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**“WHY WOULD
ANYONE ASK
US?”**

Upholding
children’s rights
in the just green
transition

A UNICEF Advocacy Brief



Acknowledgements

This advocacy brief – **“Why would anyone ask us?” Upholding children’s rights in the just green transition** – was developed by the Child Rights and Business team, Global Programme Division, under the guidance of Ida Hyllested. It is part of UNICEF’s series on Child Rights in the Just Transition including the research report – [Children’s Rights in the Just Green Transition](#) and the booklet - [‘Our Green Futures: Children’s Voices in the Green Transition’](#).

It draws on research commissioned by UNICEF and conducted by a team led by Nicholas Ponset with Alex Kaufmann, Annapurna Chatterjee, Hyuna Jung and Nyein Aye Thu from [AWR Lloyd](#), in 2024, and by a team led by Nassim Majidi with Irina Mosel, Jared Owuor, Kiran Na, Marta Rocha, Rukhsar Jafferli, Shaimaa Yousof and Wendy Indira from [Samuel Hall](#), in 2025.

UNICEF appreciates the commitment and expertise of these organizations in carrying out this research. We also extend our thanks to all the children and youth, caregivers, community members, company representatives, business advisers, climate experts, and others who generously shared their experiences and insight.

We thank the following UNICEF colleagues for their review and contributions: Anne Grandjean, Carlotta Barcaro, David Ponet, Fabio Friscia, Hana Sahatqija, Leeya Pressburger, Lulu Li, Sarah Fantoli Frommelt, Thomas Michael Kaye and Ticiana Garcia-Tapia.

We are grateful for the support from Inter IKEA Group in the development of this Advocacy Brief, and for the input provided by Nicole Bjerler and Sriram Rajagopal.

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Cover photo: © UNICEF/UNI674404/Maxime Le Li

Suggested citation: United Nations Children’s Fund, “Why would anyone ask us?” Upholding children’s rights in the just green transition – A UNICEF Advocacy Brief, UNICEF, February 2026.

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Contents

- Key messages04
- About this advocacy brief07
- 01. What is a green and just transition?.....08**
 - How business models are changing – and workers and consumers benefit, or may experience harm09
 - Figure 1:** The green and just transition requires six systemic shifts..... 10
 - Figure 2:** Companies are introducing new products and services during the shift to green energy 12
 - Figure 3:** Challenges and opportunities for people and their communities 14
 - Box 1:** Climate adaptation and business action to ensure co-benefits for communities 17
- 02. The human rights framework ‘raises the bar’ 18**
 - How the United Nations Guiding Principles apply to government duties and business impacts on children ..18
 - The Convention on the Rights of the Child at the heart.....20
 - Figure 4:** All children, everywhere, have the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment.. 21
 - Box 2:** Rights-based investments in green transition projects change daily realities for children 24
 - Children and young people have ideas and solutions – respecting their right to participation can lead to stronger results in climate and energy plans26
 - Figure 5:** Children’s rights and environmental protection belong together..... 26
 - In real life – children’s responses to green energy projects27
- 03. Call to action: Towards a global agenda for children in the green transition30**
 - Governments adopt ambitious national climate policies and just transition strategies with explicit recognition of children’s rights32
 - Businesses take steps to respect children’s rights and advance a just green transition34
 - Civil society as champions for children – and supporting children in being champions for our planet36

Key messages

The climate and nature crisis puts everyone at risk, and children are the most vulnerable

Health and WASH



2 billion children, 83% per cent of children globally, are exposed to high levels of air pollution – around **600,000 children under age 5** die every year from respiratory infections caused by air pollution.¹



739 million children are already exposed to high or extremely high water scarcity, **470 million** face high or extremely high drought risk – with climate change threatening to make this worse.²



90% of diseases linked to climate crises are likely to affect **children under age 5**.³

Education and displacement



In 2024 alone, **at least 242 million students in 85 countries and territories** had their schooling disrupted by extreme weather events.⁴



Between 2016 and 2023, **62.1 million children were displaced internally** due to weather-related disasters, the equivalent of more than 21,000 child displacements per day.⁵



Tropical storms, floods, droughts and other hazards in 2024 led to **the highest number of displacements of people** recorded over the past 16 years.⁶

Child poverty and social protection



In the Global South, 3 out of 10 children live in provinces/states with above-average child poverty and above-average exposure to extreme climate events.⁷



1.8 billion children, nearly 75% of all children worldwide, are not covered by social protection systems that help keep them out of poverty and reduce vulnerability to climate change.⁸

1 United Nations Children's Fund, [The UNICEF Sustainability and Climate Change Action Plan \(2023-2030\)](#), Executive Summary, New York, November 2023, p. 3; UNICEF Climate, Environment, Energy and Disaster Risk Reduction, [A Brighter Life for Every Child with Sustainable Energy](#), New York, September 2022, p. 4.

2 UNICEF Division of Global Communication and Advocacy, [The Climate-Changed Child: A Children's Climate Risk Index Supplement](#), New York, November 2023, p. 2. See, also: UNICEF Data, [Children's Climate Risk Index](#) (interactive website), 19 August 2021.

3 Save the Children, 'Statistics About Climate Change and Children', [The Climate Crisis](#), 2025.

4 UNICEF, [Learning Interrupted: Global snapshot of climate-related school disruptions in 2024](#), January 2025.

5 International Data Alliance for Children on the Move, 'Climate Mobility and Childhood', [UNICEF Data web page](#), 12 September 2024.

6 World Meteorological Organization, [State of the Global Climate 2024](#), WMO-No. 1368, WMO, Geneva, 2025, p. 19.

7 Global Coalition to End Child Poverty, [A Disproportionate Burden: Children in poverty bearing the brunt of the climate crisis](#), 2023, pp. 10–12.

8 International Labour Organization, [World Social Protection Report 2024-26: Universal social protection for climate action and a just transition](#), Executive Summary, ILO, Geneva, 12 September 2024, p. 5.

The shift to green energy systems has gained great momentum



In 2024, **global annual clean energy investments** reached more than **\$2 trillion** for the first time – \$800 billion more than fossil fuels, and up almost 70% since 2014.



91% of new renewable power projects commissioned worldwide produced electricity for less than the cheapest new fossil fuel alternative.⁹

But the benefits and challenges – including regional inequity and lack of attention to children – must be more fully understood, accounted for and balanced



Of global renewable energy capacity, 41% is installed in China, 39% in OECD countries, and close to 20% in Brazil and India combined.



1.5% of this capacity has been installed in Africa – which is home to 85% of the world's people living without access to electricity and has a renewable resource potential that is 10 times greater than its projected electricity demand in 2040.¹⁰



Among all approved projects and programmes funded by key multilateral climate funds during a 17-year period (2006–2023), just **2.4% were assessed to be child-responsive**.



Moreover, just **1.0%** of these projects included children's participation as part of the design or monitoring, **0.8%** incorporated social protection interventions, and **0.7%** aimed to address child-responsive health.¹¹

9 United Nations, [Secretary-General's Remarks on Climate Action 'A Moment of Opportunity: Supercharging the Clean Energy Age'](#), New York, 22 July 2025.

10 United Nations, [Seizing the Moment of Opportunity: Supercharging the new energy era of renewables, efficiency, and electrification](#), New York, 2025, p. 3.

11 Children's Environmental Rights Initiative Coalition, [Falling Short: Addressing the climate finance gap for children](#), CERl, June 2023, pp. 4–6.



The green transition must uphold children's rights.



Children have a right to be heard in matters that affect them. This right is underscored by the Committee on the Rights of the Child in [General comment No. 26](#), which emphasizes that children must have access to meaningful participation in environmental and climate-related decisions. This right is not only about participation; it is also about justice and well-being.



Governments have a duty under the [Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) to prevent and mitigate harms to children as economies decarbonize. A just transition must protect children's health, education and standard of living.



Businesses must put children at the centre of climate action. The [United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights](#) outline the normative expectation that companies have a responsibility to respect and remedy human rights impacts – including impacts on children – throughout their operations and value chains.



