



# JUSTICE FOR AFRICA'S CHILDREN



LAUREATES & LEADERS  
- FOR CHILDREN -





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# JUSTICE FOR AFRICA'S CHILDREN:

## LAUREATES AND LEADERS FOR CHILDREN

### JOINT STATEMENT, SIXTH EUROPEAN UNION – AFRICAN UNION SUMMIT

We, the Laureates and Leaders for Children from across the world, have come together to demand that world leaders deliver justice for Africa's children. Freedom remains out of reach for millions of Africa's children, even when the world is wealthier than it has ever been. Humanity is losing its moral compass.

In June 2021, the ILO and UNICEF announced the first shocking increase in the number of child labourers worldwide in two decades, during the first four years of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (2016-2019). Even before the start of the pandemic when the world grew \$10 trillion richer, the number of child labourers in the world rose to an appalling 160 million children, over half of which are in sub-Saharan Africa. This is the consequence of racial and systemic discrimination against Africa.

The historical and systemic exploitation of Africa is partly to blame but injustices and discrimination perpetrated by our generation are stealing the lives and the futures from millions more children. With the advent of COVID-19, these inequalities have taken on new dimensions and are increasing at a rapid pace, including through the blatant and shameful manifestation of vaccine apartheid.

The weight of these inequalities, unfortunately, is borne disproportionately by the poorest and most marginalised children. Moreover, underfunded, under-implemented or selectively enforced policies and programmes mean that already vulnerable groups such as ethnic and religious minorities, rural and agricultural communities, girls, and children on the move are much more likely to be in extreme poverty and child labour. All of this is compounded by corruption and conflict which has a devastating effect on children's rights.

The situation is aggravated by the fact that Africa has the lowest social protection coverage in the world, and functions that were the least covered include access to education, sickness benefits, benefits for children and family, unemployment protection, and pensions benefits.

African countries are among the most resource rich, yet they don't receive the profits they are due because of a discriminatory global tax system. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the world had a common enemy like never before, but instead of uniting humanity with our response, we disproportionately helped businesses and people in richer countries and left the most vulnerable to fend for themselves. We know that only 0.13% of the \$12 trillion released as COVID relief globally was allocated to multilateral funding to low-income countries. The emergency IMF Special Drawing Rights gave \$2,000 per European child and \$60 per African child.

The international community's continued and institutionalized subjugation of Africa is appalling and must end. The immeasurable suffering of our children is set to magnify even further, and we can no longer afford to look the other way.

The good news is that there is a powerful and proven solution, direct social protection for children. We know it works as seen through the examples of Bolsa Família in Brazil, mid-day meals in India, and cash transfers in Ghana and Uganda. Universal social protection systems, such as pension programmes in Kenya and Tanzania, and social protection floors can support and strengthen families. Emergency social protection measures to help the poorest families during the COVID-19 pandemic worked where they were put in place.

Africa's children are our children. It is our individual and collective moral obligation to protect them. To end child labour in Africa, we call on the courage, compassion and humanity of all world leaders to:

1. Ensure direct child benefits to every child in Africa by prioritising domestic budgets and targeted programmes while the international community meets its aid responsibilities through child-focused funding of the UN Secretary General's Global Accelerator on jobs and social protection
2. Achieve just representation of African countries in global decision making, end discrimination in Special Drawing Rights, and establish fair tax and trade rules with African countries as equal partners
3. Cancel all debt for low and lower-middle income countries in Africa, hold corrupt leadership and businesses to account, and eliminate vaccine apartheid by temporary waivers of intellectual property rights and access to raw material to counter COVID-induced vulnerabilities in Africa and around the world

We also call on African leaders to empower young people. They are the most powerful voices for change and the architects of Africa's future. Together with a strong civil society and a supportive government, youth can be the masters of Africa's destiny.

Agenda 2030 is heading toward imminent failure if we do not end child labour in Africa. We are, yet again, breaking our promises to our children. As long as Africa's children are working in fields, mines, shops and homes, they are not in schools. They are forced to work in place of millions of adult jobs thus prolonging intergenerational cycles of poverty and inequality. Africa is a mirror to the world. The realisation of the rights of a girl in a sub-Saharan African country, who is exploited and abused and denied her right to dream, will be the true assessment of our efforts to achieve the promise to leave no one behind. She is our child. Until every child in Africa is free, none of us are free.

We, Laureates and Leaders for Children, stand with the children, youth, citizens and leaders of Africa to fight for our shared vision and responsibility to give every child in Africa a free, safe, healthy and educated childhood. It is time for justice for all of Africa's children. It is time to stand with Africa.

### **NOBEL LAUREATE SIGNATORIES**

Mr. Houcine Abassi, 2015 Nobel Peace Laureate  
 Dr. Peter Agre, 2003 Nobel Laureate in Chemistry  
 Dr. Harvey Alter, 2020 Nobel Laureate in Medicine  
 Prof. Hiroshi Amano, 2014 Nobel Laureate in Physics, Amnesty International, 1977 Nobel Peace Laureate  
 HE Óscar Arias Sánchez, 1987 Nobel Peace Laureate  
 Dr. Barry Barish, 2017 Nobel Laureate in Physics  
 Mr. Abdessattar Ben Moussa, 2015 Nobel Peace Laureate  
 Dr. Elizabeth Blackburn, 2009 Nobel Laureate in Medicine  
 Dr. Martin Chalfie, 2008 Nobel Laureate in Chemistry  
 Mr. Michael Christ, International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War, 1985 Nobel Peace Laureate  
 Prof. Aaron Ciechanover, 2004 Nobel Laureate in Chemistry  
 Mdm. Lisa Clark and Philip Jennings, International Peace Bureau, 1910 Nobel Peace Laureate  
 Prof. Mario R. Capecchi, 2007 Nobel Laureate in Medicine  
 His Holiness the Dalai Lama, 1989 Nobel Peace Laureate  
 Dr. Johann Deisenhofer, 1988 Nobel Laureate in Chemistry  
 Prof. Peter C. Doherty, 1996 Nobel Laureate in Medicine  
 Mdm. Shirin Ebadi, 2003 Nobel Peace Laureate  
 Dr. Mohamed ElBaradei, 2005 Nobel Peace Laureate  
 Mdm. Beatrice Fihn, International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, 2017 Nobel Peace Laureate  
 Prof. Andrew Fire, 2006 Nobel Laureate in Medicine  
 Prof. Joachim Frank, 2017 Nobel Laureate in Chemistry  
 Prof. Jerome Friedman, 1990 Nobel Laureate in Physics  
 Mdm. Leymah Gbowee, 2011 Nobel Peace Laureate

Prof. Avrem Hershko, 2004 Nobel Laureate in Chemistry  
 Prof. Roald Hoffmann, 1981 Nobel Laureate in Chemistry  
 Prof. Gerard 't Hooft, 1999 Nobel Laureate in Physics  
 Prof. Takaaki Kajita, 2015 Nobel Laureate in Physics  
 Mdm. Tawakkol Karman, 2011 Nobel Peace Laureate  
 Prof. Finn Kydland, 2004 Nobel Laureate in Economics  
 Mdm. Mairead Maguire, 1976 Nobel Peace Laureate  
 Mr. Mohamed Fadhel Mahfoudh , 2015 Nobel Peace Laureate  
 Prof. Eric Maskin, 2007 Nobel Laureate in Economics  
 Prof. Edvard Moser, 2014 Nobel Laureate in Medicine  
 Prof. May-Britt Moser, 2014 Nobel Laureate in Medicine  
 Dr. Denis Mukwege, 2018 Nobel Peace Laureate  
 Prof. Yoshinori Ohsumi, 2016 Nobel Laureate in Medicine  
 Prof. Giorgio Parisi, 2021 Nobel Laureate in Physics  
 Prof. Edmund S. Phelps, 2006 Nobel Laureate in Economics  
 Dr. William Phillips, 1997 Nobel Laureate in Physics  
 Mr. Abdur Rahim Khan, Grameen Bank, 2006 Nobel Peace Laureate  
 HE José Ramos Horta, President of Timor Leste, 1996 Nobel Peace Laureate  
 Sir Peter Ratcliffe, 2019 Nobel Laureate in Medicine  
 Sir Richard J. Roberts , 1993 Nobel Laureate in Medicine  
 Mr. Kailash Satyarthi, 2014 Nobel Peace Laureate  
 Prof. Jean-Pierre Sauvage, 2016 Nobel Laureate in Chemistry  
 Prof. Susumu Tonegawa, 1987 Nobel Laureate in Medicine

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Exploited and excluded for generations, African states are now facing new injustices - many of which have escalated since the start of the Sustainable Development Goals - and an incredible struggle to deliver children's basic rights. The world has so far ignored the scale and severity of this crisis and millions of Africa's children are bearing the heavy cost of this systemic discrimination.

In February 2022, Laureates and Leaders for Children mobilised in advance of the Sixth European Union-African Union Summit, and released a Joint Statement signed by 95 Nobel Laureates and world leaders. The statement demanded 'Justice for Africa's Children', and identified the impact of the enduring injustices which trap families and nations in cyclic poverty, forcing children out of school and into child labour, child marriage, and slavery, and which allow millions of children under the age of 5 to die every year from preventable causes.

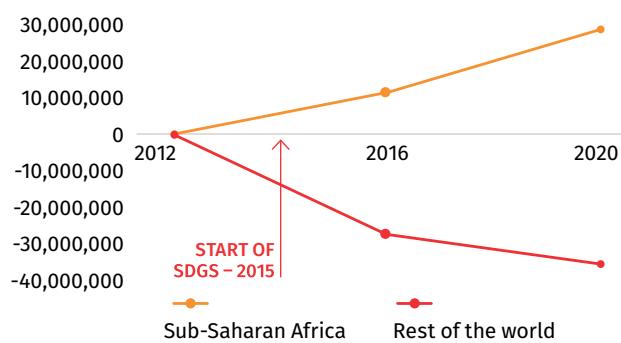
None of this should be happening: the world has never been wealthier - global GDP in 2021 is the highest on record. Despite two global economic disasters in just 15 years, the wealth of the richest citizens and countries keeps increasing at an unbelievable rate.<sup>1</sup> This rate becomes shameful when compared with the decreasing rate in sub-Saharan Africa, where GDP per capita is lower in 2021 than it was in 2011.<sup>2</sup> When the exploitation of Africa's abundant natural resources and its poorest citizens to create much of the increase in global wealth is considered, the disparity is grotesque. This report analyses data across numerous sectors and presents irrefutable evidence of the modern-day global economic injustices faced by Africa and her children in just the last seven years, which have cost trillions of dollars - and millions of lives.

## WHY FOCUS ON AFRICA?

Laureates and Leaders for Children identified that the worst impacts of recent, discriminatory decisions taken by the international community would be felt by Africa's 650 million children and undertook an analysis of the latest data from different sectors. The evidence is clear: regardless of global progress on children's rights since the start of the SDGs, the situation in Africa is in reverse. Efforts to increase education enrolment and retention and to decrease child labour, extreme poverty, and stunted growth due to malnutrition had made some progress in Africa, but in the last decade injustice for Africa's children has been increasing.

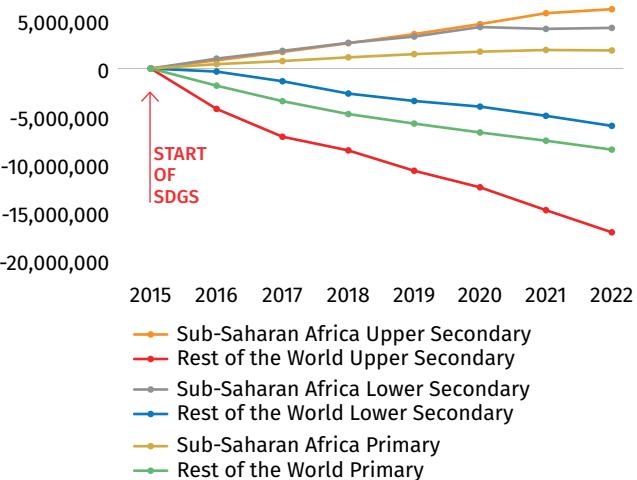
This report builds on the concerns and demands raised by Laureates and Leaders for Children during the Sixth EU-AU Summit. It presents the stark reality of the unfair treatment and subsequent financial and human costs of discrimination, and identifies ambitious yet tangible solutions to accelerate justice for all of Africa's children.

## CHANGE IN THE NUMBER OF CHILD LABOURERS (2012-2020)

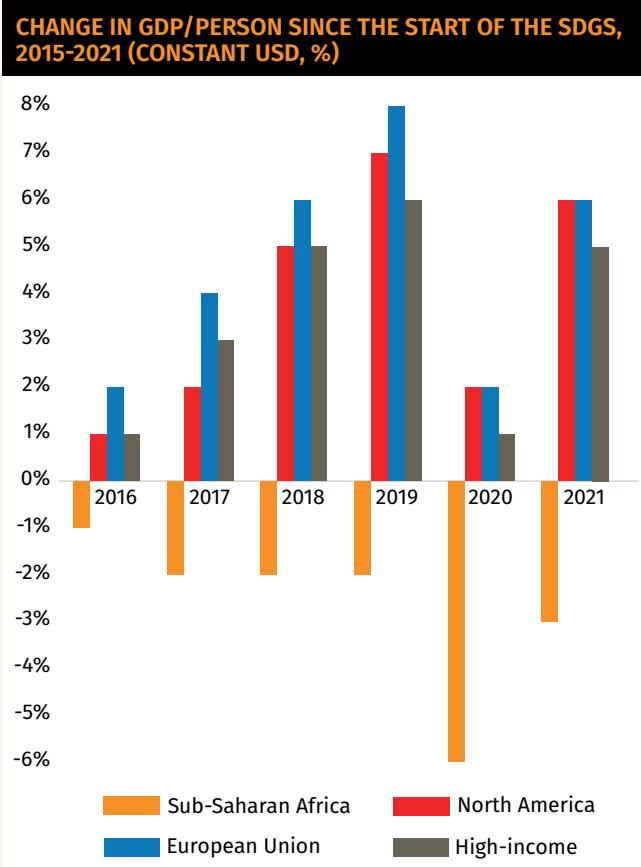


Source: International Labour Office (2017) *Global Estimates of Child Labour: Results and trends, 2012-2016*, ILO Geneva [https://www.ilo.org/global/publications/books/WCMS\\_575499/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/global/publications/books/WCMS_575499/lang--en/index.htm); and International Labour Office and United Nations Children's Fund (2021) *Child Labour: Global estimates 2020, trends and the road forward*, ILO/UNICEF New York [https://www.ilo.org/ipecl/Informationresources/WCMS\\_797515/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/ipecl/Informationresources/WCMS_797515/lang--en/index.htm)

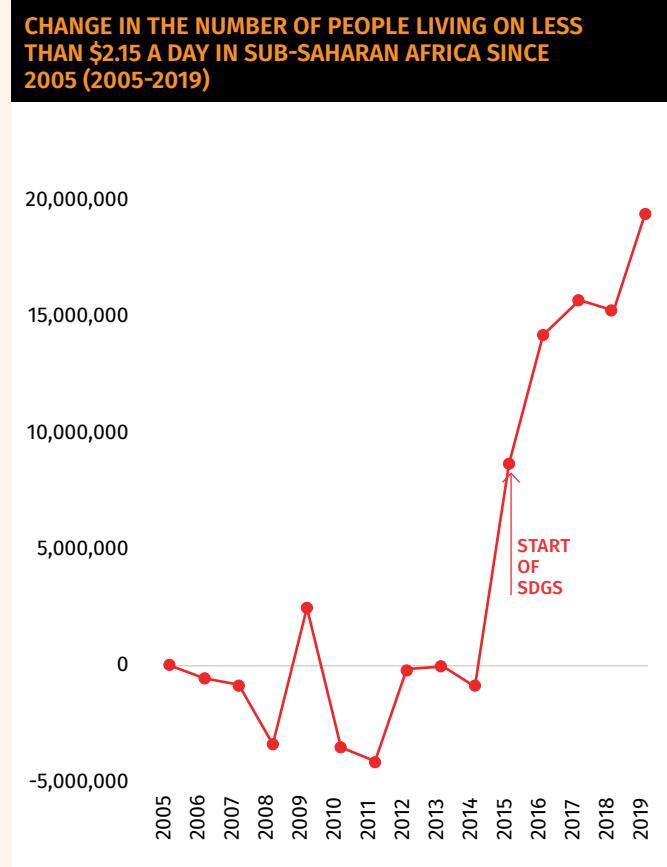
## CHANGE IN THE NUMBER OF OUT-OF-SCHOOL CHILDREN SINCE THE START OF THE SDGS (2015-2020)



Source: UNESCO (2022). *Visualizing Indicators of Education for the World*. Available at <https://education-estimates.org/out-of-school/data/> (accessed 10 October 2022).



Source: The World Bank (2021), GDP per capita (constant 2015 USD), World Bank national accounts data, and OECD National Accounts data files. Available at: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.KD> (accessed 12 September 2022).



Source: The World Bank (September 2022). Poverty and Inequality Platform Poverty Calculator – Population living below the poverty line (2017 PPP). Available at <https://pip.worldbank.org/poverty-calculator> (accessed 24 October 2022).

## WHAT HAS CHANGED FOR AFRICA'S CHILDREN?

Global wealth has increased significantly since the Sustainable Development Goals were agreed in September 2015; despite the pandemic-related drop in 2020, 2021 global GDP was the highest it has ever been.<sup>3</sup> Yet this increase in wealth has gone hand in hand with a massive increase in child suffering across Africa. Since the start of the SDGs, the number of child labourers in the world has fallen but in Africa it has increased by over 20 million.<sup>4</sup> In the same period, the number of children out of school reduced in the world, but the number of African children out of school rose by more than 12 million.<sup>5</sup>

These appalling increases are a result of the dramatically unfair share of growth Africa has received. While the rest of the world has broadly seen increases in wealth since 2016, Africa has seen a substantial decrease in GDP per capita and, by not growing at the same rate as other countries, **sub-Saharan Africa has lost \$898.7 billion** in the 2016-2021 period alone.<sup>6</sup>

**The injustice becomes more stark when the picture is broadened: since 1981 wealth per person across high-income countries has increased more every ten weeks than it has in Africa in the entire last 40 years. This is being made worse by the sharp increase in the number of people in Africa living on less than \$2.15 since the start of the SDGs.**

"ILLITERACY, DISEASE AND INEQUALITY DO NOT BELONG IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY."

ELLEN JOHNSON SIRLEAF, PRESIDENT, LIBERIA, 2006-2018; NOBEL PEACE LAUREATE, 2011

# MODERN INJUSTICES

Numerous historical injustices – not least of all the foundational legacy of colonialism – are responsible for much of the titanic difference in wealth between high-income countries and African countries. These injustices must be recognised and rectified, and restitution and reparation must continue to be addressed. However, the marginalisation of the world's poorest children will continue unless modern injustices, perpetuated by this generation, are acknowledged and equally addressed.

## UNEQUAL RESPONSE TO COVID-19

Laureates and Leaders for Children has called for a fair share for low-income countries since the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic. It was patently clear that decades of discriminatory, racist, and exploitative treatment would result in disaster for the world's most marginalised children unless they were fairly included in the global response in the pandemic's early days. They were not.

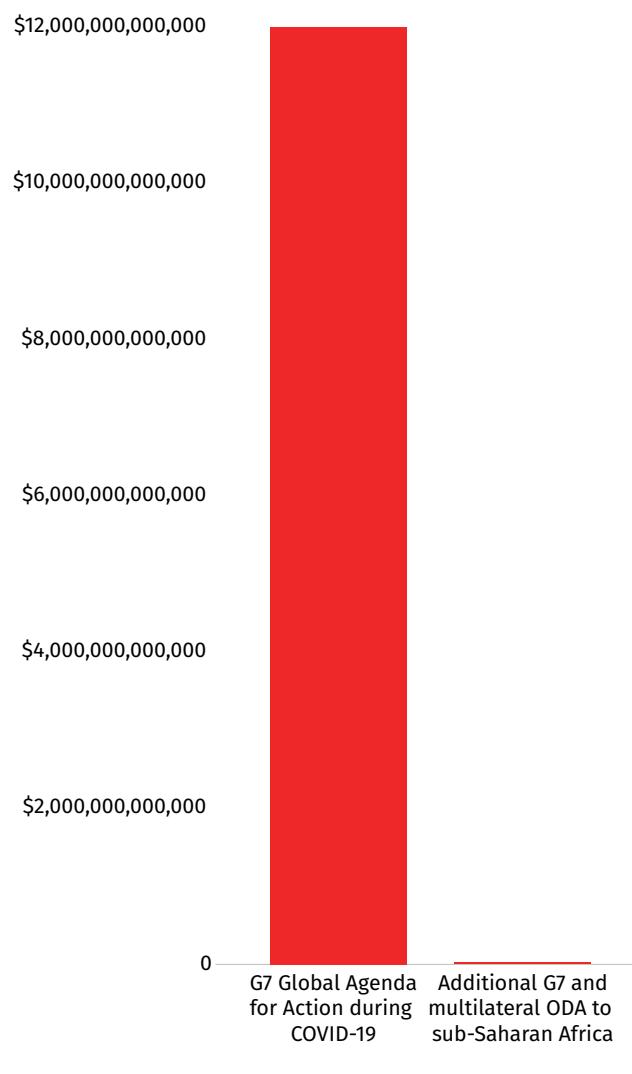
Humanity faced a common enemy like never before with COVID-19, and the world's unequal response was to leave the poorest in Africa and elsewhere to fend for themselves. Of the \$12 trillion boasted about in the G7's 'global agenda for action' in July 2021,<sup>7</sup> 0.2% - went in funding to sub-Saharan Africa. This incredibly unfair response to COVID hit Africa's children the hardest: school closures across Africa resulted in the loss of reliable access to feeding programmes, and without sufficient social protection coverage to cover the loss of family income during lockdowns, more children were forced into illicit and often dangerous forms of child labour just to survive.

High-income countries also created 'vaccine apartheid'<sup>8</sup> by preventing patent-free access for the manufacture of COVID vaccinations in lower-income countries, and providing insufficient and untimely doses to COVAX - many of which were close to expiry date and could not be stored, distributed in-country, or used.<sup>9</sup> In 2021, Pfizer, BioNTech, and Moderna made \$1000 in profit every second between them.<sup>10</sup> Yet just 24% of Africa's population has received a full primary dose - a far lower proportion than every other region in the world - and only 27 African countries were vaccinating children by December 2022. In these 27 countries, children account for just 8.8% of doses.<sup>11</sup>

## CORPORATE TAX ABUSE AND OFFSHORE WEALTH

Natural resources account for 30-50% of the national wealth held by African countries. Africa is home to around 30% of the world's mineral reserves, including 40% of the world's gold, up to 90% of its chromium and platinum, and the world's largest reserves of cobalt, diamonds, and uranium.<sup>12</sup> Yet the profits from these resources rarely benefit Africa's children. The international companies which extract and use those minerals also extract their profits, without paying their fair share of taxes to the countries

**COMPARISON OF THE G7'S COVID-19 GLOBAL AGENDA FOR ACTION & ADDITIONAL FUNDING ALLOCATED TO SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA (2020 AND 2021)**



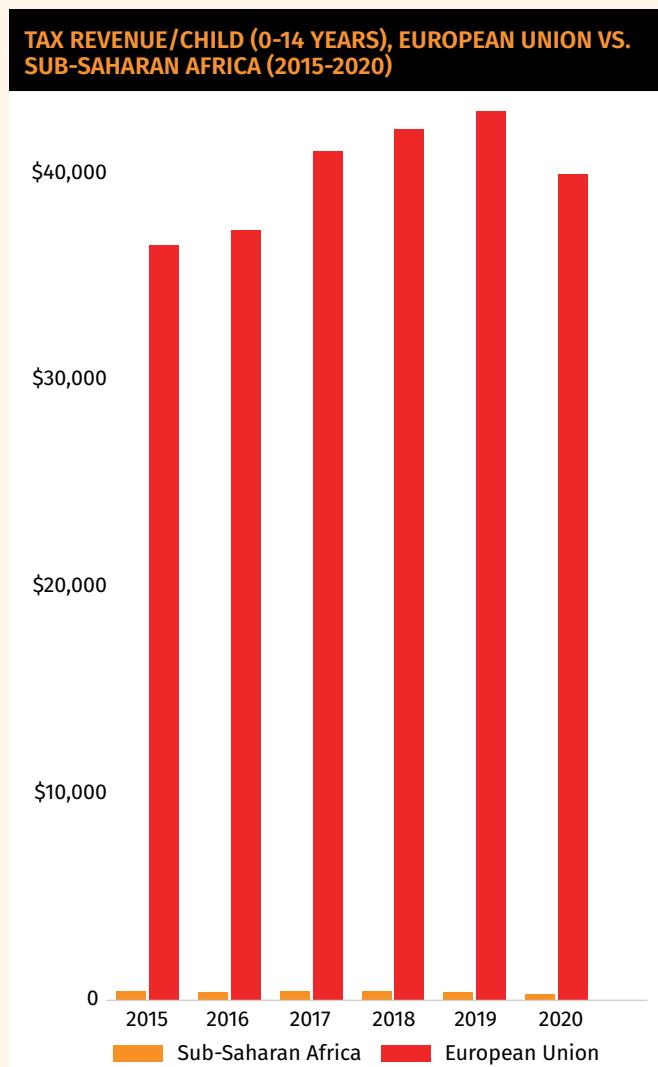
Source: OECD/DAC (2022). Aid (ODA) disbursements to countries and regions [DAC2a]. Available at: <https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=TABLE2A> (accessed 12 September 2022); Group of 7 (2021) Carbis Bay G7 Summit Communiqué. Available at: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/06/13/carbis-bay-g7-summit-communique/>

which own them. The fact that children in at least 32 of sub-Saharan Africa's 48 countries are toiling in these mines is a bitter, double injustice.<sup>13</sup>

Corporate tax evasion, led by the off-shoring of profits by multinational corporations, costs Africa over \$4.5 billion every year, and offshore financial wealth costs \$2.3 billion a year.<sup>14</sup> This massive tax injustice has created enormous wealth disparities: all 48 sub-Saharan African countries *combined* receive less tax revenue per year than Italy.<sup>15</sup> When broken down country by country, and the funds available per child are considered, the figures are stark: for example, the French government receives \$56,317 in tax revenue to spend per child, and the Madagascan government receives just \$134 in tax revenue to spend per child - more than 400 times less.<sup>16</sup> Even if the governments

of low-income countries allocated all of their tax revenue to support children, it still would not enable the provision of even basic services.

To make matters worse, recent global tax negotiations to tackle profit-shifting and offshoring proved to be an opportunity missed by a mile. Led by higher-income countries through the OECD, and motivated by the loss of taxes in their own countries, these negotiations could have enabled a fairer global tax system and finally put an end to the excessive offshoring of profits made on Africa's natural resources. However, with limited African participation and no OECD African members, extractive companies were simply left out of the new agreement, and many African governments remain unable to use their own wealth to pay for education, health care, and social protection for their children.<sup>17</sup>



Source: The World Bank (2021), *Population ages 0-14, total: World Bank staff estimates using the World Bank's total population and age-sex distributions of the United Nations Population Division's World Population Prospects: 2019 Revision*. Available at <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.0014.TO> (accessed 12 September 2022); Tax revenue (% of GDP), International Monetary Fund, *Government Finance Statistics Yearbook and data files*, and World Bank and OECD GDP estimates. Available at <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/GC.TAX.TOTL.GD.ZS> (accessed 12 September 2022); and The World Bank (2022), *GDP (Constant 2015 US\$)*. Available at <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.KD> (accessed 12 September 2022).

**"BUSINESS IS GLOBAL. COUNTRIES NEED TO REACT TO THAT; TAXES NEED TO BE PAID WHERE PROFIT ARISES.."**

**MO IBRAHIM, FOUNDER AND CHAIR, MO IBRAHIM FOUNDATION**

### DISCRIMINATION AT THE IMF: SPECIAL DRAWING RIGHTS

In August 2021, the International Monetary Fund issued \$650 billion in Special Drawing Rights, citing that it would particularly help to generate funds for the most vulnerable countries struggling with the global pandemic.<sup>18</sup> The SDR is an interest-bearing international reserve asset. This could have proven to be a game-changer for hundreds of millions of children living in low-income African countries by providing much needed liquidity. However, the IMF and its executive board, controlled by high-income countries which hold 65% of the votes, made no allowance for the allocation to be made based on need or even population. Allocations were based on share of wealth - the richer the country, the more money it received. The UK and Belgium, despite having just 1% of the world's population, controlled more votes and received more funding than all 48 countries in sub-Saharan African countries put together. Ultimately, the SDRs which were issued in August 2021 were worth over \$2,000 per European child, but just \$50 per African child.

### DEBT INJUSTICE

If tax injustice doubles the effect of extreme wealth inequality between countries, debt injustice creates a triple threat. An increasing share of government funds is being spent on debt repayments at the cost of quality public services, perpetuating extreme poverty and child labour.

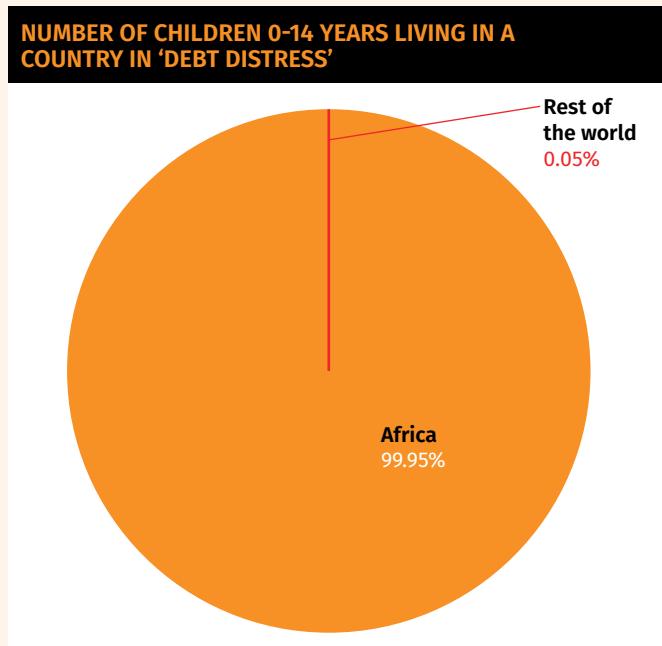
Developing country debt payments increased by 120% between 2010 and 2021,<sup>19</sup> and the debt crisis has deepened to the point that \$64 billion in African debt payments were due in 2022.<sup>20</sup> This amount is almost twice the level of bilateral aid expected to be disbursed to Africa in the same year.

The proportion of government expenditure spent on debt interest payments is growing far faster in sub-Saharan Africa than it is worldwide. For example, in 2020 Zambia spent a third of its budget on debt interest payments - almost as much as it spent on health and education combined.<sup>21</sup> If the allocations were reversed, the impact on health and learning for children would be transformative.

**"WHO ELECTED THE IMF TO BE THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE FOR EVERY COUNTRY IN THE WORLD?"**

**JULIUS NYERERE, PRESIDENT, TANZANIA, 1964-1985**

The vast majority of countries in debt distress are in Africa, which is particularly devastating when a comparison is made between the number of children living in these countries. 55 million African children live in countries in debt distress, which represents 99.5% of all children living in countries in debt distress.



Calculated from: The World Bank (2021), Population ages 0-14, total: World Bank staff estimates using the World Bank's total population and age/sex distributions of the United Nations Population Division's World Population Prospects: 2019 Revision. Available at <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.0014.TO> (accessed 12 September 2022); and International Monetary Fund (2022), List of LIC DSAs for PRGT-Eligible Countries. Available at: <https://www.imf.org/external/Pubs/ft/dsa/DSAList.pdf> (accessed 12 September 2022).

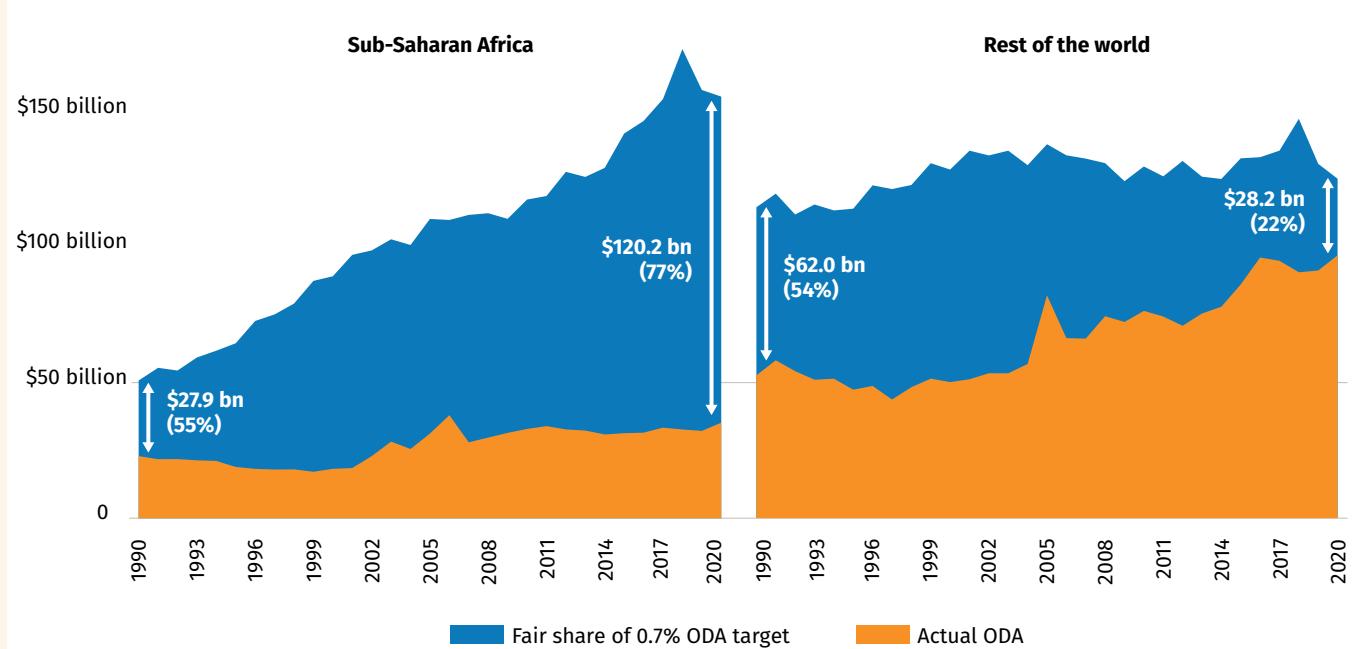
## BROKEN AID PROMISES

Few international targets have been missed as consistently as the 0.7% GDP pledge to development aid finance. To compound the issue, aid is not being spent where it is needed the most. In fact, the share of ODA to Africa as a % of GDP has been declining over the last decade<sup>22</sup> - with aid being prioritised for foreign policy and trade over the needs of the most marginalised children. This is despite the 0.7% pledge being repeatedly reiterated by the European Union to the African Union, and the agreement in the SDGs to focus aid on Africa.

It should not be controversial for aid to be used to end multidimensional poverty for millions of children; in sub-Saharan Africa, the children paying the highest price for these unfair aid allocations are the one in 13 children who die before the age of five.<sup>23</sup> A country analysis was undertaken for this report comparing the amount of aid received versus a fair share, based on infant mortality and the 0.7% GDP pledge.

ODA to the rest of the world's recipient countries is 78% of what it should be if sufficient aid is allocated where children need it the most - up from 46% in 1990. In contrast, ODA to sub-Saharan Africa is 23% of what it should be - down from 45% in 1990. In just the five years since the SDGs were agreed, broken aid promises have cost sub-Saharan Africa over half a trillion dollars, and millions of children have paid with their lives.

### FAIR SHARE OF ODA AT 0.7% ALLOCATED BY INFANT MORTALITY RATES VS. ACTUAL ODA ALLOCATIONS (1990-2020)



Calculated from: OECD/DAC (2022), Aid (ODA) disbursements to countries and regions [DAC2a]. Available at: <https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=TABLE2A> (accessed 12 September 2022); and UNICEF (2020), Child mortality estimates regional and global under-five deaths generated by the UN Inter-agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation (UN IGME). Available at: <http://data.unicef.org> (accessed 12 September 2022).

