

Asia-Pacific Regional Conference on Early Childhood Development (ECD)

Working across sectors to promote nurturing and sustainable environments for young children

HA NOI CALL TO ACTION

HA NOI, VIET NAM, 6 DECEMBER 2019

WE, the 600 participants from governments, civil society organisations, international organisations, donors, academia, and the private sector, participating in the 9th Asia-Pacific Regional Conference on Early Childhood Development (ECD) held in Ha Noi, Viet Nam on 4-6 December 2019;

RECOGNISING that the ability of young children to reach their full potential depends on the quality of the environments that surround them, particularly their homes, communities, and geographic locations as well as policies and programs that affect them;

CONCERNED that the environments that young children are exposed to in the Asia-Pacific region present pervasive risks encompassing, among others, environmental pollution and other hazards, natural- and human-induced disasters, conflicts, and migration;

INFORMED of the immediate and long-term impacts of climate change and environmental degradation on the region and the concerted action required across all sectors of government and society to anticipate, manage, and mitigate adverse consequences to young children, their families, and their communities;

AFFIRMING the importance of nurturing and sustainable environments in pursuing global, regional, national and local development aspirations and in influencing the scope and direction of early childhood development in the Asia-Pacific region;

PRIORITISING human capital investments, particularly for young children, to build the foundation of healthy societies and progressive economies in the region, in accordance with the objectives of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Sustainable Development Goals, and national development plans;

CALLING on the commitment and political will of governments and parliaments to work together to ensure the holistic development for young children and the capacity to mobilise all sectors of society to advance the nurturing care agenda for young children and their families; and

BUILDING national, regional, and inter-regional partnerships and mechanisms for promoting nurturing care, sharing good practices, and making governments and stakeholders more accountable for policies and results affecting young children:

HAVE RESOLVED TO WORK ACROSS ALL SECTORS WITH THE ENGAGEMENT OF FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES TO PROMOTE SAFE, NURTURING, SUSTAINABLE, AND RESILIENT ENVIRONMENTS FOR YOUNG CHILDREN THROUGH THE FOLLOWING AREAS OF ACTION:



On the policy environment

1. Put children at the centre of national and sub-national policies, human capital, and socio-economic development plans ensuring coherence and complementarity among all sectors, such as education, health, urban planning, social protection, and environmental security, in order to inspire sustainable futures that start with investing in young children today;
2. Ensure that young children are protected against abuse, injury, and all forms of child labour;
3. Explore ways to bring all relevant sectors together in the best interests of the child through national frameworks to improve cross-sectoral coordination, collaboration, and accountability; and
4. Provide adequate financial and technical resources to translate policies into actions, scale up effective programs, and institutionalise accountability mechanisms.



On the physical environment

5. From a child-centred perspective, create meaningful partnerships with all stakeholders, including research institutions and the private sector, in order to address environmental threats and advocate for appropriate actions to protect the wellbeing of young children;
6. Generate and use data to raise awareness of the impacts of air pollution and other conditions of climate change on the lives of young children and their families and communities, and implement effective measures to reduce the exposure of children to these environmental risks, inside and outside of the home; and
7. Bring children's voices to the forefront of the issues affecting them, including the climate and environmental crises, to accelerate the search for solutions.



On the community environment

8. Translate policies and evidence of the environmental risks to children's and their families' wellbeing into relevant and contextualised messages for action;
9. Apply these messages to raise awareness in the community about early childhood development policies and programs, including how to strengthen existing good community practices that promote nurturing care, including the power of play in building the resilience of young children; and
10. Map out how young children are affected by environmental issues and climate change and support local community action to protect them.



On the home environment

11. Increase parents' awareness about the impacts of environmental pollutants, including indoor and outdoor air pollution, on young children, pregnant women, and families and work with them to turn this knowledge into action;
12. Support changes in behaviour among families to provide holistic parenting education encompassing health care, nutrition, early stimulation, green habits, the importance of play, and the protection of children from the early years of their lives; and
13. Build family and community resilience and capacity to address short- and long-term impacts of the climate and environmental crises through the provision of nurturing care that promotes family wellbeing and protects children from toxic stress.

We will review the progress of the Call to Action and share the results of this review at the 2020 Asia-Pacific Regional Conference on Early Childhood Development.



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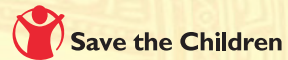
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