Children at the Heart of the Ministerial Conference to End Violence Against Children (EVAC)

Guidance for Children’s Participation in the National Preparatory Sessions.

This guidance has been developed for Governments and Civil Society Organizations (CSO).

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PURPOSE

Children are a primary stakeholder in the National Preparatory Sessions (NPS) leading up to the Global Ministerial Conference on Ending Violence Against Children. This guidance, whilst not prescriptive, provides a framework and principles and proposes practical activities to support Governments and CSOs to ensure the safe, meaningful, and inclusive participation of children in the National preparatory process culminating in the NPS. It is not a blueprint, and activities should be adapted and contextualised. Children’s participation in the NPS should build on existing local and national processes to ensure the voices and expertise of children from the most marginalised groups including migrant, ethnic, indigenous, children with disabilities, working children, girls, and other children who are often left behind (REFF, UNSDG, Operationalizing Leaving no one behind). Children have a right to express their views in matters concerning them and we encourage Governments and CSOs to harness the power of their voices and insights.

BACKGROUND

Global Ministerial Conference

The Global Ministerial Conference on Ending Violence against Children will take place on November 7-8, 2024, in Bogota, Colombia and will be co-hosted by the Government of Colombia, the Government of Sweden, the WHO, UNICEF, and the UN Secretary General’s Special Representative on Violence Against Children (UNSGSRVAC). The conference is a milestone moment for world leaders (government actors and non-state actors) to make a reality of a child’s right to protection under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the promise of SDG 16.2 to end all violence against children. It is an important moment to make sure children are at the heart of the proceedings leading up to and during the Ministerial Conference.
The Convention on the Rights of the Child establishes the right of the child to be protected from all forms of violence and the responsibility of States parties to ensure this right for every child without any discrimination. The Committee encourages States parties to consult with children in the development and implementation of legislative, policy, educational and other measures to address all forms of violence. Particular attention needs to be paid to ensuring that marginalized and disadvantaged children, such as exploited children, street children or refugee children, are not excluded from consultative processes designed to elicit views on relevant legislation and policy processes. (Extract: CRC/C/GC/12 pages 26)

National Preparatory Session (NPS)

Countries participating in the Conference are encouraged to conduct a National Preparation Process, culminating in the organization of a National Ministerial Preparatory Session (NPS) and the formulation of national commitments to ending violence against children, which will be presented at the Conference (End Violence against Children NPS Roadbook).

The NPS are government led and will bring together government officials and senior political representatives from various sectors as well as members of the national stakeholder platform to end violence against children, including non-government partners/ CSO’s, Organisations of Persons with disabilities (OPDs), children, youth, and public survivors. These sessions will be facilitated with support from UNICEF, WHO, and the UNSRSGVAC in approximately 40 ‘Bright Spot’ countries, as well as other interested countries.

Each NPS should result in two written outputs:

1. A compelling ‘story of success’ that highlights the efforts and progress of the member state since 2015 in preventing/reducing VAC.

2. A specific measurable pledge that represents an enhanced national commitment to ending violence against children – particularly in relation to SDG 16.2 and INSPIRE: Seven strategies to end violence against children.

Children at the Heart of the NPS

Children are defined as every human being under the age of 18 years, and are a distinct group of rights holders, as set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). Article 12 of the UNCRC establishes children's right to be heard as a foundational principle of the Convention and essential prerequisite for promoting their rights more widely. It is important to create safe channels, opportunities and platforms that allow the diverse voices of children to be heard.

Participation is about having the opportunity to express a view, influencing decision-making, and achieving change. Children’s participation is an informed and willing involvement of all children, including the most marginalised and those of different ages and abilities, in any matter concerning them either directly or indirectly. Children’s participation is a way of working and an essential principle that cuts across all programmes and takes place in all arenas – from homes to government, from local to international levels (Practice Standards in Children’s Participation, Save the Children (2005).

It is important to remember that children are not a homogenous group and that they reflect the diversity of “all nations, and all peoples and all segments of society” as set out in the 2030 Agenda. Children are
key stakeholders and agents of change for themselves and their communities. They are experts in their own lives and provide unique perspectives on their rights and the issues that affect them- their insights are critical to informing decision making and accountability. Prevention of and responses to violence will be more relevant, effective, and responsive when guided by the views and experiences of children.

Children and young people affected by violence need to be engaged in holding duty bearers to account, identifying their needs, calling out rights violations, and designing solutions. Through their Courage, Adaptability, Resilience, and Empathy, they are a catalyst of creative power, able to navigate towards solutions for the protection and fulfilment of their right to live in a world free of violence. The NPS must recognise children as active members who play an important role in preventing and responding to VAC. Their inclusion, representation, and engagement in the NPS is critical and every effort needs to be made to ensure their safe, inclusive, and meaningful participation.

