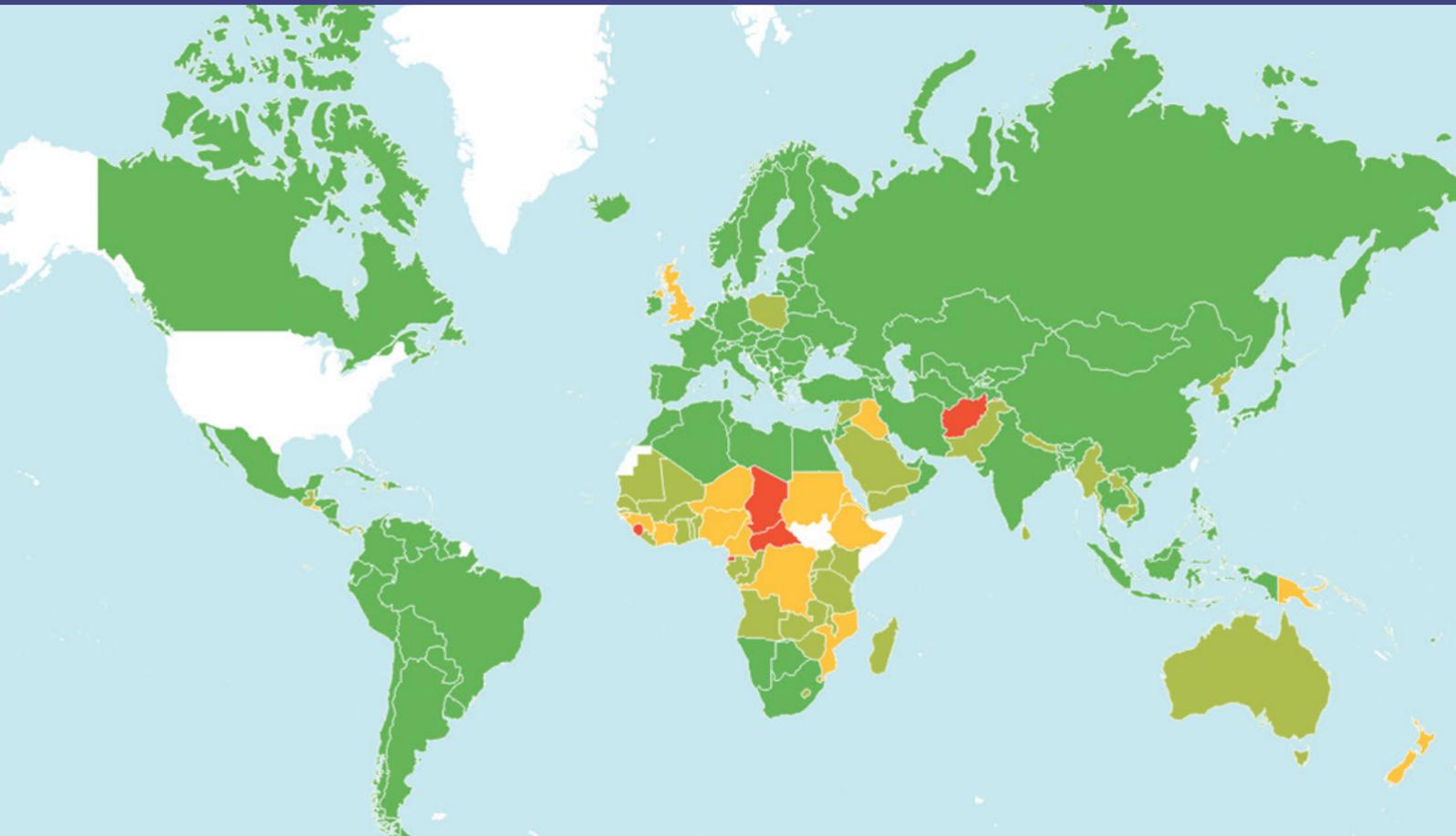


# The KidsRights Index 2022

## Report

version 22.2



**KIDSRIGHTS**  
**Index**

THE KIDSRIGHTS INDEX AND INFORMATION ABOUT ITS DOMAINS, INDICATORS AND  
METHODOLOGY ARE ACCESSIBLE ON [WWW.KIDSRIGHTSINDEX.ORG](http://WWW.KIDSRIGHTSINDEX.ORG)

## ABOUT



### KIDSRIGHTS

**KidsRights** KidsRights is an international non-governmental organization that promotes the wellbeing of vulnerable children across the world and advocates for the realisation of their rights. KidsRights strives for a world where all children have access to their rights and are empowered to realise the great potential they carry within them. KidsRights sees children as 'changemakers' who have the power to move the world and facilitates them in voicing their opinions and in taking action to bring about change.

KidsRights supports children by commanding global attention for the realisation of children's rights and by acting as a catalyst to ignite change, together with children and youths. This advocacy is supported with research and action. The KidsRights Foundation also finances local projects aimed at directly improving the rights of vulnerable children and stimulating child participation and changemaking by youths.

[www.kidsrights.org](http://www.kidsrights.org) 

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School of  
Economics



### ERASMUS SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS

Erasmus School of Economics (ESE) is a leading centre for scientific research and education in economics and econometrics. The activities of this internationally acclaimed School of Erasmus University Rotterdam contribute to understanding current and future economic developments in the world and to answering questions related to the roles of government and business policy.

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The KidsRights Index is the only annual global ranking on how countries worldwide are adhering to children's rights.

**185**  
countries

**Unique:** domain Child Rights Environment provides insight into the extent to which a country is equipped to carry out the UN CRC.

**The goal of the KidsRights Index**  
To stimulate compliance with children's rights worldwide.



**ONLINE:** the KidsRights Index is easily accessible on [www.kidsrightsindex.org](http://www.kidsrightsindex.org)



The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child is the global framework for children's rights.



**1989**

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

**196**  
states



**The KidsRights Index pools data from three reputable sources:**



- 1 Quantitative data published and regularly updated by UNICEF [www.data.unicef.org](http://www.data.unicef.org)
- 2 UNDP [www.hdr.undp.org/data](http://www.hdr.undp.org/data)
- 3 Qualitative data from the Concluding Observations by the **UN Committee on the Rights of the Child**.

**The KidsRights Index: 20 indicators: 13 quantitative and 7 qualitative indicators**

## 1. LIFE

- Under five mortality rate
- Life expectancy at birth
- Maternal mortality ratio



## 2. HEALTHCARE

- % of under five year olds suffering from underweight
- Immunization of one year old children
- % of population using improved sanitation facilities (urban and rural)
- % of population using improved drinking water sources (urban and rural)



## 3. EDUCATION

- Expected years of schooling of girls
- Expected years of schooling of boys
- Gender inequality in expected years of schooling (absolute difference between girls and boys)



## 4. PROTECTION

- Child labour
- Adolescent birth rate
- Birth registration



## 5. CHILD RIGHTS ENVIRONMENT

- Non-discrimination
- Best interests of the child
- Enabling legislation
- Best available budget
- Respect for the views of the child/child participation
- Collection and analysis of disaggregate data
- State-civil society cooperation for child rights participation



The KidsRights Index is an initiative of the KidsRights Foundation, in cooperation with Erasmus University Rotterdam; Erasmus School of Economics and the International Institute of Social Studies.

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## PREFACE

This year we are welcoming the 10<sup>th</sup> edition of the KidsRights Index. The first and only annual global index on children's rights. We are very grateful for all the work that has been done over the years by the Erasmus University and the KidsRights team.

During the last ten years we monitored how UN memberstates, who have signed the Convention on the Rights of the Child, performed on Children's rights. We started with 165 states and are now monitoring 185 states with a focus on 5 domains: life, health, education, protection and enabling environment. During all these years we analysed each domain to determine how countries adhered to children's rights and ranked them on a yearly basis regarding their overall performance.

We can conclude that no significant change for the better has occurred over the last decade of KidsRights reports. It is striking that the scores in the lowest ranking cluster of countries, have become even lower throughout the years. This means that the countries which have the most problematic conditions for children's rights, on the whole, have become worse over the last decade.

We dare to conclude that where children's rights are concerned in the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, these goals will be far from being met in 2030. This means that we will not only fail the current generation but we will also fail the generations to come.

Still we believe that positive change is possible, this is proved by the fact that within specific geographic regions, there are conspicuous risers and conspicuous falls on a country by country basis. We can see those countries who prioritise youth and have long term policies, perform well.

In addition to the lack of significant change over the last ten years, we can see that Covid-19 had a devastating effect in many domains amongst many countries, as predicted in our earlier work. The data is still incomplete and the effect might become even more serious in the longer term, than what we can see now.

Looking forward, we expect that climate change, as a new domain, which will be monitored from 2023 onwards, will have an enormous impact on all children's rights.

The current 'cocktail' of experiencing no significant change for the better in the last decade, combined with the serious setback the pandemic has provided, as well as worsening climate change, is extremely alarming for current and future generations.

In the short term, livelihood is under pressure due to rising inflation, as well as the energy crises and food crises in a number of countries, affecting children and their basic rights directly. The sum of all this threatens our very existence. If we as a civilisation cannot properly take care of our children in the long term, then we fail. We owe them a future and the generations to come, we owe it to ourselves.



Marc Dullaert

*Founder and Chairman KidsRights Foundation*



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## THE KIDSRIGHTS INDEX AT TEN: ACHIEVEMENTS, CHALLENGES AND FUTURE PROSPECTS

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by Karin Arts (ISS), with inputs from Philip Hans Franses (ESE), Dinand Webbink (ESE), and Chandrima Chattopadhyay (KidsRights)

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### 1. TEN YEARS KIDSRIGHTS INDEX: TAKING STOCK OF ACHIEVEMENTS

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The KidsRights Index Team is proud to report that in 2022 we have a decade of solid work to look back on. During that period, we have managed systematically to update the Index annually, improved our selection of data sources, fine-tuned the methodology used (especially for the Education Domain represented in the Index), and learned from feedback received. The findings generated through the Index made us gain deeper insights into developments relating to the realization of children's rights across the world, and trends therein.

#### 1.1 EXPOSURE AND ENGAGEMENT

A clear result of our work is that, over time, the KidsRights Index became an established brand name. We are grateful that this resulted in an ever-increasing level of media coverage which helped to draw attention to, and trigger debates on, the state of children's rights. Our engagement with various relevant actors (including government officials and policy officers; the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child; members of parliament; professionals involved in social work, education, and other important services for children; journalists; and staff of children's rights and development NGOs) created valuable spaces for exchanging views and mutual learning. It has been amazing to experience what a level of curiosity and interest one can trigger by publishing a ranking comparing nearly all states in the world on their child rights performance record, and what fruitful discussions this can trigger on what can be done to improve that record.

#### 1.2 CHILD RIGHTS-BASED

A particularly distinctive feature of the KidsRights Index is that it is child rights-based. This entails among others that all 5 Domains that together make up the Index reflect core aspects and requirements articulated in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) on which data are available for a large number of states. The CRC is binding for all states in the world except the United States of America, which has not ratified the treaty. The Convention is a main basis for conceptualizing and monitoring children's rights and from the very start has been a major inspiration throughout the KidsRights Index project. Next to the straightforward Domains 1 to 4 on the rights to life, health, education, and protection from exploitation and violence, we developed the unique Domain 5 covering the quality of the general environment for children's rights, or the enabling environment or 'infrastructure' that a state must have in place for it to be able to make and execute children's rights policies.

As is explained in fuller detail in section 6.2.1 of this report, more specifically Domain 5 charts how states are faring in operationalizing the CRC's substantive general principles (non-discrimination; best interests of the child; respect for the views of the child/child participation). In addition, it measures to what extent states have mobilized the bare necessities for pursuing children's rights policies and practices: enabling national legislation; the 'best available' budget; collection and analysis of disaggregated data; and state-civil society cooperation for children's rights.

The assessment of state performance on children's rights in Domain 5 is entirely based on the Concluding Observations (COs). These are documents adopted periodically by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child in which it sums up its findings on the state of play of children's rights in a particular country. These COs are an outcome of the state reporting procedure which should take place roughly every 6 to 7 years<sup>1</sup>. The Concluding Observations are the best and most comprehensive available evaluations of state performance on children's rights at the global level. In 2021 Concluding Observations were available for all states parties to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, except Somalia and South Sudan. In 2022 both countries were assessed by the CRC Committee for the very first time<sup>2</sup>. This means that in 2023, provided sufficient information will be available on other Domains, both countries can be included in the KidsRights Index. We will review this in next year's KidsRights Index report.

The KidsRights Index is based on high quality existing data made available by the United Nations (UNICEF, UNDP, UNESCO, and the Committee on the Rights of the Child).

This amounts to the best globally available and comparable data on the children's rights to life, health, education, and protection, and about the enabling environment required for pursuing those rights.

The 5 Domains together present a solid combination of quantitative and qualitative aspects of children's rights compliance, consisting of elements that are more or less equally relevant for all countries in the world. The scores for all Domains of the Index are based on high-quality existing data made available by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)<sup>3</sup>, and the monitoring body of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (i.e. the Committee on the Rights of the Child). Various other actors make inputs into the processes underlying the gathering of these data, especially states and, in the case of the work of the CRC Committee, civil society organizations as well. By basing itself on these high quality, existing, and largely comparable data, the KidsRights Index generates state of the art insights into the global and country-level condition of children's rights. It presents an assessment of key aspects of the actual children's rights record of all states parties to the CRC for which data are available. On the items covered in the Index, this amounts to the best globally and publicly available children's rights data. However, as we have pointed out over the years, there are still remarkable gaps in the available data concerning children's rights.

<sup>1</sup> Article 44(1b) of the Convention on the Rights of the Child requires states parties to report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child every five years. However, as addressed in the overall conclusion on the KidsRights Index 2022 in section 7.3 of this report, and in the Table at pp. 45-46, substantial delays occur in practice.

<sup>2</sup> Somalia's initial state report was considered by the CRC Committee in May 2022, and Concluding Observations were adopted in June 2023. For South Sudan both occurred in September 2022.

<sup>3</sup> In its annual Human Development Index which in turn uses data provided by the Institute for Statistics of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

### 1.3 MORE DATA AVAILABLE

Nevertheless, clear improvement can be reported as well, in relation to the availability of the specific data necessary for compiling the Index. When we published our first Index in 2013, we could incorporate 168 countries. In the period 2014-2017, due to changes in the methodology, that number reduced roughly to 165. But, between 2017 and 2022, the coverage of the Index increased from 165 to 185 countries. This means that currently 'only' twelve countries remain that cannot be covered in the Index due to lacking data. These include:

- the USA, which has not ratified the CRC and therefore does not have any data for Domain 5 (covering the 'enabling environment for children's rights' and, as explained in detail in the previous section, based on the 'Concluding Observations' or country assessments issued by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child);
- the four small island states Cook Islands, Marshall Islands, Niue, Tuvalu;
- Somalia and South Sudan (respectively struck by armed conflict for a long time and being a fairly new state party to the CRC and a fairly new state altogether)<sup>4</sup>;
- the four mini-states: Andorra, Liechtenstein, Holy See, Monaco;
- and the Caribbean small island state of Dominica.

Overall, the improved availability of data also shows in the change in the average missing scores per country. In 2014 on average 2.6 scores were missing per country, going up to 2.7 in 2016, but then steadily decreasing to 1.6 in 2020, 2021 and 2022.

