

Every child counts.
Everywhere, all the time.

Alternative report presented by UNICEF France and its partners as part of France's hearing by the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child.

February 2015

Foreword

UNICEF, the United Nations Children's Fund, promotes the rights and wellbeing of every child in everything we do. We work throughout the world with our partners to turn this commitment into reality, making particular effort to reach the most vulnerable and marginalised, in the interests of all children, wherever they are.

Our field offices and the national committees of UNICEF, present in 190 countries and territories, play a central role in the periodic examination of the application by the States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

In January 2016, the experts of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child will organise a hearing with France, which ratified the Convention 25 years ago, and will seek to evaluate the progress made in light of the far-reaching recommendations that were addressed to the country following the previous hearing in May 2009.

France has filed its official report. In the same vein, UNICEF France and its partners are today presenting in this alternative report the elements of analysis that seem to us to be the most significant features of the situation of children and teenagers in our country, as well as the actions external to France that concern or affect this population.

“Our job is not to please people, nor to do them harm, it is to thrust our pens into wounds”. These words, borrowed from the ethics of journalism, could just as well define the role of advocacy, because it is as an attentive watchman and a tireless advocate for the rights of the child that UNICEF France is filing its report with the experts of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child.

The format of this report was decided by the nature of the exercise itself. It therefore deliberately highlights the grey areas in the application of the UNCRC and the challenges that France still has to meet in order to allow all children and teenagers to dispose of their basic rights.

Of course, it is still true that it is much better to be born and grow up in France than in many other countries in the world, because of the colossal resources our country devotes to children and the considerable efforts it makes to offer a satisfactory lifestyle to the largest number of children possible.

And yet, despite this, France is failing to achieve all the goals it was set with regards to childhood and young people, those who are the most affected by poverty, social exclusion and discrimination but also by that most challenging time of life, adolescence; It is these children and teenagers who pay the highest price.

This alternative report does not seek to promote key principles but rather to underline the challenges that seem to us to be the highest priority, so that the Committee of the Rights of the Child can guide France towards the path of equity, effectiveness and the necessary implementation of rights for all children.

Every child counts. Everywhere, all the time.

As I thank our partners for their expertise and the legitimacy they confer on this report, I call for the recommendations contained in it to be widely taken into account by the authorities so that France fully respects both the spirit and the letter of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Michèle Barzach
President of UNICEF France

Partners and supporters

Partner organisations



A Catholic foundation, declared of public utility and committed to the child welfare and prevention, **Apprentis d'Auteuil** develops welcome, education, training and rehabilitation programmes in France and abroad to give to young people and families in difficulty what they lack the most: confidence. In France, Apprentis d'Auteuil works directly with **27,000 young people** and families in more than **200 sites**. The young people are entrusted to the centre by their family or by the child welfare authorities. The foundation provides training in 80 professions in 19 sectors. Apprentis d'Auteuil has chosen to carry out its international work in partnership. It works in **more than 50 countries** alongside its **195 local partners**. Each year, **20,000 young people and families around the world** benefit from these programmes.

www.apprentis-auteuil.org



The Fédération Citoyens et Justice is a federation of social-legal associations, and today includes around **150 associations**. Within the framework of measures of justice, either pre- or post-sentencing, these general interest social services work with victims and offenders to provide support, investigate and mediate in conflicts, throughout France.

www.citoyens-justice.fr



Since 1948, the **CNAPE**, an association declared of public utility and authorised to receive donations and legacies, defends the cause of troubled childhoods, families in difficulty and vulnerable people. The CNAPE brings together more than **120 associations, 10 federations and movements, qualified people and a national association of users**. Each year more than **8,000 volunteers and 28,000 professionals** work with more than **250,000 children**, teenagers and adults in difficulty Upholding the secular principle, the members of CNAPE are committed to ensuring the respect of and defending the rights of the child, promoting the importance of education, the correct treatment of people in care and encouraging their wellbeing, and working for solidarity and mutual assistance for the most vulnerable populations. www.cnape.fr



Hors la Rue works with foreign juveniles in danger in order to facilitate and ensure their access to the law. Historically linked to Romania, today Hors la Rue works with young men and women of very varied backgrounds, all of whom live on the streets in Paris and the greater metropolitan region: young migrants who are unprotected and isolated, young European citizens living in slums in France, young people being exploited.

www.horslarue.org



The **Union Nationale des Associations Familiales** is the national institution in charge of promoting, defending and representing the interests of the 18 million families living in France. It has four legal duties: advising the authorities on questions relating to families and suggesting measures that are in line with the material and moral interests of families; officially representing all families with the authorities; managing the family services entrusted to it by the authorities; defending the material and moral interests of families, if they are in danger, by taking out civil actions in the courts. It manages a **national network** made up of 121 structures (the **UDAF present in each French department** and the **URAF in each region**) which employ more than 6,700 people. UNAF groups together **26 national federations** of member associations and **44 associated bodies**. The 6,886 associations who are members of UDAF have themselves **more than 700,000 member families**. UNAF official represents families in more than **125 national institutions**, companies and Working Groups. www.unaf.fr



UNAPEI is the leading federation of French associations representing and defending the interests of persons with mental disabilities and their families. Created in the 1960s, it brings together **550 associations of volunteers, parents and friends**, 300 of whom are the managers of establishments and services, and 70 tutor associations who work to ensure that all people with intellectual impairment find a care and support solution and are as integrated as possible into society. UNAPEI is also **3,100 medical-social establishments and departments; 80,000 professionals** employed in associations and establishments; **60,000 families who are members** of the affiliated associations and **180,000 people with disabilities receiving care**. www.unapei.org



Since 1947, UNIOPSS (*Union nationale interfédérale des œuvres et organismes privés non lucratifs sanitaires et sociaux*) unites, defends and promotes the non-profit making solidarity sector. It is the spokesperson to the authorities for the collective voice of health and social associations. **Present throughout the country via 23 Uriopss** (regional unions) and more **than 100 federations, unions and national associations**, Uniopss brings together more than **25,000 establishments and services** from the solidarity movement and **750,000 employees** (around 75% of the total in the sector). www.uniopss.asso.fr

Experts support

Olivier Peyroux is a sociologist. He has worked for more than 10 years on the topic of human trafficking and migration from Eastern Europe. Alongside his work with associations, he has carried out a number of consultancy assignments with national and international organisations (OSCE, EU, Foreign Ministry, etc.) He has also published many articles in scientific journals. He is a legal expert for the Courts in Nancy, eastern France, on human trafficking. In 2013, he published a book entitled « *Délinquants et Victimes, la traite des enfants d'Europe de l'Est en France* » [Delinquants and Victims, trafficking children from Eastern Europe in France]. He was awarded the Caritas – Institut de France prize for this research, which will soon be available in English. He has worked with a number of universities in Europe and the USA, notably to carry out research actions on these areas. <http://opeyroux.blogspot.fr/>, olivier.peyroux@gmail.com

The **Experts of the Children's Commission in France from UNICEF France** support the alternative report from UNICEF France and its partners within the framework of France's hearing by the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child: **Dominique ATTIAS** – Lawyer at the Paris bar, member of the children's rights section of the Rights Ombudsman, **Samia DARANI** – director of the childhood, youth and families section of UNIOPSS, **Michel FIZE** - Sociologist, researcher at the CNRS, specialist on questions relating to adolescence, youth and families, **Bruno JARRY** - Director of the CLAVIM at Issy-les-Moulineaux, **Claude ROMEO** – expert on child welfare and the rights of the child, **Muriel SALMONA** - Psychiatrist-Psychotherapist, President of 'Mémoire Traumatique et Victimologie'.

Contents

- p 5 ▶ List of main recommendations
- p 10 ▶ Standards of governance are not yet on a par with the challenges France faces or with its level of ambition
- p 14 ▶ Children are left permanently vulnerable by poverty.
- p 18 ▶ Children and teenagers still growing up marginalized in slums.
- p 22 ▶ Unaccompanied minors are still treated as foreigners rather than as teenagers in need of protection.
- p 27 ▶ One country, many practices. Disparity, inequality and discrimination in France.
- p 31 ▶ Child Protection: A system rather than a plan. France does not yet ensure that children are protected against all forms of violence.
- p 35 ▶ The juvenile justice system should not lose sight of its basic principles and needs to recapture its former status.
- p 38 ▶ Teenagers in France: widespread malaise.
- p 41 ▶ Education in France: A persistent equality gap divides children attending school, a real chasm to cross for many other children who do not yet have access to schooling.
- p 48 ▶ France's international development policy caught between high ambition and dwindling resources.

List of main recommendations

(According to the Committee on the Rights of the Child's Statements and Plan)

① Measures of general application

- ▶ Coordination, national strategy and plan of action, data collection, cooperation with civil society.

Recommendation no. 1

Establish and monitor over time sets of common indicators applying to all parties. These indicators should make it possible to carry out regular assessments of the situation relating to children and teenagers for all thematic areas with a view to facilitating decision making by public bodies.

Recommendation no. 2

Carry out rigorous budgetary monitoring of public policies affecting children and teenagers so that France is in a position to assess the efficiency of the measures it takes.

Recommendation no. 3

Coordinate measures taken by the State with the work of civil society as regards the application of the Convention on the Rights of the Child using the general observations of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child as a shared road map.

Recommendation no. 14

Ensure full deployment of the Commission for Regional Equality or *Commissariat Général à l'Égalité des Territoires* (CGET), its mission being to reduce inequality, ensure equal treatment of the regions and develop them for the benefit of their inhabitants. Allocate sufficient resources to the CGET to allow it to carry out its tasks, particularly as regards assessing the effectiveness of public policy in fragile regions.

- ▶ International Cooperation

Recommendation no. 34

Ring fence the official development assistance budget and aim to achieve the target of 0.7% of Gross Domestic Product established by law without neglecting voluntary contributions to the United Nations organisations, including UNICEF.

Recommendation no. 35

Make explicit reference to France's support for the rights of the child in development policy and all other diplomacy and/or peace-keeping work.

Recommendation no. 36

Put children and young people at the heart of the post-2015 and sustainable development goals agendas.

2 General principles

- ▶ Non-discrimination

Recommendation no. 8

Encourage families living in slums to settle and put down roots by ending the intermittent clearances of camps, strictly applying the inter-ministerial circular of August 2012 and providing access to standard social services which respect the rights of the child.

Recommendation no. 9

Disseminate communication campaigns aimed at the general public and teaching tools deconstructing stereotypes of children and families who live in slums. Penalize elected representatives who stigmatize or discriminate against people living in slums.

Recommendation no. 10

Resolutely apply for the resources allocated at European level to allow France to finally take the lead on integrating the Roma people on its territory with the support of the European Commission and the European Parliament.

Recommendation no. 15

Harmonize all provisions on the regions to guarantee equal access to standard legal protections such as those relating to mother and child welfare. If necessary, recast the provisions on the basis of objective social and area-based criteria as was done with the priority education zone reforms.

Recommendation no. 16

Facilitate and foster the establishment of child welfare services or competent, qualified child welfare officials on the island of Mayotte to offer a partial response to the clear distress of unaccompanied children and teenagers. Set up a standing conference for the rights of the child on the island of Mayotte and send a support mission as requested by the Ombudsperson.

3 Civil rights and freedoms

- ▶ Follow up to the United Nations study on violence against children: corporal punishment.

Recommendation no. 17

Assert the right of children to an education which is free of violence, including in their own home, by inserting a specific reference into the civil code. Develop educational tools and pathways aimed at parents and future parents to bring about lasting changes in their educational practices.

Recommendation no. 18

Widely disseminate public information campaigns to prevent sexual violence against minors and to inform potential perpetrators of the criminal penalties such violence incurs. Implement preventive measures in schools and educational 'third places'.

4 Family environment and alternative care

- ▶ Children deprived of a family environment.

Recommendation no. 19

Stop putting children in care to protect them from their parents' low income and the resulting living conditions and instead adopt an anti-poverty policy supporting parenting.

Recommendation no. 20

Support full application of the provision of the legislation reforming the child welfare system of 5th March, 2007 by local and regional councils, who are leading it, and by other parties. In the spirit of the new law, give preference to alternatives to placing children in care wherever possible and prioritize preventive measures such as legal assistance in the management of family budgets (known by its French acronym MJAGBF).

5 Health and well-being

- ▶ Standard of living

Recommendation no. 5

Set out the components of a national anti-poverty strategy focusing on children and the most vulnerable families based, in particular, on the good practices of local and regional authorities which deserve to be scaled up.

Recommendation no. 6

Launch measures aimed at 'invisible children' that will give them access to their basic rights and to standard services to re-establish equal treatment for French and foreign children in particular.

Recommendation no. 7

End the system of emergency accommodation and the rapidly increasing use of hotel rooms to house homeless families and introduce a housing policy that will allow children to grow up in stable family environments.

- ▶ Health of teenagers

Recommendation no. 24

Develop and roll out listening and prevention centres for teenagers and their families across the country.

