

Press Release

‘Investment in children’s development in early years is the foundation for sustained economic development’: RIS-UNICEF

Bhopal, 17 January 2023 India’s presidency of G20 is a unique opportunity to galvanise the change we all need—sustainable development for all, with special focus on children. This can happen only if every human is part of the technology and green-led economic growth and development in the spirit of: One Earth, One Family, One Future.

The two-day, Think 20 (T20) conference ‘Global Governance with LiFE, Values, and Wellbeing – Fostering cooperation in Framework, Finance and Technology’, was organized by Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS) with support from Atal Bihari Vajpayee Institute of Good Governance & Policy Analysis (AIGGPA), an autonomous institute of Government of Madhya Pradesh, Niti Aayog (MPNITI) and other partners. The conference brought together T20 task force members, academia, subject experts, policymakers, diplomats, UNICEF and other international organizations, the private sector, foundations and civil society.

Mr. George Laryea-Adjei, UNICEF Regional Director for South Asia and Professor Sachin Chaturvedi, Director General, Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS), Vice Chairman AIGGPA and Madhya Pradesh Rajya Niti Aayog addressed the media today post the T20 conference. In addition, other delegates on the dais were Ms. Elizabeth Sidiropoulis, Head, South African Institute of International Affairs; Dr Andre de Mello e Souza, Coordinator, International Exchange and Cooperation, Institute of Applied Economic research, Brazil; Mr. Debapriya Bhattacharya, Distinguished Fellow, Centre for Policy Dialogue, Bangladesh.

A joint RIS-UNICEF panel on ‘Investing in children: Investing in future’ with participation of several national and internal experts put forward policy recommendations for the G20 that focus on investing in child-centric policies that prioritize progressive universal child benefits especially around the early years, maternity benefits and childcare. Evidence shows that investing in the early years can boost cognitive capital to yield the highest and more inclusive economic growth.

Sharing the outcome of the two-day conference, RIS Director General, Professor Sachin Chaturvedi said, “There is a need for shift in the approach to development transformation that recognizes the role of women in development. Women entrepreneurship should be promoted, encouraged and revitalized. Investing in children has not received the priority and focus that it deserves and for this we have prioritized children specific issues in the T20 process to inform the wider G20 deliberations like nutrition and quality education. Let us invest in children today for humanity’s tomorrow.”

Speaking to the media, Mr. George Laryea-Adjei, UNICEF Regional Director for South Asia said, “The G20 vision of One Earth, One Family and One Future, should prioritize brain power or cognitive capacities of individuals and of nations. We know that investments in early childhood and adolescence, can be a powerful driver of inclusive economic growth. The world needs to advance cognitive development, which necessitates a new model for development. We know with India in the lead of G20, this new model will emerge.”

A joint RIS-UNICEF panel on ‘Investing in children: Investing in future’ with participation of several national and internal experts put forward policy recommendations for G20 that focus on:

- The importance of investing in the early years of childhood. Evidence shows that investing in the early years can boost cognitive capital to yield the highest and more inclusive economic growth.
- Investing in universal social protection benefits for children, including family friendly policies – particularly in the early years of childhood.
- There is a need to build adolescence skills including digital literacy to transition into the 21st century job market including technology-driven and green-led growth.
- Ensuring participation and action of youth in generating innovative solutions for climate change through LiFE.

About RIS

Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS), a core T20 member of the G20 process, is a New Delhi–based autonomous policy research institute that specialises in issues related to international economic development, trade, investment and technology. RIS is envisioned as a forum for fostering effective policy dialogue and capacity-building among developing countries on global and regional economic issues.

About UNICEF

UNICEF works in some of the world’s toughest places, to reach the world’s most disadvantaged children. Across more than 190 countries and territories, we work for every child, everywhere, to build a better world for everyone.

UNICEF India relies on the support and donations from businesses and individuals to sustain and expand health, nutrition, water and sanitation, education, social policy and social protection and child protection programmes for all girls and boys in India. Support us today to help every child survive and thrive.

For more information about UNICEF India and its work for children, visit www.unicef.org/india
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