The NPS provides an important opportunity to support children hold their government to account and to make sure children are at the heart of pledges to end violence against children. Children's rights need to be seen holistically, central to the NPS, and given proportionate space and consideration throughout the discussions. This requires:

- Children to be empowered and supported to participate in the NPS safely and meaningfully.
- The voices of the most marginalized groups, including children with disabilities, migrants, ethnic minorities are being considered.
- Their views and recommendations to be listened to, valued and for there to be accountability towards them.
- Mechanisms to be put in place to facilitate the participation of children and young people on an ongoing basis.
- Accountability for the commitments made with and for children.

Bringing a pledge to the Ministerial Conference co-created with children speaks to the government’s accountability to them. It demonstrates to children that their voices are valued, and that duty bearers are committed to driving solutions that are responsive and relevant to them. The National Preparatory Process and Session provides a pivotal moment to ending violence against children in partnership with today’s generation.

States parties shall take adequate measures to assure to every child the right to freely express his or her views and to have those views duly taken into account without discrimination on grounds of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic, or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status. States parties shall address discrimination, including against vulnerable or marginalized groups of children, to ensure that children are assured their right to be heard and are enabled to participate in all matters affecting them on an equal basis with all other children. (Extract: CRC/C/GC/12 pages 18)

UN Basic Requirements for the meaningful participation of children

When planning and facilitating the participation of children in the NPS it is important to consider the UN Basic Requirements for the Meaningful Participation of Children

1. Transparent and Informative
Children clearly understand their right to express their views freely and safely. Children know they will be heard, and their contributions valued. Children understand they can freely ask
questions, seek clarification, raise concerns and/or express ideas and share recommendations.

2. **Voluntary**
   Children have received sufficient information to understand the choices available to them, what they mean and how to engage or choose not to participate. A culture that respects children’s choice must be fostered throughout the participatory process.

3. **Respectful**
   Children’s views are treated with respect, are heard, and valued. Children are not undermined and are able to express their views without fear of discrimination. A culture of respect is considerate of childrens backgrounds, experiences, concerns, vulnerabilities, and existing commitments.

4. **Relevant**
   Children understand why the issue is of relevance to them and why their views and expertise are being sought. Children are given the opportunity to identify issues that they themselves believe to be relevant and important.

5. **Child Friendly**
   Children feel welcomed. Staff are approachable and responsive to the children. Working methods do not discriminate children but consider their evolving capacities, age, diversity, and capabilities. The methods used promote children’s confidence in speaking out, sharing, and expressing their views.

6. **Inclusive**
   Children are not discriminated against including by age, gender, race, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic, or social origin, property, street connected, refugee, disability, birth, or other status. The participation process promotes inclusiveness, treats each child as an individual and considers existing patterns of discrimination, power imbalances and cultural sensitivities – and where necessary challenges these. The participation process makes sure each child knows they are valued, respected and important. The methods, approaches, languages, and arrangements do not exclude children most discriminated.

7. **Supported by Training**
   All staff facilitating children’s participation have the necessary knowledge, skills, training, confidence, and capabilities.

8. **Safe and Sensitive to Risk**
   Children know that all considerations in relation to their safety and protection from abuse and harm have been considered and know where to go for help, if needed. Child safeguarding plans are in place to minimise risks, prevent abuse and remove barriers that some children face when obtaining help. Staff have taken every precaution to minimise the risk to children of abuse and exploitation or any other negative consequence of children's participation. Risk management plans are in place to ensure the safe participation of children. Relevant organisational policies and procedures are understood and implemented effectively, for example, Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.

9. **Accountable**
Children’s views, concerns, and recommendations influence decisions, challenge actions, and support the development of commitments and government pledges. Children have access to key stakeholders and can ask questions freely and safely. Children receive feedback on how their contribution has advised, informed, or influenced developments to date. Accountability processes are integrated throughout the NPS including pre, during and post NPS. Children have adequate time, support, and information to share any feedback with their peers, particularly when nominated by their peers and/or communities to represent their views.

The Committee urges States parties to avoid tokenistic approaches, which limit children’s expression of views, or which allow children to be heard, but fail to give their views due weight. It emphasizes that adult manipulation of children, placing children in situations where they are told what they can say, or exposing children to risk of harm through participation are not ethical practices and cannot be understood as implementing article 12.

If participation is to be effective and meaningful, it needs to be understood as a process, not as an individual one-off event. Experience since the Convention on the Rights of the Child was adopted in 1989 has led to a broad consensus on the basic requirements which have to be reached for effective, ethical, and meaningful implementation of article 12. The Committee recommends that States parties integrate these requirements into all legislative and other measures for the implementation of article 12. Extract: CRC/C/GC/12 pages 29-31

See UN Basic Requirements for the Meaningful Participation of Children & Appendix 1 for further details.