## BROKEN CLIMATE FINANCE PROMISES

Responsibility for the climate crisis is not equally shared. The UK has emitted more carbon dioxide in the last century than the 54 countries of Africa combined.<sup>24</sup> In 2016 alone, the United States produced more CO<sub>2</sub> than the whole of sub-Saharan Africa did in the first six years of the SDGs.<sup>25</sup> Yet the countries most vulnerable to the climate crisis are African: the Notre Dame Global Adaptation Index ranks 182 countries by vulnerability, and all of the top ten are in sub-Saharan Africa. In fact, every sub-Saharan country is more vulnerable than the most vulnerable country in the European Union.<sup>26</sup>

Children suffer the worst impacts of any crisis, including climate. Up to two-thirds of preventable illness and death from environmental hazards is experienced by children, with the burden predominantly in children under five years old.<sup>27</sup> Drought has already impacted children living in the Horn of Africa, where out-of-school rates are double the average of the Eastern and Southern African region.<sup>28</sup> The International Panel on Climate Change, in its Africa chapter of its latest report, consistently identified children as being one of the most vulnerable groups to climate change.<sup>29</sup>

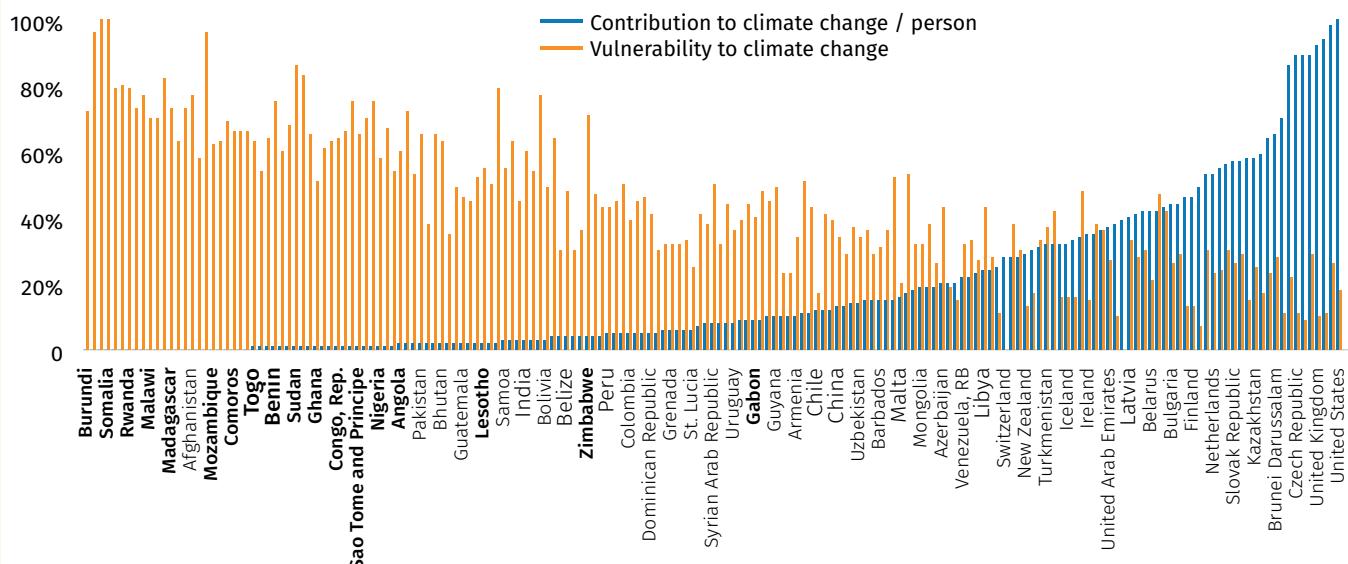
At COP 15 in 2009, \$100 billion in new annual climate financing was agreed to be made available for developing countries by 2020, in addition to aid.<sup>30</sup> This amount is equivalent to less than half a week of the domestic COVID emergency spending in rich countries. But even this

relatively modest commitment was missed, with donors admitting in 2022 that \$83.3 billion had been provided in climate finance - some \$16.7 billion short of the target.<sup>31</sup>

The truth, however, was worse, as the data had been skewed to count loans as grants, and to include projects that only had a small environmental component. When donor climate financing is calculated properly, using the OECD's own rules on loans, the climate finance provided drops to just \$31.5 billion, missing the target by a staggering \$68.5 billion.<sup>32</sup> As a significant proportion was in loans, it has left the children living in Africa's low-income countries with even less money for their wellbeing, and insufficient resources to protect them from climate disasters.

COP 27, hosted by Egypt in Sharm el-Sheikh, concluded on 20 November 2022 with the historic agreement of a 'loss and damage' fund for developing countries.<sup>33</sup> Swift action must be taken to finance and operationalise this fund, otherwise it risks being another half-empty climate finance pot: no commitment was agreed at COP27 to make up for over a decade of failure to deliver the \$100 billion annual target. In addition, the continued failure of COP to tackle the root causes of climate change perpetuates and increases the need for climate finance - high-income countries have once again traded the lives of millions of children vulnerable to climate disaster, for their own economic benefit.

## COMPARISON BETWEEN VULNERABILITY TO CLIMATE CHANGE AND CO<sub>2</sub> CUMULATIVE EMISSIONS/CAPITA (2020)



Please note: only 60 countries are labelled on the Y-axis for space but data for 180 countries is shown. Calculated from: Our World in Data (August 2020), Cumulative CO<sub>2</sub> emissions world region based on the Global Carbon Project. Available at: <https://ourworldindata.org/grapher/cumulative-co2-emissions-region> (accessed 12 September 2022); The Notre Dame-Global Adaptation Index (ND-GAIN) Country Index. Available at: <https://gain.nd.edu/our-work/country-index/> (accessed 12 September 2022); and The World Bank (June 2022), Population, Total – Using data from United Nations Population Division. Available at <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL> (accessed at August 2022).

## UNEQUAL REFUGEE RESPONSE AND UNJUST IMMIGRATION POLICIES

Wealthy governments are creating an increasingly hostile environment for refugees. By the end of 2021, the vast majority of the world's refugees - 83% - were hosted by developing countries. African countries alone hosted almost 7 million refugees.<sup>34</sup>

A stronger assessment of generosity compares the number of refugees and asylum-seekers against the wealth of the host country. EU countries provide refuge for one person per \$4.3 million of their GDP; for the same amount Africa provides refuge for 14 people. North American countries provide refuge for one person per \$12.2 million of their GDP; for the same, Africa hosts 40.<sup>35</sup>

Wealthy countries reap more in overall economic returns from refugees than they pay to host them. Over half of the world's refugees are children, some of whom are

discriminated against by European countries refusing to recognise they are under 18 in order to avoid providing the 'costly' support to which child refugees have the right.<sup>36</sup> For African children, the disproportionately low response of donor countries to the global refugee crisis adversely impacts their access to the resources they need to realise their rights.

Targeted migration policies further compound injustice. For example, the UK's National Health Service has undertaken extensive recruitment in Africa because it is cheaper to recruit an English-speaking doctor than to train a doctor in the UK.<sup>37</sup> In 2021 alone, the UK hired over 500 doctors from Sudan - almost 5% of Sudan's total number of doctors.<sup>38</sup> Sudan has a doctor-patient ratio which is 22 times worse than the UK's,<sup>39</sup> and nearly half a million Sudanese infants have died since 2016.<sup>40</sup>

# NATIONAL INJUSTICES

Alongside these global injustices to children in Africa, there are a number of injustices that are at least partially caused within African countries. In too many cases, national government policy and decision-making perpetuate the poverty caused by extreme global inequality, and further deny marginalised children their rights.

## GOVERNANCE

Effective governance is the single biggest factor in ending poverty which is under the control of African leaders. It is particularly critical to the provision of marginalised children's rights as they are often the first to lose out if essential public services are cut back due to wasteful spending elsewhere.<sup>41</sup> Similarly, if government policies are not equally applied, it is likely that the poorest communities are among those missing out.

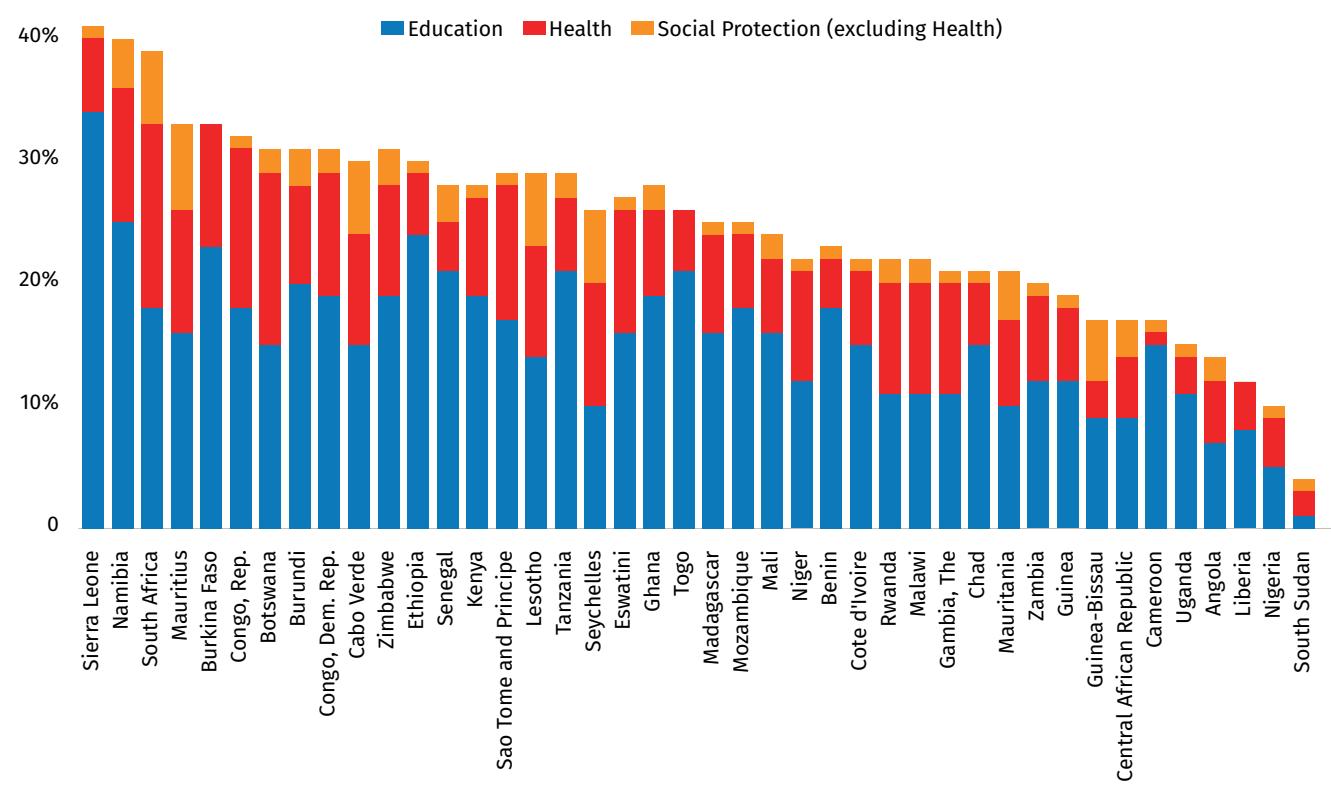
Poor budgeting impacts children on multiple levels. African governments have committed to spending 20% of their domestic budget on education (as part of the Incheon Declaration in 2015), and 15% on health (Abuja Declaration in 2001).<sup>42</sup> If African leaders were meeting these targets, more, but not all, African children would be able to

realise their rights. An analysis undertaken for this report demonstrates that with more effective governance, which places a stronger commitment on health and education, funding for children in Africa could increase by \$25.7 billion even given the debt crisis.<sup>43</sup>

Governments must also ensure their budgets are in line with their legal and political commitments to all children. A UNICEF analysis of education spending found that in low-income countries, on average, 38% of education resources were spent on the wealthiest students, and 10% on the poorest.<sup>44</sup>

Debt and low income do not have to determine the quality of governance. The Ibrahim Index of African Governance demonstrates the progress being made on governance by several African low-income countries, including Sierra Leone and Mozambique.<sup>45</sup> Across Africa's lower-income countries there are strong examples of the impact of good governance, ranging from the renegotiation of unfair deals on natural resources to the progressive implementation of social protection to alleviate extreme poverty.

% GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND SOCIAL PROTECTION, SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA (LATEST YEAR)



Source: The World Bank (June 2022). *Government expenditure on education, total (% of government expenditure)*, from the UNESCO Institute of Statistics. Available at <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.XPD.TOTL.GB.ZS> (accessed July 2022); World Health Organization (2022). *Domestic general government health expenditure (GGHE-D) as percentage of current health expenditure (CHE) (%)*, *The Global Health Observatory*. Available at <https://www.who.int/data/gho/indicator-metadata-registry/imr-details/4953> (accessed October 2022); and International Labour Organization (2022). *World Social Protection Data Dashboards – Total expenditure on social protection, excluding health*. Available at <https://www.social-protection.org/gimi/WSPDB-action?id=1461> (accessed October 2022).

## RIGHTS OF ADOLESCENT GIRLS

National government policies and laws on reproductive healthcare – or which limit access to sexual and reproductive health and rights information and services – for adolescent girls have a significant negative impact on young African women and on a raft of development issues in many African countries. Sexist laws have compounded impacts, with devastating outcomes for women.

Using the latest data available from UNICEF, 9 out of the top 10 countries in the world for girls being married before they aged 14 or younger are in sub-Saharan Africa (*table right*). Boys are also victims of early and forced marriage, but a significant majority are girls. For example, in Guinea 17% of girls are married aged 14 and younger whilst the number of boys married under the age of 18 is 1.9%. This also means in most cases of child marriage girls are marrying adult men: in the top nine African countries, over 60% of child marriages with girls aged 14 and younger are to adults.<sup>46</sup>

This situation is made worse by the lack of access to family planning, especially for adolescent girls living in poorer communities. 63% of the adolescent girls in sub-Saharan Africa who are forced into child marriage do not have access to the contraception they want.<sup>47</sup> This can have fatal consequences because the rates of maternal mortality are scandalously high despite the progress of modern medicine. The ten countries where a woman's chance of dying of maternal causes in her lifetime are the highest are all in Africa.<sup>48</sup>

**"TAKING ACTION MEANS SAYING 'NO' TO INDIFFERENCE."**  
DENIS MUKWEGE,  
NOBEL PEACE LAUREATE 2018

## CONFLICT

Conflict is devastating for the children living in affected communities and countries. It is critical for Africa's children that peace-building efforts succeed, and African (and non-African) decision-makers need to prioritise this. The devastating fighting in DRC, persistent crisis in the Sahel, anti-military rule demonstrations in Sudan, multiple instability threats in Nigeria, and conflict re-escalation in Ethiopia are further reminders of the terrible cost of conflict to children. Without an end to conflict, it will be impossible to realise children's rights.

Unfortunately, the pain and damage caused by conflict is exacerbated by the discriminatory and racist views held about Africa by some in other continents. Accusations include that governments in Africa are in poverty because they spend all their budgets on the military and are in frequent or constant conflict. The reality is that in the last 10 years, Africa has had fewer fatalities from conflict than the average in other regions. Total military expenditure in all 48 countries in sub-Saharan Africa is less than in Italy alone.<sup>49</sup> The decision to unequally allocate special drawing rights was worth more than the entire military expenditure of the 48 countries in sub-Saharan Africa since 2018.<sup>50</sup>

The consequences of conflict both for marginalised children and for investment levels are exacerbated in countries which are already poor. Conflict is not the main reason why African countries have such a low share of economic growth, but while waiting for the international community to end its hypocritical approach to conflict in Africa, it is vital that African leaders do what is in their control by strengthening peacekeeping in Africa and fulfilling AU commitments.

**"TO REFUSE TO LISTEN TO SOMEONE'S CRIES FOR JUSTICE AND EQUALITY UNTIL THE REQUEST COMES IN A LANGUAGE YOU FEEL COMFORTABLE WITH IS A WAY OF ASSERTING YOUR DOMINANCE OVER THEM IN THE SITUATION."**

IJEOMA OLUO, AUTHOR

## CORRUPTION

Corruption is corrosive. It damages the economy, diminishes trust in government and society, discourages political participation, and restricts access to public services. The highest price is paid by the poorest members of society, who have to spend a greater percentage of their income navigating their way through corruption, including through the payment of bribes.

Corruption in Africa is a real barrier to investment. Many countries in Africa score badly on Transparency International's overall Corruptions Perception Index, with the region scoring the lowest average score. But does this mean Africans are more prone to corruption, or is it a reflection of the extreme poverty levels in Africa?

An analysis was undertaken for this report to compare the corruption ranking of countries with the ranking of GNI/capita.<sup>51</sup> Nine of the top ten countries with better (lower) corruption scores than their comparative wealth would suggest are in sub-Saharan Africa. Efforts to counter corruption must accelerate, but corruption in Benin is not the main reason that Benin is 100 times poorer than Switzerland.

Recent prosecutions against Anglo-Swiss multinational commodity company Glencore demonstrate how some multilateral businesses are perpetuating corruption. UK and US investigations discovered that Glencore had long been bribing or attempting to bribe officials in Nigeria, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, and South Sudan. Less than four weeks after South Sudan became an independent country, Glencore executives flew out \$800,000 in suitcases of cash to bribe officials. In 2022, the US and UK authorities fined Glencore around \$1.5 billion between them, with the UK judge ruling Glencore were "*deploying very substantial amounts of money in bribes*".<sup>52</sup> This prosecution is important, but African children will not the money. In South Sudan, poverty is so extreme that 92% of people don't have access to electricity<sup>53</sup> and 10% of children die before their fifth birthday.<sup>54</sup>

Nevertheless, for all the international aspects, corruption needs strong action within Africa too, and it must be a major priority. Too many leaders are stealing their people's money – corroding society, reducing investment, and ultimately making the situation worse for those children missing out on their basic rights. It can and must be reduced.

## PERSECUTION OF CIVIL SOCIETY AND YOUTH-LED MOVEMENTS

Civil society – from single campaigners and grassroots groups to organised international NGOs – has long played a critical role in both realising and defending human rights; it also has a long history of persecution by governments. According to the CIVICUS Monitor, which documents enabling conditions for CSOs and civic space across 197 countries, civil society space is closed, repressed, or obstructed in the vast majority of African countries.<sup>55</sup>

In countries with ever-shrinking civil-society space and freedom of expression, this activism also often comes at a price, with increased targeted harassment, detention and student and youth leaders in recent years. From 15 youth activists arbitrarily arrested and held in solitary confinement in Angola in 2015 for simply meeting to discuss politics,<sup>56</sup> to the brutalisation of students at the University of Buea in Cameroon in 2016,<sup>57</sup> to the use of live ammunition at campus protests in the DRC in 2018,<sup>58</sup> to Senegal in 2018<sup>59</sup> and Lesotho in 2022<sup>60</sup> resulting in the death of students in each country, and to the continued arbitrary detention and alleged torture of majority youth activists, some as young as 15 years old, after the #EndSARS movement in Nigeria.<sup>61</sup>

It is a double whammy that children and young people living in poverty face such repression when they stand up for their own civil rights and demand space for civil society. Too many African leaders are exacerbating the injustices faced by poorer children in their country by repressing their rights to protest. Instead, they should be supporting justice for the young people in their country by championing a fairer share of global wealth for children in Africa.

# IMPACT

The overall impact of these multiple, modern injustices is wide-ranging, and hits children the hardest.

The first consideration is the combined financial impact. These amounts are approximate and there will be some overlap between the injustices but even in just the first six years of the SDGs, these injustices have cost Africa approximately \$4 trillion. This is more than twice the entire annual GDP of sub-Saharan Africa<sup>62</sup> and equates to over \$3,400 per African, a tremendous sum in a country such as Malawi, where the average annual GDP per person is under \$400.<sup>63</sup>

The calculations also show that the core reason for children being denied their rights is not African governments making unjust budget allocations. African governments can and must do more: conflict, suppressed girls' and civic rights, weak leadership, and corruption are claiming lives. However, these national injustices to children constitute less than 5% of the total and are dwarfed by the international injustices. The simple fact is the total government budgets in many countries are far too small to support children's rights because of the discriminatory and unjustifiable international injustices. Promises are being broken on an enormous scale. The claim that further indebted Africa with non-concessional loans counts as the climate finance promised in Copenhagen by the countries that caused global warming is laughable, and the proud prioritisation of foreign policy over children's lives in aid allocations, by a new generation of inhumane leaders, simply implies that African lives don't matter.

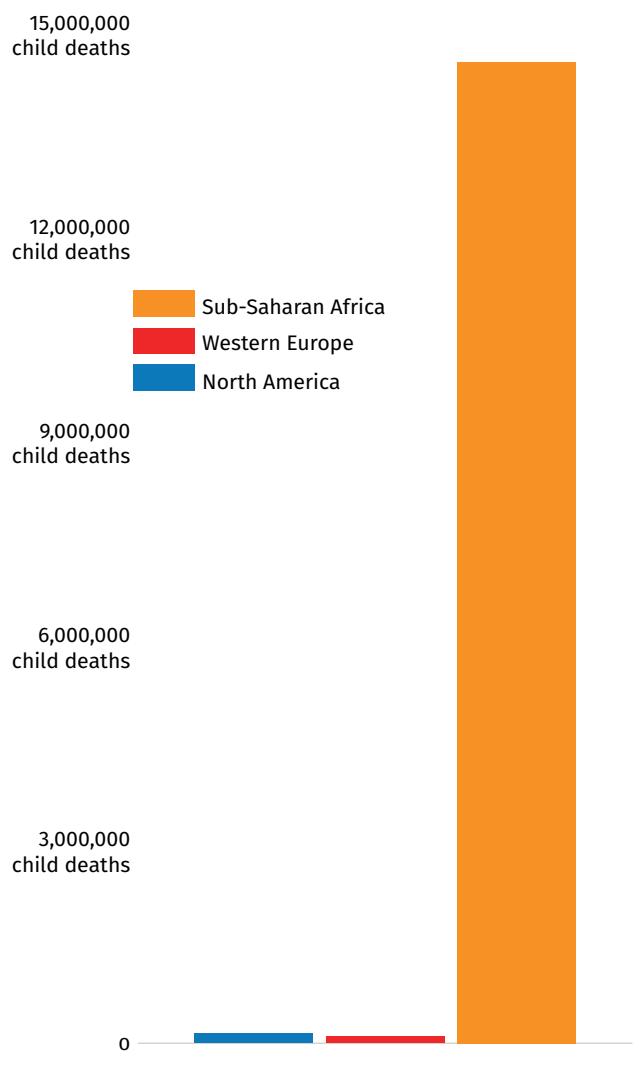
While the financial injustice is titanic, the heaviest price is paid in the lives and the deaths of African children. We are living in a world that has simultaneously created one billionaire and 10,000 child labourers every week since the start of the Sustainable Development Goals. Stunting and malnutrition were already on the increase in sub-Saharan Africa before the recent rise in food prices, which will also be catastrophic for many young children. Future generations will not understand why this was allowed to happen.

The clearest way to see the consequences of the modern injustices against Africa is to consider the number of children who pay the ultimate price: with their lives. Child deaths have been unjustifiable since medical advances dramatically improved our ability to prevent them, but in the last 20 years, when world wealth has doubled and the rest of the world has made so much progress on child mortality it has become truly shameful.<sup>64</sup>

These graphs are the starker demonstration of the extreme inequality that is characterising our times. In the first five years of the SDGs the number of African children who have died unnecessarily, over 14 million young lives,<sup>65</sup> is more than all the military deaths of all countries during the five years of slaughter of the First World War.<sup>66</sup>

In fact, more young African children have died unnecessarily since the year 2000 than all the military victims of all the

**NUMBER OF CHILD DEATHS (UNDER 5) SINCE THE START OF THE SDGS, 2016-2020, BY REGION**



Calculated from: The World Bank (2022). Mortality rate, under-5 (per 1,000 live births) - Sub-Saharan Africa. Available at: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SH.DYN.MORT?locations=ZG>; and United Nations Children's Fund (2021) Under-Five Mortality. Available at: <https://data.unicef.org/topic/child-survival/under-five-mortality> (accessed 30 September 2022).

wars in the world in the 20th century put together.<sup>67</sup> We need to end the discrimination and racism that allows children in Africa to die at this rate. Justice for Africa's children needs to be a defining issue for this generation.

The percentage of world wealth needed to end poverty is the smallest it has ever been. Our ability to communicate and learn about the lived reality of marginalised communities has never been greater. Instead, the world is turning a blind eye to the suffering and the causes whilst blaming the casualties. Global decisions in just the last few years, almost always taken in spaces where Africans are underrepresented, have cost Africa and her children hundreds of billions of dollars a year, and millions of lives. The level of ignorance about the role of richer countries and companies in disadvantaging Africa and creating these injustices is outrageous and it allows them to continue.

# SOLUTIONS

Systemic change, driven by a new movement to ensure a fair share for Africa's children, is critical. The extremity of the injustice must not be an excuse for inaction when the number of child labourers and children out of school is increasing, and when there is a threat of catastrophe on child nutrition. Urgent action is needed to prevent this disaster.

Laureates and Leaders for Children reaffirms and strengthens its previous calls and makes **underpinning**

**recommendations** to create a strong foundation for justice. However, it must also be recognised that swift action which is targeted on accelerating children's realisation of rights is vital to stop the decline in progress across, predominantly, sub-Saharan Africa. As such, Laureates and Leaders for Children further calls for urgent action to deliver three, **child-targeted recommendations** world leaders could commit to immediately that would make a real and swift difference to the lives of the world's most marginalised children.

## UNDERPINNING RECOMMENDATIONS: FOUNDATION FOR JUSTICE

**1. The rights of Africa's children will never be realised if the majority of African governments have insufficient budgets. This has not prevented many African countries from striving to achieve greater domestic budget allocations for children's rights, although greater efforts to deliver equitable budgeting must also be made. Ultimately, far higher levels of financing are needed, which can be achieved through the following measures:**

- a. Debt cancellation: all debt incurred by low- and lower-middle-income African countries during 2020-2023 must be cancelled to support pandemic recovery, including commitments that the freed-up budget is allocated to the child-specific SDGs and their relevant targets including child poverty, nutrition, early childhood, education, maternity and infant health, gender, child labour, sanitation, and social protection.
- b. The IMF must roll back the imposition of austerity measures and focus on ensuring countries are increasing spending on public services including health, education, and social protection.
- c. High-income countries must support fairer international tax and trade rules, and better tax collection in countries: taxes must be paid in the countries from which profits are generated including the extraction of Africa's natural resources. African governments must stop exemptions for corporations and strengthen their capacity to collect taxes and stop illicit financial flows.
- d. In line with SDG 10.9, official development assistance must be concentrated on the countries in most need, and aid flows to Africa must be increased.
- e. In line with SDG 13.a, donor countries must implement the commitment undertaken to mobilise at least \$100 billion annually for climate adaptation and mitigation, for all developing

countries. In addition, governments must act on their commitment to establish, finance, and operationalise the loss and damage fund.

- f. African governments must make fiscal space in domestic budgets for public services which deliver the rights of children, and ensure their budgets are transparent and tackle discrimination by using children's rights and, particularly, girls' rights lenses. This can be done by taking action on tax and illicit financial flows, reducing military expenditure, ending conflict and the use of force against civil society, and tackling large-scale corruption.

**2. Africa faces enormous discrimination on the international stage. No African country is a member of the G7, and only one African country of 54 is in the G20. The OECD has no African members, and voting power at the World Bank and IMF is dominated by non-African countries. Global decision-making fora must be equal, democratic, and decolonised.**

**3. Health care remains severely underfunded across most of Africa, with only one country meeting the 2001 Abuja commitment of 15% of budget to health, and ODA to health declining since its peak in 2017. COVID-19 will continue to be unnecessarily deadly until every country has achieved equitable levels of vaccination.**

- a. All African governments must work to meet the 15% target; donors must increase the share of ODA to health, excluding contributions made to COVAX and other COVID-19 emergency health measures, in order for this 15% to be sufficient for each country's population.
- b. COVID-19 vaccines must be patent-free, rapidly produced and distributed until over 70% of each African country's population is vaccinated with at least a primary course, to be achieved by 2023.

## TARGETED RECOMMENDATIONS: EVERY CHILD FREE, HEALTHY, AND EDUCATED

### EVERY CHILD FREE: UNIVERSAL CHILD BENEFITS

**4. The launch of a Global Child Benefit Initiative in 2023 would prevent the entrenchment of extreme poverty following COVID-19. It would cost \$53 billion, just 1.4% of what high-income countries spend on social protection, to provide benefits to every child and new mother living in a low income country. Possible criteria for the GCBI are:**

- a. Low-income countries need an approved plan and to commit 1% of their GDP in universal child and maternity benefits, to be eligible for the scheme.
- b. Participating high-income countries pledge to cover the rest of the financing by making social protection at least half the same percentage of their ODA expenditure as it is of their domestic expenditure. Donors are encouraged to continue to support participating countries bilaterally and a multilateral funding mechanism is used for donors that prefer to pool funding.
- c. Multilateral funding should be organised by and applied through the UN structure so that it strengthens the system and ensures funds are paid directly to marginalised children and their families, without discrimination, and with no additional conditionalities.
- d. Low-income country governments co-ordinate the payments of child and maternity benefits except in emergency situations where funding can be given directly to families.
- e. There are opportunities for wider sectors of society such as businesses, faith organisations, youth-led groups, and individuals to contribute to the GCBI to emphasise the solidarity and multilateralism between citizens underpinning the new global safety net for children.
- f. To be in line with the UN Secretary-General's call for a Global Accelerator on Social Protection.

### EVERY CHILD HEALTHY: SCHOOL FEEDING PROGRAMMES

**5. An enormous and integrated effort is critical to restore justice for the tens of millions of children whose access to school feeding programmes has been jeopardised. Similarly, the momentum on school feeding achieved by sub-Saharan African governments in 2013-2020 must be restored. An estimated \$4.7 billion is needed to expand school feeding programmes to the 73 million most vulnerable children in the world, rising to \$5.8 billion when integrated**

health services are included. The vast majority of these 73 million children - 86% - live in Africa.

- a. Donor countries must contribute to the World Food Programme's target of \$1.75 billion 2020-2030 to expand access and support for school feeding programmes in 30 of the most fragile and low-income countries.
- b. Donor countries must not force low- and lower-middle-income African governments to impose harmful austerity measures through the international financial institutions (IFIs), in order to allow governments to maintain and create new fiscal space for school feeding programmes.
- c. African governments should be supported to increase domestic budget to education for every child to be enrolled in primary school and to have access to school feeding programmes.

### EVERY CHILD EDUCATED: FINANCING EDUCATION THROUGH SPECIAL DRAWING RIGHTS

**6. The IMF allocation of SDRs in 2021 could have been an invaluable lifeline for lower-income countries, yet the amount received was deeply insufficient; in contrast, the amount received by high-income countries could have paid off all debts owed to the IMF by every developing country almost three times over. Governments have repeatedly committed to realise the historic impact of education for all, and recognised that financing for education must dramatically increase, both internationally and domestically. This could be achieved by rectifying the unjust allocation of SDRs and focusing their use on education.**

- a. The IMF must either reallocate the SDRs fairly by population or issue a new allocation of SDRs to the value of at least \$2.35 trillion for under-represented countries, in line with the civil society call for a total of \$3 trillion.
- b. High-income countries must agree to only keep the SDRs proportional to their population, and to pool the rest of the funds as a 7-year fund to achieve at least Sustainable Development Goal 4 in low- and lower-middle-income countries. This would provide \$5 billion a year for low-income countries and \$22 billion a year for lower-middle-income countries until 2030.<sup>68</sup>
- c. Funds should be allocated to national plans approved by the Global Partnership for Education, particularly those addressing universal access to education and solving the teacher crisis.

# CONCLUSION

The scale of injustice Africa is facing is shocking and debilitating to the efforts to achieve the African Union's Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Commitments for restitution for the damage of slavery and colonialism are important, but they need to go hand in hand with removing the current injustices that are exploiting Africa to this day: the modern-day injustices facing Africa are exacerbating the exploitation of previous generations.

Decision-makers need to act, but everyone who cares about children's rights and equality needs to educate and mobilise. The scale of the systemic modern injustices happening now and the terrible price being paid for them in a world of plenty must be understood.

Ending the injustices against Africa and her children should be a central topic for world leaders at the UN, G20, and G7. It shouldn't only be Nobel laureates, civil society, and youth activists investigating these modern-day injustices against Africa. World leaders and decision-makers must better understand why the SDGs are so off track in Africa and what more can be done to ensure equal representation in all important international fora.

The scale of death, exploitation, and the denial of rights faced by children in Africa shames the world. One in five children in Africa are in child labour, the highest of any region by far. Every 11 seconds, an African child under the age of five dies - of preventable causes. This is happening when the world has never been richer. The world is moving backwards.

## DIVIDED PERCEPTIONS

At the end of 2022, with war impacting energy and food prices, growth is slowing or stagnating in many high-income countries - yet injustice is deepening between the extremely wealthy and the remainder of their national populations: the extremely wealthy have taken most of growth in high-income countries, and billionaire fortunes have increased by \$2.7 billion a day since 2020.<sup>69</sup>

In high-income countries, public services are being squeezed, salaries are not keeping pace with inflation, and personal debt has become more expensive. This has created a perfect storm for exploitative politicians in wealthy countries to blame easy scapegoats such as poor, aid-recipient countries, and to create a hostile environment for refugees and migrants, to deflect from their unjust policies. This hate-filled political narrative has happened before and it is dangerous.

This is exacerbated as people living in rich countries vastly overestimate the amount spent on foreign aid: in the US, opinion polls show most people think 25% of government budgets is spent on aid; in reality it is less than 1%.<sup>70</sup> There is little or no public recognition in rich countries that it is the world's poorest countries which are the most generous towards refugees.

## END THE INJUSTICE

In 2021, global GDP was the highest ever on record. Global wealth increased by over \$9 trillion 2015-2018 and, despite the pandemic, it increased by \$2 trillion 2019-2021. There is no excuse for the same world to stop Africa's children from going to school, or to force millions more into child labour, or to allow millions of her youngest children to die needlessly every year. These catastrophic injustices for children have been created by humans - but they can be ended by humans too.

African governments can work their hardest to allocate their budgets fairly, to meet international targets for public service financing, to end discrimination and corruption at home, and to prevent multinational corporations stealing their wealth. The reality is that none of this will ever be achieved, nor will it ever be enough to truly end injustice, unless the governments and institutions outside of Africa which perpetuate it are forced to act. Africa's allies must stand together to demand a fairer deal for Africa's children, and force the world's gatekeepers of wealth and decision-making to finally deliver justice.

**"THE WORLD'S INTERACTIONS WITH AFRICA ARE NOT NECESSARILY MOTIVATED BY ALTRUISM, BUT BY THE SELF-INTEREST OF STATES SEEKING TO MAXIMIZE THEIR OPPORTUNITIES AND MINIMIZE THEIR COSTS, OFTEN AT THE EXPENSE OF THOSE WHO ARE NOT IN A POSITION TO DO EITHER."**

**WANGARI MAATHAI, NOBEL PEACE LAUREATE, 2004**

# A. WHY FOCUS ON AFRICA?

Accelerating inequality has been devastating the lives of the world's poorest families for the last decade – but particularly since world leaders agreed the Sustainable Development Goals in 2015. This has had an especially devastating impact in Africa.

A number of global crises have meant less international attention on the injustice facing children in Africa, but the evidence is stark and cruel. At a time of exceptional global growth, inequality and extreme poverty in Africa are increasing, and millions of children in Africa are paying the price.