The lived experiences of **children, young people, families, caregivers, workers and communities** in a world shaped by climate change must be central to the conversation with businesses, governments and civil society organizations on our shared future.



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About this advocacy brief

Countries and companies around the world are committing to climate goals, from COP pledges to net-zero road maps. Yet, while children are among those most affected by climate change, they are often the least consulted in this global conversation.

Understanding whether the green transition is also a just transition means asking three questions ...

- Who benefits?
- Who is harmed?
- Who is heard?

UNICEF set out to help find the answers by commissioning two complementary studies.

Desk research (August–October 2024) aimed to build an evidence base on: systemic changes that businesses need to adopt to meet the [Paris Agreement](#) goals; the green transition's direct and indirect impacts on children, particularly how economic activities, business models and policy changes might affect their rights; and the evidence gaps that call for additional attention.

The literature review covered a diversity of sources, including academic journals, institutional briefs, news articles, NGO publications, industry reports, and policy papers. Interview participants included child rights and climate policy experts, business and other private sector representatives, regulators and others from the public sector. The findings were thoroughly analysed to identify key themes, patterns and gaps.

Field research in Kenya and Pakistan engaged with children (April–July 2025) to find out what the global shift to cleaner energy means for their lives. Children took photos, drew pictures, and discussed their challenges and hopes. Some spoke about how solar panels brought light into classrooms. Others pointed to land being fenced, spaces being lost, and promises not being kept.

In both countries, children asked to be heard. As stated by Benson, age 15, Sarima Village, Kenya:

“ I propose that we hold a meeting with representatives from the wind power project and the government, so we have the chance to discuss and voice our concerns. Community members should not dismiss us as if we are little children who cannot speak up. People often assume that because we are young, we cannot contribute to anything.

Discussions were also held with parents, teachers and community leaders as well as government and energy actors. A review of national and global policies helped connect their insights to the broader course of progress during the green transition.

This advocacy brief draws on these distinctive sources, weaves findings from the desk and field research into the narrative, and reflects one steadfast principle throughout: **Children's perspectives and participation are an essential resource for the adults who make decisions about children's lives and, therefore, will shape our shared future.**

01

WHAT IS A GREEN AND JUST TRANSITION?

A basic definition of the **green energy transition** is the shift by industries, economies and social systems away from dependency on fossil fuels – oil, gas and coal – and into renewable energy sources. This change aims to reduce greenhouse gasses released into the air, lower increasingly spiking temperatures, and limit the environmental destruction that threatens biodiversity, the quality of life for humans and life itself.

Action to curb emissions can lessen the intensity of extreme weather events – such as heatwaves, cyclones, floods and drought – and offers an opportunity to prepare for and recover from such disasters. The benefits of reducing pollution include cleaner air, water and land, and green efforts are already showing promise in protecting and restoring local ecosystems.

A **green and just transition** is both environmentally constructive and socially equitable. It upholds universal human rights. It is as fair and inclusive as possible, designed to be beneficial for all. It is committed to uplifting the people who are affected by environmental damage and by the measures that are needed to repair the environment and to reduce future negative impact.

It creates decent work opportunities, and reduces poverty and inequalities. It invests in providing children and young people with access to education and training to develop the 21st century skills that can lead to sustainable livelihoods.

For children, a just transition fundamentally recognizes that the green transition must be deeply tied to their

human rights – encompassing healthy and sustainable environments, healthier lives, safer and more resilient communities, new opportunities for youth employment, empowerment and inclusion as well as the protection of biodiversity and ecosystems that children depend on for food, water and cultural identity.

A green and just transition that explicitly respects and supports children's rights will:



Deliver better services for all children,

making clean water, nutritious food, physical and mental health care, social protection, quality education, and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities a priority – accessible in all locations, for all levels of household income and able to withstand climate shocks to ensure continuous delivery.



Prevent harm and protect children

from child labour, violence, exploitation, displacement and exclusion, while prioritizing their physical and mental health, especially for those in vulnerable communities and for children on the move.



Listen to and engage children and youth,

recognizing them as vital stakeholders and agents of change, not simply bystanders, equipping them with education, skills and opportunities to become environmental champions.

How business models are changing – and workers and consumers benefit, or may experience harm

As the change to cleaner energy unfolds unevenly – sometimes rapidly, often gradually and in some places hardly at all – it can be easy to forget just how many of our daily habits are also transforming. From the work we do to the food we eat and the products we buy, **the green transition is reshaping lives, especially for children.**

Because all levels of society rely on access to energy, a narrow view is not enough. Along with the technologies of production and the systems of delivery, we also need to consider the impacts on individuals, communities, and the web of social and economic connections that extend across countries and continents.

Businesses must move beyond compliance towards purpose-driven transformation. Integrating child- and youth-responsive measures into green business models – such as access to green skills, inclusive hiring, and ethical supply chains – mitigates harm and builds a resilient, future-ready workforce that reflects intergenerational equity.

Based on the desk research,¹² the green transition is driving companies to rethink their business models to:

- Meet environmental goals, regulatory demands, and shifting consumer preferences.
- Shift towards low-carbon solutions, circular economy practices, and eco-innovation.
- Align operations with sustainability principles, resource efficiency, and climate responsibility.

This section highlights the scope and impacts of the conversion to sustainable energy in three graphics:

- **Figure 1** outlines changes that are necessary to transition towards more inclusive economies and societies. Each of these shifts requires strategic actions by business, including integrating

environmental, social and governance (ESG) metrics, adopting responsible sourcing practices, and actively engaging with local communities and vulnerable groups in decision-making.

- **Figure 2** highlights changes in business products, services and operating models, and reflects the ways that business strategies are being carried out. The implementation varies by sector, with some industries requiring more extensive adjustments due to their higher energy and carbon usage.
- **Figure 3** underscores the effects on communities and families, which will inevitably impact children's rights. While the green transition is necessary for people and the planet, its scale brings significant economic disparities and social challenges, particularly for the workers and communities who rely on high-carbon industries.

FIGURE 1:

The green and just transition requires six systemic shifts

01

Converting fossil fuel-based economies into

low-carbon energy systems



Transition to renewable energy sources such as wind, solar and biofuels

Electrification of transportation and machinery, along with low-carbon mobility solutions

Adopting energy-efficient technologies and smart grids for operational efficiency

02

Moving out of linear and wasteful production models and into

circular supply chains



Adopting circular supply chains, extending the product life cycle, and applying reverse logistics as end users return products to the retailer or manufacturer for repair, refurbishing for resale, or disposal

Using recycled materials in production and designing products for durability, reparability and recycling



Zero waste manufacturing and waste reduction through material recovery, reuse and recycling

¹² AWR Lloyd research, August–October 2024, examined how business strategies are being implemented across 21 industries, classified according to: United Nations Statistics Division, [International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities \(ISIC\)](#), Revision 5, 2023.