For the NPS this includes,

Preparation Adults’ for childrens safe and meaningful participation in the NPS
✓ Make sure adults are aware of the importance of child participation in the National Preparatory Process and Session.
✓ Get a commitment from everyone involved – children and adults – to respect each other’s views and work together for a positive outcome.
✓ Ensure a Safeguarding Focal Point is appointed and leads on the development of a safeguarding plan aligned with your organisational child safeguarding policy and procedures including conducting a risk assessment and putting in place mitigation strategies to ensure the safe participation of children. Ensure the safeguarding focal point reviews all safeguarding plans and is available for children and adults involved throughout the process. (further details included below).
✓ Identify trained and supportive and safe adult allies who can effectively facilitate the participation of children. For example, effective facilitation means ensuring that children are respected, their inputs are valued, and they not judged or discriminated against. Adults should not ask leading questions, rather ask open questions to elicit diverse perspectives and contributions as well as create the space for children to ask questions and share the insights important to them. Effective facilitation knows when and how to intervene to support children, while at the same time encouraging children’s growth and development. Adult facilitators should demonstrate kindness, care, be approachable and respect diverse cultures, and the diverse capabilities of children.
✓ Provide information and support to leaders and other adults engaging with the children.
☑ Have basic skills and request necessary support to facilitate inclusive discussions, where every child, including children with disabilities, feel that their opinion matters.¹
☑ Brief interpreters, where relevant – to ensure they do not summarise children's responses and provide the authentic translation of children's inputs.

Preparing Children for their participation in the NPS

Important Principles
☑ Acknowledge children as partners and agents of change – speaking for themselves!
☑ Believe in children's capabilities and potential – their agenda should drive the process enable a creative, safe, open, and exploratory way of working where children are supported to lead discussions, speak freely about the priorities important to them (even if different from adults' priorities) and encouraged to collaborate with other children and stakeholders.
☑ Ensure to have alternative ways to conduct a session (audio, visual, information in accessible format), do the group work and exercises so all participants, including those with disabilities have equal opportunities for engagement.
☑ Recognise the stage of development and maturity of the children involved and use methods and approaches that work best for them. Do not assume and do not patronise children – be open, supportive, respectful, and approachable.

Important Actions
☑ Consult children and young people on how they would like to be involved and supported.
☑ Decide your selection methods and criteria for children and strategize about how you will include groups who may experience barriers to inclusion, such as girls, children with disabilities, working children, indigenous children, or children from marginalised ethnic groups.
☑ Advise children of the reasons for participation and the possible consequences of different alternatives.
☑ Ensure children are fully briefed on the purpose of the consultation, its focus, its limits, and potential for influence to manage expectations realistically yet create an enabling environment for open discussions, including on sensitive topics.
☑ Make sure children only participate if they want to. Their participation is not coerced and must always be voluntary. This also means they can withdraw at any time without having to provide an explanation.
☑ Provide opportunities for networking among child-led organizations to increase opportunities for shared learning and platforms for collective advocacy.

Enabling Environment & Safeguarding
☑ Ensure Safeguarding plan along with sufficient resources to enable the safe, inclusive, and meaningful participation of children. This includes carrying out a risk assessment and developing a risk management plan with children and stakeholders; making sure children are aware of child safeguarding measures, adults are trained in child safeguarding and know how to respond effectively in the event of child safeguarding concerns and disclosures, appropriate referral mechanisms are in place including MHPSS, and that children/ adults understand privacy, consent, and confidentiality (including when to report issues that are serious and must be escalated in order to keep a child safe) in relation to child safeguarding. Adherence to child safeguarding policy, standards and procedures is essential.

¹ Learn more at UNICEF’s guidance Take us Seriously Take-Us-Seriously.pdf (unicef.org)
✓ Be sensitive and responsive to the context in which children live as well as to diverse cultures and individual characteristics for example age, gender, race, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic, or social origin, property, street connected, refugee, disability, birth, or other status.

✓ Provide meeting time, places, atmosphere, supportive children’s networks, and activities that encourage the children’s safe involvement.

✓ Promote and ensure a safe environment for meaningful participation in the NPS where child safeguarding standards are met. Think about whether the risks associated with children travelling to meeting points or being seen to be involved in these types of activities.

✓ Ensure you always follow your organisational child safeguarding policy and procedures and make sure you obtain consent/assent from parents/carers and children themselves.

✓ Make sure that any adults involved are the right people to be engaging with children and understand their own duty of care to work in a way that protects children from harm and always maintain appropriate boundaries. It is good practice to ask adults to sign up to a Code of Conduct that clearly outlines the kind of behaviours that are expected and prohibited and where they commit to reporting any concerns they have about a child to the Safeguarding Focal Point for the activity.

✓ It is also important to be aware of how children interact with each other to make sure no harm is done, and you can consider developing a child friendly Code of Conduct with the children involved to support this.

✓ Ensure the safe participation of children with disabilities: for example- make sure the venue is accessible, inclusive and safe it is equipped with safe ramps with handrails and/or lifts or lifting platforms, and accessible toilet facilities; The information is provided in a way that is accessible - consider verbal and written information and ensure instructions are clear and simple; make sure sign language, tactile communication, and symbols are concrete rather than abstract, and products are intuitive and easy to use; and make provisions for the consent form to be available in multiple formats (e.g. voice statement, accessible Word, easy read)

✓ Remember that children should always be under reasonable supervision of staff/chaperones and should never leave the venue or go unsupervised without prior permission during the NPS/process.