## AFRICAN CHILDREN LOSING OUT

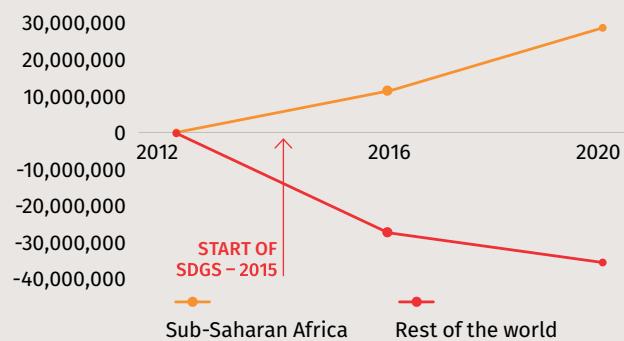
The impact of these injustices is illustrated by an unprecedented increase in child labour in Africa. In the first four years of the SDGs, the number of child labourers in Africa increased by over 20 million (16.6 million in sub-Saharan Africa<sup>71</sup>). Most of Africa's child labourers are under the age of 11.<sup>72</sup>

Millions more African children every year are working to prop up the global economy at the expense of their education, childhood, and future. Nearly 1 in 9 children in sub-Saharan Africa is now involved in hazardous work that is detrimental to their health and wellbeing.<sup>73</sup>

Since 2012 the number of child labourers in the rest of the world has fallen significantly in contrast to the shocking rises in Africa (Figure 1). **There are now more child labourers in Africa (92.2 million) than there are children in the European Union (80.3 million).**<sup>74,75</sup> With other crises around the world, the increase in the number of children working as child labourers in Africa has not received the attention it deserves. Over 10,000 more African children every day have been forced to become child labourers since 2016.

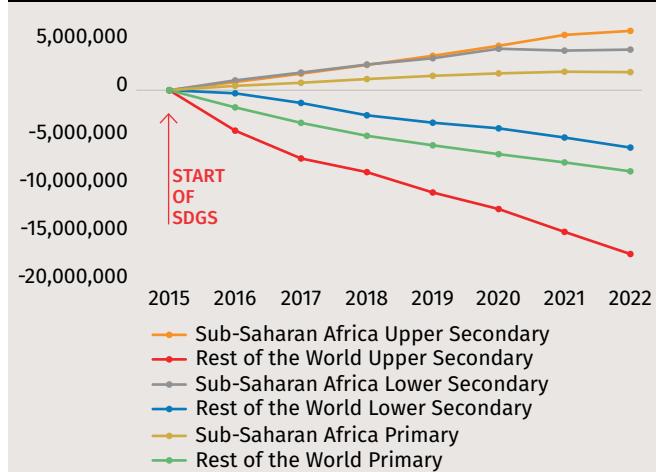
The same trend has happened with children who are out of school at primary, lower-secondary, and upper-secondary levels.<sup>76</sup> Since the start of the SDGs, while the number of children out of school in the rest of the world fell, it increased in sub-Saharan Africa (Figure 2).

**FIGURE 1: CHANGE IN THE NUMBER OF CHILD LABOURERS 2012-2020**



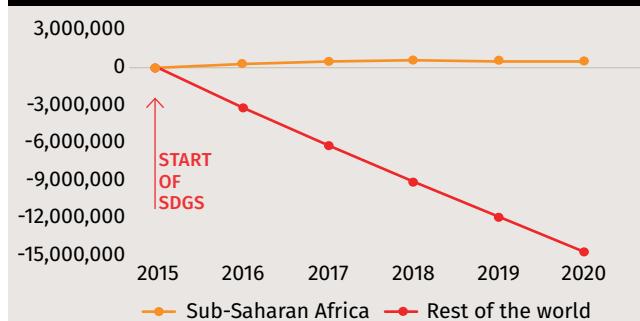
Source: International Labour Office (2017) *Global Estimates of Child Labour: Results and trends, 2012-2016*, ILO Geneva [https://www.ilo.org/global/publications/books/WCMS\\_575499/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/global/publications/books/WCMS_575499/lang--en/index.htm); and International Labour Office and United Nations Children's Fund (2021) *Child Labour: Global estimates 2020, trends and the road forward*, ILO/UNICEF New York [https://www.ilo.org/ipecl/Informationresources/WCMS\\_797515/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/ipecl/Informationresources/WCMS_797515/lang--en/index.htm)

**FIGURE 2: CHANGE IN THE NUMBER OF OUT-OF-SCHOOL CHILDREN SINCE THE START OF THE SDGS (2015-2020)**



Source: UNESCO (2022). *Visualizing Indicators of Education for the World*. Available at <https://education-estimates.org/out-of-school/data/> (accessed 10 October 2022).

**FIGURE 3: CHANGE IN THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN WITH STUNTED GROWTH SINCE THE START OF THE SDGS (2015-2020)**



Source: UNICEF, WHO, World Bank Group (May 2022), Stunting numbers affected (millions) 2000-2020, Available at <https://data.unicef.org/topic/nutrition/malnutrition/> (accessed August 2022).

"WHEN YOU SEE SOMETHING THAT IS NOT RIGHT, NOT FAIR, NOT JUST, YOU HAVE TO SPEAK UP. YOU HAVE TO SAY SOMETHING; YOU HAVE TO DO SOMETHING."

JOHN LEWIS, US CIVIL RIGHTS ACTIVIST AND POLITICIAN

Similarly, the number of children with stunted growth has been falling sharply by several million a year in the rest of the world, but in sub-Saharan Africa it is tragically increasing (Figure 3).<sup>77</sup>

Figure 4 compares how the number of people living on less than \$2.15 – the line at which extreme poverty is set – in sub-Saharan Africa has changed each year when compared to 2005. The rapid increase in the last few years is clear to see.

Figure 5 shows how quickly things have changed. In just the first four years of the SDGs, the latest data available from the World Bank, sub-Saharan Africa has gone from having less than half of the poorest people in the world to over 60%, a shocking and substantial shift. In every region of the world children are disproportionately likely to be extremely poor. In sub-Saharan Africa 58% of those who are extremely poor are children.<sup>78</sup>

#### AFRICAN GOVERNMENTS LOSING OUT

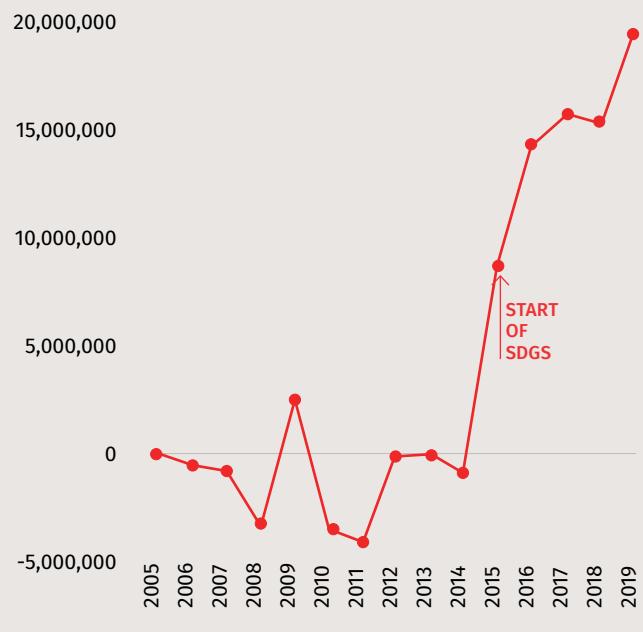
The most appalling aspect of this huge increase in child suffering is that it is taking place at a time of major economic growth. World wealth increased by over \$9 trillion in the first four years of the SDGs and increased by another \$2 trillion in 2019-2021 despite COVID.<sup>79</sup> However, African countries and Africa's children did not get their share. Before examining the causes, it is important to consider the scale of the change.

Figure 6 (following page) shows how GDP per person in sub-Saharan Africa has fallen since 2015 yet increased in North America,<sup>80</sup> the European Union, and other high-income countries.<sup>81</sup>

"IF YOU ARE NEUTRAL IN SITUATIONS OF INJUSTICE, YOU HAVE CHOSEN THE SIDE OF THE OPPRESSOR. IF AN ELEPHANT HAS ITS FOOT ON THE TAIL OF A MOUSE, AND YOU SAY THAT YOU ARE NEUTRAL, THE MOUSE WILL NOT APPRECIATE YOUR NEUTRALITY."

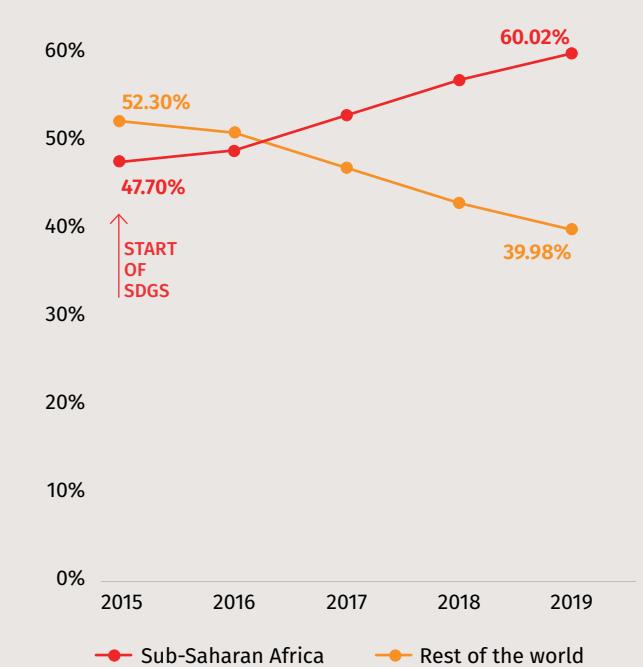
ARCHBISHOP EMERITUS DESMOND TUTU,  
NOBEL PEACE LAUREATE, 1984

**FIGURE 4: CHANGE IN THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE LIVING ON LESS THAN \$2.15 A DAY IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA SINCE 2005 (2005-2019)**



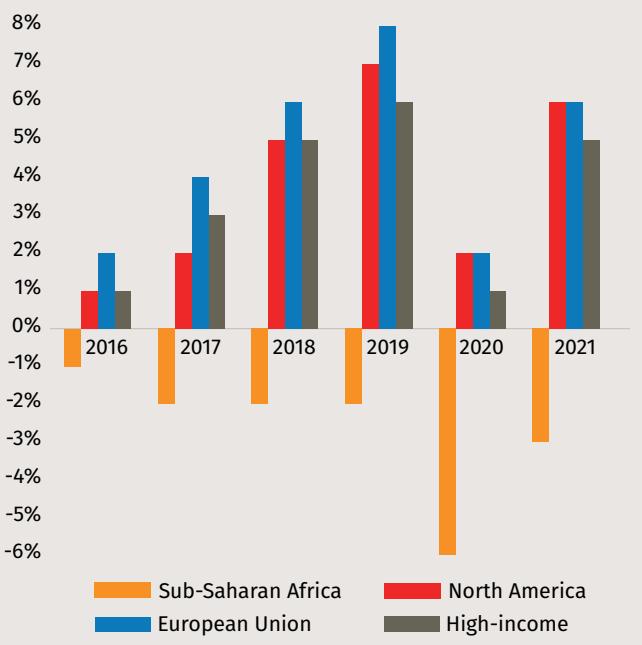
Source: The World Bank (September 2022). Poverty and Inequality Platform Poverty Calculator – Population living below the poverty line (2017 PPP). Available at <https://pip.worldbank.org/poverty-calculator> (accessed 24 October 2022).

**FIGURE 5: CHANGE IN WHERE PEOPLE IN EXTREME POVERTY LIVE (LESS THAN \$2.15 A DAY, 2015-2019)**



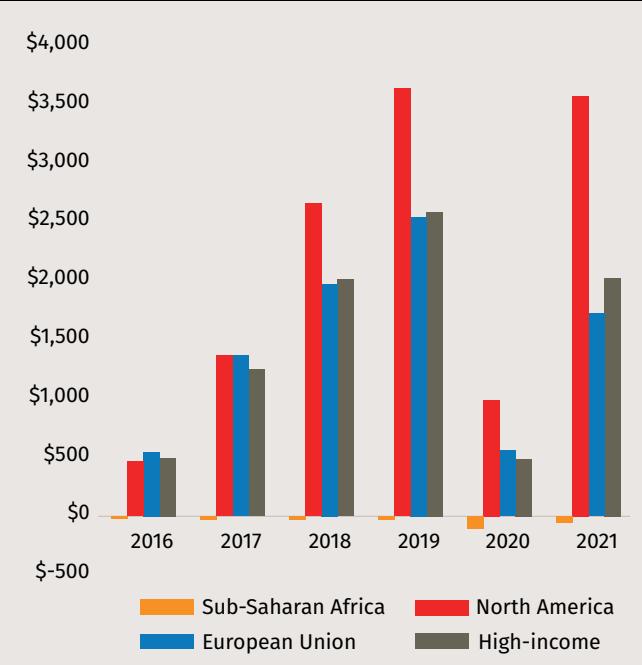
Source: The World Bank (September 2022). Poverty and Inequality Platform Poverty Calculator – Population living below the poverty line (2017 PPP). Available at <https://pip.worldbank.org/poverty-calculator> (accessed 24 October 2022).

**FIGURE 6: CHANGE IN GDP/PERSON SINCE THE START OF THE SDGS, 2015-2021 (CONSTANT USD, %)**



Source: The World Bank (2021), *GDP per capita (constant 2015 USD)*, World Bank national accounts data, and OECD National Accounts data files. Available at: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.KD> (accessed 12 September 2022).

**FIGURE 7: CHANGE IN GDP/PERSON SINCE THE START OF THE SDGS, 2015-2021 (CONSTANT USD)**



Source: The World Bank (2021), *GDP per capita (constant 2015 USD)*, World Bank national accounts data, and OECD National Accounts data files. Available at: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.KD> (accessed 12 September 2022).

**FIGURE 8: GDP/PERSON INCREASE BY REGION, 1980 VS. 2021 (CONSTANT USD, \$)**

	1980	2021	Increase
Sub-Saharan Africa	\$1,516	\$ 1,612	\$96
North America	\$30,315	\$ 59,496	\$29,181
Euro area	\$20,756	\$ 36,352	\$15,596
High income	\$21,500	\$42,373	\$20,873

Source: The World Bank (2021), *GDP per capita (constant 2015 USD)*, World Bank national accounts data, and OECD National Accounts data files. Available at: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.KD> (accessed 12 September 2022).

If reviewing the changes by percentage, it may appear as if there must be a substantial trade-off between continents to achieve a fair share of wealth for sub-Saharan Africa; however, this is not the case. The sums involved in whether wealth per person falls or increases in sub-Saharan Africa would be relatively trivial to richer countries.

Figure 7 shows that, though it is a significant percentage, the decline in wealth per person in sub-Saharan Africa is actually a tiny fraction of the huge increase in wealth per person in richer countries. Indeed, it is hard to see the fall on the graph. It would only take a small reduction in high-income country growth (6.4% to 6%) for Africa to grow at 6% instead of falling. High-income countries could have kept \$19 of the \$20 dollars of growth and countries in sub-Saharan could have grown at the same rate. Indeed, when low-income countries develop it is often a win-win situation; high-income countries may well have had higher growth if sub-Saharan Africa's growth rate had been higher. **By not growing at the same rate as other countries from 2015-2021 sub-Saharan Africa lost \$898.7 billion in GDP.**<sup>82</sup>

So far, during the SDGs, inequality has increased despite the commitment to leave no-one behind. The vast majority of global wealth continues to accumulate in richer countries, whilst poorer countries, which produce many of the primary ingredients driving global growth, are left further and further behind.

World wealth has more than trebled in the last four decades; Figures 8 and 9 compare the change in wealth per person since 1980 including for the Euro area<sup>83</sup> countries.<sup>84</sup> Since 1980, average wealth per person in North America, Europe, and other high-income countries has increased more every 10 weeks than it has in Africa in over 40 years. Even the next slowest growing region, South Asia, has grown 15 times more than sub-Saharan Africa since 1980. What more evidence of injustice do we need?

Though Figures 6-9 are stark, by focussing only on the change in GDP/person each year rather than total GDP/person they fail to properly demonstrate the actual difference in the wealth multiples.

**"AS I SPEAK RIGHT NOW ON THIS CONTINENT, A CHILD IS DYING OF HUNGER IN ONE OF OUR VILLAGES, SUCH A TRAGIC EVENT TAKES PLACE EVERY MINUTE OF EVERY HOUR OF EVERY DAY."**  
**GRACA MACHEL, CO-FOUNDER THE ELDERS**

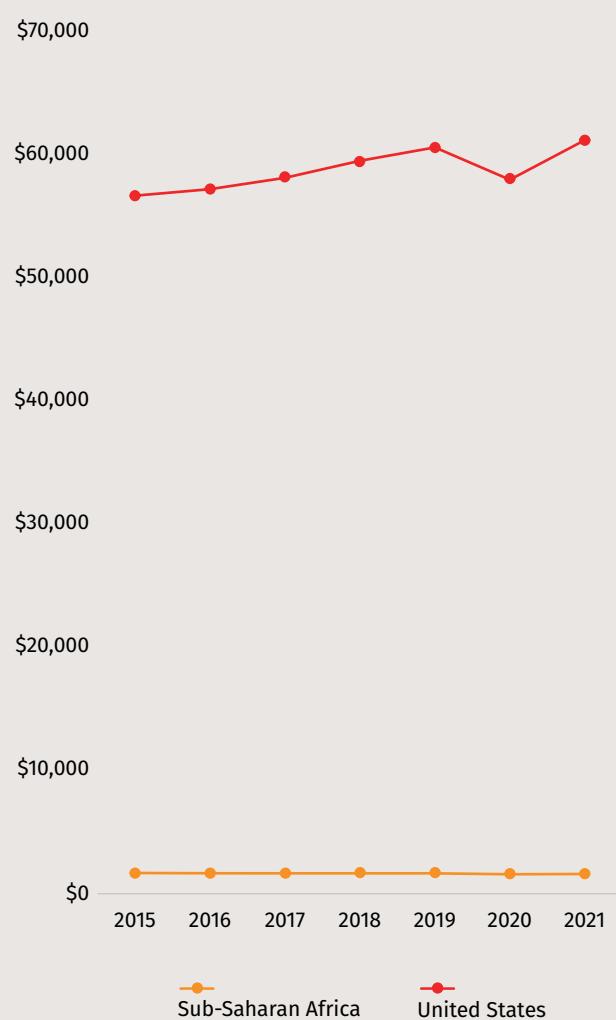
**FIGURE 9: CHANGE IN GDP/PERSON, 1980-2021  
(CONSTANT USD)**



Source: The World Bank (2021), GDP per capita (constant 2015 USD), World Bank national accounts data, and OECD National Accounts data files. Available at: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.KD> (accessed 12 September 2022).

Many countries now have less than 1% of the wealth per person of richer countries,<sup>85</sup> an obscene and too often lethal difference. To show the actual changes in GDP necessitates a tall graph (*Figure 10*) which highlights the scale of inequality between countries. It is worth noting the lower line in *Figure 10* is the average for sub-Saharan Africa; 32 of the 48 countries in sub-Saharan Africa had a GDP per person ratio below this. In fact, if wealth per person in the United States is the height of the Empire State Building, then the wealth per person of the 10 poorest countries in Africa would be lower than its second floor.

**FIGURE 10: GDP/PERSON UNITED STATES & SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA (2015-2021)**



Source: The World Bank (2021), GDP per capita (constant 2015 USD), World Bank national accounts data, and OECD National Accounts data files. Available at: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.KD> (accessed 12 September 2022).

This difference is worsening at an appalling rate. **Since the SDGs were agreed, the increase in wealth per person in richer countries has been several times more than the total wealth per person in sub-Saharan Africa** (*Figure 11*).<sup>86</sup>

There was a well-reported dip in wealth per person all over the world in 2020 because of the COVID pandemic, but in the US, wealth per person soon bounced back.<sup>87</sup> The seven-year decline in wealth per person in sub-Saharan Africa has been barely mentioned in the media or academia. Over half a billion children live in these 48 countries,<sup>88</sup> and they are paying the price for this extreme and growing inequality with their lives.

**FIGURE 11: WEALTH (GDP/PERSON) AS A MULTIPLE OF SUB-SAHARAN WEALTH (GDP/PERSON) 2015-2021**

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
North America	x32	x34	x34	x35	x35	x35	x37
Euro Area	x20	x21	x21	x22	x22	x22	x23

Source: The World Bank (2021), GDP per capita (constant 2015 USD), World Bank national accounts data, and OECD National Accounts data files. Available at: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.KD> (accessed 12 September 2022).



# MUBARAK NIGERIA

**"THEY HAVE  
PUT OFF A  
POLICY THAT  
WOULD  
IMPROVE OUR  
LIVES, AND  
THAT OF OUR  
PARENTS."**

Mubarak is 15 years old, and he lives near Jos Plateau, a conflict-affected area in the 'middle-belt' of Nigeria. He became a child labourer at the age of 13.

He dreamed of going to school, but his family's poverty forced him to work to survive. He knows he has the right to education, and he knows that the government has failed to provide the resources and protections needed for children like him to be able to go to school

Mubarak believes children are the leaders of tomorrow. He is calling on the government of Nigeria to consider the plight of children like him and take action.

Courtesy of 100 Million and Prime Goals Initiative, a youth-led organisation based in Nigeria, April 2022.

## B. MODERN GLOBAL INJUSTICES

The scale of the difference in wealth between countries is unjustifiable, and it is increasing. Modern global injustices are driving this new wave of inequality.

Numerous historical injustices are responsible for the titanic difference in wealth. The foundational legacy of slavery and colonialism has torn through our world, leaving exploited countries to repair the damage with insufficient means to do so. The injustices must be rectified, and restitution and reparation must be addressed urgently, underpinned by community participation.

Furthermore, the marginalisation of the poorest children will continue unless the injustices behind the increasing exploitation of children living in Africa today are also addressed.

These are modern injustices, perpetuated by this generation, that deny children in Africa their fair share of the world's wealth, forcing more and more young Africans to labour in fields and factories and killing millions of girls and boys every year.

This section of the report focuses on seven international examples, all from the last few years, that contribute to the shocking increase in global inequality and child exploitation. At their heart, all of these injustices have discrimination and racism.



Young village girl  
in Madagascar

## B.1 UNEQUAL RESPONSE TO COVID 19

There was a stark difference in the world's response to the COVID-19 pandemic between those living in rich and poor countries.

### EXTREMELY UNEQUAL EMERGENCY SUPPORT

Governments were quick to act and announced major support packages to protect people and businesses through the pandemic. However, the United Nations was looked over in favour of the Group of 20 (G20) and Group of 7 (G7) countries to develop the world's response<sup>89</sup> and, all too often, low-income countries were ignored.

Of the \$12 trillion boasted about in the G7's 'global agenda for action' in July 2021,<sup>90</sup> only a tiny fraction of the funding – just 0.2% – went in additional ODA to sub-Saharan African countries (Figure 12).

Humanity faced a common enemy like never before with COVID-19, and the world's unequal response has been to leave the poorest in Africa and elsewhere to fend for themselves.

Millions of children living in refugee camps were left struggling with reduced food rations and little or no access to remote learning. Millions of children were forced out of school and into work to support families with few savings and no access to social protection. Millions of girls' futures came to an end with school closures and increases in child marriage. Laureates and Leaders for Children's 2020 report, *A Fair Share for Children: Preventing the Loss of a Generation to COVID-19*,<sup>91</sup> explored all of these areas, yet the warning went unheeded. The children most vulnerable to the consequences of COVID-19 were left out of the world's response.

In contrast, by August 2020, businesses in Austria – a country with a population of just 8.9 million<sup>92</sup> – had received more COVID-19 financing than all low-income countries combined.<sup>93</sup> The airline industry in the United States alone received twice as much grant funding as all of the multilateral grant funding to the world's poorest countries put together,<sup>94</sup> despite the fact that in recent years the "boards/CEOs of the six largest airlines had spent 96% of their free cash flow on share buybacks, bolstering the share price and compensation of management."<sup>95</sup>

This was a problem for all low-income countries (LICs), but as 85% of those countries, and 87% of children living in those countries, are in sub-Saharan Africa, it has been an overwhelming injustice to African children.<sup>96</sup>

**The share of COVID emergency support to sub-Saharan Africa would have been \$1.76 trillion if money had been allocated by population.**

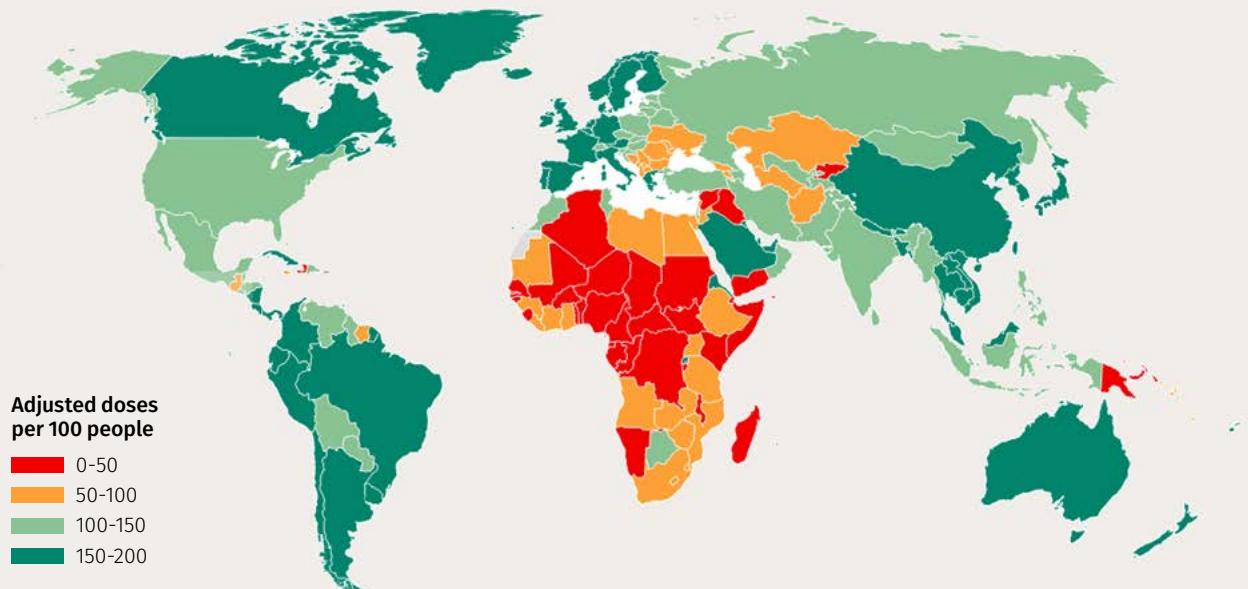
**FIGURE 12: COMPARISON OF THE G7'S COVID-19 GLOBAL AGENDA FOR ACTION & ADDITIONAL FUNDING ALLOCATED TO SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA (2020 AND 2021)**



Source: OECD/DAC (2022). Aid (ODA) disbursements to countries and regions [DAC2a]. Available at: <https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=TABLE2A> (accessed 12 September 2022); Group of 7 (2021) Carbis Bay G7 Summit Communiqué. Available at: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/06/13/carbis-bay-g7-summit-communique/>

**FIGURE 13: COVID-19 VACCINE COVERAGE OF POPULATION (2022)**

Primary doses administered per 100 people (double-dose equivalents with full coverage at 200)



Updated on 2022-09-14. Primary vaccinations of 1- and 3-dose protocols converted into double-dose equivalents (multiplied by 2 and 2/3) to achieve full coverage threshold of 200 and make cross-country comparisons invariant to the vaccine mix. Source: OWID, WPP: <https://covid19.owid.org/primary-vaccine-coverage-of-population-by-country-map-2/>

### VACCINE INEQUALITY: AFRICA AT THE TAIL END OF THE VACCINE JUSTICE QUEUE

As a result of lockdowns during the pandemic, routine vaccinations for other diseases for children under the age of 1 were suspended in many countries, and an estimated 25 million children under the age of 1 year did not receive basic vaccines – the highest number since 2009. 60% of these children were in developing countries, with four sub-Saharan countries ranking in the top ten countries with the most unvaccinated children.<sup>97</sup>

The inequality in COVID-19 support was exacerbated by the behaviour of richer countries which bought enough personal protection equipment (PPE) and vaccines to protect their populations several times over, while leaving other countries with chronic shortages. For example, in December 2021, the UK “announced it had ordered an additional 114 million COVID vaccine doses – despite around 85% of its adult population being fully vaccinated – just 6% of Africa’s 1.2 billion people had received two doses.”<sup>98</sup> Even a year into the pandemic, many doctors and nurses in sub-Saharan Africa were working without PPE and without vaccines. African health workers were risking their lives, not by that point because of COVID-19, but because of the world’s hugely unequal response.

Some important attempts to reduce the inequality in global vaccines were made through COVAX, with several donors providing funding including the US, which was the largest donor in total, and Sweden, which was the largest donor per person. However, this wasn’t enough as the issue of ‘vaccine apartheid’ was rightly raised by leaders in Africa,<sup>99</sup> and with support from the US it looked like the knowledge and skills to develop the vaccine would be shared with poorer countries in 2021.<sup>100</sup> Though richer countries were still stockpiling almost all the vaccines, they

had an opportunity to let poorer countries manufacture the vaccines themselves. Unfortunately, this was blocked at the World Trade Organization (WTO) by the UK and the European Union, particularly Germany, which prioritised future profits for their pharmaceutical companies over the demands of countries in Africa and elsewhere.<sup>101</sup> Pfizer, BioNTech, and Moderna made \$1,000 profit every second between them in 2021<sup>102</sup> while the people of the world’s poorest countries, who seem to matter less, remained largely unvaccinated (Pfizer and BioNTech delivered less than one percent of their total vaccine supplies to low-income countries, while Moderna delivered just 0.2 percent).<sup>103</sup> Some companies even excused their shameful behaviour by alleging vaccine reluctance in Africa was leading to low vaccination levels,<sup>104</sup> despite research demonstrating a higher willingness to take vaccines in poor countries.<sup>105</sup>

In a film, when the world finally discovers a cure to fight a new virus, humanity prevails. In the real world, rich countries decided to keep the cure a secret from poorer countries, which will have to wait years before they can benefit from a still inadequate number of donated products. After significant protests, a watered-down compromise agreement was agreed at the WTO in June 2022, but the damage has been done.

**"I BELIEVE THE WORLD FACES A CATASTROPHIC MORAL FAILURE IN EQUAL ACCESS TO THE TOOLS TO COMBAT THE PANDEMIC."**  
**DR. TEDROS ADHANOM GHEBREYESUS, DIRECTOR-GENERAL, WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION**

## B.2 CORPORATE TAX ABUSE AND OFFSHORE WEALTH

One of the most unjust aspects of the huge global wealth inequality between children in Africa and elsewhere is that Africa has plenty of natural resources. Indeed, many African countries actually have more natural resources than countries with 50 or even 100 times their wealth per person. These natural resources are being utilised, they are in demand, and many of them are precious. But the profits from the resources are mostly moved offshore so they don't benefit Africa's children. Instead, they benefit companies with ownerships outside of Africa, which then pay minimal tax. All too often, the very same companies exploit local workers with low wages and use child labour to extract those natural resources.

At the heart of the marginalisation of millions of children is this tax injustice which amplifies the impact of the extreme wealth inequality between countries. A government's budget depends on the size of their country's economy *and* the proportion of the economy they can raise in tax.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) is in the top ten countries with the most natural resources in the world.<sup>106</sup> The DRC supplies 70% of the world's cobalt,<sup>107</sup> a mineral which has helped drive global growth in recent years as it helps power most of the world's electronic goods – tablets, mobile phones, laptops and now cars. But tax avoidance and relentless conflict – fuelled by illicit supply routes for conflict minerals organised by armed groups funded by amoral international buyers<sup>108</sup> – mean the DRC's government receives only a fraction of the money from these resources. This leaves insufficient funds to support its children, resulting in widespread child labour – including in the cobalt mines themselves. How is it possible that the children of DRC suffer amid plenty of basic commodities that are the primary ingredients of the global economy?

The tech revolution has created many billionaires in Silicon Valley and around the world in recent years; although its resources have powered this revolution, GDP/person in the DRC is *half* of what it was 40 years ago and has barely increased since the start of the SDGs.<sup>109</sup>

It is a similar story across the continent. Africa is home to around 30% of the world's mineral reserves, including 40% of the world's gold, up to 90% of its chromium and platinum, and the world's largest reserves of cobalt,

**"PHILANTHROPY IS COMMENDABLE, BUT IT MUST NOT CAUSE THE PHILANTHROPIST TO OVERLOOK THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF ECONOMIC INJUSTICE WHICH MAKE PHILANTHROPY NECESSARY."**

MARTIN LUTHER KING,  
NOBEL PEACE LAUREATE, 1964

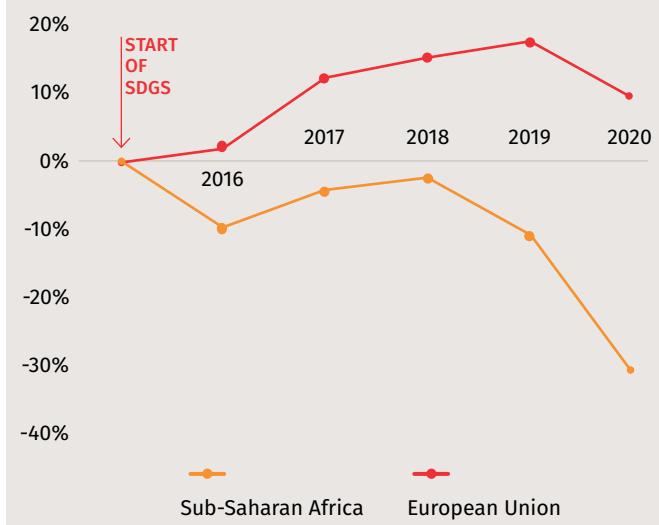
diamonds, and uranium.<sup>110</sup> Yet the profits from these resources rarely benefit Africa's children. Zambia is one of the world's top 10 copper producing countries,<sup>111</sup> Mali is one of the world's top 20 gold producing countries,<sup>112</sup> and Tanzania is one of the world's top ten diamond producing countries.<sup>113</sup> Yet they are all among the poorest countries in the world, and their governments do not have sufficient revenue to deliver the rights of their children.

### BUDGET CONSEQUENCES OF TAX INJUSTICE

Using the World Bank records of total tax collected by each country, a calculation of tax per person demonstrates that the government of Mali only has \$125 per person per year, and the government of Tanzania has \$112 per person per year. **All 48 sub-Saharan African governments combined receive less tax revenue per year than Italy.**<sup>114</sup> Corporate tax evasion in Africa costs over \$4.5 billion every year and offshore financial wealth \$2.3 billion a year.<sup>115</sup>

There are instances where influential, corrupt individuals within natural resource-rich regimes benefit from deals made with companies with ownership outside of Africa, compounding the injustice to children not only by allowing corporations to pay minimal tax, but also by directly stealing from them. This is explored in more detail in Section C. However, the enormous and increasing global inequality between government budgets is the fundamental reason millions of children are still working in child labour and dying from extreme poverty, despite the world's wealth doubling in the last 25 years.

**FIGURE 14: CHANGE IN TAX REVENUE DIVIDED BY THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN (0-14 YEARS) SINCE THE SDGS WERE AGREED (2015-2020)**



Calculated from: The World Bank (2021), Population ages 0-14, total: World Bank staff estimates using the World Bank's total population and age/sex distributions of the United Nations Population Division's World Population Prospects: 2019 Revision. Available at <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.0014.TO> (accessed 12 September 2022); and Tax revenue (% of GDP), International Monetary Fund, Government Finance Statistics Yearbook and data files, and World Bank and OECD GDP estimates. Available at <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/GC.TAX.TOTL.GD.ZS> (accessed 12 September 2022).

**In reality, even if the governments of low-income countries allocated all their tax revenue to support children, it would not be enough to provide even basic services.**

If African governments were able to raise the same percentage in tax revenue as countries in the European Union, it would increase government revenue by a third (\$116.79 billion in 2020 alone). A new analysis for this report shows just how different tax revenue per child is between the EU and sub-Saharan Africa. This gap has widened considerably since the start of the SDGs (*Figure 14*), and it is difficult to even see the changes per child in sub-Saharan Africa when compared with a child living in the EU (*Figure 15*). These are regional averages; the differences between some countries are even greater. **For example, the French government has \$56,317 in tax revenue to spend per child, and the Madagascan government has \$134 per child – more than 400 times less.**<sup>116</sup>

It is clearly impossible for governments to fulfil the basic rights of children with these extremely low budgets, even if they spend all of their government's revenue on children. In contrast, the total annual global loss of tax revenue for developing countries due to tax avoidance by transnational companies is \$200 billion,<sup>117</sup> more than the current tax revenue across sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>118</sup>

**Based on calculations by the Tax Justice Network, sub-Saharan Africa has been disadvantaged by \$85.935 billion in the first six years of the SDGs.**

#### GLOBAL TAX INJUSTICE EXTENDED

In 2021, the world finally got serious about tax justice. In April, US President Joe Biden proposed a new initiative to introduce a fairer global tax system, including moving “*toward an end to profit shifting and offshoring*”<sup>119</sup> This was in part a reaction to the increasing losses affecting Europe and the US as major corporations increased their use of tax havens, and in part a reaction to the increasing number of digital services taxes being proposed at the national level. Nevertheless, it presented a major opportunity for tax justice for African countries, which lose so much revenue from their natural resources. Research by the IMF in 2021 showed that in the mining sector alone “*governments in sub-Saharan Africa are losing \$450-\$730 million per year in corporate income tax revenues as the result of profit shifting by multinational companies.*”<sup>120</sup> This is a particularly bitter pill when children are toiling in mines in at least 32 of sub-Saharan Africa’s 48 countries.<sup>121</sup>

The OECD convened and led the global tax negotiations. A new global tax rate was agreed upon, in return for signatory countries committing to scrap any plans for a digital services tax. However, as predicted,<sup>122</sup> only a handful of African countries were included in the discussions and critical issues for Africa were side-lined. In the end, it was decided to simply exclude extractive companies from the requirements of the agreement. The excessive offshoring of the profits from Africa’s natural resources, which only benefits companies and their shareholders, is allowed to

continue even though it means there remains insufficient funds to support marginalised children, with such devastating consequences.

