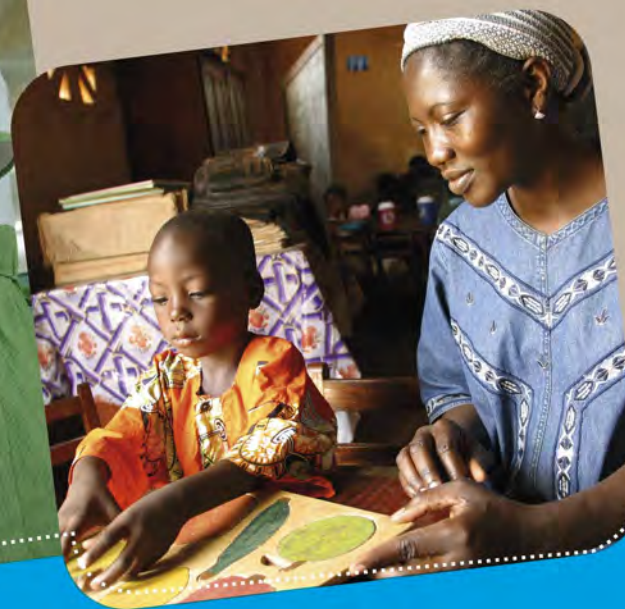




SUPPORTING WORKERS WITH FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES

Connecting child development and the decent work agenda



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CONNECTING CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND THE DECENT WORK AGENDA

**UNICEF/ILO Working Paper presented at the Annual Ministerial Review
of the High-Level Segment of Economic and Social Council,
New York, 2–9 July 2012**

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Connecting child development and the decent work agenda

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**Supporting workers with family responsibilities:
connecting child development and the decent work agenda**

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Foreword

Working families often face competing demands and tradeoffs when reconciling work with childcare responsibilities. Finding the right balance is particularly difficult for low-income families constrained by a lack of resources and limited access to the quality childcare services that are vital to give their children a good start in life. Parents need support measures that make it easier to pursue decent work without sacrificing their child's development.

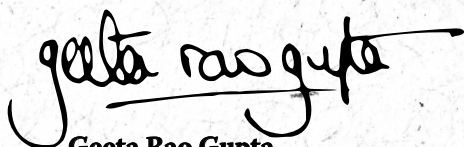
Early child development services that cater to the physical, social and cognitive needs of children lay a firm foundation for a healthy and productive adulthood. To neglect any one of these areas risks irreparable harm. Young children who receive inadequate care, insufficient food, a lack of early stimulation, or those who suffer violence, abuse or neglect, tend to exhibit learning deficits later in childhood, and are ill-prepared to enter the workforce as productive adults. In short, children who are deprived of appropriate care in the early years miss out on the chance to realize their potential to the fullest later in life.

The consequences of missed opportunities in early childhood reverberate throughout society. Under-investment in early childhood diminishes prospects for a creative and capable workforce. We cannot afford an economic loss on this scale, hence the need for adequate social sector investments, especially in the current climate of economic stress and instability.

The Working Paper "Supporting Workers with Family Responsibilities: Connecting Child Development and the Decent Work Agenda", presents a series of solutions to these challenging social issues. It builds on the conclusions of "Investing in Child Development and Learning: Ensuring Equity in Decent Work and Sustainable Development," a forum convened by UNICEF and ILO on 28 February 2012. This paper was used to stimulate dialogue and guide discussion during an Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Ministerial Roundtable in New York on 3 July 2012. The Roundtable examined the policy challenges posed to policy-makers, the social partners (employers' and workers' organizations) and other societal actors in proposing policies in support of working families.

The Working Paper offers an integrated set of social sector investments that target the critical stages of early childhood, from pregnancy through to care and development in the early years and later childhood. This integrated approach can give families the support needed to balance the competing demands of the labour market and childcare. Special attention should be paid to women who bear a disproportionate share of childcare responsibilities and are consequently disadvantaged in terms of their labour force participation and decent work opportunities.

No mother or father should have to choose between earning an income and caring for his or her child. The policy recommendations detailed in this paper are intended to provide governments with practical, evidence-based options for family-focused, employment-centred growth. Together, we can develop creative and affordable options for giving every child the best possible start in life.



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ILO

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This Working Paper was prepared as a joint UNICEF/ILO background paper for discussion at the Ministerial Roundtable “Workers with family responsibilities: Connecting child development and the Decent Work Agenda”, held on 3 July 2012, during the Annual Ministerial Review of the High-Level Segment of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). A summary of the roundtable discussions, which touched on many of the themes of the Working Paper, are presented in the Summary section.

The Working Paper was prepared by Gemma Adaba, a consultant for UNICEF and ILO and benefited from invaluable substantive comments and inputs provided by officials from UNICEF and ILO, and independent academic experts. Contributions were made by UNICEF officials: Nurper Ulkuer Ph.D. (Unit Chief and Senior Adviser, Early Childhood Development), Isabel Ortiz (Associate Director, Policy Department), Sheila Murthy (Social and Economic Policy, Policy Department), Natalia Elena Winder-Rossi (Social and Economic Policy, Policy Department), and the Latin American and Caribbean Regional Office’s Maite Onochie Quintanilla (Early Childhood Development Specialist), Enrique Delamonica, Dave Madinger and Jamie Gow; by ILO officials: Stephen Pursey (Director, Department of Policy Integration), Adrienne Cruz (Senior Gender Specialist, Bureau for Gender Equality), Christina Behrendt (Social Policy Specialist, Social Security Department), Laura Addati (Work and Family & Maternity Protection specialist, Conditions of Work and Employment Branch), Patrick Quinn (Technical Specialist, Child Labour and Education), Adina Fulga Radi (Communication and Public Information Officer, Department of Policy Integration), Alejandro Bonilla-Garcia (Social Security Department) and Manuela Tomei (Director, Conditions of Work and Employment Programme), and by the following experts: Dr. Jody Heymann M.D. Ph.D., (Founding Director, Institute for Health and Social Policy and the Project on Global Working Families, McGill University) and Pia Britto Ph.D. (Associate Research Scientist, Child Studies Center, Yale Global Health Initiative).

Programme Division, UNICEF wishes to thank Governance UN and Multilateral Affairs Division (GMA), UNICEF New York for the initiative and concept development that initiated this endeavour with the ECOSOC in a global UNICEF–ILO Forum entitled ‘Investing in Child Development and Learning: Ensuring Equity in Decent Work and in Sustainable Development’, at the United Nations, 28 February 2012.

Instrumental leadership was provided by Deborah Dishman, Senior Specialist, Governance UN and Multilateral Affairs, UNICEF, New York; Maryam Rashid, Early Childhood Development Specialist (Knowledge Management), UNICEF, New York, Amber Barth Programme Officer, ILO, New York and Kevin Cassidy, Communications and External Relations Officer, ILO New York, each provided invaluable technical support, guidance and collaboration in making this effort a reality on paper.

Abbreviations

ALMPs	Active labour market policies
AMR	Annual Ministerial Review
C	(ILO) Convention
CBOs	Community-based organizations
CCTs	Conditional cash transfers
CED	Committee for Economic Development
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CPS	Community pre-school
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CSR	Corporate social responsibility
CSW	Commission on the Status of Women
CTs	Cash transfers
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
DWCPs	Decent Work Country Programmes
ECDD	Early childhood care and development
ECCE	Early childhood care and education
ECD	Early childhood development
ECDE	Early childhood development and education
ECEC	Early childhood education and care
ECERS	Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council of the United Nations
EEL	Effective early learning
EFA	Education for all
EU	European Union
FYROM	Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
GDP	Gross domestic product
HIV	Human immunodeficiency virus
IFIs	International financial institutions
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IPEC	International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour
IRC	Innocenti Research Centre

KPAWU	Kenya Plantation and Agricultural Workers' Union
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys
NEET	Neither in education, employment nor training
NFE	Non-formal education
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NREGA	National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (of India)
NTDs	Neglected tropical diseases
ODA	Official development assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
R	(ILO) Recommendation
SDGs	Sustainable development goals
SEWA	Self-employed Women's Association (of India)
SMEs	Small and medium enterprises
TBPs	Time-bound programmes
TIMSS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
TVET	Technical, vocational education and training
U5MR	Under-five mortality rate
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNGEI	United Nations Girls' Education Initiative
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USD	United States Dollars
VAT	Valued added tax
WHO	World Health Organization

Summary of discussions:

ECOSOC Ministerial Roundtable, 3 July 2012

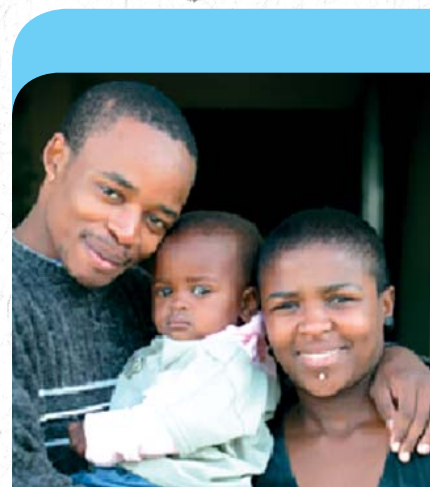
An ECOSOC Ministerial Roundtable co-hosted by UNICEF and ILO was held on 3 July, 2012. It brought together ministers and representatives from 22 Member States and the ECOSOC Bureau, high-level officials from UNICEF, ILO and UN Women and non-state organizations. Discussions focused on the theme of the roundtable: **“Workers with family responsibilities: connecting child development and the Decent Work Agenda”**. Chaired by Kenya’s Minister for Gender, Children and Social Development Dr. Naomi Shaban, the session received remarks from the United Republic of Tanzania’s Minister for Labour and Employment Gaudencia Mugosi Kabaka, Slovakia’s State Secretary Branislav Ondrus, Vice-President of ECOSOC Luis-Alfonso de Alba, of Mexico, and Gulden Turkoz-Cosslett, on behalf of Michelle Bachelet, Under-Secretary General and Executive Director of UN Women. The event was co-hosted by Yoka Brandt, Deputy Executive Director, UNICEF, and Stephen Pursey, Director of the Policy Integration Department and Special Advisor to The Director General, ILO.

Sharing examples of good practice in family and child-focused social policies, government representatives stressed their importance for decent work outcomes. A general consensus emphasized the need to prioritize strong and sustained investments in the social sectors, starting with maternity protection, early childhood care and development, investments in health and education and support along the life cycle continuum, in order to ensure a smooth transition from school to work. Further, a commonly held view was that these investments should not be postponed until the end of the current economic crisis or until countries had graduated from low-income status. Participants agreed that it was precisely through the prioritization of these investments that countries could hope to improve the productive capacities of their citizens and to achieve inclusive growth, poverty alleviation and significant improvements in family and child well-being.



Luis-Alfonso de Alba, ECOSOC
Vice President, speaking at the roundtable

Mr. de Alba recognized the roundtable as an important “common space” created by ECOSOC, and allowing for valuable collaboration between UNICEF and ILO. It served to demonstrate that this type of interagency collaboration was both possible and valuable. Noting also that the roundtable’s timing was critical, he pointed out that the Rio+20 conclusions highlighted the key role of governments in integrating into one sustainable development agenda, goals that were based on the three pillars of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. As a result of these conclusions, ECOSOC was now in a position to help to link sustainable development with the post-2015 development goals that would be



formulated in the coming months. This integration would lead to a much more comprehensive set of post-2015 goals that would be critical for sustainable development outcomes in both developing and developed countries.

Finland's representative stressed that her country was not yet highly industrialized when it decided to embark on sustained social sector investments, especially in health, education, and early childcare, along with policies to support work/life balance. Those investments had brought rich dividends in terms of economic growth with decent standards of well-being for all. Consultations with social partners (i.e. employers' organizations and trade unions) on social policy formulation were also key to the achievement of broad social consensus around policies and programmes, and were important for social cohesion.

The Representative of UN Women commended UNICEF and ILO for their partnership around a holistic agenda that linked early childhood development (ECD) with social protection floors, decent employment and measures to ensure women's economic empowerment. She pledged the support of UN Women to this partnership. In addressing the concept of a holistic and integrated agenda, Mr. de Alba reminded participants of the Rio+20 Summit framework, linking the three sustainable development pillars. The focus of the current meeting on strengthening the social pillar by investing in working families and child development was both timely and opportune, said Mr. de Alba, insisting that an emphasis on rights-based approaches must also be a part of the discussions on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) going forward into the post-Millennium Development Goals (MDG) debates.

There was general agreement on the important role of social protection floors in providing social services to families, and particularly to low-income and vulnerable groups. In that regard, attention was drawn to the recent adoption by the International Labour Conference of the Social Protection Floors Recommendation 2012 (No. 202), containing detailed guidelines for Member States to use in developing social protection systems. Of special relevance to working families and their children were provisions for "basic income security for children... providing access to nutrition, education, care and other necessary goods and services."

Examples of good practice in family-focused social protection schemes were highlighted. Notably, in South Africa, the Government had been implementing a Child Support Grant in the form of childcare allowances paid to the main caregiver. The National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme (NREGA), launched by the Government of India in 2005, had recognized the implications that family responsibilities carried regarding women's abilities to freely engage in paid economic activities. NREGA included on-site facilities for, among other things, medical aid, drinking water and shade, which local implementing agencies have to set out in order to ensure the effective implementation of the employment-generating programme.

Many other examples were shared in the course of the discussion. For instance, Malawi had been implementing social cash transfer programmes, with primary caregivers (mostly mothers and grandmothers) as beneficiaries. It was found that these transfers helped to retain children at school and to keep them from seeking employment in the tea and tobacco estates with a view to supplementing meagre household incomes. Those measures also contributed to efforts to address child labour. Kenya's social protection programmes had focused on social transfers for the benefit of orphans and vulnerable children and had helped to provide support for caregivers, enhancing early childhood care and nutritional security and serving to retain older children, mainly girls, at school.

In many instances, keeping children at school was linked to efforts aimed at combating child labour, particularly in its exploitative forms, and addressing child trafficking. Kenya had instituted the Non-trafficking Act under which the movement of children was carefully regulated. ILO's work was focused on the priority areas of providing technical assistance to countries to address child labour and to eliminate its worst forms. A four-tier strategy aimed at reducing family poverty through employment and income for parents, providing of quality and affordable school places for children, prohibiting the



Ms. Yoka Brandt, Dep. Exec. Dir., UNICEF (left); Mr. Stephen Pursey, Dir. of the Policy Integration Dept. and Special Advisor to The DG, ILO (right)

**H. E. Dr. Naomi Shaban,
Minister of Gender,
Children and Social
Development of Kenya
(Chair of the Roundtable)**



worst forms of child labour and ensuring support measures for the critical stage of transitioning from school to the world of work.

The ILO was also calling attention to the negative impacts of the current economic crisis on youth employment. With 75 million young people out of work, representing 4 million more than before the financial crisis started in 2008, youth unemployment was more than double the adult rate. In that light, the ILO had just unanimously adopted a Resolution at its annual International Labour Conference 2012, The Youth Employment Crisis: A Call to Action. The Resolution proposed vigorous action around a menu of policy options to address the employment challenges facing young people worldwide. Of concern to the present meeting was the increasing incidence

of poverty among young working families, deteriorating conditions for early childhood care and development and worsening prospects for social cohesion.

Some countries reported that the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) was an important basis for legislative frameworks to provide child protection services as well as childcare and education. Kenya was exploring ways to comply with the provision concerning a child's right to be heard, including through opportunities for children to participate in various aspects of civic life and decision-making that affected them. Tanzania was placing a great deal of emphasis on primary education for all, including "second chance" programmes for those that had not received primary-level education. Kenya had instituted similar programmes, with support for transitioning to secondary and tertiary levels, but also recognized the need to strengthen technical and vocational training programmes.

Discussions also touched on the need to support families in their efforts to combine work with family responsibilities. Some participants felt that the CRC, the Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183) and the Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention, 1981 (No. 156) provided a good basis for the establishment and strengthening of legislative and policy frameworks to support families in this critical area. Tanzania's Labour Relations Act of 2004 included provisions for maternity protection and childcare, and measures for employment creation, with an emphasis on decent work outcomes.

For its part, Kenya had instituted maternity protection provisions as well as paternity leave. Slovakia was placing strong emphasis on policies to support workers with family responsibilities, and making use of a tripartite consultative framework, involving government representatives along with employers' and workers' organizations, and social dialogue to tackle issues such as flexible work arrangements that could support the work/life balance. Israel was exploring workplace solutions for childcare within the public sector, and had instituted a number of support measures to families, including tax deductions for parents, subsidized early childcare, free compulsory education from five years of age with after-school activities, and planned to extend these provisions to three years of age by 2013. The United States-based non-governmental organization (NGO), the Committee for Economic Development (CED) has reached out to the private sector, encouraging businesses to make their company policies family-friendly, and to re-invest at least one per cent of corporate earnings in public/private partnerships that supported early childhood development programmes in their community or state. The Elma Foundation, a philanthropic organization, has invested in ECD, health and education in sub-Saharan Africa.



**H. E. Gaudentia Mugosi
Kabaka, Minister of Labor
and Employment
of Tanzania**

Some countries stated that their ECD and pre-school programmes needed to be strengthened, and welcomed UNICEF's support for initiatives in this regard. UNICEF's technical assistance was based on clear findings that early quality childcare constituted a sure investment in the long-term and holistic development of children, enhancing their chances for achieving successful outcomes at the primary, secondary and tertiary school levels, and hence their opportunities to become productive young adults.

Conclusions

UNICEF and ILO were pleased to host the roundtable and to initiate an important dialogue that generated ideas on a significant sub-set of themes connecting child development to equitable economic growth and the Decent Work Agenda. Clearly, the need for integrated approaches resonated strongly in participants' remarks: integration from the bottom up, with policies to support children and families; integration from the top down, from the United Nations system through national governments to the kitchen table; and horizontal integration through interagency partnerships with employers and workers' organizations and other non-State actors.

Executive summary

Introduction: Reconciling work with childcare responsibilities

When societies fail to provide good solutions to support the reconciliation of the dual roles of work and childcare responsibilities, negative outcomes ensue, both for economies and for families. Parents — most often women since they bear an unequal share of all family responsibilities including care for children — often must forego opportunities for decent work. Many choose part-time work or settle for vulnerable and informal economic activities that allow for some flexibility but carry their own economic and social costs. Gender inequality is reinforced, both within the home and in the workplace, since women's position in the labour market is undermined, and unequal sharing of family responsibilities is perpetuated. Household income is severely reduced, and may be inadequate to meet basic family needs, such as health care, food, nutrition and education, especially in communities already beset by a high incidence of vulnerability and poverty. As a result, children are deprived of opportunities for quality care and learning. With their chances of succeeding in life seriously impaired by such early deprivation, they may fail to reach their full development potential.

When presented with a poor start in early childhood, children tend to accumulate learning and achievement deficits throughout childhood and early adulthood, failing to acquire the prerequisite social, technical and knowledge skills to compete in the job market and to make their full contribution to society. Thus, the economy also suffers because it has missed an opportunity to efficiently harness its human capital for economic growth.

However, solutions to the dilemma are within the reach of governments, policymakers, social partners (employers and trade unions) and other societal actors. Together, ILO and UNICEF offer a package of policy tools for governments, which have a leadership role to play, as well as for social partners and parents, caregivers and teachers concerning the critical years from pregnancy and childbirth through childhood, adolescence and young people's entry into the world of work. A more integrated approach would reduce the risk of perpetuating poverty and disadvantage and would increase the likelihood that a virtuous circle of decent work interacted with strong childhood development policies to generate positive outcomes in terms of family and societal well-being.

The quality of economic growth matters

At the national level, macroeconomic policies are the drivers of economic growth. However, to achieve societal well-being and sustainable livelihoods for working families and their children, the quality of that growth is important. It must be inclusive and equitable, sharing prosperity efficiently and fairly. Therefore, UNICEF and the ILO are advocating for social policies to be fully integrated into macroeconomic frameworks that prioritize strong support for working families along the life cycle continuum. The aim must be to adopt a rights-based approach that recognizes rights and protections at work for working parents and the rights of the child, and that is grounded in the CRC, the Decent Work Agenda and social protection floors.

Strong investments are needed in the social sector and across the life cycle that are suitable for each critical step, starting with pregnancy, childbirth, maternity protection, parental leave and early childhood care and development, on through later childhood and adolescence to young people's entry into paid work. Support measures must be adequate, of good

quality, affordable and accessible to all, especially to the most marginalized and disadvantaged communities. They should also be gender-responsive in order to diminish women's over-representation in marginal forms of paid work and to promote men's more equal sharing of family responsibilities. The life cycle concept provides the basis for a holistic and integrated approach that connects and reinforces various policy support measures in a coherent manner.

Supportive environments for maternal health and ECD

A supportive environment for the critical stage of planning the family, pregnancy and childbirth is key to the well-being of all families. To this end, health-care systems must be strengthened and must provide quality and accessible services starting with reproductive health and family planning services for both women and men, as well as services for women concerning pregnancy, childbirth and post-natal care.

Social protection floors could be an effective enabler to ensure the provision of these vital services for maternal and child health — in short, for the achievement of MDGs 4 and 5, resulting in significant reductions in child and maternal mortality.

Reproductive health services should be well integrated into health care systems and should be adequately funded.

National legislative frameworks should incorporate the key provisions of Convention No. 183, thereby creating an enabling environment for child development by providing the five main elements of maternity protection: maternity leave, cash and medical benefits, health protection at the workplace, employment protection and non-discrimination and breastfeeding arrangements at work.

Supporting workers with family responsibilities

Governments should incorporate work/family balance policies into national legislative frameworks and support workers with family responsibilities, through the ratification and application of the Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention, 1981 (No. 156) and the accompanying Recommendation No. 165. National and workplace measures that ensure adequate and accessible maternity protection and family-friendly services are critical for promoting women's equal opportunities and treatment in labour markets and for achieving gender equality while ensuring support for childcare.

Paid paternity leave should be used as a strategy for encouraging men to share in the care of their newborns. Parental leave, including for men, would facilitate greater involvement of fathers in the care of their children, thereby contributing to positive child development outcomes, especially related to health and education. Fathers' access to paid paternity and parental leave should be adequately facilitated by suitable policy and legislative frameworks.

Governments and the social partners (employers and workers' organizations) should strive to create an enabling environment and to introduce measures to render workplaces more family-friendly. These measures can include working time arrangements, such as "flexitime" and reduced daily hours of work, and providing workers with the possibility of some choice concerning rest periods, holidays and leave. Flexible working time arrangements constitute a critical support measure to ensure that parents have access to adequate leave to meet their children's essential health and education needs, including care in case of illness, and time off to address school and learning issues.

Employers' organizations and trade unions should seek to incorporate these family-friendly clauses into collective agreements.

Investing in ECD

Governments must take all necessary steps to create an enabling environment to allow for the realization of children's rights in key areas: life, health, education and development, in keeping with the CRC.

In this regard, an important measure is the facilitation of birth registration for all children, thereby conferring on them the status of rights-holders of pertinent protections, provisions and entitlements under national law.

Health delivery systems must be comprehensive, accessible, affordable and of good quality, providing adequate and timely interventions in terms of post-natal care, as well as follow-up of weight/height, nutrition and immunization regimens, including stepping up delivery of measles vaccines.

In order to achieve MDG 4 on significant reductions in child mortality by 2015, accelerated and strengthened actions are needed to combat the major causes of neonatal, infant and child mortality.

Given that infant mortality rates are much higher for rural populations and underserved communities than for urban populations, special efforts must be made to provide these hard-to-reach communities with access to child health services, as well as quality childcare, development and education services.

Nutrition and feeding security measures should be firmly in place, and should start by creating the environment to allow for exclusive breastfeeding during the first six months of a child's life, and then focus on appropriate complementary feeding along with responsive feeding and care practices. These actions are critical to ensuring the good health and nutritional status of infants.

Scientific evidence points to the critical importance of early investments in child development to enable children to reach their full development potential in adulthood. Research has shown that the earlier the investment, the greater the return is on productivity in adulthood.

