support and more likely to have fewer, healthier and more educated children.

Sustainable change will come through an educated and aware society, prepared to effectively cope with challenges and make choices about how we consume, live and cooperate.

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Prevent any children from suffering  
poverty, hunger, deprivation and  
exclusion.

## Poverty & Hunger

Child poverty in all its forms must be eliminated. Children are the largest group of people living in poverty - 47% of the global population living in extreme poverty is aged 18 years or younger.

All children have the right to nutritious food for their growth and development but today, millions of children around the world remain hungry.

Roughly 165 million children under 5 are suffering from stunting. Resulting from a lack of essential nutrients during a child's first 1000 days, stunting causes permanent damage to a child's brain and body development. It drags down performance at school and future earnings.

Stunted children are also at a higher risk of dying from infectious diseases than other children. We must reduce the levels of child stunting globally in order to break the vicious cycle of poverty.

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Ensure that children are safe from  
bullying, violence, abuse, neglect  
and exploitation.

## Safety from Harm

The world can only be considered “fit for children” if we collectively ensure that children everywhere are safe from violence, exploitation, abuse and neglect. We have the right to be protected from violence, yet it remains a reality for children around the globe, cutting across boundaries of age, gender, religion, ethnic origin, disability, socio-economic status, sexual orientation and/or gender identity and expression.

Violence is everywhere but often happens out of sight or is tolerated due to social and cultural norms. We must make the invisible, visible. Violence – in all its forms – has grave and often irreversible effects on

children and young people: violence undermines our future potential; damages our physical, psychological and emotional wellbeing; and in many cases ends our lives.

The impact of violence against children and of witnessing violence, both directly and indirectly, can be life-long, and even passed from generation to generation. The victim frequently becomes the perpetrator.

For those children who are suffering the most harmful effects of exploitation, we support the call for an immediate end to child labour in all its forms, including recruitment and use of child soldiers.

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# Health

Ensure children have equal access to healthcare, nutritious food, clean water and sanitation.



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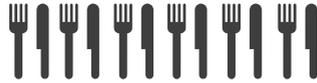
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# Poverty & Hunger

Prevent any children from suffering poverty, hunger, deprivation and exclusion.



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948  
VOTES

# Best Start in Life

Give every child a chance to enjoy their childhood and be part of their community.

Children and young people represent 30 percent of the world's population and have the absolute right to live in a decent environment: attending school; having nutritious food; enjoying good health; and living and growing up in safety.



# Environment

Protect the earth, its beauty, life and natural resources.



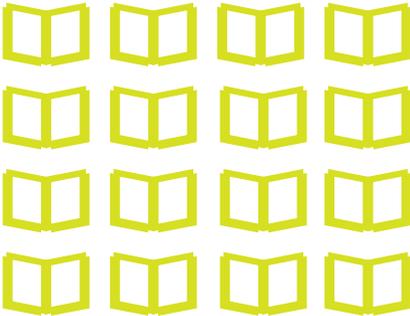
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## Education

Ensure equal access to free quality education for all children.

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VOTES



Between 1999 and 2011, the number of children out of school fell by almost half.

126 million youths worldwide still lack basic literacy and numeracy skills and more than 60% of those are women.

Investments in education, particularly for girls, have benefits for individuals, families, communities and society as a whole.

Sustainable change will come through an educated and aware society, prepared to effectively cope with challenges.

## Equality

1136  
VOTES



Eliminate all forms of discrimination against children and recognize their diversity.

Inequalities deny millions of children and young people the opportunities they need to build better lives for themselves, their families and their societies. By giving all children access to health, education and protection, we can break the cycles of poverty.

## Life Without Fear

1092  
VOTES

Protect children at risk from conflict and disasters



We have a right to live in safety- free from fear and free from want.

Today 1.5 billion people live in conflict areas.

It is children who suffer the most in conflict areas.

## Climate Change

Take action on climate change to guarantee children a safe physical environment.



486  
VOTES

## Participation

357  
VOTES

Encourage children's participation, respect their views and right to be heard.



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VOTES

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## Equality

Inequalities deny millions of children and young people the opportunities they need to build better lives for themselves, their families and their societies. By giving all children access to health, education and protection, we can break the cycles of poverty.

We must leave no child behind. The poorest and most vulnerable children must be prioritized. Investing in the rights of all children, in every place in the world – no matter the child's gender, ethnicity, race, economic, disability or other status is the fundamental building block for achieving the future we want.

It has been proven that more equal societies have healthier and happier citizens, with less violence, crime and

mental health issues. By focusing on the most disadvantaged, we achieve more and better results. It delivers high and long-lasting returns, not only for individuals and families but for entire societies and generations to come.

In particular, we must focus on achieving gender equality for girls and women through eliminating sexual violence and exploitation, child marriage, female genital mutilation and all other forms of violence and discrimination against girls and women. Men and boys are our partners in promoting and achieving gender equality.

