



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact Information:

Cheri Dahl

CDahl@ChildFund.org

804-937-6239

ChildFund Releases an Analysis of Biden-Harris Administration Commitments for Children and Youth During First Six Months in Office

Washington, D.C. (October 25, 2021) – Although the Biden-Harris administration has committed to addressing children’s and youth issues, [a recent ChildFund analysis](#) of its first six months, and of over 1,000 documents, revealed that the administration’s attention to children fails to match the scope of the challenges facing them. The president, vice president and White House publicly mention children and youth only about 15% of the time, in contexts almost evenly split between foreign and domestic policy. Globally, children and youth are facing increased violence, sexual abuse and exploitation, food insecurity, learning loss and/or the losses of primary caregivers due to COVID-19. Girls especially are suffering, with an estimated 10 million girls who would not have been married as children now estimated to be at risk.

Young people—those under the age of 25—make up more than 40% of the global population. One in six children lived in extreme poverty even before the pandemic. Experts estimate that a failure to address COVID-19’s impacts on their lives will set global progress back by 20 years.

It is imperative that donor governments like the United States use foreign assistance and foreign policy to ensure that children are healthy, safe and able to thrive. This year alone, millions of children will become orphans due to the virus, and four or more children die every minute due to COVID-19. While the health consequences of COVID-19 for young people might seem obvious, children and youth are also suffering secondary impacts from the virus. The already high pre-pandemic rates of extreme poverty for children are only expected to increase. This is on top of the estimated additional 10 million child marriages, the 9.3 million children who will experience the effects of malnutrition, and the almost \$30 billion in lost future productivity due to increased stunting and child mortality—all related to COVID-19’s secondary impacts. The unique needs and capabilities of different age groups were rarely if ever mentioned. In fact, adolescent girls were mentioned just three times in six months. Even on social media, which in recent years has become a powerful tool for communicating executive branch priorities, the president, vice president and White House failed to establish young people as a priority in foreign policy, with a mere four tweets from all three accounts combined.

“The early days of an administration are hard to measure in terms of substantive commitments and change,” said Erin Kennedy, the Senior Director for External Engagement at ChildFund. “While we were disappointed to find that the president and vice president aren’t talking more about children and youth—or with them—we are hopeful that this isn’t a trend for the administration. Given the many unprecedented challenges facing youth with this pandemic and the long-term consequences of inaction, we can’t afford for children not to be a priority in U.S. foreign policy.”

In addition to producing this [progress report](#) on the Biden-Harris administration’s commitments to children and youth, ChildFund has recently articulated a set of [five key recommendations for the administration and Congress](#) to ensure that the whole government is coordinating, communicating and working to address children’s needs from infancy through early adulthood to ensure that they are safe, healthy, supported and able to achieve their potential.

About ChildFund International

ChildFund International is a child-focused international development organization working throughout Asia, Africa and the Americas to connect children with what they need to grow up healthy, educated, skilled and safe, no matter where they are. We place a special emphasis on child protection across our approach because violence, exploitation, abuse and neglect can reverse developmental gains in an instant. Last year, we reached 13 million children and family members in 24 countries. About 200,000 Americans support our work by sponsoring individual children or investing in ChildFund programs. Find out more at www.ChildFund.org.