LAUREATES & LEADERS
- FOR CHILDREN -

STEERING COMMITTEE

HRH Prince Ali Bin Al Hussein
Hashemite Kingdom of Jordon

Lorena Castillo Garcia
First Lady of Panama (2014-2019)
Global Spokesperson Against
Zero Discrimination (UNAIDS)
Ambassador for Peace of UN Women
for Peace

HE Jose Ramos Horta
President of the Democratic Republic
of Timor Leste (2007-2012)
1996 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate
Convenor

Kailash Satyarthi
2014 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate
Founder
Kailash Satyarthi Children's Foundation

Kerry Kennedy
President
Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights

1440 G Street, NW
Washington, DC 20005

JOINT STATEMENT
BY LAUREATES & LEADERS FOR CHILDREN

We, the Laureates and Leaders for Children, call upon the world's Heads of Government to demonstrate wise leadership and to urgently care for the impoverished and the marginalised. Decisions made by our leaders, actions taken by us and the discourses that ensue in the next few weeks will be crucial. They are going to shape the future of polity, economy, culture and morality. Development priorities will be recalibrated, individual freedom, privacy and human rights will be redefined. We must take this opportunity to transform traditional diplomacy and politics into compassionate politics.

COVID-19 has exposed and exacerbated pre-existing inequalities in our world. While this virus does not differentiate between nationalities, religions or cultures, it is most adversely impacting those who are already marginalised – the poor, women and girls, daily wage earners, migrant labourers, indigenous peoples, victims of trafficking and slavery, child labourers, people on the move (refugees, internally displaced and others), the homeless, differently abled people, among others. The virus, restrictions placed on the majority of the world's population, and the aftermath will have a devastating impact on the most vulnerable amongst us.

The pandemic's public health emergency is set to exacerbate the abuse and exploitation of children. Trapped in homes to escape the virus, children are at greater risk of sexual abuse (offline and online) and domestic violence. Online child pornography is already growing, while traffickers are planning to exploit families once lockdowns are lifted. Beyond the impact of the public health crisis on marginalised communities, the economic impact is likely to trap more girls and boys in child labour. For example, school closures during the outbreak of the Ebola virus in West Africa from 2014 to 2016, contributed to spikes in child labour, neglect, sexual abuse and teenage pregnancies.[1] The 1997 Asian financial crisis and the 2009 global economic crisis have shown that more children are likely to be forced into child labour and trafficking, particularly in countries that have little or no social protection. As restrictions are lifted in countries, children will be trafficked, forced out of school and into labour, bearing the burden of sustaining their families. In addition, the World Bank has found that, for every additional year of secondary school, the likelihood of marrying before

1. https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/covid-19-children-heightened-risk-abuse-neglect-exploitation-and-violence-amidst

age 18 decreases by five percentage points or more. With more than 90% of the world's student population out of school due to school closures (as of 22 April 2020), child marriage rates are also anticipated to increase.

Currently, nearly one in every five children worldwide lives on under $2 a day. The World Bank announced on April 20th that it estimates COVID-19 will push 40 to 60 million people into extreme poverty in 2020. The International Labour Organization (ILO) has reported that tens of millions of informal workers have already become unemployed, with widespread problems with the food supply in poorer communities across the world. Governments need to do more to prevent devastating nutrition and health consequence for the 370 million children missing out on school meals amid school closures. These compounding factors mean that marginalised children are already going hungry and could starve.

Over the last several weeks, policy makers released more than US$5 trillion in emergency support for the companies and people in the richest countries. That funding is needed and is important, but we also need to see the governments of the world come together and announce a rescue package for the most marginalised children. If, for once, our world gave the most marginalised children and their families their fair share – **20% of the COVID-19 response for the poorest 20% of humanity** – the results would be transformative. **One trillion dollars would fund all outstanding UN and charity COVID-19 appeals, cancel two years of all debt repayments from low-income countries, and fund two years of the global gap to meet the SDGs on health, water and sanitation, and education – a vital step, as quality education is the most powerful way to end exclusion and change the future for marginalised children. There would still be enough left to fund social protection safety nets which are crucial in the fight against child labour. More than ten million lives would be saved; a positive response by humanity to the tragedy of COVID-19.** We urge that the necessary resources be made available through national governments and international and regional financial institutions.[2]

We anticipate that the numbers of the most marginalised will grow. We must prevent the fallout of COVID-19 being borne by the world's children. Poverty and hunger, child labour, child marriages, child slavery, child trafficking and children on the move will likely increase during and after COVID-19. We need to ensure that the most marginalised do not fall off the world's radar. Post-COVID-19, we must strengthen institutional responses to such future catastrophes, and improve the existing child protection infrastructure. Cash transfers and ensuring food security for the marginalised, improving hygiene and sanitation, a robust healthcare system and promoting a free and equitable education system with free school meals will be critical.