03

Transforming supply chains that prioritize cost-efficiency into ones that uphold human rights and environmental standards, ensuring

ethical and traceable supply chains



Shifting towards traceable, ethical and sustainable sourcing of raw materials

Collaborating with suppliers and business partners to meet environmental and human rights standards

Reducing carbon emissions and water usage

Localization of supply chains

Using biodegradable and natural products instead of synthetic or chemical-based materials

04

Replacing obsolete technologies and processes that contribute to environmental degradation with

smart technologies



Investing in R&D for sustainable product and solution development

Developing smart technologies, e.g., precision agriculture, energy management

Leveraging data analytics and AI to monitor emissions, optimize resource use, and improve supply chains transparency

05

Transition out of traditional business models that prioritize economic gains over social equity into

inclusive development strategies



Engaging children, youth, and local and Indigenous communities in decision-making and co-creating development plans

Supporting social programmes, such as those related to education, health and employment

Developing fair and inclusive workplace policies that emphasize diversity, equity and inclusion

Reorienting education and training systems to equip youth and workers with green, digital and technical skills aligned to emerging sectors such as renewable energy, circular manufacturing and sustainable agriculture

06

Reforming corporate governance models that allow for unsustainable exploitation of resources so they become

transparent and accountable systems that promote responsible business conduct









Integrating ESG metrics into business operations and reporting frameworks

Engaging stakeholders in sustainability efforts






Collaborating with governments and other organizations to shape policy and drive industry practices to align with human rights and environmental standards, e.g., responsible sourcing of transition minerals and other critical raw materials

FIGURE 2:

Companies are introducing new products and services during the shift to green energy

Sector or business function	Products or services phasing out	Products or services being introduced ¹³
 Finance and carbon markets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Traditional fossil fuel financing and investments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Green bonds, ESG-linked loans, impact investing, carbon credit platforms
 Carbon management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High-carbon supply chains 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carbon footprint assessments, emissions trading services
 Transportation and mobility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal combustion engines in vehicles, e.g., gasoline or diesel cars, buses, trucks Diesel-powered fleets, e.g., trucks, buses, ships Short-haul flights 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Electric vehicles, e.g., cars, buses, trucks, bikes, scooters Electric-powered fleets, e.g., ships, trucks, ferries Electric aircraft, drones, high-speed electric rail
 Construction and industrial equipment	Diesel-powered construction and agricultural machinery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Electric-powered machinery, e.g., tractors, forklifts, cranes
 Agriculture and food	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fossil-fuel fertilizers and chemical pesticides Animal-based meat and dairy products 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organic and bio-based fertilizers and pest control Plant-based foods, e.g., soy burgers, almond or oat-based products as alternatives to dairy Lab-grown meat and dairy
 Tourism and hospitality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carbon-intensive tourism (cruise lines, aviation-heavy travel) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eco-tourism, sustainable hospitality, low-impact travel services

¹³ The introduction of the products and services listed in Figure 2 are examples of current business practices that need to be accompanied by human rights and environmental due diligence.



Sector or business function	Products or services phasing out	Products or services being introduced ¹³
 Consumer goods and appliances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gas-powered stoves and water heaters • High-energy-use appliances 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy-efficient heat pumps, induction cooktops, electric heaters • Energy-efficient, smart appliances • Internet-of-things devices and wearables
 Packaging and materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single-use plastics and non-recyclable packaging 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biodegradable, compostable, reusable and recyclable packaging
 Waste management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landfill-based waste management • Waste disposal without energy recovery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Circular economy models, e.g., recycling, upcycling, repair services • Waste-to-energy technologies, composting
 Ownership models	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traditional ownership of appliances, batteries, and tools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subscription and leasing models, e.g., batteries as a service, tool leasing
 Maintenance and support services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal combustion vehicle maintenance, e.g., oil changes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electric vehicle maintenance, battery recycling, energy management services








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FIGURE 3:

Challenges and opportunities for people and their communities

Issues that affect human rights	Challenges	Opportunities
 <p>Employment and jobs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job losses in fossil fuel industries, e.g., coal, oil, gas • Displacement of mechanics, drivers and workers dependent on diesel-powered vehicles • Dependence on critical minerals and rare earths needed for the green solutions are linked to child labour, exploitation, and community displacement • Skills gap – Workers in traditional sectors may lack training for green jobs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New jobs in renewable energy sectors, e.g., solar, wind, hydropower • Growth of electric vehicle manufacturing and charging infrastructure • Expansion of circular economy jobs, e.g., repair, recycling, upcycling • Design of new curriculums and deployment of skilling programmes, to equip the workforce of tomorrow to excel • Equipping young people with market-ready green skills and introducing them to green opportunities, e.g., entrepreneurship
 <p>Government support for social inclusion and responsible business conduct</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weak governance or lack of policy can lead to unequal access to green jobs and services • Without proper planning, fossil-fuel-reliant communities are at risk of economic isolation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased participation in community-led energy projects, e.g., cooperatives managing solar microgrids • Opportunity for governments to design just transition frameworks that protect workers • Integrate youth employment and entrepreneurship in climate strategies, prioritizing youth skilling, micro-enterprise development, and access to green finance
 <p>Energy access and affordability</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High upfront costs of solar systems, electric vehicles, and energy-efficient appliances • Low-income households may struggle with affordability without subsidies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to renewable energy solutions in off-grid areas (solar microgrids, small hydro) • Energy as a service offerings reduce dependence on fossil fuels

Issues that affect human rights	Challenges	Opportunities
 Food systems and agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transition from fossil-fuel fertilizers and pesticides may initially reduce yields • Plant-based or organic food can be more expensive, limiting access for low-income households 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher incomes for farmers through organic agriculture and eco-certifications • Growth in plant-based food production and lab-grown alternatives
 Health and environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Air pollution may persist in transition phases as fossil fuel industries decline slowly • Resistance from some communities reliant on traditional products or practices, e.g., animal-based diets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cleaner air and water from reduced fossil fuel emissions • Reduction in pollution-related diseases (asthma, respiratory illnesses) • Eco-friendly agriculture reduces water contamination from chemical runoff
 Finance and economic inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smallholder farmers, micro-businesses and young people struggle to access green finance • Green finance tends to favour larger corporations, increasing inequality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green finance instruments, e.g., ESG loans, green bonds, provide new funding opportunities • Support for entrepreneurs to launch sustainable businesses and start-ups
 Mobility and access to transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drivers and mechanics working with diesel vehicles may lose their livelihoods • Rural communities may struggle with access to electric vehicle infrastructure and affordable transport 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of electric public transportation (e-buses, e-bikes) • Expansion of shared mobility platforms (car-sharing, bike rentals) • New jobs in electric vehicle maintenance and battery recycling
 Participation in tourism and hospitality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traditional tourism models (e.g., cruises, flights) under pressure, leading to job losses • Loss of income for communities reliant on aviation-heavy travel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growth in eco-tourism promoting conservation and sustainable travel • New business models in green hospitality (energy-efficient hotels, eco-resorts)



BOX 1:

Climate adaptation and business action to ensure co-benefits for communities

Floods, droughts and heatwaves are destroying homes, displacing families and keeping children out of school. Climate shocks move through every part of life, overwhelming classrooms, health clinics and local markets. They also disrupt business operations, damage infrastructure and break supply chains.



Since 2000, these shocks have upended entire communities and have inflicted more than \$3.6 trillion in economic losses.

While mitigation works to reduce the causes of climate change, adaptation ensures that children, communities and businesses can continue to thrive despite its effects. Investing in climate adaptation helps protect lives and livelihoods today – and builds more resilient communities, stronger markets and better opportunities for tomorrow.

UNICEF's work with companies on climate adaptation indicates growing interest in assessing climate risks beyond company assets. Yet few businesses have clear methods to connect these risks to community well-being or to their own long-term resilience.

To help businesses turn ambition into action, UNICEF and BSR (Business for Social Responsibility) have developed a suite of practical tools that integrate climate adaptation into business strategy and investment, strengthening resilience and creating shared value for children and the places where they live. To access these resources – and find out more about the crucial role of businesses to drive collective action with governments, peers, civil society and communities in building resilience for children and communities – visit the web page [Business Action for Climate Adaptation](#).



02

THE HUMAN RIGHTS FRAMEWORK 'RAISES THE BAR'

How the UNGPs apply to government duties and business impacts on children

Created to deliver the United Nations “protect, respect and remedy” framework as a fully operational resource, the [Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights](#) (UNGPs) were published in 2011. They represent the first global standard to describe specific responsibilities for government and business. They bring clarity to the conduct expected of all companies, underscore the importance of human rights due diligence, and establish stakeholder consultations as a central part of the process.¹⁴

But children are not explicitly mentioned. To complement the UNGPs and help business bring a dedicated child rights focus to their human rights efforts, the [Children's Rights and Business Principles](#) were launched by UNICEF, the United Nations Global Compact and Save the Children in 2012.¹⁵

Today, the UNGPs continue to drive commitment to and accountability for responsible business conduct and to influence global standards, including ESG. **As pointed out by the Working Group on Business and Human Rights:**

“Above all, the Guiding Principles provide the authoritative framework and a key opportunity for States and businesses to not revert to business as usual, but to forge a better normal that prioritizes respect for people and the environment... The due diligence standard and the accountability focus make them a valuable framework for practical achievement of a ‘just transition’ to a green economy.”¹⁶

Children, however, are often invisible in human rights and environmental due diligence processes, thus leaving negative impacts unidentified and unaddressed. While some companies have integrated child rights in some aspects, voluntary action by business alone does not ensure equal implementation across countries and companies.

