

**EUROPEAN COMMISSION GREEN PAPER**

**EU development policy in support of inclusive growth and  
sustainable development  
Increasing the impact of EU development policy**

**Contribution by  
Save the Children International**

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## 1. Introduction

Save the Children International welcomes the willingness of the European Commission (EC) to review its development policy in order to reflect today's reality both in developing countries and in developed countries. This is most particularly relevant in the aftermath of the High Level Plenary Meeting on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), held in September of last year, and given the tight deadline of only five years in which to meet the ambitious targets of the MDGs. We fully support the Commission's aim of assisting countries to speed up progress towards meeting the MDGs and of investigating how the EU can leverage new opportunities to reduce poverty. Save the Children agrees that economic growth is an important determinant in achieving the MDGs.

However, we do not believe that economic growth is the only factor that should be considered. Nor do we support the rather narrow approach taken in this Green Paper. Sustained economic growth is, and must remain, a policy priority for low-income countries, and is vital for their viability in the longer term. However, Save the Children believes that without a nuanced discussion about the relationship between economic growth and poverty reduction, a majority of people, and in particular children, will not gain fully from the potential benefits of growth. This is a major concern given the fact that children make up more than half the population in many developing countries.

All too often, growth and social policies are pursued as separate strategies. Instead, overarching development strategies which recognise the goals of growth, *equity* and poverty reduction are needed. It is crucial that issues such as inequality, exclusion, discrimination and redistribution form part of the growth agenda. Unless specific measures are put in place to deal with these issues, growth will only benefit the already better off, contributing to an increase in inequality and greater disparity between sectors of a population. Save the Children is concerned that the Green Paper – while in principle recognising the importance of inclusive growth – in practice fails to address the supplementary measures necessary. The Paper relies far too heavily on a traditional approach to growth. These points are developed further in the body of our submission.

Save the Children has welcomed the progress made by the European Commission in terms of recognising the need to take a holistic, rights-based approach and to focus on equity and on the more vulnerable and marginalised groups in society. However, despite the progress made in recent years at a policy level, Save the Children would like to emphasise that there still is a need to develop, strengthen and *implement* programmes to reflect the policy. This will most particularly be important in the context of a development policy focusing largely on economic growth.

Save the Children is therefore concerned that the Green Paper fails to address human rights in any credible manner and totally omits the issue of children's rights. We recommend that the Commission explore rights-based approaches and the mainstreaming of children's rights in policy, programmes and other types of action.

We would also wish to see greater linkages being made between the many existing policies – such as those developed in relation to the Spring Package 2010 - and the current Green Paper. The Commission should also look more widely to other policies in the EC such as those in home affairs and ensure that synergies are created and that the policy of “do no harm” is respected. This, surely, has to be part of the definition of Policy Coherence for Development. The Commission has for too long developed policies that exist in isolation one from another.

### Children's rights approach

In Article 3 of the Lisbon Treaty, it states that, "(i)n its relations with the wider world, the Union shall ... contribute to... eradication of poverty and the protection of human rights, *in particular the rights of the child...*" (emphasis added). The European Consensus on Development (2005) identifies children's rights as a cross-cutting issue which requires a mainstreaming approach. Children's rights are enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

Given the aim of the Green Paper to support countries to speed up progress towards meeting the MDGs and the Paper's recognition that if development assistance is to be effective it must address the underlying causes of insufficient progress, it is imperative to acknowledge that the key targets of the MDGs are women and children. Furthermore, over half of the population of most developing countries are children. Consequently, any development policy must ensure that children's rights are addressed and must contribute to building an environment in which all children's rights can be fulfilled. It is of considerable concern, therefore, that this Green Paper fails to mention children's rights.

Child poverty is one of the main obstacles to human development and economic growth. There exists a strong consensus within the literature that a better definition of childhood poverty is necessary, that it should be viewed as a distinct category of poverty, and that it must be addressed in a comprehensive way, with linkages across all sectors. Children are disproportionately affected by poverty, and in different ways to adults. For example, if children lack adequate nutrition and health care early on in life, this can cause lifelong damage to their physical and psychological development, and greatly enhance the likelihood that they will pass poverty on to their children, thus perpetuating the poverty cycle generation after generation.<sup>1</sup>

A children's rights approach would enable the Commission to achieve a holistic, long-term and consistent approach to programming and policy development that would impact on all stages: situation analysis, programme/policy design, implementation, monitoring & evaluation, and impact assessment. A children's rights approach should be an integrated, comprehensive and inclusive part of all the EC's work.