The findings mentioned above point to the need for the adoption of legislative frameworks and policies with a rights-based approach, founded on the CRC and on the Education for All (EFA) Goal 1: Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children.

Policy interventions must cater to the whole of the child, incorporating child protection, health, nutrition, care and learning components in an integrated programme, thereby constituting a solid foundation for human learning and development that addresses the physical, emotional, psychosocial and cognitive needs of the child.

Social protection floors and social protection systems as an overarching framework to support working families and their children throughout the life cycle

Social protection floors and social protection systems constitute an important means of ensuring income security and access to basic services throughout the life cycle, thereby addressing the multiple and compounding vulnerabilities faced by children and their families.

Governments should make full use of the ILO Social Protection Floors Recommendation 2012 (No. 202), to establish or strengthen social protection floors, with a view to providing a coherent legislative framework at the national level for the realization of rights in social security for all throughout the life cycle.

Social protection floors should provide guarantees on basic income security and access to a nationally defined set of goods and services, "constituting essential health care, including maternity care, that meets the criteria of availability, accessibility, acceptability and quality;" as well as "access to nutrition, education, care and any other necessary goods and services" for children.

Special emphasis should be placed on ensuring access to ECD services.

UNICEF's Social Protection Strategic Framework also provides detailed guidelines for establishing integrated social protection programmes to support child development in all of its dimensions, and especially children and families faced with social and economic vulnerabilities. The Framework should be fully utilized by governments for the construction of such programmes.

Quality pre-school programming

Quality pre-school programmes constitute an effective preparatory mechanism for successful early childhood development as well as learning later on in life. Such programmes serve to counter the high incidence of poor outcomes at the primary school level, such as dropout, class repetition and failure to acquire basic literacy and numeracy skills.

Governments must commit to strong investments in these programmes, ensuring accessibility and affordability for low-income families.

UNICEF technical assistance could play a vital supporting role in the creation and strengthening of these efforts in developing countries, using modalities such as the model kindergarten as a means for developing quality programmes, with the use of relevant, enriching curricula, teaching methods and teaching and learning materials.

Funding should be sought for bringing such programmes to scale. To ensure sustainable, predictable levels of expenditure on quality ECD services, donor countries and agencies should prioritize the establishment of co-financing and aid modalities with governments of low-income countries.

Governments must exercise their role in establishing a regulatory environment and standards in terms of suitable curricula, learning methods and materials, qualifications, conditions of work of professionals focused on early childhood, as well as child protection measures in keeping with the CRC. Governments must equally ensure compliance with these standards through the establishment of inspection and oversight systems.

Achieving EFA goals at primary school level

In many developing countries, governments need to invest in the strengthening of education systems at the primary school level along multiple dimensions, if EFA goals are to be achieved. Physical infrastructure needs to be upgraded and made conducive to learning, and schools need to be equipped with adequate and stimulating learning resources.

Attention needs to be paid to adequate school curricula, with effective strategies to overcome obstacles to the attainment of functional literacy and numeracy, as well as to the acquisition of basic notions of math and science as a foundation for successful transitioning to the secondary school level.

Systems of teacher training and re-training should be put in place to ensure that staff are well qualified and have the competencies needed to develop relevant and enriching curricula.

Special incentives should be devised to attract qualified teachers to remote or marginalized communities. Remuneration levels should be adequate, facilitating the maintenance of high morale and motivation among teaching staff. All of the strategies outlined above are key inputs for the provision of quality education, leading to a successful primary school experience for children.

Given that low income and lack of resources are key factors explaining parents' failure to enrol their children in school, user fees in education should be abolished, and cash transfers instituted in the context of social protection floors, as a support to ensure school attendance of children from low-income families.

Affordable after-school services are another feasible investment to support both children's learning and parents' need to reconcile their paid work and family responsibilities.

School feeding programmes have proven to be successful in enhancing the nutritional health and academic performance of children from poor families. Such programmes have demonstrated their positive impacts on education outcomes in terms of improved enrolment, attendance and completion rates. School feeding programmes should be stepped up where needed.

Special attention should be given to the differential impacts of the school system on girls, with a view to ensuring that girls have a safe learning environment free of harassment and gender-based violence.

Addressing child labour through tackling household poverty

Governments should recognize the links among poverty, the incidence of school drop-out and the incidence of child labour. Addressing household poverty is, therefore, key to addressing child labour. Tested strategies that should be replicated included cash transfers contingent on school attendance, and non-conditional cash transfers that increase household income and reduce the perceived need to send children to work.

The CRC, the ILO Minimum Age (for admission to employment) Convention No. 138, the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999, (No. 182) and the ILO's Global Action Program on Child Labour provide the policy and normative framework that should be used to guide the formulation of policies and strategies to combat child labour.

Governments must invest in programmes that focus on two-way transitioning from child labour back to school or training programmes, and then aim at a better transition from training or school to work at the appropriate time and age.

Given the particular vulnerabilities of girls, including risks of being trapped in highly exploitative and abusive forms of child labour, focused programmes must be put in place for the removal of girls from child labour.

Active labour market policies for a smooth transition from school to work

An important goal of macroeconomic policies must be to provide an enabling environment for the sustainable livelihoods of families.

Active labour market policies must be incorporated into macroeconomic frameworks, with a strong focus on young people and on special measures to smooth the school-to-work transition. Such strategies are all the more important in light of the current youth employment crisis.

Addressing the lack of quality job opportunities, especially for young women and men, should become a critical priority in industrialized, emerging and developing countries. Well-designed active labour market policies linked to technical and vocational education, on-the-job training and apprenticeships — both formal and informal — are essential for skills development, employment and entrepreneurship. Such policies can help to alleviate unemployment and underemployment, as well as strengthen the achievement of decent work objectives.

Priority should be given to expanding public employment programmes that have proven to be valuable in addressing unemployment and underemployment of young people and those from disadvantaged groups, such as persons with disabilities. These programmes provide employment and social protection to those vulnerable to poverty, while simultaneously building small-scale infrastructure, skills and other assets that can, in turn, increase productivity.

Clearly, health and education systems are in need of strengthening in order to provide quality services to families and their children. Investing in these services and the necessary infrastructure will carry rich dividends. It will create jobs,

including for new educators and professionals focused on ECD, as well as upgrading social services to provide quality childcare and health and education services. Moreover, economies would benefit from the improvements in human capital and productive capacity.

Commitment to the Decent Work Agenda implies adherence to all of its strategic objectives, which include, in addition to employment and social protection, social dialogue (involving the social partners, or representative employers' and workers' organizations), and fundamental workers' rights.

Recovery packages during economic crises must take into account their differential impacts on women and men, and integrate gender concerns in all measures. In discussions on recovery packages, both regarding their design and assessing their outcomes, women must have an equal voice with men.

Despite the crisis, countries should imaginatively and strategically use their available fiscal capability to ensure much-needed investments in the social sectors, as well as in the full range of programmatic measures to support working families and their children throughout the life cycle.

Towards a partnership in support of working families and their children

Countries cannot afford to forego social-sector investments in the face of the current financial crisis, or in the name of fiscal austerity. A shift is needed to family-focused investments that prioritize decent work for all women and men, social protection, reconciliation of paid work and family responsibilities, early childhood development, and support for the transition of children to young adulthood within the life cycle framework. The relevant policy and normative frameworks developed by UNICEF and the ILO can serve to provide guidelines to Member States as they embark on programmes for family-focused, employment-centred growth. The accompanying technical assistance programmes can play an important role in supporting the formulation, implementation and monitoring of national policies.



Supporting Workers with Family Responsibilities: Connecting Child Development and the Decent Work Agenda

UNICEF/ILO Working Paper presented at the AMR
of the High-Level Segment of ECOSOC
held 2–9 July 2012 in New York



“We must do more to reach all children in need, wherever they live, wherever they are excluded and left behind. Some might ask whether we can afford to do this, especially at a time of austerity in national budgets and reduced aid allocations. But if we overcome the barriers that have kept these children from the services that they need and that are theirs by right, then millions more will grow up healthy, attend school, and live more productive lives. Can we afford not to do this?”

— Anthony Lake, UNICEF Executive Director
Foreword, *The State of the World's Children 2012*

“What does poverty mean in terms of real life cycles? Too often, it is women dying in pregnancy and childbirth; children deprived of their childhoods through child labour; children and young people without opportunities to learn and to train for a better future; families without access to basic health care; it is girls losing out on opportunities for education and being hit harder by poverty as they grow up because of the gender differential; it is “choosing” any kind of work or not eating; it is a state of such extreme vulnerability that simple life cycle events easily throw families into crippling debt, even debt bondage... I believe that a life cycle approach to work and protection helps us to connect directly with these realities and the interconnectedness of people’s needs. To be effective we must respond with an integrated approach and coherent policies. And this is the essence of the decent work approach.”

— Juan Somavia, ILO Director General (1999–2012),
Preface, *Social protection, social justice: A life cycle continuum investment*, Geneva, 2003

Section 1

Introduction: Towards a virtuous cycle of family well-being

Economic production based on technology and the resource endowments of a country (natural resources, financial and physical capital, human resources-including an educated labour force), is central to economic growth and sustainability. Ensuring development of the human resource component through social reproduction¹ is critical to sustainable development. Working families are engaged in building and advancing their societies at both levels: economic production and social reproduction. Meeting the competing demands of that dual engagement poses specific challenges for working families.

When societies fail to provide good solutions to support the reconciliation of these dual roles, negative outcomes ensue, both for the economies and for families. Parents — most often women since they bear an unequal share of all family responsibilities including care for children — must forego opportunities for decent work. Many choose part-time work or settle for vulnerable and informal economic activities that allow for some flexibility but carry their own economic and social costs. Gender inequality is reinforced, both within the home and in workplaces, since women's position in the labour market is undermined, and unequal sharing of family responsibilities is perpetuated.² Household income is severely reduced, and may be inadequate to meet basic family needs, such as health care, food, nutrition and education, especially in communities already beset by a high incidence of vulnerability and poverty. As a result, children are deprived of opportunities for quality care and learning.

With their chances of succeeding in life seriously impaired by such early deprivation, children may fail to reach their full development potential. Given a poor start in early childhood, children tend to accumulate learning and achievement deficits throughout childhood and early adulthood, failing to acquire the pre-requisite social, technical and knowledge skills to compete in the job market, and to make their full contribution to society. Thus, the economy suffers also, because it misses the opportunity to harness its human capital efficiently for economic growth.

Balancing the dual roles of economic production and social reproduction and reconciling work with family responsibilities must, therefore, lie at the heart of economic and social policies for sustainable development. The theme of supporting workers with family responsibilities was central to the ECOSOC 2012 AMR discussions, which focused on “Promoting productive capacity, employment and decent work to eradicate poverty in the context of inclusive, sustainable and equitable economic growth at all levels for achieving the MDGs.”

¹ The distinction is made in the economics literature between economic production in the waged market, and social reproduction within the family sphere, referring to functions/activities, such as maternity, paternity and childbirth, childcare, care of the elderly, household chores. In short, it refers to a series of social functions, and a category of unpaid work that are nonetheless essential for the sustainability of societies. Typically, women are overrepresented in this category of work compared to men. See, for example, Bezanson, K., ‘Gender, the State and Social Reproduction: Household Insecurity in Neoliberal Times’, *Canadian Journal of Sociology*, March–April 2007.

² See, for example, Cruz, A. ‘Comparative study on promoting decent work through providing maternity protection and supporting workers with family responsibilities: Ratifying and applying Conventions Nos 183 and 156’, Working Paper 2/2012, ILO, Geneva, 2012.

Strong investments are needed in the social sector, across the life cycle, starting with maternity protection, paternity leave and parental leave, and early childhood care and development (ECCD). These are key to sustainable economic and social development, and a policy imperative. And yet, a large number of countries have not been performing well in terms of creating an enabling environment to allow parents to engage in productive employment, while having access to the necessary resources (time, income, services) to provide quality care for their children. An estimated 340 million children under the age of six live in households in which all adults work. Moreover, an additional 590 million children age six to fourteen live in households in which all adults work³ — adult household composition is characterized, either by a single working parent, or dual earner parents, or extended family arrangements in which all adults work.

The work activities of parents have the potential to bring greater income to the family as well as to produce a number of positive social outcomes: the status and decision-making power of women improve when they work, giving them better opportunities to determine development outcomes for their children; child-care, pre-school and education become more affordable; the socio-economic status and life chances of children improve as a result. But challenges arise when parents are working in settings that have not yet adapted to the need to support working families, when early childhood care is not available, when parents are not able to take leave to care for sick children, and when working conditions conflict with providing other essential care. Working parents need to have some key rights and protections at work which enable them to raise children. But they also need accessible, quality societal services to support them. Childcare and schooling are key, and social protection to support affordable health care and many other social services.

Solutions to the dilemma are fortunately within the reach of governments, policy-makers, the social partners (employers and trade unions), and other societal actors. This working paper addresses these critical issues of social sustainability, using a life-cycle approach.⁴ Section 1 frames the discussion in terms of the challenges posed to societies to support parents in their efforts to reconcile the conflicts that arise between engagement in the world of work and assumption of their childcare responsibilities. Section 2 presents composite profiles representing typical family situations that serve to underscore the impacts of family poverty and decent work deficits on early childhood development. Section 3 provides descriptive analyses supported by statistical data, illustrating how cumulative deficits in the timely access to critical resources and services along the life cycle, negatively impact the well-being of working families, women's participation in the labour market, the development potential of children, and the prospects for inclusive, equitable economic growth of societies. These analyses point to the need for strong social policies that ensure support for working families and provision of quality childcare and education services.

Section 4 explores important policy and normative frameworks as well as measures and strategies that could be used to support working families and their children at each stage of the life cycle. Rights-based approaches are proposed, with a view to promoting sustainable livelihoods to families through decent work and to supporting access to social services, with an emphasis on outreach to poor communities and low-income families. These approaches are based on the CRC, the Decent Work Agenda and key ILO instruments, including the Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183), the Workers With Family Responsibilities Convention, 1981 (No. 156), and accompanying Recommendation No. 165, and the Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202). Social protection floors are highlighted as providing an overarching framework for the determination of social sector allocations to family- and child-focused development policies and are a good entry point for UNICEF/ILO collaboration, linked to UNICEF's Social Protection Strategic Framework.

³ Heymann, J., *Forgotten Families: Ending the Growing Crisis Confronting Children and Working Parents in the Global Economy*, Oxford University Press, 2006.

⁴ For a good, comprehensive presentation of the Life Cycle Approach, see Bonilla Garcia, A. and Gruat, J., *Social Protection: A Life Cycle Continuum Investment for Social Justice, Poverty Reduction and Sustainable Development*, ILO, Geneva, 2003.

Case studies are presented, illustrating good practice in the application of these strategies and frameworks, and indicating lessons learned. Emerging from the analysis is an affirmation of the need to formulate recommendations for policy interventions that could introduce a virtuous cycle of family well-being and enriching childhood development. These policy recommendations, drawn upon the work of ILO and UNICEF, are summarized in Section 5 and are meant to serve as guidelines to Member States as they embark on programmes for family-focused, employment-centred growth.

Working parents need to have essential rights and protections at work that enable them to raise children. But they also need accessible, quality societal services to support them. Childcare and schooling are key, and social protection to support affordable health care and many other social services.

Together, ILO and UNICEF offer a package of policy tools for governments which have a leadership role to play, as well as for the social partners and parents, caregivers and teachers concerning the critical years from pregnancy and child-birth, through childhood and adolescence, and young people's entry into the world of work. A more integrated approach would reduce the risk of perpetuating poverty and disadvantage, and increase the likelihood that a virtuous circle of decent work interacts with strong childhood development policies to generate positive outcomes in terms of family and societal well-being.

Section 2

Impacts of poverty on working families and on early childhood development: Family profiles

2.1 Soglo and Afia: Small-farming family in Djanipe, Togo

Soglo and Afia are married and farm together a small plot of land in the village of Djanipe, located in the plateau region of Togo. They have leased a one-acre plot of land on which they grow produce for sale at the local market and for family consumption. They have two children, a boy Edem aged four, and a girl, Yawa, aged two. Soglo has sent Mawusi, his daughter aged 12 from a previous marriage, to his brother's home in the town of Palime, in the hope that she would find a menial job there to supplement the family's meager income.

The family has been hit hard by economic shocks, and Soglo and Afia are worried about their future. The situation was better a few years ago, but a lack of rainfall and drought have affected crop yields, and, consequently, income from farming. Afia travels to Élé market, some five miles away, to sell their produce: bananas, cassava, plantains, yams and other vegetables.

During the lean season, and with the constant pressure of a declining household income, Afia scrambles to find alternative income-generating activities: selling firewood gathered in a nearby forest and peanut cakes that she bakes. When Afia is away trading and working, she carries Yawa on her back while her 10-year old niece is withdrawn from school to take care of Edem. Afia's working day is long, starting when she gets up at 5 a.m. to fetch water from a well two miles away and prepare a family meal before going off to her farming or trading activities. Upon her return in the evening, she tends to the children, but is too tired to spend quality play and caring time with them. Soglo has a shorter working day, focused on the farming activities, and spends his time in the village with his peers. He does not spend time doing childcare activities and household chores. This unequal division of work in the family is due to socialized expectations about women and men's roles and responsibilities.

Despite all their efforts, juggling income with needed expenditures is a major challenge, and putting adequate and nourishing food on the table is becoming a losing battle. Afia is worried that the children are thin and not as healthy as she would like them to be, and she must find the money to get Edem ready for primary school. To pay for clothes, shoes, books and school fees means that she will have to borrow money from a neighbour, without knowing how and when she will be able to pay back the loan.

She wonders if Edem will enjoy school. The school building looks run-down and dilapidated and the classrooms could use some paint and improvement. She hopes he will get along well with the young monitors that are assigned to teaching the first graders. She regrets that the family did not live in an urban center, like Palime or Lomé, where there are kindergartens and younger children begin already to learn and to play in pleasant settings.

She would prefer not to have any more children, so that she could devote the scarce family resources to bringing up the two she already has; but family planning services are not available at the local health clinic, and is not affordable.

2.2 Naresh and Abeer: Slum-dwelling family in Dhaka, Bangladesh

Naresh and Abeer live in a slum in Dhaka, Bangladesh. They grew up in a rural community where they got married before migrating to Dhaka in hopes of finding better job opportunities. With very limited resources, they settled in a small, make-shift two-room dwelling with a corrugated iron roof and mud-plastered walls.

They both had limited primary school education and are illiterate. Naresh works at low-skilled, often hazardous construction jobs and Abeer is a street vendor selling fruit, vegetables, dried fish, bread and snacks.

Their neighbourhood is crowded, and the buildings are sub-standard and unhealthy. Street and house lighting are of poor quality and communal latrines are unhygienic. Clean drinking water is available at a stand pipe close by, but queuing up for one's turn is time-consuming. Family income is about USD\$46 per month, while regular expenditures total \$40 per month.

Naresh, Abeer and other slum residents must endure harassment by local authorities. Electricity is obtained "illegally" by splicing available cable wires and electricity bills and rent are paid to an exploitative and exacting slumlord. Harassment by local police is also a common feature of the everyday life of the street vendor.

The family routinely builds up debt for additional expenses, such as school fees, uniforms, health bills and credit for Abeer's vending business, and must pay back the money lender with a high interest rate. This debt trap is part of the poverty trap.

Naresh and Abeer have three daughters and a son. The eldest daughter, Bani, is 12 and dropped out of primary school before completing the sixth grade to be placed as a domestic worker/child minder for a better-off family in Dhaka.

Anjali, age 9, helps her mother at the vending stand. Seven-year old Ahmed is in school. Nalini, age two, accompanies her mother to work and is taken care of by her mother and older sister. Naresh and Abeer would like a better life, with decent incomes and the means to send all their children to school, and to give them a chance at a better future. But they are finding that options to escape their current situation are virtually non-existent.

2.3 Jose and Melba: Working family in the Bronx, New York

Jose and Melba are a young couple living in the Bronx, New York. They have a boy and a girl, four-year-old John and two-year-old Meagan, and a baby on the way. Jose is employed on short-term contracts as a semi-skilled worker in a small construction company. Melba works part-time as a cashier at a local supermarket so that she has flexible working hours in order to care for Meagan and take John back and forth to pre-school. Despite this, the family must often resort to ad hoc care arrangements for Meagan when Melba works, as they are unable to afford a private daycare centre. Sometimes a friend or babysitter comes to their home when both Jose and Melba are working, usually in the late afternoon or early evening. Alternatively, the parents leave the children with a neighbour until Jose can pick them up. Admittedly, the downside of this arrangement is the lack of enriching learning activities for Meagan, which she could have had at a daycare centre. For Jose and Melba this is the best they could do.

When John was three, his parents had applied for subsidized pre-school. Even though they were qualified for a subsidized place on the basis of low household income, the waiting list was long, and they were unsuccessful in getting John enrolled. Currently, they pay for a private pre-school for John. Soon they will put in an application for Meagan, and hope that this time they will be more successful in securing a subsidized place.

Household financial management is a challenge, what with rent, utilities, kindergarten and family medical insurance which is expensive, but which Melba absolutely needs for her maternal, prenatal and post-natal care. She has no guarantee from her employer concerning job security as she is about to go on maternity leave and she is not part of a union nor are her contracts subject to collective agreements that include maternity leave protection.

Currently, the Carpenters' Union, Local 156, is on an organizing drive in Jose's construction company. Jose has signed up in support of union representation in the company. He hopes the union will be successful in winning recognition and collective bargaining rights at the company. This will give him the opportunity to join the union so he can benefit from a collective agreement that would accord him greater job security, improved pay and benefits, such as family medical coverage, which is needed for the well-being of his family.

Section 3

Working families and the life cycle — critical issues and challenges

This section of the Paper highlights the critical issues and challenges that may arise for working parents and their children along the life cycle continuum. Access to services for maternity and child care differs markedly by level of economic development (advanced, middle income and developing), and by the socio-economic status of the family. Other factors such as ethnic minority status and geographical location (remoteness from urban centres) may also determine a family's access to these services. However, regardless of these factors, social policy frameworks need to be developed or strengthened to cater for the full range of quality services needed by working families to enhance decent work opportunities, and to provide quality care and education for their children.

“The results of globalization are up to us. Increased social and economic relations across countries can just as readily lead to widely shared economic gains as they can to a downward spiral toward worse work conditions. For this to happen, labour — something all people possess — has to be valued as highly as capital needed to conduct international commerce, which is something only a few are fortunate enough to have. We need to put in place universal standards for minimum decent work conditions. These need to comprise the kind of conditions essential to human survival both for adults and their children they care for, including a living wage, parental leave, leave and flexibility to care for sick family members, and humane hours. At the same time, we need to widen the educational opportunities that make it possible for all to gain from a global economy by ensuring that children in poor countries and poor children in affluent countries have access to early education and quality primary and secondary schools and that they are not forced to leave school at young ages because their parents' earnings are too low to survive on or because there is no care for their preschool siblings.”

Jody Heymann, *Forgotten Families — Ending the Growing Crisis Confronting Children and Working Parents in the Global Economy*, Oxford University Press, 2006

3.1 Achieving MDG 5: Improving maternal health

A supportive environment for the critical stage of family planning, pregnancy and childbirth, is key to the well-being of working families and women's equitable participation in the labour market, as well as men's participation in caring for newborns. To achieve these objectives, health care systems must provide quality services to women and men, beginning with reproductive health and family planning services, as well as adequate services for follow-up and medical care for women during pregnancy, childbirth, and the post-natal period. Despite progress with MDG 5 on improving maternal health, many countries are not on track to reach this goal by 2015. It has been estimated that an annual decline by 5.5 per cent in maternal mortality ratios is needed to reach the target of reducing these ratios by three-quarters by 2015.⁵

⁵ United Nations Millennium Development Goals Summit, 'Factsheet', New York, 20–22 September 2010.