One tool that governments can use to address this blind spot is establishing laws on mandatory human rights and environmental due diligence. This has the potential to

shape business behaviour, make sustainability and respect for human and child rights standard business practice, and ensure that remedy is available when abuses occur.¹⁷

Moreover, including community and child-related factors in environmental and human-rights due diligence helps uncover risks that might otherwise remain invisible, such as those linked to water scarcity, health impacts or displacement.

Respecting and supporting human rights during the green transition requires actively safeguarding children's best interests:



Governments have a duty to regulate businesses to prevent violations of children's rights,

such as child labour or environmental destruction, and to use strong monitoring mechanisms that hold businesses accountable for their activities.



Businesses have a responsibility to avoid infringing on children's rights and to address any adverse impacts,

including those arising indirectly (e.g., wind farms and displacement). This includes policy commitments, conducting due diligence, and tracking accountability in all activities throughout their value chains.

In addition to mitigating harm, businesses have a key role in supporting children's rights by creating opportunities for children to benefit from positive developments – such as access to clean energy, safe water, digital inclusion, and climate-resilient infrastructure.



Children affected by harmful business practices must have access to judicial or non-judicial remedies.

Governments and companies share the responsibility to ensure these grievance mechanisms are accessible, child-friendly and effective.

14 Mawson, Andrew, Humberto Cantú Rivera and Subajini Jayasekaran, *Charting the Course: Embedding children's rights in responsible business conduct*, United Nations Children's Fund, United Nations Global Compact and Save the Children, Geneva, October 2022, pp. 23–24. [Full report and briefs available](#) in English and Spanish.

15 [The Children's Rights and Business Principles](#) are available in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Japanese, Portuguese, Russian and Spanish.

16 Working Group on Business and Human Rights, [Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights at 10: Taking stock of the first decade](#), A/HRC/47/39, United Nations, 22 April 2021, paras. 6, 52. [emphasis added]

17 UNICEF Child Rights and Business, [Human Rights and Environmental Due Diligence Legislation: Corporate accountability for children's rights](#) (web page, no date).

Convention on the Rights of the Child at the heart

The [Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) (CRC) is an excellent resource for learning about children's common concerns and universal rights. This treaty was unanimously adopted by the United Nations in 1989 and has been ratified by 196 countries.¹⁸ They are 'States Parties' legally bound to uphold children's rights to the maximum extent of their available resources and, where needed, within the framework of international cooperation.

The [Committee on the Rights of the Child includes 18](#) independent, international experts who review progress and problems in implementing the CRC. It's their job to monitor whether governments fulfil their obligations, and to make recommendations for improvements.

In [General comment No. 26](#) (2023) on children's rights and the environment, the Committee hauntingly describes the 'triple planetary crisis' – climate emergency, collapse of biodiversity, and pervasive pollution. Furthermore, it explicitly credits children's advocacy and actions as the motivation for writing about this issue:

The unsustainable extraction and use of natural resources, combined with widespread contamination through pollution and waste, have had a profound impact on the natural environment, fuelling climate change, intensifying the toxic pollution of water, air and soil, causing ocean acidification and devastating biodiversity and the very ecosystems that sustain all life. ...

Child human rights defenders, as agents of change, have made historic contributions to human rights and environmental protection.

Their status should be recognized, and their demands for urgent and decisive measures to tackle global environmental harm should be realized.¹⁹

So, how does the green transition affect children's rights?

The impacts are frequently good and sometimes troubling.

Reducing waste, offering more sustainable products and services, and sourcing raw materials ethically contributes to better air quality, cleaner water and overall ecosystem health. But financial pressures from rising costs of energy and 'green' products can lead to economic hardship and compel children to leave school to help support their families.

Social investments and new infrastructure can increase access to basic services, benefiting children's health and education. But large-scale changes in land use can restrict access to safe places for play and recreation, or disrupt family connections and cultural stability.

Increased reliance on digital technologies is a pivotal aspect of the transition. But this can lead to a digital divide, leaving children in marginalized communities behind. It also poses new risks related to privacy and online safety.

Overall, the impacts continue to reflect broad social and economic inequities, as some children benefit from the green transition while others are harmed directly or indirectly by its unintended consequences.

If children's rights are not explicitly safeguarded, 'green' measures will worsen inequality instead of reducing it – undermining the very idea of a just transition.

Figure 4 lists the relevant rights defined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child.²⁰ The second column offers a discussion of how these rights can be affected, for better or worse, along with key government or business responses that can support and protect children.

18 UNICEF, [Frequently Asked Questions on the Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) (web page, no date), accessed 19 October 2025.

19 Committee on the Rights of the Child, [General comment No. 26 \(2023\) on children's rights and the environment, with a special focus on climate change](#), CRC/C/GC/26, United Nations, 22 August 2023, paras. 1, 2, 4. [emphasis added]

FIGURE 4:

All children, everywhere, have the right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment

Everything flows from articles 1, 2 & 3 ...



A child is every human being under age 18 (article 1)



All rights apply to all children without discrimination of any kind (article 2)



In all actions concerning children, the best interests of the child should be a primary consideration (article 3)



Every child has equal and universal rights –

regardless of their parents' or guardians' status, including race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, disability, property, or national, ethnic, social or birth origins.

Environmental harm can be a bigger threat to children in Indigenous communities, minority groups, children with disabilities, and those living in places most affected by disasters and climate change.

Achieving the green transition must not disproportionately affect children and youth from low-income, marginalized or vulnerable communities.

When making decisions about the environment and climate change, governments must consider the effects on children growing up today, and in the future. Business decisions should ensure that short-term economic gains do not override children's long-term well-being.

Every child has the right to ...



Life, survival and development (article 6)



The highest attainable standard of health, and to facilities for treatment and rehabilitation (article 24)



An adequate standard of living that supports their physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development (article 27)



Cleaner water, fresher air, healthier environments, more sustainable agriculture.

These are just some of the benefits for children that are emerging from the green transition.

The CRC explicitly mentions the dangers of environmental pollution in article 24, which requires governments to combat disease and malnutrition, and reduce infant and child mortality.

Governments must also ensure that children are not living in poverty – but instead have access the safe food, clean water and decent housing they need to live, grow and develop to their full potential.

These rights are at risk when the shift from carbon-intensive to green industries leads to economic insecurity for families, particularly in locations that exclusively depend on fossil fuels.

Sustainable energy projects may also lead to such issues as: increased heat from solar panel installations; disrupted ecosystems during infrastructure construction; or challenges to pastoralist ways of life that support food security.

Every child has the right to ...



Express their views freely in all matters affecting them and the opportunity **to be heard** in judicial or administrative proceedings (article 12)



Seek, receive and share information and ideas of all kinds (article 13) and **access to information** from diverse national and international sources (article 17)



Freedom of association and peaceful assembly (article 15)



Education that encourages the development of respect for the natural environment (article 29)



Rest, play, and participate freely in cultural life and the arts (article 31)



Children of indigenous origin or who belong to an ethnic, religious or linguistic minority have the right to enjoy their own culture, practise their religion, and use their own language (article 30)



As rights holders, children are entitled to be recognized and fully respected as environmental actors – as well as to be protected from infringements of their rights as a result of environmental harm.

Children often stand up for their environmental rights as human rights defenders. Many children also spend time with friends and groups where they exchange information and ideas. They have the knowledge and ability to flag negative impacts and to propose solutions. They should be taken seriously by adults.