In 2013 The KidsRights Index covered 168 countries, in 2022 185.  
Over 10 years, the availability of data per country improved from on average 2.6 missing scores per country to 1.6.

At the level of individual countries, changes in the availability of data may trigger significant changes in their overall Domain scores and total ranking. The Domain score of an individual country is based on the average scores on the indicators making up the Domain<sup>5</sup>. Missing values are not included and thus do not influence the calculation of the average Domain score. Once new data on previously missing values become available for a country, this may lead to a significant decrease of the Domain score if the country performs relatively weakly on the indicator involved. An example is the record of Equatorial Guinea on the KidsRights Index Domain of Health. Seen over the ten-year period, Equatorial Guinea's scores on the health Domain worsened significantly. The main reason for this is that, over time more data became available on the indicators sanitation and drinking water. Because of the country's relatively low score on these indicators, its average score on this Domain dropped. Likewise, Papua New Guinea's results in the health Domain of the KidsRights Index worsened over the decade because initially missing data on birth registration became available in later years but were at a comparatively quite low score. Alternatively, in case of relative strong country performance on the previously missing value, the addition of new data may result in a significant increase of the Domain score. While such changes thus may not necessarily reflect real changes on the ground, the availability of more, or more up-to-date, data is always welcome since that allows for drawing a more accurate picture of the child rights situation in a particular country.

4 As explained at the previous page of this report, in 2023 we may be able to include both of these countries now that they have both accomplished their first ever CRC state reporting round in 2022.

5 These indicators are specified in Annex 1

In a decade, the information available about maternal mortality rates, the percentage of underweight children and birth registration has substantially improved. Thus we know much better how countries are doing on these matters.

However, about child labour and state-civil society cooperation for realizing children's rights we know less because the availability of data has gone down.

As shown in Table 1 below, if we compare the number of missing values per indicator in 2013 (KRI 1) and 2022 (KRI 10), and consider that the total number of states included in the Index went up from 169 to 185, then clear improvements have taken place for:

- the Domain 1 (Life) indicator maternal mortality rate (for which the missing values reduced from 42 to 4);
- the Domain 2 (Health) indicator percentage of underweight children (for which the missing values reduced from 60 to 39);
- the Domain 4 (Protection) indicator birth registration (for which the missing values reduced from 67 to 18).

Clear deteriorations occurred on two indicators in Domains 4 and 5. Domain 4 (Protection) has (had) by far the largest number of missing values of all Domains, both in 2013 and in 2022. The number of missing values on the indicator child labour went up from 69 to 95. In Domain 5 (Enabling Environment), data on the indicator state-civil society cooperation are most frequently not available: the missing values increased from 40 in 2014 to 62 in 2022).

## Comparison Missing Values in KidsRights Index 2013 and 2022<sup>6</sup>

	KidsRights Index 1 (2013)	KidsRights Index 10 (2022)
<b>Number of countries covered</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>186</b>
<b>Missing per domain indicator</b>		
<b>Domain Life (1)</b>		
Under five mortality	1	1
Life expectancy	2	5
Maternal mortality rate	42	4
<b>Domain Health (2)</b>		
% underweight children	60	39
Immunization	Not in KRI 1	0
Sanitation	13	4
Drinking Water	11	3
<b>Domain Protection (4)</b>		
Child Labor	69	95
Adolescent birth rate	1	9
Birth registration	67	18
<b>Domain Environment (5)</b>		
Non-discrimination	3	4
Best Interests	23	21
Respect	4	3
Enabling legislation	5	1
Budget/Resources	14	5
Collection and analysis of data	6	0
State-civil society cooperation	40	62

Table 1. Comparison Missing Values in KidsRights Index 2013 and 2022 (Domains 1-2, 4, 5)

<sup>6</sup> For Domain 3 (education) we are unable to make an indicator-level comparative analysis over the ten-year period. The reason is that, as of the KidsRights Index 7 (published in 2019) we changed the methodology for this Domain and started to use a completely different but better suited set of indicators. Therefore, a comparison over the decade is not possible.

## 1.4 BETTER METHODOLOGY FOR HANDLING MISSING DATA

When data are missing, then that is a point of concern because that makes it impossible to monitor a country's performance on the indicator involved. When values were missing on certain indicators, at first, we still always calculated the Domain score based on the information available on the remaining indicators. However, this generated a potentially distorted picture and could even set a bonus or an undue penalty on having data gaps, for instance if a country's performance on indicators for which data were available was markedly strong or weak.

Therefore, as of 2016 we started to use a finer methodology for handling missing data. This entails that a country is not included in the overall Index if the overall score on Domain 5 ('Enabling Environment for Child Rights') is missing, or if more than half of all the Domain scores are missing. Thus, because of four missing values on Domain 5 indicators after the 2015 CRC state reporting procedure, Poland could not be covered in the Index in the period 2016-2021. This year, after new Concluding Observations had come about, Poland could be included again. In this way we guarantee that the scores for the Domains and the overall ranking are completely based on the most recent available data without any imputations of missing values based on historical data.

## 2. TEN YEARS KIDSRIGHTS INDEX: OVERALL RESULTS AND TAKING STOCK OF CHALLENGES

So, where are we at, in terms of children's rights in the world according to a decade of KidsRights Index material? Given the structural factors that are covered in the Index, it is disappointing but not unexpected that over the decade we have seen relatively little substantive progress or change altogether. While countries are ranked individually in the Index, they are also grouped into five different clusters. Each cluster represents a more or less similar performance level. Countries that find themselves in the same cluster may have a (sometimes even considerably) higher or lower exact ranking in the Index and show differences in performance across Domains. However, being in the same cluster means that, in reality they have a general performance level that is comparable overall. The results of the KidsRights Index over the decade reveal relatively little movement across clusters. In other words, the composition of the clusters of countries at similar performance level has turned out to be quite static over time which means that it is quite difficult to make a leap from one general performance level to another in the child rights record measured in the Index.

A decade of KidsRights Index reveals a static picture overall. Most countries have stayed roughly at the same total performance levels, and mobility across the different clusters of the Index is limited. The situation in the group of lowest ranking countries (such as Afghanistan, Democratic Republic of Congo, or Papua New Guinea) only got worse.

The absence of drastic changes over the past ten years can also be seen from the average scores within the five clusters. As presented in the Table below, the scores in the first four clusters have been rather constant, certainly over the past six or seven years.

Year	1	2	3	4	5
2013	0.93	0.83	0.70	0.52	0.32
2014	0.95	0.79	0.65	0.48	0.24
2015	0.94	0.72	0.50	0.27	0.06
2016	0.92	0.82	0.64	0.44	0.20
2017	0.92	0.82	0.64	0.44	0.20
2018	0.89	0.73	0.58	0.39	0.13
2019	0.90	0.76	0.58	0.39	0.12
2020	0.91	0.78	0.58	0.39	0.06
2021	0.91	0.79	0.59	0.39	0.07
2022	0.82	0.72	0.56	0.40	0.24

Table 2. Average KidsRights Index Scores Per Cluster of Rankings

It is striking that the scores in the lowest-scoring cluster (cluster 5) have become lower through the years. This means that, in countries that face the most problematic children’s rights situations (such as Afghanistan, Democratic Republic of Congo, or Papua New Guinea) on the whole conditions have become worse over the last decade.

A detailed collective analysis of the Domains 1, 2 and 4 (that map the performance level relating to the children’s rights to life, health, and protection from exploitation and violence)<sup>7</sup> over the ten-year period generates similar results.

Per Domain or specific Domain indicator (life, health, protection and enabling environment for children’s rights) certain individual countries show clear progress over the decade, such as Angola on the right to life, or Bangladesh on the right to health. Other countries face a clear decline such as Nigeria on the maternal mortality ratio and Montenegro on child immunization.

At the level of individual countries per Domain there is more to report. By comparing the average scores per Domain at country level for the period 2013-2015 (the first three editions of the KidsRights Index) with those for the period 2020-2022 (the most recent three editions of the KidsRights Index), it has been possible to identify several individual countries that show either a significant improvement or a significant deterioration in a particular Domain. We took the difference between the two averages (that is, the mean of the last three editions minus the mean of the first three editions). This generated a score for the change over 10 years. A positive score means that a country has improved, and a negative score means that a country did worse on a specific Domain. For the countries with the most extreme scores (more than 0.2 or less than -0.2) we investigated the changes by exploring the alterations in the underlying indicator-level values and checking for sources that shine light on possible reasons for these changes. Below we briefly present some of these significant changes for selected countries, by one positive and one negative example each, located in different continents.

<sup>7</sup> As explained in footnote 3, due to a methodological change for Domain 3 (education) we are not able to make an indicator-level comparative analysis over the ten-year period.

## 2.1 DOMAIN LIFE: ANGOLA AND NIGERIA

Since the first publication of the KidsRights Index in 2013, the Southern African state Angola has achieved a significant improvement on the Domain child life. The under-five mortality rate has reduced from 165 to 75 (per 1000 live births). Life expectancy at birth increased from 52 to 62 years. The maternal mortality ratio, expressing the number of maternal deaths per 100,000 live births, went down by almost half from 477 to 241.

### Angola:

In a decade, under-five mortality more than halved, maternal mortality almost halved, and life expectancy at birth increased by 10 years, or nearly 20%.

These are likely to be the results of deliberate government policy, as was explained by the government of Angola in the latest state report that it submitted to the CRC Committee (in 2016):

For the well being of the people in general and of the children of Angola in particular, the Executive Branch has been strategically carrying out the health policy under the 2013-2017 PND [National Development Plan]. This is done through a series of health sector programs, with emphasis on those that directly impact the life of the child (...).<sup>8</sup>

This policy emphasis is rooted in the government's conviction that:

the prerequisite for the continued existence of the whole and healthy nation of Angola is the survival and development of its citizens. In sum, this means the right to life, which has been of paramount concern for the Executive Branch of Angola, as shown in its performance in implementing public policies that are subject to international evaluation.<sup>9</sup>

Already well before, this policy stance resulted in a longstanding positive trend on issues in the sphere of the right to life. Between 2000 and 2013, life expectancy in Angola already improved by nearly seven years.<sup>10</sup> In its latest state report (submitted to the CRC Committee in 2016) Angola pledged that it would continue these endeavours for long: "efforts are constantly being redoubled to forge ahead along the long and arduous path so that, in a few decades, Angola will rise to be among the group of countries with high human development".<sup>11</sup> The KidsRights Index results presented in the period 2020-2022 confirm that these efforts have borne further fruit.

### Nigeria: negative performer on the Domain life

In a decade, the maternal mortality rate in Nigeria increased by two third.

8 Committee on the Rights of the Child, 'Consideration of Reports Submitted by States Parties under Article 44 of the Convention. Combined Fifth to Seventh Periodic Reports of States Parties Due in 2015: Angola', UN doc. CRC/C/AGO/5-7, 24 February 2017, para. 98, available at <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/1316377>.

9 Ibid., para. 42.

10 Ibid. para. 43. See also, e.g., United Nations, 'UNICEF Welcomes New Initiative to Boost Maternal and Infant Health in Angola', UN News, 26 August 2010, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2010/08/348772-unicef-welcomes-new-initiative-boost-maternal-and-infant-health-angola>.

11 Ibid.

On the other hand, West African state Nigeria has significantly fallen in this domain over the ten-year period. This is mainly due to the substantial increase of the maternal mortality ratio (from 550 to 920 per 100,000 live births) in the country. The latest available assessment of children's rights in Nigeria conducted by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child are the Concluding Observations adopted in 2010. At that time, more than 12 years ago, the Committee welcomed the introduction of a new budgetline "on maternal health and the new born child (...) in the 2010 Government budget". However, it also immediately "reiterated its earlier concern about insufficient budget allocations to children and that corruption remains endemic in the State party (CRC/C/15/Add.257, para. 21) and its adverse effects on the protection and promotion of children's rights".<sup>12</sup> According to the explanation provided by the reputable professor of public health Tanimola Akande (University of Ilorin, Nigeria), "the entire health system" in Nigeria is weak: "many of our primary healthcare centres are dilapidated and lack personnel. In some cases, the medical doctors stationed in the centres are hardly available".<sup>13</sup> In addition, factors such as "the health-seeking behaviour of Nigerians, low literacy rates and cultural and religious practices" and "low immunisation and health insurance coverage, difficulties in accessing health facilities in rural areas, and poverty" all play a role. While Tanimola Akande made these remarks to explain the relatively high under-five mortality rate in Nigeria, they certainly help to understand some of the reasons for the performance drop on the maternal mortality ratio as well.

## 2.2 DOMAIN HEALTH: BANGLADESH AND MONTENEGRO

A remarkable positive example in the health Domain is Bangladesh in South Asia. Over the ten-year period, Bangladesh managed to reduce by almost 50 per cent the number of under five-year old children suffering from underweight (from 41 to 22). In addition, the percentage of the population using improved drinking water sources improved from 85 to 98. Various sources document the purposeful policy efforts made by the government of Bangladesh to strengthen the health record of its (child) population, with special emphasis on sanitation. In 2014, the World Health Organization and the UN jointly reported Bangladesh's successful efforts in reducing open defecation, from 34 per cent in 1990, to 19 per cent in 2000, and 3 per cent in 2012.<sup>14</sup> This progress was among other activities due to campaigns promoting behavior change and to the construction of many new toilets.<sup>15</sup>

### **Bangladesh:** positive performer on the Domain health

Between 2013 and 2022, the number of underweight under five-year old children halved and the use of improved drinking water sources increased from 85 to 98 per cent of the population.

In the 2015 Concluding Observations, under the heading "health and health services", besides criticism on some aspects, the CRC Committee explicitly appreciated "the initiatives undertaken by the State party, namely, the development of a national immunization policy, the establishment of the special care unit for sick newborns and the adoption of laws on oil fortification and banning of marketing of breast-

12 CRC Committee, 'Concluding Observations: Nigeria', UN doc. CRC/C/NGA/CO/3-4, 21 June 2010, para. 16. The issue of insufficient budgetary allocations was also raised in the Concluding Observations adopted in 2005. See CRC Committee, 'Concluding Observations: Nigeria', UN doc. CRC/C/15/Add.257, 13 April 2005, para. 21.

13 Allwell Okpi, 'No, More than 99% of Nigerian Children Under 5 Don't Die Every Year', *The Guardian* (Nigeria), 10 May 2021, <https://guardian.ng/features/no-more-than-99-of-nigerian-children-under-5-dont-die-every-year/>

14 World Health Organization and UNICEF, 'Progress on Sanitation and Drinking-water: 2014 Update', Geneva/New York, 2014, p. 52.

15 Qimiao Fanm and Abul Kalam Azad, 'Towards a Cleaner Bangladesh: Safe Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene for All' *World Bank Blogs*, 15 September 2017, <https://blogs.worldbank.org/endpovertyinsouthasia/towards-cleaner-bangladesh-safe-water-sanitation-and-hygiene-all>

milk substitutes in 2013”.<sup>16</sup> The Committee also noted “the adoption of a comprehensive plan of action for 2011-2016 for adolescent reproductive and sexual health”.<sup>17</sup> In 2016, the World Bank too praised Bangladesh “for its impressive progress in achieving health-related Millennium Development Goals”, for having a “reasonably good network of health care facilities – most recently expanding the network of community based clinics”, and for its policy efforts overall.<sup>18</sup>

**Montenegro:** negative performer on the Domain health

Over the ten-year period, the immunization rates of one-year old children went down by more than two-third.