While some countries in Asia and Northern Africa have succeeded in more than halving maternal mortality since the 1990s, still, 358,000 women die each year in pregnancy and childbirth owing to lack of care during pregnancy, and oftentimes the unavailability of skilled care during childbirth. The maternal mortality risk in sub-Saharan Africa is 1 in 31, as compared with 1 in 4,300 in developed countries.⁶ Annually, over 1 million children are left motherless due to maternal deaths during childbirth. The situation is similar in Latin America. While the regional average is 1 in 280, in countries where there are high percentages of indigenous populations that have been traditionally discriminated against, the risk of maternal mortality is very high. For example, in Guatemala indigenous women are three times more likely to die during their pregnancy than non-indigenous women.⁷ Most of these deaths are preventable, given access to adequate and affordable maternal care. Children orphaned by maternal deaths often have a very poor start in life, and they face the risk of dying before reaching their first birthday.

Reproductive health services remain a grossly underfunded component of health care in many developing countries. Annually, some 215 million women who would like to delay or prevent a pregnancy lack the contraceptive means to do so. And yet, these services are vitally needed to enable working parents to plan effectively for the spacing and birth of their babies, thereby giving their children the best opportunity for adequate care and education. Moreover, according to World Health Organization (WHO) estimates, fulfilling the unmet needs for family planning services would cut the number of maternal deaths by almost one third.⁸

Policy recommendations aimed at stepping up progress in achieving the critical goal MDG 5 are discussed in Section 4, of this Paper. These include recommendations to governments for the setting up or strengthening of legislative provisions based on ILO Convention No. 183 on Maternity Protection. It commits ratifying countries to implement provisions on maternity leave, cash and medical benefits, health protection at the workplace, employment protection and non-discrimination, and breastfeeding arrangements at work. The aim of these, in addition to practical guidance provided by accompanying Recommendation No. 191, is to provide mother and newborn with access to the care and services needed and to protect women against discrimination in the labour market due to their reproductive role.

3.2 The Early childhood years

Scientific evidence points to the critical importance of early investments in child development to enable children to reach their full development potential in adulthood. The research shows that the earlier the investment, the greater the return is on productivity in adulthood.⁹ Indeed, the earliest years of life offer extraordinary opportunities to build on skills and lay foundations for future cognitive and social development.¹⁰ Investments must begin before birth, with sustainable livelihoods for working parents, and equitable access to affordable, quality, health care services. A society where individuals grow up healthy, properly nourished, emotionally secure, and possessing appropriate livelihood skills, is one with the human capacities needed for building high productivity economies that generate growth, decent jobs and sustained prosperity. Thus, in addition to its intrinsic value for child development, early childhood education and care (ECEC) contribute to societal efforts to reduce poverty and inequity. Governments must therefore make every effort to fulfill their commitments under Education for All (EFA) Goal 1: "Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education (ECCE), especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children".¹¹

⁶ World Health Organization, 'Factsheet on MDG 5', WHO, Geneva, June 2012.

⁷ United Nations Children's Fund, 'Child Survival', *The State of Latin American and Caribbean Children 2008*, UNICEF, New York, 2008, p. 18.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Carneiro, P. and Heckman, J., 'Human Capital Policy', Discussion Paper No. 821, Institute for the Study of Labor, Bonn, Germany, July 2003.

¹⁰ United Nations Children's Fund-Innocenti Research Centre, 'The Child Care Transition: A league table of early childhood education and care in economically advanced countries: Innocenti Report Card 8', UNICEF-IRC, 2008, p. 19.

¹¹ World Education Forum, Dakar, Senegal, 26–28 April 2000.

3.2.1 Vulnerabilities and early childhood development

Yet, investments in early childhood development are weak in many developing and middle-income countries. More than 200 million children under the age of five in these countries are at risk of not attaining their full development potential¹². Child poverty is also reportedly on the increase in developed countries in wake of the financial crisis, austerity measures, and cuts in social sector expenditures. This is profoundly impacting disadvantaged segments of the population that lack access to affordable care and services, as illustrated by the Bronx family in New York, presented in Section 2.

For many children in low-income families and in vulnerable situations, setbacks may have begun before birth, and are accumulated during early childhood. Often, women lack access to prenatal, post-natal and maternity care, and families lack access to reproductive health services, all of which are vital to the health and well-being of families. Barriers to access include geographical remoteness of rural families from health clinics, poor quality of services provided, women's lack of mobility in some countries, and application of user fees, which may be prohibitive for poor families.

Global disparities in infant and child mortality are a stark reminder that much still needs to be done to strengthen health delivery systems in many developing countries. While substantial progress has been made toward achieving MDG 4 on reducing child mortality, (the number of under-five deaths worldwide has declined from more than 12 million in 1990 to 7.6 million in 2010), yet, nearly 21,000 children under age five died every day in 2010. Under-five deaths are increasingly concentrated in sub-Saharan Africa and Southern Asia, while the share of the rest of the world dropped from 31 percent in 1990 to 18 percent in 2010.

In the Latin American region, aggregate figures tend to hide the disparities that exist between rural and urban populations. For example, in Peru, the average under-5 mortality rate (U5MR) is 33 in 1,000. However, upon disaggregation, urban residences report 23 deaths per 1,000 live births, while rural households average 48 in 1,000¹³. Moreover, infant mortality rates in indigenous and Afro-descendant populations are far higher than national averages. (See Table 1).

Table 1 Infant mortality rates per 1,000 live births, by ethnic origin and census year

Infant mortality rates in indigenous and Afro-descendant populations are far higher than national averages.

Country	Year	Indigenous populations	African-descendant populations	National average
Brazil	1990	61.1	63.9	39.4
	2004	48.5	27.9	26.6
Colombia	2005	39.5	31.7	23.9
Guatemala	1994	61.7	–	49.7
	2002	51.1	–	41.0
Mexico	1990	63.8	–	36.7
	2000	42.7	–	26.4

Source: United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, Latin America and Caribbean Demographic Centre, specially processed census microdata.

¹² Executive Summary, 'Child Development' Lancet series, Global Child Development Group, 2011.

¹³ Continuous Demographic and Health Surveys, 2007–2008.

The neonatal mortality rate, (number of deaths per 1,000 live births in a given year) gives an indication of the health status of mother and child (See Table 2). Whereas neonatal mortality rates in advanced industrialized countries are in the range of 4 for every thousand live births, for Southern Asia, the corresponding range is as high as 32 for every thousand live births, and for Sub-Saharan Africa it is even higher, 35 for every thousand live births.¹⁴ Socio-economic status is also a key indicator that explains differentials in infant and child mortality rates. Children who live in poor households and in rural areas, and whose mothers have less years of schooling, are at a higher risk of dying before age five (See Figure 1).¹⁵

According to the WHO, 4.4 million children under age five died from infectious diseases in 2010¹⁶. Most of these could have been prevented, if adequate health delivery services such as immunizations were in place. The findings of the MICS3 surveys (Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys) reveal that infectious diseases such as malaria and HIV impair the cognitive development of millions of young children around the world. Recommendations for policies to achieve MDG 4 are discussed in Section 4 of the Paper.

Table 2 Neonatal mortality rate, number of neonatal deaths and neonatal deaths as a share of under-five deaths, by Millennium Development Goal region, 1990 and 2010

Region	Neonatal mortality rate (deaths per 1,000 live births)			Number of neonatal deaths (thousands)		Neonatal deaths as a share of under-five deaths (percent)		
	1990	2010	Decline (percent 1990–2010)	1990	2010	1990	2010	Relative increase (percent) 1990–2010
Developed regions	7	4	43	106	53	47	53	15
Developing regions	36	25	31	4,319	3,019	37	40	10
Northern Africa	29	13	55	107	46	35	49	37
Sub-Saharan Africa	43	35	19	969	1,123	26	30	17
Latin America and the Caribbean	23	11	52	265	117	42	47	11
Caucasus and Central Asia	30	21	30	58	34	37	44	18
Eastern Asia	23	11	52	589	189	45	57	27
<i>Excluding China</i>	12	9	25	14	8	47	48	1
Southern Asia	48	32	33	1,875	1,256	41	50	20
<i>Excluding India</i>	48	33	31	576	381	40	46	15
South-eastern Asia	28	15	46	335	169	39	48	23
Western Asia	28	16	43	116	79	43	48	12
Oceania	26	21	19	5	5	37	40	7
World	32	23	28	4,425	3,072	37	40	9

Source: United Nations Children's Fund, World Health Organization, World Bank and United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, *Levels & Trends in Child Mortality Report 2011: Estimates Developed by the UN Inter-agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation*, UNICEF, WHO, World Bank and United Nations, DESA, Population Division, 2011

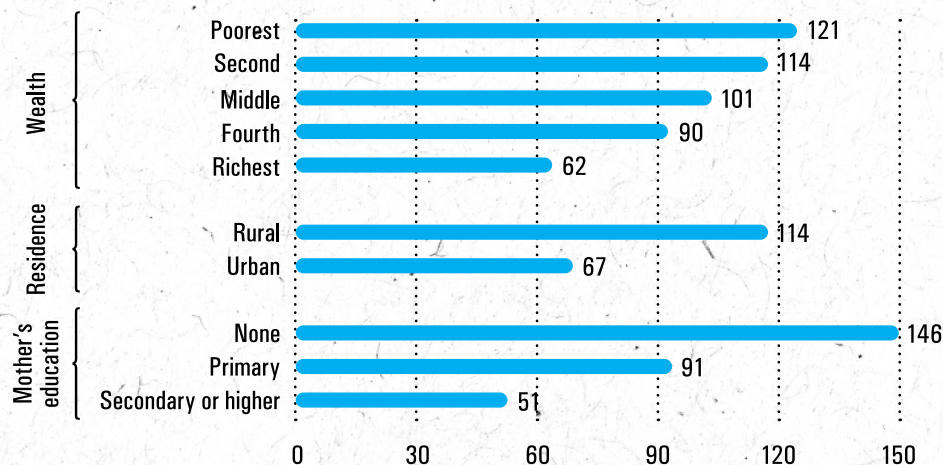
¹⁴ United Nations Children's Fund, World Health Organization, World Bank and United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, *Levels & Trends in Child Mortality Report 2011: Estimates Developed by the UN Inter-agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation*, UNICEF, WHO, World Bank and United Nations, DESA, Population Division, 2011.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ World Health Organization, *Global Health Observatory, Factsheet*, WHO, Geneva, May 2012.

Figure 1 Under-five mortality rate, by wealth quintile, residence and mother's education, 2000–2010 (deaths per 1,000 live births)

Children who live in poorer households and rural areas and whose mothers have less education are at higher risk of dying before age 5



Note: Calculation is based on 39 countries with most recent Demographic and Health Surveys conducted after 2005, with further analyses by UNICEF for under-five mortality rates by wealth quintile, 45 countries for rates by residence and 40 countries for rates by mother's education. The average was calculated based on under-five mortality rates weighted by number of births. Country-specific estimates obtained from Demographic and Health Surveys refer to a 10-year period prior to the survey. Because levels or trends may have changed since then, caution should be used in interpreting these results.

Source: United Nations Children's Fund, World Health Organization, World Bank and United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, *Levels & Trends in Child Mortality Report 2011: Estimates Developed by the UN Inter-agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation, UNICEF, WHO, World Bank and United Nations, DESA, Population Division, 2011*.

3.2.2 Competing demands on workers with family responsibilities

Exclusive breastfeeding is recommended during the first six months after childbirth, followed by appropriate complementary feeding and care practices, in order to ensure the newborn's good health and nutrition. However, meeting these vital nutritional needs of the infant may present a challenge for working mothers, especially in the informal economy and in other types of precarious work in which decent work deficits often abound, including atypical, temporary and short-term contracts. Even when maternity protection or provisions exist, enforcement of these is lacking. Women often suffer discrimination in hiring, or they risk losing their jobs once hired, due to maternity, or they cut short their leave for fear of losing their job, sometimes putting the nutritional health of the child at risk, when s/he is weaned prematurely.

In the informal economy, women who are working from home, on farms, or in settings such as street vending or petty trading, typically keep their infants with them, and breastfeed on the job. Studies have found that even when the nutritional status of young babies who are adequately breastfed is good, they often fall behind later on, after weaning due to a lack of food with a high nutritional content. An increasing incidence of child malnutrition has been noted in low-income countries, particularly in the wake of the food and financial crises, starting in 2007.¹⁷

¹⁷ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, *Global Monitoring Report*, UNESCO, Paris, 2010.



For the formal economy, most countries make some provisions for maternity leave, minimum 14 weeks, paid or unpaid. Some countries have used legislative frameworks and accompanying measures to mandate firms to provide or subsidize childcare, including workplace-based childcare, which facilitates the taking of breast-feeding breaks. Policy recommendations for maternity protection based on the provisions of ILO Maternity Protection Convention No. 183 are discussed in Section 4 of the Paper.

Paid paternity leave is a measure that provides an opportunity for men's more equal sharing of their infant's care. When incentives to take such leave exist, these measures have been shown to facilitate greater involvement of fathers in such care, which enhances child development. Evidence shows that extended periods of paternity leave and parental leave available to both men and women have a positive effect in supporting workers with family responsibilities, while enabling fathers to exercise their rights as parents and caregivers.¹⁸ Moreover, these provisions contribute to achieving gender equality, since greater sharing of childcare gives women better access to and sustained participation in the labor force, greater income-earning potential, and more equitable treatment and opportunities including for advancement, all of which contribute to closing the gender pay gap.

¹⁸ United Nations Children's Fund and Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean: 'Desafíos: Boletín de la infancia y adolescencia sobre el avance de los Objetivos de Desarrollo del Milenio', No. 12, UNICEF and ECLAC, July 2010.



Some encouraging examples of good practice at national level, with regard to parental and paternity leave provisions can be observed in, for example, Finland, Malaysia, Uganda and the United Kingdom.¹⁹ In Ecuador and Venezuela, fathers are given a minimum of 10 days of paternity leave. Cuba offers a particularly good example of year-long coverage of post natal care leave, with provisions similar to the Scandinavian countries. In addition to the 6 months of maternity leave which allows for exclusive breastfeeding, parents can decide which one will take care of the newborn for the remainder of the year²⁰. Policy Recommendations for reconciling work with childcare responsibilities, based on ILO Convention No. 156 and Recommendation No. 165 on Workers with Family Responsibilities, are provided in Section 4 of the Paper.²¹

3.2.3 Deficits in quality of care and education

Underweight in children is a sure indicator of poor nutrition and the incidence of hunger within families. This often stems from food shortages, and the inability of parents to provide adequate and nourishing food for their children. One in five children in developing countries are underweight. Most of these children are in South-east Asia (56 million). Malnutrition in the early years of life can severely and irreparably affect children's cognitive development and learning abilities.

¹⁹ International Labour Organization, 'Equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men, including care-giving in the context of HIV-AIDS', Background Paper prepared by Laura Addati and Naomi Cassirer, United Nations Expert Group Meeting, Geneva, 6–9 October 2008, p. 12–14.

²⁰ Desafios, UNICEF and ECLAC, op. cit.

²¹ See, for example: Cruz, A., 2012, op. cit.

Other dimensions of the type and the quality of care which infants and young children receive also affect their development, and the extent to which they realize their full potential. The MICS3 of 28 countries from the developing world and Eastern Europe suggests that the quality of home-based care is largely determined by socio-economic status. In a large number of countries, children under age 5 were being left at home alone, or in the care of children under age 10²² (See Figure 2). Young children in poorer households were at much greater risk in this regard, than those in better-off households. In countries such as Vietnam, Lao People's Republic, Ghana, Togo, Nigeria, Cameroon and Yemen, as many as 30 to 40 percent of under five-year olds in poorer households were found to have been left at home alone, or in the care of under ten year olds, in the week preceding the survey.



Oftentimes, if the children are not left alone at home with inadequate care, the alternative solution adopted is hardly better, that is, mothers bring their children to work. This was found to be the case for a large number of working women in the informal economy in developing countries²³. One study found that one in four low-income parents in Botswana and

²² United Nations Children's Fund, *Inequities in Early Childhood Development: What the Data say: Evidence from the Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys*, UNICEF, New York, February 2012.

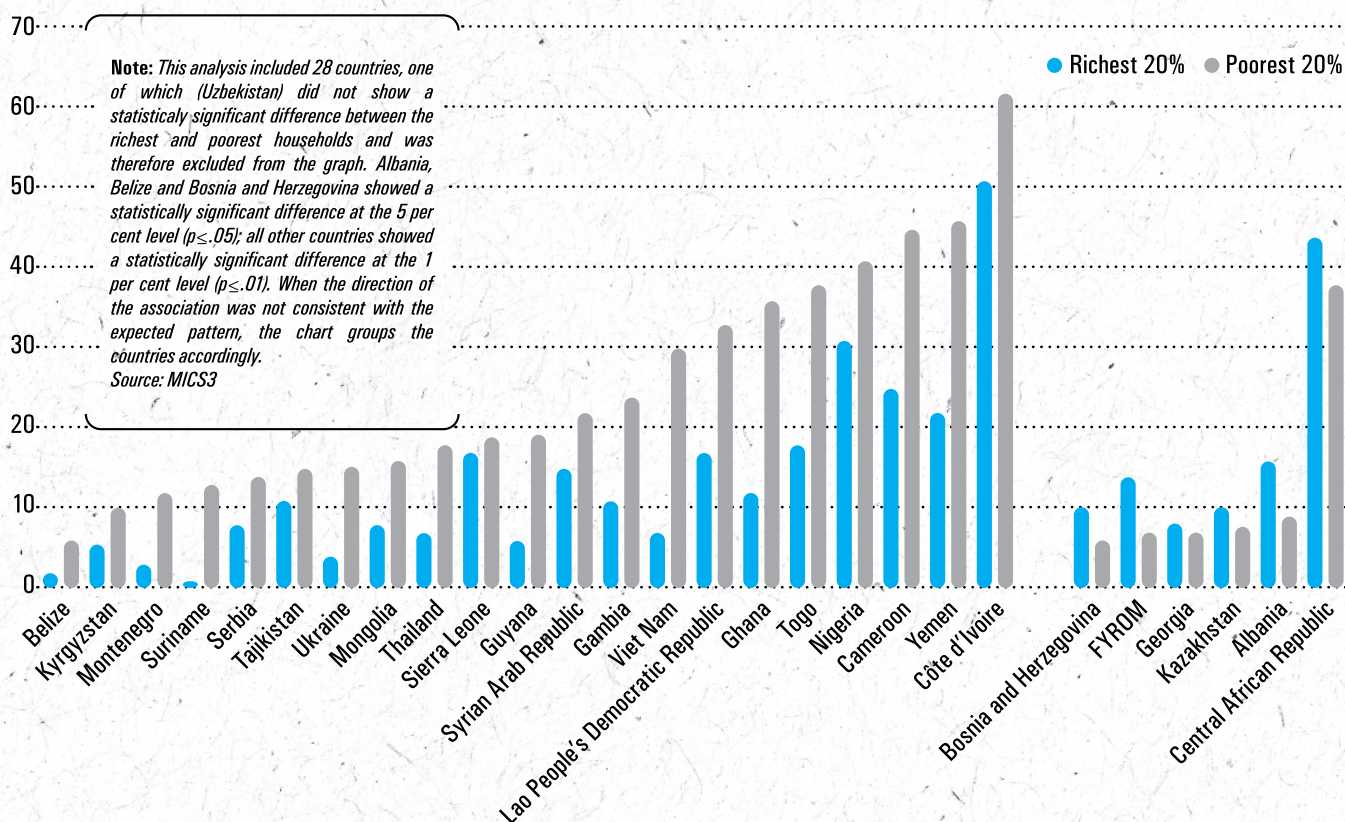
²³ ILO Background Paper, 2008, op. cit.

Vietnam took their children to the workplace²⁴. For many working parents, such practices are coping strategies in face of issues of access and affordability of professional childcare. However, outcomes are not positive for the child who needs a safe, stimulating, caring and learning environment in order to develop social, emotional and cognitive skills.

These caring arrangements may pose other risks such as lack of proper feeding, lack of hygienic practices and attendant health risks, accidents, and inadequate care in case of illness. Where parents are absent from the home and are at work for long periods, they may lack the focus and the energy to spend quality time with their children when at home, leading to deficits in emotional and psychosocial development due to a lack of quality parent/child interactions. Nor are outcomes positive for the young caregivers, usually girls, who typically dropout of school in order to perform these child-minding roles, to the detriment of their own chances at educational advancement and becoming productive working adults²⁵.

Figure 2 Percentage of children under 5 left alone or in the care of another child under 10 years old in the past week, by household wealth quintile

The poorest children are at greatest risk of being left alone, or in inadequate care.



²⁴ Ibid.; Heymann, J., op. cit.

²⁵ United Nations Girls' Education Initiative, 'A Fair Chance: Attaining gender equality in basic education by 2005', Briefing Paper, UNGEI, New York, 2003, p. 23–25.

3.2.4 Socio-economic status as a determinant of childhood development

Socio-economic status is a key determinant of early childhood development. Data from MICS3 show that children from the highest quintile within countries are more likely to have better quality learning and play opportunities in the home, and are “more than twice as likely to attend pre-school; and to have higher language performance, compared to children in the lowest income quintile” (See Figure 3).²⁶ Lower-income households are also less likely than higher-income households to have children’s books and educational toys which help provide early stimulation for the development of the child. Data from a recent United Kingdom study on poverty and children’s cognitive development reveal that those children born into poverty consistently test lower on cognitive tests than those children who never experienced poverty. Even more troubling is the finding that for those who consistently experience poverty in early childhood, these differences persist as the children grow older: “Their cognitive development test scores at age 7 are more than 10 percentile ranks lower than children who have never experienced poverty, even after controlling for a wide range of background characteristics and parenting investment.”²⁷

Increasingly, governments are realizing the importance of pre-school activities for the long-term, successful cognitive development of children. However, mere provision of these services is not enough. In those places with established early childhood services, increasing emphasis is being placed on the quality of the services offered. A UNICEF survey of pre-school facilities in Latin America found that while some are well established and well-funded, others “are often muddled in purpose, uneven in access, patchy in quality, and lacking systematic monitoring of access, quality, staff-to-children ratios, or staff training and qualification.”²⁸



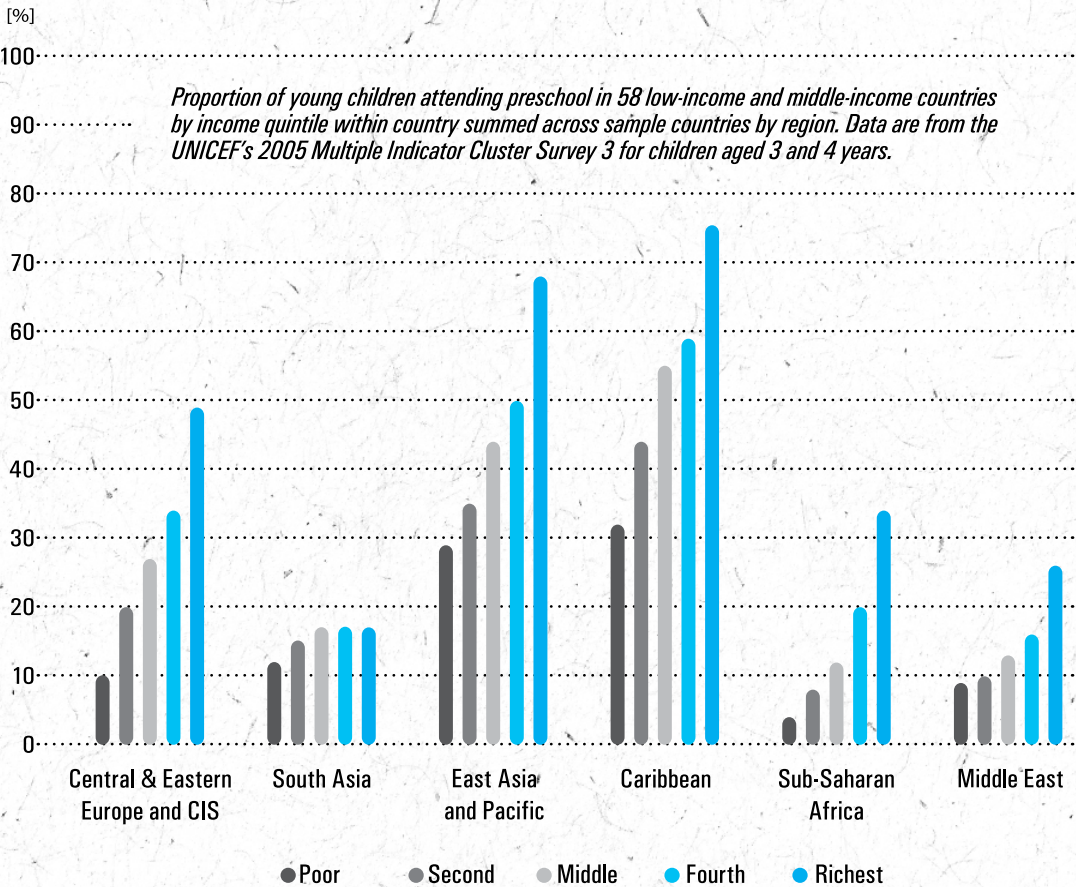
²⁶ Lancet series, 2011 op. cit.