While we acknowledge initial measures taken by the G20, as Laureates and Leaders for Children, fighting for the most vulnerable children in the world's poorest countries, we call on leaders of the G20 to take additional action beyond their own borders for those who urgently need coordinated international aid. We also call on all G20 leaders to honour existing global health commitments, including quickly working together and with stakeholders to close the financing gap in the WHO Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan. The WHO has played a vital role in supporting basic healthcare in less developed regions of the world. Regional institutions, such as the Organization of American States, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, the Economic Community of West African States, the Arab League and others must also step up in this space.

All nations must unite in this effort to protect the most vulnerable and globalise compassion by taking this moment as an opportunity to innovate and develop new, transformative and sustainable solutions to eradicate child labour, trafficking and slavery, and ensure education for all. If we do not do this, we

2. This includes innovative instruments like IFFEd, GAVI and CEPI.

will lose a generation of children. If children are not safeguarded everywhere, then our global response to this crisis and beyond will have failed everywhere.

In solidarity for all our children,

Name of Signatories (by alpha order)

Nobel Laureate or Nobel Prize winning organisation

1) **HH the 14th Dalai Lama**
   1989 Nobel Peace Laureate

2) **Most Reverend Archbishop Desmond Tutu**
   1984 Nobel Peace Laureate

3) **Prof. Elizabeth Blackburn**
   2009 Nobel Laureate in Physiology or Medicine

4) **Prof Mario R. Capecchi**
   2007 Nobel Laureate in Physiology or Medicine

5) **Prof. Aaron Ciechanover**
   2004 Nobel Laureate in Chemistry

6) **Mdm Lisa Clark and Mr. Philip Jennings**
   Co-Presidents, International Peace Bureau
   1910 Nobel Peace Laureate

7) **Prof. Robert F. Curl Jr.**
   1996 Nobel Laureate in Chemistry

8) **HE F. W. de Klerk**
   1993 Nobel Peace Laureate

9) **Prof. Johann Deisenhofer**
   1988 Nobel Laureate in Chemistry

10) **Mdm Shirin Ebadi**
    2003 Nobel Peace Laureate

11) **Dr. Mohamed ElBaradei**
    2005 Nobel Peace Laureate

12) **Prof. Joachim Frank**
    2017 Nobel Laureate in Chemistry

13) **Mdm Leymah Gbowee**
    2011 Nobel Peace Laureate

14) **Prof. Sheldon Lee Glashow**
    1979 Nobel Laureate in Physics

15) **Prof. David J. Gross**
    2004 Nobel Laureate in Physics

16) **Prof. Serge Haroche**
    2012 Nobel Laureate in Physics

17) **Prof. Oliver Hart**
    2016 Nobel Laureate in Economics

18) **Prof. Leland Hartwell**
    2001 Nobel Laureate in Physiology or Medicine

19) **Prof. Dudley Herschbach**
    1986 Nobel Laureate in Chemistry

20) **Prof. Avram Hershko**
    2004 Nobel Laureate in Chemistry

21) **Prof. Roald Hoffmann**
    1981 Nobel Laureate in Chemistry

22) **Prof. Takaaki Kajita**
    2015 Nobel Laureate in Physics

23) **Mdm Tawakkol Karman**
    2011 Nobel Peace Laureate

24) **Prof. Yuan T. Lee**
    1986 Nobel Laureate in Chemistry

25) **Mdm Mairead Maguire**
    1976 Nobel Peace Laureate

26) **Mr. Mohamed Fadhel Mahfoudh**
    2015 Nobel Peace Laureate

27) **Prof. Rudolph A. Marcus**
    1992 Nobel Laureate in Chemistry

28) **Prof. Eric S. Maskin**
    2007 Nobel Laureate in Economics

29) **Prof. Michel Mayor**
    2019 Nobel Laureate in Physics

30) **Mdm Rigoberta Menchú Tum**
    1992 Nobel Peace Laureate

31) **Prof. Edvard Ingjald Moser**
2014 Nobel Laureate in Physiology or Medicine

32) **Prof. May-Britt Moser**
2014 Nobel Laureate in Physiology or Medicine

33) **Mdm Nadia Murad**
2018 Nobel Peace Laureate

34) **Mr. Adolfo Pérez Esquivel**
1980 Nobel Peace Laureate

35) **HE José Ramos-Horta**
President of Timor Leste (2007-2012)
1996 Nobel Peace Laureate

36) **Sir Richard J. Roberts**
1993 Nobel Laureate in Physiology or Medicine

37) **Mr. Guy Ryder**
Director-General, International Labour Organization
1969 Nobel Peace Laureate

