

Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence
Against Children (OSRSG-VAC)

Inputs to the requests for contributions in response to the Indigenous Peoples
Permanent Forum's recommendations.

A. Recommendations of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and input to the 2023
Session

The SRSG focused her 2022 report to the 77th GA on the impact of the climate crisis on violence against children. The SRSG provides views and recommendations addressing how the climate crisis acts as a threat multiplier for violence against children and that action cannot wait to keep the promise made to children to end violence by 2030.

In her report and oral statement to the GA she highlights that not all groups of children are affected in the same way.

Children who are already in disadvantaged situations are especially vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, including children deprived of family care and children deprived of liberty; children with disabilities; children living in poverty or in rural areas; children in humanitarian and conflict settings; and those who rely on and have a close relationship with the natural environment and its resources, such as indigenous children. Given their strong connection to nature, some 400 million indigenous peoples face threats to practicing both their cultural rights and their collective rights.

Girls and young women are also disproportionately affected by climate change. This is especially true for those in rural areas, who represent up to 70 per cent of the agricultural workforce in some countries, owing to their social roles and the discrimination they suffer.

In her conclusions, the SRSG notes in particular that exposure to the climate crisis, violence, stress and other crises causes immediate and long-term physiological and psychological damage. The consequences can last a lifetime and she referred in particular to indigenous children.

The full report and relevant paragraphs (in particular 61, 82 and 86) can be found through the following link:

[N2243737.pdf \(un.org\)](#)

As per the usual practice, ahead of the GA presentation and after the SRSG engaged with children from all over the world including indigenous children. In this context as noted

bellow, a number of child friendly materials and didactic materials are prepared and shared. Through the following link you can find all child friendly assets and guidance.

[Climate Crisis a threat multiplier for violence against children | UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence Against Children](#)

B. System-Wide Action Plan to achieve the ends of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

As part of the SRSG VAC contribution the OSRSG collaborated with the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues in developing an updated note on the promotion and application of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples to the prevent and end violence against children¹. The updated note highlights the overrepresentation of indigenous children, and in particular indigenous children with disabilities in care institutions and justice institutions. The updated note recommends the promotion of traditional restorative systems in consultation with indigenous peoples to address issues related to children in contact with the law.

Investing in children also means involving, empowering and listening to them as part of the solution to end violence against children.

For the office of the SRSG VAC, children's participation is a key component of her mandate and a cross-cutting priority. Throughout different actions the SRSG-VAC promotes a culture of meaningful and representative child participation, including indigenous children, where children, as key stakeholders in all matters concerning their safety and wellbeing, are also actors and agents of change in the development of integral protection systems.

A key aspect of a culture of meaningful participation is bridging the gap between children who are taking actions and decision makers, by facilitating access to information that can be used by children to input their own actions and initiatives, and that has been adapted to fit children's needs. The Office of the SRSG has developed a digital map and shared with States to encourage national initiatives for enhanced and meaningful participation.

The SRSG presented a child-friendly version of her report to the General Assembly to over 100 children from different countries. The event was entirely moderated by children, including a child representing indigenous children from Greenland, who's also an environmental defender. During the event children from indigenous background from the pacific islands put forward questions related to solving the climate crisis and its effects on violence against children.

¹ E/C.19/2022/4 [N2224781.pdf \(un.org\)](#) issued on 2 February 2022

At the Ninth International Policy Conference ‘Climate Change and Children’s Rights in Africa: Impact and Accountability ‘ held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, last 6-7 September 2022, the SRSG joined more than two hundred child rights experts, civil society organisations, academics and high-level United Nations and African Union officials and by government officials from some African countries most vulnerable to the climate crisis and where indigenous communities are directly impacted

During a GA side event organized by the mandate in October 2022 to present the [advocacy brief](#) on the relationship between the climate crisis and VAC, a video was put together compiling children’s messages to decision makers, including messages from child environmental defenders representing indigenous children from the Pacific Islands.

The advocacy brief welcomed the adoption of resolution [76/300](#), in which the General Assembly recognized the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment, as a means to help to reduce environmental injustices, close protection gaps and empower people, especially those that are in vulnerable situations, including environmental human rights defenders, children, youth, women and indigenous peoples.

In 2022, the Office of the SRSG launched ‘Let’s tell the world’, a social media campaign encouraging children to share the actions they take forward to address violence, protection, the SDGs, the climate crisis, and other issues. Over 100 new submissions were received, including actions led by children from countries where indigenous groups are highly affected by the effects of the climate crisis. One example was from a child in Samoa, who started ‘Eco-Toa Pacific’, a social media based initiative looking to connect children and young people across the Pacific to each other. The initiative raises awareness of the effects of the climate crisis, encourages children and youth to speak up, and connects them with opportunities they can participate in.

C. 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Supporting acceleration of the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and all the Sustainable Development Goals is a key component of the SRSG VAC work focus. All 17 of the SDGs touch children’s lives one way or another. Realizing the rights of children, including their protection from violence, must therefore take a more inclusive and holistic approach.

Through the reporting period the SRSG-VAC continued and strengthened working with States and the United Nations System at the international, regional and national levels to increasingly address the key intersectionality of violence against children and the achievement of all the SDGs and, to ensure a coordinated and coherent approach across the UN system in line with the common agenda and the call for human rights, to ending all forms of violence against children, leaving no child behind. One form of engagement

is for example the support and cooperation in collaboration with UNCTs, with states preparing their Voluntary National Review through country visits and direct engagement on their commitments integrating child rights and in particular on effective ways to address violence against children in national and local development policies and processes.

The 2022 High-level Political Forum (HLPF) was convened under the theme, “Building back better from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) while advancing the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.”

Forty-four Member States² presented VNRs. In reading Member States’ 2022 VNRs, the OSRSG-VAC focused especially on the progress the reports highlighted towards ending violence against children and its drivers, and how this is contributing to accelerating implementation of the 2030 Agenda. An analysis is being finalized with examples regarding how the strengthening of the protection of children from violence by addressing its drivers have been part of these processes.

D. COVID-19 pandemic

As the SRSG outlined in her 2022 annual report to the Human Rights Council ([A/HRC/49/57](#)), after two years of the COVID-19 pandemic, violence against children has increased while becoming less visible. The report also highlighted how the effects of the pandemic have not been felt evenly across all groups. It has exacerbated existing inequalities and compounded challenges to accessing services, exposing children who were already more marginalized and vulnerable to violence before the pandemic, including indigenous children.

The pandemic has not only reinforced and heightened the urgent need for a paradigm shift to end violence against children; it has also demonstrated that change is possible. All violence against children is preventable. There is strong and growing evidence on what works in preventing and responding to violence effectively, including for children and communities who are marginalized and left behind. That knowledge must be translated into action at scale as the world builds back better. Moreover, spending on integrated services for children and families must be seen not as an additional cost - it is a sound investment which will provide a high return for children, families and societies at large.

² Of these, 43 full reports were available at the time of the review.