Governments and businesses should promote children's access to clear, accurate environmental and climate-related information – including information about plans and decisions being made, and about actions that children can take themselves.

The exclusion of children and youth from green transition planning and monitoring limits intergenerational justice.



Education can support the green and just transition through climate literacy, green jobs training, and overall empowerment of children and youth.



Children should be supported with environmental education that is accurate, appropriate for diverse ages, and available in local languages. The places where children learn should be safe from environmental harm.

Children should be able to play and be active in clean, safe places and connect with our natural world. Green and just transition projects create healthier environments with greater access to greener spaces.

When governments or businesses make plans for new wind farms and solar parks, roads, buildings, and even entire neighbourhoods, they need to consider where and how children will have places for recreation and play, and space to participate in cultural activities.

Changes in land use for renewable energy installations and reforestation may lead to the displacement of families and weakened cultural ties for children.

Indigenous children and children of minority groups' survival, ways of life, and cultural practices are often very connected to their natural environment. This should be accounted for in the development of sustainable energy.

Every child must be free from ...



Economic exploitation and child labour (article 32)



All forms of physical or mental violence, injury, abuse or maltreatment (article 19), including sexual exploitation and abuse (article 34); abduction, sale and trafficking (article 35)



Arbitrary or unlawful interference with his or her privacy, family, home or correspondence (article 16)



Environmental harm and climate change can lead to unstable situations, conflicts and inequalities, leaving children at greater risk of

physical and psychological violence. Stronger efforts are needed to protect children by investing in essential social services and by working to solve the root causes of violence and abuse.

Ethical sourcing and supply chain localization can improve children's health, education and rights protection, while zero-waste initiatives reduce pollution. But shifts to local suppliers and zero-waste practices – as well as loss of household income due to changing needs for green vs. fossil fuel workers – may limit access to essentials and push children into hazardous labour.

While green products, such as electric vehicles and solar panels, offer environmental benefits, the hidden harms tied to raw material sourcing are often overlooked. The high demand for cobalt and lithium for batteries, for example, may create risks of exploitative child labour. Both governments and business entities need to strengthen the safeguards that ensure children are not exposed to hazardous work in green transition supply chains.

Digitalization and use of AI-driven technologies are a central feature of increasing the efficiency of sustainable products and energy systems. However, the collection, analysis and profiling of children's data can undermine their right to privacy and the protection of their personal information. Additionally, their right to be free from exploitation and abuse can be undermined by technologies that track, monitor and broadcast their internet use.

While the CRC articles in the figure above are grouped by topics, it is important to remember that all human rights are 'indivisible, interdependent and interrelated'. They don't apply in a hierarchy. Also, while some rights are particularly threatened by environmental degradation – others play an instrumental role in safeguarding children's rights in relation to the environment. The right to education, for example, has both dimensions.²¹

21 Committee on the Rights of the Child, [General comment No. 26 \(2023\) on children's rights and the environment, with a special focus on climate change](#), CRC/C/GC/26, United Nations, 22 August 2023, para. 13

BOX 2:

Rights-based investments in green transition projects enhance daily realities for children



Solarized water supplies benefit education, health care and social cohesion:

- In the rural areas of Malawi, most of the population and institutions depend on groundwater for their water supply – which is vulnerable to contamination during cyclones and other extreme weather events.
- A UNICEF programme founded in 2017 aims to increase the access of schools and health-care facilities to resilient, sustainable and safe water systems that could withstand extreme weather and remain functional throughout the year.
- Solar-powered water systems installed in schools, health facilities, and surrounding communities have reduced school absenteeism by improving health and menstrual hygiene, while cutting the time children spend collecting water.²² These systems strengthen household hygiene, lower disease rates, and improve the quality of health-care services provided to children.
- Overall infrastructure improvements such as new roads can also strengthen social interaction within and among communities, leading to more shared activities and greater environmental awareness in local communities.



Companies can make a difference when they apply a child-rights lens to community investments:

- Through hydropower, geothermal, solar and wind energy, 92 per cent of Kenya's national grid is powered by renewable sources,²³ which bring tangible benefits directly to children. For example, access to electricity generated by the Lake Turkana Wind Power (LTWP) Project, the largest wind farm in Africa²⁴ has helped strengthen health-care services in dispensaries and hospitals. Continuous power for vaccine cold storage and access to medical services beyond daylight hours is directly safeguarding children's health.
- LTWP's community activities include sustainable development projects with a focus on increasing access to education, health and water. The company has helped promote school enrolment campaigns and built schools in areas where they were undeveloped or previously did not exist.
- According to stakeholder interviews, community elders in the initial consultation phase for building two primary schools requested that the new schools be reserved exclusively for boys. However, LTWP staff emphasized that girls, too, must be allowed to enrol. The schools were established on this principle, securing education for girls and setting an example for responsible business action.²⁵

22 UNICEF Malawi, [Scaling-Up Climate Resilient Sustainable Solar-Powered Systems for Institutions and Communities in Rural Malawi](#), May 2020.

23 Accelerated Partnership for [Renewables in Africa, Renewable Energy Investment Factsheet: Kenya](#), APRA, 2024, p. 2.

24 Energy News Network, [Lake Turkana Wind Power](#), ENN web page, London, n.d., accessed 11 November 2025. Note: The Lake Turkana Wind Power Project (LTWP) is owned by four shareholders: Anergi Turkana Investments Limited, Osprey Renewables Africa, CFP UK Holdings Limited and Sandpiper Ltd. It provides approximately 11% of the country's installed capacity and is connected to the national grid through a transmission line constructed by the Kenya Transmission Company, Government of Kenya (Source: Lake Turkana Wind Power Ltd., [Overview](#), LTWP, Nairobi, 2025).

25 Samuel Hall: Key informant interview, Nairobi, June 2025; stakeholder interviews, Kenya, April–June 2025.



Gender equality should be a central element of just transition projects:

- The Government of Pakistan is aiming to cut greenhouse gas emissions in half and shift to 60 per cent renewable energy by 2030.²⁶
- One of the largest projects related to achieving this goal is in Punjab, where the Quaid-e-Azam solar park was built in Bahawalpur District. This means more schools now have electricity, helping children study, stay cool and feel safe. It also led to increased social interactions among nearby communities as well as environmental awareness due to frequent visits to the solar plant.
- For women and girls, a primary benefit of solarization and increased access to electricity was the reduced burden of drawing and fetching water by hand.²⁷ In Pakistan, as in many other countries, women and girls are disproportionately affected by time-consuming household responsibilities. This burden can frequently be reduced by access to new sustainable energy sources, providing more time to pursue both educational and income-generating opportunities.



Equity in distribution is as critical as access:

- Decentralized and localized energy distribution allows for a more resilient energy system, where power generation is distributed across multiple small sources rather than a few central hubs. This enables communities to tailor energy production to their specific needs, leveraging local renewable resources and enhancing energy security.
- In Fiji, solar energy is making it possible for remote communities that were not connected to the main power grid to have more consistent access to electricity. Children from these communities have been able to study at night or socialize with friends.
- However, solarization has been uneven across communities, at times creating conflict and rivalry between those who do and those who do not have access to electricity through renewable energy.²⁸

26 UNDP Climate Promise, [Pakistan](#), United Nations Development Programme, Last updated: 1 August 2025.

27 Samuel Hall: Stakeholder interviews in Pakistan, April–June 2025.

28 Samuel Hall: Remote key informant interview with youth activist, Fiji, 8 May 2025.

Children and young people have ideas and solutions – respecting their right to participation can lead to stronger results in climate and energy plans