Montenegro, located in Southeastern Europe, presents a striking negative example in the health Domain of the KidsRights Index. Its descent over the ten-year period is mainly due to a significant drop in the immunization rate of one-year olds (from 88 in 2013 to 42 in 2021, and 24 in 2022). According to UNICEF Montenegro, one of the explanatory factors for this situation is the fact that many adults are rather critical of vaccines: “[a] 2019 survey on the attitudes of adults to vaccines suggests that about one-third of adults believe that vaccines should be avoided as they may cause other diseases and have adverse side effects”.<sup>19</sup> In addition, a “lack of policy priority attached to full implementation of obligatory vaccination programmes”, a lack of capacity and motivation among healthcare providers and, more recently, Covid-19 played a part.<sup>20</sup>

## 2.3 DOMAIN PROTECTION: BOLIVIA AND IRAQ

Bolivia, located in western-central South America, shows good results over the ten-year period on the KidsRights index Domain of child protection. This is due to the achieved reduction in the incidence of child labour, from 26 to 14 per cent of the children between 5 and 17 years old. The reasons for this are hard to determine, and this would require deeper research than was possible during the preparation of this KidsRights Index report. We did find that, since 2013 the United States Department of Labour has consistently reported Bolivia to have made “moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labour”.<sup>21</sup>

16 CRC Committee, ‘Concluding Observations: Bangladesh’, UN doc. CRC/C/BGD/CO/5, 30 October 2015, para. 54. These are the latest available.

17 Qimiao Fanm and Abul Kalam Azad, ‘Towards a Cleaner Bangladesh: Safe Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene for All’ World Bank Blogs, 15 September 2017, <https://blogs.worldbank.org/endpovertyinsouthasia/towards-cleaner-bangladesh-safe-water-sanitation-and-hygiene-all>

18 World Bank, ‘Bangladesh: Improving Capacity to Meet Growing Needs’, 13 October 2016, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/results/2016/10/07/bangladesh-health-nutrition-population-improving-capacity-meet-growing-needs>. See also Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha (BSS, National News Agency of Bangladesh), ‘Bangladesh Attains Huge Success in Reducing Infant, Maternal Mortality’, 14 June 2022, <https://www.bssnews.net/news/66456>.

19 Unicef Montenegro, ‘Situation Analysis of Children and Adolescents in Montenegro’, Summary, February 2021, p. 14. The CRC Committee too refers to “anti-vaccination campaigns” as a main factor behind the declining childhood immunization rates. See CRC Committee, ‘Concluding Observations: Montenegro’, UN doc. CRC/C/MNE/CO/2-3, 22 June 2018, para. 43(b).

20 *Ibid.*, p. 15.

21 Bureau of International Labour Affairs, ‘Child Labor and Forced Labor Reports: Bolivia’, U.S. Department of Labour, <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/ilab/resources/reports/child-labor/bolivia>.

**Bolivia:** positive performer on the Domain protection

In a decade, the prevalence of child labour nearly halved and birth registration improved and is currently realized for 92% of Bolivia's children).

It would be really interesting to know whether the pioneering legislation in place in Bolivia since 2014,<sup>22</sup> which - by exception and under certain (protected) circumstances - allowed children between 10 and 14 years of age to work, was a factor in the positive change in the overall child labour record of Bolivia. However, this remains unevaluated and thus is hard to tell. Reportedly, implementation efforts of the law were weak and thus effects in practice are likely to have been small. According to Manfred Liebel, expert in the field: the "government never provided the necessary means to implement the protection mechanisms". In December 2018, after fierce international criticism, among others by the International Labour Organization and the US, the law was amended. According to Liebel, the amendments entailed that:

All legal protections for working children under the age of 14 were removed, which amounts to a general ban. The code's provisions and guarantees relating to labour law are now limited to adolescents between the ages of 14 and 18. The only remaining mention of younger children is an exhortation to uphold compulsory education and the ban on child labour. The code also states that government agencies can be expected to show greater sensitivity for their need for protection.<sup>23</sup>

Nevertheless, the prevalence of child labour overall nearly halved in the ten-year period covered by the KidsRights Index (2013-2022), which is good news. The birth registration percentage in Bolivia went up from 76 to 92 per cent. Monetary incentives, in the form of a conditional social cash transfer programme, have been reported as significantly contributing to the increase of the national birth registration rate in Bolivia.<sup>24</sup> Also, UNICEF Bolivia worked both with the authorities, such as the Civil Registration Service (SERECI), and the private sector (local telephone company TIGO) to step up birth registration in hospitals and health centres. According to UNICEF Bolivia, between 2015 and 2018 this work resulted in 85 hospitals having Civil Registration Centres and "increasing registration at birth by 572 per cent".<sup>25</sup> (Public) information campaigns and training of health care professionals and civil servants were also important in obtaining these results.

**Iraq:** negative performer on the Domain protection

The adolescent birth rate in Iraq went up dramatically since 2013, from 70 to 240 per 1000 young women between 15 and 19 years old.

Iraq, in western Asia, has done less well in the protection Domain over the ten-year period, especially

22 Manfred Liebel, 'Protecting the Rights of Working Children Instead of Banning Child Labour: Bolivia Tries a New Legislative Approach', policy paper, European Parliament, September 2014, [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2014\\_2019/documents/deve/dv/liebel\\_policy\\_paper\\_bolivia/liebel\\_policy\\_paper\\_bolivia\\_en.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2014_2019/documents/deve/dv/liebel_policy_paper_bolivia/liebel_policy_paper_bolivia_en.pdf).

23 Manfred Liebel, 'Children's Rights: Bolivia Bows to International Pressure', Development and Cooperation, e-Paper no. 5, 2019, <https://www.dandc.eu/en/article/bolivia-abandons-pioneering-legal-reform-working-children>.

24 World Bank Group, 'Incentives for Improving Birth Registration Coverage: A Review of the Literature', International Bank for Reconstitution and Development/The World Bank, Washington, 2018, pp. 6-7.

25 UNICEF Bolivia, 'BOLIVIA: Child Protection Thematic Report', January - December 2018, p. 11, <https://open.unicef.org/sites/transparency/files/2020-06/Bolivia-TP5-2018.pdf>.

because of a significant rise in the adolescent birth rate (from 70 to 240 per 1000 young women in the age group 15 to 19). In the latest available Concluding Observations for Iraq (adopted in 2015), the CRC Committee already drew attention to this matter by urging Iraq to “[d]evelop and implement a policy to protect the rights of pregnant teenagers, adolescent mothers and their children”.<sup>26</sup> It also noted “with concern that adolescents lack access to reproductive health services, including access to contraceptives and safe abortion services”<sup>27</sup> and called on Iraq to:

- (a) Review its legislation concerning abortion to ensure that the best interests of pregnant teenagers are guaranteed, and ensure by law and in practice that the views of the pregnant child are always heard and given due consideration in abortion decisions;
- (b) Adopt a comprehensive sexual and reproductive health policy for adolescents, and ensure that sexual and reproductive health education is part of the mandatory school curriculum and targeted at adolescent girls and boys, with special attention on preventing early pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections.<sup>28</sup>

## 2.4 DOMAIN 5: THE ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR CHILDREN’S RIGHTS

Over the ten-year period, a total of 47 states show a significant improvement<sup>29</sup> overall on the performance indicators of Domain 5 (non-discrimination; best interests of the child; respect for the views of the child/child participation). It is interesting to observe that, percentage-wise, most regions have a similar share of countries that qualify for this category of above-average performers on Domain 5: Africa 23%,<sup>30</sup> Americas and Caribbean 29%,<sup>31</sup> Asia and Pacific 25%,<sup>32</sup> and Europe 22%.<sup>33</sup> The Middle East scores somewhat higher, as no less than 31% of the 13 countries located in this region show a significant improvement on Domain 5 over ten years.<sup>34</sup> This is because through the years they all received an overall more favourable assessment by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, which presumably means that the enabling environment for children’s rights improved tangibly.

Since 2013, 47 states have significantly improved their enabling environment for children’s rights. This consists of the combination of respect for the general principles of the Convention on the Rights of the child, legislation, one’s best available budget/resources, data, and state-civil society collaboration.

15 states perform significantly weaker on Domain 5.

The Middle East features as a frontrunner in both categories.

Over the ten-year period, a total of 15 states shows a significant decline<sup>35</sup> overall on Domain 5. Again,

26 CRC Committee, ‘Concluding Observations: Iraq’, UN doc. CRC/C/IRQ/CO/2-4, para. 55(c), 3 March 2015.

27 Ibid., para. 66.

28 Ibid., para. 67.

29 As explained at the end of section 2 above, significant improvement refers to a change score of more than 0.2.

30 Botswana, Central African Republic, Egypt, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritania, Mauritius, Namibia, Nigeria, Senegal, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe all obtained a positive change score of more than 0.2.

31 Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Guyana, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay, and Peru all obtained a positive change score of more than 0.2.

32 Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Republic of Korea, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Vanuatu and Vietnam all obtained a positive change score of more than 0.2.

33 Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Georgia, Italy, Latvia, Kyrgyzstan, Luxembourg, Montenegro, and Turkmenistan all obtained a positive change score of more than 0.2.

34 Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, and Qatar all obtained a positive change score of more than 0.2.

35 As explained at the end of section 2 above, significant decline refers to a change score of less than -0.2.

the total regional percentages of the share of countries in this category are relatively close to one another: Africa 23%,<sup>36</sup> Americas and Caribbean 29%,<sup>37</sup> Asia and Pacific 25%,<sup>38</sup> and Europe 22%.<sup>39</sup> Again, the Middle East stands out by having 8% representation in the group of countries with significantly worsened performance on Domain 5.<sup>40</sup> In all regions, these significant changes occurred because through the years they received a more favourable assessment by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. Presumably, this means that the enabling environment for children's rights improved tangibly. The Concluding Observations of the CRC Committee are a self-evident ingredient of the KidsRights Index. As stated earlier, they are the highest level available global, comparable, and independent assessment of country situations in terms of children's rights. However, the scoring exercise for Domain 5 is sometimes hampered or complicated because the CRC Committee does not necessarily compile all Concluding Observations according to exactly the same pattern. While there is a standard structure in principle, in practice Concluding Observations differ in style, formulation and emphasis in terms of content. This may depend for instance on the circumstances countries are in, on how often the state has reported already, whether previous recommendations were followed up, what has been brought up by actors involved in the monitoring procedure (including in meetings between the Committee and the reporting state, and between the Committee and civil society organizations), or which chamber of the Committee conducts the meeting with the reporting state.

The Concluding Observations of the CRC Committee are the highest level available global, comparable, and independent assessment of country situations in terms of children's rights. Changing or inconsistent practice by the CRC Committee, 'non-available' scores, and backlogs in the state reporting procedure present challenges for compiling the KidsRights Index.

Originally, the Concluding Observations normally would first contain a general evaluative text on a topic raised, followed by Committee recommendations on how to do better. The general evaluative text normally was conclusive in the sense that one could easily make out whether the Committee made positive or negative remarks only, or a combination of both. The scoring system for Domain 5 was developed on that basis and in principle works mainly with the general evaluative text. However, at some stage the CRC Committee's practice changed and more and more often it started to leave out the general evaluative text to formulate recommendations only. This makes scoring less straightforward and more prone to a negative bias. After all, recommendations imply that there is a need for improvement and action. In all cases of second thoughts or hesitations in scoring, we give the state concerned the benefit of the doubt and allocate the more positive score.

Another challenge to be mentioned here is that, although all domain 5 indicators are either recognized general principles of the CRC, or obvious general tools for realizing children's rights, they are not systematically addressed in all Concluding Observations. This shows in the various scores of 'non-available' in Domain 5. State-civil society cooperation remains relatively often unaddressed by the Committee.<sup>41</sup> The reasons for this are not clear since the matter is crucial for implementation of the CRC, has clear roots in CRC obligations, and clearly is of general importance for all countries.

<sup>36</sup> Democratic Republic of Congo, Mozambique and Sierra Leone all obtained a negative change score of less than -0.2.

<sup>37</sup> Brazil, Dominican Republic, and El Salvador all obtained a negative change score of less than -0.2.

<sup>38</sup> Australia, Maldives, and New Zealand all obtained a negative change score of less than -0.2.

<sup>39</sup> Ireland, Romania, Slovakia, Spain and the United Kingdom all obtained a negative change score of less than -0.2.

<sup>40</sup> Saudi Arabia obtained a negative change score of less than -0.2.

<sup>41</sup> In this year's Domain 5 of the KidsRights Index, 96 of the in total 1295 possible values were not available. So there was a missing value percentage of 7%. 62 of the 96 missing values were scores on state-civil society cooperation.

Finally, and perhaps the biggest challenge of all - for the CRC Committee and states parties but certainly also for the KidsRights Index - is the backlog in the state reporting procedure. As is explained in detail later in this Report, <sup>42</sup> too many states report late. And due to the limited capacity of the CRC Committee, only a relatively small number of states can be reviewed each year. Because of the restrictions triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic, the year 2021 reached an all-time low in this regard with only six Concluding Observations having been adopted. Obviously, Domain 5 is directly affected and consequently will not be updated or change much in such a year. It is difficult to accept that, on such an important topic as children's rights, data and monitoring cannot be more up to date, and reporting cannot be more frequent.

## 2.5 THE NETHERLANDS

Because KidsRights and Erasmus University Rotterdam are based in the Netherlands, we take special interest in the performance record of that country. The KidsRights Index record of the Netherlands reflects the general static trend outlined earlier. While there has been some fluctuation in the actual ranks occupied, both overall and per Domain, throughout the decade covered the Netherlands firmly stayed at the top of the cluster of the best performing countries in the Index.

The Netherlands	Total KRI Rank	Rank Life	Rank Health	Rank Education	Rank Protection	Rank Enabling Environment
2013	2	20	20	29	7	3
2022	4	17	28	4	3	37

Table 3. KidsRights Index (KRI) Record 2013-2022 of the Netherlands

The changes in the ranks for life, education and protection can be attributed primarily to the fact that, since 2013, some twenty additional countries have been included into the KidsRights Index and the Netherlands tends to do better than most countries globally. However, various challenges remain in the Netherlands in terms of the full realization of children's rights. This is expressed in the fact that The Netherlands ranks 37 on Domain 5 (enabling environment for children's rights). It is important to note that this score is based on Concluding Observations adopted in 2015 though. The newly adopted Concluding Observations (of March 2022) provide a compelling overview of children's rights issues yet to be addressed. We will discuss these new COs in detail in next year's KidsRights Index Report.

42 ADD CROSS-REFERENCE TO Relevant Text at the end of KRI 10 report

## 2.6 DOMAIN-BASED AND COUNTRY-LEVEL CONCLUSIONS OVER THE TEN-YEAR PERIOD

The state of children's rights in particular countries is determined by deeply structural factors (such as the enabling environment for children rights, the education system, and the health care system). Changing these for the better requires long-term vision and longstanding policy efforts and investments. This is highly visible in the results of the KidsRights Index over a decade: countries tend to stay in the same cluster of performance level and there is not much mobility across those clusters. In other words, it is quite difficult to make a leap from one general performance level in the child rights record measured in the Index to a higher one. It is striking, and depressing, that the scores in the lowest-scoring cluster of countries (cluster 5) have become lower and lower through the years. So, in countries that face the most problematic children's rights situations (such as Afghanistan, Democratic Republic of Congo, or Papua New Guinea) on the whole conditions only became worse over the last decade.