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**Protect children at risk from conflict  
and disasters.**

## A Life Without Fear

We have a right to live in safety- free from fear and free from want.

Today 1.5 billion people live in conflict areas – these countries are home to over half of the world's poor and remain the furthest away from and least likely to achieve the MDGs.

It is children who suffer the most in conflict areas: child deaths are nearly 150% higher; malaria deaths are 13 times greater; half of the children who die under the age of 5 live in fragile stages as do a third of people living with HIV/AIDS. Children are more than likely than an adult to be killed or injured during disasters and suffer trauma from the stress, loss and disruption.

Shocks, including natural disasters; armed conflicts; epidemics; and economic crises are eroding the rights of children. These stresses all increase the vulnerability of children therefore efforts must be made to strengthen the resilience of children, families, communities and systems to these shocks.

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Give every child a chance to enjoy  
their childhood and be part of their  
community.

## Best Start in Life

Children and young people represent 30 percent of the world's population and have the absolute right to live in a decent environment: attending school; having nutritious food; enjoying good health; and living and growing up in safety. A safe environment with access to essential services is central to a child's health and happiness. Every child has a right to housing and living conditions necessary for their development.

We also require spaces where we can study, travel through and gather with our friends. Safe, affordable and reliable transport helps us to access education, health and work.

Our communities and society first recognize and acknowledge our existence when we are registered at birth. It is crucial to guarantee our fundamental right to an identity, yet approximately 1 in 3 of all children under-five around the world are not registered at birth. We speak out on their behalf to emphasize the importance of a birth certificate in unlocking a child's full potential. Birth registration is central to ensuring that children are counted and have access to basic services such as health, social security and education.

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Protect the earth, its beauty, life  
and natural resources.

## Environment

We must safeguard our natural environment, with its diversity of life and resources, all of which enhance the quality of life for present and future generations.

Conserving and responsibly using our natural resources is not an optional luxury- the only way to ensure fair access to productive forests, oceans and soils and enjoy safe air, water and coastlines, is to change our increasingly unsustainable patterns of consumption and production. We must drive behavioral change now in order to maintain a viable planet for the future.

Water scarcity and lack of drinking water are especially life-threatening and place serious challenges on

children and their families. It forces them to rely on unsafe sources of drinking water, reduces hygiene, increases the risk of disease and increases the burden on women and girls to fetch water. No single intervention is likely to reduce global poverty than the provision of safe water. It is the key ingredient needed by society, the economy and the environment for growth.

We not only inherit the planet but actively shape it in the present. Global leaders must act now to protect children and young people from the most harmful effects of environmental pollution and preserve our earth and its resources for future generations.

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**Take action on climate change to guarantee children a safe physical environment.**

## Climate Change

Children are the largest group of people currently affected by climate change and are most at risk from higher temperatures, malnutrition and climate-induced migration. It is estimated over the next decade that approximately 175 million children a year will be affected by climate-related disasters. When a family's source of income is disrupted, through extreme weather events, it is the youngest members who suffer the most from under-nutrition and diarrheal diseases. It is estimated that children suffer more than 80% of the disease and deaths produced by climate change.

The lives of children and their families are already being affected by climate change. Unless more urgent action is taken now, children and young people

will pay a further disproportionate price in decades to come. Unless there is a significant reduction in emissions over the next decade, there will be major climatic changes that will make all our lives on this planet more difficult.

2015 will see representatives from around 200 countries meet to agree on the final structure of a new global climate agreement. It is the outcome of these talks that will decide whether the world is two, three or four degrees warmer by the end of this century. We must be meaningfully involved in this dialogue and any investments must directly benefit children and young people.

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Encourage children's participation, respect their views and right to be heard.

## Participation

Our voices, choices and participation are crucial for the sustainable future we want. With our education, skills and relevant opportunities to participate, we will become more effective problem solvers and agents for positive change.

Engaging with children and young people not only proves effective by gaining attention for issues relevant to us- it is also our right. Children have a right to be heard in decision-making that affects our lives.

Mobile technology and social media make connecting and organizing in ways previously unimaginable. These developments should be maximized to ensure broad-based and meaningful

participation, and to engage youth in key development issues.

Initiatives, such as 'It's About Us' should form part of a new culture and practice of listening to and learning from children and young people, on a continuous basis, on children's rights and global development issues. UNICEF is explicitly partnering with and investing in children and young people's innovation.

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## Our Commitment Going Forward

Based on the priorities identified, we, the participants resolve to:



Work in partnership to implement the priorities as identified in the Dublin Declaration on Children & Youth.



Continue the discussions and debate amongst our peers in order to raise awareness and take responsibility for creating a better world.



Identify and maximize the relevant opportunities to influence key decision-making processes, thereby cementing our role as active citizens.



Urge the Irish Government to acknowledge our on-going commitment to global development issues and to continue to promote the rights of all children, everywhere, in all situations.