Recommendation no. 25

Disseminate large-scale and more targeted suicide prevention campaigns aimed both at the general public and at children and adults. Promote the national freephone number for school and online bullying as bullying is an important factor in suicidal thoughts and teenage suicide attempts.

Recommendation no. 26

Carry out a specific National Suicide Observatory study on suicide amongst children and teenagers in order to better inform government decision-makers and other parties in this field.

- ▶ Disabled children.

Recommendation no. 27

Build links between the various systems caring for and supporting children with disabilities to make administration more flexible and journeys through the system smoother. Establish a right to early diagnosis and appropriate support. Recognize families' right to respite by implementing specific measures.

6 Education, leisure and cultural activities

- ▶ Education, including training and career guidance.

Recommendation no. 28

Ensure that all children in France have equal access to education, with particular attention given to children living in slums, unaccompanied minors and disabled children in accordance with French legislation currently in force and in fulfilment of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Recommendation no. 29

Allocate sufficient resources to the plan against early school leaving. Assess the plan regularly in detail and measure, in particular, its effect on youth NEET rates.

Recommendation no. 30

Include children's rights in school curricula so that every school year each child has the opportunity to study the principles and issues addressed by the Convention on the Rights of the Child and can apply them in school.

Recommendation no. 31

Train staff working in the national education system to become familiar with and to apply the Rights of the Child.

Recommendation no. 32

Encourage rewarding discovery-based teaching fostering pupils' involvement in their own learning and in school life.

Recommendation no. 33

Allocate the necessary resources to implement and monitor the Ministry of Education's strategy to bring schools into the digital age, particularly as regards updated studies relating to the media, information and responsible use of the internet and social networks.

7 Special protection measures

- ▶ Asylum-seeking, refugee and unaccompanied children: Sexual exploitation, sale, trafficking and abduction.

Recommendation no. 11

Adopt the good practice of other European countries so that France finally treats unaccompanied minors arriving in the country without discrimination, putting an end to the arguments between the State and local and regional authorities regarding responsibility for the care of teenagers deprived of the care of their families and apply the law of 5th March, 2007 reforming the child welfare system to the letter.

Recommendation no. 12

End definitively the use of bone tests and other purely physiological tests to determine the age of unaccompanied minors everywhere in France and adopt UN good practice in this field. In the final analysis, where there is doubt regarding the age of a teenager, that teenager should be given the benefit of the doubt.

Recommendation no. 13

Give practical effect to the provisions of the national plan to combat trafficking in human beings that relate to children. Allocate sufficient resources to the plan to address the problem of trafficking in human beings and carry out a regular evaluation of the implementation of the plan in cooperation with those working on the issue on the ground.

▶ Administration of juvenile justice

Recommendation no. 21

Do away with the system of juvenile criminal courts (*Tribunaux Correctionnels pour Mineurs* or TCMs), which runs counter to both the spirit and the letter of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Recommendation no. 22

Set a minimum age of criminal responsibility as required by the Convention on the Rights of the Child, fully respecting the general observations of the United Nations' Committee on the Rights of the Child.

Recommendation no. 23

Promote truly restorative justice by pro-actively supporting penal measures or other measures with educational aims and by allocating the necessary resources. Ensure effective and lasting support is available for teenagers leaving penal establishments with a view to fostering their reintegration into the community on the basis of personalized plans.

8 Ratification of international human rights instruments**Recommendation no. 4**

Ratify the third optional protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child unreservedly as soon as possible.

Standards of governance are not yet on a par with the challenges France faces or with its level of ambition.

- ▶ Since France's last hearing at the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, UNICEF has undertaken significant advocacy work in support of a national policy on children and teenagers along with an overall national strategy coordinating resources. Civil society and independent bodies regularly provide the authorities with high quality studies supporting new and better governance. Nevertheless, it is taking time and proving difficult for France to put in place new, cross-cutting ways of steering or regulating this issue based on open cooperation with civil society.
- ▶ The Committee on the Rights of the Child expressed its *'concern at the absence of a comprehensive national strategy for children and a related national plan for its implementation'*.

Five years on, it is unfortunately still the case that such a comprehensive strategy does not exist, that there is no real consolidated, well-organized government policy for children and teenagers or monitoring and evaluation mechanism for the comprehensive implementation of the plan of action.

The fact that there are so many participants involved, the complexity of the system and the silos that separate participants and bodies from one another make action less effective and lead to a lack of transparency and additional costs.

However, the multi-annual plan to combat poverty and to foster social inclusion adopted in January 2013 included the setting up of an office for general strategy and future planning, the *Commissariat Général à la Stratégie et à la Prospective* or CGSP and, within it, a committee responsible for setting out the possible measures and scope for a true national policy for children and teenagers.

This aspect of the multi-annual plan has been at the heart of UNICEF France's advocacy work since the last hearing at the Committee on the Rights of the Child in 2009. In February 2014, as it was presenting its conclusions, UNICEF France found that the CGSP's draft report did indeed set out the outline of a 'single national strategy for children and teenagers' and put forward many relevant proposals. However, it unfortunately has difficulty in identifying the basic components of a new governance structure with ambitious objectives. Whether the authorities will take ownership of this task remains to be seen.

- ▶ *The Committee on the Rights of the Child recommends that [France] ensures the promotion of the complementary role of the independent monitoring institutions [...]. The Committee encourages [France] to regularly consult [the Children's Ombudsperson and the CNDH].*

France has many independent courts, institutions and authorities which regularly publish reports, opinions and recommendations. For example, the Court of Auditors, the Rights Ombudsperson and the Children's Ombudsperson, the Inspector-General of Custodial Facilities, the National Consultative Commission for Human Rights and the Economic and Social Council regularly address issues linked to the application of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Unfortunately, however, the State does not take sufficient account of the numerous high-quality pieces of work issued by these bodies and courts. The proof of this is that the State's report generally does not refer to the work carried out in recent years or, when it does, does not explain how this work informed or influenced government decisions positively, with tangible, measurable results.

Over the last five years, the Court of Auditors has, in fact, published a series of reports, some of which were highly critical: 'Protecting Children', 'The National Education System and the Aim of Success for all Pupils', 'A Contribution to the Evaluation of Medical Care in Schools', 'Perinatal Care Policy: Remobilization is Urgently Needed', 'Urban Policy: A Decade of Reform', 'Reception of Children Under Three Years Old: An Ambitious Policy, More Targeted Priorities' and 'Organizing International Adoptions: Ongoing Reform'.

These reports should help to reorient public policy on children and teenagers. However, no mention is made of them in the State's report.

Mechanisms for monitoring the application of finance acts and public policy evaluation are, nonetheless, important tools for assessing the effectiveness and efficiency of public policy implementation.

Furthermore, under the child welfare reform law of 5th March, 2007, the government was required to present to parliament a report on measures adopted to give effect to the rights recognized in the Convention on the Rights of the Child every three years. Since the adoption of the law, no report has ever been presented by the government or requested by members of parliament.

- ▶ *The Committee on the Rights of the Child recommends that France **implements budgetary analysis and regularly conducts impact assessments for resources allocated to children's right to evaluate whether the allocation of budget is sufficient and adequate for the development of policies and the implementation of legislation.***

The State clearly indicates in its reports (section 68) the constraints it faces and provides only patchy data with no intention of remedying the situation in the future due to the complexity of the systems involved.

Nonetheless, by far and away the State's largest item of expenditure is the budget it allocates to the education system, which was 64.9 billion euros in 2014.

The State and local and regional authorities invest significant amounts whatever the field concerned but detailed monitoring would improve efficiency and ensure a better return on investment in these particularly straitened times.

- ▶ *The Committee on the Rights of the Child recommends that France **establishes a harmonized nationwide system to collect and analyse data, disaggregated on all areas covered by the Convention and its Optional Protocols.***

It is unfortunately the case that in 2014 French government statistics are still not able to produce comprehensive studies to inform public decision-making in a significant number of fields, such as child welfare, children with disabilities and children living in poverty.

Those involved in establishing and implementing public policy relating to children are systematically confronted with the recurrent difficulties posed by the lack of harmonized sources and figures, which create real blind spots.

Although there is now heightened awareness of this issue and measures are being taken to fight poverty and increase child welfare, the same cannot be said in other areas such as disabilities and migration.

It is not at all clear what specific measures might be taken to improve the statistical picture in order to evaluate progress on implementing children's rights, to help to develop comprehensive national policies for children and their families and to foster the promotion and application of the Convention and its Optional Protocols.

- ▶ *The Committee on the Rights of the Child recommends that France **strengthens active and systematic cooperation with civil society** both on the development of public policy and on the follow-up to the observations of the Committee and the preparation of the periodic report.*

Although the State at least partially subscribes to the process of consulting civil society bodies when developing public policy (the mobilization of civil society during the development of the multi-annual plan to combat poverty and foster social inclusion late in 2012 is one example), the same does not apply to following-up the final observations, which is done entirely at the State's discretion.

Furthermore, the periodic report is not written in consultation with civil society. For the fifth periodic report, all that was offered to members of the National Consultative Commission for Human Rights (CNCDH) was an opportunity to read through the draft official report and suggest changes a few days before it was to be filed.

On that occasion, it was only at a request from the Prime Minister that UNICEF France and a number of other NGOs were allowed to suggest a number of corrections, some of which were incorporated into the text.

This request confirms that there is increasing demand from the authorities for UNICEF France's recommendations and opinions. Such indications show that a 'partnership' is now well established.

- ▶ **Ratification of international human rights instruments.**

Third Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child

France signed the Third Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on 20th November 2014, which was the twenty-fifth anniversary of its adoption by the United Nations. UNICEF France welcomed the signature, which children's rights advocates had been awaiting for many months.

However, this is only the first stage. It will still be necessary to mobilize to ensure that Parliament authorises the President to ratify the Third Protocol without reservations as soon as possible.

1 Measures of general application

- ▶ Coordination, national strategy and plan of action, data collection, cooperation with civil society.

Recommendation no. 1

Establish and monitor over time sets of common indicators applying to all parties. These indicators should make it possible to carry out regular assessments of the situation relating to children and teenagers for all thematic areas with a view to facilitating decision making by public bodies.

Recommendation no. 2

Carry out rigorous budgetary monitoring of public policies affecting children and teenagers so that France is in a position to assess the efficiency of the measures it takes.

Recommendation no. 3

Coordinate measures taken by the State with the activity of civil society as regards the application of the Convention on the Rights of the Child using the general observations of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child as a shared road map.

8 Ratification of international human rights instruments

Recommendation no. 4

Ratify the third optional protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child unreservedly as soon as possible.

Children are left permanently vulnerable by poverty.

- ▶ Between 2008 and 2012, 440,000 more children and their families fell below the poverty line in France¹. Over three million children living below the poverty line, or one child in five, now have an insecure future ahead of them. Although indicators are not yet available to monitor the path of these children, we know that children have suffered the worst effects of the crisis, since poverty considerably holds back their development, makes them permanently vulnerable and puts their future at risk. Although the right to housing is enshrined in the constitution and has been enforceable since 2007, the State is failing here to the detriment of over 600,000 children, who are still growing up in unsuitable accommodation or even on the streets.
- ▶ *The Committee on the Rights of the Child recommends that France **adopt and implement legislation aimed at achieving the target of ending child poverty**, including by establishing measurable indicators for its achievement.*

'More and more young adults and children know only poverty both as their current condition and as their future. At a time when two out of three people who became poor between 2009 and 2010 were children under eighteen years old and over 140,000 young adults of under twenty-five years of age leave school with no qualifications every year, the government has a duty to adjust our solidarity policies in such a way as to prevent poverty becoming the heritage and the future of a growing proportion of French youth².'

UNICEF's studies and analyses also paint a dark picture of the situation. According to Innocenti Report Card 10 published by UNICEF in 2012, 10.1% of children are materially deprived. The last Innocenti report, entitled 'Children of the Recession' and published in Autumn 2014, showed a three point increase in child poverty rates (15.6% to 18.6%), or some 440,000 children between 2008 and 2012, putting France at the bottom of the ranking amongst the OECD countries.

Finally, the two successive national consultations³ carried out by UNICEF France amongst six to eighteen-year-olds in 2013 and 2014 point to a worrying phenomenon of cumulative inequality; the greater the material deprivation children experience, the more difficulties they have in their family environment, in their neighbourhood, at school and so on. According to this study, in 2013 17.7% of children and teenagers in France were insecurely or very insecurely integrated into society.

To add to the still-worrying picture as regards the number of children involved and the worsening trend, UNICEF France is also concerned about the issue of indicators.

There are insufficient indicators and they are not sufficiently reliable, lasting, monitored over time or harmonized to allow for a correct understanding of the issues involved in poverty. Furthermore, the few indicators that do exist are essentially based on a purely financial approach.

¹ UNICEF's Innocenti Report Card 12, 'Children of the Recession'.