While the overall Domain analyses generated a static picture, at the level of individual countries more dynamic developments, positive and negative are visible. For instance, since 2013, both the under-five mortality rate and the maternal mortality ratio in Angola more or less halved. Nigeria, on the other hand, faces a substantial increase of the maternal mortality ratio since 2013 (from 550 to 920 per 100,000 live births). The available evidence suggests that crucial factors in this difference in performance record between these two countries include the intensity, specificity and/or determination of government policy efforts and the effective mobilization of resources. Similar differences seem to play out in the Domain Health. Bangladesh should be proud of the quite positive results achieved in terms of reducing, again by almost half, the number of underweight children under five, and increasing the use of improved drinking water sources (from 85 to 98 per cent). These can be linked to deliberate policy efforts.

The intensity, specificity and/or determination of government policy efforts and the effective mobilization of resources are crucial explanatory factors in achieving above-average results (positive or negative) on any of the Domains of the KidsRights Index.

Montenegro on the other hand has not managed to prevent a drastic dip (of around 70%) in vaccination rates of one-year olds during the period 2013-2022. Lack of government policy priority and Covid-19 reportedly played major parts in this outcome.

On the Domain Education we are unable to make an analyses over ten years due to a change in the methodology processed in 2019. Significant country-level changes in the Domain Child Protection (relating to the reduction of child labour in Bolivia, and the rise in the adolescent birth rate in Iraq) are difficult to interpret.

Our analysis of the regional distribution of above-average positive and negative performers on Domain 5 (Enabling Environment), interestingly, showed that the Middle East stands out in both categories. It has a share of 31% (as compared to 25% for other regions) in the group of countries that displays above-average improvement over the decade, and a share of only 8% (compared to 25% for other regions) in the group of countries whose performance over the decade became significantly worse. All changes in Domain 5 are directly (and only) triggered by either a more positive or a more negative assessment by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. Presumably, these assessments reflect real positive or negative changes in practice.

However, certain changes in the CRC Committee’s practice in terms of the content of Concluding Observations (with less emphasis on general evaluative text and more on recommendations) at times make the generation of scores for Domain 5 more complex and possibly more at risk of bias. But, the biggest challenge of all is that of ensuring that the CRC reporting procedure and thus the adoption of Concluding Observations continues and is done on time. The Covid pandemic has been a major challenge in this regard, and it is good to notice that in 2022 some of the reporting procedure’s backlogs are being made up.

### 3. COVID-19 AND OTHER CRISES

In the KidsRights Index reports issued in 2020 and 2021 we paid prominent attention to the (likely) world-wide impact of COVID-19 on children’s rights. We sketched the to-be-expected effects on health care for children (including lesser priority for vaccination against common childhood diseases), and on the mental health and general wellbeing of children and youth. Attention was drawn to the devastating impact on children’s education due to the widespread and often very long Covid-related school closures. We explained that the pandemic deepened inequalities and poverty and posed a serious risk of increasing violence against children. We also introduced the notion of “deferred effects”. This refers to the idea that:

beyond their short-term impacts, the Corona-related effects on children in the realms of violence and abuse, poverty, education disadvantages, malnutrition, or mental health problems – separately or in combination – are likely to have significant, lasting (and in some cases irreparable) and harmful consequences for children on the long term too. However, these consequences will only fully manifest themselves over time. Hence the need to consider and respond, not only to the immediately visible negative impact of the pandemic on children and their rights, but also to the deferred impact that will become clear over (a longer period of) time. This has implications for post-Corona policy-making efforts (...).<sup>43</sup>

We also shared and commented on the ‘Framework for Child Rights-Based Corona and Post-Corona Policies’ that was made available by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child in April 2020, and which we (still) see as a fitting framework for addressing both the actual and deferred impacts of the pandemic.<sup>44</sup>

Covid-19 has had very serious effects on children, among other things due to the widespread and long school closures, lesser priority for child health care including immunization, and mental health implications.

E.g. in 2021, the highest number of children since 2009 (25 million children) did not receive basic vaccines. And, for the first time in two decades, the number of child laborers has risen (to 160 million).

However, the evidence on the full picture of all effects of the pandemic on children is still building up. Statistics lag and some of the (deferred) effects will only manifest over a longer period.

43 Karin Arts, ‘Children’s Rights in Times of the Coronavirus (COVID-19): One Year Later’, in *The KidsRights Index 2021 Report*, <https://files.kidsrights.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/03095317/KidsRights-Index-2021-Report.pdf>, p. 11.

44 *Ibid.*, pp. 16-22.

At the moment of writing (early autumn 2022), the pandemic had greatly reduced in intensity and prospects for ending it appear to be real.<sup>45</sup> However, the precise impact of Covid-19 on the children's rights measured in the Kids Rights Index still cannot be reported fully because the data required for doing so are not yet available. At the same time, evidence that confirms that children rights have been seriously affected by the pandemic is growing. Telling randomly selected examples are the following:

- **Loss of children's lives:** according to a World Bank study published in February 2022, in the year 2020, in low and middle-income countries an estimated 279,000 to 286,000 additional lives of children under the age of 5 were lost, not because of illness but due to the indirect effects of recessions related to COVID-19, such as disruptions in food and medicine delivery, closure of health clinics, or disruption in child vaccinations programmes during lockdowns.<sup>46</sup>
- **Vaccination rates:** the World Health Organization (WHO) recently reported that in 2021 global child immunization coverage dropped, from 86 per cent in 2019, to 81 per cent. "[A]n estimated 25 million children under the age of 1 year did not receive basic vaccines, which is the highest number since 2009", and "the number of completely unvaccinated children increased by 5 million since 2019".<sup>47</sup> The UN has reported similar findings.<sup>48</sup>
- **Mental health:** already back in 2020 the WHO reported that the "COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted or halted critical mental health services in 93% of countries worldwide while the demand for mental health is increasing".<sup>49</sup> In almost three quarter (72%) of the 130 countries surveyed at the time, mental health services for children and adolescents were disrupted", and 78 per cent of these countries saw "at least partial disruptions to school (...) mental health services".<sup>50</sup>

45 United Nations, 'The End of the COVID-19 Pandemic is in Sight: WHO', UN News, 14 September 2022.

46 Katelyn Jison Yoo et al., 'Excess Under-five Mortality Due to COVID-19 Related Economic Downturn', World Bank Blogs, 15 April 2022, <https://blogs.worldbank.org/health/excess-under-five-mortality-due-covid-19-related-economic-downturn>. The study itself is reported here: <https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0263245#abstract0>.

47 World Health Organization, 'Immunization Coverage', 14 July 2022, <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/immunization-coverage>.

48 UNICEF, 'Impact of COVID-19 on Routine Immunization Services in Low and Middle Income Countries', Presentation Vaccine Industry Consultation, 1-2 November 2021, <https://www.unicef.org/supply/media/10096/file/11-Impact-of-Covid-on-RI-and-campaigns-Ephrem-Lemango.pdf>.

49 World Health Organization, 'COVID-19 Disrupting Mental Health in Most Countries: WHO Survey', Press release, Geneva, 5 October 2020. For further generic information see also WHO, 'Mental Health and COVID-19: Early Evidence of the Pandemic's Impact', Scientific Brief, 2 March 2022, [https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/WHO-2019-nCoV-Sci\\_Brief-Mental\\_health-2022.1](https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/WHO-2019-nCoV-Sci_Brief-Mental_health-2022.1).

50 Ibid.

- **Education:** a report launched by the Global Education Evidence Advisory Panel (GEEAP) in January 2022 provides a depressing overview of the consequences of Covid-19 for children’s education. The accompanying press release highlights that “without urgent action, a Grade 3 child who has lost one year of schooling during the pandemic could lose up to three years’ worth of learning in the long run”.<sup>51</sup> The low effectiveness of remote learning efforts is becoming clear. The same applies to the inequality in distribution of the effects of Covid restrictions on education: “[l]ow- and middle-income countries and children from lower socioeconomic backgrounds have been the hardest hit”, according to the report. Schools in low- and middle-income countries “have, on average, been closed for longer than in high-income countries, students have had less or no access to technology during school closures, and there has been less adaptation to the challenges of the crisis”.<sup>52</sup> GEEAP reported that the “economic cost of lost learning from the crisis will be severe. A recent estimation predicts a USD \$17 trillion loss in lifetime earnings among today’s generation of schoolchildren if corrective action is not urgently taken”.<sup>53</sup> According to GEEAP’s vice-chair and Nobel prize winner Abhijit Banerjee: “Learning losses due to school closures are one of the biggest global threats to medium- and long-term recovery from COVID-19. The evidence tells us that schools need to reopen and be kept open as far as possible, and steps need to be taken in reintegrating children back into the school system”.<sup>54</sup>
- **Child Protection:** in 2021, a joint report by the International Labour Organization and the UN revealed that “[f]or the first time in two decades, the number of children being put to work has risen – to 160 million worldwide, representing an increase of 8.4 million over four years – while millions of others are at risk due to the COVID-19 pandemic”.<sup>55</sup> In terms of effects on violence against children, already in 2020 the UN reported that at the time “1.8 billion children live[d] in (...) 104 countries where violence prevention and response services have been disrupted due to COVID-19”.

While clear evidence certainly is building up on the negative impact of the Corona pandemic, a strong caveat is due: fully up-to-date and complete data on the impact of Covid-19 are still missing on many aspects of children’s lives. This is the case as well for many of the indicators used in the KidsRights Index. In other words, the long-term, including deferred, effects of Covid-19 still need to manifest concretely in the available statistics, which will only happen in the years to come. Once the relevant data will become available, over time these might underline yet more actual and deferred effects which then will reflect in an overall deterioration in the performance level, both in reality on the ground and across the KidsRights Index Domain- and country-level results. We will closely monitor this in the years to come.

51 UNICEF, ‘Learning Loss Must be Recovered to Avoid Long-term Damage to Children’s Wellbeing and Productivity, New Report Says’, 26 January 2022, <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/learning-loss-must-be-recovered-avoid-long-term-damage-childrens-wellbeing-and>.

52 Ibid.

53 Ibid.

54 Ibid.

55 United Nations, ‘Child Labour Figure Rises to 160 Million, as COVID Puts Many More at Risk’, UN NEWS, 10 June 2021, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2021/06/1093682>. See also International Labour Organization, ‘The Elimination of Child Labour and its Root Causes – The Guidance’, ILO Brief, April 2022.

In addition to the pandemic, the global effects of the war in Ukraine (in terms of food production, energy crises, and resulting inflation) on the world economy and on specific country-level economies are likely to have dramatic further effects on the capacity of governments to keep up their policy priority and investments for children and their rights. The 2021/2022 Human Development report, under the title *Uncertain Times, Unsettled Lives: Shaping Our Future in a Transforming World*, launched in September 2022, explains that:

“[f]or the first time in the 32 years that UNDP have been calculating it, the Human Development Index, which measures a nation’s health, education, and standard of living, has declined globally for two years in a row. Human development has fallen back to its 2016 levels, reversing much of the progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals. The reversal is nearly universal as over 90 percent of countries registered a decline in their HDI score in either 2020 or 2021 and more than 40 percent declined in both years, signaling that the crisis is still deepening for many”.<sup>56</sup>

This is likely to have a serious impact on the children’s rights implementation capacity of governments in the time to come.

## 4. GENERATING POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

It would be quite interesting to invest in using the KidsRights Index results for generating policy recommendations and/or for a follow-up on whether the most recent CRC Concluding Observations are in the process of being implemented. We have once done a modest pilot to explore whether this would be feasible, what it would take to make this happen, and what it might yield. However, this turned out to require a major investment of time and resources that thus far we have not been able to mobilize. This is an area that, if possible, we might wish to develop further in the future because, obviously, the ability to generate policy advice would be a major tool for seeking to advance children’s rights further. The KidsRights Index certainly holds rich information that could be used as input for a process of formulating policy advice. However, for such advice to be optimally useful, more detailed, and fully up-to-date information would need to be gathered in the countries concerned.

Nevertheless, we have had the privilege of being requested to render advice on how to interpret the KidsRights Index results and which action lines emerge from them to government institutions for instance in Iceland, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

56 UN Development Programme, ‘Multiple Crises Halt Progress as 9 out of 10 Countries Fall Backwards in Human Development, UNDP Report Warns’, press release, 8 September 2022.

## 5. FUTURE PROSPECTS: INCORPORATING CLIMATE CHANGE?

It remains our ambition to make the KidsRights Index more complete over time, in terms of covering other generally relevant aspects of children's rights, such as violence against children, the treatment of asylum-seeking and refugee children, or the position of children with disabilities. However, the current state of available data on these topics is not yet at the level required by the Index's quality and comparison standards.

If there is one overarching concern and threat to children's rights, at present already and even more so in the future, it is climate change. According to the UN's visionary report 'The Climate Crisis is a Child Rights Crisis', published in August 2021: "1 billion children are at 'extremely high risk' of the impacts of climate change. That is nearly half of all children. And it is happening today".<sup>57</sup> According to the same report, more than one-third of the world's children (820 million) are "currently highly exposed to heatwaves". Already more than one in six children (400 million) are "highly exposed to cyclones". One in seven, and one in ten children is "currently highly exposed to riverine flooding" or to coastal flooding, respectively. Water scarcity affects 920 million children world-wide, and vector-borne diseases, such as malaria and dengue, affect 600 million children (or one in four). Nearly 90 per cent of all children "are currently highly exposed to air pollution".<sup>58</sup> With climate change intensifying, this situation is likely to exacerbate in the years and decades to come.

- **Close to half of all children in the world are at risk of being seriously affected by climate change.**
- **More than one-third of the world's children is already impacted by heatwaves.**
- **More than one in six children is exposed to cyclones.**
- **One in seven, and one in ten children respectively, are imperiled by riverine or coastal flooding.**
- **Water scarcity and vector-borne diseases abound.**
- **Nearly 90 per cent of all children are subjected to air pollution.**

Besides these recent numbers of children affected by the consequences of climate change, already for a relatively long time there is convincing scientific evidence that children are also *disproportionally* affected by climate change.<sup>59</sup> This is the case, for instance because children are often more vulnerable than most adults in situations such as climate change-induced floodings. This shows in the number of child drownings.<sup>60</sup> In addition, children are often likely to suffer more damaging health effects than adults do. These can hinder their physical development at a certain age which might not be reparable at a later age. In addition, there is the double impact of climate change on children as the phenomenon will seriously affect both their present and future living conditions.

57 UNICEF, 'The Climate Crisis is a Child Rights Crisis: Introducing the Children's Climate Risk Index', New York, August 2021, p. 4, <https://www.unicef.org/media/105376/file/UNICEF-climate-crisis-child-rights-crisis.pdf>.

58 *Ibid.*, p. 10.