38) **HE Juan Manuel Santos**
2016 Nobel Peace Laureate

39) **Mr. Kailash Satyarthi**
2014 Nobel Peace Laureate

40) **Prof. Gregg L. Semenza**
2019 Nobel Laureate in Physiology or Medicine

41) **Prof Fraser Stoddart**
2016 Nobel Laureate in Chemistry

42) **Prof. Jack W. Szostak**
2009 Nobel Laureate in Physiology or Medicine

43) **Prof. Kip S. Thorne**
2017 Nobel Laureate in Physics

44) **Mdm Jody Williams**
1997 Nobel Peace Laureate

45) **Ms Malala Yousafzai**
2014 Nobel Peace Laureate

Leaders

1) **HRH Prince Ali Bin Al Hussein**

2) **HRH Princess Rym Al Ali**

3) **HE Abdulaziz Altwaijri**
Former Director General of ISESCO

4) **HE Rosalía Arteaga Serrano**
President of Ecuador (1997)

5) **HE Sali Berisha**
President of Albania (1992-1997)
Prime Minister (2005-2013)

6) **HE Irina Bokova**
Director General, UNESCO (2009-2017)

7) **HE Lakhdar Brahimi**
United Nations and Arab League Special Envoy to Syria (2012-2014)
Minister of Foreign Affairs of Algeria (1991-1993)

8) **HE Gordon Brown**
Prime Minister of the United Kingdom (2007- 2010)
Chancellor of the Exchequer (1997-2007)

9) **Mdm Sharan Burrow**
General Secretary, International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)

10) **HE Helen Clark**
Prime Minister of New Zealand (1999-2007)
Administrator of UNDP (2009-2017)
Member, Nizami Ganjavi International Center

11) **HE Mirko Cvetković**
Prime Minister of Serbia (2008-2012)

12) **Mdm Nathalie de Gaulle**
President and Co-Founder NB-INOV

13) **HE Herman De Croo**
President of the Chamber of Representatives (1999-2007), Belgium

14) **Mdm Maria Efrosinina**
Honorary Ambassador of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in Ukraine

15) **HE Jan Fischer**
Prime Minister of the Czech Republic (2009-2010)

16) **Former First Lady Lorena Castillo García**
First Lady of Panama (2014-2019)
Global Spokesperson Against Zero Discrimination (UNAIDS)
Ambassador for Peace of UN Women for Peace

17) **HE Ameenah Gurib-Fakim**
President of Mauritius (2015-2018)

18) **HE Tarja Halonen**
President of Finland (2000-2012)
Board of Trustees & Member, Nizami Ganjavi International Center

19) **Dr. Noeleen Heyzer**
Member of the High Level Panel of the UN Secretary General on Mediation

20) **HE Dalia Itzik**
Interim President of Israel (2007)
Speaker of Knesset (2006-2009)

21) **HE Mladen Ivanić**
President of Bosnia and Herzegovina (2014-2018)

22) **Mr. Mats Karlsson**
Vice President of the World Bank (1999-2002)

23) **Mdm Kerry Kennedy**
President, Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights

24) **HE Jadranka Kosor**
Prime Minister of Croatia (2009-2011)

25) **HE Zlatko Lagumdžija**
Prime Minister of Bosnia and Herzegovina (2001-2002)
Deputy Prime Minister (1993-1996)
Minister of Foreign Affairs (2001-2002, 2012-2015)

26) **HE Tzipi Livni**
Minister of Foreign Affairs of Israel (2006-2009)

27) **HE Péter Medgyessy**
Prime Minister of Hungary (2002-2004)

28) **Dr. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka**
Executive Director, UN Women

29) **HE Amre Moussa**
Secretary General, Arab League (2001-2011)
Minister of Foreign Affairs of Egypt (1991-2001)

30) **HE Rosen Plevneliev**
President of Bulgaria (2012-2017)

31) **HE Mary Robinson**
President of Ireland (1990-1997)
Founder, The Mary Robinson Foundation – Climate Justice

32) **HE Petre Roman**
Prime Minister of Romania (1989-1991)
Speaker of Parliament (1996-2000)

33) **Prof. Jeffrey D. Sachs**
University Professor at Columbia University
Director of the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network

34) **Mr. Ismail Serageldin**
Co-Chair, Nizami Ganjavi International Center
Vice President World Bank (1992-2000)

35) **Mdm Gulnara Shahinian**
UN Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Slavery (2008-2015)
Independent expert

36) **HE Petar Stoyanov**
President of Bulgaria (1997-2002)

37) **HE Laimdota Straujuma**
Prime Minister of Latvia (2014-2016)
Member, Nizami Ganjavi International Center

38) **HE Boris Tadić**
President of Serbia (2004-2012)

39) **HE Eka Tkeshelashvili**
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Georgia (2010-2012)

40) **HE Marianna V. Vardinoyannis**
Goodwill Ambassador of UNESCO
Board of Trustees of MENTOR International Foundation

41) **HE Filip Vujanović**
President of Montenegro (2003-2018)

42) **HE Viktor Yushchenko**
President of Ukraine (2005-2010)

43) **HE Kateryna Yushchenko**
First Lady of Ukraine (2005-2010)