²⁷ Dickerson, A. and Popli, G., ‘Persistent Poverty and Children’s Cognitive Development: Evidence from UK Millennium Cohort Study’, Centre for Longitudinal Studies, London, 2012.

²⁸ UNICEF-IRC, op. cit., p. 15.

Another challenge for the successful implementation of pre-school programs relates to the demand side. Sometimes, parents place a higher value on alternative options for the care of their young children, such as home-based care. In a recent sample of poor Chilean families, 90 per cent of self-reported reasons for not enrolling children between ages 4 and 6 in pre-school related to the cultural perception that they were too young or better cared for at home. Lack of services or financial constraints were not cited as reasons for non-enrolment. These findings point to the importance of factoring in cultural and popular beliefs when designing policy interventions²⁹. A general discussion of the policy implications of this section for the setting up of pre-school programmes is taken up in Section 4 of the Paper.

Figure 3 Percentage of three- and four-year-olds attending pre-school



²⁹ World Bank, *The promise of ECD in Latin America and the Caribbean*, World Bank, Washington, D.C., 2010, p. 22.

3.3 Transition to primary school

The previous sections highlighted the accumulation of ECD deficits in the 0 to 5 age group, particularly in low-income households. These included poor health and nutrition status, and the lack of an enriching care and learning environment that would cater to the development needs of the whole child (emotional, psycho-social and cognitive needs), including through quality pre-school environments. Because of these cumulative deficits, the transition to primary school is often not a smooth one. Children are ill prepared to engage in formal learning, and the primary school environment is ill equipped with appropriate remedial measures as well as materials and curricula that combine care, play and learning. This accounts in part for poor performance at primary school level, and high drop-out rates.

While enrolment and completion rates for primary school are increasing, still, as many as 67 million children of primary school age were out of school in 2009. The highest drop-out rates contributing to these persistent numbers of out-of-school children are in the first grades of primary school. A recent UNICEF and UNESCO study of out-of-school children in Latin America and the Caribbean found that by 2009, 1.7 million 5-year-olds were neither in pre-school nor in primary school. This represents 15 per cent of the total 5-year-old population. This in itself has serious implications, given that these children will most likely enter primary school with no previous formal learning experience. Secondly, 11.6 per cent of children who by their age should be in the first year of primary school are in preschool, and already lagging behind. This process of late first entry at each stage continues until the age of eight. This is the beginning of *the overage phenomenon*, implying a continual lagging behind in the acquisition of learning skills, and difficulties catching up, as children progress from primary to secondary levels of education³⁰. This translates also to high repetition rates in the first year of primary school.

These findings point clearly to a dual dilemma: children begin primary school without being ready for the experience, nor are the schools ready to receive them. Transition to primary school poses multiple challenges for parents too. They need to cover school expenses, including school fees in some cases, in addition to a large number of related informal fees that impose a burden on the income of poor households. They need also to provide for the children's care and safety as well as to support them to ensure good academic achievement. Solutions in terms of after-school services therefore need to be found, as well.

3.3.1 EFA Goals and the countdown to 2015

Many countries are not on track for reaching the EFA goal of universal primary education by 2015, despite serious efforts to that end. Of the 67 million out-of-school children of primary school age in 2009, 35 million, or over 50 per cent, were girls. Of those 35 million girls, 50 per cent lived in sub-Saharan Africa and 25 per cent were in South Asia. Both common and gender-specific causal factors help to explain poor academic performance and the high incidence of dropout among boys and girls. Affecting both boys and girls are factors such as poverty, marginalization, geographical remoteness of communities from schools, and prohibitively high costs of children's schooling for poor families.³¹ Also, fragile States account for about 37 per cent of all out-of-school children.

Gender-specific factors affecting girls include expectations for greater hours spent on household work, including child-minding, as well as dangerous school environments where girls are victims of harassment and gender-based violence, including in fragile states.³² In many traditions, too, there exists a cultural preference for sons' education. A daughter's education is considered a 'lost investment' to the family, as girls marry into and contribute economically to their family of adoption, rather than their family of origin³³. All of these factors affecting poor primary school completion rates point to the need for applying both common and differentiated measures, as well as gender-specific strategies, to address the range of attendant challenges.

³⁰ United Nations Children's Fund and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Institute for Statistics, 'Study on out-of-school children in Latin America and the Caribbean', UNICEF and UNESCO, 2011.

³¹ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, Education for All Global Monitoring Report: Mid-term Review, UNESCO, Paris, 2008.

³² UNGEI 2005, op. cit.

³³ Ibid.



Improvements in mean years of schooling are observed in developing countries, yet comparisons are from a low performance base, and the gap with advanced countries is great. This means that many developing countries face the serious challenge of strengthening their education systems with a view to achieving significant improvements in student performance, and creating an educated, well-trained cadre of young people, capable of being highly productive assets to their respective economies (See Table 3).

Table 3 Mean years of schooling by region – 1980 and 2010³⁴

Region	1980	2010
Sub-Saharan Africa	2.8	5.5
South Asia	2.9	5.6
East Asia		8.3
Latin America		8.4
Industrialized Countries		10.6

Improvements in school completion rates do not give a full picture of progress towards the EFA goals. “...Learning outcomes data from numerous countries show that children in school are failing to acquire the most basic of skills. For example,

³⁴ Patrinos, H. A. and Pscharapoulos, G., Education: *Past, present and future global challenges*, World Bank Policy Research Working Paper No. 5616. World Bank, Washington, D.C., 2011.

9 out of 10 grade 2 students in Mali studying in French could not read a single word of connected text. In Kenya, 14 per cent of grade 3 students were non-readers in English. In two regions in Uganda, 70 per cent of grade 2 students could not read a single word in English and over 80 per cent could not read in Lango. Roughly half of these grade 3 students in Uganda were unable to read one word in their respective languages”.³⁵

The 2007 TIMSS Report (Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study) supports these findings. It reveals that many children in low-income countries as well as children from disadvantaged groups in middle-income countries are failing to master basic literacy and numeracy skills by the end of primary school. It further shows huge gaps in performance between low- and middle-income countries on the one hand, and industrialized countries on the other.³⁶ Average performers in the first group of countries were doing worse than poor performers in industrialized countries. These findings underscore the need to prioritize quality early learning, and to develop and use predictive indicators of primary school achievement based on early learning experiences. Such indicators can be used to monitor progress, and to help build a convincing case for strong investments in early childhood education. Recommendations for policies to achieve EFA Goals are discussed in Section 4 of the Paper.

3.3.2 Austerity measures: A setback to progress

Austerity measures put in place in response to the current economic crisis have led to high unemployment among working families in Europe, with steep cuts in public expenditure, affecting education budgets, teachers’ pay and childcare support. Rising youth unemployment is cause for serious concern, as discussed in Sections 3 and 4. Greece, one of three Eurozone countries to need an international bailout, had gone through the largest restructuring of Government debt in history, affecting public sector salaries, pensions, education and health care. As a result, unemployment has soared to over 21 per cent, fuelling social unrest. This is not surprising, given that the social sectors that matter most to working families with regard to childcare were hit hardest by spending cuts. In addition, unemployment and social insurance cuts have meant severe reductions in household income. To ensure social stability and peace, an enabling environment is needed, where working families have the assurance that vital support for sustainable livelihoods and quality childcare is maintained, despite the ongoing financial crisis.

In Italy, too, the Government adopted an austerity package in 2011, which included increases in health care fees as well as cuts to regional subsidies, family tax benefits and the pensions of high earners. In Ireland in that same year, the toughest budget in the nation’s history was implemented, including cuts by at least 5 per cent to all public servants’ salaries, reduced social welfare, child benefits cuts and an increase of the value added tax (VAT) to 23 per cent. With the highest rate of unemployment in Europe (25 per cent overall and over 50 per cent for young people under age 25), Spain adopted one of the toughest austerity measures, freezing public sector workers’ salaries and reducing by 16.9 per cent Government departmental budgets. The Government cut spending on health care and education, and also made it easier for companies to fire workers. In the United Kingdom’s 2012 budget, the Government announced several measures including cuts in the personal income tax allowance that pensioners receive, and reduced child benefits. University tuition costs have soared, provoking strong protests. A thorough review of current austerity policy responses to the crisis is called for, as Europe can ill afford to fail its working families and their need for quality care, education, skills development and decent jobs, in the name of austerity. Appropriate policy responses to the crisis are discussed in Section 4 of the Paper.

In some developing countries, too, fiscal austerity measures in wake of the economic crisis have had severe negative impacts on education and health expenditures. This will no doubt only serve to compound the already weak learning achievements of students, resulting from deficits in early childhood development, and the poor quality of education systems. On many dimensions, the environment is not highly conducive to learning. Oftentimes, physical infrastructure is poor, and classrooms lack adequate

³⁵ Van der Gaag, J. and Adams, A., ‘Where is the Learning? Measuring Schooling Efforts in Developing Countries’, Policy Brief, 2010–04, The Brookings Institution, Washington, D.C., 2010.

³⁶ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, *Reaching the marginalized: Education For All Global Monitoring Report 2010*, UNESCO, Paris, 2010.

and enriching learning materials. Decent work deficits come into play. Teachers are underpaid and decry the lack of proper instructional support materials available to facilitate their teaching. Poor conditions of work often influence their morale.

A UNICEF Desk Review of International Monetary Fund (IMF) reports of 86 low- and middle-income countries assessed impacts of austerity measures in the health and education sectors, the social areas most critical to children's development.³⁷ A total of 79 of the 86 countries reviewed were asked to cap or cut the wage bill, in the context of IFI loan arrangements (international financial institutions) for the period 2009 to 2011. Direct effects of these conditionalities included layoffs and wage moratoria. Indirect effects may include loss of motivation and morale among affected staff and a deterioration in conditions of work and service delivery. In many instances, school systems were resorting to the recruitment of under-qualified staff because of the budget crunch.

Another study revealed that some 70 countries had lowered their spending on education by as many as 3 percentage points of their GDP growth in 2010, and that 91 countries were planning cuts in 2012.³⁸ Fortunately, some countries, notably in Latin America, have responded to the crisis with a combination of macroeconomic and sector policies that averted massive unemployment and cuts in social services. Section 4 of this Paper discusses these policy responses, and makes the case for a shift to policies that support working families, prioritizing social sector allocations for services as well as employment growth, rather than austerity measures.

3.4 Poor transitioning: The incidence of child labour

Serious decent work deficits lead to severe economic hardship for working families. Sometimes they are pressured into adopting survival strategies that may be detrimental to the welfare of their children. Resorting to child labour is one such undesirable outcome of poverty. The child labourer may also have had very poor engagement with the primary school experience after an accumulation of deficits in early childhood development, leading to a high propensity to drop out of school and to slip into child labour.

Estimates put the total number of child labourers in the world at 215 million, of which 115 million are in the worst forms of child labour as defined in ILO Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182). These include children in forced labour, in illicit activities or in hazardous work — work which is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children. While there is some evidence of decline in the incidence of child labour around the world, it is rather slow, indicating that much still needs to be done to address this situation. A large number of child labourers are in agriculture. Many are labourers on family or neighbouring farms or on local plantations³⁹.

Of the recorded 215 million child labourers ages 5 to 14, 60 per cent are in agriculture, 20 per cent in services, and 7 per cent in industry⁴⁰. Many struggle to combine school with work, as has been reported for Mali and Zambia⁴¹. As the number of hours worked increases, school attendance often falls. Many child labourers do not attend school at all, and many are engaged in hazardous work. One survey found that child laborers on cocoa plantations in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana were using potentially harmful implements, and applying toxic pesticides. Many children on plantations in Côte d'Ivoire had been trafficked from Burkina Faso and Mali, and were working as bonded labourers.⁴²

³⁷ United Nations Children's Fund, 'Protecting Salaries of Frontline Teachers and Health Workers', Social and Economic Policy Working Briefs on Policy and Practice, UNICEF, New York, April 2010.

³⁸ United Nations Children's Fund, Sir Richard Jolly, 'Bringing Children into Development Strategies', Policy Matters, Second Edition, UNICEF, New York, March 2012.

³⁹ International Labour Organization, *Accelerating Action Against Child Labour: Global Report Under the Follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work*, ILO, Geneva, 2010.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ UNESCO 2010, op. cit., p. 168–169.

⁴² Ibid.

3.4.1 Worst forms of child labour

The plight of the 115 million children worldwide, trapped in the worst forms of child labour, is indeed cause for great concern. Most of those involved are in hazardous work, which may include night work, long hours of work, exposure to physical, psychological, or sexual abuse, work with dangerous machinery or tools, transport of heavy loads, work underground, underwater or at dangerous altitudes, and work that may expose children to hazardous substances damaging to their health. From the child development perspective, the concern is, primarily, with the impacts of hazardous work on the development of the child or the adolescent, the risk of irreparable physical or psychological harm, and the opportunities denied for education and skills training. Indeed, the child's capacity to acquire skills and become a productive adult is seriously impaired.

Combining long hours of work with schooling is not conducive to learning. One Latin American survey of 11 countries found that educational attainment was impacted by work as child labourers. This group of children obtained significantly lower scores in language and math at the third and fourth grade levels, than non-child labourers, when controlling for a



number of household characteristics⁴³. Addressing these issues must be a priority for the child development community. The normative framework for doing so is established by the CRC, ILO Minimum Age Convention 1973 (No. 138), the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), and the ILO's Global Action Programme for the elimination of child labour. The application of these Conventions as well as strategies to combat child labour is discussed in Section 4 of the Paper. Case studies of good practice in combating child labour are highlighted, and recommendations made for concerted action to provide good transitioning programmes for child laborers into training, and then back into the world of work at the appropriate age.

3.4.2 Girls at risk

Special risks are associated with girls' entry into child labour. Oftentimes, when low-income families have to make difficult tradeoffs because of the cost of educating children, or the need for a child-minder for younger children, boys are favoured for education more so than girls, and girls drop out of school⁴⁴. Slippages into highly exploitative forms of child labour are a risk for girls, as shown in Box 1. The Recommendations in Section 4 also address the gender dimensions of child labour.

Box 1 Girls still at special risk, and still left behind

The ILO estimates that about 100 million girls are involved in child labour around the world. If engagement in unpaid household chores is included and combined with economic activity, girls work longer hours than boys as part of a "double burden" and as a result often jeopardize their education and future. There are many other reasons why the plight of girls deserves special attention and is particularly challenging for those concerned with tackling the problem of child labour.

The fact that girls constitute a large proportion of children engaged in some of the most dangerous forms of child labour, including forced and bonded labour and prostitution, is especially alarming. As child domestic workers, girls face the risk of literally being locked away from outside view. Girls, too, have ended up as sex slaves to armed groups in some of the most intractable civil conflicts of recent years. Most girls, however, work in agriculture, a sector not without its own hazards and dangers.

Being a girl still implies a significant education disadvantage in many countries. Girls represented 55 per cent of out-of-school children in 2007. The MDG gender parity goal in education by 2005 was missed. Women still account for two-thirds of the world's illiterate population — the most neglected of the EFA goals. The discrimination facing girls in many countries in sub-Saharan Africa and West and South Asia is a major impediment to achieving EFA and the elimination of child labour. Overcoming these gender disparities once again points to the importance of political leadership in helping to change attitudes and creating additional rungs to the ladders of opportunities for girls at all levels of the education system and in future employment.

Source: IPEC: Give girls a chance: Tackling child labour, a key to the future (Geneva, ILO, 2009)

⁴³ UNESCO, 2010, op. cit.

⁴⁴ UNGEI 2005, op. cit.

3.5 Poor transitioning: The youth employment crisis

A total of 73 million adolescents of junior secondary school age, between age 12 and 15, are currently not enrolled in school.⁴⁵ Many of these children may have completed primary education but often find barriers to participation in secondary education because of cost or inaccessibility. Many lack access to the types of vocational training or remedial programmes that may help them overcome the deficits accumulated along the life cycle continuum, and equip them for the world of work. In the absence of schooling, many of these adolescents drift into the labour force at an age below the minimum age of employment, but often lacking sufficient skills to ensure their future long term employment. The transitioning processes from early childhood to primary school, from primary to secondary school, and then on into the job market are in all likelihood fraught with problems for this group of young people.

Poor transitioning is not unrelated to the current and unprecedented global youth employment crisis. According to the ILO's Global Employment Trends report for 2013,⁴⁶ global unemployment is set to remain at 6 per cent until 2017, while youth unemployment will be significantly more than double this figure, standing at 12.9 per cent. This translates to some 210.6 million unemployed world-wide, of which 75 million will be young people. Thus, the global upward trend in unemployment is set to continue for the next four years, and it is affecting young workers far more acutely than the adult labour force. At its 2012 annual conference the ILO adopted a resolution on The youth employment crisis: a call for action which stressed the urgency of the crisis and set out a policy agenda to tackle youth joblessness.

3.5.1 Youth employment and the working poor

In some regions, notably the European Union, the financial and economic crises have hit particularly hard in terms of rising unemployment among young people. In the developing world, there are large variations. Youth unemployment rates were highest in the Middle East and North Africa, at 28.3 percent, and 23.7 percent respectively. For much of sub-Saharan Africa, economic hardships are such that most young people have no choice but to work to survive. The youth employment crisis here takes the form of working poverty, with increasing numbers of young people surviving at or below the poverty line of \$2 per day. Many are working in rural areas, in agriculture, and in the informal economy. In many African countries, the largest share of young workers is to be found in the informal economy. For example, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, 96.2 per cent of young workers are employed in the informal economy, while in Cameroon, the corresponding figure is 88.6 per cent, and in Zambia as high as 99 per cent of young workers are to be found in the informal economy.⁴⁷ ILO estimates serve to confirm the findings above on the higher incidence of young people among the working poor as compared with adults. This is seen in Figure 4.

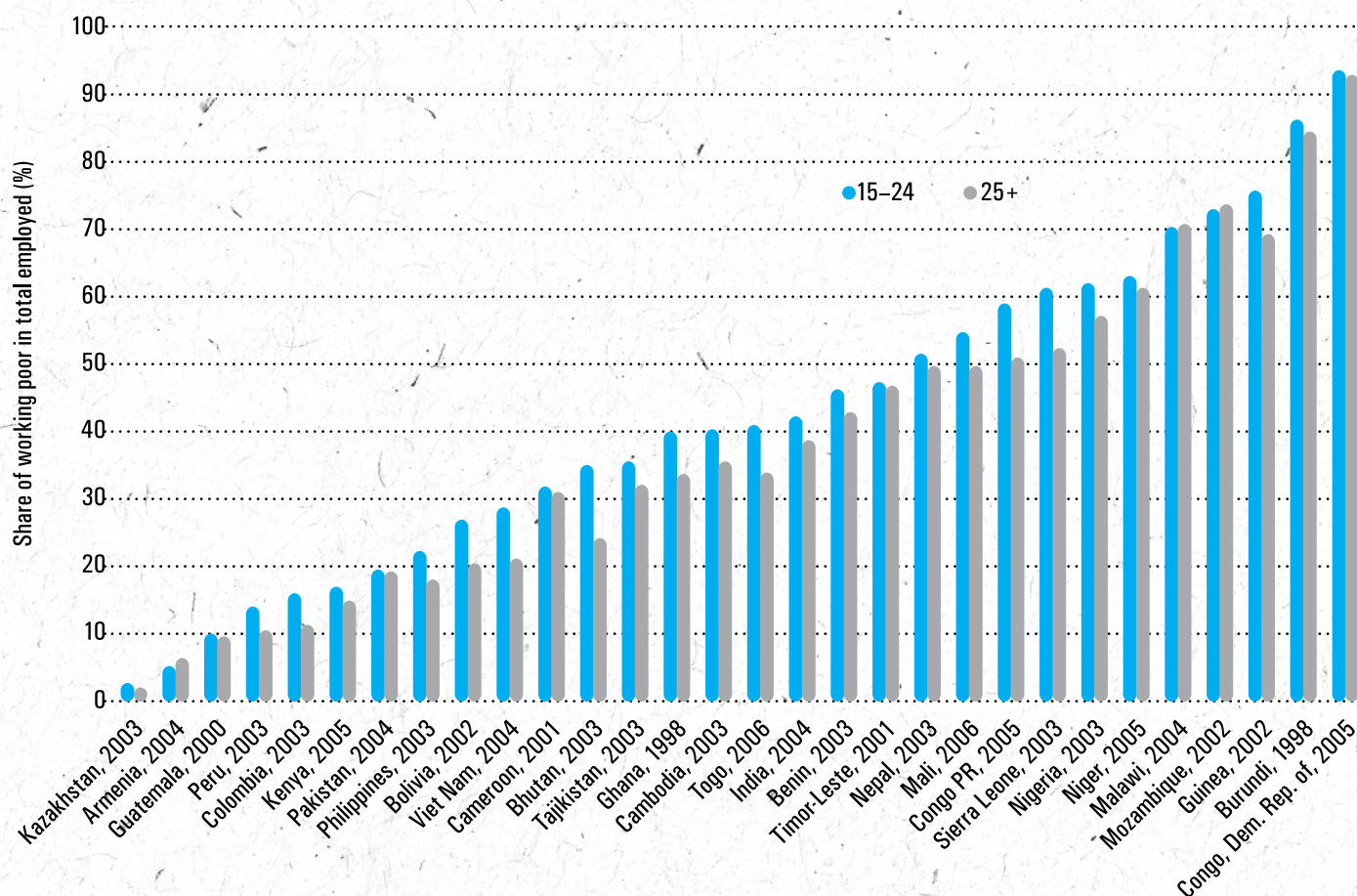
In 52 countries surveyed, youth made up 23.5 per cent of the total working poor. Clearly, countries can ill afford to have such large numbers of young people with low educational achievement trapped in low-paid work, characterized by low productivity. This represents a lost opportunity for the economies concerned, and can lead to disaffection and social marginalization among the young people, both undesirable economic and social outcomes. The situation is particularly difficult for young families of the working poor, like those of Soglo, Naresh and Jose, struggling on meager incomes to provide adequate life chances for their children through quality care and education.

⁴⁵ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, *The hidden crisis: Armed conflict and education: Education For All Global Monitoring Report 2011*, UNESCO/Oxford University Press, Paris, 2011.

⁴⁶ International Labour Organization, *The youth employment crisis: a call for action*, 101st session of the International Labour Conference 2012; *Global Employment Trends 2013: Recovering from a Second Jobs Dip*, ILO, Geneva, 2013 and International Labour Organization, *Global Employment Trends for Youth 2013 — A generation at risk*, ILO, Geneva, 2013

⁴⁷ UNESCO 2011, op. cit.

Figure 4 Working poverty estimates, youth and adult cohorts, for selected countries



Source: ILO: *Key Indicators of the Labour Market*, seventh edition, *op. cit.*

3.5.2 Youth unemployment in advanced and middle-income countries

A different scenario presents itself for advanced economies and some middle income countries where the youth employment crisis is directly fuelled by the financial and economic crisis, fiscal austerity, economic contractions and layoffs in some sectors, and stagnation in new job creation in most sectors. Oftentimes, young people are employed on short-term contracts with little or no protection under labour legislation. Given that they have not had the time to acquire firm-specific skills that would be valued by the company, in times of economic downturn, they become victims of the “last-in-first-out” syndrome. Contrary to empirical studies which suggest that higher levels of education result in increased opportunities for decent employment and better jobs, a new phenomenon has emerged where many educated young people are failing to find work. This is a worrying trend. It calls for an urgent rethink of macroeconomic policies, and a shift to job-rich patterns of growth.