59 See e.g. Karin Arts, 'A Child Rights Perspective on Climate Change', in Mohamed Salih, M.A. (ed.), *Climate Change and Sustainable Development: New Challenges for Poverty Reduction*, Edward Elgar, Cheltenham, 2009, pp. 79-93; and Karin Arts, 'Children's Rights and Climate Change', in Claire Fenton-Glynn (ed.), *Children's Rights and Sustainable Development: Interpreting the UNCRC for Future Generations*, Cambridge University Press, 2019, pp. 216-235.

60 See e.g. World Health Organization, 'Drowning', 27 April 2022, <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/drowning>

There is also a legal argument to be mobilized, building on the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Except for the US, all states parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (1992) and to the Paris Agreement (2015) also ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). Thus, it makes perfect sense to consider these legal instruments in an integrated manner. Even if that would be considered a step too far, in any case it is clear that climate change jeopardizes the realization of a large part of the CRC, including the rights to: life, survival and development (art. 6); health, including health care, food and water (art. 24, paras. 1 and 2c); adequate standard of living (art. 28); education (art. 29); enjoy one's own culture, religion, and language (art. 30); play (art. 31); and not to be discriminated (art. 2). In situations of natural disasters such as floodings or storms, or massive displacement of people, possibly the rights to family life (art. 8); not to be economically or sexually exploited or abused (arts. 32 and 34); and not to be abducted, sold, or trafficked (art. 35) might be at stake.

**Climate change puts in jeopardy a large part of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.**

Because the CRC (art. 4) requires states to take all appropriate measures to implement the children's rights embodied in the Convention, measures to curb climate change and to enable children and their caretakers to adjust to climate change (i.e. mitigation and adaptation) are mandatory.

Article 4 of the CRC describes the implementation obligations of states parties. It requires them to "undertake *all appropriate legislative, administrative, and other measures for the implementation of the rights recognized in this Convention*". Considering the hugely negative impact (actual and expected) of climate change on children and their rights, curbing climate change and supporting children and their caretakers in adapting to the consequences of climate change are sensible, appropriate, and necessary measures to implement the CRC. This makes the CRC a solid legal basis for the position that (child rights-based) mitigation and adaptation action is mandatory.<sup>61</sup>

This then begs the question whether climate change (and more in particular an assessment of how states are responding to the effects and risks that climate change brings for children) could be taken up in the KidsRights Index, and how. Since the UN is known for its quality data, according to the KidsRights team the earlier mentioned UNICEF report *The Climate Crisis is a Child Rights Crisis*<sup>62</sup> is especially interesting. As explained in the online highlights section of this report, the UN has developed the Children's Climate Risk Index (CCRI). It "uses data to generate new global evidence on how many children are currently exposed to climate and environmental hazards, shocks and stresses".<sup>63</sup> The composite "CCRI brings together geographical data by analyzing (...) exposure to climate and environmental hazards, shocks and stresses; and (...) child vulnerability" to climate change, respectively.<sup>64</sup> According to the UN, the CCRI "helps to understand and measure the likelihood of climate and environmental shocks or stresses leading to the erosion of development progress, the deepening of deprivation and/or humanitarian situations affecting children or vulnerable households and groups".<sup>65</sup>

61 For a more detailed explanation and reasoning, see Arts (2019), *ibid*.

62 UNICEF, 'The Climate Crisis is a Child Rights Crisis: Introducing the Children's Climate Risk Index', New York, August 2021, p. 4, <https://www.unicef.org/media/105376/file/UNICEF-climate-crisis-child-rights-crisis.pdf>.

63 <https://www.unicef.org/reports/climate-crisis-child-rights-crisis#:~:text=The%20climate%20crisis%20is%20a%20child%20rights%20crisis%20presents%20the%20environmental%20hazards%2C%20shocks%20and%20stresses>

64 *Ibid*.

65 *Ibid*.

In Chapter 6 of *The Climate Crisis is a Child Rights Crisis* report, the UN outlines the methodology of the CCRI. It explains that:

The CCRI composite index is a multi-shock model that aims to capture the exposure of children to multiple climate and environmental shocks and stress. It is a multisectoral model that seeks to represent a balanced view of the different sectors involved in the well-being of children, focusing on aspects that could contribute to, or aggravate, child deprivation in the context of climate-related and environmental shocks and stresses”.<sup>66</sup>

In the next phase of our work, we will therefore explore whether the Children’s Climate Risk Index, composed of the two components “Child Vulnerability” and “Climate and Environmental Factors”, could be a basis for incorporating climate concerns into the KidsRights Index. If this turns out not to be the case, we will look for potential alternatives.

If available data allow us to do so, we could develop a Domain 6 on climate change and children’s rights for future KidsRights Indexes. Another or an additional option could be to expand the already existing Domain 5 (‘enabling environment for children’s rights’) with an indicator on climate change as addressed in the Concluding Observations. However, a first analysis has shown that, currently, only about fifty of the 185 COs used for generating the KidsRights Index contain remarks about climate change. However, since the CRC Committee is paying increasing attention to the subject, it is to be expected that most new COs will contain statements about the matter and thus the data gap will reduce gradually.

Anyway, because we regard climate change as one of the single most serious threats to the realization of children’s rights in the time to come, we will explore in more depth how we can integrate climate change into the KidsRights Index, and we will report on our findings again next year.

66 UNICEF, *The Climate Crisis is a Child Rights Crisis: Introducing the Children’s Climate Risk Index*, New York, August 2021, p. 4, <https://www.unicef.org/media/105376/file/UNICEF-climate-crisis-child-rights-crisis.pdf>, p. 101.

## REPORT KIDSRIGHTS INDEX 2022

by Karin Arts and Chandrima Chattopadhyay

### 6. GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO THE KIDSRIGHTS INDEX

#### 6.1 WHAT IS THE KIDSRIGHTS INDEX?

The KidsRights Index<sup>67</sup> is published every year. It is based on the almost universally ratified United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).<sup>68</sup> The Index synthesizes and ranks the children's rights performance records of states parties<sup>69</sup> to the CRC in relation to the most crucial aspects of children's lives for which global and comparable data is available. A particularly distinctive feature of the Index is its Domain 5. This Domain charts in particular how states are faring in creating the conditions that need to be in place for realizing children's rights and/or for making children's rights policies and putting them into effect. In other words, Domain 5 assesses how states are doing in providing the 'enabling environment' for children's rights required by the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Overall, the KidsRights Index presents an accessible, general, and comparative overview of state performance on selected children's rights. It also creates a basis for making concrete and evidence-based recommendations on how governments might improve on various children's rights matters.

#### 6.2 THE METHODOLOGY OF THE KIDSRIGHTS INDEX (DOMAINS AND INDICATORS)

From the start, the original intention of the creators of the KidsRights Index was to develop a fully comparable measure of state performance on children's rights, available for as many States Parties to the CRC as possible. Specific child rights issues, such as child marriage or the situation of children in armed conflict, are much more prevalent in some countries than in others. This makes it difficult to come to a fair comparison between countries when scoring such issues in an index. In addition, the insufficient or non-availability of data on certain specific issues (such as violence against children, or the treatment of refugee children) makes it hard to measure those issues and/or to come to adequately comparable results.

Therefore, the KidsRights Index focuses on more generic issues which in principle are equally relevant for all states parties to the CRC and for which, on the whole, reliable data are available. The KidsRights Index is the outcome of an integrated analysis of existing, high-quality data published by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the Committee on the Rights of the Child.<sup>70</sup>

The Index covers the following five Domains:

- 1. Right to Life**
- 2. Right to Health**
- 3. Right to Education**
- 4. Right to Protection**
- 5. Enabling Environment for Child Rights**

<sup>67</sup> Hereafter also referred to as the 'Index'.

<sup>68</sup> UN General Assembly, *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, 20 November 1989, United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 1577, p. 3, available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CRC.aspx>.

<sup>69</sup> The term 'state party' refers to states that have formally bound themselves to the CRC (through ratification or accession). Since 2015, this is the case for 196 states. The USA remains the only state that did not follow up on its signature with a ratification.

<sup>70</sup> For further details please see the 'Background Information' section of this Report.

Twenty indicators together cover and measure these five Domains. Thirteen indicators are quantitative and seven are qualitative. The data collected is systematically rated for all the countries included in the Index, by applying a standard calculating method. Countries are ranked on each of the five Domains, which in turn generates a comprehensive overall ranking. Further information on the sources of the data used can be found in the background section of this Report. An overview of all indicators and their precise meaning or content is presented in Annex 1 to this Report. Further specifications on the calculation of scores are provided in the next sub-sections of this Report (1.2.1-1.2.3).

## 6.2.1. CALCULATION OF SCORES DOMAIN 5

Domain 5, or the 'Enabling Environment for Children's Rights', is an important and unique Domain of the KidsRights Index. Closely based on the Convention on the Rights of the Child, it reveals to what extent countries have operationalized the Convention's general principles and the state of their basic 'infrastructure' for making and implementing children's rights policies. The scores on Domain 5 are derived from the Concluding Observations (COs) adopted by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. These COs are the final product of the state reporting procedure that monitors how states are doing in implementing the Convention. They communicate the views of the CRC Committee on the level of realization of children's rights achieved in a particular country and period of time.

The specific scores on Domain 5 are generated as follows. First, the Committee's Concluding Observations are analyzed for remarks about a country's performance on the seven selected indicators that make up Domain 5:

- 1. Non-discrimination;**
- 2. Best interests of the child;**
- 3. Respect for the views of the child/child participation;**
- 4. Enabling national legislation;**
- 5. Mobilization of the 'best available' budget;**
- 6. Collection and analysis of disaggregated data; and**
- 7. State-civil society cooperation for children's rights.**

These seven selected indicators together represent what can be seen as the general enabling environment, or 'infrastructure' for children's rights that every State Party to the CRC is expected to have in place. The first three (non-discrimination, best interests, and child participation) are general principles of the Convention.<sup>71</sup> The last four (legislation, budget, data, and state civil society collaboration) represent basic elements or tools that states must mobilize to be able to make and carry out child rights policies and to trigger child rights practice. This set of requirements can be applied to all countries in the world, is equally relevant to all countries in the world, and crucial for creating capacity to implement the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Thus, they form a pertinent and fully comparable measure for children's rights performance.

<sup>71</sup> These general principles were identified by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child and are supposed to be leading considerations in all CRC implementation efforts. Survival and development of children has been identified as another general principle of the Convention. However, this is of a different (including more substantive) nature than the three other general principles mentioned, and in fact only fully pursued through realizing the Convention as a whole. In that spirit, the general principle of survival and development is integrated into the Kidsrights Index via Domains 1 to 4 and not addressed separately again in Domain 5.

For each of the above seven indicators, countries are scored on a scale between 1 and 3. The actual score assigned for each indicator is exclusively based on the language used by the Committee on the Rights of the Child in its Concluding Observations. A score of 1 (or 'bad') means that the Committee made exclusively negative remarks. A score of 2 (or 'average') implies that the Committee made both negative and positive remarks. A score of 3 (or 'good') means that the Committee presented positive remarks only. In case the Committee did not address a particular indicator in the Concluding Observations on a particular country, the score of NA (for 'not addressed') applies.

The scoring for Domain 5 is performed separately and independently by two researchers. If upon comparison of their scores it turns out that there are differences between them (which happens relatively rarely because the scoring system is simple and in most cases its application is straightforward), the final score is determined jointly, in consultation between the two researchers. The specific text in the Concluding Observations on which the scores are based is made available in a overview table publicly available at <https://www.kidsrights.org/research/kidsrights-index/reports-and-publications/>.  These scores are then standardized into a mean of the scores received.

### 6.2.2. CALCULATION OF SCORE DOMAIN 1-4

The scores for Domains 1 to 4 are also calculated as the mean of the scores on the underlying indicators. These scores are standardized between a minimum of 0.01 and a maximum of 1. If scores are missing for particular indicators, then the Domain score is calculated over the score of the remaining indicators. However, a country is not included in the overall Index if the score on Domain 5 'Enabling Environment for Child Rights' is missing, or if more than half of all the Domain scores are missing. The score for a particular Domain is not calculated if there is data missing for more than half of the indicators in that Domain.

### 6.2.3. CALCULATION OF OVERALL SCORE, RANKS AND CLUSTERS

The total score of the KidsRights Index is calculated as the geometric mean of the scores on the five specific Domains. In general, the geometric mean is used instead of the arithmetic mean, because this makes it more difficult to compensate for low scores on specific Domains. This is justified by the argument that such a compensation is not desirable, because all the children's rights aspects covered are considered equally important. Therefore, an extremely low score in one area of children's rights, for example on providing an 'enabling environment for children's rights', cannot be compensated by a high score, for instance, on 'education'.

The Index is a ranked list of countries, with colour-coding indicating relevant clusters of rankings. There are five different clusters (see figure 1 below). Each cluster displays a similar performance level. This means that each cluster represents countries for which the scores are in the same range, for example 0.991 to 981. Within a cluster, the scores of countries are more similar than across clusters. The clusters are expressed in coloured world maps on <https://www.kidsrights.org/research/kidsrights-index/>. 



Figure 1. Colour-coding indicating relevant clusters of rankings

## 7. THE SPECIFIC RESULTS OF THE KIDSRIGHTS INDEX 2022

### 7.1 OVERALL RANKING

In 2022, Iceland continues to top the KidsRights index.

Country	KRI 10 Total Ranking	KRI 10 Total Score
Iceland	1	0.945
Sweden	2	0.915
Finland	3	0.913
Netherlands	4	0.910
Germany	5	0.909
Luxembourg	6	0.905
Denmark	7	0.890
Austria	8	0.882
Slovenia	9	0.880
Norway	10	0.879

Table 4. Top ten of the KidsRights Index in 2022.

Chad remains the lowest scoring country.

Country	KRI 10 Total Ranking	KRI 10 Total Score
Chad	185	0.181
Afghanistan	184	0.204
Sierra Leone	183	0.223
Central African Republic	182	0.260
Equatorial Guinea	181	0.286
Democratic Republic of the Congo	180	0.315
Guinea	179	0.323
El Salvador	178	0.327
Papua New Guinea	177	0.330
Niger	176	0.353

Table 5. Bottom ten of the KidsRights Index 2022.

The complete rankings and rankings per domain are available at <https://www.kidsrights.org/research/kidsrights-index/>

## 7.2 STRIKING RESULTS KIDSRIGHTS INDEX 2022

### 7.2.1 STRIKING RESULTS DUE TO NEW SCORES IN DOMAIN 5

In the KidsRights Index 2022, Domain 5 on the 'Enabling Environment for Child Rights' has been updated to include all Concluding Observations adopted by the CRC Committee in 2021. Due to the constraints caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, the CRC state reporting procedure still stood on the back burner. It is disappointing to note that therefore, in 2021 in total only six States were assessed by the Committee on the Rights of the Child, and thus received a new score for Domain 5: Czech Republic, Eswatini (until 2018 named Swaziland), Luxembourg, Poland, Switzerland, and Tunisia. This led to significant negative changes for Switzerland, Eswatini, and Tunisia, while the Czech Republic, Luxembourg, and Poland significantly improved their positions in the Index.