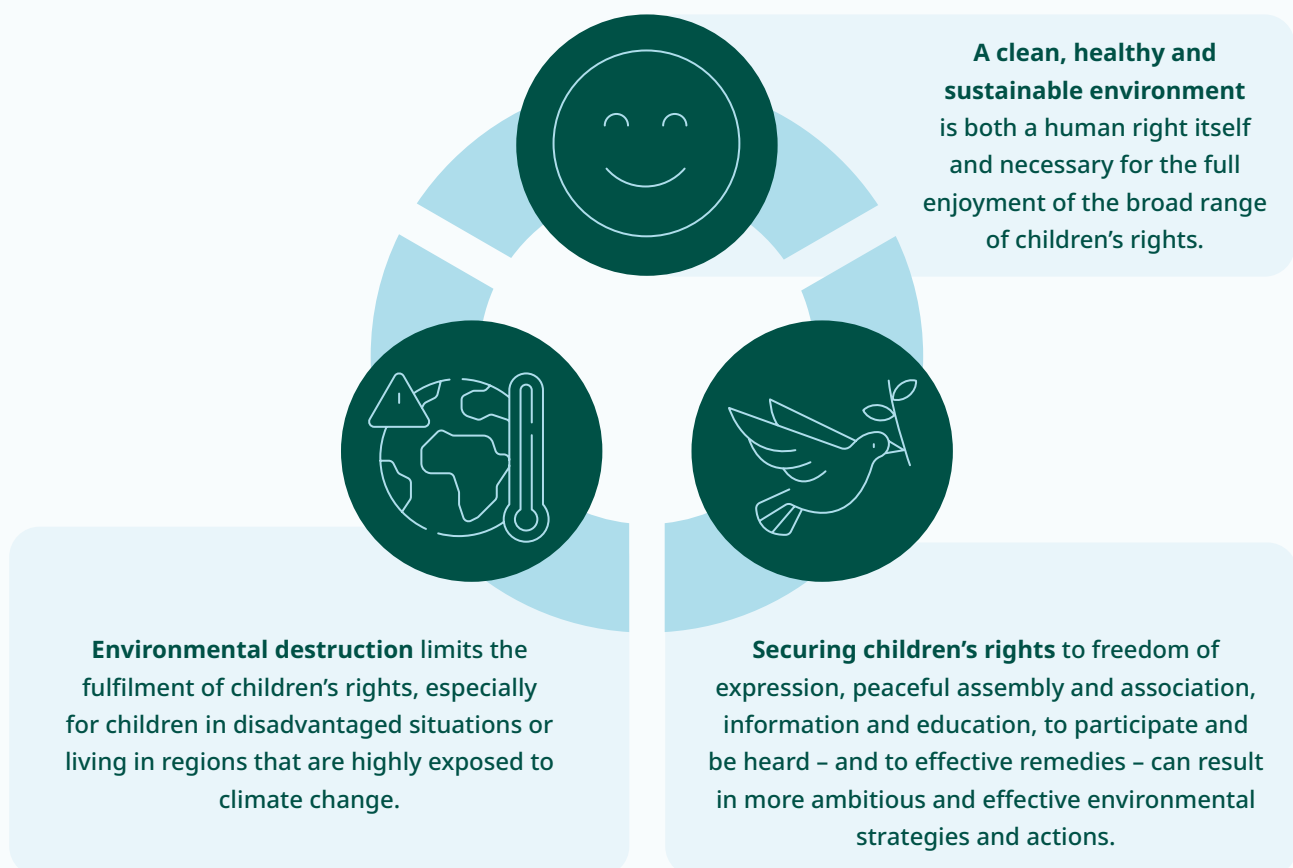
Children do not speak in policy terms such as ‘green transition’ or ‘climate resilience’. They live these experiences every day. When the rains fail, when drought hits their village, when power cuts disrupt school, when families are forced to move, or when new projects reshape their neighbourhoods ... they understand what is happening, and they have important things to say.

Children and young people are not just witnesses to change – they are vital agents of change. As entrepreneurs, advocates, innovators and resilience builders, they are leading local solutions that make the green transition both just and sustainable.

Children’s rights and environmental protection belong together, as illustrated in [Figure 5](#).²⁹

FIGURE 5.

Children’s rights and environmental protection form a virtuous circle



29 Adapted from: Committee on the Rights of the Child, [General comment No. 26 \(2023\) on children's rights and the environment](#), CRC/C/GC/26, United Nations, 22 August 2023, para. 8.

Yet, in spite of the significant and unequal impacts of climate change on children, they remain largely invisible in policy discussions and global climate commitments.³⁰

Research projects and studies in diverse countries indicate that when children are consulted on climate and energy plans the results can be stronger, for them, their families, and their communities.

In Kenya and Pakistan, for example, children who participated in the UNICEF research in 2025 shared specific and far-reaching information about their

experiences. Their comments reveal both the benefits and drawbacks of large-scale sustainability projects, and uncover connections between existing social issues and opportunities for change. When the respondents point to problems, they also highlight potential solutions.

Because the impacts on their lives should inherently be part of building the global green and just transition, it is our hope that this type of participation by children will become standard for many types of projects in many more places. The following section offers examples of children's wide-ranging insights.

IN REAL LIFE

Children's responses to green energy projects



Infrastructure and land use:



"Just like solar panels are being installed, we should plant as many trees as possible. If youth groups are formed, I will make sure to be a part of that and help you all in raising awareness among our people."

– Rida, age 16, Sarima Village, Kenya



"My friend's father was unemployed. Because of solar panels, he got a job. Now he earns well, and my friend has started liking studying because at her home light and everything is available. There has been a change in her – she has become good in studies."

– Rijji, age 16, Bahawalpur, Pakistan



"We used to go far to fetch salty water for home and school. Now we can easily get clean water in the village. But we have to pay for it, and we don't know where the money goes."

– Vivian, age 15, Sarima Village, Kenya



"There is one problem – the solar panels are installed too low. When it rains, water causes electric current to leak into the ground. Children can get electrocuted. A few days ago, my little lamb died. It was running around in the rain, got shocked, and died."

– Bibi, age 14, Cholistan, Pakistan



"Before the wind power project, we lived in an open area with freedom to move. When the project started, we were relocated and fenced in. Because of the fence, children have no space to play. We are confined and congested, and when the rains come, the lowland floods and sweeps away people's houses."