✓ Remember it may be difficult for children to feel comfortable in seemingly ‘safe spaces’, due to their experiences of exploitation and harm. Organisers should facilitate the provision of both on-site professional psychological support and safeguarding teams who must be always accessible by children.

✓ Children bring a wealth of insights and expertise – give them the appropriate space and time to contribute freely and safely.

**Partnerships, Sustainability, & Accountability**

✓ Establish and continue to nurture partnerships and collaborations between governments, child-focused organisations (CSO’s), and children’s groups/networks as well as other allies.

✓ Build on and strengthen existing relevant platforms and mechanisms to further strengthen civil society and sustain children’s efforts and leadership.

✓ Allow the necessary time for children to explore ways they wish to continue working together and contributing to efforts and solutions to end violence against children.

✓ Explore with the children and adults what accountability to children could look like going forward.

✓ Generate meaningful mechanisms, platforms, and opportunities with and for children to bring leaders to account concerning their pledge to end violence against children.
Invest in plans to deliver on the pledge created with children and other important stakeholders.

Recommendations for Childrens Participation in the NPS

When preparing for the NPS Governments, supported by CSOs, are encouraged to:

- Inform children about the Ministerial Conference, via child-friendly and accessible approaches. (Appendix 3)
- Facilitate children’s groups, networks, and associations to participate in the NPS process.
- Together with children, review national progress on EVAC as well as the country’s priorities in achieving EVAC by 2030.
- Consider referring to the Inspire Strategies to support the framing of the priorities with children.
- Offer children’s groups, networks, and associations the opportunity to explore and express their views, key messages, solutions, questions, and commitments they expect from their governments and other stakeholders.
- Record children’s views in a comprehensive format to be presented by children themselves where appropriate and safe to do so and/or by CSO representatives during the NPS.

During the NPS, Governments and CSO’s are encouraged to:

- Support the incorporation of children’s views into the government’s pledge so that children, their rights, and their meaningful participation are at the heart of the commitments to Ending Violence against Children.
- Respect, value and be influenced by the diverse voices of children, their priorities, insights, and experiences. Remember it is individual children's own decision to decide what and how much they wish to share, particularly regarding personal experiences (if any information at all).
- Always prioritise the safeguarding of children.
- Convey children’s views and advocate to keep their perspectives and best interests at the centre of the discussion and decision making.
- Share examples of child-led and collaborative participation practices that have contributed to preventing or reducing VAC.

After the NPS, CSOs and Governments are encouraged to:

- Inform children about the outputs of the NPS.
- Develop communications materials that are child friendly, accessible, relevant, and informative.
- Enable children's safe activism, opportunities for them to demand actions, raise awareness and promote the conference and their priorities for ending violence against children.
- Plan a local or national advocacy dialogue around the same date as the Conference with children and other stakeholders to raise awareness about the event’s significance and the need to strengthen multi-stakeholder collaboration to end violence against children.
- Consider the participation of children in the National Delegation to the Ministerial Conference.
- Agree a feedback process with the children following the Ministerial Conference.

Further details see: UNICEF - Tip Sheets for Adults on Participation.
ACTIVITIES

It is important to plan for children’s participation and develop activities and facilitation processes that are inclusive, safe, and participatory, considering the diversity of children’s experiences, views, and perspectives, their agency, and capabilities. It is important to remember that some children may have direct and indirect experiences of different forms of violence and this needs to be considered when planning activities, for example ensure that the children understand they will not be asked or expected to share their personal experiences of violence however if they do want to speak to someone then the space, time and support is available. Create a safe and supportive process for children to meaningfully participate, engage in dialogues, contribute towards plans and solutions as well as share examples and insights. The following activities have been designed to support you facilitate the meaningful participation of children, please adapt them as required taking into consideration the key points highlighted in this guidance to ensure the safe, inclusive, and meaningful participation of children in the NPS.

Introduce the importance of the Ministerial Conference and National Preparatory Session to children (Appendix 3). You may choose to do this as a focus group discussion, provide written information in the children’s local languages, share a story to convey the key points, use images/ artwork/illustrations to highlight key messages, and/or conduct a survey to build on the children’s insights. Remember to build in time for the children to express any questions they may have and provide timely and accessible information/ responses.

Use, adapt and contextualise the proposed activities below to understand children’s views, key messages, and calls to action. Use participatory and creative methods to support children’s meaningful participation including through focus group discussions, scenarios, role play, debate, artwork expressions and so on.

The National Preparatory Sessions provide an important opportunity for children to support their government to create new pledges, commitments, and solutions so that all children live free from violence. The following activities support children to explore, express, and influence the development of the governments’ pledge to focus on childrens priorities and strengthen the voice and participation of children to end violence against children.

Activity A): Children’s Call to Action!