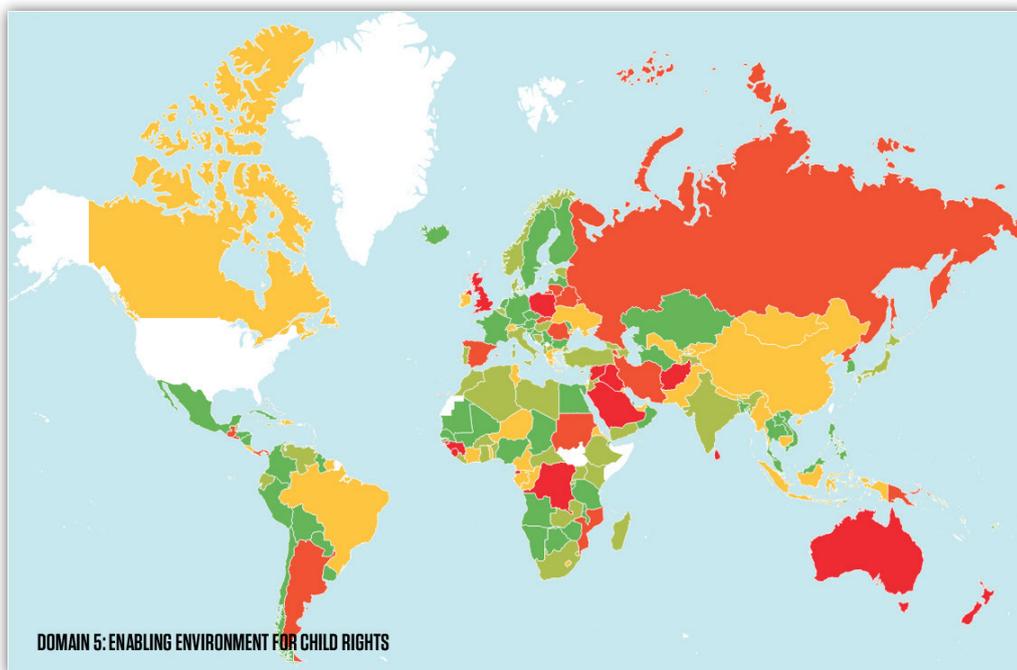


Figure 2. World map domain 5

The Czech Republic improved its overall rank from 26<sup>th</sup> (out of 182 in total) in 2021 to 17<sup>th</sup> in 2022 (out of 185 in total). This change in ranking is primarily brought about by the change in scores for indicators within Domain 5. On Domains 1 to 4, the scores of the Czech Republic show no significant changes. The positive change in Domain 5 relates to a better score on the indicator 'collection and analysis of disaggregated data'. The Committee on the Rights of the Child observed that the finalization of the system for better data collection by the government was a step in the right direction.<sup>72</sup> However, the Committee also remained concerned that the data collection was not yet comprehensively covering all areas of the CRC, insufficiently disaggregated, and not yet inclusive enough in particular in terms of covering children living in situations of vulnerability such as "children from disadvantaged households, children who are victims of violence, rural children, children belonging to minority groups, migrant and refugee children, children with disabilities, children in care, children at risk of family separation and children deprived of their liberty".<sup>73</sup>

<sup>72</sup> Committee on the Rights of the Child, 'Concluding Observations on the Combined Fifth and Sixth Periodic Reports of Czechia', UN doc. CRC/C/CZE/CO/5-6, 22 October 2021, para. 11.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

Eswatini ranks 123<sup>th</sup> in the 2022 (out of 185 in total), compared to 131<sup>st</sup> in 2020 (out of 182 in total).<sup>74</sup> For 5 out of the 7 indicators of Domain 5 Eswatini remained at the same performance level as before. Its score on 'state-civil society cooperation' went down and was characterized by the Committee as "ad hoc".<sup>75</sup> On the other hand, this time Eswatini did somewhat better than previously on the indicator 'collection and analysis of disaggregated data'. In the 2021 Concluding Observations, the Committee noted in this respect that, since the last reporting procedure, no less than 16 years ago, Eswatini had improved on its data collection system. But the Committee also expressed concern about data not being collected "systematically on all areas of the Convention, that data are not routinely shared between ministries and that data are not sufficiently disaggregated to allow for adequate analysis and policy measures".<sup>76</sup>

In the KidsRights Index 2022, we welcome the return of Poland into the Index. Because of four missing values in Domain 5 after the 2015 CRC state reporting procedure, Poland could not be included in the KidsRights Index any longer since 2016. This was redressed this year when, with the new 2021 Concluding Observations, fortunately scores could be determined again for all the indicators of Domain 5. On all four previously missing values (for 'best interests of the child', 'child participation', 'legislation', and 'state-civil society collaboration') Poland thus automatically improved its scores. In addition, it obtained a higher score on the indicator 'best available budget'. However, its scores on 'non-discrimination' and 'data' went down. In case of the former, this occurred among other considerations because, according to the CRC Committee, there was "a reported increase in the number of incidents of bullying and discrimination on the basis of ethnicity, religion or lack of religious affiliation, sexual orientation and gender identity and the response by the authorities to such incidents is insufficient".<sup>77</sup> Concerning data collection, the Committee recommended Poland to "develop a centralized and integrated data collection system, disaggregate data by age, sex, disability, residence, ethnic and national origin and socioeconomic and migration status and harmonize methodologies and procedures for the collection of data on children".<sup>78</sup> Despite the fuller information available for Poland in Domain 5 of the 2022 KidsRights Index, overall the country's child rights performance record deteriorated. This is visible in the drop from an overall 85<sup>th</sup> rank (out of 165 in total) in the 2015 KidsRights Index to the 123<sup>th</sup> place (out of 185 in total) in 2022. This decline is due to the combination of lower values on the indicators life, health, education and, despite the earlier-noted better availability of data in Domain 5 and compared to others, a relatively low performance on the indicator 'enabling environment on children's rights'.

Luxembourg fared significantly better this year, jumping 47 ranks from 53<sup>th</sup> in 2021 (out of 182 in total) to 6<sup>th</sup> (out of 185 in total) in 2022. This is caused by the fact that, on 4 out of the 7 indicators in Domain 5, Luxembourg received more positive scores than the ones based on the previous Concluding Observations (adopted in 2013). The Committee assessed Luxembourg's performance particularly positively on the indicator 'best available budget'. More specifically, it welcomed "the significant increase in budgetary resources to the child and youth sectors from €985,725,834 in 2009 to €1,682,703,838

74 By omission, most likely caused by data being recorded under the different country names Swaziland and Eswatini, the country was not included in the 2021 KidsRights Index. While regrettable, the effect on the overall findings, both for the Index as a whole and for Eswatini individually, is minimal. Nevertheless, once discovered, of course this omission was corrected in the KidsRights Index 2022.

75 Committee on the Rights of the Child, 'Concluding Observations on the Combined Second to Fourth Periodic Reports of Eswatini', UN doc. CRC/C/SWZ/CO/2-4, 22 October 2021, para. 5.

76 *Ibid.*, para. 14.

77 Committee on the Rights of the Child, 'Concluding Observations on the combined Fifth and Sixth Periodic Reports of Poland', UN doc. CRC/C/POL/CO/5-6, 06 December 2021, para. 18(b).

78 *Ibid.*, para. 12.

in 2018”.<sup>79</sup> This generated the (rare) maximum score of 3 on this indicator for Luxembourg in the 2022 KidsRights Index. On the indicators ‘non-discrimination’, ‘data’, and ‘state-civil society cooperation’ too, Luxembourg’s performance improved. Concerning non-discrimination, the Committee appreciated the introduction of new legislation “addressing to a certain extent the discrimination against children of unmarried parents, and (...) aimed at eliminating the concepts of legitimate and illegitimate parentage”. However, it also remained “concerned that the distinction between children of married and unmarried parents continues to exist”.<sup>80</sup> Because there were no changes for Luxembourg in the other KidsRights Index Domains, its rise to the top 10 of the Index is entirely due to the significantly more positive assessment by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child in 2021.

On the other hand, Switzerland experienced a significant drop (from rank 2 out of 182 in total in 2021 to rank 31 out of 185 in total in 2022) in its overall KidsRights Index ranking due to the content of the Committee’s Concluding Observations in 2021. This relapse can also be attributed primarily to the changes in scores in Domain 5 although Switzerland shows a very minor negative change in the Domain health as well. In Domain 5, Switzerland’s scores stayed the same for 3 indicators (‘non-discrimination’, ‘participation’ and ‘legislation’) and deteriorated for 3 other indicators (‘best interests’, ‘budget’ and ‘data’). The Committee observed that Switzerland is still lagging in working with the best interests of the child principle. It commented “that the concept of ‘the good of the child’ in the Constitution does not correspond to the principle of the best interests of the child enshrined in the Convention, and has contributed to the insufficient implementation of the principle of the best interests of the child in decisions affecting children”.<sup>81</sup> As noted earlier, the allocation of resources towards children’s rights is another important component of Domain 5. Article 4 of the CRC requires states to undertake “all appropriate measures” for implementing children’s rights and for economic, social, and cultural rights to do so “to the maximum extent of their available resources”. Thus, well-to-do countries such as Switzerland should expect the Committee to measure them against a high standard in this respect. This led to a rather critical assessment of Switzerland’s performance record in the 2021 Concluding Observations. The Committee regretted “the limited progress made in developing a child-specific approach for the planning and allocation of resources in the federal and cantonal budgets, and the lack of information on child-related expenditure at the cantonal level”.<sup>82</sup> As a result, we could only allocate Switzerland the minimum score of 1 on the indicator ‘best available budget’. The only indicator of Domain 5 on which Switzerland scored a little better after the adoption of the 2021 Concluding Observations was that of ‘state-civil society cooperation’. This was mainly because previously the matter was not addressed in the COs on Switzerland and thus no data was available to allow scoring at all.

Another country that fell in ranks in the KidsRights Index 2022 due to Domain 5 is Tunisia. Until 2021, Tunisia’s rank was based on Domain 5 scores generated by Concluding Observations dating from 2010. After new Concluding Observations were adopted in 2021, Tunisia’s rank went down from 16<sup>th</sup> in 2021 (out of 182 in total) to 69<sup>th</sup> (out of 185 in total) in 2022. On 4 out of the 7 indicators of Domain 5 (‘best interests’, ‘participation’, ‘legislation’, and ‘state-civil society cooperation’), Tunisia scored less than previously. No score could be generated for ‘state-civil society cooperation’ at all, as the matter was not sufficiently addressed in the new Concluding Observations. On the other three Domain 5 indicators

79 Committee on the Rights of the Child, ‘Concluding Observations on the combined Fifth and Sixth Periodic Reports of Luxembourg’, UN doc. CRC/C/LUX/CO/5-6, 21 June 2021, para. 3.

80 *Ibid.*, para. 11

81 Committee on the Rights of the Child, ‘Concluding Observations on the combined Fifth and Sixth Periodic Reports of Switzerland’, UN doc. CRC/C/CHE/CO/5-6, 27 September 2021, para. 19.

82 *Ibid.*, para 10.

(‘non-discrimination’, ‘budget’, and ‘data’), according to the CRC Committee, Tunisia’s performance record stayed more or less the same. The Committee was especially critical about Tunisia’s non-discrimination record. It called for urgent action and referred to:

- the “lack of comprehensive legislation that prohibits all forms of discrimination in line with article 2 of the Convention”;
- the fact that the Personal Status Code “continues to allow discrimination against women and girls in matters relating to inheritance and custody and does not provide for the rights of adopted children and children born to unmarried parents to succession or inheritance”;
- the “persistent stigmatization of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex children”;
- the “[p]ersistent disparities in access and availability of services between children in different regions and between urban and rural communities”;
- the “[p]ersistent de facto discrimination against children in disadvantaged situations, including girls, children born to unmarried parents, children with disabilities, children living in rural or underprivileged areas, children living in poverty, children belonging to racial or religious minority groups, Amazigh children, migrant children, children infected with HIV and children affected by HIV/AIDS”.<sup>83</sup>

## 7.2.2 OVERALL ANALYSIS OF DOMAIN 5

Overall, no significant changes occurred in Domain 5 in the 2022 KidsRights Index since only six countries received new Concluding Observations. Nevertheless, we now share a few remarks on the findings per indicator of Domain 5, in addition to the comprehensive country findings that were presented in the previous section.

### 7.2.2.1 NON-DISCRIMINATION

The Convention on the Rights of the Child enshrines the principle of non-discrimination in Article 2. Many children all over the world face discrimination, no country excluded, as was underlined again in each of the six additional Concluding Observations adopted in 2021. Legislation remains to lag in terms of protection against all forms of discrimination, or in terms of protecting all children, including children in vulnerable circumstances such as girls, indigenous children, children with disabilities, or children born outside of marriage. Four out of the six reviewed states stayed at the same average performance level on the non-discrimination indicator. These are the Czech Republic, Eswatini, Switzerland and Tunisia. Poland did less well than previously, and Luxembourg improved. None of the newly reviewed countries achieved the highest score on the indicator of non-discrimination in 2021 while Poland received the lowest possible score of 1.

### 7.2.2.2 BEST INTERESTS OF THE CHILD

The best interests of the child is another important general principle that, for instance, is supposed to be a primary consideration in all legislative, administrative, and judicial processes. Four out of the six countries who received their new Concluding Observations in 2021 got the lowest possible score on this indicator (Eswatini, Poland, Switzerland, Tunisia), Switzerland and Luxembourg obtained a middle score, and none obtained the maximum possible score. Three states (Czech Republic, Eswatini and Luxembourg) maintained their previous performance level on this indicator. Switzerland and Tunisia’s record went down compared to the previous round of COs. The score for Poland improved but that was because in

<sup>83</sup> Committee on the Rights of the Child, ‘Concluding Observations on the Combined Fourth to Sixth Periodic Reports of Tunisia’, UN doc. CRC/C/TUN/CO/4-6, 2 September 2021, para. 14.

the previous round this was a missing value and thus at the time no score could be generated at all.

### **7.2.2.3 RESPECT FOR THE VIEWS OF THE CHILD**

Four out of the six countries reviewed by the CRC Committee in 2021 maintained their score on child participation (Czech Republic, Eswatini, Luxembourg, Switzerland). The score for Poland improved but that was because in the previous round this was a missing value and thus no scoring was possible at the time. Tunisia's score dropped to the lowest possible score of 1.

### **7.2.2.4 ENABLING LEGISLATION**

A similarly static picture exists for the indicator 'enabling legislation' which assesses the efforts undertaken to ensure that there is domestic legislation that is in harmony with the Convention. While Tunisia previously obtained the maximum score of 3 on this indicator, after the 2021 Concluding Observations its score dropped back to 2. Four of the other states reviewed by the CRC Committee in 2021 maintained the same result on this indicator and thus did not improve but also did not fall back (Czech Republic, Eswatini, Luxembourg, Switzerland). Only Poland stepped up its record but, again, that was largely since previously this was a missing value and thus could not be scored.

### **7.2.2.5 BEST AVAILABLE BUDGET/RESOURCES**

Based on the Concluding Observations issued by the CRC Committee in 2021, Luxembourg now scores the maximum on the indicator of 'best available budget'. This is exceptional and at present Luxembourg is the only country in the KidsRights Index that has managed to obtain this maximum result on this indicator. This is especially significant since in previous KidsRights Index Reports we consistently observed that developed countries tend to score on average the lowest on this indicator. We also noted then that likely this is because developed countries are expected to be able to mobilize resources for the realization of children's rights more easily than poorer countries are, and thus are reviewed more critically by the CRC Committee on this aspect. However, the improved score of Luxembourg on this indicator reflects that some developed countries could well be taking significant steps to do better on their budgetary allocation towards children and youth.