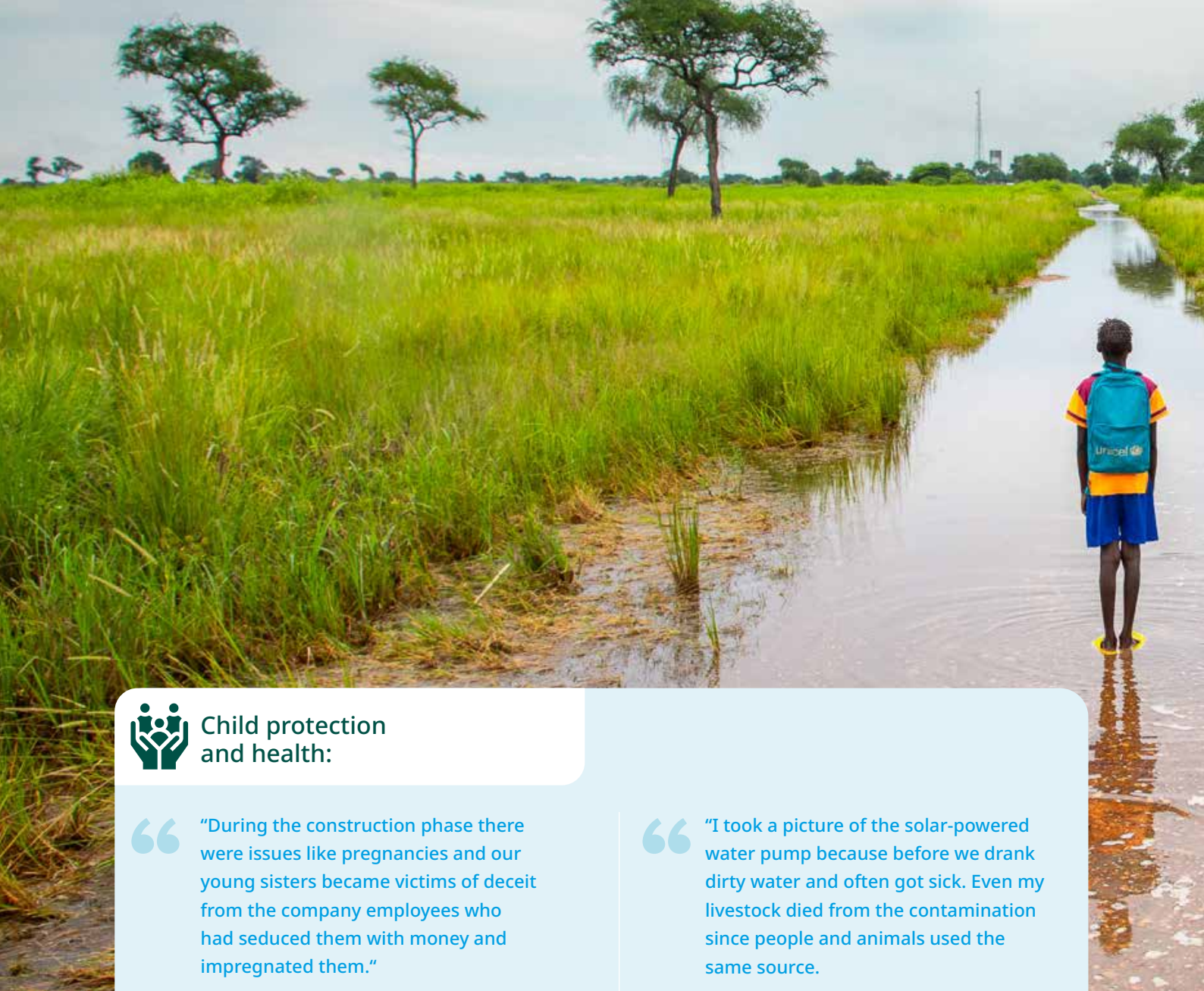
– Benson, age 15, Sarima Village, Kenya



"Our village used to be good grazing land for our animals, but the turbines have disrupted our grazing patterns and the corridors leading to water points."

– Lago, age 17, Sarima Village, Kenya

30 United Nations Children's Fund, The UNICEF Sustainability and Climate Change Action Plan (2023-2030), Executive Summary, New York, November 2023, p. 4.



Child protection and health:



“During the construction phase there were issues like pregnancies and our young sisters became victims of deceit from the company employees who had seduced them with money and impregnated them.”

– Robert, age 17, Sarima Village, Kenya



“If there were plays and games, young people would leave the villages, get involved, and stay busy. It would help us avoid many things like alcohol and drugs. But right now, we have no such opportunities – we are idle with nothing to do.”

– Benson, age 15, Sarima Village, Kenya



“Since the solar park was built, the heat has become stronger and hot winds blow. This makes us sick with problems like asthma, fever, coughs and headaches.”

– Akash, age 13, Bahawalpur, Pakistan



“I took a picture of the solar-powered water pump because before we drank dirty water and often got sick. Even my livestock died from the contamination since people and animals used the same source.

“Now there are separate areas, and both we and the animals have clean water. It’s much easier – before it took an hour and a half just to fetch water. I only wish there were more pumps. For us it is convenient, but people in nearby villages still have to travel far. If more pumps are built, it will be easier for them too.”

– Sheeba, age 15, Cholistan, Pakistan



Education and gender equality:



“We don’t have classes on pollution, climate change, or how to keep our surroundings clean. Even though the solar plant brought some good changes, students are not involved in environmental programmes like tree planting or clean-up activities.”

– Jam, age 14, Cholistan, Pakistan



“Before, there was no proper road and it was very hard to reach school. Many accidents happened on the rough path. After the solar park was built, a new road was made. Now it’s easier and safer to travel, and our parents feel relieved. Everyone in the village is happy with this road.”

– Mohammad, age 13, Bahawalpur, Pakistan



“There are many good things that have come with these changes – the dispensary, the borehole, the roads, and the classroom. We also appreciate that some of our parents have jobs there.

But as a girl, I don’t feel the wind power project cares about us. Few girls or women are employed, and they have never asked how we are doing or sent female workers to talk to us.”

– Lucy, age 17, Sarima Village, Kenya



“We’re girls – why would anyone ask us? Even our families don’t ask for our opinions. All decisions are made by others. We didn’t know what this project was or how it would affect us. Permission was given without asking us. Here, children – especially girls – are ignored and have no say, even in decisions like marriage.”

– Gulnaz, age 15, Cholistan, Pakistan



“Parents and elders should be educated on the importance of taking girls to school. This is because, according to our parents, we don’t have any rights as girls.

I suggest for us to be given the opportunity to select a female leader in the organization who can talk on our behalf. For now, we do not have any woman representing us in any decision and the elders and leaders are male. ... I personally can never tell a male elder my issues. If female leaders were involved, some of our challenges as girls would have been sorted.”

– Christiane, age 15, Sarima Village, Kenya

03

**CALL TO ACTION:
TOWARDS A GLOBAL
AGENDA FOR CHILDREN
IN THE GREEN
TRANSITION**



At least 2.4 billion human beings in the world have yet to celebrate their 18th birthday.³¹

All of them have the right to health care, healthy food, safe drinking water and sanitation, uninterrupted learning, and protection from all forms of violence. But one billion children already face **extreme risks** to their ability to survive, grow and thrive.³²

Our failure to confront the triple planetary crises of climate change, environmental pollution and biodiversity loss endangers everyone.

And yet, children and young people are holding on to their optimism and vision for the future. They are raising their voices, taking action, and demanding an urgent response. It is time to put global commitments and resources to work in support of their demands and help realize their right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment.

This requires accelerating the just transition towards a nature-positive, circular-economy and carbon-neutral world through collaborative commitments by government, business and civil society to:



Equip local communities with low-carbon, low-pollution and accessible infrastructure and services that can withstand shocks. And make essential services for children – health-care centres, schools, water supplies and nutrition facilities – climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable.



Embed child-focussed policies, budget allocations, and financing structures that prioritize children's most urgent needs in government systems. And provide the financial means to implement these measures.



Support young people in their roles as champions and changemakers for our planet. This includes empowering youth to design and lead solutions that drive green innovation, entrepreneurship and local job creation, ensuring that the transition generates opportunities.



Provide community members and service delivery professionals with the knowledge, skills and data required to proactively engage with and meet children's needs and respond effectively when children's well-being is threatened.

While **national governments** have the primary duty to uphold children's rights and set policy and legal frameworks to guide and regulate as well as incentivize and accelerate the green transition, **private sector businesses** and **civil society organizations** have key responsibilities to ensure the transition respects children's rights and does not perpetuate existing inequalities.

Here are key recommendations for each.

31 UNICEF Data, [How many children are there in the world?](#), Population under age 18, 2023.

32 United Nations Children's Fund, [The UNICEF Sustainability and Climate Change Action Plan \(2023-2030\)](#), Executive Summary, New York, November 2023, p. 3. For more on this topic, see: UNICEF Division of Global Communication and Advocacy, [Triple Threat: How disease, climate risks, and unsafe water, sanitation and hygiene create a deadly combination for children](#), New York, March 2023.

Governments adopt ambitious national climate policies and just transition strategies with explicit recognition of children's rights



Policy and legal frameworks

- Incorporate explicit references to children's rights in national climate policies and just transition strategies
- Strengthen enforcement of child labour laws and collaborate internationally to standardize regulations.
- Enforce child-friendly environmental impact analysis to assess infrastructure development project.
- Adopt laws and regulation that make it mandatory for businesses to conduct child-responsive human rights and environmental due diligence to identify, prevent and address the actual and potential risks that result from or are linked to their operations throughout the value chain.
- Require businesses to publicly report due diligence outcomes in formats, languages, media and platforms that are accessible to children, young people, and their communities.
- Integrate child rights clauses into all procurement and outsourcing contracts linked to the green transition. Include human rights and environmental due diligence expectations in investment strategies and agreements with investors, whether domestic or foreign.
- Establish grievance mechanisms that are accessible to the children and communities who are most affected by the impacts of climate change and the results of projects related to the green transition.