Governments all over the world have made a promise to End Violence against all Children by 2030!

Q1. What does violence against children in your community look like? (children draw, shout out keywords, or write key points illustrating how they define violence against children).

Q2. Violence against children is.... (building on the above activity the children complete the sentence as many times as they wish covering as many points/ topics including on/offline violence)

Q3. Do you think violence against children will be ended by 2030 (sustainable development goal agreed by governments)?

Q4. Why do you think that?

Children generate as many responses as they wish of all the reasons/ issues they can think of.

Q5. What actions & by whom can be taken to end violence against children?

Children select 3 priorities from the above/ their discussions so far and go through each one to explore what actions and by whom. They can list as many actions as they wish as well as the different
stakeholders, they believe have the power to make change happen. Remember some responses may have several actors with the power to make change happen.

Q6. What difference would the change make for children? Children imagine the situation no longer exists - what would that mean for children and which children would be most impacted.

Children's CALL to ACTION! Children summarise the actions they want government and other stakeholders to take to end violence against children into a 1–3-minute message.

Share the Children's Call to Action! with the CSO Forum too so that we can further support to amplify children’s voices during the proceedings leading up to and during the Ministerial Conference.
EMAIL: B.mepani@savethechildren.org.uk & e.nowotny@arigatouinternational.org (See Appendix 2).


This section builds on children’s existing insights related to ending violence against children. Children can choose one or as many options as they wish (multiple responses per question). You may wish to print these or write them on separate cards/paper for children to select, cluster & discuss or produce a short survey for children to complete. Ensure you and other stakeholders utilise the children’s insights to support the development of the Governments pledge and new commitments.

Question 1.
What actions do you think the government of your country should take to prevent violence against children?

a) Create laws that protect children more.
b) Ensure that laws against violence are enforced by the government.
c) Strengthen the participation of children, including local and national networks, so that their voices are included when decisions are made on this topic.
d) Support social organizations that work to protect children.
e) Provide economic resources for programs and actions designed to prevent and properly address violence against children.
f) Support training and education for families, teachers, community leaders, and those working in child protection.
g) Options for children to report violence.
h) Create educational campaigns on children’s rights and ways to address and prevent violence.
i) Are there other actions? Open question)

Question 2.
If you were the President of your country and you could only select 3 of your choices, which 3 would you select and why? What difference do you think it would make for children? Children summarise their priorities and key points into one sentence per priority.

Share the Children's 3 Priorities and Responses with the CSO Forum so that we can further support to amplify children’s voices during the proceedings leading up to and during the Ministerial Conference.
EMAIL: B.mepani@savethechildren.org.uk & e.nowotny@arigatouinternational.org
Question 3.
What can world leaders do to prevent violence against children? (children select as many responses as they wish)

a) Have countries make investments to protect children.
b) Give money for programs or initiatives that prevent and respond to violence against children.
c) Create a worldwide network of children to protect children’s rights to live free from violence and to be heard by decision makers.
d) Help train and educate families, teachers, community leaders, media, government officials, and those who work in child protection.
e) Help train and educate families, teachers, community leaders, media, government officials, and those who work in jobs that affect children.
f) Make campaigns to teach people about children's rights and ways to prevent violence.
g) Support children, communities and governments create campaigns about ending violence against children.
h) Make sure international laws to protect children from violence/ end violence against children are enforced by the government.
i) Provide opportunities for children in their local community and nationally to contribute to solutions to Ending Violence against Children.
j) Build systems to better protect and support children in their community from violence.
k) Invest in children's ideas to end violence against children.
l) Support children lead change in their communities.
m) Do you have other ideas to share? (Open question)

Question 4.
If you were the president of your country and you could only select three items from the above, which 3 would you prioritise? What difference do you hope it would make? Children summarise their responses into one statement.

Share the World Leaders Actions- Priorities and Responses with the CSO Forum so that we can further support to amplify children’s voices during the proceedings leading up to and during the Ministerial Conference.

EMAIL: B.mepani@savethechildren.org.uk & e.nowotny@arigatouinternational.org

Question 5. My Right to be Heard!
5.1 What actions can children take to make sure their voices are heard by leaders, politicians, the international community, and those responsible for protecting children?

a) Join groups, networks, and spaces for children where they can safely express their ideas and concerns.
b) Take part in dialogues with these people to safely express their ideas and concerns.
c) Write letters, make videos, recordings, or artistic creations to share their opinions with these people.
d) Create campaigns or initiatives to raise awareness among children and adults about this topic.
e) Share their opinions with a trusted adult who can share their ideas with decision makers.
f) Support the community build interventions/programs to end violence against children.