² Government report on poverty in France, December 2012, p.3

³ The national consultation for children between six and eighteen years old, 'Let's Listen to What the Children Have to Say' was carried out in 2013, when it involved 22,500 children and teenagers living in France, and in 2014, when it involved 11,232.

The poverty line, which is calculated on the basis of average income, remains an imprecise indicator which gives no indication of how far children are from the line, of how long they remain in that situation or of the impact of poverty on their daily lives.

Simply measuring and commenting on poverty rates is too narrow an approach to give an understanding of the real multidimensional phenomenon which is poverty. The State's approach should be broadened to address the reality children experience in their family environment and their neighbourhood, schools and the health system.

The Innocenti Report Card 10 of 2012, entitled *Measuring Child Poverty*, offered a more innovative and much more precise approach by analysing the consequences of financial poverty in terms of the material privations that children experience (clothing, shoes, food, living space, books and so on). The same is true of the national consultation mentioned above.

In January, 2013, in the multi-annual plan to combat poverty and to foster social inclusion, the State, being aware of the lack of indicators, put on record the need to determine needs via observation and to mobilize available data in the following terms: *'Decision makers do not yet have at their disposal all the data and comparisons that would allow them to make fully informed decisions. Led by the National Observatory for Poverty and Social Exclusion (French acronym ONPES), the State must provide itself with the tools to gain a more detailed understanding of the target population and their needs⁴'*.

However, in June 2014, one and a half years after the adoption of the plan, the ONPES acknowledged that one of the thematic areas which had not been followed up due to 'lack of time' was the area of child poverty.

Between 2014 and 2017, ONPES should finish its scoreboard containing 'a breakdown suitable for describing the situation of children and young people under eighteen years old' to be disseminated annually. In UNICEF France's view, it will be high time.

The lack of comparative studies of children's experiences, which would provide a better understanding of children's situations and how they perceive them, and of analyses of children's pathways, should be underlined.

Despite strong political will and encouraging initiatives like the national conference to combat poverty and foster social inclusion and the setting up of the Commission for Children and Teenagers within the Office for General Strategy and Future Planning (CGSP), UNICEF France awaits the creation of effective monitoring tools that will bring a better understanding of child poverty and its impact on the children themselves.

- ▶ *The Committee on the Rights of the Child recommends that France **prioritize in legislation and in the follow-up actions, those children and their families in most need of support, including children from immigrant backgrounds.***

Current approaches do not take into account certain children who, as a result, are left out of public statistics entirely. We refer to invisible children who are not in the system: unaccompanied minors, migrant children, children living in slums and so on.

⁴ Multi-Annual Plan, p.48

Instead of giving them any kind of priority as regards support or monitoring measures, France discriminates against them, unjustly and unfairly treating them differently from other children both in mainland France and in the overseas territories and departments.

There are increasing numbers of children of single parent families in France and they belong to the ranks of fragile and vulnerable children. According to the K D'urgence foundation, in 2010, 41% of children under eighteen years old living in single parent families were living below the poverty line, as against 20% for the population as a whole.

According to the research centre for the study of living conditions *Credoc*, single parents were early victims of the crisis. The rate of unemployment is twice as high for women living alone than for those living with a partner and these families are still some of the poorest even after social payments are taken into account.

Once again the survey of six to eighteen-year-olds carried out by UNICEF France confirmed that 26.8% of the children surveyed who are considered to be deprived⁵ live with one of their parents. In some cases daily deprivation can be a source of suffering, particularly when the deprivation is cumulative and runs the risk of devaluing children and teenagers in the eyes of their social circle, thus weakening their social integration.

- ▶ *The Committee on the Rights of the Child recommends that France ensures **swift implementation of the enforceable right to housing (droit opposable au logement)**, including by allocating sufficient budgetary resources*

In its social portrait of France, published in November 2014, the French office for national statistics INSEE estimates that there are 112,000 homeless people in the country, of whom 31,000 are children. This figure rose by 44% for the whole of France between 2001 and 2012 but the rise for Paris was 84 % during the same period.

The rising percentage of families with children (almost 40 % of applicants in 2013) is worrying. The Paris branch of Samusocial accommodated 29,000 family members in its centre in 2013, whereas it accommodated only 4,000 in 2004.

According to the ENFAMS survey report on children and families with no home of their own in greater metropolitan Paris, published by the Paris Samusocial Observatory, between 35% and 40% of homeless people today are families and nearly a quarter of the homeless population are children.

To try and respond to this situation, the State is increasingly resorting to hotel accommodation and the number of such hotel stays has risen exponentially. The cost is estimated⁶ at 170 million euros per year in hotel accommodation at 17 euros per night per person for the Paris department alone, and 1.3 billion euros nationally. This solution incurs huge costs and does not meet the needs of families (for example, cooking is not possible in hostels, which means extra has to be paid to feed children elsewhere and this can also lead to nutritional insecurity).

⁵ Index based on seventeen items which cover and supplement the criteria used at European level for the EU-SILC 2009.

⁶ Article by [Isabelle Rey-Lefebvre](#), on line, in the Le Monde newspaper of 9th December 2014.

According to the report on poor housing conditions in France published by the Abbé Pierre Foundation⁷ in 2014, 3.8 million households comprising 8 million people experience energy insecurity; 1,735,000 households are on a waiting list having applied for social housing, 3.5 million people are homeless or living in very substandard housing⁸, 8 million people live in poor housing or are vulnerable in France.

Yet France adopted the ‘Dalo’ law (an enforceable right to housing) on 5th March, 2007, with the aim of improving access to social housing.

According to data from the ‘info-dalo’ monitoring software package, 84,500 appeals regarding housing or accommodation were lodged in 2012, or 372,000 appeals from 2008 to 2012. Mediation panels are increasingly active having handed down 84,200 decisions in 2012. The majority of these decisions (53%) were rejections. Only 38% of decisions went in the applicant’s favour. When a decision in the applicant’s favour is handed down, the State is required to rehouse them. According to the latest data available (30th June, 2012), 27,500 households in greater metropolitan Paris had still not been rehoused after the legal deadline. The figure for the rest of France was 5,000.

5 Health and well-being

▶ Standard of living

Recommendation no. 5

Set out components of a national anti-poverty strategy focusing on children and the most vulnerable families based, in particular, on the good practices of local and regional authorities which deserve to be scaled up.

Recommendation no. 6

Launch measures aimed at ‘invisible children’ that will give them access to their basic rights and to standard services to reestablish equal treatment for French and foreign children in particular.

Recommendation no. 7

End the system of emergency accommodation and the rapidly increasing use of hotel rooms to house homeless families and introduce a housing policy that will allow children to grow up in stable family environments.

⁷ L’Etat du mal-logement en France, Fondation Abbé Pierre, 2014, p.283

⁸ L’Etat du mal-logement en France, Fondation Abbé Pierre, 2014, p.285

Children and teenagers still growing up marginalized in slums.

- ▶ Too many children and teenagers live in slums in France. Their situation is particularly worrying. Their access to their most fundamental rights is far from being guaranteed. Despite numerous initiatives, particularly from civil society, there is still no coordinated response to guarantee minimum welfare, lasting access to schooling and to health care for these children. They are amongst the most vulnerable in France.
- ▶ *The Committee on the Rights of the Child urges France to continue its efforts to **eliminate regional disparities and to take measures to prevent and combat persistent discrimination against and stigmatisation of foreign children and children belonging to minority groups**, and create a climate of social progress, justice and equality.*
- ▶ *The Committee on the Rights of the Child further urges France to take all necessary measures to **ensure that cases of discrimination against children in all sectors of society are effectively addressed.***

Protection against all forms of discrimination begins with guaranteeing decent living conditions and access to economic and social rights.

According to a survey of the current state of affairs carried out at the end of 2013 by the Inter-Ministerial Delegation for Accommodation and Access to Housing (French acronym DIHAL), around 17,000 people live in nearly 400 slums in France. The number of children who live in slums may be around 8,000 to 10,000, according to sociologist Olivier Peyroux and the associations which work with these groups of people.

UN-Habitat defines a slum as *'a very heavily populated urban area characterized by sub-standard housing and squalor'*. It is characterized by five features: inadequate access to drinking water, inadequate access to sanitation and other infrastructure, the poor quality of the housing, overcrowding, and insecure residency status.

Furthermore, UNICEF's advocacy regularly highlights the fact that living in insecure surroundings makes children and teenagers more vulnerable to trafficking networks.

The number of people living in slums has remained unchanged and migration flows have continued since 2005. Contrary to a common assertion and against all odds, Olivier Peyroux confirms that former slum residents do gradually become integrated locally and are replaced by new arrivals.

Slum dwellers are often referred to as 'Roma'. In some cases they are indeed Roma or of Roma origin, but in many other cases these children are minors from Eastern Europe more generally. Like other associations working with children and families, UNICEF France chooses to use the expression 'slum children'.

In fact semantics plays a key role in fighting discrimination and it is vital not to use such pejorative, vague and discriminatory expressions in order to deconstruct perceptions and prejudices.

According to the French Human Rights League's January 2014 report, over 21,537 people living in 187 camps were forcibly removed in 2013, more than double the figure for 2012. The figure is also higher than the total population of slum residents in France, which means that families have been through several forced evictions in the course of a single year.

These successive removals have many effects: obvious instability and permanent insecurity, fear of expulsion and that the child will not find its family there when it goes home in the evening, violent scenes linked to the wilful destruction of living spaces, gaps in the social work undertaken by charitable organisations, loss of administrative documents, etc. The removals have grave traumatic psychological effects and seriously affect children's schooling and life chances.

Slum children have very limited access to health care. Amnesty International's September 2013 report ('Condemned to Wander: The Forcible Expulsions of the Roma in France') stresses that successive removals only make monitoring children's health more difficult. Preventive work and medical care is abruptly interrupted every time there is an eviction. In addition to the destruction of documents required to gain access to health care, the movements of families following expulsions take them away from the health centres they had been attending. This means that they have to go through the administrative procedures once again on arrival in a new area.

In July 2011, the NGO Médecins du Monde published a survey report which focused on slum dwellers' vaccination coverage. The survey was carried out on 281 respondents in four towns and showed that only 38.5% of them had an up-to-date medical card and just 25% had their vaccines up to date. This explains the re-emergence of diseases like tuberculosis, rubella, etc.

In response to the worrying evidence regarding recognition of children's rights, the inter-ministerial circular of August 2012 attempted to put forward a framework and monitoring procedure for camp clearances.

The text set out *'the carrying out of individual analysis of the groups present on the site prior to clearance of the living space and the development of alternative solutions with priority given to the ordinary rules'*. UNICEF France notes with interest that, for the first time, an inter-ministerial approach was chosen and, though its legal status is relatively weak, the circular nevertheless shows that there is real political will. However, the title of the circular emphasizes the expulsion aspect and does not enshrine the preventive, support-based approach to these groups that the various actors would like to see.

Although, under the multi-annual plan to combat poverty and foster social inclusion of January 2013, the DIHAL had a budget of four million euros to put in place the diagnostic tools whereby each family was supposed to be offered an integration package, more often than not accommodation available via the 115 phone number (Samusocial) was used. This accommodation is already over-subscribed and is very often inappropriate for these families.

The default option for these families is to prefer to stay on the outskirts of Paris and, unfortunately, to sleep in the streets with all the especially high attendant risks for children and the growth in trafficking in slum accommodation.

In 2013, the 'Les Morts de la Rue' association had recorded the deaths of fifteen children under fifteen on the streets of France. This is a large increase on the figure for 2012, which is unfortunately linked to the increase in the number of families being accommodated by Samusocial or living in slums. Ten of these children belonged to the Roma community.

In the experience of the various civil society actors, diagnostic tools too rarely lead to the satisfactory proposal and implementation of integration packages. In reality, people are continuously moved on and fragile social support and access to health care are systematically undermined.

Yet this situation has been criticized several times. In a public statement in August 2013, the National Consultative Commission for Human Rights (CNCDH) set out a series of recommendations to fight stereotypes, end evictions without alternatives offered and so on. It also took the opportunity to remind the government of its duty to guarantee access to education, care and health care.

In September 2010 and 2013, the European Commission's Commissioner for Justice, Fundamental Rights and Citizenship questioned France's actions and went so far as to threaten to begin infringement proceedings against the country for its treatment of the Roma population. She then recalled that over the last seven years the European Union has made fifty billion euros available to member states to help with the integration of disadvantaged people, including the Roma. France alone had four billion euros at its disposal: *'We put money on the table. It could be used by Mayors and I see that it does not get used'* the Commissioner for Justice complained, lamenting the absence of an 'integration plan'.

In 2010, the European Parliament declared that it was *'very concerned about the measures taken by the French authorities as well as by other Member State authorities against the Roma and travellers envisaging their expulsion [and urged] them to immediately suspend all expulsions of Roma'*.

The Parliament felt that measures to remove the Roma *'constituted discrimination on the basis of race and ethnicity'* and expressed its deep concern about *'the provocative and openly discriminatory rhetoric used in political discourse during the operations to send the Roma back home'* in France.