This missed opportunity shows how injustice can be perpetuated to disadvantage Africa, even when the injustice is being resolved for others. The OECD only allows richer countries as members and has no African members at all. Rich countries have again drawn up their own rules and have ignored calls to move rule-making on tax to the UN. Kenya, Nigeria, and most low-income countries didn’t back the final deal, but it moved ahead anyway, bringing a fairer tax system for some – but not for Africa.

In 2019, the Africa Group at the United Nations called for a UN Convention on Tax<sup>123</sup> and stressed that the group believed such a convention could help to tackle illicit financial flows. Three years later, and only after the OECD discussions on the new global tax rate were completed, the issue was finally discussed at the UN when it passed the ‘Promotion of inclusive and effective international tax cooperation’ resolution;<sup>124</sup> Africa’s children must now wait and see if it will have the intended impact.

**FIGURE 15: TAX REVENUE/CHILD (0-14 YEARS), EUROPEAN UNION VS. SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA (2015-2020)**



Calculated from: The World Bank (2021), *Population ages 0-14, total: World Bank staff estimates using the World Bank's total population and age-sex distributions of the United Nations Population Division's World Population Prospects: 2019 Revision*. Available at <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.0014.TO> (accessed 12 September 2022); *Tax revenue (% of GDP)*, International Monetary Fund, *Government Finance Statistics Yearbook* and data files, and World Bank and OECD GDP estimates. Available at: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/GC.TAX.TOTL.GD.ZS> (accessed 12 September 2022); and The World Bank (2022), *GDP (Constant 2015 US\$)*. Available at <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.KD> (accessed 12 September 2022).

## B.3 DISCRIMINATION AT THE IMF: SPECIAL DRAWING RIGHTS

In August 2021, the IMF announced a historic development to address the global liquidity crisis caused by COVID-19. This acute shortage of liquidity particularly affected poorer countries, which were unable to undertake quantitative easing as was being done by the US and EU central banks.

The IMF decided to temporarily act in a similar role to a central bank for the world and issued \$650 billion in Special Drawing Rights (SDR) to generate funds for countries struggling with the pandemic.<sup>125</sup> The SDR is an interest-bearing international reserve asset. This was bold and showed real leadership, given the scale of the crisis.

This announcement should have been some rare, good news for children living in low-income countries, who were particularly vulnerable during the pandemic but had been excluded from the G7/G20 support packages, and were facing extreme hardship due to enormous gaps in social protection coverage.<sup>126</sup>

Instead of allocating this emergency global funding in proportion to each country's population, however, or even giving more to the poorer countries which couldn't undertake quantitative easing and desperately needed the liquidity, the IMF's executive board allocated most of it to rich countries, and those rich countries decided to keep these allocations.

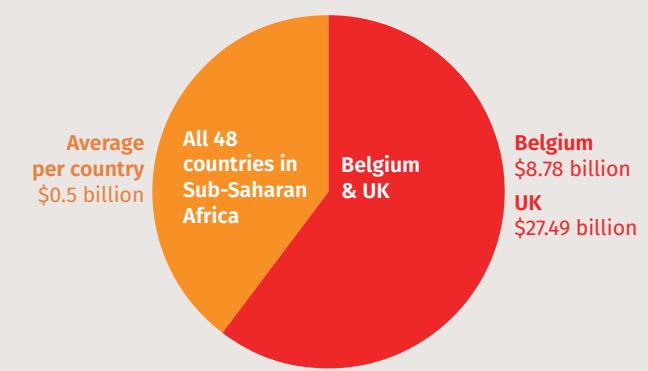
IMF Managing Director, Kristalina Georgieva, boasted that the SDR allocation "will particularly help our most vulnerable countries struggling to cope with the impact of the COVID-19 crisis."<sup>127</sup> UK Prime Minister and then-Finance Minister, Rishi Sunak, who chaired the G20 pre-meeting, claimed the agreement "paves the way for crucial and concerted action to support the world's low-income countries, ensuring that no country is left behind in the global economic recovery from [the] coronavirus."<sup>128</sup> But the truth is that the most vulnerable countries got a fraction of the resources of European and North American countries.<sup>129</sup>

High-income countries control 65% of the IMF's votes. The UK and Belgium, despite having 1% of the world's population, control more IMF votes than all 48 countries in sub-Saharan Africa put together, as they have since the IMF was founded in colonial times (Figures 16, 17, 18).

The French government has proposed a reallocation of SDRs to low-income countries, and has tried to galvanise other countries to do the same. However, by January 2023, they had not yet succeeded. If the IMF gives itself new powers to act as a creator of global liquidity, then these funds must be allocated fairly to all countries so all children of the world can benefit.

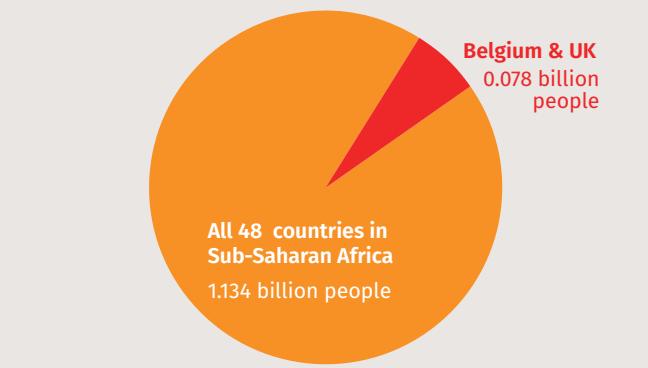
**If Special Drawing Rights had been issued by population, sub-Saharan Africa would have received an additional \$71.2 billion.** When the SDR allocations are divided by the number of children under 15 in each region, the scale of

**FIGURE 16: SHARE OF EMERGENCY SDR 2021, BELGIUM AND UK VS. SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA**



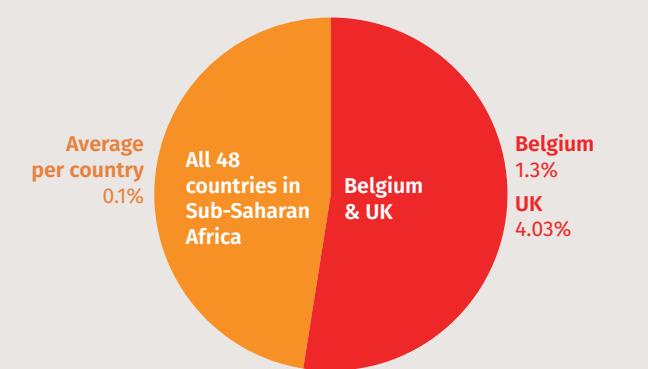
Source: International Monetary Fund (2021), 2021 General SDR Allocations. Available at <https://www.imf.org/en/Topics/special-drawing-right/2021-SDR-Allocation#> (accessed 12 September 2022)

**FIGURE 17: POPULATION, BELGIUM AND UK VS. SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA (2020)**



Source: The World Bank (2021), Population, total. Available at: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL> (accessed 12 September 2022).

**FIGURE 18: IMF VOTING POWER, BELGIUM AND UK VS. SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA**



Source: International Monetary Fund (2022), IMF Members' Quotas and Voting Power, and IMF Board of Governors. Available at <https://www.imf.org/en/About/executive-board/members-quotas> (accessed 12 September 2022).

the injustice is clear. **The SDRs issued in August 2021 were worth over \$2,500 per European child, but just \$50 per sub-Saharan African child.** There can be no justification for such discrimination against African children (Figure 19).

### FURTHER CONSEQUENCES OF UNDERREPRESENTATION OF AFRICA

The lack of African voting power at the IMF has had a negative impact for decades. The IMF has held a significant amount of control over many African governments since the end of colonialism in a way which is poorly understood in rich countries. This injustice also affects Latin America, parts of Asia and Eastern Europe, but its most devastating impact has been in Africa.

If the advice being enforced on countries by the IMF was neutral and had a positive impact, the harshness of the injustice could have been tempered – although the lack of voting power for poorer countries remains fundamentally unjust. However, the impact of the IMF's control over the last 50 years has been lamentable, with few positive stories from Africa to tell. There are many reasons for this, including the forced adoption of extreme austerity rejected by richer countries, a lack of understanding and accountability to the communities being managed, a dogmatic approach to economic policy and hostility to welfare, and enforcing access for multinationals without ensuring tax returns to the finance ministry.

In September 2022, the IMF published its conditions for the new deal made with the Zambian government.<sup>130</sup> In short, the IMF is demanding that Zambia turns its 6% GDP fiscal deficit in 2021 to a surplus of 3.2% of GDP by 2025, which can only be achieved by introducing severe and damaging austerity measures. All of the conditions are likely to hit the poorest citizens the hardest, including cutting fuel subsidies and increasing electricity tariffs, reducing the amount of consumer products that are VAT-free, and – unbelievably – making cuts to the successful Farmer Input Support Programme (FISP), which has made Zambia largely maize-secure. Income taxes are likely to increase, but at faster rates than taxes on profits from industry, including mining.<sup>131</sup>

The austerity imposed on Africa since independence by the rich countries which control the IMF, coupled with a lack of donor support for social protection, has been debilitating, and Africa's children have paid a heavy price. It is no coincidence that the countries in East Asia that have been making the most progress have been those with the

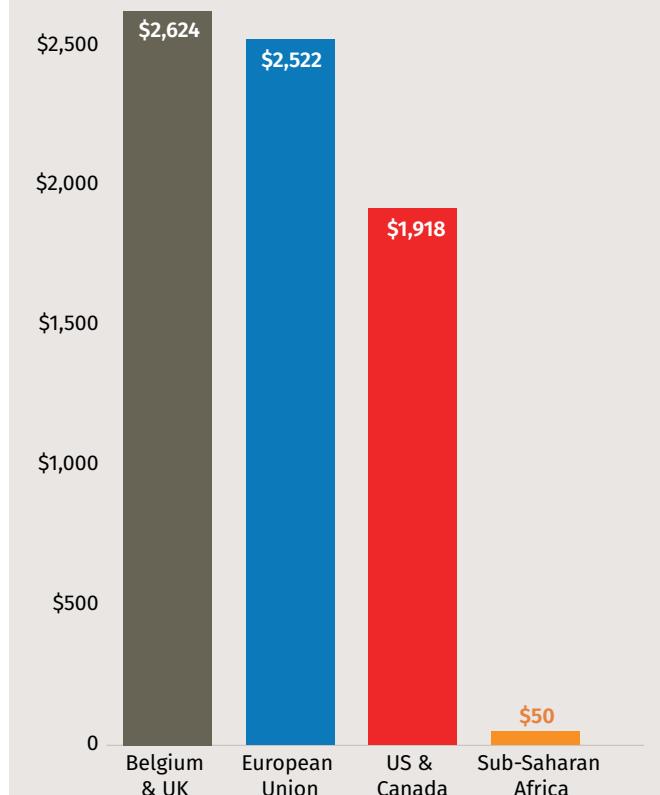
**"THERE WERE RIOTS IN AFRICA, DEMONSTRATIONS AGAINST THE IMF BECAUSE OF THE POLICY ADVICE THEY WERE GIVING, THE CONDITIONALITIES THEY WERE IMPOSING, AND THE DIFFICULTIES THAT AROSE OUT OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THOSE CONDITIONALITIES."**

JAKAYA KIKWETE, PRESIDENT, TANZANIA, 2005-2015

**"THE IMF'S USUAL PRESCRIPTION IS BUDGETARY BELT TIGHTENING TO COUNTRIES THAT ARE MUCH TOO POOR TO OWN BELTS."**

PROFESSOR JEFFREY SACHS, ECONOMIST

**FIGURE 19: IMF EMERGENCY SDR ALLOCATION/CHILD (0-14 YEARS)**



Calculated from: International Monetary Fund (2021), 2021 General SDR Allocations. Available at <https://www.imf.org/en/Topics/special-drawing-right/2021-SDR-Allocation#> (accessed 12 September 2022); The World Bank (2021), Population ages 0-14, total: World Bank staff estimates using the World Bank's total population and age-sex distributions of the United Nations Population Division's World Population Prospects: 2019 Revision. Available at <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.0014.TO> (accessed 12 September 2022)

ability to resist the control of the IMF. As Joseph Stiglitz, Nobel-winning economist and former chief economist of the World Bank identified, "*the IMF's lurch to extreme monetary policy ... reflects the interests and ideology of the Western financial community.*"<sup>132</sup>

While these mistakes are beginning to be acknowledged,<sup>133</sup> 43 African Union member states are cutting their spending by a cumulative 5.4% of GDP in 2021–26, totalling \$183bn, as a result of IMF austerity recommendations.<sup>134</sup> These reductions are likely to hit the public services children need the most: health, education, and social protection. In addition, countries that have been managed by the IMF are still ceding a huge amount of sovereignty. All too often, African parliamentarians and the citizens who elect them are not in control, undermining democracy and important local political institutions. The shocking decision on Special Drawing Rights is just the latest example of how the high-income countries controlling the IMF prioritise the policies that enrich themselves, and are indifferent to the needs of poorer countries, despite claiming to help them.

## B.4 DEBT INJUSTICE

If tax injustice doubles the effect of extreme wealth inequality between countries, debt injustice creates a triple threat. Archaic and unjust international debt management robs too many African governments of the limited tax revenue they have secured. Instead of services for children, an increasing share of government funds is spent on debt repayments, perpetuating extreme poverty and child labour, which can include repayments for loans of dubious quality and legality.

Developing country debt payments increased by 120% between 2010 and 2021.<sup>135</sup> The debt crisis has now deepened to the point that \$64 billion in African debt payments were due in 2022.<sup>136</sup> This is almost twice the level of expected bilateral aid to Africa<sup>137</sup> and is clearly unsustainable.

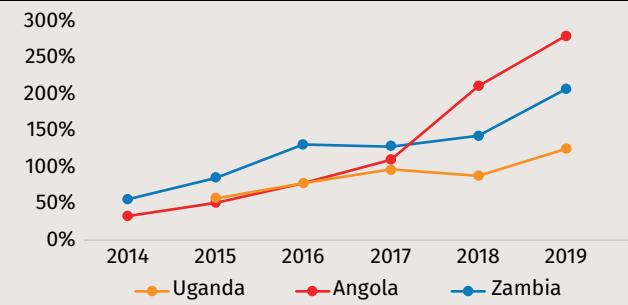
It is easy to see the practical impact of this debt. A comparison of budgetary expenditure in Uganda, Angola, and Zambia demonstrates the appalling increase in debt expenditure in the first few years of the SDGs (Figure 20). Is it any wonder more children are out of school and in child labour when government expenditure on debt interest has increased so quickly?

The proportion of government expenditure on debt as opposed to health care is equally shocking. It makes devastating reading, given the maternal mortality rate in these countries is between 35 and 62 times higher than in the European Union.<sup>138</sup>

This share of government budgets being spent on debt interest payments is growing far more quickly in sub-Saharan Africa than it is worldwide (Figure 21).

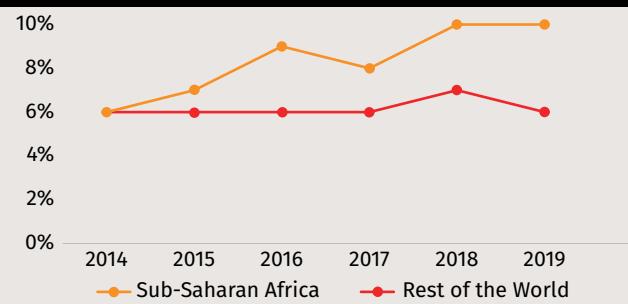
Increasing African interest rates and flatlining government income, despite huge growth worldwide, have resulted in a new debt crisis in many countries in sub-Saharan Africa. It is obscene that so many sub-Saharan African countries are being forced to pay similar amounts in interest on their debt than they are spending on education and health for their citizens (Figure 22). If the money being spent on interest was reallocated to health and education, it would make a transformative difference (Figure 23).

**FIGURE 20: GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURE ON DEBT INTEREST PAYMENTS AS PERCENTAGE OF EXPENDITURE ON EDUCATION (2014-2019)**



Calculated from: The World Bank (June 2022), *Government expenditure on education, total (% of GDP)*, UNESCO Institute of Statistics. Available at: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.XPD.TOTL.GD.ZS> (accessed 12 September 2022); and *Interest payments (% of expense)*, International Monetary Fund, *Government Finance Statistics Yearbook and data files*. Available at: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/GC.XPN.INTP.ZS> (accessed 12 September 2022); and The World Bank (2020) *Expense (% of GDP)* International Monetary Fund, *Government Finance Statistics Yearbook and data files*, and World Bank and OECD GDP estimates. Available at: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/GC.XPN.TOTL.GD.ZS> (accessed 29 December 2022).

**FIGURE 21: GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURE ON DEBT INTEREST PAYMENTS AS PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL EXPENDITURE (2014-2019)**



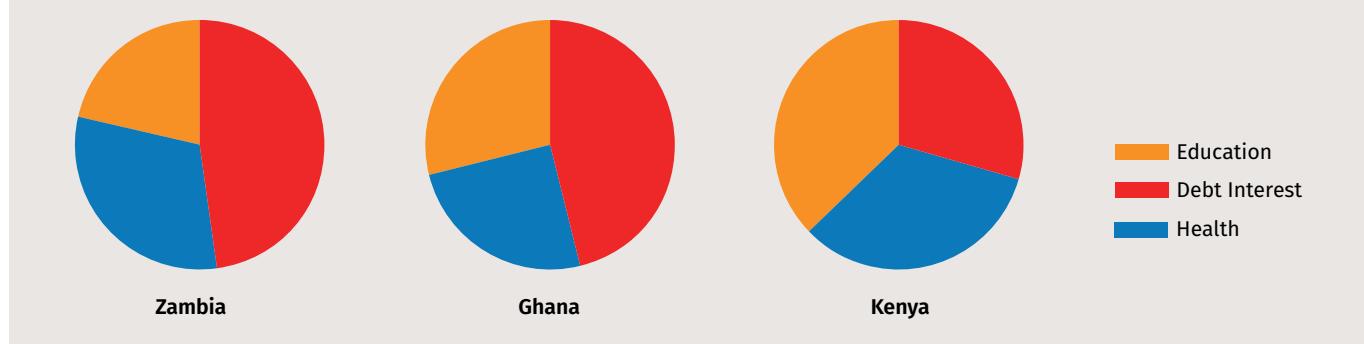
Source: The World Bank (2020), *Interest payments (% of expense)*, International Monetary Fund, *Government Finance Statistics Yearbook and data files*. Available at: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/GC.XPN.INTP.ZS> (accessed 12 September 2022)

**FIGURE 22: PERCENTAGE OF GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURE**

Country	Debt Interest	Health	Education
Zambia	8.3%	5.3%	3.7%
Ghana	6.3%	3.4%	3.9%
Kenya	4.1%	4.6%	5.1%

Source for figures 22 and 23: The World Bank (2020), *Interest payments (% of expense)*, International Monetary Fund, *Government Finance Statistics Yearbook and data files*. Available at: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/GC.XPN.INTP.ZS> (accessed 12 September 2022); *Government expenditure on education, total (% of GDP)*, UNESCO Institute of Statistics. Available at: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.XPD.TOTL.GD.ZS> (accessed 12 September 2022); and *Current health expenditure (% of GDP)*, World Health Organization Global Health Expenditure database ([apps.who.int/nha/database](https://apps.who.int/nha/database)). Available at: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SH.XPD.CHEX.GD.ZS> (accessed 12 September 2022). World Bank (2020) *Expense (% of GDP)* International Monetary Fund, *Government Finance Statistics Yearbook and data files*, and World Bank and OECD GDP estimates. Available at: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/GC.XPN.TOTL.GD.ZS> (accessed 29 December 2022).

**FIGURE 23: COMPARING GOVERNMENT INTEREST PAYMENTS WITH EDUCATION AND HEALTH EXPENDITURE (LATEST YEAR)**



This issue particularly affects children in Africa. A comparison of the number of children currently living in a country that is in debt distress demonstrates once again the scale of injustice: it is difficult to even see the slice for the rest of the world compared to the 55 million children in Africa (Figure 24). The countries most likely to move into debt distress, *Medium* and *High* debt risk, are also predominantly African (Figure 25).

**Interest paid on unsustainable debt by countries now in debt distress or at high risk of debt default in sub-Saharan Africa was an estimated \$93.49 billion in the first six years of the SDGs.**

These debt risks are assessments by the IMF itself, yet the international community has so far been incredibly slow to act to cancel the debts of these countries even though they are unsustainable.

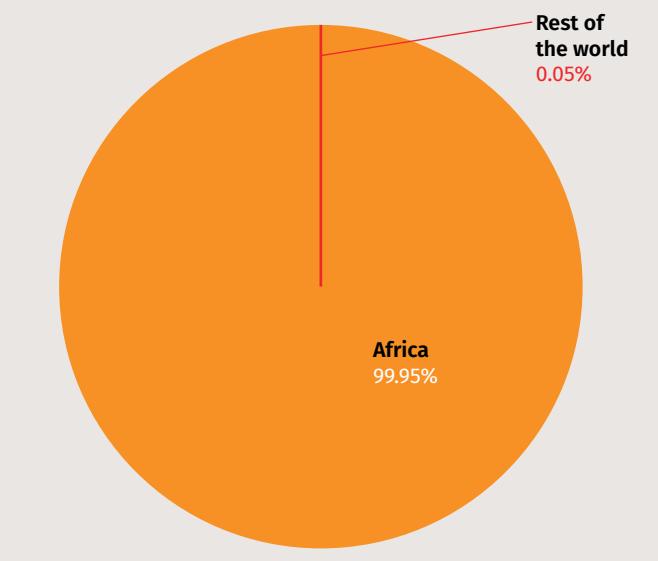
Policy-makers must give priority to resolving the crisis and provide a quick mechanism to cancel debt, so millions of girls and boys aren't forced out of education and into child labour to help repay debt that is already confirmed as unsustainable. How long must children in indebted countries suffer before the world acts?

**BAD LOANS REPAYED MANY TIMES OVER**

Being able to borrow funds is an important tool for national governments. However, lower-income countries are particularly vulnerable to macro-economic shifts, and it is especially important that any loans are undertaken for investments that are likely to produce governmental revenues that can then be used to alleviate poverty.

A large proportion of debt is owed to private lenders and the government of China,<sup>139</sup> as well as high-income countries, but this cannot be a barrier to action when the situation is unsustainable. Much of the money was poorly lent, but instead of the lender suffering as a business creditor would, Africa's children lose out. Countries are forced to take out more loans, deepening the level of debt and increasing the long-term costs. When other lenders stop, the IMF then lends more money to meet unsustainable repayments, which has the effect of bailing out previous lenders rather than IMF resources helping children. This means countries are borrowing more money overall, often paying the original amount many times over.

**FIGURE 24: NUMBER OF CHILDREN 0-14 YEARS LIVING IN A COUNTRY IN 'DEBT DISTRESS'**



Calculated from: The World Bank (2021), *Population ages 0-14, total: World Bank staff estimates using the World Bank's total population and age/sex distributions of the United Nations Population Division's World Population Prospects: 2019 Revision*. Available at: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.0014.TO> (accessed 12 September 2022); and International Monetary Fund (2022), *List of LIC DSAs for PRGT-Eligible Countries*. Available at: <https://www.imf.org/external/Pubs/ft/dsa/DSAlist.pdf> (accessed 12 September 2022).

"MODERN HIGH-TECH WARFARE IS DESIGNED TO REMOVE PHYSICAL CONTACT: DROPPING BOMBS FROM 50,000 FEET ENSURES THAT ONE DOES NOT 'FEEL' WHAT ONE DOES. MODERN ECONOMIC MANAGEMENT IS SIMILAR: FROM ONE'S LUXURY HOTEL, ONE CAN CALLOUSLY IMPOSE POLICIES ABOUT WHICH ONE WOULD THINK TWICE IF ONE KNEW THE PEOPLE WHOSE LIVES ONE WAS DESTROYING."

JOSEPH STIGLITZ, NOBEL LAUREATE IN ECONOMICS, 2001

This debt spiral being facilitated by the IMF and the World Bank reflects the priorities of their governing board, which prefer to avoid a default to companies and bond holders in richer countries and so encourage further borrowing. Though companies and rich individuals can quickly claim bankruptcy and restructure payments, low-income countries are forced to sink further into debt to meet repayments they already can't afford.

**FIGURE 25: CHILD POPULATION (0-14 YEARS) LIVING IN COUNTRIES IN OR AT RISK OF DEBT DISTRESS (2022)**

	Africa (Population U15)	Rest of the World (Population U15)	Percentage living in Africa
In debt distress	55,796,382	26,849	99.95%
At high risk	127,226,208	29,598,581	81.13%
At moderate risk	174,186,540	17,177,904	91.02%

Calculated from: The World Bank (2021), *Population ages 0-14, total: World Bank staff estimates using the World Bank's total population and age/sex distributions of the United Nations Population Division's World Population Prospects: 2019 Revision*. Available at: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.0014.TO> (accessed 12 September 2022); and International Monetary Fund (2022), *List of LIC DSAs for PRGT-Eligible Countries*. Available at: <https://www.imf.org/external/Pubs/ft/dsa/DSAlist.pdf> (accessed 12 September 2022).

In any agreement that considered the needs of people outside the G20, debt for low-income countries would have been cancelled during the COVID crisis. This would have cost less than one month of the emergency funding spent in rich countries that year.<sup>140</sup> However, instead the G20 (temporarily) suspended interest payments,<sup>141</sup> so the debt continued to build.

In response to further post-COVID global economic shocks, low-income countries have been left with few options and are being forced to borrow at even higher interest rates, extending and deepening the debt crisis. In October 2022 the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) released *Avoiding 'Too Little Too Late' on International Debt Relief*, a new report on the intensifying debt crisis, ahead of the IMF Annual Meetings. It highlighted how 54 developing economies have severe debt problems: “*They represent little more than 3 percent of the global economy, 18 percent of the population, but account for more than 50 percent of people living in extreme poverty... Debt relief would be a small pill for wealthy countries to swallow, yet the cost of inaction is brutal for the world's poorest.*”<sup>142</sup>

The G20 Common Framework, a forum to negotiate debt restructuring, was launched in November 2020, yet it has taken two years to agree any kind of support – and so far, this has been for just one country. Only three countries have applied – Chad, Zambia, and Ethiopia – and by December 2022 only Chad had reached an agreement with its creditors through the framework, some 22 months after it first applied.<sup>143</sup>

Glencore, a Switzerland-based mining and commodity firm and Chad's largest private external creditor, eventually agreed to support the restructuring of Chad's debt in November 2022. It is important to note, though, that there will be no reduction of debt – merely a delay in repayment. World Bank President, David Malpass, expressed his concern for the deal: “*The agreement reached by the creditors provides no immediate debt reduction. As a result, the debt service burden of Chad remains heavy and is crowding out priority expenditures on food, health, education and climate.*”<sup>144</sup> However, he did not go as far as cancelling Chad's debt to the World Bank itself.

Tim Jones, Head of Policy at Debt Justice, highlighted that “*The consortium of lenders led by Glencore must be laughing all the way to the bank. They've delayed the debt relief process for the last 18 months. During that time IMF loans have effectively been paying them off. Their reward is to keep being paid in full*”<sup>145</sup>.

Chad has been in debt distress for two years with unsustainable debt ten times the annual health budget. Women in Chad have the highest chance of maternal death in the world. A 15 year-old girl in Chad has a 1 in 15 chance of dying from maternity-related causes in her lifetime, a risk almost a thousand times greater than if she lived in Switzerland, where Glencore is based.<sup>146</sup>

It should be recognised that the people of Chad have not seen the benefits of the oil revenues the country has produced in the last two decades, partly due to much of the profit being offshore by foreign companies. Other revenues also disappeared through military expenditure and widespread corruption under its now-deceased leader, Idriss Deby, who was supported by Western governments for 30 years. These other injustices are addressed elsewhere in the report.

A more recent example of debt injustice and power dynamics can be seen with Blackrock (the largest known holder of external private debt in poorer countries<sup>147</sup>) and Zambia. Blackrock is the largest private bondholder in Zambia, but it refused a request to suspend debt payments in 2020 at the height of the pandemic. In fact, it purchased over \$100 million in bonds in the first 18 months of the COVID-19 pandemic and will make 110% profit if this is fully repaid.<sup>148</sup> In contrast, cuts planned by the government in Zambia are five times larger than their entire annual health budget.<sup>149</sup> It also raises new questions of government autonomy when so much debt is owned by major foreign companies with other interests.

The loans themselves can also be highly questionable. For example, in Mozambique, in the first year of the SDGs it was disclosed that London-based Credit Suisse and VTB Capital had lent \$2 billion to three state-owned companies in Mozambique without public disclosure. The loans were not approved by the Mozambique parliament as required under Mozambique law. A Credit Suisse condition to get sign off on the loans by the Bank of Mozambique was dropped and Credit Suisse and VTB gave or arranged loans to three companies which had no revenue and had no contracts in place to suggest that they would generate revenue in the future. The cost of the equipment bought with the loans was \$700 million higher than would be expected.<sup>150</sup>

Such negligent lending in any other walk of life would see losses on those who lent the money. However, propped up by the threat of sanctions and punitive penalties, African governments continue to be forced to pay back bad loans made on unfair terms, meaning the original debt is paid back many times over, and perpetuating the depletion of funds for vital public services. Such debt repayments can take decades, leaving current and future generations of children without sufficient access to health and education.



# DAPHINE UGANDA

“WE USE OUR  
VOICES AS  
CHILDREN,  
AND SPEAK  
ABOUT HOW  
BEST WE  
CAN FIGHT  
AGAINST CHILD  
LABOUR.”

Daphine was just eight years old when she first became a child labourer in the Tira gold mines in Uganda. She was exposed to injustices including sexual harassment and rape. She knows the mine she worked in is still using child labour, and continued to use child labour even throughout the COVID lockdowns.

Through SOMERO Uganda’s advocacy projects, ‘Girls Advocacy Alliance’ and ‘Joining Forces for all Children’, child labour survivors have been empowered to go back to school and are given an opportunity to speak about issues that directly affect them and how they can join the efforts towards the elimination of child labour.

Courtesy of 100 Million and SOMERO Uganda, Busia District, Eastern Uganda, May 2022.

## B.5 BROKEN AID PROMISES

### DEVELOPMENT FINANCE – CAN PAY, WON'T PAY

It is now over 50 years since the international target of 0.7% GDP was agreed for development aid finance. The wellbeing, education, and participation of children were all specifically identified by the UN in the agreement of this target, as part of the compelling need to support the economic, environmental, social, and political growth of developing countries.

The target has been repledged numerous times, including reaffirmation in the Sustainable Development Goals. EU leaders alone have promised it in three consecutive EU/AU summits with African leaders. However, there are few targets that have been as consistently missed. After 50 tries at it only eight countries have ever met it and one of those, the UK, recently slashed its ODA – in the middle of the global pandemic.<sup>151</sup> Figure 26 shows the decline of ODA as a % of GDP in the last 60 years.

This has left international aid at too low a level to break the cycle of extreme poverty, ensuring the misery is passed onto another generation of children. Surveys consistently show people in richer countries overestimate the proportion of their country's wealth allocated to aid.<sup>152</sup> In fact, the wealth of the world's richest man is larger than the sum of all international aid budgets put together.<sup>153</sup> **The cost of the broken promise on aid in the last 50 years is a staggering \$5.7 trillion.<sup>154</sup>**

### AFRICAN AID INJUSTICE

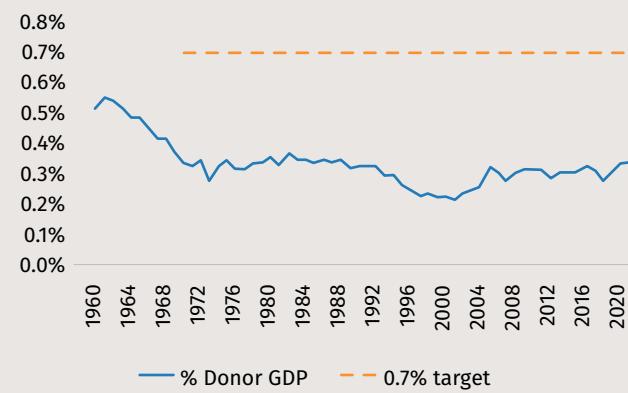
Richer countries have not only broken their promise on how much they will give, they have also broken promises to spend aid where it is needed. Even within the relatively small funding committed to aid, the needs of African countries and their children have been deprioritised, despite the overwhelming challenges they face. Appallingly, the share of ODA to Africa as a % of donor GNI has been declining over the last decade (Figure 27).

Despite the recognition in the SDGs of the importance of a particular focus on Africa, and despite the increasing levels of extreme poverty, donors have decided to deprioritise the continent when allocating aid. Political priorities and profit-making for domestic companies have been chosen over the needs of the poorest girls and boys, with fatal consequences.

**"THE WORLD IS A DANGEROUS PLACE,  
NOT BECAUSE OF THOSE WHO DO EVIL,  
BUT BECAUSE OF THOSE WHO LOOK ON  
AND DO NOTHING."**

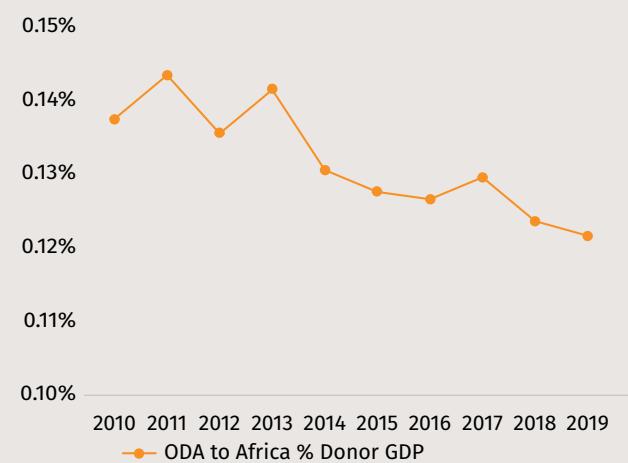
ALBERT EINSTEIN, NOBEL LAUREATE IN  
PHYSICS, 1921

FIGURE 26: ODA AS % OF GDP (1960-2020)



Source: OECD/DAC (2022), Aid (ODA) disbursements to countries and regions [DAC2a]. Available at: <https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=TABLE2A> (accessed 12 September 2022).

