



INTERNATIONAL
DAY for the
ERADICATION
of POVERTY
17 OCTOBER



United Nations International Day for the Eradication of Poverty 2019

Concept Note

Theme — “Acting together to empower children, their families and communities to end poverty”

This year marks the 30th anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) on 20 November 1989. This landmark human rights treaty sets out the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of every child, regardless of their race, religion or abilities.

In particular, the Convention recognizes the right of every child to a standard of living adequate for the child’s physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development. Poverty hurts children’s development and, in turn, leads to lower income and health in adulthood. When child poverty is recognized as a denial of children’s human rights then people in positions of responsibility and power are legally bound to promote, protect and fulfil children’s rights. Above all, it is imperative to recognize and address the specific discriminations experienced by the girl child.

Children must be recognised as full actors in their own well-being rather than be passive objects of choices made on their behalf. Indeed, child participation is one of the core principles of the UNCRC, which asserts that children and young people have the right to freely express their views and to participate in, and access all relevant information, in relation to decision-making processes affecting their lives.

Participation can occur at various levels where children can provide insights that others cannot automatically provide. Children’s participation must be systematic, structured and adequately resourced

for it to be meaningful and effective. Most importantly, children’s opinions, particularly the voices of most vulnerable children, should be listened to and taken seriously in the development of effective policies and strategies to prevent and eradicate child poverty. When children and young people learn to communicate opinions, take responsibility and make decisions, they develop a sense of belonging, justice, responsibility and solidarity.

“How to protect children’s rights without protecting parents’ rights? We cannot talk about children without talking about their parents and families... It’s like a tree, the parents are the base and the children the branches. We must care for the children but for the parents as well, so that the base is solid.”

ATD Fourth World Montreal, Canada

The participation of children can only be fully realized when the state fulfils its obligations, and families and communities are empowered sufficiently through effective poverty reduction opportunities and initiatives to enable them to create a nurturing and safe environment where children can realize their full potential and freely exercise their human rights.

The theme this year reminds us that our efforts to overcome poverty must address the fulfilment of all the rights of children as spelled out in the UNCRC. Childhood is a special time in everybody’s life. It is a time when children should be encouraged to learn,



October 17

play and develop physically and intellectually by their family and an extended community of adults in a safe and caring environment. A nurturing childhood experience is an essential element in the development of healthy and productive future generations.

Yet, today the reality for millions of children is that they are being robbed of a meaningful childhood. Through no fault of their own, children living in poverty are deprived of their rights to survival, health and nutrition, education, participation, and protection from harm, exploitation and discrimination. For these hundreds of millions of children who suffer the daily deprivations of poverty, the promise of childhood laid down in the Convention on the Rights of the Child has not been fully achieved.

The United Nations' Agenda 2030 is laying the foundation for poverty reduction and ensuring that no one is left behind. An integral part of efforts to end poverty is the implementation of social protection systems which specifically include and address the needs, concerns and rights of children and their families. Currently, most children living in poverty are not covered by social protection. To lift children and families out of poverty and promote social inclusion and empowerment, we need to expand social protection coverage, and ensure they are well-designed, appropriately funded, accessible to all those in need, and adequate to meet the basic needs.

However, government policies alone cannot create the social inclusion and social dialogue that is fundamental to reaching those left furthest behind and overcoming poverty in all its dimensions. The Tapori Children's Network, for example, demonstrates the important ways in which children can come together to empower themselves and to participate more effectively in their families and communities as agents of change. Such initiatives must be supported and encouraged by governments and communities as the building blocks for social inclusion.

It is crucial that children's participation be recognized as a process and not a one-off event. Too often consultation is mistaken for participation.

Whereas the process of consultation gathers children's views on a particular issue or question, participation means that children actually join in in decision-making.

The commemoration of October 17 each year demonstrates how we can achieve greater participation by enabling people from all walks of life to come together to respect the human rights and dignity of people living in poverty. The participation of children and young people has always been encouraged and supported as an integral part of October 17 observances at the United Nations and around the world. This recognizes the important roles children can play by sharing and applying the valuable knowledge they have acquired from their personal daily struggle to overcome poverty.



Celebrated since 1987 as the World Day for Overcoming Extreme Poverty and recognized by the United Nations in 1992, the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty promotes dialogue and understanding between people living in poverty and their communities, and society at large. "It represents an opportunity to acknowledge the efforts and struggles of people living in poverty, a chance for them to make their concerns heard and a moment to recognize that poor people are in the forefront in the fight against poverty." (United Nations, Report of the Secretary General, A/61/308, para. 58)

More information about initiatives, events and activities to mark October 17 around the world can be found at: overcomingpoverty.org and UNDESA websites.

International Committee for October 17
12, rue Pasteur F-95480 Pierrelaye, France

<http://www.overcomingpoverty.org>
international.committee@oct17.org

Note: The views in this document do not necessarily represent those of the United Nations or its Member States.