5.2 Examples of actions children have taken to make sure their voices are heard by leaders.

5.3 What can leaders do to make sure children's voices are heard?

5.4 What actions could others take? (Open question Who/What)

Share a summary of the Children's ‘My right to be Heard!’ responses with the CSO Forum so that we can also support to amplify children’s voices further during the proceedings leading up to and during the Ministerial Conference.
EMAIL: B.mepani@savethechildren.org.uk & e.nowotny@arigatouinternational.org

Question 6. Safer Communities
6.1 How can children help create safer communities (family, school, social networks, etc.)?

a) Talk about the importance of peace and peaceful coexistence with friends, classmates, and community members.
b) Support those who are victims of violence and seek help from trusted adults who can report the violence.
c) Participate in educational, recreational, cultural, and sports activities that protect children's rights and contribute to preventing violence.
d) Share examples of actions you have taken to create safer communities on/offline.
e) Can you think of another action that children like you can take for this? (Open question)

6.2 What can leaders do to make sure children's voices are safe in their communities including on/offline?

6.3 What actions could other individuals take? (Open question – Who/What)

Share a summary of the action's children have taken to create safer communities and their suggestions for new ideas to create safe places for children on/offline as well as their suggestions for leaders- with the CSO Forum too so that we can further support to amplify children’s voices during the proceedings leading up to and during the Ministerial Conference.
EMAIL: B.mepani@savethechildren.org.uk & e.nowotny@arigatouinternational.org

Activity C. Question Generation!

Q1. If you had the opportunity to ask your government a question about Ending Violence Against Children – what would you ask?
**Share** the **Childrens Questions** with the CSO Forum so that we can further support to amplify children’s voices during the proceedings leading up to and during the Ministerial Conference.

EMAIL: B.mepani@savethechildren.org.uk & e.nowotny@arigatouinternational.org

Ensure the children’s insights are utilised by government reps and other leaders/ stakeholders present to co-create the new commitments/pledge by government to create a world where children live free from violence.

**CLOSING POINTS**

Following the National Preparatory Process and Session It is important for facilitators (Government reps/ CSO Facilitators) to

- explain to the children what the next steps are and agree with the children how they wish to stay involved and how you will feedback on the outcomes of the conference.
- continue strengthening existing child participation platforms, networks, groups, child led organisations and child focussed agencies.
- building dialogues and relations between government representatives and children.
- remember children represent an important constituent for holding duty bearers accountable to implement pledged solutions following the Ministerial Conference to Ending Violence against Children.

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**A milestone opportunity to position Children at the Heart of the NPS & Ministerial Conference to End Violence Against Children**

Children have a right to live in a world free from violence.
### Appendix 1 Checklist

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<th>Item</th>
<th>Check</th>
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<td>Transparent and informative - children were provided with full, accessible, diversity-sensitive and age-appropriate information about their right to express their views freely, and how this participation would take place, its scope, purpose and potential impact.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Voluntary - children were never coerced into expressing views against their wishes, provided their and their parents' informed consent, and were informed that they can cease involvement at any stage.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Respectful - children's views were treated with respect and children were provided with opportunities to initiate ideas and activities. Adults working for and with children also respected children's views with regard to participation in public events and activities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Relevant - the issues on which children were consulted and invited to participate are of real relevance to their lives and enable them to draw on their knowledge, skills and abilities.</td>
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<td>Child-friendly - environments and working methods were adapted to children's capacities. Consideration was given to the fact that children need differing levels of support and forms of involvement according to their age and evolving capacities.</td>
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<td>Inclusive - participation means being inclusive, avoids existing patterns of discrimination, and encourages opportunities for marginalized children, children from different religions, ethnic groups, and minority groups, including both girls and boys, to be involved.</td>
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<td>Supported by training - adults have the preparation, skills and support to facilitate children's participation effectively, to provide them, for example, with skills in listening, working jointly with children and engaging children effectively in accordance with their evolving capacities.</td>
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<td>Safe and sensitive to risk - in certain situations, expression of views may involve risks. Adults must take responsibility towards the children with whom they work and take every precaution to violence, exploitation or any other negative consequence of their participation.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountable - a commitment to follow-up and evaluation is essential. Children were informed later as to how their views were interpreted and used and the children were provided with the opportunity to give feedback.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Appendix 2. Sharing Quotes and Information with the CSO Forum to further amplify Children's voices.

A few points to remember,

- Ensure the childrens and parent/carer consent for their participation in the NPS process and session includes the usage of the childrens inputs by the **CSO Forum and Ministerial Organising Group** and make sure this is stored safely locally.

- Please include first name only (or pseudonym), country and age, when sharing quotes, childrens illustrations or images with Bharti Mepani and Emma Nowotny.

- Always respect childrens confidentiality, dignity, and privacy.

- Safeguarding of children is all our priority, please ensure children are always kept safe including through any communications related to their participation.

- Reach out to Bharti or Emma for technical assistance, if helpful.  
  b.mepani@savethechildren.org.uk; e.nowotny@arigatouinternational.org

Children Briefing Note: Introduction to the National Preparatory Session

This briefing note supports facilitators to prepare children for the in engagement in the National Preparatory process and session used alongside the Child Participation Guidance in the NPS. Facilitators can also make the information accessible to children directly, where relevant.

DID YOU KNOW A GLOBAL MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN IS HAPPENING THIS YEAR IN COLOMBIA?