FIGURE 27: ODA TO AFRICA AS % OF DONOR COUNTRY  
GDP (2010-2019)



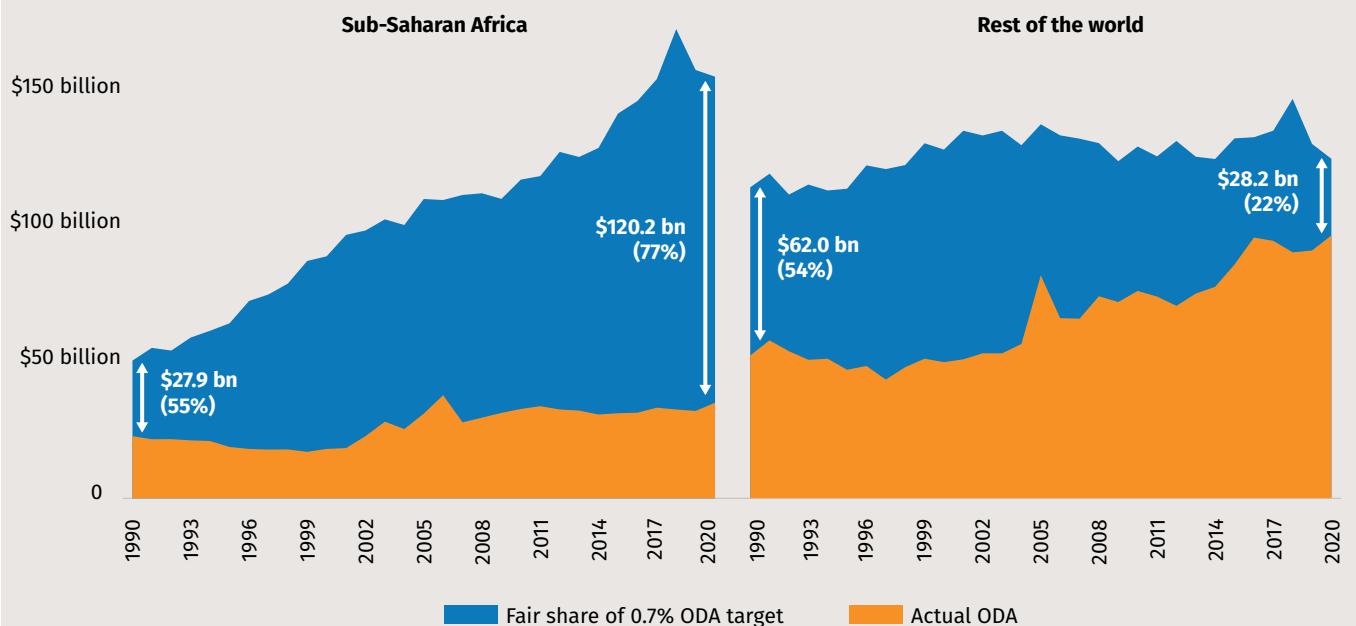
Source: OECD/DAC (2022), Aid (ODA) disbursements to countries and regions [DAC2a]. Available at: <https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=TABLE2A> (accessed 12 September 2022).

### WHAT IF AID WAS SPENT TO HELP CHILDREN?

Discrimination and international politics mean many rich countries spend much of their aid outside of the world's poorest countries, despite the explicit purpose of ODA being development. It should not be controversial for aid to be used to end multidimensional poverty for millions of children.

For this report an analysis was undertaken of the proportion of children dying under the age of five to see where the greatest need is and where aid should be spent proportionally. In sub-Saharan Africa, the children paying the very highest price are not even the one in four children aged 5-11 who are in child labour, but the one in thirteen children who die before they turn five.<sup>155</sup>

A subsequent calculation was made to identify how much funding countries would have received if the 0.7% promise was kept, and if ODA was allocated based on where extreme poverty is killing young children. A comparison was

**FIGURE 28: FAIR SHARE OF ODA AT 0.7% ALLOCATED BY INFANT MORTALITY RATES VS. ACTUAL ODA ALLOCATIONS (1990-2020)**

Calculated from: OECD/DAC (2022), *Aid (ODA) disbursements to countries and regions [DAC2a]*. Available at: <https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=TABLE2A> (accessed 12 September 2022); and UNICEF (2020), *Child mortality estimates regional and global under-five deaths generated by the UN Inter-agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation (UN IGME)*. Available at: <http://data.unicef.org> (accessed 12 September 2022).

then made between the share due to sub-Saharan Africa countries and the rest of the world, and the ODA actually allocated (Figure 28). The results are deeply troubling.

ODA in the rest of the world is 78% of what it should have been if rich countries had kept the aid promise and spent aid where children need it (up from 46% in 1990). In contrast, ODA to sub-Saharan Africa is 23% of what it should have been (down from 45% in 1990).

In addition, these trends have accelerated during the first few years of the SDGs: the annual gap for sub-Saharan Africa increased by \$10 billion from 2015-2020 whilst the annual gap for the rest of the world decreased by \$15 billion. When the then-President of the United States used deeply discriminatory language about African countries in 2018, and when the then-UK Prime Minister complained in Parliament about aid money going to African countries like Tanzania rather than (much richer) countries in Europe, there were consequences. Donors have not only broken their aid promise for the last 50 years, but they have broken it several times over to children in Africa.

**Broken aid promises have cost sub-Saharan Africa \$742 billion since the start of the SDGs.** In 2020 alone the 48 countries in sub-Saharan Africa lost out on \$120 billion compared to the \$28 billion lost by the other 98 aid-receiving countries in the rest of the world. The discrimination against sub-Saharan Africa is clear to see.

Not only have richer countries provided less overall aid than promised, and allocated sub-Saharan African countries just a fraction of what they should have had, they have also forced much of that aid to be spent on European and American companies or on projects that benefit industries in richer countries.<sup>156</sup> In the very first year of the SDGs, donors awarded 51% of the aid contracts they report to the OECD to their own domestic companies and just 7% to

suppliers in the low- and middle-income countries they are meant to be supporting. In the preceding year, EU countries spent three times as much on agricultural aid in Europe as in sub-Saharan Africa.

Yet when aid is spent well it really works. There are millions of children in school and millions drinking clean water because of aid. In some of the poorest countries aid forms a major part of government expenditure. The recent decision of the UK government to slash aid and deprioritise African countries has had a deep and immediate negative effect.

Some justice advocates have deprioritised or diminished the importance of aid because they feel it is used to mask other injustices and isn't working. But in truth, part of the justice the world's most marginalised children have a right to is to receive their fair share of aid. If global ODA was realigned to provide direct funding for the world's poorest families, the effects would be transformative.

The alternatives promulgated by donors and the international financing institutions, such as loans and 'innovative financing', are not working. Funding provided in loans often ends up exacerbating poverty, and a large portion of international investment results in off-shoring of profits and lost control of critical national assets, long after the touted employment benefits have worn off. The global injustices highlighted in this report can be tackled alongside providing aid justice for the children living in sub-Saharan Africa.

**"AT THE ROOT OF THESE PROBLEMS LIES POLITICAL WILL OF THE GLOBAL COMMUNITY, ESPECIALLY THE RICH."**  
FESTUS MOGAE, PRESIDENT, BOTSWANA  
1998-2008

## B.6 BROKEN CLIMATE FINANCE PROMISES

A further injustice is the long list of broken promises on climate financing that low-income countries have had to endure. With a few notable exceptions, richer countries have continuously failed to meet their commitments on the international stage, let alone step up to address all the damage they have caused on CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

### CLIMATE CRISIS: WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

The responsibility for the climate crisis is not equally shared. Climate change has been growing over the last century, and Europe and the North American countries have been by far the biggest polluters over the last 100 years (Figure 29).

A single country, the UK, has emitted more carbon dioxide in the last century than all of the 54 countries in Africa combined, despite having a fraction of the population.<sup>157</sup> The combined CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of the 48 countries in sub-Saharan Africa in the six years since the start of the SDGs still comes to less than the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions produced by the United States in 2016 alone.<sup>158</sup> Even the CO<sub>2</sub> produced by the big new polluters like China include emissions to manufacture goods consumed in the US and other rich countries.<sup>159</sup> Twenty of the richest billionaires are estimated, on average, to be emitting as much as 8000 times more carbon than the billion poorest people.<sup>160</sup>

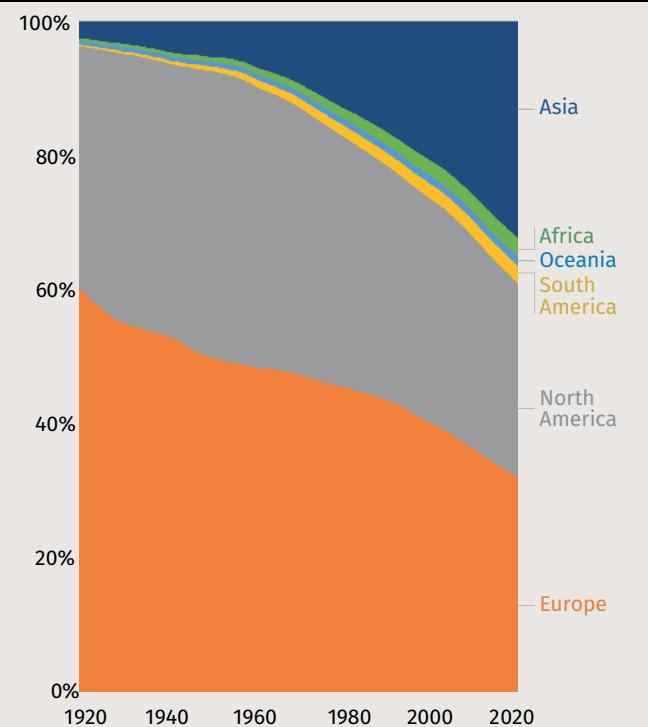
### CLIMATE CRISIS: WHO IS VULNERABLE?

While the cause of the pollution is abundantly clear, it is also clear who will suffer the most from the climate crisis. Temperatures in Africa are projected to rise faster than the global average increase during the 21st century.<sup>161</sup> With 95% of the world's rain-fed agriculture,<sup>162</sup> and high current temperatures in many countries, Africa is particularly vulnerable.

The Notre Dame-Global Adaptation Initiative (ND-GAIN) Country Index ranks 182 countries by vulnerability – all of the top 10 countries are in sub-Saharan Africa (Figure 30) and the average sub-Saharan Africa country is over 100 places higher than the United States and the average European Union country. **In fact, every single country in sub-Saharan Africa is more vulnerable than the most vulnerable country in the European Union. Africa has the least responsibility, but will suffer the most, and must make the biggest adaptations (Figure 31).**

Children suffer the worst impacts of any crisis, including climate. Up to two-thirds of preventable illness and death from environmental hazards is experienced by children, with the burden predominantly in children under five years old.<sup>163</sup> Drought has already impacted children living in the Horn of Africa, where out-of-school rates are double the average of the Eastern and Southern African region.<sup>164</sup> When water is scarce, children are more likely to get sick or die from water-borne diseases in polluted water. The

**FIGURE 29: CUMULATIVE CO<sub>2</sub> EMISSIONS BY WORLD REGION**

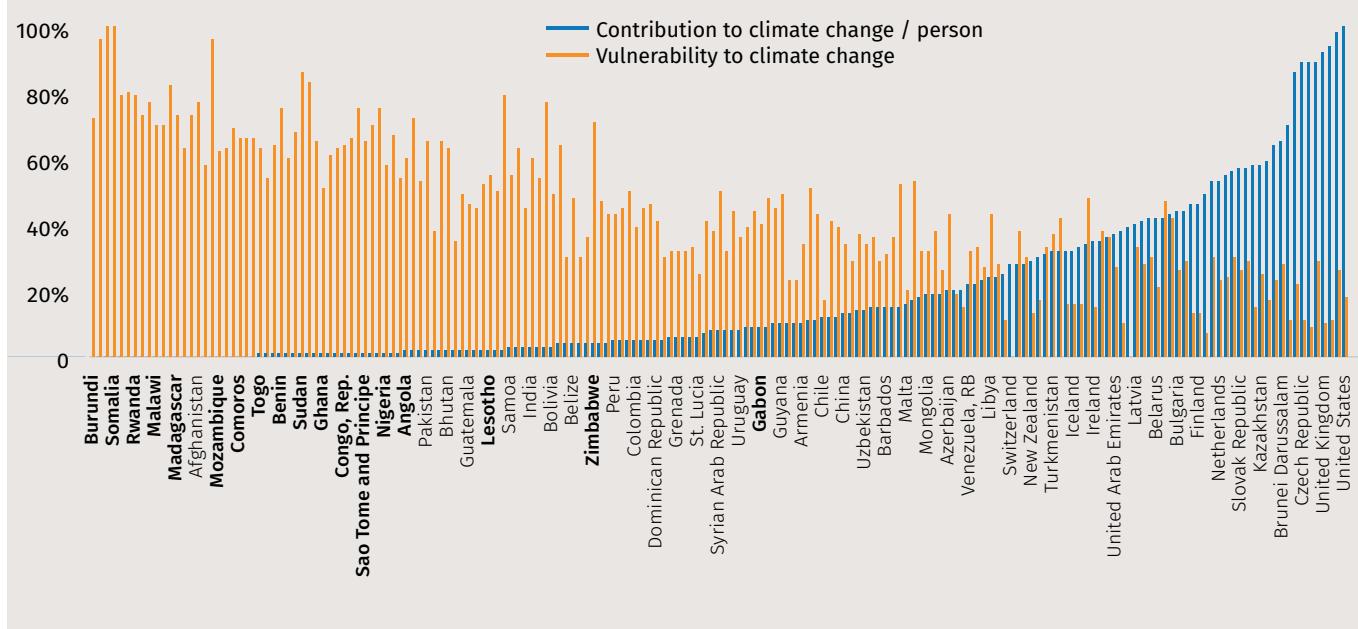


Source: Our World in Data (August 2020), Cumulative CO<sub>2</sub> emissions world region based on the Global Carbon Project. Available at: <https://ourworldindata.org/grapher/cumulative-co2-emissions-region> (accessed 12 September 2022).

**FIGURE 30: VULNERABILITY TO CLIMATE CHANGE BY COUNTRY**

Country	Vulnerability score	Rank (n=182)
<b>Niger</b>	<b>0.67489</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Somalia</b>	<b>0.67315</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Guinea-Bissau</b>	<b>0.6582</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Chad</b>	<b>0.65795</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Sudan</b>	<b>0.61753</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Liberia</b>	<b>0.60292</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Mali</b>	<b>0.59784</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Central African Republic</b>	<b>0.59263</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Eritrea</b>	<b>0.59084</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Congo, Dem. Rep.</b>	<b>0.58604</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Rwanda</b>	<b>0.58576</b>	<b>11</b>
Micronesia, Fed. States	0.58481	12
<b>Uganda</b>	<b>0.58007</b>	<b>13</b>
Afghanistan	0.57913	14
Tonga	0.57852	15
<b>Benin</b>	<b>0.57222</b>	<b>16</b>
Solomon Islands	0.57144	17
<b>Mauritania</b>	<b>0.57054</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Ethiopia</b>	<b>0.56303</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Sierra Leone</b>	<b>0.56301</b>	<b>20</b>

Source: The Notre Dame-Global Adaptation Index (ND-GAIN) Country Index. Available at: <https://gain.nd.edu/our-work/country-index/> (accessed 12 September 2022).

**FIGURE 31: COMPARISON BETWEEN VULNERABILITY TO CLIMATE CHANGE AND CO2 CUMULATIVE EMISSIONS/CAPITA (2020)**

Please note: only 60 countries are labelled on the y axis for space but data for 180 countries is shown. Calculated from: Our World in Data (August 2020). Cumulative CO2 emissions world region based on the Global Carbon Project. Available at: <https://ourworldindata.org/grapher/cumulative-co2-emissions-region> (accessed 12 September 2022) & The Notre Dame-Global Adaptation Index (ND-GAIN) Country Index. Available at: <https://gain.nd.edu/our-work/country-index/> (accessed 12 September 2022) & The World Bank (June 2022). Population, Total – Using data from United Nations Population Division, Available at <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL> (accessed August 2022).

International Panel on Climate Change, in its Africa chapter of its latest report, consistently identified children as being one of the most vulnerable groups to climate change.<sup>165</sup>

### PROMISE LITTLE, DELIVER LESS

Every country in the world needs to act to solve the climate crisis and rectify the mistakes of long-industrialised nations – but adaptation is particularly difficult with just 1-2% of their wealth. A critical agreement made at the major COP 15 UN Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen in 2009 was that that \$100 billion in new annual climate financing would be made available for developing countries by 2020 in addition to aid.<sup>166</sup>

To put that number in a global context, despite the scale of the climate emergency (and richer countries being directly responsible for the crisis, and poorer countries facing most of the consequences), the amount rich countries pledged in annual climate funding is *less than half a week* of the emergency expenditure given during 2020 to support people and businesses in rich countries during the COVID pandemic.

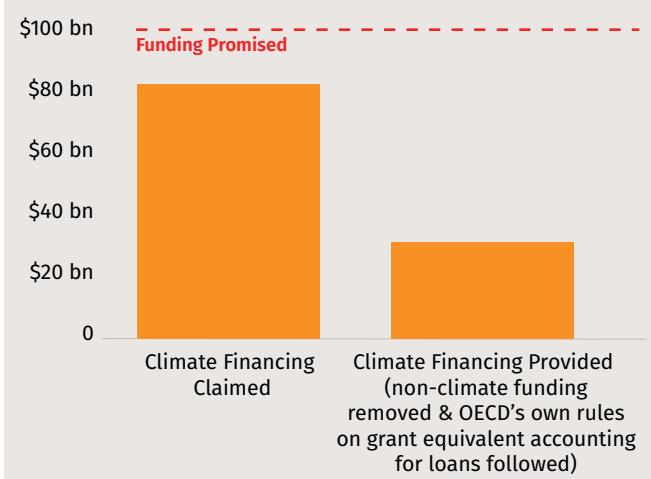
### LET THEM EAT CO<sub>2</sub>

Even this relatively modest commitment was missed, with donors admitting in 2022 that \$83.3 billion had been provided in climate finance – some \$16.7 billion short of the target.<sup>167</sup> In addition, as a further injustice, there was real dishonesty in the purported figures provided at COP:

- High-income countries were counting loans rather than grants – worsening the debt burden.
- Much of the ‘new’ money came from *existing* development funding. Diverting funds from health and education for marginalised children in Africa was not what was promised.

“THERE IS ONE THING I ALMOST NEVER HEAR LEADERS TALK ABOUT, AND THAT IS LOSS AND DAMAGE. FOR MANY OF US, REDUCING AND AVOIDING IS NOT ENOUGH. YOU CANNOT ADAPT TO LOST CULTURES, YOU CANNOT ADAPT TO LOST TRADITIONS, YOU CANNOT ADAPT TO LOST HISTORY, YOU CANNOT ADAPT TO STARVATION. YOU CANNOT ADAPT TO EXTINCTION.”

VANESSA NAKATE,  
CLIMATE JUSTICE ACTIVIST

**FIGURE 32: CLIMATE FINANCING FOR DEVELOPING COUNTRIES, CLAIMED VS ACTUAL (2019-20)**

Source: OECD Publishing (2022). *Climate Finance Provided and Mobilised by Developed Countries in 2016-2020: Insights from Disaggregated Analysis. Climate Finance and the USD 100 Billion Goal series*. Available at <https://doi.org/10.1787/286dae5d-en>; and Oxfam (2022). *Climate Financing Short-Changed*. Available at <https://policy-practice.oxfam.org/resources/climate-finance-short-changed-the-real-value-of-the-100-billion-commitment-in-2-621426/> (accessed 27 October 2022).

- Some donors counted the full costs of projects which only had a limited climate component.

An analysis by Oxfam in 2022 showed that when donor climate financing is calculated properly, using the OECD's own rules on loans, the climate finance provided drops to just \$31.5 billion, missing the target by a staggering \$68.5 billion.<sup>168</sup> Insufficient funding was provided for the least developed countries, which received only 20.5% of the financing – and a majority of their funding was further loans, adding to their debt burden. Even looking at broader global climate finance, only 3% flows into Africa, even though 14% of the world lives in Africa.<sup>169</sup>

COP 27, hosted by Egypt in Sharm el-Sheikh, concluded on 20 November 2022 with the historic agreement of a 'loss and damage' fund for developing countries.<sup>170</sup> While the announcement of the fund should be celebrated, it is unhelpful that the Transitional Committee, which is charged with the development of the fund, has allocated only two seats to sub-Saharan Africa, and another two to Small Island Developing States (SIDS), out of a total of 24 members. Sub-Saharan African countries and SIDS are the most vulnerable to climate change, and should additionally take the two seats available to 'least developed countries' to enable greater representation.<sup>171</sup> Swift action must be taken to finance and operationalise this fund, otherwise it risks being another half-empty climate finance pot: no commitment was agreed at COP27 to make up the failure to deliver the \$100 billion annual target. In addition, the continued failure of COP to tackle the root causes of climate change perpetuates and increases the need for climate finance – high-income countries have once again traded the lives of millions of children vulnerable to climate disaster, for their own economic benefit.

Once the attention on the conference and the cameras have gone, with few laws with which domestic campaigners can hold them to account, too many governments in richer countries reduce or simply cancel funding they have pledged.

**Broken climate promises have cost countries in sub-Saharan Africa \$157.5 billion since the start of the SDGs.**

As we saw during the COVID crisis, inadequate targeting of funding is leaving the most marginalised under-protected, even when funding is mobilised. Aside from corroding goodwill from countries who did not create the climate crisis and jeopardising the vitally important global consensus on tackling climate change, the failure to provide the much-promised funding to low-income countries is another injustice that leaves millions of the world's poorest children further at risk.

"AFRICA IS THE MOST VULNERABLE CONTINENT TO CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACTS UNDER ALL CLIMATE SCENARIOS ABOVE 1.5 DEGREES CELSIUS. DESPITE HAVING CONTRIBUTED THE LEAST TO GLOBAL WARMING AND HAVING THE LOWEST EMISSIONS, AFRICA FACES EXPONENTIAL COLLATERAL DAMAGE, POSING SYSTEMIC RISKS TO ITS ECONOMIES, INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENTS, WATER AND FOOD SYSTEMS, PUBLIC HEALTH, AGRICULTURE, AND LIVELIHOODS."

AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK

## B.7 UNEQUAL REFUGEE RESPONSE AND UNJUST IMMIGRATION POLICIES

Refugees have become easy political targets for wealthy governments, which – despite their rising wealth – are creating an increasingly hostile environment for refugees, particularly for refugees of colour. Much of the hostility towards refugees comes from discriminatory or incorrect reporting, which leads to false impressions in rich countries. All of this ignores both the positive impact of refugees to the economies of wealthy countries and the far greater contribution that poorer countries make to providing asylum.

For high-income countries – despite hosting far fewer of the world's refugees – the net fiscal impact of welcoming migrants and refugees is usually positive. A UK comparative study demonstrated that the public cost of a non-European migrant is far lower than the cost of a UK-born citizen,<sup>172</sup> and a US government study (albeit rejected by the Trump White House) showed that refugees contribute around 25% more to the US economy than the hosting cost.<sup>173</sup>

By the end of 2021, the vast majority of the world's refugees – 83% – were hosted by developing countries. African countries alone hosted almost 7 million refugees.<sup>174</sup> The Russia invasion of Ukraine has significantly increased the number of refugees hosted in Europe, but the data should not be used to mask the fact of the hostile environment: the very same countries now hosting Ukrainian, predominantly white, refugees are the same

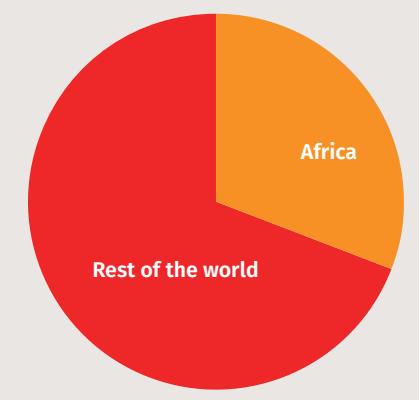
countries which continue to block access to refugees from Afghanistan, Syria, South Sudan, and DRC, often violently and with fatal consequences.

Wealthy countries' approach to refugees are doubly insidious to children in poorer countries – more so if you consider the economic benefits wealthy countries reap from hosting refugees. Over half of the world's refugees are children, some of whom are discriminated against by European countries refusing to recognise they are under 18 to avoid providing the 'costly' support to which child refugees have the right.<sup>175</sup> For African children, the disproportionately low response of donor countries to the global refugee crisis adversely impacts their access to the resources they need to realise their rights.

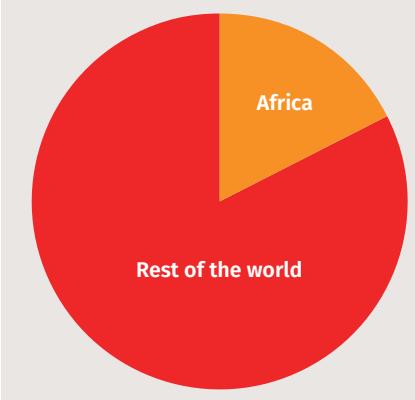
### WHICH COUNTRIES IN THE WORLD ARE THE MOST GENEROUS TO REFUGEES?

African countries, though among the poorest in the world, are also the most generous host countries and provide more than their share of refuge compared with their populations (*Figures 33, 34, 35*). African countries are also providing support to 48% of the world's internally displaced people. Even in the first few years of the SDGs, when Africa has faced such hardship and discrimination, the number of people provided refuge by African countries has been increasing (*Figure 36*).

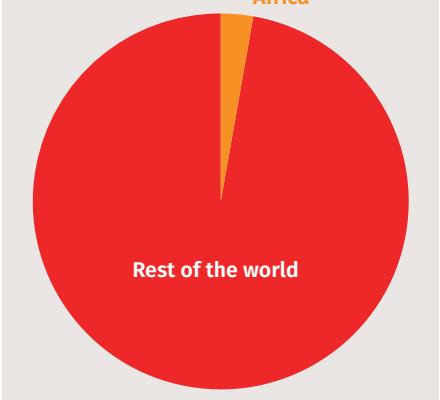
**FIGURE 33: SUPPORT FOR REFUGEES & ASYLUM SEEKERS (2021)**



**FIGURE 34: TOTAL POPULATION (2021)**



**FIGURE 35: TOTAL GDP (2021)**



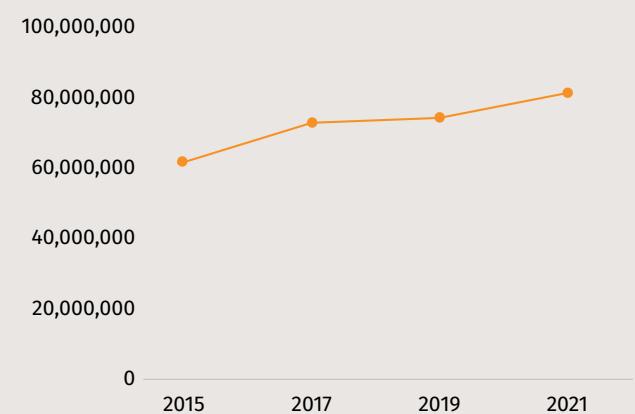
Sources: Figure 33: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (2022), *Refugee Data Finder*. Available at <https://www.unhcr.org/refugee-statistics/download/?url=AvpD0v> (accessed 12 September 2022). Figure 34: The World Bank (2021), *Population, total*. Available: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL> (accessed 12 September 2022). Figure 35: The World Bank (2021), *GDP (current US\$) World Bank national accounts data, and OECD National Accounts data files*. Available at: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.CD> (accessed 12 September 2022).

## COMPARE BY WEALTH?

Comparing the number of refugees hosted to the host country's population is a helpful measure, but a stronger assessment of generosity is to compare the number of refugee and asylum-seekers a country is hosting with the wealth of the country. The number of refugees helped per million of a country's GDP is a fairer method and should be used by UN agencies. It explodes the myth that it is high-income countries that are the most generous when it comes to providing refuge, or that the richer countries can't afford to provide support.

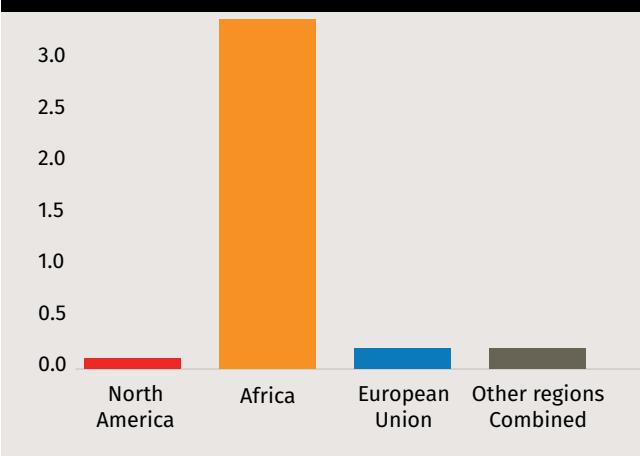
EU countries are providing refuge for only one person per \$4.3 million of their GDP; for the same amount, Africa provides refuge for 14 people. North American countries are providing refuge for one person for every \$12.2 million of their GDP; Africa provides refuge for 40 people for the same amount. *Figure 37* shows the number of refugees and asylum seekers supported in each region per million of the country's GDP.

**FIGURE 36: REFUGE PROVIDED BY AFRICAN COUNTRIES (NUMBER), 2015-2021**



Source: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (2022), *Refugee Data Finder*. Available at <https://www.unhcr.org/refugee-statistics/download/?url=AvpD0v> (accessed 12 September 2022).

**FIGURE 37: NUMBER OF REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS SUPPORTED (PER MILLION OF THE COUNTRY'S GDP), 2021**



Calculated from: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (2022), *Refugee Data Finder*. Available at <https://www.unhcr.org/refugee-statistics/download/?url=AvpD0v> (accessed 12 September 2022); and The World Bank (2021), *GDP (current US\$) World Bank national accounts data, and OECD National Accounts data files*. Available at: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.CD> (accessed 12 September 2022).

The gap between countries is even larger. *Figure 38* shows the top twenty countries when ranking by the number of refugees and asylum-seekers a country supports per million of its GDP. **Chad is providing refuge at over 500 times the rate of the US.**

In fact, eight of the top ten and 15 of the top 20 most generous countries providing refuge in the world are in Africa. There are 35 countries in Africa more generous than the best-performing G7 country (Germany). In contrast, a number of high-income countries are seeking to weaken their responsibilities to refugees and migrants more generally by seeking to forcibly relocate them to another country<sup>176</sup> or even prevent NGOs from rescuing migrants and asylum-seekers stranded at sea.<sup>177</sup>

**FIGURE 38: TOP 20 HOST COUNTRIES VS. SELECTED HIC HOSTS BY NUMBER OF REFUGEES AND ASYLUM-SEEKERS SUPPORTED PER MILLION NATIONAL GDP, 2021**

Position	Country providing refuge	People given refuge/million GDP
1	Chad	52.3
2	Sudan	41.9
3	Uganda	41.8
4	Lebanon	32.9
5	Burundi	30.9
6	South Sudan	28.2
7	Niger	19.4
8	Jordan	17.4
9	Mauritania	13.3
10	Rwanda	12
11	Cameroon	11.4
12	Djibouti	10.9
13	Congo, Dem. Rep.	10.8
14	Nauru	9
15	Ethiopia	7.6
16	Liberia	5.9
17	Turkiye	5.6
18	Yemen, Rep.	5.4
19	Kenya	5.4
20	Congo, Rep.	5.2

### Selected leading economies...

64	Germany	0.4
70	France	0.2
87	Canada	0.1
92	Italy	0.1
95	United Kingdom	0.09
98	United States	0.08
151	Japan	0.004

Calculated from: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (2022), *Refugee Data Finder*. Available at <https://www.unhcr.org/refugee-statistics/download/?url=AvpD0v> (accessed 12 September 2022); and The World Bank (2021), *GDP (current US\$) World Bank national accounts data, and OECD National Accounts data files*. Available at: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.CD> (accessed 12 September 2022).

## RECRUITMENT CAMPAIGNS FOR PROFESSIONALS

There is also a major misunderstanding of the way in which source countries are affected by migration, particularly the emigration of professionals targeted by richer countries.

It is accepted within countries that movement of young people from rural areas to cities is detrimental to the source areas, and beneficial to the areas people move to. But when it comes to selective international migration, the benefits to richer countries are downplayed and the damage caused to the source area by selective migration is ignored.

For example, the UK Health Service has recruited from Africa and elsewhere extensively because it is cheaper to recruit an English-speaking doctor trained overseas than it is to train a doctor in the UK.<sup>178</sup> In 2021, the UK hired more doctors from outside the UK and European Economic Area than it did inside.<sup>179</sup> This is clearly beneficial to the UK and helps ensure many more people get treatment. However, it can be very damaging for the poorer countries from which a large number of professionals emigrate in a short space of time.

In 2021 alone, the UK hired over 500 doctors from Sudan (almost 5% of the total number of doctors in Sudan).<sup>180</sup> Sudan has a doctor patient ratio that is 22 times worse than the UK<sup>181</sup> and nearly half a million Sudanese children under the age of 5 have died since the SDGs started in 2016.<sup>182</sup> Africa bears over 24% of the global disease burden with only 3% of health workers to take care of the sick.<sup>183</sup>

For rich countries to mass recruit doctors and nurses from sub-Saharan Africa, where they are already in such short supply, is unjust – especially when it is considered that the cost of educating sub-Saharan health care workers has been borne by their home governments. To do this without adequate compensation is immoral. **A BMJ report on just nine sub-Saharan African countries showed an estimated loss of returns from investment of \$2.17 billion for the doctors who had gone to work in high-income countries.**<sup>184</sup> This injustice is then compounded by the lack of support and racism new doctors may experience, due to the hostile climate. For nurses, while a UK salary may be appealing compared to the salaries at home, the starting salary for a newly recruited nurse can be barely above UK minimum wage<sup>185</sup> – leaving nurses with little to send home in remittances after living costs are deducted. Overseas nurses must also wait to be registered in the UK before they can attain even this level of wage, which can take months. In 2021, 1 in 4 nurses working in the UK's National Health Service came from overseas, compared to 1 in 6 in 2016.<sup>186</sup>

The UK has a doctor-to-population ratio of 1 per 357 patients<sup>187</sup> but even before last year's recruitment Sudan had a low ratio of one doctor per 3,800 patients.<sup>188</sup> In Zambia, a country which has an infant mortality rate 1458% higher than the UK, the ratio is over 10,000 patients per doctor,<sup>189</sup> yet over 10% of Zambian doctors are treating patients in the US, UK, Australia or Canada.<sup>190</sup> Individuals need to be able to migrate, but the organised mass recruitment of doctors from the world's poorest countries by some of the richest countries, is damaging, with deadly consequences for African children.

**"PEACE IS NOT ONLY THE ABSENCE OF WAR; AS LONG AS THERE IS POVERTY, RACISM, SEGREGATION AND EXCLUSION WE COULD HARDLY REACH A WORLD OF PEACE."**

RIGOBERTA MENCHÚ TUM, NOBEL PEACE LAUREATE, 1992

# C. NATIONAL INJUSTICES

Alongside the international injustices facing children in Africa, there are also injustices at the national level which are perpetuating poverty and leaving children further marginalised in their own countries.

## C.1 GOVERNANCE

One of the most important aspects for the development of any country is effective governance. It is the single biggest factor in ending poverty that is under the control of African leaders, and it is critical to the development of the continent and the delivery of children's rights.

Effective governance is particularly important to marginalised children as they are hit hardest by the consequences of weak governance. For example, they are often the first to lose out if services to health and education are cut back because of wasteful spending elsewhere.<sup>191</sup> Similarly, if government policies aren't equally applied, it is likely that the poorest communities are among those missing out.

### CHILD UNFRIENDLY BUDGETS

Too often, the limited funding per person available to governments in Africa is exacerbated by decisions to direct a large proportion of that expenditure to areas that don't benefit children. As they are unable to vote, important services to children can be overlooked by policymakers.

One of the most critical decisions affecting children living in low-income countries is how much of their government's budget is spent on health and education services. In many countries this is affected by the debt crisis, as detailed in Section B4, but another critical factor is poor decision-making by policymakers.

If African leaders spent 20% of their budgets on education and 15% of their budgets on health, as targeted in the Incheon Declaration in 2015 and in the Abuja Declaration in 2001,<sup>192</sup> then more – but not all – African children would be able to realise their rights *despite* the international injustices.

For this report, an analysis was undertaken of government expenditure on health and education in sub-Saharan African countries. Figure 39 shows the current estimates of the shortfall to meet the Abuja Declaration and Incheon Declaration targets. If the interest on debt in countries in debt distress or with a high likelihood of debt distress is

Five injustices faced by children in Africa that are principally perceived to be national issues are explored: governance, girls' rights, conflict, corruption, and the persecution of civil society. These issues arise in all countries of the world, but there is a perception that they are particularly worse in Africa. This section analyses these issues to explore how they are contributing to the denial of the rights of Africa's children.

redirected, this would meet just over half of these costs, with the other half requiring a greater priority from the national government.