If large numbers of young people are failing to find work and are becoming disillusioned and are disengaging from societal involvement, this augurs ill for social cohesion and social peace. It should not go unnoticed that young, educated people have

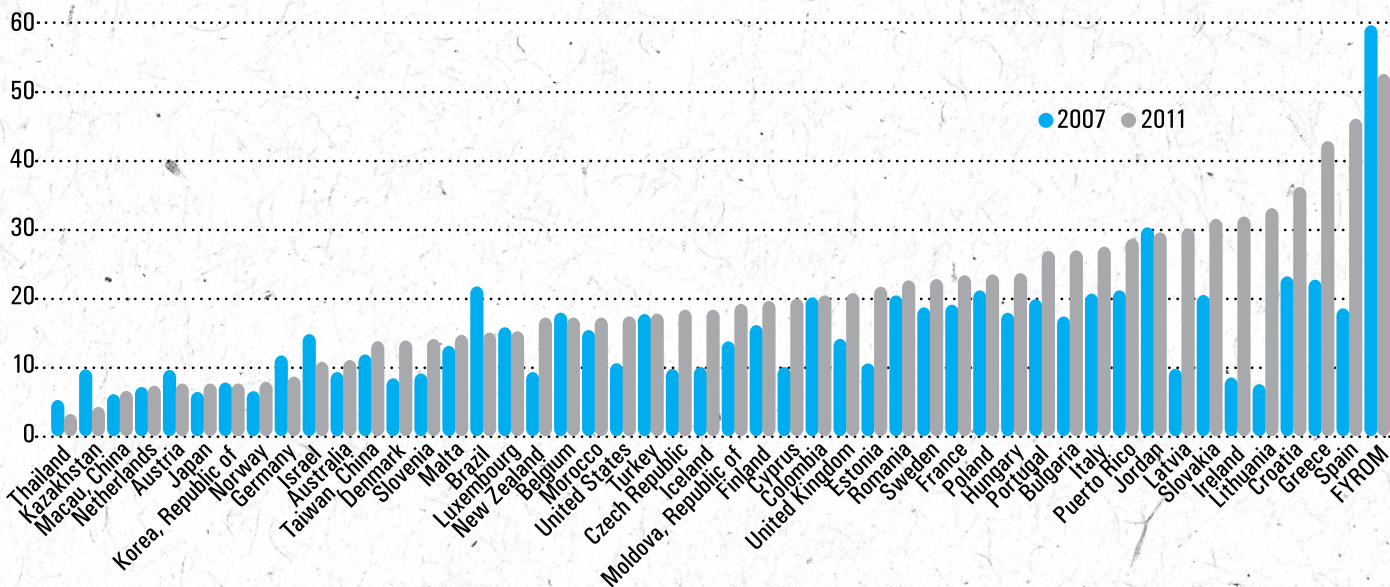
been playing significant leadership roles in the protest movements of the Arab Spring, the “indignados” of Spain and other European countries, and the Occupy movements in the US. A consistent message in these movements has been a call for voice and participation of young people in a system that needs to shift in order to cater for people’s needs for fulfillment and self-realization through quality employment and quality life opportunities.

The ILO’s indicators of the labour market show the worrying rise in youth unemployment in advanced and middle income economies following the onset of the global financial and economic crisis. (See Figure 5). In a data set of 48 countries presented, 22 had youth unemployment rates of over 25 per cent. Since then youth unemployment has continued to rise reaching by February 2013 62.5 per cent in Greece, 56.4 per cent in Spain and over 40 per cent in Portugal and Italy (Eurostat). These levels of youth unemployment are unprecedented.

For those youth that do find work, many are to be found in non-standard, precarious forms of employment. According to ILO estimates, 25 percent of employed youth in Europe were in part-time employment in 2011, and 40.5 percent worked on temporary contracts.

For young working families in the formal economy in industrialized and middle income countries, caught up in the dilemma of unemployment and precarious employment, childcare may present, not so much the issue of accessibility, but of affordability. Countries will need to formulate adequate policy responses that both cater to the current crisis impacts, as well as to the longer term question of decent work/decent life balance, in a sustainable way.

Figure 5 Youth unemployment rates in selected countries, 2007 and 2011 (per cent)



Source: ILO: Short-term Indicators of the labour market – National sources.

3.5.3 Indicators of poor transitioning

The experience of young people in terms of the quality of the school-to-work transition and of their first entry into the world of work, these are critical for their future prospects in the labour market, and for opportunities to find decent work. Given the current youth employment crisis, and not surprisingly, a study of indicators of the transitioning process reveals worsening trends. Indicators of poor school-to-work transitioning that have been studied include:

- The time it takes to find a first job
- The time it takes to find a decent job
- The youth/adult unemployment rate
- The incidence of long-term unemployment
- The incidence of temporary and part-time work
- The number of young people who are neither in education, nor employment, nor training — the NEET phenomenon⁴⁸

Recent surveys show worsening trends in relation to all of these indicators. Notably, the transition period from school to work is becoming longer. In Indonesia, for example, a survey showed that the transition period has gone from 6.9 months in 2001 to 14.7 months in 2009. In OECD countries too, (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development) key indicators that measure the quality of the transition have deteriorated, namely, the youth unemployment rate, the incidence of long-term unemployment, and the incidence of temporary and part-time work.

In 2011, there were 6.4 million fewer people in the labour force than would be expected, based on long-term labour market trends.⁴⁹ This may, to some extent be a proxy for the size of the NEET group of discouraged school graduates, “hiding out” in the economy, registered neither as job seekers nor in education nor in training.

Studies have found greater informality of work in the first cohort or new entrants to the labour market (15 to 19 age group), as compared with the second (20–24 age group)⁵⁰. Another indicator of poor quality transitioning from school to work is the number of young people in hazardous jobs. A total of 62.5 million young people were involved in hazardous work in 2008, up from 51 million in 2004⁵¹. Even though these young people are past the minimum age for entry into the workforce and are not therefore covered by Convention No. 182 on the worst forms of child labour, they nevertheless need special protection to improve their conditions of work and enhance their capacities to be productive young adults. Policy makers must also concern themselves with the well-being and future work prospects of this group of young workers. Governments must enforce the relevant labour standards pertaining to health and safety in the workplace, notably the Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 2006 (No. 187), and its accompanying Recommendation, (No. 197). Policy Recommendations to address the youth unemployment dilemma are taken up in Section 4 of the Paper.

⁴⁸ International Labour Organization, 101st International Labour Conference, ILO, Geneva, 30 May–14 June 2012.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ International Labour Organization, *Children in hazardous work: What we know, what we need to do*, ILO, Geneva, 2011.

Section 4

Working families and the life cycle — a package of policy responses

Increasingly, and particularly in the wake of the multiple crises that have rocked the global economy since 2008, governments are seeing the need to integrate social policies for sustainable human development into national macroeconomic frameworks. This is therefore an opportune time to advocate for an approach which places working families at the centre of such policies. Countries cannot afford to forego social sector investments in face of the current crisis, and in the name of fiscal austerity. To do so would be short-sighted and counterproductive. It would serve only to perpetuate the crises of unemployment, lack of decent employment, intergenerational poverty and failed early childhood development. What is needed is a shift to family-focused investments within a life cycle framework, supported by social protection measures, and prioritizing decent work, work/life balance, and early childhood development. This will serve to reverse the economic downturn, because it will stimulate demand through the increased consumption of families with better purchasing power. It will serve to prepare the current and the next generation of young people to take their places in society as productive adults, contributing to inclusive growth in the economy, and to shared well-being. It will be a major driver for the eradication of poverty among working families.



Providing supportive working conditions will also facilitate the achievement of greater gender equity in the workforce. In Asia and the Pacific alone, it has been estimated that achieving gender equity in the workforce would yield an additional USD \$42 billion to \$47 billion annually in productivity. Moreover, the most competitive countries in the world have demonstrated the feasibility of investing in an approach to decent work that is good for parents and children⁵². The evidence points to the potential for economic returns to be generated across countries. The impact on the healthy development of children would clearly be profound.

4.1 Maternity protection and breastfeeding breaks

A critical set of policy measures is needed at national level, in terms of health care. Efforts should be focused on strengthening national health policy, instituting comprehensive systems of service delivery that prioritize the health needs of mothers and children, and that ensure access, quality and affordability. To achieve MDG 4 and 5 on reducing child and maternal mortality, systems must envisage a continuum of care, delivering effective and timely interventions over the critical phases of pre-pregnancy, pregnancy, birth, and post-natal care. Adequate infrastructure for safe delivery should be put in place, including emergency obstetric care in case of need, as well as for post-partum and post-natal care. Access to affordable family planning services, including reproductive health counseling, is important for working families, in order to enable them to plan effectively for the birth of their children, and to avoid unwanted pregnancies. Proper planning and readiness will provide the best possible welcoming and nurturing environment for the child, and therefore a good start in life. Given the notable underfunding of reproductive health services in many developing countries, this is an area that external donors should prioritize, in the context of achieving MDG 4 and 5 coupled with MDG 8, a global partnership for development.

Legislative and social policy frameworks at national level should contain strong provisions on maternity protection, in keeping with ILO Convention No. 183 on Maternity Protection. Enabling breastfeeding breaks to working mothers of newborn infants must be a priority. Breastfeeding breaks play a critical role in the health of these infants. Being breastfed reduces infant and child mortality by 1.5 to 5 fold. Women who work are just as likely to intend to breastfeed as those who do not. The problem arises when their working conditions make it impossible to breastfeed. Ensuring breastfeeding breaks is entirely consistent with the stipulations in the relevant International Conventions: CRC, UN Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and ILO Convention No. 183.

Ratification of Convention No. 183, and the incorporation of its provisions into national legislative frameworks should be a priority for governments. The Convention contributes to the creation of an enabling environment for child development by securing safe and healthy working conditions for pregnant working mothers, providing maternity leave, ensuring adequate pre- and post-natal care, and supporting breastfeeding. It recommends the provision of time and facilities for mothers to recover and care for their infants and young children after birth. It provides also for extended leave in case of illness or complications related to the pregnancy. It proposes the provision of cash benefits, including medical benefits, in accordance with national law or practice. The non-discrimination in employment section of the Convention stipulates that employer requirements on pregnancy testing is forbidden (Art. 9–2), and discrimination is not permitted on the basis of pregnancy status or maternity leave (Art. 8–1; Art. 8–2). Daily breaks, or daily reduction of working hours are provided for, in order to allow for breastfeeding. Pregnant and breastfeeding mothers must not be obliged to perform work which may be prejudicial to the health of the mother or the child⁵³ (See Box 2 for key legislative provisions of Convention No. 183).

⁵² Heymann, J. and Earle, A., *Raising the Global Floor: Dismantling the Myth that We Can't Afford Good Working Conditions for Everyone*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, 2010.

⁵³ International Labour Organization, C183: Maternity Protection Convention, 2000, No. 183, Convention concerning the revision of the Maternity Protection Convention (Revised), 1952. Retrieved from ILO NORMLEX Information System of International Labour Standards <C183> and <www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:12100:0::NO::P12100_INSTRUMENT_ID:312328> 26 November 2012.

Only 24 countries have ratified Convention No. 183, although many industrialized and some middle-income countries offer more than the minimum requirement of 14 weeks maternity leave. In the Latin American Region, for example, Chile and Cuba offer 18 weeks of maternity leave, and Brazil offers 120 days for national civil servants. Of these countries, only Cuba has ratified the Convention. Unfortunately, large proportions of working mothers in middle-income, developing and some industrialized countries do not have access to paid maternity entitlements and non-discrimination in employment guarantees, and so legislative provisions, as well as effective enforcement, should be a priority area of focus for governments.

Box 2 ILO C183: Maternity Protection Convention, 2000: Key legislative provisions⁵⁴

The Convention, which takes into account the circumstances of women workers and the need to provide protection for pregnancy, considered as the shared responsibility of government and society, stipulates the following:

- Entitlement to a period of maternity leave of not less than 14 weeks, which shall include a period of six weeks' compulsory leave after childbirth, unless otherwise agreed at the national level by the government and the representative organizations of employers and workers
- Cash benefits, based on previous earnings, shall be provided to women on maternity leave, ensuring that the woman can maintain herself and her child in proper conditions of health and with a suitable standard of living — in the absence of entitlement to cash benefits, women will receive adequate benefits out of social assistance funds, subject to the means test required for such assistance
- Medical benefits shall be provided for the woman and her child including prenatal, childbirth and post-natal care, as well as hospitalization care when necessary
- In order to protect the situation of women in the labour market, it shall be unlawful for an employer to terminate the employment of a woman during her pregnancy or absence on leave, or during a period following her return to work to be prescribed by national laws or regulations, except on grounds unrelated to the pregnancy or birth of the child and its consequences or nursing. A woman is guaranteed the right to return to the same position or an equivalent position paid at the same rate at the end of her maternity leave
- A woman shall be provided with the right to one or more daily breaks or a daily reduction of hours of work to breastfeed her child. These breaks, determined by national law and practice, shall be counted as working time and remunerated accordingly.

4.2 Supporting workers with family responsibilities: Incorporating paid paternity leave and parental leave provisions into national legislative frameworks

The capacity of families to balance working life with childcare is key to their economic and social well-being. In particular, paid paternity leave and parental leave that can be taken by fathers or mothers, help ensure that family income is not jeopardized because of childcare responsibilities. In addition, these provisions contribute to child development and are essential to fulfilling CEDAW and other international covenants, conventions and the Beijing Platform for Action⁵⁵ provisions concerning gender equality. While significant progress has been made globally in relation to paid maternity leave for formal sector workers, coverage needs to be extended to all women in all types of work, and application of legal rights needs to be enforced. Progress is needed also in terms of ensuring adequate paternity leave and parental leave for both men and women in both the formal sector and the informal economy.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, UN document A/CONF.177/20 (1995), Annex I.

Convention No. 156 on Workers with Family Responsibilities and accompanying Recommendation No. 165 provide practical guidance to member States, social partners and other social actors. Governments have a leadership role to play by setting policy orientation and creating an enabling environment conducive to social dialogue for reconciliation of paid work and family responsibilities. Provisions encourage fathers to participate fully in childcare by recommending parental leave which can be taken by either parent, within a specified period immediately following maternity leave (R165 Art. 22[1]). The parental leave measure is also recommended in case of illness of a child (R165 Art. 23[1]).

One of the main goals of C156 and R165 is to create effective equality of opportunity and treatment both between women and men workers with family responsibilities, as well as between such workers and other workers. They recognize that women typically bear a disproportionate share of caregiving and thus devote longer hours to unpaid work in the home than men, which reduces their access to and equal treatment and opportunities in the labour market. For this reason, the provisions aim to encourage more equal sharing of care responsibilities, to promote the development of community services such as childcare, allow parental leave, uphold the principle of non-discrimination in employment contingent on the carrying out of family responsibilities, encourage re-training opportunities for women and men who have left the labour market because of family responsibilities, and raise awareness about the principle of equality of opportunity and treatment of workers with family responsibilities.

The social partners (employers' organizations and trade unions) are encouraged to get involved in designing and applying work-family measures; and Art 9 of the Convention provides for measures to be applied through collective agreements. Increasingly, trade unions are playing a significant role in initiating or supporting work-place solutions to the provision of childcare. Collective bargaining is used as an effective tool to secure agreements with employers for the provisioning of childcare. For example, in Oregon, USA, the SEIU (Service Employees International Union) won an agreement for subsidized childcare, where parent co-pay was reduced by 20 per cent, and the eligibility criteria for state support to the programme were improved. In Brazil, trade unions are playing an active role in securing childcare programmes subsidized by employers, through collective agreements. These and many similar examples are documented in the seminal ILO Publication on the subject: **Workplace Solutions for Childcare**.⁵⁶ (See Box 8 for a case Study drawn from the Publication.)

As mentioned in the introduction to this section, the lack of extension of provisions such as maternity protection and paternity leave to the informal economy continues to be a daunting challenge for working families in that sector. Increasingly, trade unions are reaching out to provide support services to this sector, including child-care support services. In India, the Self-employed Women's Association (SEWA), a trade union which organizes women workers in the informal economy, has set up self-help cooperatives which provide childcare facilities for working mothers.⁵⁷ By providing supplementary income that could be used for childcare, measures adopted within Social Protection Floors, such as basic income guarantees and cash transfers, extended to informal economy workers, would help to ease the work/family conflicts. The application of Social Protection Floors is discussed in some detail in Section 4, in the sub-section "Social Protection Floors, Social Protection Systems and the Family Life Cycle."

Based on C156 and R165, the ILO has provided a number of recommendations for work-family measures that incorporate gender equality enhancing objectives (See Box 3.). Increasingly, Governments are establishing work-family policies, and implementing accompanying measures. Some examples of good practice in this regard are mentioned in Section 3 of the Paper. For other instructive examples providing greater detail, see Box 4.

⁵⁶ International Labour Organization, Hein, C. and Cassirer, N., *Workplace Solutions for Childcare*, ILO, Geneva, 2010.

⁵⁷ Self-Employed Women's Association, '25 Years of Achievement of Childcare — BAL-SEWA', SEWA Newsletter No. 34, Ahmedabad, India, May 2011.

Box 3 Requirements for family-friendly measures to be gender-equality-friendly

Recognizing men's caring role: Offering parental leave and making parental leave, after the initial maternity leave, available to both men and women and non-transferable.

Making paid work more family-compatible: Flexible arrangements with regard to working schedules, rest periods and holidays; provision of annual leave, short leave for emergencies; (good) part-time, flexitime, time banking, teleworking, reduction of daily hours of work and of overtime.

Making family responsibilities more compatible with work: Ensure availability of affordable and good-quality child-care and other family services and facilities that assist workers in meeting their employment and family responsibilities.

Promoting a more equal sharing of family responsibilities between men and women, through information, awareness-raising measures and education policies.

Promoting public and private actions to lighten the burden of family and household responsibilities through labour-saving devices, public transport, supply of water and energy.

Source: ILO, Addressing gender equality through work family measures, Information Sheets on Work and Family, No. 2, TRAVAIL, 2004, Geneva

Box 4 Examples of work-family policies from Chile, India and South Africa⁵⁸

- In recognizing that lack of childcare poses significant barriers to women's labour force participation, the government of Chile, which ratified C156 in 1994, had made considerable efforts to expand childcare services as a means to create better quality jobs and to promote gender equality and national development. Since 2005, the number of free public nursery places for children aged 3 months to 2 years who are living in the poorest areas of Chile has increased from 14,400 to 64,000 in 2008; in addition, kindergarten places for children aged 2–4 years, which numbered 84,000 in 2005, will [have expanded] to about 127,000 by 2009.
- In fulfilling its obligations under C156 and other UN gender-related instruments, in 2006 Croatia adopted the National Policy for the Promotion of Gender Equality, which sets out a number of specific measures promoting the sharing of family responsibilities between men and women and increasing the availability of childcare services as a means of achieving effective equality of opportunity and treatment between men and women workers.
- The National Employment Guarantee Programme (NREGA), launched by the Government of India in 2005, recognizes the implications that family responsibilities carry vis-à-vis women's ability to freely engage in paid economic activities. The NREGA includes on-site crèches among other worksite facilities, such as medical aid, drinking water and shade, which local implementing agencies have to set out in order to ensure the effective implementation of the employment-generating programme.
- In South Africa, the government is implementing a non-conditional cash benefit programme, the Child Support Grant, in the form of childcare allowances paid to the main caregiver, with the concern of avoiding the reinforcement of the role of women as primary carer within the household. The grant is not conditional on the carer having to attend training sessions or performing unpaid community work, a controversial feature of family and child allowances in other developing countries. In May 2006, the total beneficiaries summed up to almost 7 million children.

⁵⁸ International Labour Organization, *Work and Family: The Way to Care is to Share*, ILO, Geneva, 2008.

4.3 Domestic workers

Domestic workers are often used as a 'coping strategy' by families to help reconcile paid work with household responsibilities and childcare. Because domestic workers, the overwhelming majority of whom are women including some girls, most often are in the informal economy, they are unprotected by labour legislation. Because they carry out their work in private homes and hidden from view, they are not recognized as workers and do not benefit from labour rights guarantees such as minimum wages, regulated hours of work, overtime pay, paid leave, and maternity protection. Oftentimes, they work very long hours for low pay and without entitlements to leave periods. Typically, they come from low-income, rural or migrant groups, and lack voice and representation to improve their conditions of work. Many are exposed to highly exploitative working conditions and violence, including sexual harassment and verbal or physical abuse. Other relevant issues concerning girls in child labour performing domestic work are taken up in PARTS III and IV of this Paper.

In 2011, the ILO adopted the landmark Domestic Work Convention No. 189, containing standards which should provide the basis for improving the living and working conditions of tens of millions of domestic workers worldwide. Governments should ratify this Convention and seek to integrate its provisions into national legislation frameworks, among other things as a support for childcare services, and for this category of childcarers whose work has gone largely unrecognized, unprotected and undervalued until now.

The Convention stipulates that domestic workers should have the same basic labour rights as other workers, including reasonable hours of work, weekly rest, freedom of association, and the right to collective bargaining⁵⁹. Article 5 states that Each Member shall take measures to ensure that domestic workers enjoy effective protection against all forms of abuse, harassment and violence. Article 6 states that Each Member shall take measures to ensure that domestic workers, like workers generally, enjoy fair terms of employment as well as decent working conditions and, if they reside in the household, decent living conditions that respect their privacy.⁶⁰

In the context of provision of home care support and counseling for quality childcare within national policy frameworks, every effort should be made to involve domestic workers with childcare responsibilities into such programmes where applicable, in order to ensure their proper training, and good quality of childcare, while giving them opportunities for better remuneration as home-based childcare professionals.

4.4 Adaptation of national labour legislation and policy to support working families

Much of national labour legislation was passed prior to the time when the majority of children live in households where all adults work. Important adaptations need to be made for there to be decent work opportunities available to adult members of all working families, reconciled with adequate provision of care and education for their children. National legislative frameworks need to align with the relevant protective provisions to be found in major international conventions such as the CRC, ILO Night Work Convention, 1990 (No. 171), Reduction of Hours of Work Recommendation, 1962 (No. 116), as well as Convention No. 156 and Recommendation No. 165 on Workers with Family Responsibilities, mentioned earlier. In this section, three examples are reviewed, where such protective provisions should be applied: leave to meet family health needs, leave for education, and work schedules.

1. Leave to meet children's health needs: Just as paid sick leave has long been recognized as essential for all employees regardless of their family status, in the same way attending to the health needs of dependents is essential, and also requires leave provisions, in line with Rec. 165. Children need parental care when they are sick and unable to go to

⁵⁹ International Labour Organization, 'One Year On, Uruguay is first to ratify ILO Domestic Work Convention', Press Release, ILO, Geneva, 14 June 2012.

⁶⁰ International Labour Organization, Domestic Workers Convention, 2011, No. 189, Convention concerning decent work for domestic workers, adopted in Geneva, 100th ILC session, 16 Jun 2011. Retrieved from ILO NORMLEX Information System of International Labour Standards <C189>

school or to their childcare centre. They also need parental care to bring them to health care providers. The evidence is substantial of the importance of parental care for the outcomes of acute and chronic illnesses alike. A modest amount of leave from work to care for children's health, can make an enormous difference in the ability of parents to keep their jobs, while caring for the health of their sons and daughters.