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<sup>1</sup> EC Programming Guide for Strategy Papers, Programming Fiche: Rights of Children, Nov. 2008

## 2. High impact development policy

While Save the Children recognises the need for the EU to show the results of its development assistance – and to assist countries as efficiently as possible – we wish to underline that a holistic and successful development policy aimed at poverty eradication and improving the lives of the world’s most disadvantaged populations must of necessity recognise that the majority of results will be long-term. Furthermore, the results of a successful development policy should go beyond being measured in terms of economic growth.

Even in those developing countries whose data show them to be on track to meet the MDGs – or a particular MDG – in most cases this does not reflect the fact that the poorest quintile of the population or the most marginalised groups in society are not being reached. It is therefore doubly important that a poverty eradication approach underpins *all* EU policy and action going forward. This approach should not just be part of policy documents but should be reflected in the EU’s implementation of its policy, in its Country Strategy documents and in its funding mechanisms.

### 2.1 Human development: Children’s right to health and education

The EU should adopt a systems-strengthening approach to development, including to health and education and areas such as social protection. A systems strengthening approach would achieve even more than contributing to meeting the MDGs since it is far more holistic. It would allow a country to address its overall capacity in providing services to its population and would ensure that quality services are put in place across the ‘continuum of care’, meeting the needs of all people, including the most disadvantaged in society.

Such an approach must be pro-poor and equity-based. In addressing the issue of human development – with the overall goal of meeting the MDGs – the EU should not overlook the need to invest more in re-distributive social policies and social protection mechanisms since these focus on the needs of the poorest, and aim at protecting vulnerable households and facilitating their access to basic services such as education and health. For this reason, it is of concern that such policies appear to be geared in the Green Paper only to the goal of increasing economic growth. In reality, the social protection system of a country plays a far greater role and should be more closely linked to a rights-based approach.

#### Children’s right to health

The EU, in its policy commitments, shows willingness to take a rights-based, holistic approach. Yet, in practice it focuses on specific issues or diseases. It does not therefore take a health systems strengthening approach which is widely agreed to be necessary. Much of the EU’s contribution to Global Health is channeled through vertical initiatives such as the Global Fund to Fight HIV/ AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria<sup>2</sup>. While this aid is important, it fails to address mechanisms that would strengthen health systems and thus fails to provide a less disease-centric approach. To improve the impact and effectiveness of the EU’s aid to healthcare, the EU should therefore adopt a rights-based, systems strengthening approach.

Many countries have weak, ill-functioning health systems. At a minimum, health systems should be equipped, staffed and organised to deliver proven interventions, effectively and equitably, to those who need them. These systems need to operate across what is called the ‘continuum of care’. Yet in many poor countries and communities, such systems are simply non-existent. Two aspects of weak systems to which attention should be drawn are the shortage of health workers (especially skilled attendants at birth) and the shortage, or unavailability, of medicines, or vaccines, especially

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<sup>2</sup> 10<sup>th</sup> European Development Fund

preventative and curative treatment for pneumonia, diarrhea and malaria in order to combat child mortality.

The EU should work with partner countries to ensure universal access to quality healthcare free at the point of delivery. That implies that such barriers as discrimination – particularly against women and girls – must be eradicated.

Lastly, to ensure the impact and effectiveness of the EU's development policy, other DG's should be requested to respect the principle of 'do no harm' when drawing up their policies. An example in this regard is the so-called Blue Card, which, if it goes ahead, will only serve to increase the brain-drain of skilled workers from developing countries to Europe.

### **Children's right to education**

The EC has a well-developed policy framework for development cooperation and education, including in fragile contexts.<sup>3</sup> The EC has gone further than required by the MDG framework by also looking at the issue of the quality of education and the role the EC can play in improving quality levels.<sup>4</sup>

However, translating policy commitments into implementation remains a challenge for the Commission, not least owing to the discrepancy between programming being done locally, while policy is developed centrally in Brussels. Human development, which includes education, is rarely chosen as a focal sector in the Country Strategy Papers. Furthermore, the EC's emphasis on good governance has the potential to disadvantage fragile states.

Since the EU gives a large amount of funding through the Education for All Fast Track Initiative (FTI), it would be wise to ensure that this mechanism is as effective as possible. The EU should therefore promote and support reform of the FTI, in line with the mid-term evaluation. Issues such as governance and trustee arrangements, the inclusion of civil society, and the financing of CAFS were most particularly highlighted as needing radical reform.

The EU could also increase the impact and effectiveness of its education aid if it explicitly addressed the links with DG ECHO as regards education and the fact that this is a key example of linking relief, rehabilitation and development (LRRD). Many of the countries which are off-track on MDG2 are also conflict-affected or fragile states (CAFS). Thus the EC's humanitarian aid policy should also include a commitment to always fund education. The European Union accounts for over half of all aid given to education worldwide. However, while on average between 2005 and 2007, 9% of the EU's ODA was committed to education in other LICs, it was only 5% in CAFS (Save the Children, 2009). The linkages between policies must be made in order to capitalise on any one of them or indeed in order to ensure, for example, that the gains made in development are not lost when disaster strikes, owing to differing policies in ECHO.