It must be noted that expenditure on education in Africa is a higher percentage than most other regions;<sup>193</sup> however, because the government budgets are so low, children in Africa need their governments to ensure the percentage allocated to education – as well as health – is high.

With more effective governance, which places a stronger commitment on health and education, funding for children in Africa would increase by \$25.7 billion.<sup>194</sup> **Calculating the non-debt portion of the underspend in health and education gives an estimated cost of \$154 billion since the start of the SDGs.**

### EXCLUSION AND DISCRIMINATION WITHIN COUNTRIES

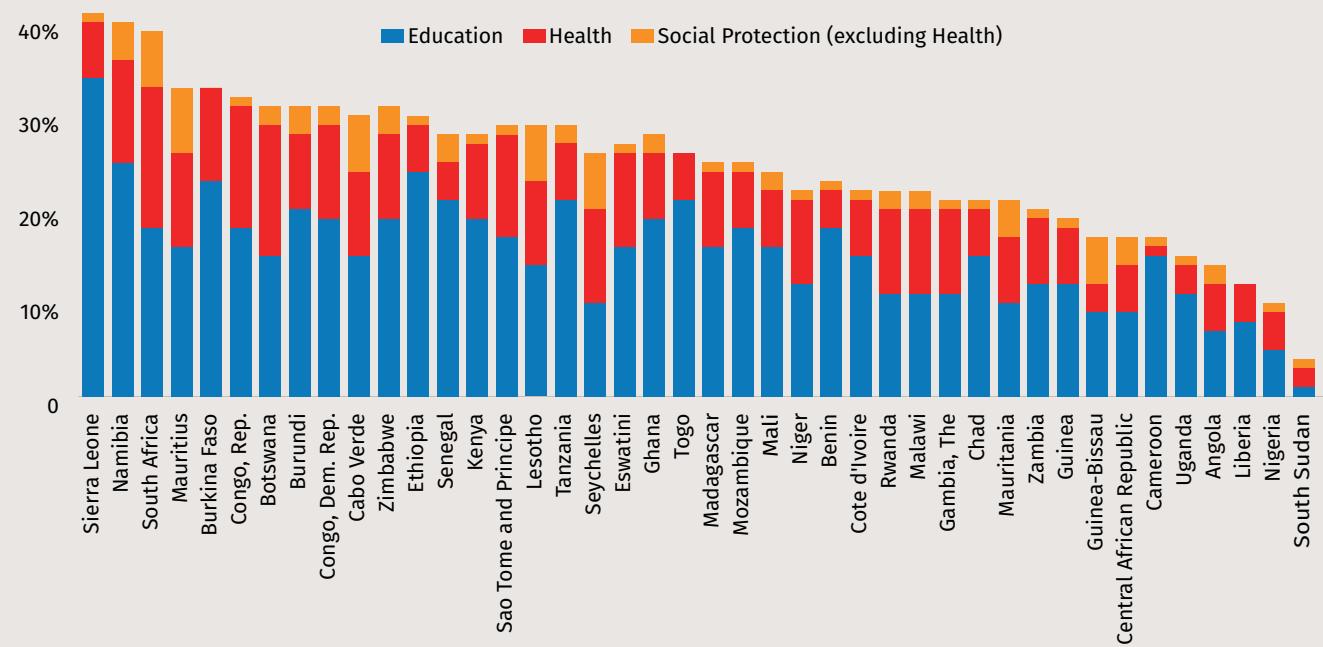
Despite national commitments in law and policy to end discrimination, these can only have an impact when government budgets adhere to the same principles. When they do not, marginalised populations will suffer from discrimination.

Discrimination in national budgets is common on the grounds of gender, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status, meaning some children have even fewer opportunities to demand and effect change. These discriminations are historic and pervasive and have as much impact on budgeting as they do on policy-making; this makes it difficult to identify and dismantle discrimination.

Even when governments specify how their budget will support marginalised groups, few publicly report the impact their budgets have had, leaving citizens with little evidence to challenge discrimination and hold their governments to account.

Education budgets provide stark evidence of how discriminatory budgeting is failing marginalised children. Universal quality education is widely acknowledged as vital

**FIGURE 39: % GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND SOCIAL PROTECTION, SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA (LATEST YEAR)**



Source: The World Bank (June 2022). *Government expenditure on education, total (% of government expenditure)*, from the UNESCO Institute of Statistics. Available at <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.XPD.TOTL.GB.ZS> (accessed July 2022); World Health Organization (2022). *Domestic general government health expenditure (GGHE-D) as percentage of current health expenditure (CHE) (%)*, The Global Health Observatory. Available at <https://www.who.int/data/gho/indicator-metadata-registry/imr-details/4953> (accessed October 2022); and International Labour Organization (2022). *World Social Protection Data Dashboards – Total expenditure on social protection, excluding health*. Available at <https://www.social-protection.org/gimi/WSPDB.action?id=1461> (accessed October 2022).

not only in the fight to end child labour, but also to end poverty and inequality. Within countries, there are massive disparities in the impact of education spending, with the poorest children rarely benefitting at the same level as their wealthier counterparts.

A UNICEF analysis of education spending in 2015<sup>195</sup> found that, on average, 46% of resources were spent on the top 10% of students with the highest levels of education in low-income countries. In lower-middle-income countries, the disparity remained high, at 26% of resources being spent on the top 10%. The same analysis found, for the low-income countries included, just 10% of education funding goes to the poorest children, while 38% goes to the richest. Unsurprisingly, as many as 34% of boys and 44% of girls from the poorest quintile never attend or complete primary school.

The Oxfam Commitment to Reducing Inequality (CRI) Index 2020<sup>196</sup> found some astonishing disparities in the impact of inequitable funding distribution at the national level. In Nigeria, 90% of the richest children complete secondary school, compared with only 15% from the poorest households. When education financing discriminates against the children with the lowest levels of education and the poorest families, a critical route out of poverty and away from child labour is barricaded.

### COUPS AND FRAGILE DEMOCRACIES

After decades of brutal and ruinous colonisation, African countries began to gain independence in the 1950s. However, the initial period of decolonialisation was marked by cycles of authoritarian or single-party leaderships, and

frequent coups: between 1960 and 2000, there was an average of four coups or attempted coups per year across Africa.<sup>197</sup> By the 1990s, most African countries had achieved some multi-party democratisation, and between 2000 and 2020 the average number of coups and attempted coups in Africa halved;<sup>198</sup> 31 of sub-Saharan Africa's 48 countries have not had coup activity since 2000.<sup>199</sup> Six of these countries, however, have had the same leader for over 30 years, and a further five are classified as authoritarian regimes.<sup>200</sup> Yet countries such as Mauritius, Botswana, Benin, Ghana, Namibia, Mauritius, Senegal, and South Africa have achieved political stability, in the face of challenges such as low GDP and racial divisions including those created by colonial powers.<sup>201</sup>

Of the 17 countries which have seen coup activity in the last two decades, 13 are classified as 'authoritarian regimes', and Sudan, Guinea, Mali, Burkina Faso, and Chad have undergone coups since 2021. All but Chad are currently suspended from the African Union as a result.

There are common, underlying causes of coups, which can be categorised as 'internal' – such as citizen frustration at poverty and lack of infrastructure, public services, and democratic participation – and 'external' – such as interference by wealthy countries, often including former colonisers, due to their own interests in the region. However, many internal causes exist due to external forces. Unfair tax rules and tax dodging, broken promises on aid, and unfair borrowing terms are all factors in preventing poorer governments from delivering the demands of their citizens and the rights of children.

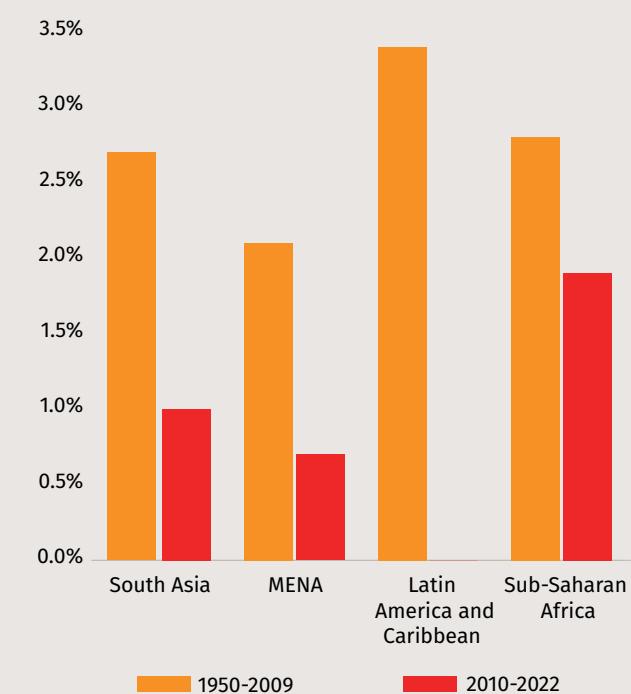
While coups remain a symptom of fragile democracies, there are coups which have ousted corrupt regimes and authoritarian leaders – including Robert Mugabe in Zimbabwe and Omar al-Bashir in Sudan. Some coups have resulted in positive changes – albeit short-lived. Power gained by coup is fragile, and wealthy foreign powers can dismantle it with ease. In 1983, a military coup in Burkina Faso resulted in social reform and development, led by Thomas Sankara. However, in 1987 Sankara was assassinated in a coup led by Blaise Compaoré, supported by the French government – which disliked Sankara's anti-colonialist policies. Compaoré remained in power for 27 years until he was ousted in 2014; in 2022, after efforts by civil society, a military tribunal in Burkina Faso found Compaoré and others guilty of "*attacks on state security, complicity in murder and concealment of a corpse*" in relation to the 1987 coup. Though a victory for the Sankaras and for Burkinabè civil society, the French government's role remains unpunished. Burkina Faso was the subject of two coups in 2022, and its membership to the AU remains suspended.

The African Union has made several agreements to try to prevent coups. As a result, every coup-based regime was expelled by the AU between 2004-2012; subsequently, half of those regimes were ousted. The 2012 Addis Ababa Charter on Democracy broadened the definition of 'unconstitutional changes to government' to include refusals by incumbent governments to relinquish power if they lose an election, and constitutional changes made by an incumbent to extend terms of office or increase the number of terms they can serve. However, the AU has been slow to act. Five Heads of State used these measures to extend their tenures after 2012; in 2000-2012, nine other Heads of State had done the same.<sup>202</sup> Only Togo has ever been suspended by the AU for an unconstitutional appointment.

Though deeply damaging, coups are not the main reason for extreme poverty in sub-Saharan Africa; as *Figure 40* shows they have affected other parts of the world too. Coups are not the preserve of Africa. Since 2000, there have been coups or attempted coups in the Philippines, Bangladesh, Turkey, Thailand, Myanmar, and Yemen. Haiti, Honduras, Ecuador, and Peru have all seen recent coup activity. In the US, the 6 January 2020 attack on the Capitol, encouraged by outgoing President Donald Trump, has been deemed an insurrection and an attempted coup. Coups by 'constitutional reform' are also not exclusively African – with the most notable examples being China's Xi Jinping and Russia's Vladimir Putin.

Coups have predominantly, however, become concentrated in the poorest countries. As academic Jonathan Powell noted in 2016: '*Africa doesn't have more coups than Europe because of its 'Africanness', rather the continent has countries that tend to be poorer and have*

**FIGURE 40: AVERAGE PROBABILITY OF A COUNTRY HAVING A SUCCESSFUL COUP PER YEAR, BY REGION (1950-2009 & 2010-2022)**



Calculated from: Powell, J. and Thyne, C. (2011). *Global Instances of Coups from 1950-Present: Journal of Peace Research* 48(2): 249-259. Available at: <https://arresteddictatorship.com/coups/> (accessed October 2022).

*less developed political institutions. If you look at Africa... you can actually see large variation within the continent. Poorer regions, like West Africa, are rife with coups, while the more developed southern region has rarely seen them."*<sup>203</sup>

### AFRICAN LEADERSHIP ON GOOD GOVERNANCE

It is also important to note the leadership on governance coming from within Africa. For example Sudan-born businessman Mo Ibrahim has helped to put good governance at the centre of Africa's development and demonstrated how African leadership can be strengthened despite the international injustices Africa is facing. Poverty, though a critical factor, is not an excuse for poor governance as *Figure 41*, drawn from data in the Ibrahim Index of African Governance (IIAG) shows.<sup>204</sup>

Progress is being made on governance by several low-income African countries, including Sierra Leone and Mozambique. Across Africa's lower-income countries there are strong examples of the impact of good governance, ranging from the renegotiation of unfair deals on natural resources in several countries on mining, to the establishment of a national Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative in Ghana, and to the progressive implementation of social protection to alleviate extreme poverty as part of the COVID-19 responses.

**FIGURE 41: TOP 5 AND BOTTOM 5 AFRICAN COUNTRIES COMPARING THEIR IBRAHIM INDEX OF AFRICAN GOVERNANCE (IIAG) RANKING WITH GDP/PERSON RANKING (2020)**

African country	Rank GDP/person	Rank governance	Difference in rank	African country	Rank GDP/person	Rank governance	Difference in rank
Rwanda	36	11	+25	Eq. Guinea	3	51	-48
Sierra Leone	48	24	+24	Libya	6	46	-40
Mozambique	50	26	+24	Djibouti	12	42	-30
Gambia, The	39	16	+23	Congo, Rep.	17	45	-28
Malawi	45	23	+22	Angola	16	43	-27

Calculated from: Mo Ibrahim Foundation (2021), *Ibrahim Index of African Governance (IIAG) Full Dataset*. Available at: <https://iiag.online/downloads.html> (accessed 12 September 2022); and The World Bank (2021), *GDP (current US\$) World Bank national accounts data, and OECD National Accounts data files*. Available at: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.CD> (accessed 12 September 2022).

### EFFECTIVE DECISIONS ON INVESTMENT

Investment is critical but it needs to be judged based on the long-term contribution to public funds. All too often deals are signed based on short-term construction employment benefits, even though the long-term returns to the finance ministry are poor. Africa does not need investment at any price, but investment that will provide long-term benefits to Africa's children. However, too often investment is driven by powerful and exploitative forces which are seeking to quickly offshore excessive profits and which use pay-offs to avoid the scrutiny of parliament and secure unequal deals.

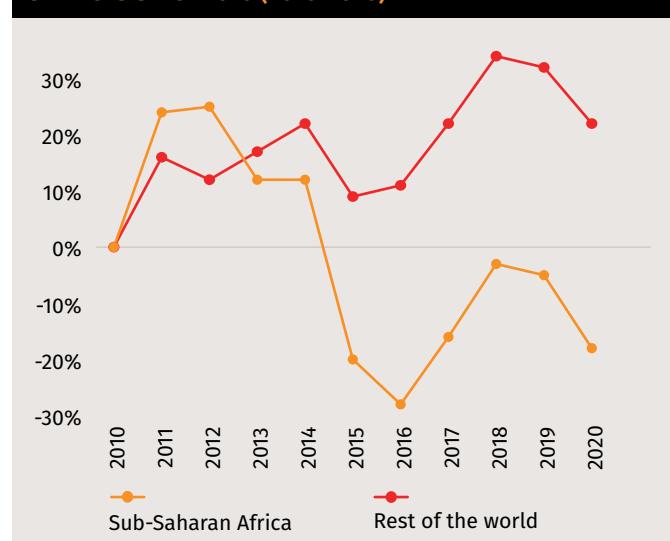
Issues around governance also impact people's belief in the future of their country. It affects the relationship citizens have with local and central government, which is critical for building thriving societies. For Africa to secure the long-term beneficial investments needed to raise funds for growth, the single biggest factor will be good governance.

It is not just a case of eliminating criminal acts, such as taking personal profits from major governmental loans and public investments; weak leadership is also an issue. Providing exclusive access to the best land and assets of a country to an investor whilst allowing the bulk of the profits to be moved off-shore, for example, is damaging for children in the country. The decline in exports from sub-Saharan Africa since the SDGs began<sup>205</sup> is also worrying (Figure 42). The high levels of protectionism in Europe and one-sided trade deals are having a growing effect.

### RESPECTING PARLIAMENTS AND DEMOCRACY

Supporting the autonomy and oversight authority of parliaments and restoring democracy is critical. However, several steps backwards have been taken in the aftermath of the COVID pandemic. With the lack of access to the G7's 'global agenda for action' on COVID, many low-income countries came under severe economic pressure, which compounded existing security challenges. Even when parliaments are functioning, they are often bypassed illegally. For major trade and debt agreements to be honoured by a country, parliamentary oversight needs to be respected. In particular, it must be made harder for fraudulent decision-makers to steal a country's resources,

**FIGURE 42: CHANGE IN EXPORTS OF GOODS AND SERVICES SINCE 2010 (2010-2020)**



Source: The World Bank (2021), *Exports of goods and services (current US\$) World Bank national accounts data, and OECD National Accounts data files*. Available at: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NE.EXP.GNFS.CD> (accessed 12 September 2022).

and money lent illegally and without the mandate of parliaments should not be liable to be repaid by the country.

To that end, richer countries could play a much more positive role in supporting African governments. Richer countries need to stop the use of World Bank conditionalities and threatening ODA reductions to force countries to over-prioritise deals with companies from rich countries. If a domestic company will leave a greater economic benefit to the people of a country, that is a legitimate reason for a government to pick them for a contract. This overt and still permissible behaviour by donor countries is effectively a breach of not just citizens' democratic rights, but also the rights of children to the resources they need to be healthy and educated.

**"THE ONLY PURPOSE OF POWER IS TO SERVE WITH THE COURAGE OF ONE'S CONVICTION THAT ALL PEOPLE IN THE WORLD HAVE RIGHTS THAT MUST BE RESPECTED."**

**AMINA J MOHAMED, DEPUTY SECRETARY-GENERAL, UNITED NATIONS**

## C.2 RIGHTS OF ADOLESCENT GIRLS

National government policies and laws on reproductive healthcare – or which limit access to sexual and reproductive health and rights information and services – for adolescent girls have a significant negative impact on a raft of development issues in many African countries. Sexist laws have compounded impacts, with devastating outcomes for women.

The consequences of the continuous gender violations against adolescent girls include high cases of unintended pregnancies, high maternal mortality rates, early and forced marriages, and sexual abuse and harassment. These violations not only steal the future from adolescent girls but also cause thousands of avoidable deaths.

### EARLY AND FORCED MARRIAGE

Child marriage is a violation of rights, a violence against children, and – in incidents of forced child marriage – it is internationally classified as modern slavery. All countries which have ratified or acceded to the UN Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women – which includes every country in sub-Saharan Africa bar Somalia and Sudan – have committed to raise the minimum age for marriage to 18. Yet poverty, inequality, and outdated societal norms all contribute to a situation where girls, and sometimes boys, are still married under 18, and many under the age of 15.

UNICEF collects data on the percentage of young women and men now aged 20-24 who were married or in union aged 17 and younger, and aged 14 and younger. It is a global problem with high rates in India and several other South Asian countries, but the highest rates are in Africa. *Figure 43* shows that 9 out of the top 10 countries in the world with data, the countries with the highest percentage of girls married before they turn 15 are in sub-Saharan Africa. In two countries, over a quarter of girls are married by the age of 14 and, cross-referencing with the Girls not Brides. Atlas, Niger, Mozambique and Mauritania would have been

in the table if data had been available. There are some boys who are also victims of early and forced marriage, but the majority are girls. *Figure 43* also shows the percentage of boys who are married under the age of 18 – clearly showing that a significant proportion of girls aged 14 and younger are getting married or in union with adult men. For example, in Guinea, 17% of girls are married aged 14 and younger whilst the number of boys married under the age of 18 is 1.9%. In the top nine African countries, over 60% of child marriages with girls aged 14 and younger are to adults.<sup>206</sup>

The rates are even higher in marginalised communities. For example, in Guinea, the percentage of women now aged 20-24 who were married or in union as a girl aged 17 or younger in rural areas is 61.3%, more than twice the rate of the 28.4% in urban areas. There is an even greater differential between wealth levels, with child marriage rates much higher in the poorest quintile at 71.7% than the richest quintile at 19.9%.<sup>207</sup>

Thirteen sub-Saharan countries have made child marriage (for girls under the age of 18) a criminal offence – compared to just six countries in Europe and zero in North America. However, eighteen sub-Saharan countries – including Guinea – have no minimum age for marriage at all.<sup>208</sup> Where laws exist, poor monitoring and implementation of the law enables the perpetuation of this injustice.

### CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE, EARLY PREGNANCY, AND LACK OF ACCESS TO CONTRACEPTION

Girls' rights are further eroded by early pregnancy and the lack of access to contraception. This particularly affects girls from poorer communities and girls subjected to child marriage.

Child marriages, especially those which are illegal, or which occur as a result of exceptions to the law, should not be used to mask child sexual abuse. The age of consent across most of sub-Saharan Africa ranges from 16-18; eight sub-

**FIGURE 43: CHILD MARRIAGE AGE COMPARISONS, TOP TEN COUNTRIES WITH DATA AVAILABLE (LATEST YEAR)**

Country	% of women (20-24 years) married or in union whilst a girl aged 14 or younger	% of men (20-24 years) married or in union whilst a boy aged 17 or younger	Minimum % of women (20-24 years) married or in union whilst a girl 14 or younger with an adult man
<b>Central African Republic</b>	<b>25.8%</b>	<b>17.1%</b>	<b>8.7%</b>
<b>Chad</b>	<b>24.2%</b>	<b>8.1%</b>	<b>16.1%</b>
<b>Guinea</b>	<b>17.0%</b>	<b>1.9%</b>	<b>15.1%</b>
<b>Somalia</b>	<b>16.7%</b>	<b>7.1%</b>	<b>9.6%</b>
<b>Mali</b>	<b>15.9%</b>	<b>2.1%</b>	<b>13.8%</b>
<b>Nigeria</b>	<b>15.7%</b>	<b>3.2%</b>	<b>12.5%</b>
Bangladesh	15.5%	no data	no data
<b>Ethiopia</b>	<b>14.1%</b>	<b>5.0%</b>	<b>9.1%</b>
<b>Madagascar</b>	<b>12.7%</b>	<b>11.8%</b>	<b>0.9%</b>
<b>Cameroon</b>	<b>10.7%</b>	<b>2.9%</b>	<b>7.8%</b>
<b>Benin</b>	<b>9.4%</b>	<b>4.8%</b>	<b>4.6%</b>

Saharan countries with no minimum marriage age have the consent age of 18 and six are set at 16.<sup>209</sup> Regardless of the weak enforcement of marriage laws and marriage registration that has enabled an adult to marry a child below the legal age of consent, sexual relations with that child are more likely than not to be incidents of child sexual abuse, and should be classified as statutory rape – as is the case in India, for example.

### SHORTAGE OF FUNDING

This further injustice becomes compounded by a lack of contraception, and subsequent early pregnancies.

The contraceptive pill was introduced over 60 years ago, but access to any modern contraception is still denied to a huge number of women and girls in Africa today; it is legal but it is too expensive for many women, and in many districts supplies are inconsistent.

FP2030, a global partnership focused on family planning, measures the percentage of women in each country who want access to contraception but don't have it. The unmet need for family planning is over 15% in all of the African countries in *Figure 43*.

This is a result of longer-term underinvestment from donor countries and the shortage of funds for African governments due to the injustices in Section B. In an analysis of the FP2030 expenditure data for this report, African governments are giving a slightly higher proportion of their national income to family planning compared to the governments outside of Africa.<sup>210</sup> The problem is that overall government budgets are too low due to the global injustices Africa faces. Donors need to not only keep their promises on family planning and reproductive health, but also invest extra resources to cover the national governments' funds that have been decimated by the debt crisis, declining tax revenue, and the injustices in the world's COVID support.

It must not be overlooked, however, that many African ministries of health do not provide adequate women's health services within the public health system, leaving girls in these countries who are forced into marriage at the age of 14 or younger unable to access the contraception they need. The unmet need for family planning is also higher for 15-19 year-olds than 20-24 year olds: **63% of married adolescent girls in sub-Saharan Africa who want access to contraception do not have access to it.**<sup>211</sup>

As the World Health Organization highlights, "*child marriage places girls at increased risk of pregnancy because girls who are married very early typically have limited autonomy to influence decision-making about delaying child-bearing and contraceptive use.*"<sup>212</sup>

### RISK OF MATERNAL MORTALITY

Given modern medicine, the rates of maternal mortality in Africa are scandalously high. *Figure 44* shows the ten countries where a woman's chance of dying of maternal causes in her lifetime are the highest. All of them are in Africa, reflecting the low levels of tax revenue and domestic

funding allocated to most African ministries of health. Even basic maternity services can be hard to access, especially for girls and young women from poorer communities.

Four of the five countries with the highest rates of early and forced marriage are also in the top ten countries where women are most likely to die of maternal causes in their lifetime. In all African countries with data, where the chance of a woman dying of maternal causes in her lifetime is over 3%, the unmet need for family planning for married women is over 16% (16.9%-32.2%).<sup>213</sup>

While maternal mortality is a danger for all pregnant women in these countries, girls and young women aged 15-19 are a third more likely to be at risk of mortality due to pregnancy than young women aged 20-24. The risk is even higher for girls aged 14 and under.<sup>214</sup>

There is also a marked increase in complications in pregnancy for girls. For example, adolescent girls and their children are at risk of obstructed labour, low birthweight, and infections due to the immaturity of their bodies.<sup>215</sup> This can have lifelong consequences.

70,000 girls die each year from pregnancy or childbirth complications, making it the second leading cause of death for girls aged 15-19 worldwide.<sup>216</sup> Early marriage is a determinant of adolescent pregnancy and, therefore, as reported by the World Health Organization, government policies on marital age, and early education on sex and contraception, are fundamental to prevent adolescent pregnancies.

Globally, the share of the world's maternal deaths that take place in Africa has been increasing steadily. In 2000, the number of mothers dying in sub-Saharan Africa was slightly higher than the rest of the world put together. By 2017, the number of mothers dying in sub-Saharan Africa was twice as high as the rest of the world combined,<sup>217</sup> even though less than one in eight women live in Africa. The medical advances that are quickly bringing down the number of maternal deaths in the rest of the world are, because of low funding for ministries of health, being introduced more slowly in sub-Saharan Africa – with disastrous results for African women.

**FIGURE 44: THE TOP TEN COUNTRIES WITH A 15 YEAR OLD GIRL HAS THE HIGHEST RISK OF MATERNAL DEATH IN HER LIFETIME (2022)**

Country	% risk	Average rate
Chad	6.9%	1 in 15 women
South Sudan	5.5%	1 in 18 women
Somalia	5.1%	1 in 20 women
Sierra Leone	4.9%	1 in 20 women
Nigeria	4.9%	1 in 21 women
Central African Republic	4.1%	1 in 25 women
Niger	3.8%	1 in 27 women
Mauritania	3.6%	1 in 28 women
Mali	3.5%	1 in 29 women
Gambia, The	3.2%	1 in 31 women

Source: The World Bank (2022), *Risk of Maternal Death*. Available at <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SH.MMR.RISK> (accessed 20 October 2022).

## C.3 CONFLICT

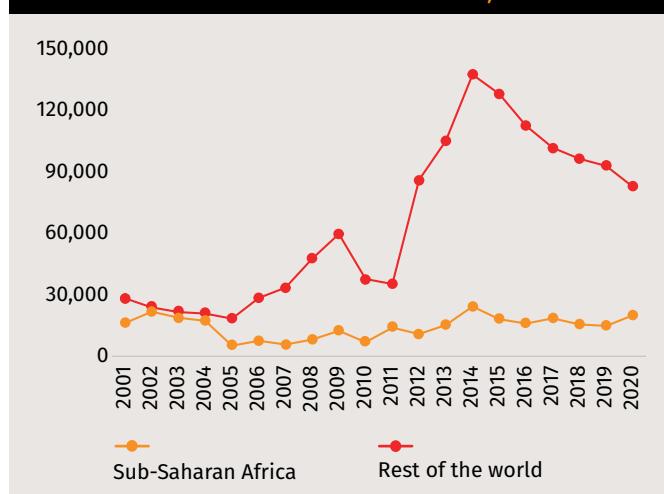
Conflict is devastating for the children living in affected communities and countries. It is critical for Africa's children that peace-building efforts succeed, and African (and non-African) decision-makers must prioritise this. The devastating fighting in DRC, persistent crisis in the Sahel, anti-military rule demonstrations in Sudan, multiple instability threats in Nigeria, and conflict re-escalation in Ethiopia are further reminders of the terrible cost of conflict to children. Without an end to conflict, it will be impossible to realise children's rights. As Mahatma Gandhi said, "*there is no path to peace. Peace is the path*".

### CHILD 'SOLDIERS'

One of the most devastating denials of a child's rights and a violation of international humanitarian law is when they are recruited into conflicts by armed forces and groups. The UN reports that children as young as six years old have been forcibly recruited by armed groups.<sup>218</sup>

Often misleadingly referred to as 'child soldiers', girls and boys are abducted from their communities and are made to endure extensive forms of exploitation and abuse in forced service to whichever military group has taken them. The term is additionally misleading as children are not only forced to be combatants; they can be scouts, cooks, porters, guards, and messengers, with some children being taken explicitly to be sexually abused. Since the start of the SDGs until December 2021, the United Nations had documented and verified over 51,000 new child 'recruits', across 23 countries – although each annual report is clear that there are likely to be many more cases.<sup>219</sup> A further painful injustice is the emerging trend in modern warfare to use children for acts of terror, including as suicide bombers.<sup>220</sup>

**FIGURE 45: COMBINED CONFLICT FATALITIES, 2001-2020**



Source: Uppsala Conflict Data Program, Department of Peace and Conflict Research, University of Uppsala (2021). *Battle Related Deaths, One Sided Conflicts, and Non-State Actors*. Available at: <https://ucdp.uu.se/exploratory> (accessed 12 September 2022).

### DISCRIMINATORY VIEWS ON CONFLICT?

The pain and damage caused by conflict is exacerbated by the discriminatory and racist views held about Africa in other continents, particularly by those seeking to justify the huge inequalities in wealth that allow millions of children to starve in a world that is richer than ever. Accusations include that governments are spending all their budgets on frequent or constant conflict. In fact:

1. The number of military fatalities from conflict worldwide since 2000<sup>221</sup> (combining battlefield deaths with deaths from one-sided conflicts and non-state actors) shows that Africa is in line with the global proportion, and in the last 10 years Africa has had fewer fatalities than the average in other regions (Figure 45). Any conflict is one too many, and needs attention, but all continents have been prone to conflict.
2. Total world military expenditure passed \$2 trillion in 2021 for the first time.<sup>222</sup> The five biggest spenders in 2020 were the United States, China, India, Russia, and the United Kingdom, which together accounted for 62% of world military spending (Figure 46).<sup>223</sup> In fact, total military expenditure in all 48 countries in sub-Saharan Africa is less than in Italy alone.<sup>224</sup> Military expenditure as a share of the budget in African countries is lower than in the United States and the same as in Europe.<sup>225</sup> In 2020, the increase alone in US military expenditure was greater than total military expenditure in sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>226</sup> The decision to unequally allocate Special Drawing Rights was worth more than the entire military expenditure of all 48 countries in sub-Saharan Africa since 2018.<sup>227</sup>
3. Any historical analysis shows that conflict can rage regardless of location, race, or belief. Although western Europe has been more peaceful in the last 70 years, it had continuous conflict between countries and different strands of Christianity for centuries – and of course was the origin of both World Wars. It is worth noting that when the First and Second World Wars began, western Europe had much higher education enrolment levels than sub-Saharan Africa does now.<sup>228</sup> Sub-Saharan Africa has the same literacy rate today as the US at the outbreak of the civil war in 1861.<sup>229</sup>
4. Africa provides more than its fair share of UN peacekeepers and nearly half of the global total (Figure 47).<sup>230</sup> This is even more generous when you consider the smaller size of armies in Africa: proportionally, Africa provides nearly 10 peacekeepers per thousand troops compared to under 2 peacekeepers per thousand troops provided by the rest of the world.<sup>231</sup> This is partly a response to the tragedy in Rwanda, when UN peacemakers weren't deployed, even though they could have made a big difference, due to politics and indifference by rich countries on the UN Security Council.<sup>232</sup>

## WHO PROVIDES THE WEAPONS?

Unfortunately, it isn't just discriminatory views in countries outside of Africa that are the problem. Many conflicts are affected by clashes between countries outside of Africa, and many dictators are supported to remain in power militarily with support and weapons from richer countries. Too often, military support is not used to promote stability and protect children, but to secure access to – and a low price for – exports of raw materials. Would Europeans have been able to remove their dictators if there had been countries outside the continent, with vastly greater resources, supporting the dictators militarily?

Of the world's top 100 arms-producing and military services companies, not a single one is based in Africa.<sup>233</sup> The weapons used in Africa are made in other countries and exported to the continent, often with generous government protection subsidies from the very same rich country governments which claim they can't afford to provide their climate and development finance commitments. For example, in 2018-19, UK arms exports were 55 times more likely to receive government underwriting than non-arms exports, even though just 0.2% of the UK workforce made arms to export.<sup>234</sup> Rising Chinese arms exports are now making the situation worse, but are following the well-worn path taken by France, Russia, the UK, and the US.

## CONFLICT AND MILITARY SPENDING ARE STILL MAJOR PROBLEMS

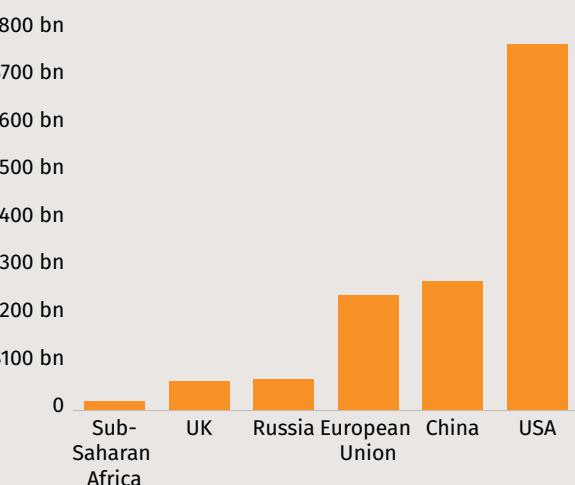
While dispelling the incorrect and sometimes discriminatory attitudes on conflict in Africa, it is important to be clear that military expenditure is still too high in many African budgets, and this comes at the expense of public services provision. Often, this military force is used to suppress citizens and repress democracy rather than bring stability.

**The financial costs of conflict are very difficult to estimate. Updating previous calculations of the cost of conflict in Africa, by the rates of conflict since 2016, gives a cost of \$40.6 billion since the start of the SDGs.<sup>235</sup>**

Although still less than Italy, a 2019 study showed that average military expenditure in Africa had increased by 91% since 2005.<sup>236</sup> In 2020, Nigeria's military expenditure was \$4.7 billion.<sup>237</sup> In the same year, Uganda's military expenditure leapt from 1.8% of GDP to 2.6%, remaining at a similar level in 2021,<sup>238</sup> and in 2022 the budget topped \$1 billion for the first time. This is despite relatively low levels of conflict in the country; as noted by The East African newspaper, "although there has not been any severe war within Uganda apart from pockets of insecurity caused by cattle rustlers in the Karamoja region, Uganda has been allocating a sizeable amount of money every year to the sector."<sup>239</sup>

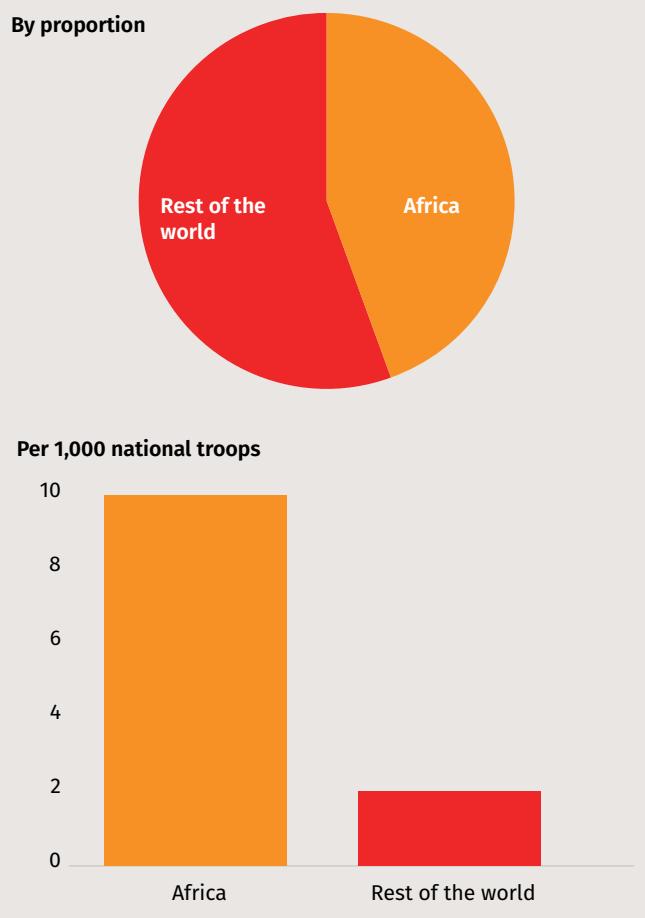
Though Africa is no more likely to have conflict than other regions, the consequences of conflict both for marginalised children and for investment levels are exacerbated in countries which are already poor. Conflict is not the main

**FIGURE 46: MILITARY EXPENDITURE (USD), 2021**



Source: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (2022), SIPRI Military Expenditure Database. Available at: <https://milex.sipri.org/sipri> (accessed 12 September 2022).