2. **Leave for education:** One of the most significant determinants of children's educational outcomes is parents' involvement in their education. Provision for flexible work arrangements or a small number of days of leave (in line with Rec. 165), can ensure that parents meet with teachers and assist their children when problems arise at school.
3. **Work schedules:** Work schedules that allow parents to earn a living and care for their children are essential. For example, to allow for quality parent/child interactions for school-age children, it is important that parents are available to spend time with their children in the evenings and nights when school is not in session. Rigorous studies have documented the negative educational and developmental impacts on children, when parents have to work evenings and nights. In consultation with representative employers' and workers' organizations, it is important for governments to develop policies that decrease the need for parents to work nights, and that mitigate the negative impacts, when night work is unavoidable. An example of a straightforward approach aiming to produce optimal outcomes is that in which night work includes entitlement to a wage premium, just as overtime work does. Provision of a wage premium will serve as a disincentive to employers to resort to night work. It will give incentives to workers without childcare responsibilities to take up night work, thereby obviating the need for parents with childcare responsibilities to take up such work. However, parents with childcare responsibilities should not be discriminated against in employment including for night work, because of their family status. This is in keeping with the general non-discrimination clause in Convention No. 156. When parents do have to work nights, the wage premium also makes it more feasible to afford adequate care for their children.

4.5 Social protection floors, social protection systems and the family life cycle

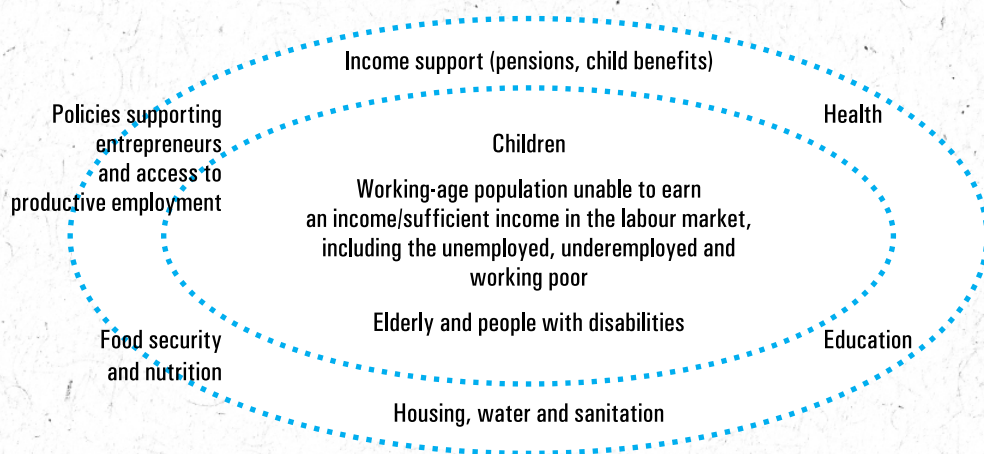
Section 3 of this Paper highlights the evidence which confirms that socio-economic status is a powerful determinant of childhood development outcomes. In particular, low-income families and marginalized groups face economic and social risks which, if not addressed, will lead to cumulative deficits in children's learning and skills development along the life cycle. These findings make a compelling case for the use of social protection systems as an important means of ensuring income security and access to basic services throughout the life cycle, thereby addressing the multiple and compounding vulnerabilities faced by children and their families. In their recently adopted strategic frameworks⁶¹ both ILO and UNICEF highlight the importance of building national social protection floors as fundamental elements of comprehensive and integrated social protection systems.

Social protection floors can provide an important overarching framework for social policy and planning at national level, in the context of the life cycle, and for the determination of social sector allocations to family and child-focused development programmes. The Social Protection Floor Initiative was adopted by the United Nations System Chief Executives Board (CEB) in April 2009, led by the ILO and the WHO. The initiative was prompted by the recognition of the importance and necessity of adequate social protection systems, given that 75 to 80 per cent of the world's population lacks access to social security. The aim is to expand and extend social protection coverage to all as a right, in order to compensate for loss or lack of income, and to ensure access to social services to meet basic needs. This may be in a short-term context such as economic shock, as in the current financial crisis, or for longer-term support to vulnerable populations not covered by social insurance provisions applicable to the formal economy.

⁶¹ ILO, 2012 (forthcoming): *Social Security for All: Building social protection floors and comprehensive social security systems: The strategy of the International Labour Organization* (Geneva: International Labour Office). UNICEF: 'Integrated Social Protection Systems: Enhancing Equity for Children — UNICEF Social Protection Strategic Framework' UNICEF, March, 2012.

A recent report of the Social Protection Floor Advisory Group, chaired by Michelle Bachelet, former President of Chile, Under-Secretary General of the United Nations, and Executive Director of UN Women, shows that the extension of social protection to persons not covered by social security, drawing on social protection floors, can play a pivotal role in relieving working families of poverty and deprivation.⁶² The Report stresses that they should be implemented in close coordination with other policies to enhance employability, reduce precarious work, create decent jobs, and promote entrepreneurship. The Life Cycle Approach can serve to provide coherence, and a means for integrating the wide range of common, differentiated and focused policies needed to support working families and their children.

Figure 6 Social protection floor: Integrated social policies to protect and empower people across the life cycle⁶³



The rights-affirming and child-focused aspects of the Social Protection Floor are well highlighted in the Bachelet Report. (See Box 5 for relevant excerpts from the report).

Box 5 Bachelet Commission Report on the social protection floor is child-focused and rights-affirming⁶⁴

The Report refers to the Convention on the Rights of the Child:

“States Parties shall recognize for every child the right to benefit from social security, including social insurance, and shall take the necessary measures to achieve the full realization of this right in accordance with their national law.” (Article 26)

The Report states that an option for mitigating both the poverty and nutritional effects of food price increases and shocks in general in the short run could be providing cash transfers or food subsidies along with micronutrient supplementation — specifically to poor women and young children. The social transfers synonymous with the floor could thus play an important role in combating the impact of food insecurity

The Report states that income security for children linked with access to health and education represents a significant investment in human capital formation, from which society will benefit in terms of better educated, skilled and more productive individuals.

⁶² Social Protection Floors for a Fair Globalization — Report of the Social Protection Floor Advisory group chaired by Michelle Bachelet — ILO, Geneva, October 2011.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

4.5.1 The ILO's Social Protection Floors Recommendation 2012 (No. 202)

The new policy and normative instruments adopted recently by ILO and UNICEF are clearly relevant in shaping their respective actions and collaborative agenda. The ILO's tripartite constituents adopted a two-dimensional strategy on the extension of social security during the 100th Session of the International Labour Conference in June 2011, which calls for the rapid implementation of national social protection floors, achieving universal coverage of the population with at least minimum levels of protection (horizontal dimension) and progressively ensuring higher levels of income security and access to health care in line with ILO social security standards (vertical dimension).⁶⁵ The Social Protection Floors Recommendation (No. 202) was adopted at the 101st Session of the International Labour Conference in June 2012.⁶⁶

As is common practice with ILO normative instruments, the Recommendation contains guidelines for Member States to use in setting up their policy and legislative frameworks to implement social protection floors and their strategies for the extension of social security. This constitutes a significant step forward in the promotion of social protection floors at national level, and a good entry point for UNICEF/ILO collaboration. The ILO Recommendation follows a flexible approach that takes into account national needs and priorities, with a view to further developing existing systems of coverage, and closing coverage gaps. Because of its rights-based approach, such national social protection floors can provide strong support to working families, particularly low-income families in the informal economy, who are often excluded from contributory social insurance schemes, in gaining access to quality care, education and other social services for their children.

The Recommendation characterizes social protection floors as “nationally-defined sets of basic social security guarantees which secure protection aimed at preventing or alleviating poverty, vulnerability and social exclusion”. (Art. 2). These basic social security guarantees should include at least “access to a nationally defined set of goods and services, constituting essential health care, including maternity care, that meets the criteria of availability, accessibility, acceptability and quality” (Article 5(a)), as well as “basic income security for children, at least at a nationally defined minimum level, providing access to nutrition, education, care and any other necessary goods and services” (Article 5(b)). It is important to note that such basic social security guarantees can be realized through a variety of different means, including cash transfers such as universal child allowances and birth grants, non-cash transfers such as fee waivers for health and education services, food vouchers or food aid, as well as national employment guarantee schemes, unemployment benefits, and access to social services.

Of special relevance in terms of rights-affirming support to working families and their children, including low-income families in the informal economy, are the following principles⁶⁷:

- 3.(b) entitlement to benefits prescribed by national law;
- (d) non-discrimination, gender equality and responsiveness to special needs;
- (e) social inclusion, including of persons in the informal economy;
- (g) progressive realization, including by setting targets and time frames;
- (m) coherence across institutions responsible for delivery of social protection;
- (n) high-quality public services that enhance the delivery of social security systems;

The Recommendation also provides guidance for member States in implementing social protection floors within strategies for the extension of social security that aim at progressively building comprehensive social security systems.

⁶⁵ International Labour Organization, Resolution and conclusions concerning the recurrent discussion on social protection (social security), adopted at the 100th Session of the International Labour Conference, ILO, Geneva, June 2011. Retrieved from <www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---relconf/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_162049.pdf> 26 November 2012. See also ILO, *Social Security for All*, op. cit.

⁶⁶ Retrieved from <www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO:12100:P12100_INSTRUMENT_ID:3065524:NO> 26 November 2012.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

4.5.2 UNICEF's Social Protection Strategic Framework

UNICEF's first global Social Protection Strategic Framework⁶⁸ launched in March 2012, provides a starting point for a collaborative agenda with partners, aimed at harnessing the potential of social protection to advance children's rights and well-being. UNICEF defines social protection as a set of public and private policies and programs, aimed at reducing and eliminating economic and social vulnerabilities to poverty and deprivation.

UNICEF's Strategic Framework is guided by three core principles:

Universality: The progressive realization of universal coverage. Countries are encouraged to identify and progressively build up a mix of policies and strategies suited to their needs, and in line with their national development plans.

National leadership and ownership of social protection systems: Support for countries' efforts to assert their policy space, and to design country-specific systems, to develop coordinated implementation mechanisms, to decide on expenditure levels in relation to capacity, and to explore financing options.

Inclusive social protection: Comprises an integrated, multi-sectoral approach making use of the life cycle, with appropriate age-specific policy interventions, ensuring both preventive and protective measures, recognizing that positive ECD outcomes that cater to the whole of the child are dependent upon an integrated, multi-sectoral approach that links policy interventions from different sectors: health, childcare, child protection, nutrition and education. This approach also considers and addresses gender-specific risks and vulnerabilities, as well as those related to other components of socio-economic status: marginalized groups, children with disabilities, indigenous peoples, ethnic minorities.

Central to the integrated approach, also, is the framing of social protection strategies within the context of a broader set of social and economic policies, including sustainable livelihoods and decent work strategies. The core principles of the Strategic Framework underlie four components of policy and programmatic interventions as follows:

- Social transfers
- Programmes to ensure economic and social access to services
- Social support and care services
- Legislation and policies to ensure equity and non-discrimination in children and families' access to services and employment/livelihoods⁶⁹.

A number of low and middle income countries have been implementing family and child-focused policies, constituting elements of their national social protection floors, with good results. These provide instructive examples of how policy and normative instruments like UNICEF's Social Protection Strategic Framework, the ILO's two-dimensional strategy for the extension of social security and the Social Protection Floors Recommendation 2012 can be used to establish, strengthen or scale up social protection systems, ensuring access to, and affordability of essential social services for low-income families and their children. (Boxes 6 and 7)

⁶⁸ UNICEF, March 2012, op. cit.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

Box 6 Applying social protection floors: Chile⁷⁰

The Social Protection System of Chile includes the comprehensive child protection system known as *Chile Crece Contigo* ("Chile grows with you"). This programme follows an intersectoral and multidisciplinary approach to child protection of children that is unprecedented in Chile and has wide territorial coverage. Through it, boys and girls will be protected from the moment of conception with relevant and timely services that allow for early stimulation and provide opportunities for their comprehensive development.

Thanks to new mechanisms of support and protection established under the policy, Chilean children from the poorest families will now be eligible to attend day care centres and pre-schools for free.

The legislative framework for *Chile Crece Contigo* includes:

- Automatic transfer to the post-natal period of days not used in the prenatal, in the case of premature births;
- Right to transfer up to the first three weeks of rest and prenatal benefits to the post-natal period;
- Right of working mothers to breast-feed their children, independently of the existence of a nursery in the workplace;
- Extension of post-natal leave to one year when the child is born with a disability;
- Accompaniment for all boys and girls from the first prenatal control until entry into the school system;
- Improved health controls, especially for the first two years;
- Differentiated support and guarantees for boys and girls from the 40 per cent poorer homes and/or in special situations of vulnerability.

Box 7 Applying social protection floors: Further instructive examples

Argentina: A universal child allowance introduced in 2009 is linked to other social services and benefits to children and adolescents of unemployed persons and to informal economy workers through a non-contributory scheme.

Brazil: The Bolsa Familia, covering 13 million families, is a key component of a broader social protection floor. It provides cash transfers to households, conditional upon child school attendance, participation in prenatal and post-natal programmes and immunization regimens. The cost of the programme is reportedly 0.4 per cent of GDP, and it is complemented by other non-conditional cash transfers. The programme has reduced short-term poverty, and is aiming to alleviate long-term poverty through an integrated range of family support measures in health and education. It has contributed to the reduction of poverty in Brazil by 27 per cent.

Ecuador: A non-conditional cash transfer is reported to have similar favourable outcomes.⁷¹

South Africa: A child support grant, in the form of a non-conditional cash transfer, extends to 75 million children. The costing of the programme is 1 per cent of GDP.⁷²

⁷⁰ Ibid, chapter 2: http://www.unicef.org/socialprotection/framework/index_61856.html and www.crececontigo.cl

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Social Protection Floor, 2011, op. cit.

4.6 Solutions for quality childcare⁷³

The foregoing discussions have highlighted the importance of early, timely, and integrated interventions to support children in the critical phase of 0 to 8 years of age. These should focus on the physical, emotional, psycho-social, and cognitive dimensions of the child's development. In terms of health interventions, the policy focus has been framed in terms of accelerated actions to achieve MDG 4 on significantly reducing child mortality by 2015.⁷⁴ The importance of strengthened health systems and integrated approaches to delivery, catering to the health care needs of mother and child, were discussed in Section 4 (sub-Section on Maternity Protection and Breastfeeding). As regards MDG 4, accelerated and strengthened actions are needed to combat the major causes of neonatal, infant and under five deaths, including diarrhoea, malaria, pneumonia. De-worming and other preventive treatments for NTDs, (Neglected Tropical Diseases in sub-Saharan Africa), as well as immunization regimens with an emphasis on measles vaccines, should be stepped up.

Special attention should be paid to effective post-natal follow-up and care, given that a large number of infant deaths occur in the first 28 days (50 per cent of all infant deaths in South Asia). Growth, height and weight monitoring are important, with attention paid to incidence of under nutrition, and the need for vitamin A and micronutrient supplements. Given that infant and child mortality rates are much higher for rural than for urban populations and for underserved communities such as indigenous communities and Afro-descendants (in the case of Latin America), special efforts must be made to provide these hard-to-reach communities with access to child health services. Pakistan's system of mobile clinics may be explored for possible replication in this regard.



As regards ECCE, providing adequate, accessible, affordable solutions for quality care and education is of critical importance for overcoming the childcare deficits discussed in Section 3 of the Paper. A mix of entry points should be considered for policy interventions, in a differentiated approach to match individual country and community needs and circumstances, and also the age of the children concerned, including: home-based visits and parent counseling from childcare professionals, a schedule of health centre maternal and child visits, community-based care or private nurseries and crèches, learning centres, and pre-school establishments. In the study “Workplace Solutions for Childcare” the ILO has documented the use of firm-specific, work-place based childcare centres in some countries, emerging out of agreements between employers and trade unions⁷⁵.

UNICEF has been supporting early childhood development programs in many developing countries through technical assistance for capacity building. Policy-makers are encouraged to view this as a professional field, requiring proper training of staff, if programmes are to be of high quality, with good results for child development. Attention needs to be paid to the professionalization of early care through systems of training, licensing, regulation, and adequate remuneration for early years teachers and professionals.⁷⁶ Several studies in Latin America have demonstrated how early childhood care and education programs

⁷³ Quality as used in “quality childcare” is multi-dimensional, and may encompass 1) the alignment of ECD programmes with core, shared community/ societal values on the provision of care, 2) adequate levels of and access to resources, 3) safe and secure care and learning environments, 4) adequate leadership, governance and staffing of programmes, 5) satisfactory and supportive communications and interactions between the various actors, such as providers, parents, caregivers, educators and children: Society for Research in Child Development, *Social Policy Report: Quality of Early Childhood Development Programs in Global Contexts: Rationale for Investment, Conceptual Framework and Implications for Equity*, Vol. 25, No. 2, SRCD, 2011.

⁷⁴ World Health Organization, *Accelerating Progress Towards the Health-related MDGs*, WHO, Geneva, 2010.

⁷⁵ *Workplace Solutions for Childcare* — op. cit.

⁷⁶ The Early Years Professional is a relatively new inter-disciplinary professional, trained to assume responsibilities for the integrated development of the child in terms of health care, psycho-social care, learning and education. Refer to: Lumsden, E., *The Early Years Professional: A New Professional, or a Missed Opportunity?*, Research Overview, University of Northampton, February 2012.

improve, not only the developmental status of young children, but also the labor force participation rates of women. For instance, a study in Argentina which assessed the impact of the expansion of pre-school infrastructure on women's employment, found a positive impact on the probability of women's employment of between 7 and 14 percentage points⁷⁷. The vectors for increased female labour force participation rates are two-fold: women are freed from home-based childcare activities, and can avail themselves of employment opportunities; the expansion of pre-school centres provides direct employment opportunities that are seized upon by women. On this latter point, however, men should also be encouraged to pursue professions in the childcare and education fields just as women should be encouraged to pursue careers in traditionally male-dominated sectors, with a view to overcoming the problem of occupational segregation in the labour market.

4.7 Workplace solutions for childcare

While the use of work-place solutions is currently not widespread, and indeed hardly attractive to some industrialized country contexts with established and extensive child-care provisions, they nevertheless provide interesting and innovative solutions to childcare, which may be studied for contextual relevance. The ILO Publication mentioned above presents case studies from nine countries, four industrialized, and five of the larger developing or middle-income countries: France, Hungary, the UK, the US, Brazil, Chile, India, Thailand and Kenya. One illustrative example of these programmes is highlighted in Box 8 below:

Box 8 The Childcare Programme at the SOCFINAF coffee-producing company in Ruiri, Kenya

Ruiri is a large coffee growing region in Kenya, north east of Nairobi. SOCFINAF is a coffee growing and exporting company in the region. It has 9 plantations and 2 engineering and milling departments, and employs 1,450 permanent agricultural workers, 45 per cent of whom are women. During peak harvest season, it hires an additional 8,600 seasonal workers. SOCFINAF has a long-standing tradition of corporate social responsibility (CSR), and has operated child crèches since 1950. The Kenya Plantation and Agricultural Workers' Union (KPAWU) represents agricultural workers in the company, and advocates for good conditions of work through collective agreements.

In line with provisions within the national ECD framework, SOCFINAF's childcare programme is divided into two parts: crèche services, catering to children from three months to three years, and nursery schools, catering to four- to six-and-a-half-year-olds. In 2007, there were 340 children in crèches, and 226 children in the nursery schools. The centres are conveniently located close to the workplaces and workers' community residences. They run year-round, six days a week, from 6:45 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and are free of charge for employees.

Children receive two meals a day, and health care is provided by a nurse and an assistant, housed in a dispensary on each of the nine plantation sites. Children at the nursery schools follow an educational programme until 1 p.m., when they have a meal, after which they participate in play programmes. As part of its CSR policy, SOCFINAF finances childcare programmes through an annual budgetary allocation that covers the cost of crèches and the nursery programme. This represents 0.15 per cent of its annual turnover, and 1.6 per cent of its profits.

The programme employs 52 caregivers: 11 ECDE teachers, 21 regular caregivers, and 20 support staff. On average, each site is staffed with 3 caregivers for the crèche, and one ECDE teacher for the nursery school. Caregivers and ECDE teachers have opportunities to attend training courses organized by the National Occupational Safety and Health Environment Programme, and the District Centres for Early Childhood education, respectively. Childcare staff are represented by KPAWU, and their conditions of work are determined by collective agreements between KPAWU and the Kenya Coffee Growers' and Employers' Association.

SOCFINAF takes the view that providing these childcare services makes for good industrial relations, enhances its corporate image, helps to attract and retain qualified committed staff and productive workers, and reduces absenteeism. Workers have commented that they are less stressed, knowing that their children are taken care of while they are at work. One coffee picker commented that previously, she used to carry her baby on her back or place the child in the field. Her work situation is now much improved, as she can be far more productive, and meet her daily quota. It used to be tiring working while carrying her baby on her back; and she was always worried about harm befalling the baby when s/he was left close by in the fields; and so she had to interrupt her work every so often to check on the baby, with obvious negative repercussions for her productivity and pay which is at a piece rate, based on a daily quota of three derbies of coffee.

⁷⁷ World Bank 2010 The Promise of ECD in LAC 2010

4.8 Policies for ECEC in OECD countries

The Starting Strong review process of ECEC programmes in OECD countries provides a comprehensive overview of policies, and recommendations for addressing outstanding issues and policy gaps in these countries.⁷⁸ An important notion underlying policy approaches is that of “universal and appropriate access”, or the provision of early, quality care and education as a social good that should be made available to all children. Early provision is recognized as constituting a solid foundation for human learning and development. Typically, policies and programmes attempt to provide some choices to parents between a range of options, while ensuring that principles of universality and equity are upheld, in particular, that attention is paid to special and additional needs of children, for example from low-income families and second language groups, or children with disabilities.

The age at which children begin formal pre-school has been observed to vary depending on the availability of paid parental leave, and the age at which free pre-school services are provided. In Finland where good parental leave provisions exist, most families opt for home-based care by parents during the child’s first year of life. Most countries make provision for free or subsidized spaces in kindergartens for the pre-school age group of 3–6 years. Increasingly, governments are recognizing and attempting to deal with the provision of licensed, quality care and learning services for children under age three. Working parents, too, are appreciating the value of early professional care and learning for good outcomes in terms of child development, in addition to their desire to minimize interruptions in labour force participation. There is therefore real demand for services for the under 3-year old group, and increasingly, governments are prioritizing this area, and allocating more funds to early childhood services. Box 9 presents examples of ECEC provisions in OECD countries. (Information dates from the 2006 “Starting II” publication, and does not therefore reflect more recent developments. The discussion on austerity measures in Section 3 of this Working Paper points to recent cuts in public spending on education and childcare services in the European Union, in the wake of the Euro-zone crisis).

Box 9 Provisions for ECEC in OECD Countries⁷⁹

Nordic countries (except Norway): Municipalities have an obligation to provide families who demand it a place in a fee-paying centre or family day-care centre, not just at age three but from the end of parental leave. For children in need in these countries, parental fees are generally waived.

France: Increasingly, children are enrolled in freely provided centres, from age two.

Belgium: Most children are enrolled in free early provision care from 30 months.

Austria, the Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Norway (majority), the United Kingdom: Enrolment in centres starts at age three.

Mexico: States are now obliged by law to provide early education services for children over age three, and attendance is now compulsory for all children from this age.

Germany: Enrolment places in kindergarten for three- to six-year-olds, now stand at about 90 per cent in half-day centres in the West, and full-day centres in the East. A statutory right to places in kindergarten was legislated in 1996.

Ireland (majority), Netherlands: Enrolment starts at age four.

Australia, Canada, Republic of Korea (majority), the United States: Enrolment from the age of five, but with an increasing number of places for four-year-olds.

Portugal: Over 90 per cent of five-year-olds benefit from a free daily five-hour session in the jardim de infância (kindergartens).

Republic of Korea: Important investments are being made in early childhood services. All five-year-olds now have a right to free kindergarten. However, as demand far outstrips supply, only about half of all children have access.

⁷⁸ Starting Strong — Early Childhood Education and Care — OECD, 2006

⁷⁹ Ibid.