Lastly, the EU should address the issue of discrimination and the many barriers to accessing education, if the aid it gives is to benefit the poorest and most marginalized children and contribute to reducing the poverty they face. Barriers to accessing education include gender, race, religion and disability. It is at the intersections of these barriers that some of the most intractable barriers to expanding education to all children are found.<sup>5</sup> For children with more than one such characteristic (such as a girl from a minority ethnic group, who is poor and living in a rural area), the barriers to accessing education are particularly pernicious and their chances of getting into school extremely low.

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<sup>3</sup> For example, the EU Consensus on Development 2005, Programming Guide for Strategy Paper: Education, 2006, EC Communication *Towards an EU response to situations of fragility*, 2007

<sup>4</sup> More and Better Education in Developing Countries, Commission Staff Working Document, February 2010

<sup>5</sup> Barriers to Accessing Primary Education in Conflict-Affected Fragile States, Save the Children, 2009

## **2.2 Migration: Children's right to move safely**

Migration may occur for many reasons such as conflict, climate change or lack of livelihood opportunities at home. For this reason, a comprehensive approach to migration is necessary, addressing all the factors. The Green Paper does not take such an approach.

Development assistance should target the creation of opportunities for children in countries of origin, including through education, training and work options, to reduce the risk of unsafe unnecessary migration for children within and outside of their countries. The views of children should inform the creation of these opportunities.

Since children may have to, or want to, work, the Commission should adapt its policies on child labour in order to recognise that the fact of children working is not necessarily wrong – it is the conditions that accompany their work that need to be verified. For example, working hours should not be too long, the work environment should not be harmful and children should be able to also attend school. It is unhelpful if the Commission takes a strict anti-child labour policy since this may result in companies operating in developing countries not being able to offer children work opportunities and push children into the informal sector which can be that much more harmful to their well-being (eg. prostitution).

By supporting an environment of opportunity and protection, EU development assistance may foster a situation where return of children and children within families from a situation of irregular immigration in Europe may be in their best interests, to be determined on a case-by-case basis. Specific support should be provided where sustainable reintegration is possible.

Aid to education should also include possibilities for circular migration for the purpose of education.

## **2.3 Governance: Children's rights governance**

Being the most important ingredient for equitable and sustainable growth, good governance is a sine qua non for human development and human rights. However, recent work by the African Child Policy Forum on child-friendly governance reinforces the idea that good governance is not the same as governance that is good for children.<sup>6</sup> Countries such as Ghana, Benin, and Mozambique perform relatively well in general governance assessments, such as the Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI), but less well in terms of their child-friendliness.

In the context of children's rights, good governance implies the full, free and meaningful participation of all concerned towards the realisation of the objectives enshrined in the UNCRC and other international instruments, as well as domestic laws and policies that are relevant to the well-being of children.

However, the Green Paper, despite mentioning human rights, does not put forward any proposals for what the Commission might incorporate in its development policy. Instead, it again focuses largely on economic angles.

The Commission should seek to make children more visible in debates about how countries are governed, since this can help improve government performance and build more effective states, especially in challenging environments. Analysing children's rights can bolster an understanding of the local context and can contribute to good governance in areas such as capability, accountability and responsiveness. One of the greatest challenges in the quest to improve governance is improving

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<sup>6</sup> African Child Policy Forum (2008) *The African Report on Child Wellbeing: How child-friendly are African governments?*

responsiveness. It is often the countries that most need better governance that have governments that are least inclined to deliver it. Children's rights may provide an opportunity to break this deadlock. The UNCRC is so widely ratified that no country wants to be criticised for ignoring the well-being of children. In states that are not particularly committed to broader human rights, children's rights may be seen as less controversial and provide a useful starting point.

A related task is the formulation of measurable indicators that will help assess and implement the impact of policies and programmes designed to foster the welfare and rights of children. One example of such an indicator is child mortality.

#### **2.4 Security and fragility: Children's rights to be protected**

There is evidence that the number of conflicts is growing – it is estimated that 1.8 billion children live in conflict-affected countries.<sup>7</sup> The challenge of linking relief, rehabilitation and development was in part addressed above (under education). Another area that merits much greater consideration by the EU is that of child protection, which is a recognised field within humanitarian aid. However in development policy it is only addressed in an ad hoc fashion by some specific actions, principally in the areas of children affected by armed conflict, child labour, and child trafficking. However, that these areas exist is owing to child protection failures: they are therefore the symptoms of a lack of child protection. Fragmented approaches to child protection can deliver benefits for children but they come with significant costs. The evidence suggests that they may undermine or hold back the creation of a more effective and long-term response to child protection problems – national and sub-national child protection systems that are more coordinated, comprehensive and sustainable.