**FIGURE 47: PEACEKEEPERS PROVIDED TO THE UN, AFRICA VS REST OF THE WORLD (2020)**



Calculated from: United Nations (2022), Troop and Police Contributors. Available at: <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/troop-and-police-contributors> (accessed 12 September 2022) and the World Bank (2022), Armed forces personnel, total, derived from International Institute for Strategic Studies, The Military Balance. Available at <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/MS.MIL.TOTL.P1> (accessed 12 September 2022)

reason why African countries have such a low share of economic growth, but while waiting for the international community to end its hypocritical approach to conflict in Africa, it is vital that African leaders do what is in their control by strengthening peace building in Africa and fulfilling AU commitments.

## C.4 CORRUPTION

Corruption is corrosive. It damages the economy, diminishes trust in government and society, discourages political participation, and restricts access to public services.<sup>240</sup> The highest price is paid by the poorest members of society, who have to spend a greater percentage of their income navigating their way through corruption, including through the payment of bribes.

Corruption in Africa is a real barrier to investment. However, it is also commonly cited in rich countries as the main reason for poverty in African countries and this is far from the truth. It is important to be clear about the scale of the different types of corruption and their causes.

### ARE AFRICANS MORE CORRUPT?

Corruption takes many forms and varies across regions. For example, while Africa tops the rank overall, the Global Corruption Barometer by Transparency International shows that bribery in sub-Saharan Africa is lower than in almost every region – only the EU and its accession countries perform better.<sup>241</sup>

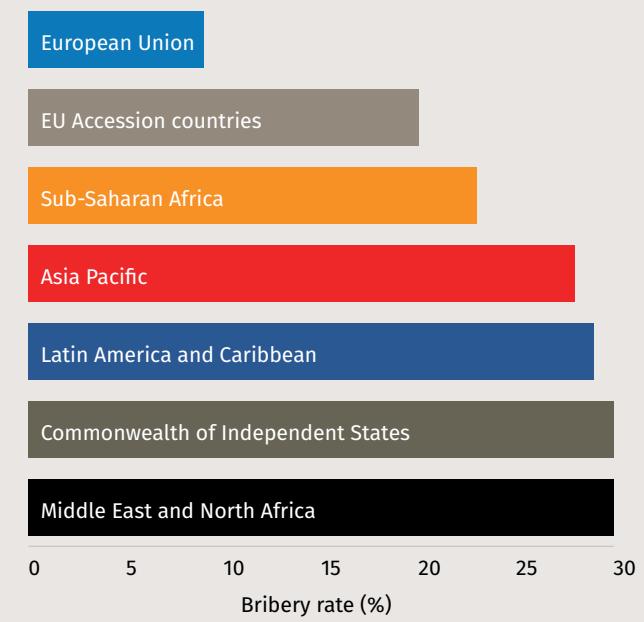
Corruption is broader than bribery, and many countries in Africa score badly on Transparency International's Corruptions Perception Index, with the region scoring the lowest average score.<sup>242</sup> But does this mean Africans are more prone to corruption, or is it a reflection of the extreme poverty levels in Africa? For example, an absence of social protection and public healthcare increases the motivation for officials to get family and community members jobs – because lives are at stake. Similarly, when there is a crisis and salaries for police and teachers go unpaid for months, the temptation to take bribes increases.

An analysis was undertaken for this report to compare the corruption ranking of countries with the ranking of GNI/capita.<sup>243</sup> This identifies countries that are less and more corrupt than their income levels would suggest. This scoring system has a built-in bias as it is easier for poorer countries (as they can't move down very far) and harder for richer countries (as they can't move up very far), but nevertheless, the results are illuminating.

Nine of the top ten countries with better (lower) corruption scores than their comparative wealth would suggest are in sub-Saharan Africa, with Rwanda 100 places above its expected position based on its GNI ranking. It is less relevant given the bias of the model, but none of the worst-performing countries is in sub-Saharan Africa.

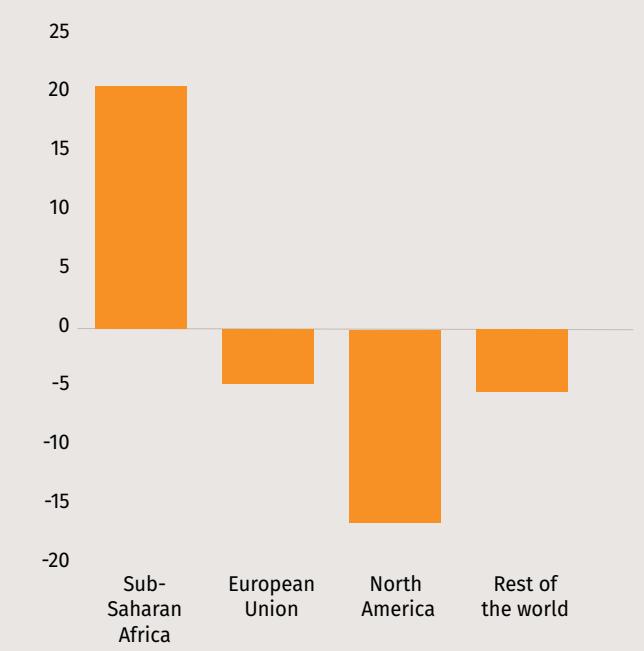
**"MANY AFRICANS SUCCUMB TO THE IDEA THAT THEY CAN'T DO THINGS BECAUSE OF WHAT SOCIETY SAYS. IMAGES OF AFRICA ARE NEGATIVE – WAR, CORRUPTION, POVERTY. WE NEED TO BE PROUD OF OUR CULTURE."**  
DAMBISA MOYO, ECONOMIST

**FIGURE 48: VARIATIONS IN BRIBERY ACROSS REGIONS, TRANSPARENCY INTERNATIONAL**



Source: Transparency International (2017) *Global Corruption Barometer*. Available at <https://www.transparency.org/en/gcb/global-global-corruption-barometer-2017> (accessed 12 September 2022).

**FIGURE 49: PLACE ON CPI CORRUPTION RANK COMPARED TO GNI/CAPITA RANK, 2021, BY REGION**



Calculated from: Transparency International (2022), *Corruption Perceptions Index*. Available at: <https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2021> (accessed 12 September 2022); and The World Bank (2021), *GDP per capita (current US\$) 2020, World Bank national accounts data, and OECD National Accounts data files*. Available at: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.CD> (accessed 12 September 2022).

**FIGURE 50: TOP 10 AND BOTTOM 10 COUNTRIES COMPARING CPI CORRUPTION RANK WITH GNI/PERSON RANK (2021)**

Country	Rank GNI/ person	Rank corruption	Difference in rank	Country	Rank GNI/ Person	Rank governance	Difference in rank
Rwanda	160	51	+109	Venezuela, RB	42	175	-133
Bhutan	114	25	+89	Turkmenistan	68	169	-101
<b>Burkina Faso</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>+79</b>	<b>Equatorial Guinea</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>-98</b>
Cabo Verde	115	38	+77	Russian Federation	57	136	-79
Senegal	139	73	+66	<b>Libya</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>-65</b>
Benin	143	79	+64	Lebanon	89	152	-63
Ethiopia	152	90	+62	Mexico	65	124	-59
Sao Tome and Principe	126	65	+61	Iraq	100	158	-58
Gambia, The	161	101	+60	Dominican Republic	71	128	-57
Lesotho	154	94	+60	Guatemala	92	148	-56

Calculated from: Transparency International (2022), *Corruption Perceptions Index*. Available at: <https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2021> (accessed 12 September 2022); and The World Bank (2021), *GDP per capita (current US\$) 2020, World Bank national accounts data, and OECD National Accounts data files*. Available at: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.CD> (accessed 12 September 2022).

Efforts to counter corruption must accelerate but it is vital for securing investment to be accurate about the scale of corruption and the split responsibility for it. Corruption in Benin is not the main reason that Benin is 100 times poorer than Switzerland. Corruption is not the reason children in Africa are still dying from poverty in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### BIG SCALE CORRUPTION?

The largest amount of corruption occurs at the most senior levels of government and business.

Capital flight and off-shoring of profits are extremely damaging when they occur legally, but when it is illegal theft of public funds or illegal kickbacks from major companies, it is even more detrimental.<sup>244</sup> It is important to identify how it happens, who is enabling it, and who is benefitting from these wealth transfers. It can be difficult to move even relatively small sums of money into sub-Saharan Africa from abroad. However, those African decision-makers that are corrupt find it too easy to move funds into bank accounts and buy luxury properties in the richest countries. This is because they are enabled by companies and governments in richer countries.<sup>245</sup>

Even when theft is exposed, prosecution of the crime and the restitution of that money to the people of the country are minimal. It was a Swiss company that advised and supported the Kenyattas to set up 'untraceable' trust funds in the British Virgin Islands.<sup>246</sup> Even 10 years after Swiss banks seized \$70 million in assets from Côte d'Ivoire's former president, Laurent Gbagbo, and despite a case at the International Criminal Court, it is still not determined whether the assets are stolen and need returning.<sup>247</sup> The assets were only seized after 300 people died as President Gbagbo tried to ignore election results – before that, the huge transfer of wealth was ignored.

Businesses based in wealthier countries do not just facilitate corruption, however. Recent prosecutions against Anglo-Swiss multinational commodity company Glencore

demonstrate how some businesses are perpetuating corruption, particularly in the poorest countries. The UK and US investigations discovered that Glencore had long been bribing or attempting to bribe officials in Nigeria, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, and South Sudan. Less than four weeks after South Sudan became an independent country, Glencore executives flew out \$800,000 in suitcases of cash to bribe officials. In 2022, the US and UK authorities fined Glencore around \$1.5 billion between them, with the UK judge ruling Glencore had "corporate corruption on a widespread scale, deploying very substantial amounts of money in bribes".<sup>248</sup> This prosecution is important, but the tens of millions of children in the countries where the crimes were actually committed will not see of the money. In South Sudan, poverty is so extreme that 92% of people don't have access to electricity<sup>249</sup> and 10% of children die before their fifth birthday.<sup>250</sup>

Furthermore, when there are examples of corruption linked to a project funded by richer governments, there is sometimes a knee-jerk reaction from donors. Instead of restricting the expenditure on that type of activity or concentrating on robust schemes with comparatively less corruption, like child benefits, too often donors use it to justify reducing their commitments. If in a richer country a public hospital makes a poor purchasing decision to buy the wrong machine and wastes some government funding, the just reaction is to strengthen systems and hold individuals accountable, not to stop funding all public hospitals.

Nevertheless, for all the international aspects, corruption needs strong action within Africa too, and it must be a major priority. It is one of the factors African governments can directly influence. Too many leaders are stealing their people's money – corroding society, reducing investment in essential public services, and ultimately making the situation worse for those children missing out on their basic rights. It can and must be reduced.

## C.5 PERSECUTION OF CIVIL SOCIETY AND YOUTH-LED MOVEMENTS

Civil society – from single campaigners and grassroots groups to organised international NGOs – has long played a critical role in both realising and defending human rights; it also has a long history of persecution by governments.

The International Center for Non-Profit Law (ICNL) has been monitoring legislation which impacts civil society since 2013. Between then and 2022, 103 countries have proposed more than 340 legislative initiatives that impact civil society, of which over 244 have been restrictive, in both authoritarian and democratic states. These have ranged from barriers to forming organisations and intrusive oversight procedures to limits on access to resources and the exercise of rights online.<sup>251</sup>

The CIVICUS Monitor works to document enabling conditions for CSOs and civic space. Launched in 2016, the Monitor covers 197 countries and territories, and uses a system of indicators to classify civic freedoms as:

- **Open:** The state both enables and safeguards the enjoyment of civic space for all people.
- **Narrowed:** While the state allows individuals and civil society organisations to exercise their rights to freedom of association, peaceful assembly and expression, violations of these rights also take place.
- **Obstructed:** Civic space is heavily contested by power holders, who impose a combination of legal and practical constraints on the full enjoyment of fundamental rights.
- **Repressed:** Civic space is significantly constrained. Active individuals and civil society members who criticise power holders risk surveillance, harassment, intimidation, imprisonment, injury and death.
- **Closed:** There is complete closure – in law and in practice – of civic space. An atmosphere of fear and violence prevails, where state and powerful non-state actors are routinely allowed to imprison, seriously injure and kill people with impunity for attempting to exercise their rights to associate, peacefully assemble and express themselves.<sup>252</sup>

**"I'VE COME ACROSS A LOT OF PEOPLE IN MY LIFE WHO TALK ABOUT POVERTY AND TALK ABOUT THE POOR, BUT YOU RARELY HAVE A SENSE THAT IT MATTERS TO THEM TO THE POINT AT WHICH THEY WILL BE WILLING TO SACRIFICE SOMETHING."**

KUMI NAIDOO, HUMAN RIGHTS AND ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVIST

### REPRESSION OF YOUTH ACTIVISTS AND YOUTH-LED MOVEMENTS

Many campaigns and movements to try and rectify the injustices being faced by marginalised children are led by young people themselves, and originate in locations where the most marginalised children live – including informal settlements, rural communities, and amongst persecuted ethnic minorities. However, these attempts to self-organise can be harshly treated, with groups attempting to achieve change relentlessly persecuted.

It is a double whammy that children and young people living in poverty face such repression when they stand up for their own civil rights and demand space for civil society. Too many African leaders are exacerbating the injustices faced by poorer children in their country by repressing their rights to protest.

Every African country has ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child,<sup>253</sup> which, importantly, provides for the right of children to express themselves freely on matters which relate to the child. Governments are therefore compelled to allow the concerns of their marginalised young citizens to be aired, as is their right. By suppressing their protests, those governments guilty of repressing youth and child activists are, in effect, acting as the enforcers and enablers for the companies and countries which are taking so much of their wealth away.

It would be better for leaders to act as national advocates for their children and countries' rights on the global stage instead of suppressing dissent.

### STORIES OF REPRESSION OF YOUNG PEOPLE: ZIMBABWE AND ESWATINI

Student and youth activists across the African continent are often at the forefront of not only the fight for quality, public education but for wider social justice, democracy, and human rights. Yet in countries with ever-shrinking civil society space and freedom of expression, this activism also often comes at a price, with increased targeted harassment and detention of student and youth leaders in recent years. From 15 youth activists arbitrarily arrested and held in solitary confinement in Angola in 2015 for simply meeting to discuss politics,<sup>254</sup> to the brutalisation of students at the University of Buea in Cameroon in 2016,<sup>255</sup> to the use of live ammunition at campus protests in the DRC in 2018,<sup>256</sup> to Senegal in 2018<sup>257</sup> and Lesotho in 2022<sup>258</sup> resulting in the death of students in each country, and to the continued arbitrary detention and alleged torture of majority youth activists, some as young as 15 years old, after the #EndSARS movement in Nigeria.<sup>259</sup>

## Zimbabwe

Members and leaders of the Zimbabwe National Students' Union (ZINASU) have been among the victims of rights violations by the Mnangagwa administration. In 2020, Takudzwa Ngadziore, then-president of ZINASU and just 22 years old, was assaulted, arrested and imprisoned without trial for over 30 days after peacefully protesting the alleged abduction and torture of another student activist, Tawanda Muchehiwa.<sup>260</sup> Ngadziore, along with many other members of the student movement in Zimbabwe, has since been re-arrested multiple times as a result of his political activism. Speaking to reporters after being released on bail in March 2021, Ngadziore committed to continuing to call out injustice despite the personal risk:

*"Let me make this clear to the oppressors of this country. The bail we need is not one from prison. What we need is a bail from economic mismanagement, political instability, abject poverty, unemployment ... [all of] which students and citizens are currently facing. We must keep fighting because we will lose the battle the moment we keep quiet."*<sup>261</sup>

Similarly, in February 2021, Makomborero Haruzivishe, a 28 year-old pro-democracy and youth leader, was arrested by armed men in civilian clothing, and spent almost a year in prison for blowing a whistle during a protest demanding the government provide more support to poor Zimbabweans.<sup>262</sup> The targeted harassment and persecution of student leaders and activists in Zimbabwe continues to the present day, with 14 students at the University of Zimbabwe on 12 September 2022 being arrested during a peaceful protest, after the university announced a staggering increase in tuition fees of up to 1000%.<sup>263</sup> More than 40 student activists have been arrested, detained, or harassed since March 2020.<sup>264</sup>

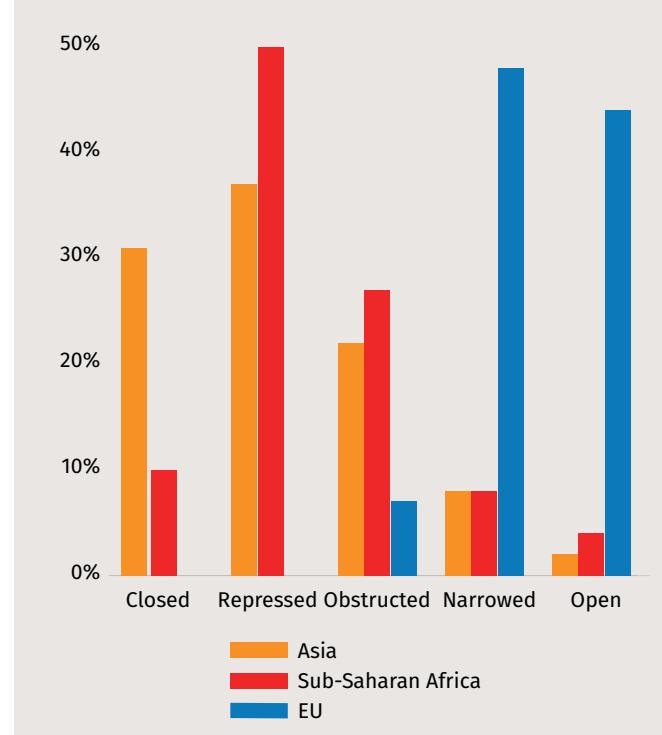
## eSwatini

Youth and student activists are leading actors in eSwatini's pro-democracy movement, including the Swaziland National Union of Students (SNUS), which has been deemed an illegal organisation under King Mswati III's absolute monarchy that bans all political parties, and heavily restricts unions. Following the brutal killing of student Thabani Nkonmye in May 2021 by suspected state forces, #JusticeforThabani protests grew around the country, calling for accountability and democratic reform. Young people took to the streets in June 2021 demanding the right to democratically elect a prime minister; this was met by the regime with curfews, internet shutdowns, and – according to the Swaziland Youth Congress – at least 21 people were killed and 250 injured, allegedly by state security forces.<sup>265</sup>

Throughout September 2021 demonstrations were led by students in schools and universities, including those from William Pitcher College, who marched to the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare. In response, the state deployed the army against the students, using teargas and violence.<sup>266</sup> Due to the prominent role students continued to play in the pro-democracy protests, including peaceful demonstrations on campus and boycotts, in October 2021 the military were deployed to schools across eSwatini and, later, the King called for an indefinite closure of all schools.<sup>267</sup>

Targeted repression, detention, and violence against the vibrant student movement in eSwatini continues, with SNUS members and leaders routinely arrested. Yet young people remain undeterred, with the current SNUS president, Colani Khulekani Maseko, who was himself arrested by 40 plain clothed police officers in January 2022 on his way to class, stating *"our struggle for democracy is legitimate and noble...when we go to the streets, we do not carry guns, we do not carry any weapons. We come with our voices and our energy."*<sup>268</sup>

**FIGURE 51: CIVIL SOCIETY SPACE RATING, BY REGION (2022)**



Source: CIVICUS Monitor, CIVICUS Available at: <https://monitor.civicus.org> (accessed 14 September 2022).

## ENGAGEMENT WITH JUSTICE MOVEMENTS GLOBALLY

Despite enormous developments in global communications, the repression of civil society together with low access to global media have made it extremely difficult for wider African-led movements to secure backing from social justice campaigners outside of Africa. While a few have secured fleeting international attention, such as the #BringBackOurGirls campaign around the appalling abductions in Nigeria by Boko Haram terrorists, there has not been an African-led movement that civil society in richer countries has united behind since the anti-apartheid movement.

Although there are notable exceptions, part of this responsibility also lies with those civil society organisations (CSOs) working on global poverty whilst based in richer countries, which often focus on short-term campaigns that aren't devised by those with lived experience of poverty in lower-income countries. Too often, CSO communications are also dominated by high-cost advertising campaigns that call for donations to their work in a way that undermines rather than emphasises that extreme poverty was created and is perpetuated by humans, and needs significant political solutions to tackle the root causes. There is a significant difference between these types of communications, and the donation communications of CSOs working in the environmental and human rights movements, such as Greenpeace and Amnesty International. These organisations focus on explaining the political problems that need to be addressed, and increase wider understanding.

Civil society organisations and movements must practise justice if they are to campaign for it. This means they must be heavily influenced and led by those with lived experience of the issues. Some CSOs – in both the global north and south – are complicit in the 'silencing' of voices, only having leaders who have no lived experience of extreme poverty even when they come from countries

with high levels of extreme poverty. Similarly, despite widespread lip service being paid to 'youth engagement', few international NGOs working in development have meaningful participation of young people in their governance and senior decision-making processes – and this includes many organisations which purport to be youth organisations.

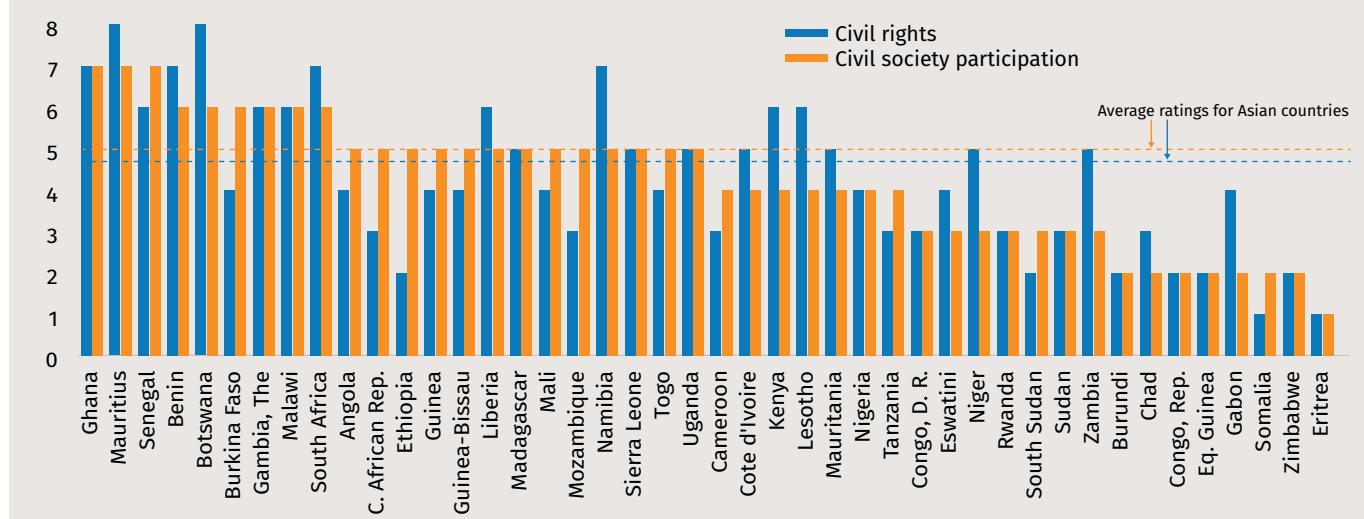
When people with lived experience of extreme poverty are able to lead the campaigns of civil society organisations, and when they are supported by African leaders – instead of being threatened by them – calls for justice from Africa's children for Africa's children will be heeded, and change will be inevitable.

## HOW DOES AFRICA COMPARE?

It is important to note that whilst the suppression of civil rights in Africa is not the cause of extreme and rising poverty, it is hindering efforts to end it, and it is an aggravating factor and a double injustice to marginalised children. *Figure 51* shows the CIVICUS Monitor's tracking of civil society space from 2021, and *Figure 52* shows the civil society participation and civil rights scores from the Bertelsmann Stiftung's Transformation Index (BTI). The scores for Africa and Asia are both very low and far behind the open approach in the European Union.

This must change urgently, as civil society can play a critical role in ending the injustices faced by so many African children. A supported and thriving civil society in Africa, rooted in a human rights approach, would be a critical ally for governments in challenging international injustices such as resource exploitation, unfair debt, and tax injustice, impacting their country's ability to deliver citizens' rights and risking the lives and futures of children. Repression does not just benefit the elites of African countries, but also international players – and is perhaps one reason why 'security equipment' is freely sold by so many rich countries to undemocratic regimes.<sup>269</sup>

**FIGURE 52: CIVIL RIGHTS AND CIVIL SOCIETY SPACE RATINGS PER COUNTRY, SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA 2022 (9 HIGHEST, 1 LOWEST)**





# JANET LIBERIA

**"I WANT MY  
FRIENDS  
TO GO TO  
SCHOOL  
AND BE  
WELL  
EDUCATED."**

Janet was seven years old when she first became a child labourer in Liberia, forced to hawk on the streets of the capital, Monrovia, to support her family. She used to have to wake up early to start selling sugarcane and sweets among cars and on the streets.

The rates of child labour for children aged 5-11 years old are rising at unprecedented rates. Janet calls on the government of Liberia to end child labour and deliver the right of education for all.

Courtesy of 100 Million Liberia, May 2022.

# D.IMPACT

This section considers the impact of these modern injustices on Africa and her children.

The first consideration is the combined financial impact. Figure 53 shows the approximate financial costs of some of the injustices considered in sections B and C. The total is more than twice the entire annual GDP of sub-Saharan Africa<sup>270</sup> at approximately \$4 trillion and equates to nearly \$3,400 per person, a tremendous sum in a country such as Malawi where the average annual GDP per person is under \$400.<sup>271</sup>

Calculating the financial cost is not possible for certain injustices and it can only be a very approximate estimate for others. However, it is important to try to estimate the rough scale of the financial impact modern injustices are having on children in sub-Saharan Africa.

The estimate for the *Unjust COVID Response* is based on the share sub-Saharan Africa would have received from the \$12 trillion G7 'Global Agenda for Action', if the funds had been allocated by population minus the additional funding Sub-Saharan Africa did receive from the G7 and multilateral institutions in 2020 and 2021.

The estimate for *Unequal Global Growth* is based on the additional GNI sub-Saharan Africa would have received since 2015 if sub-Saharan GNI/capita had grown in line with the world's average (as opposed to falling whilst global GDP increased by \$11 trillion).

The estimate for *Broken Aid Promises* is based on the funding sub-Saharan Africa would have received in ODA if donor countries kept their promise of 0.7% of ODA, and allocated those funds based on the proportion of infant mortality minus the ODA sub-Saharan Africa did receive. It is worth noting that the cost of this injustice would be even higher if, instead of infant mortality, funds were allocated by the proportion of people living on less than \$2.15 a day.

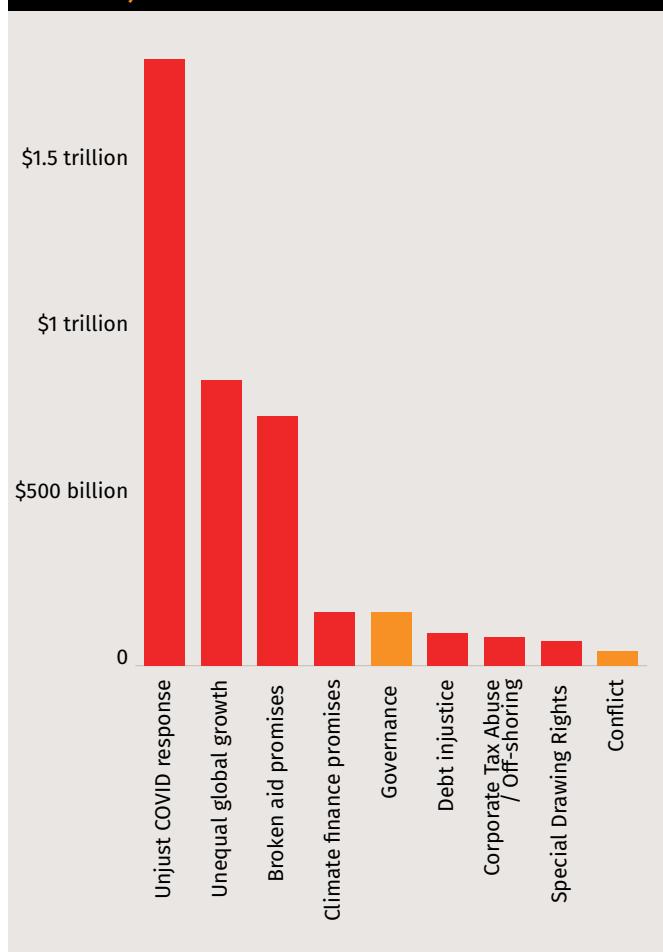
The calculation for *Climate Finance Promises* is based on the shortfall in climate finance provided by rich countries (using the Oxfam estimate of the actual financing provided by then OECD's own rules and a graduated Copenhagen promise scaled from 2009 to 2020) and share for sub-Saharan Africa is based on the proportion of people living on less than \$2.15 a day. It is worth noting that the cost of this injustice to sub-Saharan Africa would be even higher if the vulnerability of countries to climate change was taken into account.

The calculation for the *Corporate Tax Abuse and Offshore Wealth* is the annual figure from the Tax Justice Network's State of Tax Justice 2021 report, multiplied for the period 2016-2021.

**FIGURE 53: ESTIMATED COST TO SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA OF SELECTED INJUSTICES SINCE THE START OF THE SDGS (USD)**

Injustice	Cost 2016-2021
Unjust COVID response	\$1,760,450,518,444
Unequal global growth	\$898,732,567,994
Broken aid promises	\$742,755,271,861
Climate finance promises	\$157,507,834,503
Governance	\$154,086,692,815
Debt injustice	\$93,487,215,982
Corporate Tax Abuse/Off-shoring	\$85,935,600,000
Special Drawing Rights	\$71,217,236,852
Conflict	\$40,623,870,406
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$4,004,796,808,857</b>

**FIGURE 54: ESTIMATED COST TO SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA OF SELECTED INJUSTICES (INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL, 2016-2021)**



The calculation for *Governance* is the shortfall in health and education expenditure by sub-Saharan African governments against the 20% education and 15% health government expenditure targets. The figures come from UNESCO and WHO estimates combined with IMF Government expenditure data for sub-Saharan Africa. Where IMF data was not available a population weighted average was used. The calculation of debt injustice from countries with unrepayable levels of debt is then deducted to avoid double counting and to calculate the governance proportion of the underspend. The annual estimate is then multiplied for the period 2016–2021.

The calculation for *Debt Injustice* is the level of debt interest being paid annually by sub-Saharan African countries that were categorised by the IMF as in 'debt distress' or 'high' levels of debt in 2021. The amount is reduced proportionally based on the lower levels of annual debt interest in previous years and 2021 is a projection based on 2020.

The calculation for *Special Drawing Rights* is based on the share of SDR that sub-Saharan African countries would have if they had been allocated by population, minus the SDR sub-Saharan Africa received.

The calculation for *Conflict Injustice* is based on updating older estimates for the financial cost of conflict in sub-Saharan Africa from ANSA, Oxfam, and Saferworld in previous years, by adjusting for the difference in conflict

"A SMALL PRIVILEGED FEW ARE RICH BEYOND CONSCIENCE, AND ALMOST ALL OTHERS ARE DOOMED TO BE POOR AT SOME LEVEL. THAT'S THE WAY THE SYSTEM WORKS. AND SINCE WE KNOW THAT THE SYSTEM WILL NOT CHANGE THE RULES, WE ARE GOING TO HAVE TO CHANGE THE SYSTEM."

MARTIN LUTHER KING,  
NOBEL PEACE LAUREATE, 1964

fatalities as calculated by the Uppsala Conflict Data Program and for USD inflation. The 2021 estimate is a projection based on 2020. The original authors felt their calculations were likely to be an underestimate, so the true cost of conflict is likely to be significantly higher. The opportunity cost where there is excessive military expenditure is taken into account in the *Governance* costings.

These amounts are approximate and there will be some overlap between these injustices. For example, Africa's virtual exclusion from the G7's 'global agenda for action' to protect people during the COVID-19 crisis increased the severity of the debt crisis in sub-Saharan Africa. Other injustices are too difficult to estimate. Nevertheless, it is clear: since the start of the SDGs, modern injustices have cost Africa trillions of dollars. The scale is colossal.

## D.1 COMPARING THE INJUSTICES

The calculations also show that the core reason for children being denied their rights is not African governments making unjust budget allocations. African governments can and must do more: conflict, suppressed girls' and civic rights, weak leadership, and corruption are claiming lives. However, national injustices to children constitute less than 5% of the total and are dwarfed by the international injustices, as can be seen in *Figure 54*.

The simple fact is the total government budget in many countries is far too small to support children's rights in the first place, because of the discriminatory and unjustifiable international injustices.

Aid and climate finance promises to Africa during the SDG period could have helped to compensate for other injustices and should have protected children across the continent. It would have taken a tiny fraction of the amount achieved in global growth in the same period. Instead, promises were broken on an enormous scale. The claim that further indebted Africa with non-concessional loans counts as the climate finance promised in Copenhagen by the countries that caused the crisis is laughable. The proud prioritisation of foreign policy over children's lives in aid allocations, by a new generation of inhumane leaders, simply implies that African lives don't matter.

"RACISM, LIKE MOST SYSTEMS OF OPPRESSION, ISN'T ABOUT BAD PEOPLE DOING TERRIBLE THINGS TO PEOPLE WHO ARE DIFFERENT FROM THEM BUT INSTEAD IS A WAY OF MAINTAINING POWER FOR CERTAIN GROUPS AT THE EXPENSE OF OTHERS."

ALICIA GARZA, CO-FOUNDER, BLACK LIVES MATTER INTERNATIONAL MOVEMENT

## D.2 IMPACT ON CHILDREN

It is bad enough that Africa's children receive an unfair share of the world's wealth. Is an African child worth just 2% of a European or North American child? That is the share their governments received of the IMF's Special Drawing Rights. Almost every child in sub-Saharan Africa lives in a country which is extremely climate vulnerable, and almost every child living in a country in debt distress is African – yet on neither front have they received their fair share of financial support to protect them.

Yet impact is not only measured in dollars: the world must consider the impact of injustice on the lives of Africa's children.

Today, more than 92 million African children will be forced to work – and 55 million of them are 11 years old or younger.<sup>272</sup> More than 41 million African children are in hazardous child labour, including almost 16 million primary school-aged children.<sup>273</sup> This is a world that is simultaneously creating one billionaire and 10,000 child labourers every day.<sup>274</sup>

More than 64 million African children endure severe malnutrition – this is broadly the equivalent of the population of France. The vast majority of these children are suffering from stunting, which will have consequences for the rest of their lives.<sup>275</sup>

106 million African children are not in school.<sup>276</sup> To visualise this, imagine that every single school in the whole of the European Union AND half of the schools in the United States simply didn't exist.

These are all impacts that have been increasing since the start of the Sustainable Development Goals, making it clear that the wealthiest countries in the world are not only prepared to fail Africa, they are happy to leave more and more of her children behind.

### MULTIPLE DISCRIMINATIONS, MAGNIFIED IMPACT

It is important to acknowledge that, in this section and throughout the report, the impact of injustice has been assessed using an average African country and an average African child.