An international UNICEF report published in April 2014 called on European governments to put children firmly at the heart of integration policy for the Roma population. UNICEF wants to mobilize European States on the challenges of malnutrition, access to health and education, parenting support measures and improving families' standards of living.

Far from fostering integration or inclusion of children, French policy towards slum dwellers in France reinforces discrimination against them while their children have the least access to fundamental rights.

② General principles

- ▶ Non discrimination

Recommendation no. 8

Encourage families living in slums to settle and put down roots by ending the intermittent clearances of camps, strictly applying the inter-ministerial circular of August 2012 and providing access to standard social services which respect the rights of the child.

Recommendation no. 9

Disseminate communication campaigns aimed at the general public and teaching tools deconstructing stereotypes of children and families who live in slums. Penalize elected representatives who stigmatize or discriminate against people living in slums.

Recommendation no. 10

Resolutely apply for the resources allocated at European level to allow France to finally take the lead on integrating the Roma people on its territory with the support of the European Commission and the European Parliament.

Unaccompanied minors are still treated as foreigners rather than as teenagers in need of protection.

- ▶ Unaccompanied foreign minors (UFMs) are above all children and teenagers who are alone in France, temporarily or permanently deprived of the protection of their family. There are believed to be between 8,000 and 10,000 UFMs in France (although nobody knows precisely how many there are) and their situation is worrying for a number of reasons, because they are among the most vulnerable populations. The preamble of the law of 5 March 2007 reforming the child welfare system states that child welfare also seeks to relieve the difficulties that could be faced by UFMs and ensure they were taken care of. Despite the efforts of the French authorities, it is obvious that access to services is strewn with obstacles for these teenagers, who are still too often left in the hands of people-trafficking networks.
- ▶ *The Committee on the Rights of the Child also expresses concern at the lack of a systematic inclusion of unaccompanied minors into systems of social services, education [...] as well as the absence of a clear legal status for unaccompanied children admitted on [France's] territory.*

As the National Consultative Commission for Human Rights (CNCDH) recalled in its public statement in June 2014, the notion of 'unaccompanied' should be enough to demonstrate the vulnerability of the UFM and thus organise protective care.

Foreign children, whether unaccompanied or not, have the same right to protection as all other children. What should be an automatic response, as these measures are enshrined in law, is too often questioned by certain local councils (*Conseil General*) which do not respect their obligations.

In 2011, a veritable battle between the French national authorities and the local councils developed.

A succession of local councils decided to unilaterally suspend provision of services to UFM, publishing decrees to this end. As the CNCDH observed in its statement in June 2014 *"the greater interest of the child has henceforth been undermined by this institutional ping-pong between the State and the councils."*

The tensions between the local councils, in charge of child protection and the State which is responsible for managing migratory flows, has existed for a long time, to the detriment of the UFM who are the first to be concerned and impacted.

In May 2013 and in response to this situation, the Minister of Justice took the initiative, issuing a circular defining a protocol establishing a national system of shelter, assessment and guidance, in order to facilitate an equitable distribution of the services provided to UFM across mainland France.

Although this is an encouraging sign, as it potentially signals a new commitment from the State with regards to service for UFM, a number of questions rapidly emerged and have yet to be resolved.

The unclear role of the Children's Judge in the system, the uneven respect by local councils of decisions redistributing UFM geographically and the fact that the opinions of unaccompanied teenagers are not taken into account are all elements which mean the system should be revised.

As the CNCDH observes in its statement, "it should be noted that a simple circular alone cannot resolve the substantial problems facing both UFM and the structures that provide them with assistance. It is therefore urgent for the authorities to commit to a widescale policy that takes a non-segmented approach to the issues". Furthermore, the CNCDH demands that "UFM 'truly' benefit from all the rights to which any child in France is entitled, rights which are not theoretical and illusory but concrete and effective."

In addition, the report, written by three general inspectors of social affairs, the judicial services and the authorities and published in December 2014, confirms many of the concerns raised by associations working in the field and independent institutions.

The difficulties in taking legal action, the fact that the greater interest of the child is not taken into account, and the absence of a clear legal framework for the evaluation and sustainability of the system are just some of the questions that remain unanswered today. During this time, and at a period where the issue of migration is generating tension in the political debate, hundreds of teenagers are living in the streets.

- ▶ *Taking into account the General Comment No. 6 of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on the treatment of **unaccompanied and separated children outside their country of origin**, the Committee urges [France] take all necessary measures to enable the **decision of placement in waiting zones to be challenged** and ensure the access and availability of **adequate psychological assistance** to unaccompanied children and to children within the waiting zones and **protect them from exploitation**, in particular through strict surveillance of access to these zones.*

Around 500 children and teenagers are believed to be detained in holding centres each year, according to the report "Lost in holding centres" published by Human Rights Watch (HRW) in 2009. These young people do not have access to a regular procedure in contrast with young people present on French soil.

In fact, because they are kept in a holding centre they are not considered to be present on French soil, which is the perfect illustration of a situation of discrimination. In addition to depriving them of their liberty, which must remain a measure of last resort, there is a risk that their request for asylum will be given only perfunctory attention, and they are sometimes detained with adults.

And yet, the French Appeal Court established in 2009 that a child detained in a holding centre was in fact in France. The French authorities do not seem to take this decision into account, and continue to pursue a discriminatory policy.

In addition, Human Rights Watch recognises that "*France has, with the support of the European Union, built a minors centre within the holding centre at Roissy Charles de Gaulle airport, but it is too small for all the unaccompanied foreign minors. On at least one occasion in 2013, more than half the minors detained were held with adults.*"

- ▶ *The Committee on the Rights of the Child urges France to **systematically appoint** an ad hoc administrator as required by its domestic law.*

Appointed by a judge, the ad hoc administrator is charged with representing the minor child, protecting his or her interests and exercising in his or her name the rights granted to applications, in place of legal representatives.

It should be noted that at the time of writing access to an ad hoc administrator, a fundamental support for unaccompanied minors, is far from being automatic. Most are volunteers and their number, their geographical distribution and, above all, the training they receive has not been enough to meet the growing needs of recent years.

What is more, ad hoc administrators have very limited resources for providing assistance to children facing complex procedures, particularly in determining their age when doubt arises. Certain minors receive no assistance, particularly in the holding centres of Marseille and Lyon according to the HRW report.

An advocacy event co-organised by UNICEF France in September 2012, on the subject of foreign unaccompanied minor asylum seekers, highlighted a comparative European study. At the end of this event, three key recommendations emerged: The need for the systematic appointment of a legal representative or tutor for the duration of the procedure; the assurance that the tutor had received specific training and was independent; and lastly *“the need to listen to the child with regards to his legal representative and to put in place an evaluation of it.”*

These recommendations illustrate the scale of the work that remains to be achieved throughout the country.

- ▶ *The Committee on the Rights of the Child reiterates its previous recommendation and **urges France to introduce recent methods of age determination** which have been proven to be more accurate than the determination by bone test currently in use.*

According to the opinion of the National Consultative Commission for Human Rights (CNCDH) of June 2014, *“bone tests continue to be systematically ordered by many courts, even when the unaccompanied foreign minors are in possession of a birth certificate or identity papers.”*

Despite the substantial advocacy work carried out by associations in the field and independent institutions for many years, supported by the expert assessment of the National Ethics Consultative Committee, the National Academy for Medicine and the High Council on Public Health, in a note that was revised in January 2014, bone tests remained the authorities’ preferred measure for deciding the fate of these newly-arrived teenagers, despite their great unreliability and lack of precision.

In addition to being a totally unsuitable method, subjecting isolated and vulnerable teenagers to bone tests or other solely physical tests, without explanation, remains a traumatising experience. Furthermore, these young people often submit to these tests without having given their consent and without support. To once again condemn this situation, UNICEF France joined the collective appeal initiated by Réseau Education Sans Frontières (RESF) to condemn these practices, in January 2015.

- ▶ The Committee on the Rights of the Child **recommends that [France] adopt further measures to combat trafficking of children for sexual and other exploitative purposes...**

For the purposes of the Additional Protocol to the United National Convention against Organised Crime, which seeks to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons, especially women and children (the Palermo Protocol), Article 3 designates the expression of “trafficking in persons” (TIP) as meaning *“the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.”*

It is clear that the problem of the trafficking of children requires a greater commitment from the French authorities. From a simple accountancy perspective alone, there are no reliable data available which would at least help in drawing up a real public policy on protection against TIP.

In January 2013, the report published by GRETA (the expert group on the fight against trafficking in persons) examining the application of the Convention of the Council of Europe on the fight against human trafficking (entered into force in February 2008), confirmed these failings.

The lack of statistics actually masks the scale of the phenomenon and does not encourage the development of suitable policies, according to the sociologist Olivier Peyroux, one of the leading experts in this field.

Despite the lack of transposition into French law within the due timeframe, EU Directive 2011-36 from the European Parliament can now be invoked and is applicable in French law. This Directive places the emphasis on the protection of victims, particularly regarding the trafficking of minors, which is not always effective in France. To date, no mechanism for the protection of minors exists at local level, there are no education personnel trained in the question nor are there any specialised structures for urgent situations or those where greater protection is required.

EU Directive 2011-36 also gives very clear indications about victims who are forced to commit crimes. Very clearly, from the moment where the suspicion of trafficking exists, the minor cannot be prosecuted for the crimes that he or she may have committed. They must immediately be placed under full protection which, as the GRETA report underlines, is not the case in France.

And still today in France, the lack of a mechanism for identifying the victims of TIP and of a “victim status”, as well as serious gaps in the training of the professionals in charge, means that the welfare system is unable to operate correctly and unfortunately, the preference is for repressive responses.

A national action plan against people trafficking was finally presented in May 2014 by the French government.

Mention should be made of the strong political will that was expressed to make the fight against TIP *“a public policy in its own right”*.

However, uncertainties persist concerning consideration of the specific issues of minors, even while the national action plan highlights the fact that minors represent an ever-increasing proportion in the situations of TIP in France and in Europe, resulting in "invisible" teenagers living in some of the most extreme situations of vulnerability. The opinion of many experts working for organisation in the field is that adult victims of TIP are better protected than children today.

Another subject of concern for UNICEF France is that the timetable for implementing the national plan has not been specified, more than eight months after it was adopted, and no indication of budget has been given with regards to the future resources allocated to the measures announced.

The seriousness of the situation identified by experts in the field in recent years, and confirmed by the government's initiative, means that the legislation must now enshrine these measures, which must be transposed into action as soon as possible.

7 Special protection measures

- ▶ Asylum-seeking, refugee and unaccompanied children: Sexual exploitation, sale, trafficking and abduction.

Recommendation no. 11

Adopt the good practice of other European countries so that France finally treats unaccompanied minors arriving in the country without discrimination, putting an end to the arguments between the State and local and regional authorities regarding responsibility for the care of teenagers deprived of the care of their families and apply the law of 5th March, 2007 reforming the child welfare system to the letter.

Recommendation no. 12

End definitively the use of bone tests and other purely physiological tests to determine the age of unaccompanied minors everywhere in France and adopt UN good practice in this field. In the final analysis, where there is doubt regarding the age of a teenager, that teenager should be given the benefit of the doubt.

Recommendation no. 13

Give practical effect to the provisions of the national plan to combat trafficking in human beings that relate to children. Allocate sufficient resources to the plan to address the problem of trafficking in human beings and carry out a regular evaluation of the implementation of the plan in cooperation with those working on the issue on the ground.

One nation, many practices. Disparity, inequality and discrimination in France.

- ▶ Decentralisation has accentuated inequalities between children living in mainland France as well as its overseas departments and territories; it has created sizeable disparities, incompatible with the full respect of access to fundamental rights for all children, French or foreign, accompanied or living with their family.
- ▶ *The Committee on the Rights of the Child **urges France to establish a body for overall coordination of the implementation of the Convention and its two Optional Protocols between the national and the departmental levels, including the Overseas Territories and Departments, with a view to **decreasing and eliminating any possibility of disparity or discrimination** [...]***

Through a lengthy process France, which was a very centralised unitary state, is becoming progressively more deconcentrated and decentralised. Decentralisation is enshrined in Article 1 of the Constitution, which states that "*the organisation [of the French Republic] is decentralised*".

In this movement to reorganise the functional and territorial structure, the unitary state has thus transferred certain responsibilities. The local and regional authorities enjoy a legal personality and status, have their own resources and areas of competency and thus a certain local autonomy. They exercise their responsibilities within the respect of the law and under the supervision of the state.

Unfortunately, the decentralisation measures taken since the 1980s have often been synonymous with important disparities and have demonstrated a lack of equity towards children, who are sometimes painfully confronted with this reality in their daily lives.