Hence, Save the Children recommends that the EU take a systems approach to child protection, since this offers a comprehensive approach to putting in place the measures and structures necessary to prevent and respond to abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence affecting children. A systems approach offers protection to all children by addressing underlying vulnerabilities as well as targeting individual groups or categories of vulnerable children. A systems approach makes existing efforts and structures in child protection more efficient by improving coordination, maximising scarce resources, and eliminating duplication within a previously fragmented set of activities.

The EU is ideally placed to address all the components of a child protection system owing to the potential reach of its policies and the nature of its influence. For example, the EU can, in its dialogues with partner countries, address the child protection laws and policies which are in place or needed and ensure that they are in line with the UNCRC. It can urge governments to improve coordination across ministries (including with those responsible for education, health and justice, which do not come within the child protection system), and oversight of protection mechanisms. The EU can urge partner countries to address gaps in knowledge and data on child protection issues and good practices and support governments, through its funding mechanisms, to establish preventive and responsive services and develop a skilled child protection workforce.

Establishing or bolstering child protection systems can also serve to enhance the EU's migration policies, since EU cooperation should aim to ensure that these systems reach out to all children within the community, including children in transit, and facilitate access to their rights as children, regardless of their immigration or national status. This could contribute greatly to the reduction of trafficking and smuggling which are two causes of children finding themselves in Europe.

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<sup>7</sup> Reducing Risks, Saving Lives – Save the Children, 2009

### 3. Development policy as a catalyst for inclusive and sustainable growth

#### 3.1 Inclusive growth and social protection: Children's right to share in the benefits of growth (non-discrimination)

As the Green Paper rightly states, the “MDGs will not be achieved without more and more inclusive growth”. Economic growth is a powerful tool for reducing poverty in developing countries. Experience shows that ‘poverty eradication has been most pronounced in the regions where growth has been the largest.’<sup>8</sup> According to the World Bank, economic growth is responsible for between 40% and 80% of the poverty alleviation that has occurred worldwide since 1980.<sup>9</sup>

However, growth alone will not achieve children's rights or improve children's well-being – a fact that the Green Paper fails to recognise or address. Sustained economic growth should, of course, be a policy priority for low-income countries. But the current political orthodoxy around economic growth has neglected several key issues:

- The benefits of growth touch different sectors or groups in a population to different extents, and factors such as discrimination against certain groups in society drastically influence how much they may benefit from growth. Such discrimination may be deeply embedded in a society and be reflected in the countries' national policies. Without a more nuanced discussion about the relationship between economic growth and poverty reduction, children most particularly will not gain fully from the potential benefits of growth.
- Higher incomes do not directly equate to a better quality of life. Analysis by Save the Children and the Institute of Development Studies shows that while changes in income matter for poverty goals, *other factors are equally or more important, especially in poorer countries.*<sup>10</sup> An example of this is the fact that under-five mortality rates vary for countries with similar per capita incomes: a relatively low mortality rate can be achieved with low income, and further GDP per capita increases do not result in further improvements.<sup>11</sup> There is no visible correlation between GDP growth per capita and reduction of under-five mortality rates, which declined in countries with high, low or even negative growth.<sup>12</sup>

Childhood poverty therefore needs to be measured using a number of different criteria, including factors such as access to safe water and sanitation, nutritious food, education and healthcare, not simply by looking at the relative affluence of the household.

- Less growth may be ‘more’. It is often assumed that growth is “good” and therefore that more growth must be even better. But the evidence does not support this. For example, the countries with rates of *moderate* economic growth achieved the best child mortality and under-nutrition results, while those with low growth rates fared poorly and those with very high growth rates did not fare exceptionally well.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> J.H. Lopez and L Serven, *A normal Relationship? Poverty, Growth, and Inequality*, World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 3814, January 2006

<sup>9</sup> R J Barro and X Sala-i-Martin, *Economic Growth*, Second Edition, MIT Press, 2003, p 10

<sup>10</sup> R Gottschalk, P Martins and S Hague, *Pro-poor Growth: The evidence beyond income*, presented at the ESRC Development Economics Conference, September 2008

<sup>11</sup> A Minujin, J Vandemoortele and E Delamonica, ‘Economic growth, poverty and children’, *Environment and Urbanization*, **14**, 2, 2002, pp 23-43

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p 30

<sup>13</sup> A Gabriele and F Schettiono, *Child Malnutrition and Mortality in Developing Countries: Evidence from a Cross-Country Analysis* (Unpublished), 2007

There is also a direct trade-off between income growth and children's well-being for many families in the short to medium term, most clearly because sending children to school instead of making them work has immediate costs for income but enhances long-term growth.