4.9 The pre-school: A time to learn and play

Increasingly, governments are recognizing the value of quality pre-school programs for the development of the whole of the child, and as an effective preparatory process for later successful learning and development. The discussion on deficits in quality of care and education in Section 3 of this Paper also points to the importance for Governments of low income countries to prioritize organized pre-school activities as a means of compensating for lack of adequate stimulation and learning by play in the home, particularly for low-income families. Governments are beginning to adopt legislative frameworks and policies with a rights-based approach, founded on the CRC, and incorporating child protection, health, nutrition, care and learning, in an integrated framework. For example, Cambodia has adopted a new ECCD policy which promotes “a holistic approach to children that supports their survival, growth, development, and learning, [and] which includes interventions in health, nutrition and hygiene, as well as cognitive, social, physical and emotional development”⁸⁰ (See Box 10).

Box 10 In Cambodia’s pre-schools, everyone learns⁸¹

In Prey Kuy village, 19 children attend a CPS (Community Pre-school) two hours a day, each weekday. They learn about animals, colours, letters, shapes and social interaction, along with playing games and singing songs.

Their teacher was trained by the Provincial Office of Education in 2004, and since that time, has received continual support from the Early Childhood Department of the Ministry of Education Youth and Sports and the Commune Council Focal Point on Women and Children. This training and support has enabled her to provide the children in her community with quality basic education.

“Some parents think that learning starts in primary school and that children just play in pre-school”, one parent notes, adding that she feels her child will be more “confident and prepared” for primary school after attending the Prey Kuy pre-school.



⁸⁰ United Nations Children's Fund — *Early Childhood Development: Real Life Stories from Around the World* — UNICEF, New York, May, 2011.

⁸¹ Ibid.



For communities affected by food insecurity and malnutrition, establishment of feeding programmes in pre-school facilities is a valuable intervention to improve nutritional health, and thus the cognitive and physical development of children. These have been found to be important interventions in the case of Cambodia cited above, and also in the case of Guyana⁸².

Ghana has set the goal of “school readiness” among pre-schoolers 4–5 years old, and has established an ambitious programme, targeting this group⁸³. The programme encompasses multiple components: training of pre-school educators, development of quality curricular, teaching and learning materials, UNICEF has supported the programme by designing Model Kindergartens with the use of customized methodologies for capacity-building, delivery of care and learning, supported by teaching and learning materials and tools. This approach provides a means of setting standards for the programme, which could then be monitored and evaluated, with a view to scaling up. The programme is reportedly successful and highly popular among parents, and has recorded an enrolment rate of 63.6 per cent of the target group.

A number of interesting standard-setting approaches are used in OECD countries. In some countries, educators at kindergarten level use a variety of evaluation methods. For example, learning programmes, sessions and achievements are documented through such instruments as child portfolios, and video footage of sessions, artifacts and creative productions. Educators and children reflect on what was done, and this becomes a part of the pedagogy, helping to enrich the learning environment, and promoting positive self-identities on the basis of projects accomplished⁸⁴.

⁸² United Nations Children's Fund — Meeting Note — ECOSOC 2012 Preparatory Event with UNICEF — *Investing in Child Development and Learning: Ensuring Equity in Decent Work and in Sustainable Development*. UNICEF, New York, 28 February, 2012 (Pages 2–3, Presentation of the Minister of the Republic of Guyana).

⁸³ *Early Childhood Development: Real Life Stories from Around the World* — op. cit.,

⁸⁴ OECD 2006 — op. cit.

Many Kindergartens in the UK use the EEL instrument, (Effective Early Learning) to evaluate learning programmes. Through this method, and with the help of an external evaluator, centres identify and address issues, improve and refine programmes, customizing them in function of lessons learned. This method provides a way to achieve and sustain quality programmes. However, caution must be exercised to avoid transposing methods and instruments not relevant to the local environment. This may lead to undesirable outcomes. Every effort should be made to ensure relevance of approaches, and the factoring in of adequate provision for customization to match local contexts.

Another instrument used in some OECD countries is the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS). This instrument is used in a similar way for self-evaluation among educators, as well as for evaluation and refinement of curricula and teaching methods. This participatory approach can also be used for involving parents in the learning process. They may come to better understand and appreciate the programmes in use, and this also provides them with the tools to support the learning process at home, thereby ensuring some continuity and reinforcement in learning. This approach can also constitute a good basis for encouraging quality parent/child interactions. UNICEF technical assistance, including the use of model Kindergartens, could play a valuable role in exploring the use of these methodologies with a view to enhancing the quality of ECD programmes.

The discussion in Section 3 highlighted the fact that many parents in some contexts (for example Chile), did not appreciate the value of pre-schools, and preferred to take care of children at home. National or community-based awareness campaigns could be used to promote understanding of the importance of pre-school activities for child development and primary school readiness, and to motivate parents to avail themselves of pre-school opportunities for their children.

4.10 Financing options for early childhood care and development

In a study of ECD initiatives in a selection of developing countries,⁸⁵ UNICEF highlights good practices, and concludes by delineating possible next steps for scaling up of these initiatives. Consistently, conclusions point to the severe shortfalls in public funding for scaling up of initiatives that have worked well at the level of local pilot projects. The discussion in Section 3 of this Paper also highlighted the finding that more than 200 million children under the age of 5 in developing countries are at risk of not attaining their full development potential, because of a lack of access to ECD services. Findings from ECD studies point to the fact that societies “currently” overinvest in remedial skills in later ages and under invest in the early years.” They assert that investments in remediation are less cost effective than investments in early childhood development. Mounting evidence from the UK shows that provision of quality services in the early years improves outcomes in adulthood, enhancing prospects for productive, fulfilling lives.⁸⁶ Given that early childhood services offer crucial benefits to children and to society, attention should be paid to the financing needs for these services.

In general, growing awareness of these findings on the importance of ECD, coupled with the realization that public funding for ECD programmes is low, has served to open up a debate on alternative sources of funding, in particular private sources. A mix of country experiences exists in this regard. The involvement of the private sector as ECD service providers may range in scale from individuals setting up services, to small-scale entrepreneurial service provision, to Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and community-based service providers, through to large-scale corporations with multiple service points and broad coverage at national or sub-national level.⁸⁷

The model adopted for service provision may be a business for-profit model, as in the case of an SME (Small or Medium Enterprise), or a Corporation, or it may be a not-for-profit model, as in the case of NGOs or Community-Based Organizations (CBOs). Financing arrangements may differ, starting with totally autonomous financing of operations from private and/or

⁸⁵ *Early Childhood Development: Real Life Stories from Around the World*, op. cit.

⁸⁶ Dickerson, A. and Popli, G., ‘Persistent Poverty and Children’s Cognitive Development: Evidence from UK Millennium Cohort Study’, Centre for Longitudinal Studies, London, 2012.

⁸⁷ Woodhead, M. and Streuli, N., ‘Early Education for all: is there a role for the private sector?’, UNICEF, New York, February, 2011.

donor sources and parents' fees, with no government involvement. There may be varying degrees of government involvement through co-financing mechanisms, or direct subsidies to service providers, or vouchers to families for subsidized kindergarten or pre-school places, coupled with fee-paying arrangements for parents. The role of governments in setting up regulatory environments and in standard-setting may vary also from minimal to optimal.

Given the critical importance of quality ECD services for positive child development outcomes and the need for an inclusive approach that reaches all children, including those in low-income and disadvantaged households, the question must be asked: is private sector involvement in ECD service provision consistent with the achievement of pro-equity goals, in particular, EFA Goal 1? To what extent will private sector providers operating on a for-profit model ensure access for underserved, low-income families and vulnerable populations?

Traditionally, private service provision has tended to serve higher income households with the ability to pay. Services may be of good quality, involving the use of innovative approaches, but they exclude a vast majority of low-income families unable to pay for them.⁸⁸ One study has concluded that the private sector for-profit model of service provision may not be a suitable model for middle and low income countries where the vital need is to remove disparities and reach marginalized groups lacking access to affordable ECD services (Woodhead et al 2011).⁸⁹ Woodhead concludes that the not-for-profit model may offer a better option for supporting national efforts to reach the EFA goal of universal access to ECD services, since NGOs and CBOs typically service disadvantaged and marginalized groups. Mobilizing resources for service provision by the not-for-profit sector remains a challenge, and private donor funding for the implementation of this model should be seriously explored by governments and not-for-profit actors. In addition, ODA (Official Development Assistance) will continue to be needed by many governments of developing countries, to supplement national expenditure for providing quality public education.

Whatever the model adopted, Governments have a clear role to play in establishing a regulatory environment and standards in relation to suitable curricula, learning methods and materials, qualifications, salaries and conditions of work of early years professionals, as well as child protection measures, pro-equity approaches, and outreach to disadvantaged groups, in keeping with the CRC, and EFA goals. Governments must equally ensure compliance with these standards through the establishment of systems of inspection and oversight. In doing so, Governments should attempt to create a motivating environment that encourages innovation and that provides incentives for the maintenance of quality programmes.

Singapore offers an example of private sector involvement in ECD service provision, and demonstrates that an active role for governments in regulation and in subsidizing low-income households is key to quality service provision and universal access (See Box 11.).

Box 11 Public-private partnerships for pre-schools in Singapore⁹⁰

In Singapore, all pre-schools and childcare centres are entirely managed and operated by individuals, communities, NGOs or enterprises. The Government makes regular visits to the early childhood centres for supervision, licensing, health checks, etc., and finances these non-public services but does not involve itself in delivery. The Government, however, continues its subsidies for all families by paying up to 30 per cent of the fees and an additional financial assistance programme serves poor families.

To ensure sustainable, predictable levels of expenditure on quality ECD services, donor countries and agencies should prioritize the establishment of co-financing and aid modalities with governments of low-income countries. User fees for parents should be eliminated, as recommended by UNESCO's 2010 Global Monitoring Report. In the context of national social protection floors, cash transfers to low-income households as subsidies for ECD expenditures should be envisaged.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ UNESCO, Global Monitoring Report, 2007.

4.11 Realizing children's rights — The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

In the foregoing discussions, reference has been made to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) as the basis for legislative frameworks at national level, to support provision of child protection, care and education. Adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1989 and ratified by a large majority of Member States, this Convention is a milestone, in that it defines and sets out key provisions on children's rights, and it calls upon Member States to do their utmost to ensure the realization of these rights. This sub-section of the Paper outlines some of the important provisions of the CRC which governments should seek to incorporate into legislative frameworks as the basis for rights-based child-development policies and programmes. While parents or legal guardians have primary responsibility for ensuring the care and education of children, governments are called upon to take all necessary steps to create an enabling environment to allow for the realization of children's rights in a number of major areas:

- Life, health, education, and development
- Right to registration at birth
- Protection
- Social security
- Non-discrimination
- Consideration of the best interests of the child
- The right to be heard

(See Box 12).

Box 12 Some important provisions of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)

Article 19 1. States Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child.

Article 24 1. States Parties recognize the right of the child to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health and to facilities for the treatment of illness and rehabilitation of health. States Parties shall strive to ensure that no child is deprived of his or her right of access to such health care services.

Article 26 1. States Parties shall recognize for every child the right to benefit from social security, including social insurance, and shall take the necessary measures to achieve the full realization of this right in accordance with their national law.

Article 27 1. States Parties recognize the right of every child to a standard of living adequate for the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development.

Article 28 1. States Parties recognize the right of the child to education, and with a view to achieving this right progressively and on the basis of equal opportunity, they shall, in particular:

- Make primary education compulsory and available free to all;
- Encourage the development of different forms of secondary education, including general and vocational education, make them available and accessible to every child, and take appropriate measures such as the introduction of free education.

The CRC emphasizes that States Parties shall “render appropriate assistance to parents and legal guardians in the performance of their child-rearing responsibilities and shall ensure the development of institutions, facilities and services for the care of children”, and shall “take all appropriate measures to ensure that children of working parents have the right to benefit from child-care services and facilities for which they are eligible” [Art. 18.2 and Art. 18.3]. States Parties are called upon to “recognize the right of the child to be protected from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child’s education, or to be harmful to the child’s health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development” [Art. 32.1]. In the follow-up Declaration of 2002, “A World Fit for Children”, governments committed more explicitly to take “immediate action to eliminate the worst forms of child labour” [Principle 2].

Very importantly, Article 7 of the CRC establishes the right of the new born to birth registration, thereby establishing his/her identity with a name and a nationality, as a rights holder of all of the provisions set out in the Convention and in pertinent national level legislation and policies. This is an important provision for follow-up by governments to ensure compliance, given that many children in remote rural areas or in marginalized groups in developing countries are not registered at birth, because of geographical or social remoteness from registration offices. Thus, the CRC is a major legislative instrument that should inform national legislative and policy frameworks for the critical measures that should be adopted at key stages along the life cycle continuum from birth and early childhood, right through later childhood and adolescence.

4.12 Key strategies for the primary school phase

A pre-school experience of good quality improves considerably the likelihood of smooth transitioning to primary school. The challenge posed is to maintain and build on the gains achieved, in order to arrive at successful completion of primary school. But the challenge is enormous for many low-income and for some middle-income countries. Many have not yet developed extensive, quality pre-school programmes, and the reach of pre-school programmes to children is still quite low. The discussions in Section 3, ‘The transition to primary school’ highlighted the fact that despite tremendous improvements in primary school enrolment, attrition and repetition rates are high. Even after completing primary school, children are failing to acquire basic literacy and numeracy skills.

Box 13 Brazil: Literacy at the right age

Achieving children’s literacy in the initial three years of primary school is a main challenge for the poorest municipalities of the semi-arid region of Brazil, where communities suffer from high illiteracy levels due to poor quality schooling, lack of trained teachers, and limited adequate basic infrastructure and services. In 2007, the State of Ceará adopted the Literacy at the Right Age programme as a public policy. This led to a drop in illiteracy by 56 per cent among 8-year-olds in Ceará from 2006 to 2009. The regional disparity between the State and the national average dropped from nearly 28 to 6 percentage points. In 2011, the State of Piauí adopted *Palavra de Criança* as a public policy, with a budgetary allocation of nearly USD \$906,000. This will support the expansion of the initiative to include 150 of the 226 municipalities in the State, benefiting nearly 130,000 children. Further, the Federal Brazilian government has announced that a national literacy programme for children along the lines of the pilot literacy initiatives in the semi-arid region will be implemented in 2013.

Source: United Nations Children’s Fund, Sir Richard Jolly, ‘Bringing Children into Development Strategies’, Policy Matters, Second Edition, UNICEF, New York, March 2012.

In the semi-arid, impoverished region of Brazil, for example, it was found that about 24 per cent of children completing the fifth year of primary school were unable to read, write or understand simple, age-appropriate text. This problem was tackled at the state level by devising and launching the programme **Literacy at the Right Age**⁹¹ (See Box 13).

Education systems need to be strengthened at several levels. Physical infrastructure needs to be upgraded and made conducive to learning, and schools need to be equipped with adequate and stimulating learning resources. Attention needs to be paid to adequate school curricula, with effective strategies to overcome obstacles to the attainment of functional literacy and numeracy. Methodologies should be developed to reach and engage at risk students that show a high propensity for failure and drop out, with a special focus on girls, in this regard.

Systems of teacher training and re-training should be put in place to ensure that staff are well qualified, and able to develop relevant and enriching curricula. Special incentives should be devised to attract qualified teachers to remote or marginalized communities. Remuneration levels should be adequate, facilitating the maintenance of high morale and motivation among teaching staff. All of these interventions are key inputs for the provision of quality education, leading to a successful primary school experience for children.

User fees should be abolished to ensure affordability, and as part of the accelerated programme to achieve Millennium Development Goal 2 on achieving universal primary education and the EFA Goals by 2015. Affordable after school services are another feasible investment to support both additional learning opportunities for children, and parental needs for life and work balance. Special attention should be paid to the differential impacts of the school system on girls, with a view to ensuring that they have a safe learning environment, free of harassment and gender-based violence.⁹² To overcome the preference for sons' education prevalent in some cultural contexts (for discussion, see Section 3), awareness-raising initiatives directed at parents should seek to promote the importance of gender equality with respect to children's education. School-feeding programs and cash transfers have been found to increase enrollment rates for both boys and girls, and should be pursued as important policy measures to encourage primary school participation and retention among low-income families.

4.13 Combating child labour

The discussion in Section 3 'Poor transitioning, the incidence of child labour' highlighted the fact that child labour is closely linked to poverty and resulting negative outcomes such as poor engagement with the school experience, weak learning achievement, and the incidence of dropout from school. Combating child labour should be a high priority within overall strategies to address child poverty and to enable children to reach their full development potential. The policy and normative framework to guide policies and strategies is provided by the CRC, ILO Minimum Age (for entry into employment) Convention No. 138, Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention No. 182, and the ILO's Global Action Program on Child Labour. Convention No. 138 stipulates that the minimum age should not be less than 15 years, except in member countries whose economy and educational facilities are insufficiently developed, and therefore may, under certain conditions, initially specify a minimum age of 14 years (See Box 14 on key provisions of Convention No. 182.).

⁹¹ United Nations Children's Fund, Policy and Practice Division, Policy Matters, Second Edition, UNICEF, New York, March 2012.

⁹² Global Union's Statement to the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, 2009.

Box 14 C182 Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999: Key provisions

- Each Member shall design and implement programmes of action to eliminate as a priority the worst forms of child labour, taking all necessary measures to ensure the effective implementation and enforcement of the provisions giving effect to this Convention including the provision and application of penal sanctions or, as appropriate, other sanctions.
- Each Member shall, taking into account the importance of education in eliminating child labour, take effective and time-bound measures to:
 - (a) Prevent the engagement of children in the worst forms of child labour;
 - (b) Provide the necessary and appropriate direct assistance for the removal of children from the worst forms of child labour and for their rehabilitation and social integration;
 - (c) Ensure access to free basic education, and, wherever possible and appropriate, vocational training, for all children removed from the worst forms of child labour;
 - (d) Identify and reach out to children at special risk; and
 - (e) Take account of the special situation of girls.

89 per cent of Member States have ratified C138, while 96 per cent, a record 175 out of 183 ILO Member States have ratified C182. The large number of ratifications of these two Conventions is an indication of a high degree of country consensus on the need to eliminate the worst forms of child labour and protect the rights of the child. But consensus is not tantamount to implementation. Much more needs to be done, given the large number of child labourers in the world, with an unacceptably large proportion caught up in the worst forms of child labour.

Given the various forms that child labour takes around the world, from slippages into child labour due to poverty, through to hazardous work, involvement in global value chains, trafficking, forced and bonded labour, and domestic work, child labour must be treated as an issue of global concern. There is a need for universal ratification of C138 and C182, and the putting in place of clear implementation plans and strategies by all countries, including monitoring and evaluation.

In 2010 a Global Conference on Child Labour hosted by the Government of the Netherlands adopted a Roadmap for Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour by 2016. It called for action by governments in four key areas; national legislation based on ILO standards and effective law enforcement, extending access to free, compulsory and quality education and expansion of vocational training, effective social protection, and labour market policies supporting decent and productive employment for adults and young people of working age.

Through the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC), the ILO offers technical assistance and support to developing countries for the establishment of programs to combat child labour. The ILO's Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCPs) are the main vehicle for programming and technical assistance at country level, for the elimination of child labour. A number of countries have set targets and introduced policy interventions aimed at eliminating child labour. Programs focus typically on two-way transitioning from child labour back to school or training programs, and then aim at a better transition from training or school to work, at the appropriate time and age. Support from social actors and social partners for these transitions is an important part of the effort to eliminate child labour.

Various approaches are used. Recognizing the difficulties former child labourers would face in the formal school setting, non-formal education (NFE) is often a first step used to provide a bridge to bring children back into the education system. Use of remedial teaching methods, guidance counseling and vocational training constitute important strategies. Social protection measures are used as interventions in some countries.



In the context of DWCPs, time-bound programmes (TBPs) with built in monitoring and evaluation are used. Within this framework, governments have set targets for the elimination of the worst forms of child labour (in keeping with C182), by a target date, generally set at 2016. In doing so, they recognize and agree to address the root causes of child labour which lie in poverty, and they agree to link efforts very closely with EFA goals. They recognize that to achieve sustainable results, efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labour need to be well integrated into other mutually supporting policy interventions. TBPs are country-owned, and receive external support. (See Box 15 for country examples of various strategies used to address child labour).

Box 15 Various strategies used to address child labour

Indonesia uses Conditional Cash Transfers (CCTs) to households. These are conditional upon children's attendance at school.

A similar programme in Brazil, the Bolsa Familia, is discussed in the Social Protection section of this Paper.

Ghana has launched a new programme on poverty alleviation, "Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty", with tackling child labour as an important dimension of the programme. In tackling child labour, access and affordability of education and training are key pre-conditions, and so, once again, it would be important for governments to abolish user fees.

Cambodia and Indonesia have set numerical targets for substantial reductions in child labour by 2016.

Kenya's programme focuses on monitoring trends with respect to child labour, remedial programmes, and promoting youth employment.

Note: Thorough evaluation studies need to be done, in order to assess the effectiveness of these programmes.

Given the large number of child labourers in the agricultural sector, tackling child labour in this sector must be a priority. Given the particular vulnerabilities of girls and the risk that they are trapped in highly exploitative and abusive forms of child labour, focused programmes must be put in place, aimed at removing girls from child labour.

Trade unions have been active in various initiatives to eliminate child labour, including in awareness campaigns in specific industries and sectors, such as garments, carpet-making and sporting goods, and in building alliances with global and national movements to eliminate the practice. Trade unions have worked to gain commitments within specific global industry sectors and value chains, using instruments such as collective agreements and Global Framework Agreements entered into with multinational companies, to ensure that managers in supply and value chains put monitoring mechanisms in place with a view to verifying and dealing with cases of child labour within these supply or value chains. The strengthening of national labour inspectorates and their prioritizing of monitoring mechanisms to deal with child labour are also important strategies to be implemented.

4.14 Addressing the youth employment crisis

Indicators of the school-to-work transition reveal a deteriorating situation for young people for a range of reasons, including poor capacity for productive employment owing to low skill levels, and lack of opportunities for decent work in prevailing job-poor labour markets. The youth employment crisis calls for strategic thinking and serious policy shifts to bring about employment-centred growth. An important goal of macroeconomic policies must be to provide an enabling environment for sustainable livelihoods of families. Active labour market policies (ALMPs) are needed, with a strong focus on young people as well as special measures to smooth the school-to-work transition.

Increasingly, technical, vocational, education and training (TVET) is being used as a means of organizing relevant curricula and skills development programmes, with a view to equipping job seekers, and matching them with positions in the market, while removing mismatches between skills and labour market demand (See Box 16.).

Employment Services are an important means for planning of training programmes and determining relevant curricula, as they assess and forecast labour market needs and trends. *Apprenticeships* are often used as a training mechanism to prepare young people for the job market. These work best when they are closely linked with, and tailored to match available opportunities in the labour market. Many advanced countries use the system of dual apprenticeships which combine technical or vocational training components at schools or training centres with on-the-job-training in a given field. These have been found to produce positive outcomes for the school-to-work transition (See Box 17).

Box 16 TVET reforms in selected countries

Some countries are increasing funding for TVET schools, thus opening up places for more youth (e.g. Chile, China, Colombia, Egypt, Germany, Malaysia, New Zealand, Republic of Korea, Thailand, Turkey and Viet Nam).

China: “Skilled workers’ schools” (a comprehensive vocational training base) offer long- and short-term training courses. By the end of 2008, there were about 3,075 skilled workers’ schools nationwide, with close to 400 million registered students. Nearly 95 per cent of graduates find jobs.

Colombia is doubling the training places in some of the technical levels at the National Training Service (SENA), offering 250,000 new places to unemployed youth and young people living in extreme poverty in urban areas.

Viet Nam is diversifying its vocational training to include full-time and regular training, mobile training, and training in enterprises and in traditional “occupational villages”. It is also expanding its reach to particular target groups such as farmers who have lost their land, and ethnic minorities.

Source: ILO, Increasing the employability of disadvantaged youth, Skills for Employment Policy Brief, ILO, Geneva, 2011.

Box 17 Dual system apprenticeships open doors to the world of work⁹³

The dual system of apprenticeship, which combines school-based education with in-company training, is typical of Austria, Denmark, Germany and Switzerland, and more recently Norway. Apprenticeships are part of the formal educational structure, and are usually entered into after completion of compulsory education. They involve an employment relationship plus formal schooling over a period of three or four years. At the end of the programme, apprentices graduate through a final examination in which they have to prove their theoretical and practical understanding of the occupation. Dual systems have proved successful in giving young people a good start in the labour market.