In the area of child protection, the Secretary of State for the Family declared in December 2014⁹ that the State remained the guarantor of the welfare of minors and that "*its role is to give meaning to public policy on child welfare, to provide the framework needed for initiatives to succeed and local characteristics to be respected, whilst ensuring that every child, anywhere in France, receives the same quality of public service and has the same attention paid to the difficulties that he or she is experiencing. Because, we all know that a number of disparities exist: Certain areas of France have focused on maintaining family links, others prefer to remove children from their families... Depending on which side of a French department you live in, your destiny can be totally altered!*"

Indeed, the Law of 5 March 2007 reforming child welfare confirmed the position of local councils as the lead party in Child Welfare. However budgets vary according to the resources of the local councils. The historical, demographic and economic reality of the different regions cannot be overlooked and this situation generates disparities in the way children and families are treated.

⁹ Speech by Madame Laurence Rossignol during the debate on the draft bill proposed by Madame Michèle Meunier in the Senate.

For example, the decision to place a child with a foster family can sometimes mean splitting up siblings; in certain French departments, the child has the possibility of seeing his or her parents, whereas in other departments where child welfare professionals are less well trained, these measures are very limited.

It is to be hoped that all children who are subject to welfare measures would at least receive the same protection irrespective of where they live in France. But this is not the case today.

Maternal and child welfare (PMI) sectors and school health services are not enough to ensure a uniform level of support and welfare for children and their parents throughout France.

Despite the commitment shown by lawmakers in 2007 (a consultation at the 4th month of pregnancy, child monitoring visits at 3, 6, 9 and 12 years) the PMI and school health services are areas that have been decimated. Associations have observed that medical examinations in school are not carried out as they should be.

In the area of justice for minors, one of the general difficulties results from the distribution of duties between the State and the local authorities (both departmental and regional). There are actions that cannot be carried out at present due to the lack of clarity regarding the distribution of responsibilities at each level.

In theory, there exists a national policy for the legal protection of young people (PJJ) with a presence in nine regions, but there are very wide disparities between the national level and the application throughout the country. The “community service” measure (*réparation pénale*) is a prime example. In France as a whole, little use is made of it. The lack of coordination between the national and regional levels results in an absence of equity for teenagers who would be entitled to benefit from it.

Let us take two regions as an illustration. In greater metropolitan Paris first: In Seine-Saint-Denis, 800 such measures are applied each year; in Val-d’Oise, 300 measures each year, and in Paris 200 measures each year. This contrasts with Provence Alpes Côte d’Azur region, where no “community service” orders were given. Why does this difference exist? It is simply a result of the belief of the magistrates in the usefulness and appropriateness of the community service measure.

In the education sector, other types of geographical inequality can be seen: Children living in ‘sensitive urban areas’ (French acronym ZUS) are particularly affected by poverty but also by a strong feeling of insecurity that they expressed during the second edition of the National Consultation of 6 – 18 years olds by UNICEF France in 2014. According to the ZUS National Observatory (ONZUS), “the poverty level is three times higher in ZUS than outside of ZUS¹⁰” The poverty in these areas particularly affects young people.

“Half of under-18s living in ZUS live below the poverty line.” In addition to the fact that this perpetuates a very strong feeling of discrimination, this reality generates problems in terms of the education of these pupils.

“At the start of the 2011-2012 school year, around 400,000 secondary school pupils [middle & high school] lived in ZUS. As an illustration of the difficulties experienced by these districts, of the 227,000 middle school pupils, the majority (62.4%) were schooled in a priority education establishment (établissement de l’éducation prioritaire.)”

¹⁰ Report by ONZUS 2013.

- *The Committee on the Rights of the Child urges France to ensure full protection against discrimination in the field of economic and social rights and on the grounds of race, origin, colour, name, ethnic or social origin, name or other grounds. It urges France to continue its efforts to eliminate regional disparities ...*

Geographical and socio-economic disparities accentuate the inequalities between French children in mainland France and the overseas departments and territories. Situations of poverty, which have unfortunately been well-known for a long time, are particularly exacerbated.

The question has taken on particular significance in France since Mayotte became a department (the 101st French department) in March 2011.

In Spring 2013, the Children's Ombudsperson took a firm position and once again drew the attention of authorities to the "*particularly alarming situation reserved for minors present on Mayottan territory, and notably foreign minors*".

According to a report¹¹ by the Children's Ombudsperson and as an example, just as regards the protection of children's rights in Mayotte: "*The resources allocated by the child welfare department are...very inadequate with regards to the actions that need to be carried out. The ASE budget (child welfare) budget is around 2% compared with 55% to 60% for the other overseas departments.*" And "*In mainland France, ASE spending is the third largest line in the social welfare budget at €102 euros/ inhabitant. In Mayotte, with a similar ratio for its 212, 645 inhabitants, the budget should be €21M, whereas in fact it stands at €1.8M (non-stabilised figure).*"

In February 2014, the senator for Mayotte explained during a parliamentary debate that there existed no dedicated child protection structure able to provide a place of safety for children in extreme circumstances and "*the only children's home on the island, which only counts seven beds, is dedicated to delinquent children.*"

The Ombudsperson suggested that "*a standing conference on children's rights be established on the island of Mayotte, bringing together all the public and non-governmental parties*" and "*that a support mission be initiated, for a fixed duration and made up of qualified public employees, to implement these objectives.*"

In February 2015, UNICEF France and its partners see no progress on this subject.

There are certainly plenty of challenges, but even so the abnormal situation of children in Mayotte cannot persist in a climate of inertia and indifference.

¹¹ Report on the "Protecting the Rights of the Child" Mission to Mayotte by Yvette Mathieu, March 2013.

① Measures of general application

▶ Coordination

Recommendation no. 14

Ensure full deployment of the Commission for Regional Equality or *Commissariat Général à l'Égalité des Territoires* (CGET), its mission being to reduce inequality, ensure equal treatment of the regions and develop them for the benefit of their inhabitants. Allocate sufficient resources to the CGET to allow it to carry out its tasks, particularly as regards assessing the effectiveness of public policy in fragile regions.

② General principles

▶ Non-discrimination

Recommendation no. 15

Harmonize all provisions on the regions to guarantee equal access to standard legal protections such as those relating to mother and child welfare. If necessary, recast the provisions on the basis of objective social and area-based criteria as was done with the priority education zone reforms.

Recommendation no. 16

Facilitate and foster the establishment of child welfare services or competent, qualified child welfare officials on the island of Mayotte to offer a partial response to the clear distress of unaccompanied children and teenagers. Set up a standing conference for the rights of the child on the island of Mayotte and send a support mission as requested by the Ombudsperson.

Protection of children: A system rather than a plan. France does not yet ensure that children are protected from all forms of violence.

- ▶ The right to protection is a fundamental right of children and is the primary duty of the adults around them. Ensuring the protection of children from all forms of violence is also an inherent responsibility of the authorities. It is a duty of the State that goes beyond the work of the regional Child Welfare teams and the general child welfare system, and one which still struggles to provide all the children in France, and particularly the most vulnerable members of this group, with protection from the violence, attacks, brutality, negligence, mistreatment and exploitation which continue to threaten them all too often today.
- ▶ *The Committee on the Rights of the Child recommends that France ensures that **every child is protected from all forms of physical, sexual and psychological violence to prevent and respond to such violence and abuse** [making particular use of the recommendations contained in the United Nations study on violence]*

In recent months, a number of studies have evaluated the implementation the law of 5 March 2007 reforming child welfare.

A draft bill invited political and non-governmental stakeholders to examine a series of legislative adjustments in 2014 and 2015. During the general debate, the Secretary of State for the Family declared in December 2014: *“We have reached the moment where it is no longer necessary to commission further reports. Now we must act, that is to say we must formulate recommendations to harmonise and develop practices, but also change the law where necessary.”*

For example, the report of the National Consultation of 6-18 year olds carried out in 2014 by UNICEF France showed that one of the risk factors concerning suicide, which is very frequent in teenagers (suicidal thoughts affect 28% of 12-18 year olds questioned and nearly 11% had attempted suicide) is bullying on social networks which would appear to play a crucial role in pushing the young person to act on these thoughts, multiplying the risk threefold.

On the subject of sexual violence, it is also high time for France to scale up the preventative and support actions currently implemented: According to the charity “Mémoire traumatique et victimologie”, 15 to 20% of children in a same age group will be subject to sexual violence in France.

The majority of rapes and attempted rapes in France are carried out on minors. If we compare these figures to victim studies, it is estimated that 120,000 girls and 22,000 boys are victims of rapes and attempted rapes each year.

- *The Committee on the Rights of the Child asks France to **intensify its efforts to render appropriate assistance to parents** and legal guardians in the performance of their child-rearing responsibilities, in **particular for families in crisis situations due to poverty, absence of adequate housing or separation.***

Indeed, one of the aims of the 2007 law on child welfare was to shift the emphasis towards greater prevention. The objective was to act earlier, rather than waiting until situations deteriorate to do so; unfortunately since the 2007 law was adopted, the implementation of preventative measures at the national scale has not taken place and local parties have not been given assistance to consider prevention.

Although certain local councils do provide support for parents, these are only occasional and limited actions.

And yet, from the perinatal period onwards, it is essential to promote this spirit of universal prevention.

Parenting support contributes to prevention by highlighting the principle of positive action, helping parents to take ownership of their role in the education of the child. It draws on potentials to add value to and give confidence to families. For professionals, this is a fulfilling approach: rather than focusing their work on the negative aspects (failures or inadequacies), they work on the basis of positive support points.

In April 2014, the National Family Allowances Office (CNAF) and the government announced that as part of the agreement on objectives and management (COG) support measures for parenting would be doubled and parenting support programmes would need to become more visible and clearer. However, today these objectives seem to be difficult to achieve as the appropriate budgets do not appear to be provided.

In addition, the measures in the draft bill on child protection proposed by Michèle Meunier do not include propositions offering a radical alternative to usual practices, with the aim of changing approaches and practices in the field, and making it possible to build better links between children and their parents wherever possible.

The measures under discussion concerning the reform of the law on judicial declaration of the abandonment of children, also need to be carefully examined to ensure that the law remains a child protection measure and never becomes an adjustment variable (and, what is more, a misleading one) in the area of national adoption.

Professionals do not currently have all the necessary competencies to make a detailed evaluation of situations of abandonment.

To this end, it would be pertinent to develop similar structures to the regional organisation for discussion on adoption (French acronym ORCA) which could work across the country on situations of abandonment in order to best reconcile the respect of the greater interest of the child and the family situation.

- ▶ *The Committee on the Rights of the Child recommends that France **avoids the placement of children in alternative care as a result of low parental income.***

“Of the children who are taken into care by the child welfare teams (ASE) 20% are victims of mistreatment, but 80% are children from families living in great poverty, in great material difficulty. 80% of parents whose children are taken into care by the ASE are not abusive parents: *they are parents who are victims of the financial crisis and the difficulties in earning a living wage today*”. This was the observation of the Secretary of State for the Family during the General Assembly of the national union of family charities (French acronym UNAF) in June 2014.

It is clear that the existence of poverty and the living conditions of the children are given inadequate consideration in the area of child protection.

If the government implemented measures far enough upstream to compensate for the principle consequences of situations of poverty on the living conditions of children, the number of children taken into care would be reduced, in turn significantly reducing the human and financial costs.

For example, the law of 5 March 2007, reforming child welfare, created instruments to provide support for the social and family budget (French acronym ASEF) and legal assistance to help with managing the family budget (French acronym MJAGBF). Enshrined in common law and in the area of child welfare, these are a service and a measure that both seek to ensure the wellbeing of children by providing active support to parents who are accumulating material and budgetary difficulties.

Providing assistance with managing the household budget is a way of initiating support for families who are suffering, the vast majority of whom are bogged down in a cycle of exclusion, who are living in fear and who sometimes show resistance to other support measures.

The intervention therefore seeks to resolve urgent problems such as the risk of expulsion from a rented home. From this basis, work on supporting parenting can start, based around the acquisition of concrete skills, the objective being to give people the means to act, to become independent in their management and to take ownership of their responsibilities with regards to their children.

It is a way of avoiding taking children into care. It has demonstrated its effectiveness, made it possible to generate security rather than sanction, and at a much lower cost than that of taking children into care. And yet, it is still used far too little.

Supporting families means that the child is also being supported, avoiding the break-up of the family and the implementation of measures that are inevitably traumatic for the child and far too expensive for the authorities.

- ▶ *The Committee on the Rights of the Child **reiterates its recommendation to France to explicitly prohibit corporal punishment in all settings, increase awareness-raising in this respect and promote the value of education without violence.***

25 years after the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, France has still not banned the use of educational, physical or psychological violence within the home, based on corporal punishment, fear, humiliation and deprivation.

The recommendation of the 2013 report by the United Nations Human Rights Council, the reports by the Committee on the Rights of the Child which in 2004 and then in 2009 asked for corporal punishment to be expressly forbidden in all contexts, including within the home, and the conclusions of the European Committee of Social Rights, which considers that the situation of France is not compliant with the European Social Charter, have met with no response.

How can we continue to tolerate the fact that children, people who are vulnerable, fragile and dependant, are the only ones in France for whom adults are not expected to fully respect their physical and psychological integrity, and who can be hit, slapped, pinched, spanked and humiliated in the name of education and the right to punish?