### **(Re-)Distribution matters**

Whether, and how many, people are taken out of poverty by growth depends on how equally the benefits of growth are shared. This is strongly influenced by the existing equality of wealth distribution in a country. In situations of inequality of wealth distribution, unless re-distributive policies reflecting a rights-based approach are put in place, growth will predominantly benefit those who are already better off.

The Green Paper does not address the important question of redistribution. The role of redistribution is often downplayed because of the fear that it would damage incentives and deter investment and risk-taking.<sup>14</sup> But redistribution need not generate large inefficiencies since very small changes in income distribution can have substantial impacts on the incomes of the poor.<sup>15</sup>

Save the Children therefore strongly recommends that the European Commission promotes and supports re-distributive, pro-poor, rights-based policies in its partner countries.

The issues of **inequality and discrimination**, are central factors perpetuating poverty and therefore key to poverty eradication, have been lost in the growth debate and are barely addressed in the Green Paper. Yet equality *is* central to growth, and policies to improve equality – going beyond social protection, or indeed other economic means - must form part of any comprehensive growth strategy. Evidence shows that high inequality impedes growth in poor countries by lowering investment in human and physical capital.<sup>16</sup>

### **Pro-poor, pro-child growth**

All too often growth and social policies are pursued as discrete strategies. The assumption is that pro-growth policies plus social policies equal pro-poor growth. But decades of research have shown that what is needed is not just “growth plus social policy”, but overall development strategies which explicitly recognise goals for growth, equity and poverty reduction, as well as key social indicators.<sup>17</sup>

The agencies leading the current policy agenda around economic growth seem to have forgotten the basic lessons about the “value of viewing growth through a pro-poor lens.”<sup>18</sup> Growth must be explicitly geared to poverty reduction, with a distributive bias in favour of the poor.

This is an area on which the EU should focus, given its global importance both in development aid and in the development debate, and which is entirely missing from the Green Paper and the questions it poses. The EU should focus on the specific elements of pro-poor growth strategies, including macroeconomic stability, fiscal redistribution (including progressive taxation, rural infrastructure, essential services and social protection), asset redistribution (including land) and institutional reform.

Lastly, the **nature of policies used to achieve growth** has clear implications for the rate at which growth reduces poverty. Labour-intensive growth in sectors of the economy where poor people are

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<sup>14</sup> Commission on Growth and Development, *The Growth Report*, 2008

<sup>15</sup> H Waddington, op. cit.

<sup>16</sup> See H Jones, *Equity in Development: Why it is important and how to achieve it*, Working Paper 311, Overseas Development Institute, 2009

<sup>17</sup> S Paternostro, R Anand and E R Tiongson, *How Does The Composition of Public Spending Matter?*, World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 3555, March 2005

<sup>18</sup> The World Bank, *Pro-Poor Growth in the 1990s: Lessons and Insights from 14 Countries*, 2005

mostly engaged – usually agriculture, small enterprises and in some cases some types of industry – have greater impact on poverty than growth in sectors such as the extractive industries or financial services.

### **Social protection**

Although the Green paper acknowledges that social protection plays a role in inclusive growth, Save the Children believes that this should be strengthened, including outlining stronger EU support and concrete interventions that the EU should prioritise in supporting the development of social protection systems. The Green Paper – while correct in what it states – focuses too heavily on productivity. In fact, social protection mechanisms (including cash transfers) play a much more important role in the lives of families. They are an important policy response to malnutrition, to the difficulties of access to healthcare and education, and to child poverty more generally. Social protection systems are also important in redistributing wealth in a society.

As such, social protection is crucial for enabling the most vulnerable in society to take part in the economy, by improving both human development outcomes and livelihoods. It has been widely acknowledged to boost productivity and contribute to economic growth. As the European Report on Development states, “(s)ocial protection can play a role in tackling poverty, reducing the impact of shocks and promoting sustainable growth and inclusive development in the long run. Social protection can also be part of a strategy to empower the most vulnerable groups, tackling inequalities to make growth more inclusive.” Furthermore, it plays an important role in addressing the inter-generational transmission of poverty.

### **Accelerating progress to achieving the MDGs**

Poor households are often unable to meet their health, education and nutritional needs owing to a number of other costs, leading to delayed healthcare, the surrender of education for work and under-nutrition in young children, which can have irreversible consequences. Social protection policies – such as cash transfers – enable households to overcome these costs and accelerate the achievement of the MDGs.