A. What is this Global Ministerial Conference?

→ An important event about Ending Violence Against Children.
→ Takes place on 7-8 November 2024 in Bogota, Colombia.
→ A moment to bring leaders, organizations, youth, and children together to agree what more needs to be done to end violence against children so that every child everywhere can live without fear, be protected and be safe.
→ Check out: United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, and
→ Children are at the heart of the global ministerial conference and the steps leading up to it! One of the steps is the National Preparatory Session (NPS).

B. What is a National Preparatory Session?

It is a session led by the government of each country - including yours - that has been invited to the Ministerial conference. During this session, leaders, other adults, children, and youth of each country will meet to talk about the promise World Leaders made to end violence against children by 2030 SDG 16.2.

They will discuss all the different issues that are connected to violence against children including, the different types of violence, how it affects children’s lives in the home, community and your country; what has changed, got better, and got worse; and what can be done in the next few years to end violence against children.

Some governments may have several meetings, workshops nor events supported by other organizations leading up to the NPS to help make sure they get a good understanding from different members of the community including civil society organizations.

The Organizers of the Ministerial Conference has asked each government to make sure they agree on:

1. A STORY OF SUCCESS! (since 2015) that can be shared with other countries to inspire them, share learnings, and be an example of what can be done to end violence against children.
2. **A SPECIFIC PROMISE! (PLEDGE)** that delivers actions to end violence against children. It is important that governments commit to actions they have the power to make happen because they will need to show evidence.

**Why are children invited to participate in the National Preparatory process and session?**

→ You are the experts of your own lives.
→ You provide a unique perspective about your rights and the issues that affect you.
→ You are the ones who can genuinely inform decision making and hold leaders to account.
→ You are a citizen of your country.
→ You have the right to be involved in decisions affecting your lives.
→ Your views must be listened to, respected, and valued by governments and other adults.
→ Your voice is powerful.

The NPS Process and session recognises the importance of your role and contribution as active agents of change!

**What kind of results can come from your participation in the NPS?**

→ Your participation means the priorities important to you and other children in your country are heard by your government. It is important for the government to understand the issues from your viewpoint and experiences so that they can focus on the reality of children’s lives in their country and not only on what adults’ think is happening to children.

→ Your participation can help your government to agree on a pledge (commitments/ actions) that focus on the issues important to you and other children. This is an important opportunity for you so that children’s insights, views and experiences are taken into account when the government makes decisions about what to prioritise and commit to over the next few years.

→ Your participation will require governments to be accountable to you – they will need to make sure they clearly explain the decisions they are making about the issues they will focus on and the resources – such as people, time, and money- they will commit to so that the actions can be delivered on time and result in the change they believe needs to happen to end violence against children.

C. **Your safe and meaningful participation**

There will be local and national organizations working with you and the government to make sure your involvement is safe and meaningful. This means the National Preparatory process and session will make sure the UN Basic Requirements for the Meaningful Participation of Children are taken into account. You can take a copy of these or review them during and after your participation to make sure you can feedback your experience.
1. Transparent and Informative
Do you feel comfortable to express your views freely and safely during the session?
Did you receive enough information to understand how and why to participate?
→ Remember you can freely ask questions, raise concerns, and look for clarification!

2. Voluntary
Did you choose to participate because you are genuinely interested?
Have you received informed about the choices you have available during this session?
→ Remember, if you feel uncomfortable you are free to opt out (no longer engage) at any moment!

3. Respectful
Do you feel your opinions and views will be/ are being valued?
Do you think you will have the space to initiate activities and ideas?
→ Remember, you should feel able to express your views freely and without fear!

4. Relevant
Are you interested in raising your voice and expressing your ideas about the theme/topics?
Do you feel like your knowledge and skills connect to the topics?
→ Remember, this space is meant for you to speak about the issues you find relevant and important!

5. Child Friendly
Have you received information (verbal, written, or visual) that is easy for you to access, understand, and ask questions for clarification?
Do you think the session allows you to engage freely, confidently and without fear and enables you to share in a way that makes most sense to you?
→ Remember, the methods in place should make you feel confident to speak out and share!

6. Inclusive
Have you felt valued and respected?
Do you think efforts were made to include you and your peers in genuine ways?
→ Remember, we want you to feel free to express yourself without fear of discrimination!

7. Supported by Training
Have the adults involved in the event made it easy and comfortable for you to engage?
Do you think they have the skills and knowledge to make the work with you fun and productive?
Are they supportive and approachable?
→ All staff should be approachable and responsive to you!

8. Safe and Sensitive to Risk
Do you know who and where to go if you feel at risk during the session?
Have you received information about safeguarding – including how to keep yourself and other children safe, and how others will keep you safe?
→ Remember, you should feel like all considerations related to your safety and protection have been considered!
9. Accountable
Do you think the results of your participation in this session will influence the decisions made by the government about focus, priority, actions, and resources?
Do you think it will be easy to follow up on the promises agreed during the session?

