

High-Level Segment on Statelessness
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UNICEF Statement
by
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Thank you Chairperson.

Across the globe girls and boys are particularly vulnerable and heavily impacted by statelessness. While it is difficult to accurately quantify the number of children impacted, previously it was estimated that children made up a third of the approximate 10 million stateless persons worldwide.

Recognizing this fundamental violation of a child's right to a nationality and the dire consequences that followed from this, UNICEF and UNHCR came together to bring attention to childhood statelessness, creating the UNICEF-UNHCR Coalition on Every Child's Right to a Nationality in 2017.

A child without any nationality can face a lifetime of discrimination. Statelessness profoundly affects the ability of children to access education and adequate healthcare, and to fulfill their ambitions and dreams for the future.

Preventing and ending childhood statelessness will ultimately also lead to better enjoyment of human rights by individuals and improved development outcomes for communities and States.

The Coalition aims to strengthen international co-operation to raise awareness and combat childhood statelessness by promoting the right of every child to a nationality. The Coalition seeks to engage in activities that will help to:

- Ensure no child is born stateless
- Eliminate laws and practices that deny children nationality on discriminatory grounds
- Remove gender discrimination from nationality laws
- Improve birth registration to prevent statelessness
- Encourage States to accede to the UN Statelessness Conventions

To date the Coalition is made up of 63 international organizations and civil society groups at the global, regional and national levels that are working towards the Coalition's goals.

Under the Coalition, UNICEF and UNHCR have established joint strategies in 20 countries to address childhood statelessness. As a result, in Albania it led to the adoption of amendments to the country's civil status law to remove barriers to birth registration, reducing the risk of statelessness—particularly for children of Albanian parents born outside the country, and for children of the Egyptian and Roma

communities. Work through the Coalition has also helped to promote dialogue between countries in Central Asia to improve birth registration and include safeguards to prevent childhood statelessness in nationality laws.

Building on these successes of the Coalition, UNICEF makes the following commitments:

Commitment 1

UNICEF commits to:

1. *Advocacy to remove gender discrimination in nationality laws and civil registration laws:* Such discrimination is one of the root causes of statelessness among children globally. Ending gender discrimination in nationality laws and civil registration laws will not only help not to eliminate childhood statelessness worldwide, but is critical to achieving gender equality, which benefits girls, boys, their families and their societies.

- In partnership with UNHCR and Coalition Partners and other UN Agencies, including UN Women, and UNFPA, strengthen advocacy at national and regional levels to encourage States to review and revise laws on nationality and civil registration and their implementation to ensure gender equality in line with international human and children's rights standards. Produce and publish global goods (including advocacy and briefing materials) in support of States' efforts to revise nationality laws and civil registration laws to include the promotion of gender equality in line with international human and children's rights standards.

Expected date of completion: 2024

Commitment 2

UNICEF commits to:

2. *Increased capacity on childhood statelessness:* With Coalition partners, support the production of global guidance and materials to strengthen capacity to address the issue of childhood statelessness at national, regional and global levels particularly amongst national governments and civil society stakeholders.

- Build the capacity of civil society actors and national governments in understanding and addressing childhood statelessness, through the development and roll-out of an advanced training on childhood statelessness in partnership with the Institute for Statelessness and Inclusion. Building on a pilot of the training to be held in South Africa this year in partnership with UNHCR and civil society stakeholders, UNICEF will expand the programme to two further regions where childhood statelessness is of concern before rolling out globally.
- Produce guidance (tools and guidance materials) to build capacity to engage with the United Nations human rights treaty-body system, particularly the Committee on the Rights of the Child and the Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families, on childhood statelessness.

Expected date of completion: 2021