**Poverty and Hunger (MDG1):** Regular and predictable income, or support through other social protection measures, can help those struggling with chronic poverty to secure a livelihood and to sustain adequate levels of nutrition, particularly in the event of ‘shocks’ such as a poor harvest, unemployment, or a more generalised, global financial crisis.

Malnutrition in early childhood (before the age of two) has irreversible effects on physical and cognitive development, educational achievement and adult height. These effects in turn have negative impacts on productivity in adult life, including physical productivity, hours worked and adult earnings. Increased longevity, through positive effects on health and nutrition also increases total lifetime earnings. Cash transfers could produce economic multiplier effects, through increasing demand for goods in local markets and stimulating trade and production.

**Education (MDG2):** Even where social protection schemes are not conditional on school attendance, there is evidence to show that poor families receiving social assistance spend this additional income on their children’s education and health. Increased income security can reduce the burden on children to contribute to family income, thus freeing them up to attend school, and can cover the additional costs parents may incur. The fact of attending school – and being able to perform better at school through enhanced nutrition – will have long-term effects on productivity. Equality legislation and measures to ensure school systems are accessible, flexible and inclusive are other essential social protection interventions to reach those children still out of school.

Social Pensions have been associated with increased school attendance rates amongst children in Brazil, Bolivia<sup>19</sup> and South Africa<sup>20</sup>. The midday meal scheme in India has been shown to have positive effects on children's educational attendance and performance and to improve their nutritional status particularly when children were affected by drought.<sup>21</sup>

Health (MDGs 4, 5 and 6): In addition to the health benefits that result from improved nutrition, social protection can improve health outcomes by supporting universal and equitable access to healthcare, either by increasing the ability of poor people to pay, or by reducing the cost of services at the point of delivery.

## **4. Sustainable development, a new driver**

### **4.1 Climate change, biodiversity and development: Children's right to a future**

Save the Children is encouraged that the EC Green Paper places due importance on the issue of climate change. However, the focus on climate adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) does not go far enough. Save the Children strongly urges that they be viewed through a child-centered approach.

Save the Children has strong grounds for this demand. The Global Humanitarian Forum has estimated that on average around 300,000 people die every year because of the impacts of climate change. Save the Children estimates that 85% of these deaths are of children under five. Furthermore, some of the countries predicted to be among the worst-affected by climate change, including India, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Ethiopia, have a large percentage of their population below the age of 14.

One of the most effective ways to tackle the growing threat from increasing disasters is to invest significant resources before they happen – through DRR. Save the Children recommends that child-led DRR be developed, since children can play an important role in helping their communities to avoid disasters.

## **5. Agriculture and food security: Children's right to survival and development**

Save the Children welcomes the EU's focus on agriculture and food security but regrets that the nutritional dimension appears to be an after-thought. Under-nutrition kills more than 3 million children every year and prevents hundreds of millions from achieving their full potential as adults. At the national level, under-nutrition can reduce gross domestic product by as much as 6% a year.<sup>22</sup> Globally, the direct cost of child under-nutrition is estimated at between \$20 billion and \$30 billion. Child under-nutrition – a staggering and persistent problem in low- and middle-income countries – is seriously undermining progress towards wider human development goals.

Under-nutrition means children are more vulnerable to illness throughout their lives, achieve less at school and have a reduced capacity to work, culminating in less income when they are adults. Under-nutrition plays a terrible catalytic role in reinforcing this pattern from one generation to another and transmitting poverty into the future. In Zimbabwe, for example, under-nutrition is estimated to have

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<sup>19</sup> Martinez 2005 in Palacios and Sluchynsky, De Cavalho Filo 2000 in Barrientos and Lloyd Sherlock 2002.

<sup>20</sup> South Africa, social pensions have led to an 8 per cent increase in school enrolment amongst the poorest 20 per cent of households (Samson, M et al 2004)

<sup>21</sup> Singh, A, 2008, Do school meals work? Treatment evaluation of the midday meal scheme in India, Young Lives student paper

<sup>22</sup> World Food Programme <http://www.wfp.org/node/357>

reduced lifetime earnings of individuals by 12% due to its impact on educational achievement.<sup>23</sup> Estimates suggest that 11% of the total global disease burden relates back to under-nutrition.<sup>24</sup>

Investing in nutrition will therefore make investments in other sectors such as education and health more effective. This in turn will have a significant and long-term impact on national economies.

Finally, relying solely on calorie intake as a measure of under-nutrition does not guarantee effective diets. People need much more than calories – they need protein, fat, vitamins and minerals – and young children need these in disproportionate quantities because they are growing and developing. The quality of nutrition received, from conception through the critical first 2 years life, determines an individual's health prospects for life and must clearly be addressed as crucial in any development policy discussion.