Denmark and Switzerland are among the OECD countries with the lowest unemployment rates for youth, and Austria is well below the OECD average. In addition, Austria, Denmark and Germany are among the countries with the lowest share of youth experiencing repeated spells of unemployment.

Some key features of the German system include:

- content of enterprise-based training are determined jointly by the Government, employers and trade union representatives (federal level);
- individual firms choose their own training methods;
- training costs are shared between the Government and employers (the Government covers the school-based component, while employers finance enterprise-based training);
- salaries of apprentices are relatively low – ranging from 25–45 per cent of the average wage of a qualified worker in the same occupation;
- wage and working conditions are determined through collective bargaining agreements specifying the minimum apprentice wage;
- qualifications are awarded upon completion of written and practical exams, set and marked by tripartite external examiners;
- competent bodies (mostly chambers of commerce, industry and trade) issue certificates which are recognized throughout the country;
- after graduation, workers can apply for work to their current employer or elsewhere.

In developing countries where large sections of the youth population lack job opportunities in the formal economy, systems of informal apprenticeships among artisans and craftspeople in the informal economy are the norm. Efforts are being made to support and upgrade these informal systems with training tools and materials. (See Box 18).

Box 18 Bridging the gap between formal and informal apprenticeships

West African countries, such as Benin, Mali, Senegal and Togo, are restructuring TVET systems to incorporate apprenticeships, including certification mechanisms. They are developing dual apprenticeship systems, where the craft enterprises which take on apprentices share responsibility for training. In parallel, some regulatory instruments have been developed to meet policy objectives and the specific arrangements for apprenticeship, such as the types of contracts and the rules governing vocational qualifications.

In Latin America, where there is a high rate of informality in the labour market, countries have adopted measures, including contractual arrangements, to support a transition from informal to formal employment relationships. Among these, legislation enacted in Peru in 2005 provides for five different training arrangements, including a “youth job training agreement” for 16–23 year-old workers who have not completed their schooling, allowing them to demonstrate their skills in a real work situation during periods ranging from six to 24 months, and a “learning contract” for 14–24 year-old workers, supervised by an authorized training centre and partly carried out in manufacturing plants of companies.

Sources: ILO, Upgrading informal apprenticeships. A resource guide for Africa, ILO, Geneva, 2012; ILO, Trabajo decente y juventud en América Latina, ILO, Lima, 2010.

⁹³ Quintini, G. and Martin, S., ‘Starting well or losing their way? The position of youth in the labour market in OECD countries’, OECD, Paris, 2006; der Velden, V., Welter, R. and Wolbers, M., ‘The integration of young people into the labour market within the European Union: The role of institutional settings’, Working Paper No. 2001/7E, Maastricht University, 2001; Gangl, M., ‘Returns to education in context: Individual education and transition outcomes in European labour markets’, cited in *Report V: The Youth Employment Crisis: Time for Action*, Conference Paper, 101st International Labour Conference, 13 March 2012.



4.15 Shifting from austerity to family- and child-friendly policies

Supply-side measures such as training and skills development programs are not enough to ensure decent work if economic sectors are characterized by job-poor growth, as in the current economic crisis. Policy shifts are needed, and the introduction of measures to stimulate demand in the economy. Such demand-side measures would include raising of minimum wages, as well as guaranteeing of incomes to workers through jobs or unemployment or other cash benefits, so that they could spend on goods and services, thereby raising demand for those goods and services, and stimulating job creation in the sectors concerned. Other measures to jumpstart contracting economic sectors include subsidies to employers to hire workers, particularly young workers, and support for entrepreneurship development among young people. It has been found that countries that have weathered the economic crisis relatively well such as Brazil, have responded to the crisis by a judicious mix of policies, in addition to traditional counter-cyclical macroeconomic approaches. For example, Chile responded to the crisis by raising social spending. As of December 2009, social spending in Chile was up 7.8 per cent, making the country's social spending 69 per cent of total spending.⁹⁴ These measures provide instructive examples of policy responses to the economic crisis that other countries should study with a view to replication.

⁹⁴ Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, *The reactions of the Governments of the Americas to the international crisis: An overview of policy measures up to 31 December 2009*, ECLAC, Chile, 2010.

Of special relevance are counter-cyclical policies and measures that focus on children, such as those discussed in Section 4, sub-section on social protection floors. Public employment programmes, for example in infrastructure development, are also job-creating measures that have been found to benefit the economy, as well as families, in times of economic crisis. Both sets of policy interventions (social protection and job-creating measures) will contribute to strengthening the demand for goods and services, thereby supporting working families, while increasing consumption and boosting the economy. Public investment in infrastructure should be employed as a job-creating and social policy tool. With the proper planning, governments can generate employment by investing in works that offer tangible benefits for children. The analyses in this Working Paper have shown that health and education systems are in need of strengthening, in order to provide quality services to families and their children. Investing in these services should be prioritized. For example, investments may include building or upgrading of schools and pre-school centres, ensuring adequate water and sanitation facilities, building roads to access the schools, providing Internet connectivity for the computers and training for the early years professionals and teachers that will teach and provide care at these schools and pre-school facilities.

Similarly, building health clinics and equipping them with relevant medical equipment and supplies to service mother/child health needs, as well as training and skills upgrading of health sector personnel would be suitable investments in the health sector. It should be highlighted that when construction plans are devised, they should include an environmental and social impact study. Also, they should be located where access and utilization can be optimized, particularly for the most marginalized children, including those in rural areas, and indigenous children or Afro-descendants in peri-urban areas, for example, in Latin America.

Employment-centred policies should focus on providing decent work in both the formal and informal economy, and progressively extending social security coverage to the informal economy, with specific attention paid to achieving gender equality objectives. Commitment to the decent work agenda implies adherence to all of its strategic objectives, that is, not only employment and social protection as already discussed, but also social dialogue (involving the social partners, or representative employers' and workers' organizations), and fundamental workers' rights. Policy responses to the economic crisis should not undermine workers' rights by causing deteriorating wages and conditions of work, or denial of voice at work. That would only aggravate the economic situation by depressing consumption, and disproportionately so for the lowest quintile of the population, thereby resulting in negative social outcomes for children such as under-nutrition, increased vulnerabilities and morbidity, increased school drop-out and slippages into child labour. In keeping with the principle of social dialogue, it is important that trade unions be involved in policy formulation through consultative frameworks to ensure that policies are geared towards achieving sustainable livelihoods for working families and their children.

All of the policy approaches and measures discussed above will result in the upgrading of social services to provide quality childcare and education; and economies will benefit from the improvements in human capital and productive capacity. Collectively, these measures will assist countries in overcoming the crisis in the short-term, while also setting the foundation for the development of more socially cohesive and rights-based societies that uphold child rights and the rights of working families, thereby resulting in productivity gains, and fewer disparities, over the medium-term. Despite the crisis, countries should use what fiscal space they have imaginatively and strategically to ensure much needed investments in the social sectors, and indeed in the full range of programmatic measures to support working families and their children, along the life cycle, as discussed in this Working Paper. For countries with very limited fiscal space, external financing through ODA should be sought over the medium-term, and donors should prioritize the relevant social sectors for aid disbursements, in the context of national development plans.

Section 5

Conclusions: Key recommendations and the way forward

5.1 The quality of economic growth matters

At national level, macroeconomic policies are the drivers of economic growth. However, to achieve societal well-being and sustainable livelihoods for working families and their children, the quality of that growth is important. It must be inclusive and equitable, sharing prosperity efficiently and fairly. Therefore, UNICEF and the ILO are advocating for social policies to be fully integrated into macroeconomic frameworks which prioritize strong support for working families along the life cycle continuum. The aim must be to adopt a rights-based approach, recognizing rights and protections at work for working parents and the rights of the child, grounded in the CRC, the Decent Work Agenda, and social protection floors.

Strong investments are needed in the social sector and across the life cycle that are suitable for each critical step, starting with pregnancy, childbirth, maternity protection, parental leave, and early childhood care and development (ECCD), on through later childhood and adolescence, to young people's entry into paid work. Support measures must be adequate, of good quality, affordable and accessible to all, especially to the most marginalized and disadvantaged communities. **The life cycle concept** provides the basis for a holistic and integrated approach that connects and reinforces the various policy support measures in a coherent manner.

5.2 A supportive environment for maternal health and early childhood development

A supportive environment for the critical stage of planning the family, pregnancy and childbirth, is key to the well-being of all families. To this end, health care systems must be strengthened, and must provide quality services to women and men, starting with reproductive health and family planning services, as well as adequate services for women concerning pregnancy, childbirth and post-natal care.

Services should be accessible, affordable, of good quality, and should include emergency obstetric care in case of need. Social protection floors can be an effective enabler to ensure provision of these vital services for maternal and child health, in short for the achievement of MDG 4 and MDG 5, with significant reductions in child and maternal mortality.

Reproductive health services should be well integrated into health care systems and should be adequately funded.

National legislative frameworks should incorporate the key provisions of Convention No. 183 on Maternity Protection, thereby creating an enabling environment for child development, by providing the five main elements of maternity protection: maternity leave, cash and medical benefits, health protection at the workplace, employment protection and non-discrimination and breastfeeding arrangements at work.

In keeping with the provisions of C183, governments should do their utmost to provide at least 14 weeks of paid maternity leave to all women covered by the Convention and qualifying for such leave on the basis of pregnancy status (all employed women, including those in atypical forms of dependent work [Art. 2.1; Art. 4.1]).

In keeping with the Convention, discrimination in employment should not be permitted on the grounds of pregnancy status or maternity leave.

Daily breaks, or daily reduction of working hours should be provided, to allow mothers to breastfeed their babies when they return to work. In keeping with the principles of non-discrimination in employment contingent on pregnancy status and motherhood as outlined in C183, breastfeeding mothers should be guaranteed job security when they return to work, thereby freeing them of any fear of losing their job.

5.3 Supporting workers with family responsibilities

Governments should incorporate work/family balance policies into national legislative frameworks and support workers with family responsibilities through the ratification and application of ILO Convention No. 156 on Workers with Family Responsibilities, and accompanying Recommendation 165. National and workplace measures that ensure adequate and accessible maternity protection and family-friendly services are critical for promoting women's equal opportunities and treatment in labour markets and for achieving gender equality, while ensuring support for childcare.

Paid paternity leave should be used as a strategy for encouraging men to share in the care of their newborns, and parental leave, including for men, will facilitate greater involvement of fathers in their children's lives, thereby contributing to positive child development/outcomes, especially in health and education. Access of fathers to paid paternity and parental leave should be adequately facilitated by suitable policy and legislative frameworks.

Compensation during the period of parental leave should be sufficient to enable parents to avail themselves of such leave, without undermining household income.

Governments and the social partners (employers and workers' organizations) should strive to create an enabling environment and introduce measures to render workplaces more family-friendly: these can include working time arrangements such as flexitime and reduced daily hours of work, and providing workers with the possibility of some choice concerning rest periods, holidays and leave. Flexible working time arrangements constitute a critical support measure to ensure that parents have access to adequate leave to meet their children's essential health and education needs, including care in case of illness, and time off to address school and learning issues.

In consultation with representative employers' and workers' organizations, governments should develop policies that decrease the need for parents to work nights, that create alternative choices for productive employment, and that mitigate the negative impacts, when night work is unavoidable. Wage premiums for night work should be envisaged, thereby creating incentives to workers without childcare responsibilities to take up night work, and facilitating affordable childcare for parents who do work night shifts.

Governments and the social partners should strive to create an environment in which childcare responsibilities of parents are more compatible with work, and to ensure availability of affordable, quality childcare services.

Employers' organizations and trade unions should seek to incorporate family-friendly clauses into collective agreements, guaranteeing support for the provision of quality childcare services for working parents.

Governments should ratify and implement the Domestic Work Convention No. 189, and incorporate its provisions into relevant national legislative frameworks, in order to improve the wages and conditions of work of domestic workers, and in this context, of domestic workers that assume responsibility for childcare.

In the context of provision of home care support and counselling for quality childcare within national policy frameworks, every effort should be made to involve domestic workers with childcare responsibilities into such programmes where applicable, in order to ensure their proper training and a good quality of childcare, while giving them opportunities for better remuneration as home-based childcare professionals.

5.4 Investing in early childhood development

Governments must take all necessary steps to create an enabling environment to allow for the realization of children's rights in key areas: life, health, education and development, in keeping with the CRC.

In this regard, an important measure is the facilitation of birth registration for all children, thereby conferring on them the status of rights-holders of pertinent protections, provisions and entitlements under national law.

Health delivery systems must be comprehensive, accessible, affordable and of good quality. They must provide adequate and timely interventions in terms of post-natal care as well as follow-up of weight/height, nutrition and immunization regimens, including stepping up of delivery of measles vaccines.

In order to achieve MDG 4 on significant reductions in child mortality by 2015, accelerated and strengthened actions are needed to combat the major causes of neonatal, infant and child mortality, including diarrhoea, malaria, pneumonia and NTDs.

Given that infant mortality rates are much higher for rural populations and for under-served communities than for urban populations, special efforts must be made to provide these hard-to-reach communities with access to child health services, as well as quality childcare.

Nutrition and feeding security measures should be firmly in place, and should start by creating the environment to allow for exclusive breastfeeding during the first six months of a child's life, then starting appropriate complementary feeding with responsive feeding and care practices. These are critical to ensuring good health and nutritional status of the young infant.

Focused measures should be used to ensure that needy, hard-to-reach households with specific vulnerabilities are not excluded from ECD services. Given the high incidence of underweight and stunting in some populations, provision of Vitamin A and micronutrient supplements should be a priority.

Scientific evidence points to the critical importance of early investments in child development to enable children to reach their full development potential in adulthood. The research shows that the earlier the investment, the greater the return is on productivity in adulthood.

The findings mentioned above point to the need for the adoption of legislative frameworks and policies with a rights-based approach, founded on the CRC, and EFA Goal 1: "Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education (ECCE), especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children."

Policy interventions must cater to the whole of the child, incorporating child protection, health, nutrition, care, and learning, components, in an integrated programme, thereby constituting a solid foundation for human learning and development that address the physical, emotional, psycho-social and cognitive needs of the child.

A mix of entry points should be considered for ECD policy interventions, in a differentiated approach to match individual country and community needs and circumstances, and also the age of the children concerned, including home-based visits, parental counseling from childcare professionals, a schedule of health centre maternal and child visits, community-based care or private nurseries and day care and learning centres, and pre-school establishments.

Governments should seek to prioritize ECD as a professional field, requiring proper training of staff, if programmes are to be of high quality, with good results for child development. Attention needs to be paid to the professionalization of early care and education through systems of training, licensing, regulation, as well as through adequate remuneration for early years teachers and professionals.

5.5 Social protection floors and social protection systems as an overarching framework to support working families and their children throughout the life cycle

Social protection floors and social protection systems constitute important means of ensuring income security and access to basic services throughout the life cycle, thereby addressing the multiple and compounding vulnerabilities faced by children and their families.

Governments should make full use of the ILO Social Protection Floors Recommendation No. 202, to establish and maintain national social protection floors, with a view to providing a coherent legislative framework at national level for the realization of rights in social security to all working families, throughout the life cycle.

Social protection floors should provide at least guarantees on basic income security for children and their families, and access to a nationally defined set of goods and services, “constituting essential health care, including maternity care, that meets the criteria of availability, accessibility, acceptability and quality;” as well as “access to nutrition, education, care and any other necessary goods and services” for children.

Given its critical importance, special emphasis should be placed on ensuring access to early childhood development services.

UNICEF’s Social Protection Strategic Framework also provides detailed guidelines for establishing integrated, inclusive social protection programmes to support child development in all of its dimensions, and especially children and families faced with social and economic vulnerabilities. The Framework should be fully utilized by governments for the construction of such programmes, linked to legislative frameworks pertaining to social protection floors and comprehensive social protection systems.

In developing social protection systems, governments may choose from a variety of implementing mechanisms and tools suited to the specific country context, and aligned with nationally defined goals, including cash transfers such as universal child allowances and birth grants, non-cash transfers such as fee waivers for health and education services, food vouchers or food aid, as well as national employment guarantee schemes, unemployment benefits and access to social services.

5.6 Quality pre-school programming

Quality pre-school programmes constitute an effective preparatory mechanism for later successful development and learning. They also serve as a preventive mechanism to mitigate the high incidence of poor outcomes at primary school level, such as drop-out, class repetition, and failure to acquire basic literacy and numeracy skills.

Governments must commit to strong investments in these programmes, ensuring accessibility and affordability for low-income families.

National or community-based awareness campaigns could be used to promote understanding of the importance of pre-school activities for child development and primary school readiness.

Quality programmes should combine care, learning, and learning by play components, catering to the whole of the child.

UNICEF technical assistance can play a vital supporting role in the creation and strengthening of these programmes in developing countries, using modalities such as the model kindergarten as a means of developing quality programmes, with the use of relevant, enriching curricula, teaching methods, teaching and learning materials.

Funding should be sought for bringing such programmes to scale. To ensure sustainable, predictable levels of expenditure on quality ECD services, donor countries and agencies should prioritize the establishment of co-financing and aid modalities with Governments of low-income countries.

Governments must exercise their role in establishing a regulatory environment and standards in terms of suitable curricula, learning methods and materials, qualifications, conditions of work of early years professionals, as well as child protection measures in keeping with the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Governments must equally ensure compliance with these standards through the establishment of systems of inspection and oversight.

Investment in adequate training of early years professionals is key to the success of these programmes.

Where feasible, employers and workers' organizations should be encouraged to explore workplace solutions for the provision of childcare. The country case studies documented by the ILO provide examples which may be used as models for exploration and replication.

5.7 Achieving the EFA goals at primary school level

In many developing countries, governments need to invest in the strengthening of education systems at primary school level along multiple dimensions, if the EFA Goals are to be achieved. Physical infrastructure needs to be upgraded and made conducive to learning, and schools need to be equipped with adequate and stimulating learning resources.

Attention needs to be paid to adequate school curricula, with effective strategies to overcome obstacles to the attainment of functional literacy and numeracy, as well as to the acquisition of basic notions of math and science as a foundation for successful transitioning to the secondary school level.

Systems of teacher training and re-training should be put in place to ensure that staff are well qualified and able to develop relevant and enriching curricula.

Special incentives should be devised to attract qualified teachers to remote or marginalized communities. Remuneration levels should be adequate, facilitating the maintenance of high morale and motivation among teaching staff. All of these strategies outlined above are key inputs for the provision of quality education, leading to a successful primary school experience for children.

Given that low income and lack of resources are key factors explaining parents' failure to enrol their children in school, user fees in education should be abolished, and cash transfers instituted in the context of social protection floors, as a support to ensure school attendance of children from low-income families.

Affordable after-school services are another feasible investment for both children's learning and parents' need to reconcile their paid work and family responsibilities.

School feeding programmes have been found to be successful in improving the nutritional health and academic performance of children from poor families. They have been proven to have effects on education outcomes in terms of improved enrolment, attendance and completion rates as well. In light of these findings, school feeding programmes should be stepped up where needed.

Accessible, quality childcare should be a priority investment, both for the sake of meeting the development needs of young children, and for freeing up older children, especially girls, for attendance at school.

Special attention should be paid to the differential impacts of the school system on girls, with a view to ensuring that they have a safe learning environment, free of harassment and gender-based violence.

5.8 Addressing child labour through tackling household poverty

Governments should recognize the links between poverty, the incidence of school dropout, and the incidence of child labour. Addressing household poverty is therefore key to addressing child labour. Decent work strategies linked to social protection to improve household incomes, for example, cash transfers contingent upon school attendance, or non-conditional cash transfers that increase household income and reduce the perceived need to send children to work, these are tested strategies that should be replicated.

The CRC, ILO Minimum Age (for entry into employment) Convention No. 138, the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention No. 182, and the ILO's Global Action Program on Child Labour provide the policy and normative framework which should be used to guide the formulation of policies and strategies.

Governments must invest in programmes which focus on two-way transitioning from child labour back to school or training programs, and then aim at a better transition from training or school to work, at the appropriate time and age.

Given the large number of child labourers in the agricultural sector, tackling child labour in this sector must be a priority.

Given the particular vulnerabilities of girls, including risks of being trapped in highly exploitative and abusive forms of child labour, focused programmes must be put in place, aimed at removing girls from child labour.

5.9 Active labour market policies for a smooth transition from school to work

An important goal of macroeconomic policies must be to provide an enabling environment for sustainable livelihoods of families.

ALMPs must be incorporated into macroeconomic frameworks with a strong focus on young people, and on special measures to smooth the school to work transition. Such strategies are all the more important in light of the current youth employment crisis.

Skills development can make a critical contribution to sustainable development, towards achieving the MDGs by 2015 and decent work objectives beyond 2015, through coordinated policies linking education, skills formation, employment and decent work.

Addressing the lack of quality job opportunities, especially for young women and men, must be a critical priority in industrialized, emerging and developing countries. Well-designed active labour market policies linked with technical and vocational education, on-the-job training and apprenticeships, both formal and informal, are essential for skills development, employment and entrepreneurship and can help alleviate unemployment and underemployment.

Priority should be placed on expanding public employment programmes that have proven to be valuable in addressing un- and under-employment of young people and those from disadvantaged groups, such as persons with disabilities. These programmes provide employment and social protection to those vulnerable to poverty, while simultaneously building small-scale infrastructure, skills and other assets which can, in turn, increase productivity.

Clearly, health and education systems are in need of strengthening, in order to provide quality services to families and their children. Investing in these services and the necessary infrastructure will carry rich dividends. It will create jobs, including for new early years educators and professionals, and upgrade social services to provide quality childcare and education. As a result economies will benefit from the improvements made in human capital and productive capacity.

Governments should focus investments in employment-creating sectors where there are tangible benefits for children. For example, investments may include building or upgrading schools and pre-school centres, providing Internet connectivity for computers, ensuring adequate water and sanitation facilities and building roads to access the schools.

Building of health clinics and equipping them with relevant medical equipment and supplies to service mother/child health needs, as well as training and skills upgrading of health sector personnel would constitute suitable job-creating investments in the health sector.

Employment-centred policies should focus on providing decent work in both the formal and informal economy and on progressively extending social security coverage to the informal economy, with specific attention paid to achieving gender equality objectives.

Commitment to the decent work agenda implies adherence to all of its strategic objectives, that is, not only employment and social protection, but also social dialogue (involving the social partners — representative employers' and workers' organizations), and fundamental workers' rights.

In keeping with the principle of social dialogue, it is important that trade unions be involved in policy formulation through consultative frameworks to ensure that policies are geared towards achieving sustainable livelihoods for working families and their children.

Despite the crisis, countries should use what fiscal space they have imaginatively and strategically to ensure much needed investments in the social sectors, and indeed in the full range of programmatic measures to support working families and their children, along the life cycle.

For countries with very limited fiscal space, external financing through ODA should be sought over the medium-term and donors should prioritize the relevant social sectors for aid disbursements in the context of national development plans.

5.10 Towards a partnership in support of working families and their children

Countries cannot afford to forego social sector investments in face of the current crisis and in the name of fiscal austerity. What is needed is a shift to family-focused investments that prioritize decent work, social protection, work/life balance, early childhood development and comprehensive support measures for children's transitional phases to young adulthood, within a life cycle framework. This will serve to reverse the economic downturn, because it will stimulate demand through the increased consumption of families with better purchasing power. It will also serve to prepare the current and the next generation of young people to take their places in society as productive adults, contributing to inclusive growth in the economy and to shared well-being. In addition, it will be a major driver for the eradication of poverty among working families. Together, UNICEF and ILO can offer a package of policy tools to accompany parents, children, caregivers and teachers through the critical stages of the life cycle. The policy and normative frameworks developed by these institutions can serve to provide guidelines to Member States as they embark on programmes for family-focused, employment-centred growth. The accompanying technical assistance programmes can play an important role in supporting the formulation, implementation and monitoring of national policies.

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