The poor understanding of the traumatic consequences of educational violence on children's development, self-esteem and health encourages the tolerance of educational violence in France, which is seen as commonplace and even commendable. It also encourages the reproduction of this violence by the children who have experienced it once they become adults and parents, resulting in the perpetuation of harmful practices. It is high time to put an end to this.

③ Civil rights and freedoms

- ▶ Follow up to the United Nations study on violence against children: corporal punishment.

Recommendation no. 17

Assert the right of children to an education which is free of violence, including in their own home, by inserting a specific reference into the civil code. Develop educational tools and pathways aimed at parents and future parents to bring about lasting changes in their educational practices.

Recommendation no. 18

Widely disseminate public information campaigns to prevent sexual violence against minors and to inform potential perpetrators of the criminal penalties such violence incurs. Implement preventive measures in schools and educational 'third places'.

④ Family environment and alternative care

- ▶ Children deprived of a family environment.

Recommendation no. 19

Stop putting children in care to protect them from their parents' low income and the resulting living conditions and instead adopt an anti-poverty policy supporting parenting.

Recommendation no. 20

Support full application of the provision of the legislation reforming the child welfare system of 5th March, 2007 by local and regional councils, who are leading it, and by other parties. In the spirit of the new law, give preference to alternatives to placing children in care wherever possible and prioritize preventive measures such as legal assistance in the management of family budgets (known by its French acronym MJAGBF).

The juvenile justice system should not lose sight of its basic principles and needs to recapture its former status.

- ▶ Since the early 2000s, juvenile criminal justice has been subject to substantial modifications or attempts at reform which tend to gradually shift justice for juveniles towards that of adults. Children and teenagers in conflict with the law are above all children and teenagers in danger, for whom restorative justice, in line with the founding principles of the Ordinance of 1945, can provide diversified and relevant educational responses. The reform awaited by all parties must henceforth allow France to fully respect both the spirit and the letter of the Convention on the Rights of the Child as well as all of its international commitments.
- ▶ *The United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child urges France to **ensure that juvenile justice standards are fully implemented** and in particular, while taking into account the Committee's general comment on the administration of juvenile justice to **strengthen preventive measures** [...] take all possible measures to **avoid stigmatisation** [...] **Use detention as a measure of last resort** and for the shortest possible period of time [...] **Refrain from treating children between 16 and 18 years of age differently than children below the age of 16** [...] **Expand the use of reintegration and alternative measures to deprivation of liberty**[...]*

In 2009, the experts of the Committee on the Rights of the Child once again expressed their concern by the legislation and the practice in the area of juvenile justice, which tended to favour repressive measures rather than educational measures, particularly since the reforms introduced by Law n°2007-1198 of 10 August 2007, strengthening the fight against repeat offending by adults and minors.

This field is currently undergoing rapid change: A guidance note from the judicial protection of juveniles department (French acronym PJJ) was published in September 2014 (strategic note) and a draft bill proposed by the government is scheduled to be debated during 2015, namely the "draft bill relating to criminal justice for children and teenagers."

The PJJ works with young people and families affected by juvenile justice to put in place through its practices the educational duties conferred upon it by the law. The ambition of this new guidance note is to "*place the successful continuity of the education of the young people it works with at the heart of its activities.*"

UNICEF France notes with interest the broad consultation carried out by PJJ with professionals, stakeholders from the justice system and partners in the inter-regions of the PJJ.

It should also be underlined that in the same guidance note, it is stated that "*juvenile justice is part of the child protection system and has the same objectives of protection, education and integration.*"

In turn, the current version of the text of the draft bill on criminal justice for children and teenagers also seems to indicate a new approach, even though from its opening lines the preamble emphasises the need to "reaffirm the duties" of children and adolescents.

The preamble states: *“By ensuring more unified responses, where the specialisation of the intervening bodies is strengthened, the Government is also targeting a longer term objective. By offering the teenagers in question, and their families, personalised support that is fair and flexible, this draft bill seeks to individualise the penal response to reflect as closely as possible the specific features of each person. It is through this benevolent authority that legal action will be understood and respected, and it will help in developing the maturity of the affected parties.”*

The founding principles of juvenile justice have a constitutional value that has been recognised since August 2002: reduction of criminal responsibility for minors according to their age, the need to redress their educational and moral situation through measures adapted to their age and personality, decisions taken by specialised judges or according to appropriate procedures.

And yet, in 2011, France decided to create Magistrate's Courts for Minors (Tribunaux Correctionnels pour Mineurs or TCM), a system that goes against the spirit and the letter of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

In September 2012, when the periodical report was submitted to the Committee on the Rights of the Child, the government deliberately chose not to mention this system in its report (the reason given was that a future political action would repeal these measures) even though civil society expressly requested it.

In addition, during a parliamentary debate in the Senate on the penal reform, the members of parliament voted for the removal of TCM; however the joint commission (French acronym CMP) preferred to follow the position of the government and reject this legislative development that would have put an end, from summer 2014, to this infringement on the principle of the specialised juvenile courts and the dangerous shift where justice for juveniles edges ever closer to that of adults.

At the time of filing this report TCM continue to exist, but the new draft law allows a glimmer of hope to exist regarding their repeal, as well as, we hope, a real place for restorative justice despite the fact that funding for this has decreased continually in recent years.

In line with the experts of the Committee on the Rights of the Child in 2004 and 2009, UNICEF France can only call for France to fully respect international standards in the area of juvenile justice and encourage the movement seen since spring 2012 in this area.

On the 25th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child the Minister for Justice declared that *“France has decided to recapture its former status”*. UNICEF France will be vigilant to ensure that this comes to fruition as quickly as possible.

- ▶ *The Committee on the Rights of the Child recommends that France **establishes a minimum age of criminal responsibility**, in line with article 4 of the Convention [...] and with the recommendation that it is not below the age of 13 and requiring the child's capacity of discernment.*

France continues to favour the notion of discernment, which is assessed by the judge, to establish the age of criminal responsibility; that is to say, the age from which a juvenile is recognised as having acquired the maturity to be aware of committing a crime and causing harm.

The draft law on criminal justice that will be debated in 2015 would not seem to rescind this measure, despite the advocacy by UNICEF France in this area.

France has chosen to sign and ratify the Convention on the Rights of the Child which demands that an age for criminal responsibility be set. This is an international treaty which supersedes domestic law.

The measures of the Convention require an age limit to be set, and the Committee on the Rights of the Child has produced firm recommendations in this area. France did not express any reservations on this point when it signed and subsequently ratified the treaty.

France remains one of the last European countries not to have set an age limit for criminal responsibility. In Germany, Austria and Italy the limit is 14, in Sweden it is 15 and in Spain and Portugal it is 16.

In the light of the demands of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the recommendations of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, of UNICEF and the Children's Ombudsperson in 2009, UNICEF France asks for an age limit for criminal responsibility to be set, at the highest age possible, without exceptions and accompanied by an additional criteria of discernment.

7 Special Protection Measures

► Administration of juvenile justice

Recommendation no. 21

Do away with the system of juvenile criminal courts (*Tribunaux Correctionnels pour Mineurs* or TCMs), which runs counter to both the spirit and the letter of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Recommendation no. 22

Set a minimum age of criminal responsibility as required by the Convention on the Rights of the Child, fully respecting the general observations of the United Nations' Committee on the Rights of the Child.

Recommendation no. 23

Promote truly restorative justice by pro-actively supporting penal measures or other measures with educational aims and by allocating the necessary resources. Ensure effective and lasting support is available for teenagers leaving penal establishments with a view to fostering their reintegration into the community on the basis of personalized plans.

Teenagers in France: widespread malaise.

- ▶ The figures regarding suicidal thoughts, suicide attempts, addictions and the many other at-risk behaviours are alarming for teenagers in France. It is commonly agreed that dialogue between adults and children is important but in fact it is far from the norm in the daily life of children, whether at home, school or elsewhere. And yet, the authorities do not always seem to appreciate the scale of the challenge and struggle to provide support to young people and families. Whereas in fact, listening, vigilance and prevention should become the priority of all.
- ▶ *The Committee on the Rights of the Child recommends that [France] continues to address the issue of mental health by adolescents across the State party, including by [...] studying the root causes of these problems in order to provide targeted preventive measures.*

In 2014, UNICEF France carried out a study of thousands of children and teenagers aged between 6 and 18 (more than 62% of which were aged 12 – 18). This study took a completely new look, on a very wide scale, at one specific theme: The quality of the relationships binding the child or teen to their close environment (parents, friends, teachers, etc.) and their effect on his or her psycho-affective wellbeing.

One of the lessons learned casts a harsh light on the situation of children and teenagers living in France: more than one third of participants are experiencing psychological suffering, this proportion increasing with age, affecting 43% of the over-15s.

The prevalence of suicidal thoughts, suicide attempts and addictive behaviour in teenagers is also at an alarming level.

While the participants in this study are generally happy in their lives, a large proportion say that they do not feel appreciated by their father and experience strained relations with both parents. This feeling of a lack of recognition as well as family tensions increased with age, the level of deprivation and the uncertainty of their living conditions.

As regards school, for a large number of children it does not fulfil its role of recognition and protection: 45% of 6 – 18 year olds question for the survey “*feel really upset that they are not doing well enough at school*”. This proportion rises to nearly 60% for those experiencing deprivation.

The difficulties encountered by 6 – 18 year olds manifest themselves as psychological suffering in a little more than 36% of them. Once again, the level of deprivation, the quality of their local living environment and the family profile aggravate the situation.

According to respondents, psychological suffering also increases with age and affects the over-15s particularly hard (43.3%). The fact of being a girl, the fear of failing at school and bullying on social networks significantly increase the risks of psychological suffering.

This report provides elements necessary for understanding the risk factors in the areas of suffering but also of at-risk behaviours.

The study by UNICEF France highlights the fact that the question of suicide is strongly present amongst teenagers (12-18 year olds): the idea of suicide concerns 28% of participants, girls in particular, whilst 11% of them claim to have attempted suicide. Among the risk factors discussed in the report, bullying on social networks would appear to play a crucial role in pushing the young person to act on these thoughts, multiplying the risk threefold.

As regards the consumption of drugs and alcohol, this increases sharply with age: more than 41% of over 15s said they drank alcohol and had already been intoxicated, and nearly 32% took drugs or smoked cannabis.

Looking beyond this study, it should be noted that suicide is the second largest cause of death among 15 – 24 years olds (16%) in France and that one in five teenagers attempts suicide.

In 2008, the Child's Ombudsperson highlighted 40,000 suicide attempts each year amongst 15/24 year olds, with a death rate of 1/25 for boys and 1/160 for girls. Already at the time she underlined the high prevalence of suicidal actions amongst teenage homosexuals, which represent a quarter of attempts by boys and 10% for young girls of the same age.

Having been subjected to violence (whether sexual or not) is one of the most important risk factors in generating both suicidal thoughts and suicide attempts.

In 25 years, the number of suicides amongst teenagers was reduced by 20% thanks to specific and targeted programmes and strategies. National suicide prevention programmes, put in place in the early years of this century, contributed to this result.

However, despite the substantial efforts made by the authorities, France is still one of the countries with the highest levels of suicide in Europe, well above the European average.

Indeed, the statement from the economic, social and environmental council (CESE) in February 2013 highlighted the need to promote measures to warn of and monitor suicidal crises and to ringfence, or even increase the resources of the health networks involved in their management.

The creation of the National Suicide Observatory (ONS) in September 2013 is to be applauded and should improve knowledge in this field, starting with the establishment of reliable statistical data (centralising, processing and enriching the data, better understanding of risk factors) which are still lacking and which tend to largely underestimate the number of children and teenagers affected.

The first report by the ONS was handed to the Minister for Health and Social Affairs in December 2014 but does not specifically address the problem of teenagers, which is unfortunate.

A call for research papers should be launched in early 2015 in order to improve knowledge around suicide and in doing so provide guidance for public health actions, on the basis of the priorities identified by the work of the Observatory.

Let us hope that the authorities finally start to take into consideration the suffering of children and teenagers commensurate with the real extent of the problem. It is more than time.

5 Health and well-being

▶ Health of teenagers

Recommendation no. 24

Develop and roll out listening and prevention centres for teenagers and their families across the country.

Recommendation no. 25

Disseminate large-scale and more targeted suicide prevention campaigns aimed both at the general public and at children and adults. Promote the national freephone number for school and online bullying as bullying is an important factor in suicidal thoughts and teenage suicide attempts.

Recommendation no. 26

Carry out a specific National Suicide Observatory study on suicide amongst children and teenagers in order to better inform government decision-makers and other parties in this field.

Education in France: a persistent equality gap divides children attending school, a real chasm to cross for many other children who do not yet have access to schooling...