In the 2021 COs, as in previous year, in addition to recommending states to ensure adequate budgetary frameworks, the CRC Committee also highlighted several times that an efficient monitoring and evaluation framework should be put in place to ensure adequate and transparent budget allocation, both at central and decentral levels. In addition, it called for special attention for children in disadvantaged situations such as migrant or Roma children, children living in poverty, children in rural areas, and children with disabilities. It also emphasized the importance of public (including child) participation in budgeting.<sup>84</sup>

<sup>84</sup> See respectively: Committee on the Rights of the Child, 'Concluding Observations on the Combined Fifth and Sixth Periodic Reports of Czechia', UN doc. CRC/C/CZE/CO/5-6, 22 October 2021, para. 10(a); Committee on the Rights of the Child, 'Concluding Observations on the Combined Fourth to Sixth Periodic Reports of Tunisia', UN doc. CRC/C/TUN/CO/4-6, 2 September 2021, para. 14; Committee on the Rights of the Child, 'Concluding Observations on the combined Fifth and Sixth Periodic Reports of Poland', UN doc. CRC/C/POL/CO/5-6, 06 December 2021, para. 11.

### 7.2.2.6 COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS OF DISAGGREGATED DATA

On this indicator, relatively the most states show both improvement (three out of six states) as well as decline (two out of six states). Czech Republic, Eswatini and Luxembourg upgraded their scores from 1 to 2, Poland and Switzerland dropped from 2 to 1, while Tunisia's record remained unchanged at the score 2. The Committee several times referred explicitly to previously adopted Concluding Observations as not being (fully) implemented yet, insisted on disaggregation as crucial in data collection, and underlined the importance of covering the Convention as a whole and children in disadvantaged situations.<sup>85</sup>

### 7.2.2.7 STATE-CIVIL SOCIETY COOPERATION

The record on this indicator for the six states reviewed by the CRC Committee in 2021 shows the same trends as those on 'data': relatively the most states show both improvement (three out of six states) as well as decline (two out of six states). Luxembourg, Poland, and Switzerland upgraded their scores from 'not-addressed' to 1 or 2. Two states dropped respectively from 2 to 1 (Eswatini) and from 2 to 'not-addressed' (Tunisia). Czechia's record remained unchanged at the score 2. The global average on this indicator is the lowest of all, partly because it also shows the most scores of 'not-addressed' of all indicators in Domain 5. This means that the Committee on the Rights of the Child did not include specific remarks on this matter in the COs. Overall this picture reveals that, on the whole, there is much to be improved in terms of the actual practice of, and climate for, state-civil society cooperation, and in terms of specific attention by the Committee on the Rights of the Child for this aspect which is so crucial for the realization of all children's rights.

<sup>85</sup> See respectively e.g.: COs Czechia, 2022, *ibid.*, para. 11; Committee on the Rights of the Child, 'Concluding Observations on the Combined Second to Fourth Periodic Reports of Eswatini', UN doc. CRC/C/SWZ/CO/2-4, 22 October 2021, para. 5; Committee on the Rights of the Child, 'Concluding Observations on the combined Fifth and Sixth Periodic Reports of Luxembourg', UN doc. CRC/C/LUX/CO/5-6, 21 June 2021, para. 9; Committee on the Rights of the Child, 'Concluding Observations on the combined Fifth and Sixth Periodic Reports of Switzerland', UN doc. CRC/C/CHE/CO/5-6, 27 September 2021, para. 4.

## 7.2.3 BRIEF ANALYSIS OF RESULTS DUE TO NEW SCORES IN DOMAIN 1-4

### 7.2.3.1 DOMAIN 1: LIFE

Country	KRI 10 Total Ranking	Life Rank	Life Score
Japan	21	1	0.997
Singapore	37	2	0.987
Italy	18	3	0.985
Spain	82	4	0.984
Switzerland	31	5	0.984
Iceland	1	6	0.982
Australia	134	7	0.981
Sweden	2	8	0.978
Republic of Korea	16	9	0.977
Israel	55	10	0.977

Table 6. *New Rankings Right to Life 2022.*

For about forty countries, this year the reported Under5 mortality rate was (often only slightly) higher compared to that reported in the KidsRights Index 2021. Examples include Japan, Spain, the Netherlands, Belgium, and Australia. However, this did not significantly change any country's ranking. One explanation for this outcome is that, if many countries were already doing considerably well, then no significant change in ranking is to be expected. Depending on the recentness of the underlying data in the UN database used for generating Domain 1, one would think that these drops could perhaps in part be attributed to the effect of the Covid-19 pandemic. However, thus far such an effect cannot be determined yet based on the currently available data. According to a report published by the UN Inter-agency Group for Child Mortality Estimates (UNIGME) in December 2021: "[t]he pandemic itself is still unfolding – and because the data remain poor, outcomes for children and adolescents in 2021 and beyond remain unknown".<sup>86</sup> According to the Inter-agency Group, "[s]o far, a relatively small number of direct COVID-19 deaths have been reported among children and young people, but they may be at increased risk of indirect death resulting from disruptions to services, decreased utilization of health services (due to lockdowns or fear of contracting the virus) or economic contractions".<sup>87</sup>

86 David Sharrow, Lucia Hug, Sinae Lee, Yang Liu, and Danzhen You, *Levels & Trends in Child: Report 2021 - Mortality Estimates developed by the UN Inter-agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation, UNICEF/WHO/World Bank Group/United Nations, New York/Geneva/Washington, 2021, p. 5.*

87 *Ibid.*, p. 7.

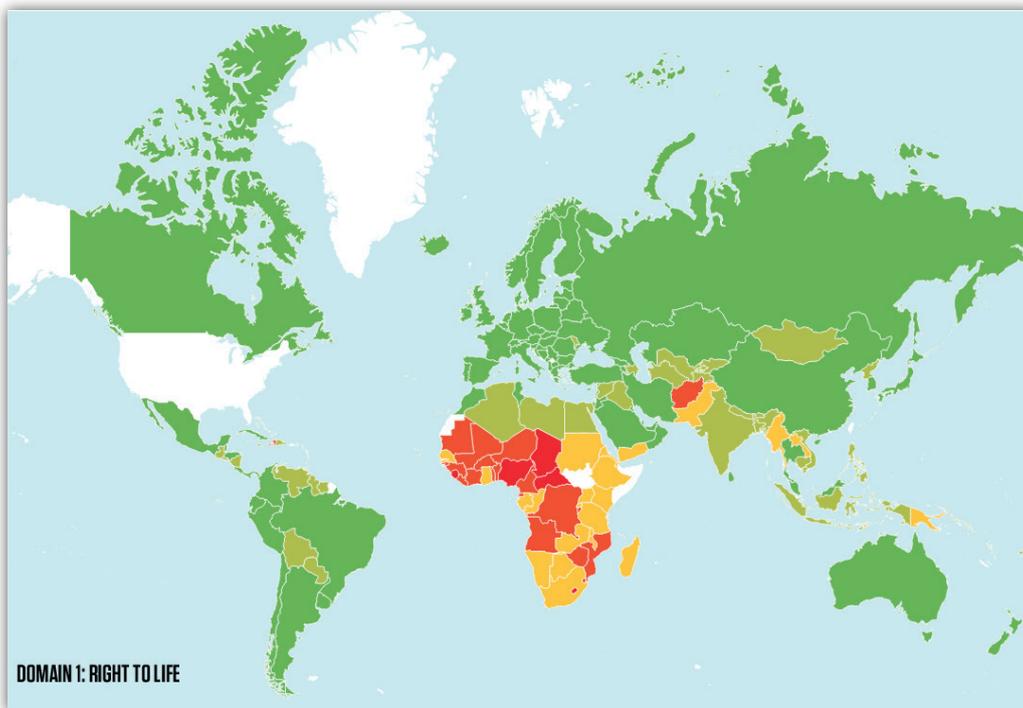


Figure 3. World map domain 1

In any case, the predominant picture of the last decades in terms of many child deaths being entirely preventable, continues to exist. According to the Inter-agency Group: “the task of ending preventable child deaths remains unfinished. If current trends continue, fifty-four countries will not meet the SDG target on under-five mortality, more than sixty countries will miss the target on neonatal mortality, and 43 million under-five deaths are projected to take place between 2021 and 2030”.<sup>88</sup>

Given the importance of the right to life, it is disappointing that the world still very much lacks complete up-to-date child mortality data. In its December 2021 report, UNIGME exposed that “substantial data gaps (e.g., only 40 countries have high-quality nationally representative under-five mortality data for 2020) pose enormous challenges to policy and decision-making”.<sup>89</sup> According to the Inter-agency Group:

*“[t]imely, reliable data on child mortality for all countries remain elusive. On average, the most recent quality data point on child mortality across all countries was 4.8 years old, with half the countries in the world having a data point within the past 3.5 years. For about a third of all countries, the latest available child mortality data point was more than five years old”.*<sup>90</sup>

While on the whole high-income countries have the quality data needed, in December 2021 UNIGME determined that two thirds of all low- and middle-income countries lacked reliable data on under-five mortality in the (then) past three years.<sup>91</sup> This is a clear order for action in the immediate future.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 26.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 23.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.* This applied to 97 out of 135 countries.

### 7.2.3.2 DOMAIN 2: Health

Country	KRI 10 Total Ranking	Health Rank	Health Score
Israel	55	1-2	1.000
United Arab Emirates	76	1-2	1.000
Portugal	11	3	0.999
Spain	82	4-5	0.996
Kuwait	94	4-5	0.996
Republic of Korea	16	6	0.994
Hungary	40	7	0.993
Germany	5	8	0.991
Luxembourg	6	9	0.991
Switzerland	31	10-11	0.991
Sweden	2	10-11	0.991

Table 7. *New Rankings Right to Health 2022.*

China jumped 23 ranks on the Health Domain by achieving a 100% sanitation rate. Japan, the Netherlands, South Africa, and Switzerland also jumped up around 10 ranks each within Domain 2. However, the latter are not significant changes considering the overall trends in this Domain. In fact, the higher rank of these four countries is mainly due to an average fall of other countries.

Overall, the (modest) shifts in this Domain are diverse and do not point out a clear common trend. For instance, while for South Africa the available figures show a reduction of the number of underweight children of about 7 per cent, and for Malawi even a drop of close to 24 per cent, the available figures on underweight children in Mozambique, Namibia and Zimbabwe in 2021 and 2022 are identical. However, the latter might suggest that they could not be updated and thus progress or relapse could not be measured. While Venezuela dropped 34 ranks in this Domain, the neighbouring country of Mexico went up by 34 ranks. It is interesting that Mexico's gain is directly due to its rate of immunization going up by 21 per cent. Venezuela's fall can be attributed to the decrease of the immunization rate by 18 per cent and the reduction of access to drinking water by 2 per cent. Argentina fell by 28 ranks in the health Domain. This is because the immunization rate of the country fell from 94% to 77%. The rate of immunization seems to be a significant reason why especially various Latin American countries saw a change in their ranking in this Domain. This could well be a first sign in the figures of a detrimental effect of COVID-19 on health care for children such as immunization.

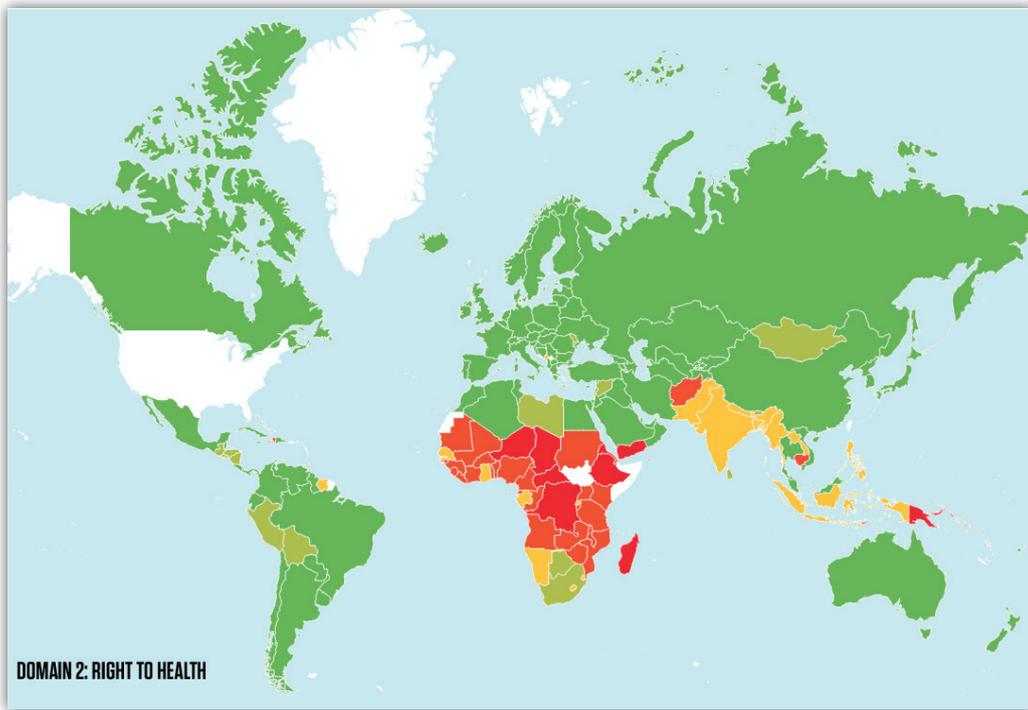


Figure 4. World map domain 2

### 7.2.3.3 DOMAIN 3: EDUCATION

Country	KRI 10 Total Ranking	Education Rank	Education Rank specified	Education Score
Sweden	2	1-8	1	1.000
Finland	3	1-8	2	1.000
Belgium	28	1-8	3	1.000
Australia	134	1-8	4	1.000
Denmark	7	1-8	5	1.000
Netherlands	4	1-8	6	1.000
Iceland	1	1-8	7	1.000
Ireland	53	1-8	8	1.000
New Zealand	171	9	9	0.990
Greece	32	10	10	0.954

Table 8. *New Rankings Right to Education 2022.*

No significant changes were recorded in the ranking for the Domain on Education. This is important to note and, again, could well be the result of a lack of current data, especially given the devastating effects Covid-19 had on education since 2019, for instance in the form of long and widespread school closures.<sup>92</sup> The last available updated data for all the indicators in the Domain Education is from 2020 which is too old to reflect the impact of the pandemic.