Save the Children recommends that the EU changes the focus of its development aid from agriculture and food security to one including nutrition. A comprehensive and multi-sectoral approach should be at the cornerstone of EU and national strategies to reduce under-nutrition. Each approach should tackle both its immediate, underlying and root causes. It should incorporate means to overcome economic barriers to nutritious food, alongside a strong focus on building poor households' resilience to cope with recurrent as well as isolated crises.

Investing to improve nutrition is cost effective. The Copenhagen Consensus 2008, produced by a panel of leading economists including Nobel Laureates, listed combating under-nutrition as the *best* development investment considering its cost-benefit ratio. Each dollar spent on micronutrient programmes for children aged under two years would realise gains of more than \$17 in terms of fewer deaths, better health and increased future earnings.<sup>25</sup>

Tackling under-nutrition is rarely a glamorous choice for politicians and policy-makers, but investing in it is vital for economic growth and human development. The EU should work with and support governments to draw up a credible national nutrition plan which should include a comprehensive approach integrating direct nutrition interventions with other development strategies such as social protection, agriculture, education, water and sanitation in order to achieve lasting change.

Lastly, the EU should, in any future development policy, re-establish the link between agriculture, food security and nutrition and the MDGs, if supporting developing countries to achieve the MDGs is the goal of the review of the EU's development policy.

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<sup>23</sup> S Horton and J Ross (2003) 'The economics of iron deficiency', *Food Policy* 28(1): pp 51-57.

<sup>24</sup> R E Black, L H Allen *et al* (2008) 'Maternal and child undernutrition: global and regional exposures and health consequences', *The Lancet* 371: pp 24-59.

<sup>25</sup> [www.copenhagenconsensus.com/Default.aspx?ID=953](http://www.copenhagenconsensus.com/Default.aspx?ID=953)

## 6. Recommendations

### 1. Revising EU development policy

Save the Children urges the EU to:

- Explore rights-based approaches and the mainstreaming of children's rights in policy, programmes and other types of action, in accordance with the explicit provisions of the Lisbon Treaty.
- Review approaches to poverty to ensure that childhood poverty and its specificities are addressed.
- Avoid treating the MDGs as silos and build on the obvious links between education and health, water, sanitation and health, nutrition and health etc. Ensure that, through Policy Coherence for Development, such links are made between existing policies and any future development policy or strategy. Review all policies to respect the principle of "do no harm".
- Disaggregate data by age so that progress for children specifically can be tracked. This will guarantee that action to reduce poverty effectively targets and reaches those who are currently marginalised.
- Not renège on promises already made. To cite one example, the Africa-EU Partnership on the MDGs, which contains concrete commitments in such areas as health and education, should be adhered to and fulfilled.

### 2. High impact development policy

The EU should:

- Recognise that the majority of results will be long-term and limit the focus on showing immediate successes of EU development policy.
- Ensure that the success of EU development policy is not only measured in terms of economic growth. Take into consideration the wide variety of factors involved in eradicating childhood poverty, including access to education, healthcare, nutritious food etc.
- Ensure that EU development policy is developed with a view to reaching the poorest and most marginalised in society, including children.

#### Human development

- Address the fact that human development is rarely chosen as a focal sector in the EC's Country Strategy documents.
- Ensure that so-called 'division of labour' does not entail a reduction in the longer term of EU aid to education and healthcare.
- Adopt a systems-strengthening approach and promote this with partner countries.
- Follow a pro-poor and equity-based approach, investing more in re-distributive social policies and social protection mechanisms.

#### Education

- Translate policy commitments into implementation and ensure that education is more regularly funded through geographic funding instruments.
- Ensure that the Commission's focus on good governance in no way disadvantages fragile states.
- Increase funding for CAFS. The EU should explore innovative financing options and examine how existing modalities can be modified to suit the needs of CAFs.
- Focus on the issues of equity and the Accra Agenda commitments on gender, rights and disability.

- Ensure focus remains on improving access to education and reducing drop-out rates, especially for the more vulnerable and marginalised groups, even in countries where progress appears to have been made. The EU should support countries seeking to eliminate school fees, through financial and technical assistance.
- Endorse and promote the recommendations from the FTI evaluation to radically reform the FTI. In particular, address the governance and trustee arrangements, the inclusion of civil society, and the financing of CAFS. The FTI should further address the need for capacity-building to focus on issues of inclusion.<sup>26</sup>
- Encourage ECHO to support education as part of every humanitarian response, through the education cluster, and allocate adequate funding to preparedness, co-ordination and response at country and global levels.

