

# UN Human Rights Council 46: UK statement for the Annual Discussion on Rights of the Child

Thank you, Madam President,

We share your concern that COVID-19 has exacerbated existing inequalities among the most vulnerable; and resolve that the Sustainable Development Goals can help us build back better. But we cannot build back better without engaging children directly.

They are our future leaders, our policy-makers, our humanitarians – giving them a voice and the right environment to excel is a strong investment in our global future.

Mass school closures across the world due to the COVID-19 pandemic will have the biggest impact on girls' futures.

Girls are less likely to return to school, facing increased risks of child marriage, teenage pregnancy, gender-based violence, and loss of sexual and reproductive health services.

That is why the UK is putting girls' education at the heart of our G7 presidency to accelerate action, and this year we will be co-hosting the Financing Summit for the Global Partnership for Education with Kenya.

We have also provided 20 million pounds to UNICEF's global Covid-19 appeal, and 5 million pounds for Education Cannot Wait, supporting access to essential services for children, women and vulnerable populations.

Quality education is also critical for communities responding to emerging challenges such as climate change.

The UK has committed to delivering an inclusive and ambitious COP26, advancing gender equality within climate action and harnessing the voices, innovation and leadership of young and marginalised people.

We can only truly understand what is in children's best interests by listening.

What action should the international community take to ensure children's voices are heard and acted upon meaningfully?

Thank you.