

## Toxic mix of poverty and discrimination damaging the lives of millions of children worldwide

New report from Save the Children reveals millions of the world's poorest children are being denied life-saving services because of who they are and where they live; new campaign launches to reach 'every last child'

Toronto, April 26, 2016...In today's world the bodies of child refugees wash up on European beaches, girls are denied access to education because of their gender, and indigenous children miss out on life-saving healthcare because of ongoing discriminatory policy and funding decisions. Deliberate discrimination or neglect is the largest threat to the well-being of the world's poorest children and it is only getting worse, according to a new report from Save the Children.

Even in the richest countries, tens of millions of children live with uncertain access to food, inadequate shelter and social services, and with the damaging effects of social exclusion. The Every Last Child report shows that recent progress in fighting extreme poverty is often not reaching children who need it most – because of geography, their gender, ethnicity or race, a disability or because they are victims of conflict. At its worst, this discrimination is deadly. Of the 16,000 children still dying each day from preventable causes, a disproportionate number are from these excluded groups.

“Our report reveals how some of the world's poorest children are being left behind because of who they are or where they live. The system is broken,” says Patricia Erb, President & CEO of Save the Children. “It is not an accident that discrimination is preventing some of the most vulnerable children from accessing life-saving services – these children are being systematically left out by design or neglect.”

Save the Children is today launching a new three-year campaign, *Every Last Child*. The campaign calls on decision makers at the household, local, national and international levels to eliminate the barriers put in place that prevent the poorest and most vulnerable children from accessing life-saving services.

The organisation also calls on world leaders to commit to three basic guarantees for all children, everywhere. These are **fair financing** – financial security for every child and their family, along with sustainable financing of essential services so that everyone can access them – **equal treatment for all children** – remove barriers to health and education through laws and policies - and for **decision makers to be held accountable**.

“When I was 14, I witnessed indigenous children in Bolivia die because they had measles and couldn't afford a doctor or medicine. I knew then that I would devote my life to the fight against poverty and injustice. The recent UN goals have the world promising to leave no child behind by 2030. To achieve this, we need real change. Governments must change their laws and policies, we must have a global economy that is inclusive and people must change their

discriminatory attitudes and beliefs. The cycles of inequality and poverty that entrap generations must be stopped, and we must work together to do so,” continues Patricia Erb.

The Every Last Child report reveals:

- **400 million children** globally face discrimination because of their ethnicity/race and religion, and this discrimination can be deadly.
- Child marriage is prevalent among the world’s poorest girls. **720 million women were married before they were 18, compared with 156 million men.** Apart from being a human rights violation, child marriage has grave consequences for girls’ sexual and reproductive health, limits education and employment opportunities, and makes girls vulnerable to sexual and physical violence.
- Many of the basic rights of children are undermined and violated during emergencies and situations of protracted displacement. The consequences for refugee and displaced children and their communities are devastating. **1 in 4 refugee children of secondary age are estimated to be in school, compared with 3 in 4 children worldwide.** A third of the 10 million stateless people worldwide are children. **Once displaced for six months, the average length of displacement is now 17 years.** Business as usual is clearly failing most of the world’s displaced people.
- Discrimination and exclusion are also affecting children in some of the wealthiest countries. **The average poverty rate for Indigenous children in Canada is 40%, more than twice the national average of 17%. Fifty percent of First Nations children in Canada live below the poverty line.** They are lagging behind compared to the rest of the country’s children, and are suffering as a result of low family income, low educational success rates, poor water quality, high infant mortality and suicide.

“For generations in Canada, governments of all levels failed to provide First Nations, Inuit and Métis children and communities with the most basic of services in health, education, housing and water. Now more than ever Canada needs to open its eyes,” says Patricia Erb. “Unless we work to provide Indigenous Peoples in Canada with the services they are entitled to, we make it impossible for Canada to be the nation it wants to be. We cannot wait for more meetings, roundtables, and discussions. The urgency has never been greater and our past failures never more obvious, but it is never too late for us to begin the important work of reconciliation.”

“The Every Last Child Campaign is about justice. It’s about the right of every child to healthcare, to education, to shelter and food. Today, far too frequently, the rights of children are being denied. And that is not an accident. Choices are being made at the systems level, by governments, businesses, and the public, to let children’s rights go unfulfilled and to let children suffer. We need to start making a different choice. And we need to start now.”

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**About Save the Children**

Save the Children is the world's leading independent organization for children, delivering programs and improving children's lives in more than 120 countries worldwide. We are committed to achieving immediate and lasting change for the world's most vulnerable. Our programs reached more than 62.2 million children in 2015. Learn more here: [www.savethechildren.ca](http://www.savethechildren.ca) or follow us on Twitter ([twitter.com/savechildrenca](https://twitter.com/savechildrenca)), Facebook ([www.facebook.com/savethechildren.ca](https://www.facebook.com/savethechildren.ca)) and Instagram ([@savechildrenca](https://www.instagram.com/savechildrenca)).