- ▶ The “*Refondation de l’Ecole de la République*”, an overhaul of the French education system launched by the government in 2013, reasserted the right of all children to an education and definitively promoted the concept of the inclusive school. And yet, despite the many initiatives, far too many children remain excluded from schools or even specialist establishments, and without an education solution. The education system itself exacerbates the inequalities between students and places France in the lowest reaches of the European rankings in terms of performance and efficacy. Since 2013, the authorities have started to demonstrate action that is on a scale with the challenges particularly in the area of priority education, which has struggled to date to generate any notable impact and improve the situation of children who had been left behind.
- ▶ *The Committee on the Rights of the Child recommends that France Take all necessary measures to ensure that legislation providing **access to education, as well as programmes and specialized assistance for children with disabilities**, are effectively implemented and ensure the full enjoyment of their rights under the Convention on the entire territory [...].*

Since the last time France was questioned by the experts from the Committee on the Rights of the Child, a dynamic has grown in favour of pupils with disabilities.

In September 2014, according to the statistics from the Minister of Education, 260,000 pupils with disabilities attended mainstream schools. This number of pupils has doubled in the last eight years and should continue to increase each year by more than 10%, although this figure hides wide disparities, particularly in terms of hours of schooling.

The framework act for reforming state education of July 2013 stated that the education system “*must ensure in that inclusive schooling is available to all pupils*” and made it easier to take into account the specific needs of pupils with disabilities, notably by creating the Personalised Support Plan (French acronym PAP), targeting pupils with serious and lasting educational issues related to learning difficulties.

The regulatory instruments governing the schooling of pupils with disabilities have also evolved to include a better definition of the Personal Education Project (French acronym PPS) and the formalisation of national documents should henceforth allow equal treatment to be guaranteed for all children with disabilities throughout France, with a better assessment of the needs of the pupils and a wide palette of solutions.

However, despite these positive developments, what are the real conditions and procedures for accessing education or enrolment in school for these children and teenagers?

How many remain excluded from mainstream or special needs schools?

Nobody is able to give a real answer today in France due to a lack of consolidated statistics and the incompatibility of the information technology systems in this field. At best the authorities have a snapshot of a given moment, rather than data that is updated in real time. In addition, non-governmental partners, who are all too often the last resort for isolated families, do not have the possibility to take the place of the authorities and draw up an accurate picture.

And yet, they are the witnesses to the often chaotic experiences of many children: lack of early identification of problems, lengthy waits for answers, an unequal approach around the country, a shortage of suitable centres, difficulties in coordinating and operating in a joined-up manner by professionals in the health and socio-medical sector, part-time schooling, unstable or unsuitable support, breakdowns in the system, a shortage of specialists, difficulties in accessing treatment for the youngest children, etc.

Stakeholders from civil society are also the first witnesses to the lack of an educational solution for so many others.

According to a parliamentary report from May 2011¹², there are around 5,000 children with disabilities aged from 6 – 16 living at home and not being schooled. In total, taking into account children at home and those in care establishments, more than 20,000 children of compulsory schooling age are not enrolled in school.

The *Ensemble pour l'autisme* (Together for autism) movement, created in 2012 when it was selected as a “great national cause” highlighted the constant rise in cases of autism, which today affects one in 150 children or 600 children per year.

According to the organisations involved in this movement, 80% of autistic children are not in school (some 70,000 children), despite the fact that many of them could succeed in a mainstream school providing suitable help was provided.

The wide varieties seen in the various statistical approaches can only encourage France, once again, to establish reliable and updated statistical indicators in this area.

In addition, from a legal perspective, a number of legal rulings have been made requiring the country to respect the basic rights of people with disabilities.

In February 2014, the European Committee of Social Rights of the Council of Europe condemned France as part of a collective claim, unanimously concluding that the European Social Charter had been violated in three areas: The right of autistic children and teenagers to be schooled, with priority given to mainstream establishments; the right to professional training for young autistic children; and the lack of priority given to the provision of education in specialised institutions caring for autistic children and teenagers.

Whereas the law of 11 February 2005 specifies that priority should be given, wherever possible, to enrolling pupils with disabilities in mainstream schools, the charity *Vaincre l'autisme* claims that access to mainstream schooling concerns less than 30% of autistic children. In addition, at each stage of compulsory education, the number of children with autism enrolled in school decreases. Thus, while 87% of autistic children enrolled in mainstream schools attend primary school, only 11% attend middle school and 1.2% high school.

¹² « La scolarisation des enfants handicapés » by Senator Paul Blanc.

A number of decisions by the Council of State between 2009 and 2013 also underline France's serious shortcomings, particularly with regards to compulsory schooling. The right to an education and compulsory schooling, as well as the right to multidisciplinary care for autistic people or persons with multiple disabilities requires the State to produce results and not simply provide resources.

In addition, the Council of State ruled that a total lack of schooling or a serious risk of danger due to a lack of suitable support could constitute "*serious infringements of basic rights.*"

Since 2013, the Minister of Health and Social Affairs has decided to put in place a system for managing critical situations. Furthermore, Denis Piveteau, Member of the Council of State was charged with writing a report, filed in June 2014, on disrupted education, where he strongly underlined the "total lack of anticipation and project management in individual situations", while the report in October 2012 from the inspectors Jeannet and Vachey had already emphasised "*the insufficient number and poor quality of the solutions available*".¹³

Mention should also be made of the 3rd Autism Plan that has been adopted, without however obtaining unanimous approval from all non-governmental parties.

- ▶ *The Committee on the Rights of the Child recommends that France continues and strengthens its efforts to reduce the effects of the children's social background on their achievement in school and strengthens its efforts to decrease dropout and repetition rates without penalizing parents.*

A new mapping of priority education zones and a reform in the allocation of resources to schools was presented in December 2014 and indicated a determination to offer all pupils equal opportunities for success.

The Minister for Education recognised at the same time that France "*does not give the same chances of success to all its pupils*" and that "*France is the European country that is the worst affected by social determinism, which not only results in a lack of opportunities for certain pupils but also be a deterioration in the level of attainment of all pupils, including the best ones.*"

The Education System is not only failing in its primary objective, but as was already noted in UNICEF's 2010 Innocenti Report Card 9, "The children left behind", the French system is incapable of reducing the inequality between pupils. The Pisa 2012 survey by OECD even showed that between 2003 and 2012, the impact of their social origins on the performance of 15 year olds had increased by 33% in France, placing the country at the bottom of the list of European countries in terms of fairness in education. In addition, the National Consultation carried out by UNICEF France in 2013 and 2014 clearly highlighted the link between material deprivation and difficulties at school. According to this study, only 33.8% of the poorest children feel safe at school, whereas 68.4% of children who do not experience this deprivation consider themselves to be safe at school.

Therefore, the new approach to priority education, based on a "*transparent social index that converges with the policy of the city*", the defining of efficiency indicators and a four-year reassessment of the system are all very pertinent points.

¹³ Report by the Inspectors Jeannet and Vachey from October 2012
http://www.igas.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/Rapport_ESMS_IGAS.pdf, p.20.

This new approach seeks to re-inject coherence and clarity into a number of overlapping systems that are regularly compared to a "*millefeuille*" - a multitude of layers.

The reform of the allocation of resources, applying a new model based on 15 profiles that combine social and geographical criteria, forms part of an effort to be equitable, to apply social justice and to reduce inequality. Attention must therefore be focused on the real conditions of social diversity that could result.

The actors on the ground must now be given support to take ownership of this new approach to priority education, which has all too often been reduced to the allocation of additional resources.

As the Observatory of Priority Areas (French acronym OZP) underlines, "this reformulated priority education is no longer seeking to "give more to those who have less" but rather to "do more and better for those who are threatened by social relegation."

With regards to school dropout rates, it is also worth noting a new approach from the Ministry of Education which henceforth recognises that each year, 140,000 young people leave the education system without a qualification equivalent to the Baccalaureate or a vocational qualification. These teenagers swell the ranks of the NEETs, young people who are Not in Education, Employment or Training; 11.2% of 15- 24 year olds fell into this category according to UNICEF's Innocenti 12 Report Card of October 2014.

In November 2014, the Minister of Education also recognised that "every pupil who drops out of school will "cost" around €230,000 for the rest of their life, generating some 30 billion euros of debt each year." Faced with this unacceptable situation, which has existed for so many years, a plan to combat school dropout was at last defined.

It has now been rolled out and its measures include: increased financial resources (an additional 50 million euros will be available each year from 2015); a hotline to provide young people and their parents with assistance and information; the strengthening and generalisation of suitable measures at the key moments in the career guidance process; the creation of training programmes designed to prevent pupils from dropping out, aimed at teachers, and an adult-pupil tutoring programme.

To provide a personalised response to the various difficulties that can be encountered, young people in a situation of school dropout should be managed by educational structures that include external partners.

Innovative solutions should also be encouraged and structured at the national level, resulting in there being at least one innovative structure to combat school dropout in each regional education authority.

Now that France has recognised the scale of the problem of school dropout and the magnitude of its consequences in terms of early school leaving and total abandonment of formal education, attention must now be paid to the long-term allocation of resources for tackling this problem and assessing the effectiveness of the plan in place.

- ▶ *The Committee on the Rights of the Child recommends that France invest considerable additional resources in order to **ensure the right of all children to a truly inclusive education which ensures the full enjoyment to children from all disadvantaged, marginalized and school-distant groups;***

Other than children with disabilities, the children who are the most discriminated against in terms of access to education in France are undoubtedly children living in slums. Only 20% to 50% of children of compulsory schooling age attend primary, middle or more rarely, high school.

The ROMEUROPE collective group estimated that some “5,000 to 7,000 migrant gypsies in France have attained or will attain the age of 16 in France having never, or almost never attended school¹⁴.”

The main reasons for this non-attendance are the precarious living conditions, successive evictions and lack of encouragement from certain local elected officials to proceed with the administrative enrolment of these children.

Amnesty International published a report in September 2013 on this subject, explaining that “*the living conditions in informal camps have an undoubted effect of the attendance rates and success rates of gypsy children.*”

In turn, the National Consultative Commission for Human Rights (CNCDH) published a press release in August 2013 where they underlined the recurrent problems at a local level: “*families find that they are refused enrolment in school by the municipality for reasons – which do not comply with the regulations – such as that they do not have official proof of address documentation*¹⁵.”

Already, in October 2012, the Children’s Ombudsperson alerted the Prime Minister about the problem of children in slums not attending school because of the various eviction programmes.

These successive evictions and destructions of gypsy camps have extremely negative effects on the schooling of children. Eviction is a traumatic experience for children which sometimes means they stop attending school for a number of weeks and, in some cases, many months.

Whereas the Secretary of State for Educational Success published, in September 2012, three circulars reiterating the key principles of protection and access to education, it is clear that successive interruption in the schooling of children growing up in slums persist, and that they considerably slow, indeed often destroy their basic learning, the condition sine qua non for successful integration.

- ▶ *The Committee recommends that France **further strengthen its efforts, to ensure that all the provisions of the Convention and its two Optional Protocols are widely known and understood by adults and children alike throughout the State party.***

The framework act reforming the schools of the French Republic, which entered into force in July 2013, translated the political will to develop another vision of the place of children within the education system.

¹⁴ [La non-scolarisation des enfants Roms migrants en France](#) - Published on 10 March 2010, p.7

¹⁵ Press Release from CNCDH on 2 August 2013, p.6

If we consider more specifically the importance given to the rights of the child, we can note that they have been given a new importance: henceforth primary schools are tasked with teaching pupils about the rights of the child.

Looking beyond these overall guidelines, it is possible to continue to question how the subject of the rights of the child will be brought to pupils' attention and how they will apply them.

The law sets out the principle of a common set of knowledge, skills and culture, which must allow pupils to continue their studies, build a future for themselves, both professionally and personally, and prepare them to become fully-fledged citizens.

Clearly, this project to create a common set of skills is influenced by the principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, in the sense that it confirms the active role of the child in his or her own learning process, as well as the need for education to contribute to developing the skills, independence and fulfilment of children. However, it is regrettable that the Convention on the Rights of the Child was not mentioned at least in the preamble to the text. Firstly, this would have symbolically underlined the commitment of the State to respecting the rights of the child and secondly it would have ensured their inclusion in the curricula and their full integration into teaching practices.

The national curricula are in the process of being re-written at the time of writing of this report. A draft curriculum for civil and moral education classes shows some progress, in comparison with current curricula, in its reference to the rights of the child. However, the importance that is given to them is quite inadequate. At this stage, we can suppose that the Rights of the Child will only be the subject of teaching once per education cycle¹⁶ (although reference is only made to the Convention on the Rights of the Child itself in cycle 2). However, it is to be hoped that the curriculum will ensure that this subject is addressed at least once in each school year.

There is also a need to strengthen teacher training in this area; the new procedures for training teachers allow each teaching college to decide whether to include the rights of the child in its curriculum, both in terms of content and educational methods.