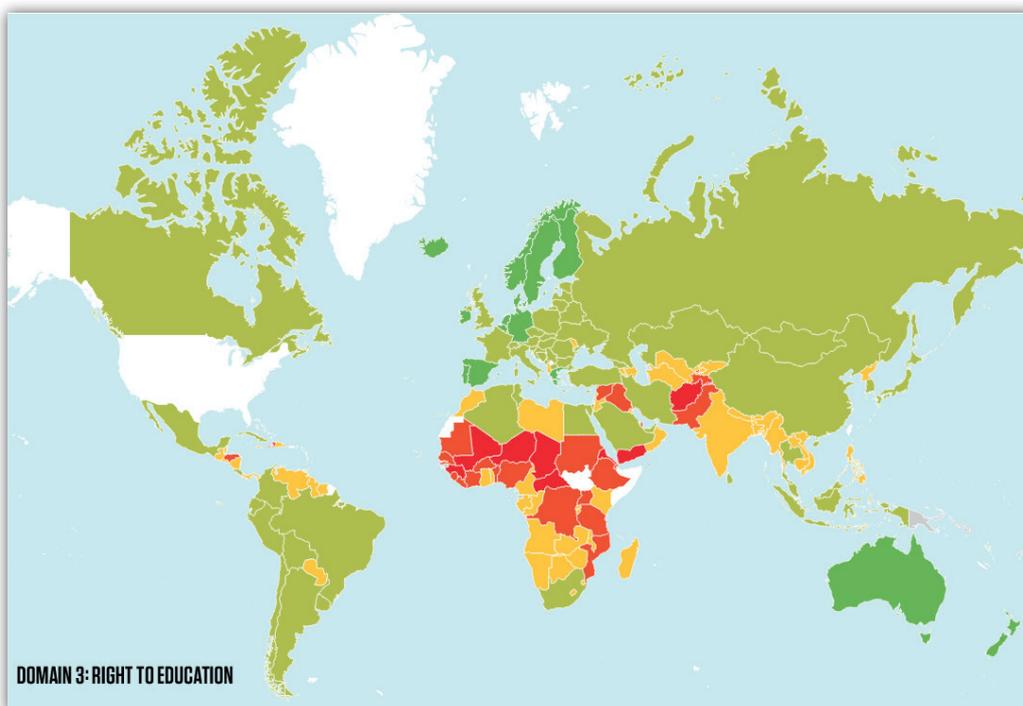


Figure 5. *World map domain 3*

<sup>92</sup> See the Covid-19 sections in the KidsRights Index Reports 2020 (e.g. pp. 5-6) and 2021 (e.g. pp. 6 and 8-10).

### 7.2.3.4 DOMAIN 4: PROTECTION

Country	KRI 10 Total Ranking	Protection Rank	Protection Score
Switzerland	31	1	0.997
Singapore	37	2	0.996
Netherlands	4	3	0.996
Denmark	7	4	0.996
Norway	10	5	0.996
Japan	21	6	0.994
Slovenia	9	7	0.994
Luxembourg	6	8	0.993
Sweden	2	9	0.993
Belarus	86	10	0.992

Table 9. *New Rankings Right to Protection 2022.*

Bangladesh jumped 16 ranks up in the Protection Domain. Pakistan and Sri Lanka also improved in Domain 4, each by around 10 ranks. On the whole, the Indian subcontinent fared better in the ranking than before, largely because of the inclusion of (previously missing) data on child labour. On the other hand, the African state Madagascar fell by 33 ranks in this Domain due to the inclusion of the child labour data for this country. Besides the inclusion of data for the indicator on 'child labour' for some 13 countries, no other main changes occurred in this Domain.

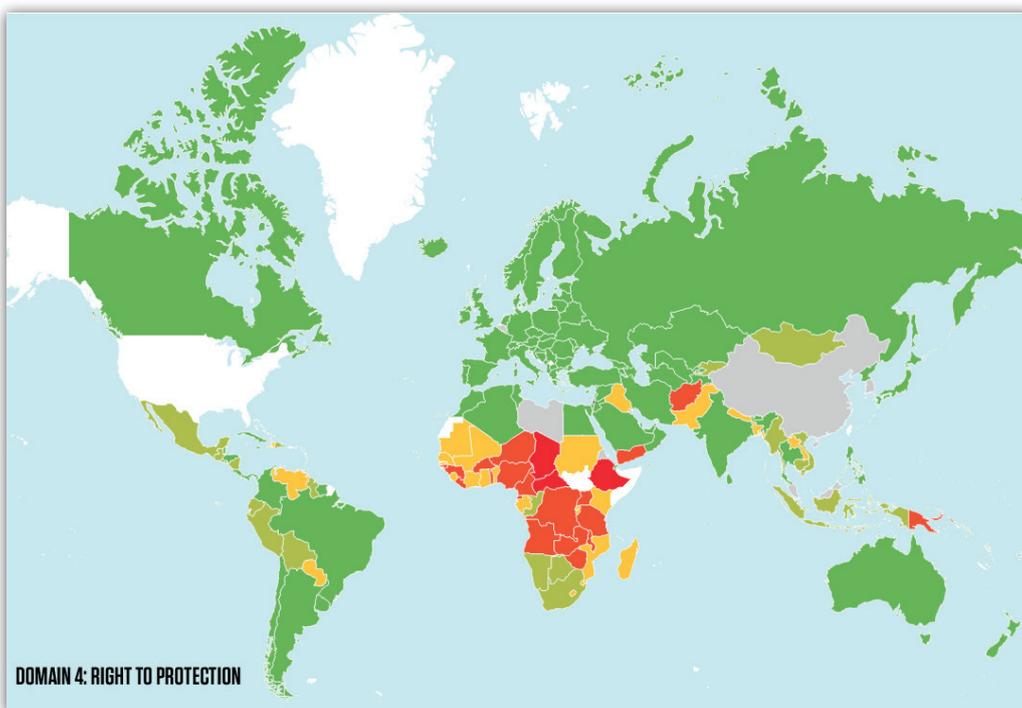


Figure 6. *World map domain 4*

### 7.3 CONCLUSION KIDSRIGHTS INDEX 2022: FURTHER INVESTMENTS IN DATA GATHERING URGENTLY NEEDED

Because of the structural nature of the child rights aspects measured in the KidsRights Index, combined with the limited renewal of data that occurred in 2021, only modest change has occurred in the Index 2022, as compared to 2021.

When comparing 2022 with 2021, in Domains 1 to 4 on average only around 0 to 5 per cent change can be seen in the data on the indicators making up these Domains. This means that the latest updated data available is not or only marginally different from that used last year. In some cases, such as for all the indicators used for the Domain Education, the latest updated data is from 2020. In the section on Domain 1 (2.2.3.1) we already explained more elaborately the global problems with gathering reliable and current data on issues affecting the right to life. On some other indicators there are still a significant number of missing values and updating is rather slow. According to the KidsRights Index team, if one is serious about wanting to realize children's rights more broadly and more universally, it is imperative to step up data gathering to ensure the availability of much more complete, current, and disaggregated data on the matters addressed in Domains 1 to 4 (life, health, education, protection).

This year we could only update Domain 5 with six new Concluding Observations issued by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child in 2021. While we tremendously appreciate the work of the Committee, and understand the challenges posed by COVID-19 restrictions, it is a pity that it turned out to be impossible to do more of the state reporting procedure online. This would have allowed for maintaining a little more continuity in the only currently existing global monitoring procedure designated fully to children's rights. However, it is encouraging to see the Committee picking up its rhythm again, with already 14 new Concluding Observations having been adopted and made available through the UN Treaty Bodies database in the first half of 2022. Another nine states are on the list to be reviewed in the 91st session of the CRC Committee (29 August-23 September 2022). This is highly desirable, given the large number of states for which the currently available Concluding Observations are at least 10 years old. In order to do fuller justice to children's rights, it is important that states step up their efforts to submit periodic reports to the CRC Committee timely, and that the Committee finds ways to get rid of the backlog incurred.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### SOURCES USED FOR COMPILING THE KIDSRIGHTS INDEX

The KidsRights Index pools data from three reputable sources: quantitative data published and regularly updated by UNICEF and UNDP, and qualitative data published by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child in the detailed individual country assessments that it adopts for all States Parties to the CRC (the so-called Concluding Observations). The KidsRights Index aims at making the data involved more accessible to a broader audience, in an effort to stimulate dialogue about children's rights. Because the United States of America is the only State in the world that is not yet a party to the CRC, there is no material for scoring the country on Domain 5 and thus it cannot be included in the KidsRights Index yet.

### DATA BEFORE 2012

Article 44 of the CRC requires States to report to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child within two years after joining the Convention, and every five years thereafter. However, as is the case for other UN human rights treaties as well, many countries do not fulfil this obligation on time. Therefore, the KidsRights Index 2022 includes no less than 46 countries for which the data in Domain 5 is older than ten years. The analysis of children's rights in these 46 countries is thus based on Concluding Observations from 2012 or before (see the table below). This is unavoidable because the countries involved have not presented more recent state reports to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child or the Committee has not yet scheduled a state reporting meeting with them. The ranking of these countries may therefore not reflect the current children's rights situation. According to the currently available information, seventeen of these countries have been, or will be, assessed by the Committee in 2022 or 2023. That leaves twenty-nine states with seriously outdated information. This shows that both a significant number of states parties, and the Committee itself, are facing a substantial backlog in their reporting or monitoring work respectively.

#	Rank	Country	Year of Concluding Observations
1	144	St Kitts and Nevis	1999
2	168	Comoros	2000
3	100	Libya	2003
4	51	San Marino	2003
5	181	Equatorial Guinea	2004
6	177	Papua New Guinea	2004
7	139	Bahamas	2005
8	77	Belize	2005
#	Rank	Country	Year of Concluding Observations
9	151	Uganda	2005
10	122	Kiribati	2006
11	83	Trinidad and Tobago	2006
12	42	Malaysia	2007
13	153	Mali	2007
14	124	Djibouti	2008
15	65	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	2009
16	141	Mauritania	2009
17	70	Philippines	2009



#	Rank	Country	Year of Concluding Observations
18	185	Chad	2009
19	160	Burkina Faso	2010
20	136	Burundi	2010
21	78	Grenada	2010
22	45	North Macedonia	2010
23	72	Nicaragua	2010
24	175	Nigeria	2010
25	67	Paraguay	2010
26	169	Sudan	2010
27	184	Afghanistan	2011
28	126	Cambodia	2011
29	19	Cuba	2011
30	38	Egypt	2011
31	84	Ukraine	2011
32	52	Albania	2012
33	60	Algeria	2012
34	64	Azerbaijan	2012
35	48	Canada	2012
36	35	Cyprus	2012
37	32	Greece	2012
38	1	Iceland	2012
39	161	Liberia	2012
40	155	Madagascar	2012
41	128	Myanmar	2012
42	110	Namibia	2012
43	13	Thailand	2012
44	157	Togo	2012
45	25	Türkiye	2012
46	56	Viet Nam	2012

Table 10. 46 countries for which the data in Domain 5 is older than ten years

## ADJUSTMENT OF THE EDUCATION DOMAIN IN THE KIDSRIGHTS INDEX 2018

Because an Index is continuous work in progress, the availability and quality of data and the methodology of the KidsRights Index are reviewed every year. For the KidsRights Index 2018, comprehensive methodological changes were made in the Domain 'education', so as to generate a yet higher quality assessment and basis for comparison of country performance records on education. These were applied since. The consequence of these methodological adjustments is that it is not possible to compare the 2018 and later KidsRights results one-on-one to the 2017 and previous results, although overall the differences in rankings caused by the methodological changes are limited. Obviously, all countries have still been compared on the same footing, as was the case in previous versions of the KidsRights Index. Thus, a comparative assessment between countries remains very well possible.

From the 6<sup>th</sup> KidsRights Index (2018) onwards, the 'education' domain is based on the indicator 'expected years of schooling'. This indicator, which is also used in the Human Development Index (HDI), is a measure of the years of schooling that a child of school entrance age can expect to receive if prevailing patterns of age-specific enrolment rates persist throughout the child's life.<sup>17</sup> As such, the new indicator shows the opportunities for learning or educational development of a child in a specific country. In order to also capture differences between girls and boys, since 2018 the 'education' domain is constructed on the basis of the following three indicators:

1. **Expected years of schooling of girls**
2. **Expected years of schooling of boys**
3. **Gender inequality in expected years of schooling (absolute difference between girls and boys).**

The data for the three indicators of the Education Domain are gathered by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and are available at [www.hdr.undp.org/data](http://www.hdr.undp.org/data).

## ANNEX 2. - REGIONS KIDSRIGHTS INDEX 2022 (185 COUNTRIES)

The latest list of [Regional Classifications by UNICEF](#) was published in March 2017.

According to [OHCHR Database](#), in the last decade three countries ratified the UNCRC: Somalia (1 October 2015); South Sudan (23 January 2015); and State of Palestine (2 April 2014)

### EASTERN EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA – 21 COUNTRIES

Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Macedonia (the former Yugoslav Republic of), Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan

### WESTERN EUROPE – 28 COUNTRIES

Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

### EAST ASIA AND THE PACIFIC – 28 COUNTRIES

Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, China, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Fiji, Indonesia, Japan, Kiribati, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Micronesia (Federates States of), Mongolia, Myanmar, Nauru, New Zealand, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Samoa, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Vanuatu, Vietnam

### SOUTH ASIA – 8 COUNTRIES

Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka  
Middle East and North Africa – 19 countries

Algeria; Bahrain; Egypt; Iran; Iraq; Israel; Jordan; Kuwait; Lebanon; Libya; Morocco; Oman; Qatar; Saudi Arabia; State of Palestine; Syrian Arab Republic; Tunisia; United Arab Emirates; Yemen

### EASTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICA – 23 COUNTRIES

Angola; Botswana; Burundi; Comoros; Djibouti; Eritrea; Ethiopia; Kenya; Lesotho; Madagascar; Malawi; Mauritius; Mozambique; Namibia; Rwanda; Seychelles; South Africa; Sudan; Eswatini (Swaziland); Uganda; United Republic of Tanzania; Zambia; Zimbabwe

### WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICA – 24 COUNTRIES

Benin; Burkina Faso; Cape Verde; Cameroon; Central African Republic; Chad; Congo; Côte d'Ivoire; Democratic Republic of the Congo; Equatorial Guinea; Gabon; Gambia; Ghana; Guinea; Guinea-Bissau; Liberia; Mali; Mauritania; Niger; Nigeria; Sao Tome and Principe; Senegal; Sierra Leone; Togo

### NORTH AMERICA – 1 COUNTRY

Canada

### LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN – 33 COUNTRIES

Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Saint Lucia, San Marino, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Surinam, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay, Venezuela



## 12 COUNTRIES NOT (YET) IN THE INDEX

**East Asia and Pacific:** Cook Islands, Marshall Islands, Niue, Tuvalu

**Eastern and Southern Africa:** Somalia, South Sudan

**Industrial Countries:** Andorra, Liechtenstein, Holy See, Monaco

**Latin America and Caribbean:** Dominica

**North America:** USA (which has not ratified the CRC)

## ANNEXURES

### ANNEX 1. - DOMAINS & INDICATORS

Domains:		Indicators:	
1		Right to Life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Under five mortality</li> <li>• Life expectancy at birth</li> <li>• Maternal mortality ratio</li> </ul>
2		Right to Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % of under five year olds suffering from underweight</li> <li>• Immunization of one year old children</li> <li>• % of population using improved sanitation facilities (urban and rural)</li> <li>• % of population using improved drinking water sources (urban and rural)</li> </ul>
3		Right to Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expected years of schooling of girls</li> <li>• Expected years of schooling of boys</li> <li>• Gender inequality in expected years of schooling (absolute difference between girls and boys)</li> </ul>
4		Right to Protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child labour</li> <li>• Adolescent birth rate</li> <li>• Birth registration</li> </ul>
5		Enabling Environment for Child Rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Non-discrimination</li> <li>• Best interests of the child</li> <li>• Respect for the views of the child/child participation</li> <li>• Enabling legislation</li> <li>• Best available budget</li> <li>• Collection and analysis of disaggregate data</li> <li>• State-civil society cooperation for child rights</li> </ul>



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