➤ Remember you should be receiving information about how you can influence (before engaging) and how you have influenced the process during and after the session!

Further details:

b.mepani@savethechildren.org.uk or e.nowotny@arigatouinternational.org
Appendix 4. Childrens Call to Action / Accountability Template

Childrens Participation in the End Violence Ministerial Conference NPS/Process

The information collected during the NPS process/session is important and should be recorded consistently. Information gathered from the NPS Process/Session will support the organisers ensure childrens voices influence the Ministerial communications products/outputs and advocacy materials co developed with children. We would also like to encourage you to ensure locally/ nationally childrens voices inform your decisions, communications, and actions towards ending violence against children.

Feel free to share the childrens insights in any format you choose and where possible please include translation into English. We have developed the following template in case you also wish to use this form to share the children’s insights as well as any / photographs of their participation in the NPS/Process. Please send to the co-chairs of the CSO Forum Child and Youth Participation Working Group b.mepani@savethechildren.org.uk and e.nowotny@arigatouinternational.org by 31 July 2024.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consultation Submission Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name of Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date and Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name of Note-taker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name of Facilitator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NPS Process/ Session format</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Confirm consent has been obtained for all participants and consent forms are stored and available to your organisation

2. Confirm the inputs of children align to the consent they/ their carers have granted, for example (pseudo names have been used where requested).

Number of groups

Total number of participants

Demographics of participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>No. boys:</th>
<th>No. girls:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of children prefer not to say:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. boys with disability:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of girls with disability:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of children with disability prefer not to say:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of children displaced due to Conflict/Violence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any other relevant demographic information captured:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Age range of participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Youngest participant:</th>
<th>Oldest participant:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Reflectiosn on the Activity

Please capture quotes of what children say, words or stories used by participants whenever possible.

### List any participatory activity used

**For ALL quotes**

Include the quote, first name or pseudonym and/or boy / girl, country, and age for each quote.

### General Highlights

*What was the most important thing that happened today for the group?*

*If there is anything specific about age, gender, ability or diversity please note this.*

*Add inspiring quotes that can be used for End Violence Ministerial Conference communications/advocacy products/publication - ask for permission to use via the consent form.*

### Copy and complete the following section separately for each group who participated, indicating the age range and gender.

**GROUP:** (Please fill)  
**Gender:**  
**Age:**

### Activity A. Childrens Call to Action!

*Throughout the documentation - if the children have a creative way of expressing their insights, please share a photograph or short video clip capturing this expression as well as providing the details below. Thankyou.*

Capture in a statement the childrens description of what a world free from violence looks or feels like for children?

Provide the children’s summary of what would it mean for children to live in a world free from violence?

List the children’s top 3 priorities.

Share the children’s 1–3-minute message capturing the actions to end violence against children and by whom?

If these actions were a reality, what would it mean for children?  
Describe the children’s insights.

Any other highlights

Add inspiring quotes

### Activity B. Building the Government Pledge/ world leaders actions, priorities, & Responses.

If the children were the leaders of their country, what would they include in the pledge/ (commitments) to End Violence Against Children?
(Insert a 50–100-word statement)

Please record the recommendations that children have provided.

3 urgent actions include...

List 3 priority recommendations for government

Highlights

Add inspiring quotes.

List 3 Priority actions for world leaders

Highlights

Add inspiring quotes.

My Right to be Heard!

Share a snapshot of examples of how children feel their voices have been heard in relation to ending violence against children.

List the actions children believe -

Children

Leaders

Others

can take to end violence against children.

List the children’s top 3 priorities for their government/world leaders in relation to their right to be heard.

Highlights

Add inspiring quotes...

Safer Communities

Summary of the action’s children have taken to create safer communities and their suggestions for new ideas to create safe places for children on/offline.

Children's priority actions

Children’s priority suggestions for leaders to create safer communities for children including on/offline.
### Activity C. Question Generation!

**Questions for Leaders**

Please list here the diverse questions from children—(during the session create ways for these to be shared with the leaders and use them to inform your ongoing efforts to support the child’s right to be heard and planning related to ending violence against children).

A reminder to ensure all documentation captures children’s own voice/insights and not adults’ interpretation of what they think the children mean. Please take the time to understand children’s views.

In addition,

**Add a selection of inspiring quotes.**

A reminder, Include the quote, first name or pseudonym or boy / girl, country, and age for each quote.

**Insert additional inspiring quotes from the children.**

**Insert additional inspiring quotes from the leaders/ adult participants engaged in the NPS.** - ask for permission to use via the consent forms.

**Additional Comments, Lessons Learned or areas for follow-up?**

Please highlight any other general observations about the consultation that you think are important and have not been included above.

Please send to the co-chairs of the CSO Forum child and youth participation working group b.mepani@savethechildren.org.uk and e.nowotny@arigatouinternational.org by **31 July 2024**.

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i Children – girls, boys, and children with non-binary identities.

ii The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child General Comment No.12 (2009)