## Health

- Ensure a rights-based approach to children's health which, among other things, should tackle discrimination, target poor and marginalised groups, and address birth registration to facilitate access to basic services. Universal access to quality healthcare, free at the point of delivery, should be the Commission's objective.
- Focus on a systems strengthening approach to healthcare, rather than supporting vertical initiatives. This approach should be child-friendly, including support to community-based service delivery.
- Recognise that gender is a barrier to accessing health care for girls, as well as women, and provide support to reduce these barriers with particular attention to the rights of adolescent girls.
- Adopt an integrated approach to the health MDGs.
- Commit to contribute to the milestones outlined in the EU Agenda for Action on the MDGs, including on numbers of health workers and removal of user fees. The EU should work with partner countries towards universal access to quality healthcare, free at the point of delivery.
- Promote direct nutrition interventions such as breast-feeding counseling, weaning practices, micronutrient supplements, nutrition education and growth monitoring.
- Ensure that all DGs in the Commission respect the principle of 'do no harm' in order to avoid policies being drawn up in one part of the Commission which could gainsay the aims and achievements of the EU's development policy.

## Governance

- Include children's rights in governance assessments and, as a minimum, include infant mortality as a key metric in quantitative governance indices.
- Support the creation of a global, country-led governance-for-children assessment, based on the pioneering work done by the Africa Child Policy Forum.

## Migration

- Target the creation of opportunities for children in countries of origin, including through education, training and work options.
- Adapt policies on child labour in order to recognise that the fact of children working is not necessarily wrong – it is the conditions that accompany their work that need to be verified.

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<sup>26</sup> <http://www.educationfasttrack.org/media/library/Themes/vulnerable-groups/EFA-FTI-Equity-Inclusion-Tool-Report.pdf>

### Security and fragility

- Re-visit its approach to child protection issues and ensure that any development policy includes a comprehensive, systems-based approach. This should focus on the measures and structures necessary to prevent and respond to abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence affecting children. It should be fully rooted in the UNCRC.
- Support partner governments financially and technically to establish preventive and responsive protection services and develop a skilled child protection workforce.
- Work with partner countries to improve coordination across ministries responsible for child protection (and those responsible for education, health and justice, which do not come within the child protection system), to ensure oversight of protection mechanisms, and to address gaps in knowledge and data on child protection issues.

### 3. Inclusive growth

The European Commission, and the EU, should:

- Promote “development strategies” rather than “growth strategies”, recognising the goals of growth, equity and poverty reduction. Such strategies should ensure that the benefits of growth are felt by all sectors of a population including the most marginalised.
- Review with partner countries the strategies used to achieve growth in order to focus on those most benefiting poor people, focusing on labour-intensive sectors such as agriculture and small enterprises.
- Recognise the importance of redistribution, including global redistribution. Such redistributive policies must be pro-poor and rights-based. The European Commission should work with partner countries to draw up plans for macroeconomic stability, fiscal redistribution, asset redistribution and the redistribution of political power through institutional reform.
- Employ other measures of well-being alongside economic growth such as, for example, found in Save the Children’s Child Development Index.<sup>27</sup>
- Address inequality and inequity (including discrimination and exclusion) in *all* areas of partner countries’ policies.

### Social protection

- Make social protection an integral part of its development policy by supporting social protection systems in developing countries, as recommended in the European Report on Development. The EU should adopt a comprehensive policy framework for social protection, tied to concrete time-bound commitments and dedicated resources. Well-designed social protection policies to help vulnerable households should complement strengthened investments in health, education and nutrition.
- Pay special attention to ensuring that social protection programmes are designed in such a way that they maximise their impact for pregnant women and young children in order to improve child survival through better access to healthcare and nutritious food.

### 4. Sustainable development, a new driver: climate change

Save the Children urges the EU to:

- Take a child-centered approach to climate change and disaster risk reduction owing to the benefits this can bring to communities.

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<sup>27</sup> Save the Children, *The Child Development Index*, 2008

## **7. Agriculture and food security: Children's right to survival and development**

The EC should:

- Broaden its approach to agriculture and food security to include the nutritional dimension, as child under-nutrition is seriously undermining progress towards wider human development goals.
- Work with partner countries to draw up a credible national nutrition plan. Adopt a comprehensive and multi-sectoral approach in EU and partner country strategies to reduce under-nutrition. This should incorporate measures to overcome economic barriers to nutritious food, alongside a strong focus on building poor households' resilience to cope with recurrent as well as isolated crises. It should also integrate direct nutrition interventions with other development strategies such as social protection, agriculture, education, water and sanitation in order to achieve lasting change.
- focus on the critical period from conception through the first two years of a child's life – ie. incorporate pregnant women into any nutritional policies.
- Use a wide range of indicators for the nutritional value of people's diets, not relying solely on calorie intake.