There is a significant number of countries where the impact is worse. For example, in Sierra Leone the number of children dying before they reach the age of 5 is over 10%; over 30% of girls aged 5-14 in the DRC are in child labour.<sup>277</sup> There are also wide disparities within countries. In poorer communities and amongst disadvantaged groups, the impact of the injustices, the rates of child labour, and the rates of child mortality are even higher.

A separate report is needed to fully address how multiple, intersecting discriminations impact different groups of children, but it is important to recognise in any case that the impact of injustice is not even.

**Women and girls:** While this report has explored in-depth one of the worst consequences of extreme poverty for children – early and forced child marriage – women and girls face many other deep injustices. Girls are still more likely to be denied the chance to go to school and over 40% of women in Africa are still illiterate compared with 28% of men.<sup>278</sup>

Annually over 3 million young women and girls face the risk of female genital mutilation (FGM).<sup>279</sup> Economic earnings are lower for women and they are disproportionately represented in lower-paid jobs and in unpaid family roles,<sup>280</sup> which is particularly difficult where there is no child benefit.

**Children with disabilities:** The rights of children with disabilities are always, unjustly, further off-track, but they are particularly eroded when a country's government has insufficient funds to provide even basic services. Even when good policies are in place there are rarely sufficient resources to enact them. Africa has the highest rates of disability among children in the world,<sup>281</sup> in part because of increased stunting from malnutrition. Children with disabilities are 49% more likely to have never attended school, and 25% more likely to suffer from wasting.<sup>282</sup>

Households with a person with disabilities are 19% more likely to be negatively affected by shocks (either environmental, like a major natural disaster; or financial, like the death of the main breadwinner, illness of a family member, or loss of a job) than other households in sub-Saharan Africa,<sup>283</sup> making them particularly vulnerable to the global inequality of the COVID pandemic response. It is also important to note that sub-Saharan Africa has a relatively low employment gap for those with disabilities, with half the differential points of North America (18 percentage points compared to 39), and sub-Saharan African governments have the highest disability workplace quota levels of any region.<sup>284</sup>

**Race/discrimination:** When discrimination occurs against particular ethnic groups, this is exacerbated in low resource settings.<sup>285</sup> When budgets are not fairly or equitably allocated due to discrimination, access to basic public services like social protection, healthcare, and education effectively does not exist for communities subjected to the discrimination. This kind of injustice forces families into extreme poverty, and with extreme poverty come extreme measures to survive, including child labour and child slavery. For some marginalised and discriminated against communities in West Africa, slavery never ended; the model developed by the slave trade simply adapted itself to other production models underpinned by poverty so extreme that children are forced into this slavery to survive.

### DYING CHILDREN

Ultimately, the most horrendous injustice is that millions of children are paying for the world's discriminatory behaviour and attitude towards Africa with their lives.

Medical advances have been reducing the rates of young children dying over the last 100 years, but the progress for children in Africa has been criminally slow.<sup>286</sup> This is particularly unjustifiable in recent years, when world wealth has doubled, and the rest of the world has made so much progress on child mortality.

Figure 55 is an important graph that should be a priority for discussion when world leaders meet: it is a stark reminder that their discriminatory decisions take their toll on children's lives. It shows the number of children who have died under the age of 5 since the start of the SDGs.<sup>287</sup> It is scandalous, and a direct result of the injustices against Africa, that so many African girls and boys are dying from extreme poverty. Millions of deaths every year because of the unequal and sometimes discriminatory decisions on tax, debt, aid and economics.

**The number of African children under the age of 5 who have died since the SDGs started (2016-2020) is more than all the military deaths during the slaughter of the First World War (1914-1918)<sup>288</sup> (Figure 56).**

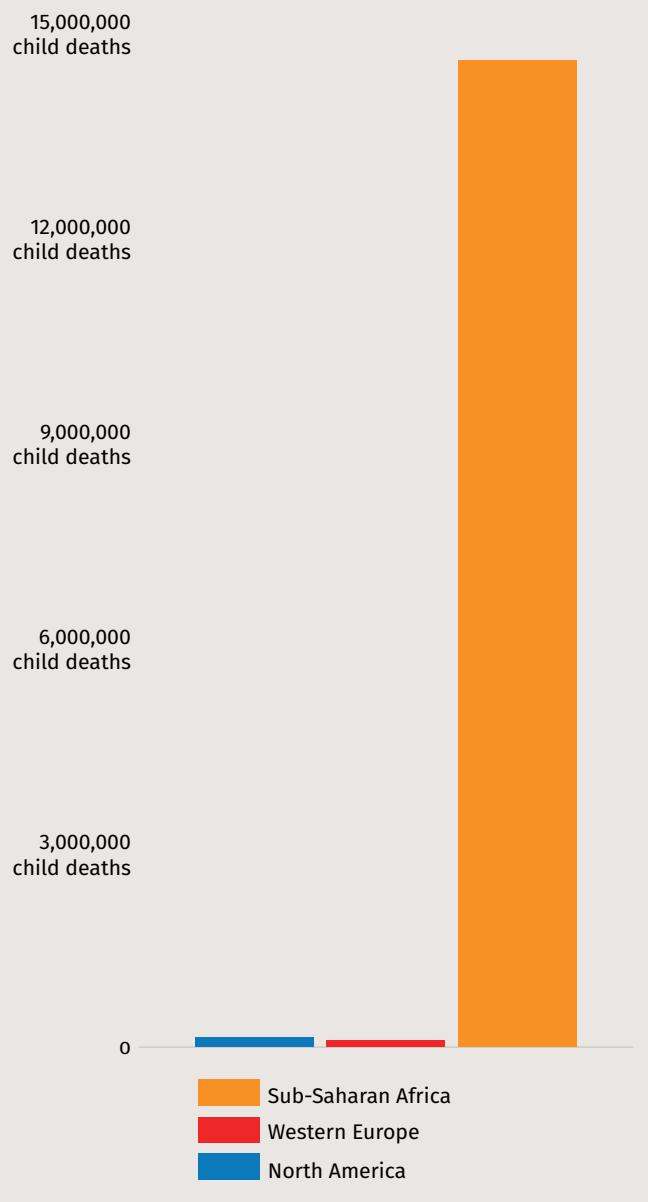
This is the scale of the crisis facing Africa's children. In World War 1, 882,000 British soldiers died, some 6% of the then adult population of the UK.<sup>289</sup> In World War 2, 384,000 British soldiers died, some 3% of the adult population.<sup>290</sup> **In the first five years of the SDGs, 7% of children in sub-Saharan Africa died before they reached the age of five – or 14,434,703 girls and boys.<sup>291</sup>** More African children have died unnecessarily since the year 2000 than all the military victims of all the wars in the 20<sup>th</sup> century put together.<sup>292</sup>

Justice for Africa's children needs to be a defining issue for our generation. There is no excuse for the discrimination and racism that allows children in Africa to die at this rate.

The SDGs are failing when the world is the richest it has ever been, and they were already on track to fail before the impact of the pandemic and the food price crisis. The percentage of world wealth needed to end poverty is the smallest it has ever been. Our ability to communicate and learn about the lived reality of marginalised communities has never been greater.

But we are turning a blind eye to the suffering whilst blaming the casualties. This isn't just a tale of indifference; numerous discriminatory and racist modern-day injustices are preventing the efforts of African countries to receive their fair share of the world's resources.

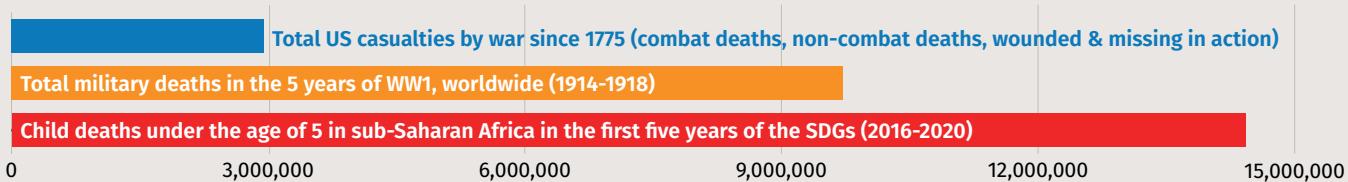
**FIGURE 55: NUMBER OF CHILD DEATHS (UNDER 5) SINCE THE START OF THE SDGS, 2016-2020, BY REGION**



Calculated from: The World Bank (2022). Mortality rate, under-5 (per 1,000 live births) - Sub-Saharan Africa. Available at: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SH.DYN.MORT?locations=ZG>; and United Nations Children's Fund (2021) Under-Five Mortality. Available at: <https://data.unicef.org/topic/child-survival/under-five-mortality> (accessed 30 September 2022).

The level of ignorance about the role of richer countries in disadvantaging Africa is shocking. Global decisions in just the last few years, almost always taken in spaces where Africans are underrepresented,<sup>293</sup> cost Africa and her children trillions of dollars, and millions of lives.

**FIGURE 56: TOTAL MILITARY DEATHS IN THE 5 YEARS OF WWI (1914-1918) VS UNDER 5 DEATHS IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA IN THE FIRST 5 YEARS OF THE SDGS (2016-2020)**



Calculated from: The World Bank (2022). Mortality rate, under-5 (per 1,000 live births) - Sub-Saharan Africa. Available at: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SH.DYN.MORT?locations=ZG>; and United Nations Children's Fund (2021) Under-Five Mortality. Available at: <https://data.unicef.org/topic/child-survival/under-five-mortality> (accessed 30 September 2022); REPERES, Centre Européen Robert Schuman (2011) *World War 1 Casualties*. Available at: <http://www.centre-robert-schuman.org/userfiles/files/REPERES%20E2%80%93%20module%201-1%20-%20explanatory%20notes%20E2%80%93%20World%20War%20%20casualties%20E2%80%93%20EN.pdf>; and Business Insider (2014). *The number of US soldiers who have died in every major American war*. Available at <https://www.businessinsider.com/number-of-us-soldiers-who-died-in-every-major-war-2014-5?r=US&IR=T> (all accessed 30 September 2022).

# E. SOLUTIONS

Children everywhere should be free to enjoy their rights and their childhoods. But, as demonstrated within this report, recent modern injustices have particularly impacted Africa, leaving her children far behind the rest of the world, and setting the continent up to fail future generations.

Since its inception, Laureates and Leaders for Children has consistently called for urgent and collaborative action to end the extreme marginalisation that prevents children from going to school and forces them into child labour. The patently unjust response to the global pandemic was predicted to have the worst impact on children by Laureates and Leaders and many other actors – from grassroots NGOs to the UN Secretary-General – and particularly in the world's poorest countries.

Evidence to date demonstrates that the pandemic resulted in the almost immediate reversal of progress across a raft of child-focused policies, including school feeding, immunisation programmes, and ending child marriage. However, it must be acknowledged that massive international injustices had already ended progress on child labour and education well before the pandemic. Notably, progress began to stop from the commencement of the Sustainable Development Goals in 2015, which were designed and agreed in order to 'free the human race from the tyranny of poverty'.

## A FOUNDATION FOR JUSTICE

Systemic change, driven by a new movement to ensure a fair share for Africa and Africa's children, is critical. The extremity of the injustice must not be an excuse for inaction when the number of child labourers and children out of school is increasing, and when there is a threat of

catastrophe on child nutrition due to world food prices. Urgent action is needed to prevent this disaster.

Laureates and Leaders for Children reaffirms and strengthens its previous calls and makes **underpinning recommendations to create a strong foundation for justice**.

## EVERY CHILD FREE, HEALTHY, AND EDUCATED

However, it must also be recognised that swift action which is targeted on accelerating children's realisation of rights is vital to stop the decline in progress across, predominantly, sub-Saharan Africa. As such, Laureates and Leaders for Children further calls for urgent action to deliver three, **child-targeted recommendations** world leaders could commit to immediately that would make a real and swift difference to the lives of the world's most marginalised children.

- Universal child benefits
- School feeding programmes
- Financing education through Special Drawing Rights

Social protection and education are fundamental human rights which have yet to be fully realised for millions of Africa's children, yet together they can end extreme poverty for children and their families – all for a fraction of the amount rich countries spent on their national COVID-19 responses. It is essential to dismantle the systemic injustices identified in this report and it is also important to introduce direct and immediate schemes that can help children in extreme poverty as soon as possible.

"FOR CENTURIES, WE WERE TAUGHT THAT ANGER IS BAD. OUR PARENTS, TEACHERS, PRIESTS, EVERYONE TAUGHT US HOW TO CONTROL AND SUPPRESS OUR ANGER. BUT I ASK: WHY CAN'T WE CONVERT OUR ANGER FOR THE LARGER GOOD OF SOCIETY?"

KAILASH SATYARTHI,  
NOBEL PEACE LAUREATE, 2014

## E.1 FOUNDATION FOR JUSTICE

### RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1. The rights of Africa's children will never be realised if the majority of African governments have insufficient budgets. This has not prevented many African countries from striving to achieve greater domestic budget allocations for children's rights, although greater efforts to deliver equitable budgeting must also be made. Ultimately, far higher levels of financing are needed, which can be achieved through the following measures:**
  - a. **Debt cancellation:** all debt incurred by low- and lower-middle-income African countries during 2020-2023 must be cancelled to support pandemic recovery, including commitments that the freed-up budget is allocated to the child-specific SDGs and their relevant targets including child poverty, nutrition, early childhood, education, maternity and infant health, gender, child labour, sanitation, and social protection.
  - b. **The IMF must roll back the imposition of austerity measures – which have been proven to repeatedly fail to stimulate growth – and focus on ensuring countries are increasing spending on public services including health, education, and social protection.**
  - c. **High-income countries must support fairer international tax and trade rules, and better tax collection in countries:** taxes must be paid in the countries from which profits are generated, including the extraction of Africa's natural resources. African governments must stop exemptions for multinational and national corporations and strengthen their capacity to collect taxes and stop illicit financial flows.
  - d. **In line with SDG 10.9, official development assistance must be concentrated on the countries in most need, and aid flows to Africa in particular must be increased.**
  - e. **In line with SDG 13.a, donor countries must implement the commitment undertaken to mobilise at least \$100 billion annually for climate adaptation and mitigation, for all developing countries. In addition, governments must act on their commitment to establish, finance, and operationalise the loss and damage fund to support countries which are vulnerable to the adverse effects of the climate crisis for losses arising from disasters which occur as a result of climate change.**
  - f. **African governments must make fiscal space in domestic budgets for public services which deliver the rights of children, and ensure their budgets are transparent and tackle discrimination by using children's rights and, particularly, girls' rights lenses. As well as taking action on tax and illicit financial flows, fiscal space can be created by reducing military expenditure, ending conflict and the use of force against civil society, and tackling large-scale corruption.**
- 2. Africa faces enormous discrimination on the international stage. No African country is a member of the G7, and only one African country out of 54 is in the G20. The OECD has 38 member countries but not a single one is African, and voting power at the World Bank and IMF is dominated by non-African countries – the United States has three times more votes than all African countries together. Global decision-making fora must be equal, democratic, and decolonised – it is unacceptable that the world continues to allow the wealthiest to make the rules the poor must live by. This is in line with SDG 10.6 and would achieve fairer decision-making and allocations for Africa's children.**
- 3. Health care remains severely underfunded across most of Africa, with only one country meeting the 2001 Abuja commitment of 15% of budget to health, and ODA to health declining since its peak in 2017. At the same time, COVID-19 is not over, and it will continue to be unnecessarily deadly until every country has achieved equitable levels of vaccination.**
  - a. **All African governments must work to meet the 15% target; donors must increase the share of ODA to health, excluding contributions made to COVAX and other COVID-19 emergency health measures, in order for this 15% to be sufficient for each country's population.**
  - b. **COVID-19 vaccines must be made patent-free, rapidly produced and distributed until over 70% of each African country's population is vaccinated with at least a primary course; it is in the best interests of everyone that this is achieved by 2023.**

## E.2 EVERY CHILD FREE: UNIVERSAL CHILD BENEFITS

### CHILD BENEFITS: CRITICAL FOR THE WEALTHY, OPTIONAL FOR THE POOR?

There is a critical, proven method to protect children from the inequality within economies. The world spends over \$1 trillion dollars every year to protect children in higher-income countries through child benefits.<sup>294</sup> However, this protection is not in place for those who need it the most: vulnerable children living in low-income countries who are forced to live with the worst consequences of historic and modern injustices faced by Africa. This can and must change.

Figure 57 shows the difference between the budget for domestic social protection in the European Union (where it is the largest area of government expenditure and prioritised as a critical service) and the ODA budget to support social protection in developing countries (where it is a small part of the ODA budget and not prioritised currently).

Given the alarmingly rapid rise in poverty in lower-income countries, universal child benefits, alongside benefits which protect their mothers, offer a way to stop the increase in poverty and pull children out of child labour.

### CHILD AND MATERNITY BENEFITS

The provision of universal child and maternity benefits in low-income countries would have a transformative impact on ending child labour and extreme poverty, and would be a historic step for multilateralism.

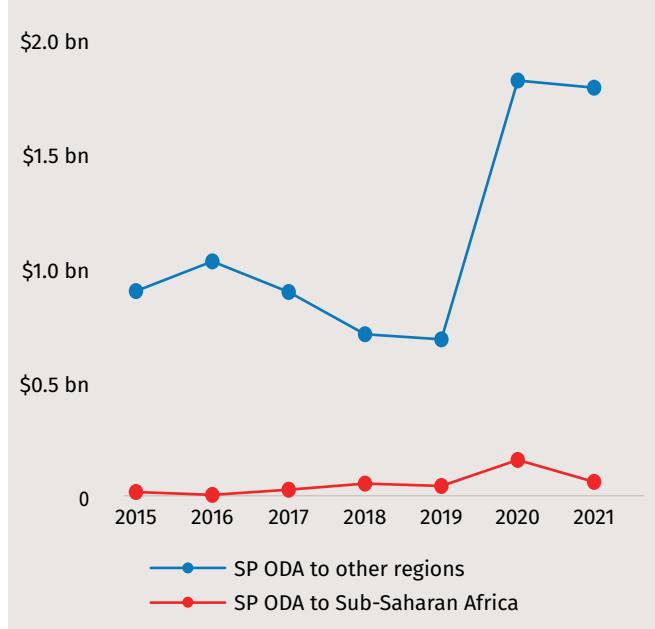
In September 2021, a report by Laureates and Leaders for Children,<sup>295</sup> using data from the ILO, demonstrated that the long-term cost of providing universal benefits to every child and new mother in the poorest countries was \$53 billion a year, or just 1.4% of what high-income countries spend on social protection. Universal means all families in low-income countries would be eligible for payments. A universal policy is the most pragmatic approach as the vast majority of children live below the \$3.20 poverty line<sup>296</sup> and means-tested programmes have higher overhead costs.<sup>297</sup>

Broadly, there are three types of child benefits: child-related cash transfers (cash benefits) to families with children, including child allowances, with payment levels that can vary with the age of the child; public income support payments to new parents such as maternity benefits; and income support for sole parent families. Child benefits work:<sup>298</sup>

- They help end child labour and increase school completion rates.<sup>299</sup>
- They help grow the economy and increase employment.<sup>300</sup>
- They have comparatively low administration costs<sup>301</sup> and lower rates of corruption.<sup>302</sup>

Establishing a globally supported safety net for children and new mothers in low-income countries would provide the foundation for the realisation of their human rights and be an outstanding example of multilateralism. It would be a very effective way for aid to make a direct difference to the world's most marginalised children and their families. Global child benefit is an idea whose time has come.

**FIGURE 57: ODA TO SOCIAL PROTECTION 2015-2021**



Source: OECD (2022), Query Wizard for International Development Statistics, Available at: <https://stats.oecd.org/qwids/#?x=1&y=6&f=2:262,4:1,7:1,9:85,3:67,5:3,8:85&q=2:262,217,221,228+4:1+7:1+9:85+3:67+5:3+8:85+1:2+6:2016,2017,2018,2019,2020,2021> (accessed 10 October 2022).

**RECOMMENDATION:**

**4. The launch of a Global Child Benefit Initiative (GCBI) in 2023 would prevent the entrenchment of extreme poverty following the COVID-19 pandemic and, to ensure low-income country governments commit to investing in universal child benefits, provide the resources to protect every child and new mother.**

Possible criteria for the GCBI are:

- a. Low-income countries need an approved plan and to commit 1% of their GDP in universal child and maternity benefits, to be eligible for the scheme.
- b. Participating high-income countries pledge to cover the rest of the financing by making social protection at least half the same percentage of their ODA expenditure as it is of their domestic expenditure. Donors are encouraged to continue to support participating countries bilaterally and a multilateral funding mechanism is used for donors that prefer to pool funding.
- c. Multilateral funding should be organised by and applied through the UN structure so that it strengthens the system and ensures funds are paid directly to marginalised children and their families, without discrimination, and with no additional conditionalities.
- d. Low-income country governments co-ordinate the payments of child and maternity benefits except in emergency situations where funding can be given directly to families.
- e. There are opportunities for wider sectors of society such as businesses, faith organisations, youth-led groups, and individuals to contribute to the GCBI to emphasise the solidarity and multilateralism between citizens underpinning the new global safety net for children.
- f. To be in line with the UN Secretary-General's call for a Global Accelerator on Social Protection.

A global child benefit initiative is an attempt to tackle one part of the wider need for increased social protection. If rich country governments make broader commitments to give social protection the same priority within their international ODA expenditure as they do domestically, it would provide additional ODA funding for pensions and unemployment insurance and other key social protection protections.

## E.3 EVERY CHILD HEALTHY: SCHOOL FEEDING PROGRAMMES

The Russian invasion of Ukraine, hot on the heels of COVID-19 and the increasing impact of climate change, has seen a dangerous escalation of food prices and a weakening of grain supplies. According to the World Health Organization, UNICEF, and the World Bank, there is a real risk of millions more children suffering from malnutrition as a result of these recent and ongoing global crises.<sup>303</sup> By the start of 2020, the number of children under the age of five who suffer from stunting had been declining for the last two decades – in every region except for Africa, which saw an increase in stunting for 7 million children since 2000.<sup>304</sup>

Pre-COVID, school feeding programmes were providing one in every two primary school-aged children with school meals, in 161 countries, and with a 36% increase in access in low-income countries.<sup>305</sup> However, the impact of prolonged school closures brought an abrupt end to the growth in school feeding programmes, with 95% of children who had previously received school meals going hungry.<sup>306</sup>

### PROGRESS IN JEOPARDY

A paradigm shift occurred between 2013 and 2020 across Africa, during which African leaders adopted the African Union's Home-Grown School Feeding Decision, more countries put in place school feeding policies, and the proportion of domestic financing spent on school meals increased. This period saw an overall increase in coverage of around 8%,<sup>307</sup> and providing a rare upward trajectory in progress towards multiple child-focused SDGs in Africa.

In sub-Saharan Africa, several countries achieved higher coverage than the global average. Low-income country Burkina Faso had achieved 100% coverage with its school feeding programme pre-COVID, although it should be recognised that this was achieved with the support of the 2020 Nobel Peace Laureate, the World Food Programme. Middle-income countries Zimbabwe, eSwatini, and Botswana had also achieved 100% coverage, with Lesotho, Mauritius, South Africa, Malawi, and Sierra Leone reaching 60-90% coverage.<sup>308</sup>

School feeding achievements are now threatened by the massive injustices faced by African governments in the wake of the pandemic, climate crises, and the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Furthermore, despite the 8% progress, it should be acknowledged that less than a third of primary school children in sub-Saharan Africa were receiving school meals at the start of 2020, leaving over 100 million primary-aged children without access.<sup>309</sup> 62.7 million school children are living in extreme poverty in low-income African countries without access to school meals, and have the most urgent need.<sup>310</sup> School feeding programmes only work if children are in school in the first place; more than 30 million sub-Saharan African children are out of primary school.<sup>311</sup>

### RECOMMENDATION:

**5. An enormous and integrated effort is critical to restore justice for the tens of millions of children whose access to school feeding programmes has been jeopardised. Similarly, the momentum achieved by sub-Saharan African governments in the 2013-2020 period must be restored to increase the number of children covered by school feeding programmes. An estimated \$4.7 billion is needed to expand school feeding programmes to the 73 million most vulnerable children in the world. This figure rises to \$5.8 billion when integrated health services are included – such as deworming treatment, menstrual health management, and sight testing – and half of this amount is needed in low-income countries. The vast majority of these 73 million children – 86% – live in Africa.**

- a. Donor countries must contribute to the World Food Programme's target of \$1.75 billion 2020-2030 to expand access and support for school feeding programmes in 30 of the most fragile and low-income countries.
- b. Donor countries must not force low- and lower-middle-income African governments to impose harmful austerity measures through the international financial institutions (IFIs), in order to allow governments to maintain and create new fiscal space for school feeding programmes.
- c. African governments should be supported to increase domestic budget to education for every child to be enrolled in primary school and to have access to school feeding programmes.

By far the biggest intervention to deliver justice for the children missing out is to focus on getting children back into school after the pandemic-induced school closures. As school feeding programmes provide a significant incentive for poorer families to enrol their children, financing interventions must be made through a combination of sustained focus in domestic budgets and increased external financing to support children get back into school.

## E.4 EVERY CHILD IN SCHOOL: FINANCING EDUCATION THROUGH SDR

Education is critical to ensure that every child can enjoy their right to fully participate in their society and break the poverty cycle for marginalised families. However, even before COVID-19, 258 million primary- and secondary-school-aged children were out of school.<sup>312</sup> The impact of pandemic-induced school closures on school participation is beginning to emerge. In Uganda, about 1 in 10 students at both primary and secondary levels did not report back to school at reopening,<sup>313</sup> and in Kenya, a survey of 4,000 adolescents aged 10–19 years found that 16% of girls and 8% of boys did not return.<sup>314</sup>

The education financing gap to achieve SDG4 by 2030 was estimated at \$200 billion annually, before the pandemic.<sup>315</sup> This figure is now higher.

Quality education can be transformational for every child, yet girls are less likely to complete primary and secondary education,<sup>316</sup> for reasons such as extreme poverty, child marriage, lack of sanitary facilities in school, and gender-based violence on the way to and in school. Women who have accessed primary education (partially or completed) earn 14–19% more than those with no education at all; women with secondary education can earn twice as much.<sup>317</sup> Educated women and their children also have better health outcomes.<sup>318</sup> Educating girls creates a positive permanent cycle of literacy – in general, literate women do not bring up illiterate children, so if a significant investment is made in girls' education the world could eradicate mass illiteracy.

Education is also beneficial for countries. Achieving universal education increases GDP. According to the ONE campaign, the Global Partnership for Education, and Save the Children, every dollar invested effectively in education for low-income countries could yield \$4.8 in economic growth, generating tax revenues and lifting people out of extreme poverty.<sup>319</sup> Universal education was a critical route South Korea used to drive GNI so high in the space of 40 years that they are now a member of the G20.<sup>320</sup>

Education financing is at a critical point, as millions of children have not returned to school since the COVID pandemic.<sup>321</sup> There is a tangible risk of the loss of another generation unless the world acts now to increase the capacity of governments to fund education and close the remaining education financing gap.

Reallocating or a new allocation of Special Drawing Rights for every low- and lower-middle income country that has a robust and comprehensive education sector plan to educate every child by 2030 would be a transformative step. It would be a much more appropriate legacy for the vision of the IMF to issue the emergency SDR than the unseemly money-grab by the richest countries in 2021.

The majority of costs in an education system are for professional teachers – at an average of 75%, often rising to over 90% – so when budgets are cut teacher numbers fall too low.<sup>322</sup> Every child has the right to a trained teacher, but there is a global shortage of teachers and the professional teacher gap in sub-Saharan Africa is estimated at 15 million.<sup>323</sup> Professional teachers are recurrent costs for governments and it is not sustainable to fund new teachers through loans or other piecemeal initiatives.

To solve the crisis and realise the historic impact of education for all, education financing must dramatically increase, both internationally and domestically, and education budgets must be more efficient, equitable, and accountable.

### RECOMMENDATION:

- 6. The IMF allocation of SDRs in 2021 could have been an invaluable lifeline for lower-income countries, yet the amount received was deeply insufficient for this to be more than a temporary boost to cover emergency or one-off costs. In context, the amount received by high-income countries alone could have paid off all debts owed to the IMF by every developing country almost three times over. This grotesquely unjust allocation must be rectified.**
  - a. The IMF must either reallocate the SDRs fairly by population or issue a new allocation of SDRs to the value of at least \$2.35 trillion for under-represented countries, in line with the civil society call for a total of \$3 trillion.
  - b. High-income countries must agree to only keep the SDRs proportional to their population, and to pool the rest of the funds as a 7-year fund to achieve at least Sustainable Development Goal 4 in low- and lower-middle-income countries. This would provide \$5 billion a year for low-income countries and \$22 billion a year for lower-middle-income countries until 2030.<sup>324</sup>
  - c. Funds should be allocated to national plans approved by the Global Partnership for Education, particularly those addressing universal access to education and solving the teacher crisis.

# F. CONCLUSION

The scale of injustice Africa is facing is shocking and debilitating to the efforts to achieve the African Union's Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Commitments for restitution for the damage of slavery and colonialism are important, but they need to go hand in hand with removing the current injustices that are exploiting Africa to this day: the modern-day injustices facing Africa are exacerbating the exploitation of previous generations.

Decision-makers need to act, but everyone who cares about children's rights and equality needs to educate and mobilise. The scale of the systemic modern injustices happening now, and the terrible price being paid for them in a world of plenty, must be understood.

It is also important to note that this report is just a selection of the injustices Africa faces.

For example, another report could easily have been written on the impact of unfair trade: the one-sided deals that entrench protectionism for richer countries and the unaccountable courts based outside Africa subverting democracy and fining countries to enforce continued exploitation. A further report could have considered the routine profiteering on life-saving drugs and the trade in patents. Another report could look at the exploitation of immigrants and refugees in rich countries: the scandal of how child migrants are treated, bonded sub-minimum wage labour and extortionate profiteering on remittance fees; and currency controls of weaker economies. Much more can be written about the role of some foreign governments that have supported political instability when their extreme profit-making is threatened.

Ending the injustices against Africa and her children should be a central topic for world leaders at the UN, G20, and G7. It shouldn't only be Nobel laureates, civil society, and youth activists investigating these modern-day injustices against Africa. World leaders and decision-makers must better understand why the SDGs are so off track in Africa and what more can be done to ensure equal representation in all important international fora. Leaders in Africa must prioritise peace-building, children's services, and the rights of adolescent girls, and end the persecution of youth-led movements. The world must recognise how small a portion of global wealth is required to end extreme poverty.

Africa is rich in natural resources, and African minerals are powering the global technology boom that has already added so much to global growth. Those resources are being mined, many of them are rare and precious, and they are sought all over the world. The problem is that most of the profits are being taken outside Africa, without contributing

to public services for African children. The world has twice the wealth of 30 years ago,<sup>325</sup> much of it derived from African natural resources;<sup>326</sup> Africa must be allowed to keep what is rightfully hers. How rich does the world have to be before Africa gets justice?

The scale of death, exploitation, and the denial of rights faced by children in Africa shames the world. One in five children in Africa are in child labour, the highest of any region by far.<sup>327</sup> Every 11 seconds, an African child under the age of five dies – of preventable causes.<sup>328</sup> This is happening when the world has never been richer. The world is moving backwards.

## DIVIDED PERCEPTIONS

While high-income countries have long seen rapidly increasing wealth, this rarely 'trickles down' to the majority of their populations, and personal incomes are not equally distributed. Since the start of the SDGs, in the United States for example, for every \$20 of increased income just \$1 went to the poorest 20% of people while \$9 went to the wealthiest 20%.<sup>329</sup> Social protection, healthcare, and universal education are usually accessible, but unjust taxation, inequitable budgeting, and discrimination still exist in many rich countries.

At the end of 2022, with war impacting energy and food prices, growth is slowing or stagnating in many high-income countries – yet injustice is deepening between the extremely wealthy and the remainder of national populations: the extremely wealthy have taken most of growth in high-income countries, and billionaire fortunes have increased by \$2.7 billion a day since 2020.<sup>330</sup> Public services are being squeezed, salaries are not keeping pace with inflation, and personal debt is more expensive. This has created a perfect storm for exploitative politicians in wealthy countries to blame easy scapegoats such as poor, aid-recipient countries, and to create a hostile environment for refugees and migrants, to deflect from their unjust policies. This hate-filled political narrative has happened before and it is dangerous.

This is exacerbated as people living in rich countries vastly overestimate the amount spent on foreign aid: in the US, opinion polls show most people think 25% of government budgets is spent on aid; in reality it is less than 1%.<sup>331</sup> There is little or no public recognition in rich countries that it is the world's poorest countries which are the most generous towards refugees.

Another core contributor to these injustices being prolonged is the low level of awareness of the lived reality of poorer African families and their children. It was not so long ago that the only widely known representation of African culture in global media was a Disney film sung by cartoon animals. While today, some progress has been made and more of the diversity and vibrancy of African culture is visible, the reality of life for poorer children and child labourers is not.

African news stories in the majority of international media are hard to come by. Not enough journalists cover the international meetings where the injustices to Africa occur, few of them report it, and even fewer editors prioritise the story of injustice. The number of foreign correspondents is declining in many countries because of wider changes in the media.<sup>332</sup> African lives are not an international news priority – even when 11 African children are dying every two minutes. US entertainment industry magazine Variety might write about the diversity gains for film and TV talent due to the pandemic-induced content boom, but while they may help manufacture the world's TV screens, African child labourers are rarely on them.

This is partly due to the share of content made in rich countries, where media ownership is held by a handful of individual billionaires and financial companies. Jeff Bezos is the private owner of Amazon, which owns Amazon Prime Video and the Washington Post; Rupert Murdoch remains in control of the Wall Street Journal, Fox News, and the UK broadsheet The Times and the tabloid The Sun; and the film and TV production companies Paramount (also owner of CBS news) and Comcast (also owner of NBC news) are both controlled by private billionaire families. ‘Publicly’-owned media conglomerates can still be beholden to a small number of major stakeholders. The world’s leading holder of fossil fuels, Vanguard, and investment company BlackRock are both major shareholders in Disney, Warner Media, and Netflix. Four banks – Citibank, Master Trust Bank of Japan, Japan Trustee Services Bank, and JP Morgan Chase – are the largest shareholders of Sony, which owns Columbia Pictures and TriStar Pictures. Private media ownership by the ultra-wealthy is also not the preserve of high-income countries: a private family owns the English-speaking world’s most circulated newspaper, The Times of India; another private family owns Grupo Globo, Latin America’s biggest media conglomerate.

This is not to say that audiences cannot get reliable news and information from many of the media outlets owned by these conglomerates, but they should be aware that commercial, political, or financial interests can influence the type of content that is created and made available. It is not in the interests of billionaires or financial companies to make or promote content about extreme poverty and injustice in Africa, or to report on African child labourers or out-of-school children. It is, however, in their interests to distract audiences from massive income inequality and unfair tax laws, and in some higher-income countries, to support cuts to international aid, or to scapegoat refugees and migrants. The role of state-controlled media must not be underestimated, particularly in countries where most other media is censored, such as China and Russia, which are unlikely to report on the damage being done to Africa by the new debt crisis, or by private militia such as the Russian Wagner Group.

Audiences themselves also have responsibility for what they choose to watch, and how that informs their views and perceptions. In much of the world, news is viewed online and content is streamed, and the algorithms used by media companies can record an individual’s aversion to learning or watching about injustice and extreme poverty in Africa, where it is available, and hide it further.

### END THE INJUSTICE

In 2021, global GDP was the highest ever on record. Global wealth increased by over \$9 trillion 2015-2018 and, despite the pandemic, it increased by \$2 trillion 2019-2021. There is no excuse for the same world to stop Africa’s children from going to school, or to force millions more into child labour, or to allow millions of her youngest children to die needlessly every year. These catastrophic injustices for children have been created by humans – but they can be ended by humans too.

African governments can work their hardest to allocate their budgets fairly, to meet international targets for public service financing, to end discrimination and corruption at home, and to prevent multinational corporations stealing their wealth. The reality is that none of this will ever be achieved, nor will it ever be enough to truly end injustice, unless the governments and institutions outside of Africa which perpetuate it are forced to act. Africa’s allies must stand together to demand a fairer deal for Africa’s children, and force the world’s gatekeepers of wealth and decision-making to finally deliver justice.

**“THE WORLD IS WAITING TO HEAR FROM YOU.”**

LEYMAH GBOWEE, NOBEL PEACE LAUREATE, 2011

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