Allowing children to know and apply their rights takes on all its meaning not only with the aim of ensuring the personal development of each individual but also of teaching them to live together in society. However, this cannot be achieved without School being opened up to all the other aspects of a child's life, notably by improving the parent-school relationship, as well as the role that School should play in educating children about the media and the use of the internet. Having said this, the efforts made by the Ministry of Education to combat cyber-bullying and violence at school are to be commended.

¹⁶ Translator's Note: French primary education (aged 5 – 11, or GS – CM2) is divided into three cycles.

5 Health and well-being

- ▶ Disabled children.

Recommendation no. 27

Build links between the various systems caring for and supporting children with disabilities to make administration more flexible and journeys through the system smoother. Establish a right to early diagnosis and appropriate support. Recognize families' right to respite by implementing specific measures.

6 Education, leisure and cultural activities

- ▶ Education, including training and career guidance.

Recommendation no. 28

Ensure that all children in France have equal access to education, with particular attention given to children living in slums, unaccompanied minors and disabled children in accordance with French legislation currently in force and in fulfilment of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Recommendation no. 29

Allocate sufficient resources to the plan against early school leaving. Assess the plan regularly in detail and measure, in particular, its effect on youth NEET rates.

Recommendation no. 30

Include children's rights in school curricula so that every school year each child has the opportunity to study the principles and issues addressed by the Convention on the Rights of the Child and can apply them in school.

Recommendation no. 31

Train staff working in the national education system to become familiar with and to apply the Rights of the Child.

Recommendation no. 32

Encourage rewarding discovery-based teaching fostering pupils' involvement in their own learning and in school life.

Recommendation no. 33

Allocate the necessary resources to implement and monitor the Ministry of Education's strategy to bring schools into the digital age, particularly as regards updated studies relating to the media, information and responsible use of the internet and social networks.

The international development policy of France, a tale of ambition and reduced resources.

- ▶ International development policy is an instrument for diplomacy and for spreading the influence of the State, and it plays an essential role in the application of the rights of the child and achieving the global goals of poverty reduction, access to health and education, the reduction of disparities and fighting discrimination. While France shows admirable political ambition, the resources allocated to its implementation are worrying.
- ▶ *The Committee notes with appreciation the State party's contributions and various child-rights related activities in the area of international and bilateral cooperation.*
- ▶ *The Committee encourages the State party **to continue to strengthen its activities in the area of international cooperation, inter alia, by striving to achieve the United Nations 0.7 per cent target of GDP for international development assistance.** The Committee further encourages the State party to **take into due account**, in its bilateral cooperation with other States parties to the Convention and its two Optional Protocols, **the concluding observations and recommendations made by the Committee in respect of those countries.** In this regard, the Committee invites the State party to **take into account its recommendations** issued in 2007 after the Day of General Discussion on "**Resources for the Rights of the Child – Responsibility of States**".*

Overhauling development policy

Since 2012, a desire to overhaul international development policy has been expressed by the French authorities, with the aim of rendering it more effective, efficient, coherent and transparent. In November 2012, the government launched the *Assises du développement et de la solidarité internationale*, a four-month consultation period bringing together the various stakeholders in the sector in order to set the foundations for a change in paradigm. These wide-ranging discussions between the government and NGOs, private companies and foundations, local authorities, Members of Parliament and operators from developing countries, etc, is worthy of note because of the way in which it meets a need expressed by the various stakeholders and it helps to raise the profile of the major development challenges.

The Interministerial committee for international cooperation and development (CICID), meeting in July 2013, used the main conclusions from this period to build a new framework for development policy, concentrating, for example, financial efforts on 16 priority countries, mainly in Central and West Africa, in a structure of differentiated partnerships.

These decisions have been included in the draft bill on development policy and international solidarity (LOPDSI) This is the first law of the Fifth Republic in France on this subject and has been welcomed by players in the sector including UNICEF. Consequently, for the first time civil society and members of parliament have been able to express their opinion on the orientations and the priorities of French overseas development assistance, rather than just examining the budget documents.

The new law, enacted on 7th July 2014, is satisfactory from many perspectives.

The vast majority of the priorities and principles it includes correspond to those of UNICEF. Geographical priority first: the region designated as a priority for France's efforts (West and Central Africa) includes countries which have some of the worst figures for maternal and infant mortality, access to education, gender inequality and poverty. UNICEF can only fully subscribe to with the priority subjects to be addressed; The new law promotes a cross-sector, inclusive approach, due to its emphasis on the need to encourage the education of girls, fight malnutrition, respect the greater interest of the child, and also on the universal nature of the measures in favour of child protection.

The transparency and coherence of overseas development assistance (ODA) is also largely addressed in the text of the law. Even before it was adopted, the Government acted in favour of greater transparency in the funding of certain projects, starting with Mali via the platform <http://www.transparence-aide.gouv.fr> which should be extended to all priority countries.

Accountability is also one of the key elements of the LOPDSI and governmental action. As part of development policy, accounting for the use of public funds on the basis of precise indicators to the French taxpayer, members of parliament and also partner countries is essential.

Although these elements are satisfactory with regards to UNICEF's priorities for development, nevertheless the rights of the child are not explicitly mentioned in the LOPDSI, which is regrettable. Yet, France is required to respect and promote these rights, in the country and in its international policy. The last three years have been marked by a growing participation from France, in terms of both its diplomatic efforts and its military presence (unilateral and multilateral) in countries affected by conflicts that have a devastating impact on child protection (Mali, Central African Republic, and Syria). There was a real opportunity for the explicit integration of the issue of human rights and specifically the Rights of the Child in the LOPDSI. UNICEF France particularly regrets this omission given that the law offered a remarkable occasion to clearly highlight the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the rights themselves.

Reduced resources

The will expressed by the government and its intentions are generally encouraging; it now remains to evaluate the implementation and the impact in the long term. Indeed, despite a visible shift in the French vision of ODA, a major concern persists: the resources allocated for its implementation.

In 2002, like many other countries, France committed itself to allocating 0.7% of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to Official Development Assistance (ODA) by 2015. This is also the same year for the conclusion of the first Millennium Development Goals (MDG) and for defining the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) that are supposed to take over from them.

And yet, the budget for 2015 shows the fourth consecutive reduction in annual ODA. If the government's forecasts are confirmed, ODA will have been reduced by 20% between 2012 and 2017. Whilst it reached 0.5% of GDP in 2010, ODA only represented 0.41% in 2013 whereas in the same year, the volume of ODA on a global scale increased by around 6%.

However, the LOPDSI does confirm the commitment to "0.7%", which was met with incredulity and criticism by development organisation. This is indeed the only quantitative object the law contains.

The French economic context cannot alone be enough to explain this constant reduction. In the various budgets that have been voted, ODA is disproportionately reduced in comparison with other budgets and the overall savings targets.

Choices are therefore being made. It is clear that bilateral aid is now favoured, to the detriment of multilateral aid. With regards to the voluntary contributions made by France to United Nations agencies, this choice was justified as follows: *“The voluntary contributions of France to the United Nations for development assistance have been decreasing since 2007; this clearly has an impact on our capacity to influence matters in these institutions which play their part in defining development assistance priorities, notably sectoral priorities. Four organisations receive nearly 80% of French voluntary contributions: The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), and UNICEF. In 2013, voluntary French contributions used to finance development assistance represented some 47 million euros¹⁷”*.

And yet, regular resources are the most essential, particularly for UNICEF. They are at the heart of the organisation’s ability to reach the most vulnerable children, at any time. They allow for stable resources and predictability. There are more and more crises (2014 was one of the most devastating for children) and in 2014 half of UNICEF’s regular resources were dedicated to responding to humanitarian emergencies; therefore resources not affected by this are essential: they allow UNICEF to immediately apply its capacities in the field, working with its partners.

Financing the post-2015 agenda

With the creation in 2010 of the Muskoka Fund (French acronym FFM), the French government committed to the implementation of a multiyear programme to improve reproductive, maternal and infant health and accelerate the reduction of maternal and infant mortality in 16 countries of Sub-Saharan Africa, Haiti and Afghanistan, via certain United Nations Agencies (UNICEF, WHO, UNFPA, UN-Women)

The financial commitment to the United Nations was for €19M per year over five years. UNICEF was the largest beneficiary with 8.5 million euros per year. This project comes to an end in 2015. UNICEF encourages France to maintain its efforts in the area of maternal and infant health as part of its commitment to the MDGs in particular, notably in Central and West Africa, regions that are facing new challenges, including the devastating impact of the Ebola epidemic on the health and social services in the three affected countries.

As 2015 marks the end of the Millennium Development Goals period, a new framework for international development is being put in place. The “Post 2015 development agenda” will result in the formulation of a new set of goals and targets - the sustainable development goals (SDGs) - which will underpin the progress made with the MDGs and the work still to be achieved.

Basic issues impacting on children have been integrated into the goals and targets: the strong points of the MDGs have been improved and a number of areas that were not specified in the MDGs, such as the reduction of inequality, elimination of violence towards children and alleviation of poverty in children, are now recognised and taken into consideration.

¹⁷ « Mise en œuvre de la stratégie française d’aide au développement – Rapport bisannuel 2014 » MAEDI

UNICEF would like to draw attention to the importance of strengthening the links between the SDGs and the Rights of the Child. It is essential that France uses its influence on the world stage to ensure that particular attention is paid to guaranteeing the poorest and most vulnerable children become a priority in the achievement of international development goals.

1 Measures of general application

Recommendation n°34

Ring fence the official development assistance budget and aim to achieve the target of 0.7% of Gross Domestic Product established by law without neglecting voluntary contributions to the United Nations organisations, including UNICEF.

Recommendation n°35

Make explicit reference to France's support for the rights of the child in development policy and all other diplomacy and/or peace-keeping work.

Recommendation n°36

Put children and young people at the heart of the post-2015 and sustainable development goals agendas.

Acronyms and Abbreviations

AESF	Accompagnement en Economie Sociale et Familiale / <i>Support for the social and family budget</i>
ASE	Aide Sociale à l'Enfance / <i>Child Welfare</i>
CESE	Conseil Économique Social et Environnemental / <i>Economic, social and environmental council</i>
CGET	Commissariat Général à l'Égalité des Territoires / <i>Commission for regional equality</i>
CGSP	Commissariat Général à la Stratégie et à la Prospective / <i>Office for general strategy and future planning</i>
CICID	Comité Interministériel de Coopération Internationale et de Développement / <i>Interministerial committee for international cooperation and development</i>
CMP	Commission Mixte Paritaire/ <i>Joint committee</i>
CNCDH	Commission Nationale Consultative des Droits de l'Homme / <i>National consultative commission for human rights</i>
COG	Convention d'Objectif et de Gestion / <i>Agreement on objectives and management</i>
Crédoc	Centre de recherche pour l'étude des conditions de vie / <i>Research centre for the study of living conditions</i>
Dalo	Droit au logement opposable/ <i>Enforceable right to housing</i>
DIHAL	Délégation Interministérielle à l'Hébergement et l'Accès au Logement / <i>Ministerial Delegation for Accommodation and Access to Housing</i>
FFM	Fonds Français Muskoka/ Muskoka Fund
GNI	Gross National Income
GRETA	Groupe d'experts sur la lutte contre les êtres humains / <i>Expert group on the fight against trafficking in persons</i>
HRW	Human Rights Watch
LOPDSI	Loi d'orientation et de programmation relative à la politique de développement et de solidarité internationale / <i>Draft bill on development policy and international solidarity</i>
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MJAGBF	Mesure Judiciaire d'Aide à la Gestion du Budget Familial / <i>Legal assistance in the management of family budgets</i>
NEET	Not in Education, Employment or Training
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
ODA	Overseas Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Cooperation and Economic Development
ONPES	Observatoire National de la Pauvreté et de l'Exclusion Sociale / <i>National observatory for poverty and social exclusion</i>
ONS	Observatoire National du Suicide / <i>National suicide observatory</i>
ONZUS	Observatoire National des Zones Urbaines Sensibles / <i>ZUS national observatory</i>
ORCA	Organisation Régionale de Concertation sur l'Adoption / <i>Regional organisation for discussion on adoption</i>
OZP	Observatoire des Zones Prioritaires / <i>Observatory of priority areas</i>

PAP	Plan d'Accompagnement Personnalisé / <i>Personalised support plan</i>
PJJ	Protection Judiciaire de la Jeunesse / <i>Legal protection of young people</i>
PMI	Protection Maternelle et Infantile / <i>Maternal and child welfare</i>
PPS	Projet Personnalisé de Scolarisation / <i>Personal education project</i>
RESF	Réseau Education Sans Frontières / <i>Education without borders</i>
SDD	Sustainable Development Goals
TCM	Tribunal Correctionnel pour Mineur / <i>Magistrate's Courts for Minors</i>
TIP	Trafficking in Persons
UFM	Unaccompanied Foreign Minors
UNAF	Union Nationale des Associations Familiales / <i>National union of family charities</i>
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	High Commissioner for Refugees
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
WHO	World Health Organisation
ZUS	Zone Urbaine Sensible / <i>Sensitive urban areas</i>