Social protection and financial support

- Provide targeted financial support and social protection to low-income families to incentivize adoption of renewable energy and green products.
- Ensure equitable and affordable access to green products, essential services and renewable energy.

Education and skills development



- Invest in STEM education and vocational training to prepare children for the jobs emerging from the green transition, with particular attention to girls and other marginalized groups.
- Focus on reskilling for parents displaced by the transition to prevent economic insecurity.
- Raise awareness of the green transition's impacts at the community level and especially in schools:
 - Incorporate environmental education, including green transition projects, into national curricula, and provide training for teachers on the environment and children's rights.
 - Develop age-appropriate teaching materials on green transition themes, such as renewable energy, and encourage educational projects where students design local solutions and extracurricular programmes.

Community engagement and preservation of cultural heritage



- Make community engagement mandatory through regulatory measures for all green transition projects to understand and address local needs. Carry out impact assessments of intended and unintended effects, and design mitigation strategies.
- Provide training for public officials on due diligence principles and impacts of the green transition at the community level. Empower local governments to conduct data-driven assessments of green transition projects.
- Preserve cultural heritage when making changes in land use, ensuring that local and Indigenous communities have a role in decision-making and benefit from new developments.



Children and youth participation

- Maintain ongoing consultation throughout design, implementation and monitoring of projects and laws.
- Promote youth leadership in regular reporting on both environmental impacts and social impacts.
- Encourage investment in young entrepreneurs as part of national and local just transition strategies.
- Apply dedicated funding to create mentorship and incubation opportunities that can enable youth to turn climate solutions into viable green enterprises, strengthening both community resilience and decent work opportunities.
- Develop specific channels and platforms in cooperation with communities, businesses and civil society organizations:
 - Support initiatives such as youth parliaments, child councils and youth champions.
 - Appoint focal points from the community or child and youth advisory boards at local and national levels to provide feedback on impacts of the green transition.
 - Invite children, youth and caregivers to discussions and/or consultation groups on a regular basis.



Businesses take steps to respect children's rights and advance a just green transition



Policy and operational frameworks

- Ensure that green transition strategies, action plans and projects are sustainable and mitigate harm on children and youth by establishing accountability policies at the company level. Assessing climate risks through a child-centred lens leads to more sustainable and inclusive business decisions, ensuring that the rights and needs of children and youth are not overlooked in the pursuit of environmental goals:
 - Conduct human rights and environmental impact assessments that consider child rights to identify adverse impacts on children, and ensure these impacts are remediated.
 - Conduct regular, mandatory training sessions for all employees and management on upholding children's rights.
 - Cooperate with government authorities to establish confidential reporting mechanisms on violations of children's rights that can be used by staff and community members, including children or their representatives.
- Integrate children's rights into supply chain strategies, with explicit obligations, standards and expectations that promote ethical sourcing and guide product development and sourcing decisions for all suppliers and contractors.
- Prohibit child labour across all phases of the supply chain – including sourcing, production, recycling and waste management – and take proactive measures to prevent, identify and mitigate risks through robust due diligence, transparent reporting, and collaboration with suppliers, communities, and relevant stakeholders.
- Based on the results of the impact assessment and the identified risks, provide targeted training for suppliers and service providers on the children's rights implications of the green transition, including the benefits and potential negative impacts to build awareness and capacity for responsible business conduct.

Economic stability for families



- Limit harm and inequalities for vulnerable households, taking account of the diverse impacts of green transition projects.
- Support social protection and just transition funds by co-investing in funds supporting workers during the transition, offering unemployment support and job placement services, and collaborating on health care and mental well-being programmes.
- Consider subsidies to provide affordable access to green solutions, such as solar panels and electric vehicles, to reduce household expenses that can lead to harmful 'coping mechanisms', such as child labour.
- Work with governments to provide economic opportunities for communities that face significant job losses, including co-funding for training programmes in renewable energy and sustainable industries.
- Support and invest in reskilling and upskilling programmes for workers displaced by green transition activities to ensure families remain economically secure.
- Provide apprenticeships, vocational training, and youth skills programmes linked to future employment.

Inclusive development and community engagement



- Engage children and their communities in decision-making processes.
- Improve the quality of risk assessments and the uptake of solutions by ensuring that children, caregivers and local institutions participate in climate adaptation planning.



- Accelerate comprehensive investments in essential infrastructure, such as roads, schools and WASH facilities, that address gaps in quality and access.
- Join councils aligning business strategies with public interests, advocate for policies promoting sustainable jobs and tax incentives, and set corporate responsibility standards for 'green' employment.
- Help bridge the digital divide by working with governments to ensure equitable access to technology and digital platforms, especially for marginalized children, and implement privacy safeguards to protect children from exploitation in digital spaces.

Advocate for and support the growth of local green economies



- Advocate for child-centred actions and investments by government and public institutions.
- Generate long-term co-benefits for communities and business alike through investments that link adaptation with local employment, youth skills and essential services

- Invest in green infrastructure – including solar, wind and eco-tourism projects – ensuring long-term employment opportunities and job sustainability beyond short-term construction phases.
- Prioritize local hiring for green projects to support livelihoods and encourage return migration, and commit to developing transition programmes for workers shifting from fossil-fuel sectors.
- Strengthen local supply chains by sourcing from local suppliers and cooperatives, supporting training and certification for small- and medium-sized enterprises in green sectors, and helping local businesses access global green markets.
- Support community social enterprises by creating impact investment funds for local green businesses, sharing profits through community development programmes or investing in cooperatives managing renewable energy or farming initiatives.
- Partner with universities to develop green technologies, fund pilot projects to test sustainable business models and transfer technology to local businesses.

Civil society as champions for children – and supporting children in being champions for our planet



Amplify children's voices

- Civil society, including non-governmental organizations, can serve as a link between local communities, governments and/or businesses to ensure that children's perspectives are actively considered in green project planning and implementation.
- Support continuous community consultations that include children and young people, and share their insights with businesses or government authorities, particularly where they lack the capacity to collect data.
- Develop programmes that inform children, youth and communities about the social, economic and environmental dimensions of the green transition and its impacts – particularly with a focus on building skills for the future.
- Leverage media – including social media, TV channels, local radio and places of worship – to amplify children's perspectives, raise awareness of their rights, and highlight the real impacts of green transition initiatives.
- Create and distribute tools such as storybooks and fact sheets to make sustainable energy topics accessible and relevant.
- Support youth-led initiatives and movements that promote a child-sensitive green transition by providing mentorship, safe spaces and platforms for advocacy.

Bridge local to global action



- Support community monitoring that places children and youth at the centre of tracking the impacts of green transition projects.
- Engage with local residents in data collection, reporting and advocacy – and generate independent, disaggregated data through surveys and focus group discussions.
- Act as advocates by monitoring and identifying gaps in government or private-sector commitments and action to include children and youth as essential participants in the development of policies, strategies and projects.

Help fill the evidence gaps



- Universities and civil society organizations can work together to reframe research on the broader environmental and economic outcomes of the shift to sustainable energy to include studies on how these changes specifically affect children.
- Generate crucial data on how adaptation measures affect children's daily lives and local economies through partnerships between research institutions, civil society and businesses.
- Focus on countries and regions where the risks to children from climate change and the green transition are high, but data remain insufficient.
- Submit shadow reports to treaty bodies to highlight gaps in government reporting on climate, sustainability, and the present and future risks and benefits for children.



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For every child

Whoever she is.
Wherever he lives.
Every child deserves a childhood.
A future.
A fair chance.
That's why UNICEF is there.
For each and every child.
Working day in and day out.
In more than 190 countries and territories.
Reaching the hardest to reach.
The furthest from help.
The most excluded.
It's why we stay to the end.
And never give up.

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