

# **The Rights of the Child and International Development Cooperation**

## **(Alternative Report on the Republic of Korea's Implementation of UN Convention on the Rights of the Child)**

By Working Group on the Rights of the Child of KCOC

Oct 2018

**Title of the Report:** The Rights of the Child and International Development Cooperation:  
Alternative Report on the Republic of Korea's Implementation of UN CRC

**State Party:** Republic of Korea

**Marked:** NGO Report

**Name of the NGO Coalition:** KCOC Working Group on the Rights of the Child

### **Contact Information:**

Korea NGO Council for Overseas Development Cooperation (KCOC)

4F, 990 Building, 282 Dongmak-ro, Mapo-gu, Seoul

Republic of Korea

+82 (0) 2 2279 1704

policycenter@ngokcoc.or.kr

**Confidentiality:** Not confidential

### **Written by:**

ChildFund Korea

Good Neighbors

Korea Food for the Hungry International

Plan International Korea

Save the Children Korea

World Vision Korea

KCOC Policy Center

### **Published by:**

Korea NGO Council for Overseas Development Cooperation (KCOC)



KOREA NGO COUNCIL FOR OVERSEAS  
DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

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## 1. Executive Summary

By ratifying the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in 1991,<sup>1</sup> the Republic of Korea is obliged to respect, protect and fulfill all the rights of the child provided in the CRC. As a State Party to the Convention, the government of the Republic of Korea (hereafter the Korean government) has the obligation to “undertake all appropriate legislative, administrative and other measures for the implementation of the rights recognized in the Convention”(…) “with regard to economic, social and cultural rights”, and to “undertake such measures within the framework of international cooperation” to implement the Convention.<sup>2</sup> The Committee on the Rights of the Child (hereafter the CRC Committee) emphasizes that international cooperation should be carried out within the framework of the CRC from a rights-based approach.<sup>3</sup>

While the Korean government has gradually increased its contribution to international assistance, as of 2017, the Republic of Korea’s Official Development Assistance (ODA) volume remains at 0.14% of its GNI<sup>4</sup>, much lower than the internationally agreed target of 0.7%. This is a failure to meet the recommendations of the CRC Committee on the 3rd and 4th Periodic Report in 2011, which encouraged Korea to reach, and if possible, surpass international standards by 2015.<sup>5</sup> The Korean government also has not taken any measures to implement the CRC Committee’s concluding observations to prioritize child rights in international cooperation agreements with developing countries, and to refer to the CRC Committee’s concluding observations on the Country Reports of partner countries in this process.

The Korean government introduced the Framework Act on International Development Cooperation in 2010 and declared the promotion of the rights of the child as one of the foundations of its international development cooperation<sup>6</sup>. However, there is lack of effort from the Government to develop a child rights-based approach and strategy, implementation plan and budget that are necessary for enhancing child rights through international development cooperation. **It is urgent that the Korean government adopts a Child Rights-based framework for international development cooperation so that the Rights of the Child are prioritized in all sectors and throughout the processes of development cooperation.**

In fragile states, which fail to carry out basic functions due to the poor system, conflicts, disasters and poverty, children are under the most vulnerable circumstances. However, the Korean government’s assistance strategy for fragile states does not sufficiently address children, who are the primary beneficiaries of development cooperation and among the most vulnerable groups. **The government should develop differentiated strategies and specific implementation plans for each fragile state based on the CRC Committee’s recommendations and child vulnerability assessment results of each fragile state, prioritizing children and girls.** In this process, the government can enhance program effectiveness by **promoting children’s participation based on stronger partnership with NGOs** that work effectively with vulnerable children and local communities.

The Korean government has established Country Partnership Strategies(CPS) for each partner country

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<sup>1</sup> Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1990.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid*, Article 4.

<sup>3</sup> The Committee on the Rights of the Child. 2003. General Comment No. 5: General Measures of Implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, CRC/GC/2003/5, para. 61.

<sup>4</sup> Joint Related Ministry. 2017. 30th Agenda Item of the International Development Cooperation Committee (30-1). 2019 International Development Cooperation Annual Implementation Plan.

<sup>5</sup> The Committee on the Rights of the Child. 2011. Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 44 of the Convention, CRC/C/KOR/CO3-4, para 24.

<sup>6</sup> Republic of Korea. 2010. Framework Act on International Development Cooperation, Article 3, Para 1.

in implementing development assistance both through loans and grants. However, the CPS do not have a child rights approach in general, in its current status analysis of partner countries and implementation plans, nor does it take into consideration the CRC Committee's recommendations for partner countries. As the Korea International Cooperation Agency ("KOICA"), the main governmental institution responsible for grant aid, carries out development cooperation programs based on the CPS, **a Child Rights Perspective must be introduced to CPS in order to prioritize Child Rights and implement the CRC Committee's concluding observations on partner countries.**

**The Korean government needs to take countermeasures to ensure that the process and outcome of its loan and grant programs do not lead to violation of children's rights in Korea and partner countries, and to establish an accountability mechanism to deal with such violations.**

The government has previously encountered serious violations of children's rights caused by its loan and grant programs, as in the sexual violence case against a Korean high school girl who volunteered for a foreigner training program in 2013, and in the collapse of the Xe Pian-Xe Namnoy Dam of Laos in 2018. Korean development agencies implementing loan and grant programs have only adopted some phrases related to child protection in their internal regulations or safeguard policies. This is a weak and ineffective way of preventing child rights violation. As growing numbers of various stakeholders, including corporations, take part in development cooperation, it is urgent that the government establishes stronger mechanisms for child rights impact assessment, implementation monitoring, and violation reporting and response.

International development cooperation has profound impact on children's lives, both directly and indirectly. Therefore, children must be considered not just in health and education sectors, but also in rural development, water, sanitation and hygiene, transportation and other major sectors of international development cooperation. For this to happen, **the principles on Child Rights must be observed and children must be respected as rights-holders in all sectors of development cooperation.**

While Korea's humanitarian strategy regards children as a vulnerable group that requires special consideration, it does not have any specific implementation plan. In addition, it is difficult to confirm whether the priority in strategy effectively translates into actual development assistance and how much it contributes to the promotion of children's rights, as the government does not disclose detailed data per program. As 52 percent of refugees in the world are children under 18, who are one of the most vulnerable groups in humanitarian crises caused by conflict, natural disaster and persecution, it is more urgent than ever that efforts are made for special protection and increased educational assistance for children. Therefore, the Korean government needs to establish new humanitarian strategies, specific implementation plans, and a roadmap to expand relevant assistance, and develop performance assessment criteria and mechanisms for monitoring progress and impact on children's rights, in order to deal more effectively with serious emergency situations for children.

## 2. Introduction

This report is prepared by the Working Group on the Rights of the Child of KCOC<sup>7</sup> (hereafter the Working Group), organized to promote child protection and child rights in Korea's international development assistance and NGOs' development programs. The report intends to provide the Working Group's perspective on the Korean government's implementation of the CRC, in particular international cooperation, and thereby contribute to the analysis of the CRC Committee on the consideration of the Republic of Korea. In addition, through this report, the Working Group seeks to emphasize the importance of international cooperation in the Korean government's implementation of the CRC, and to urge the government to adopt a children's rights-based approach in its international development cooperation policies and programs, recognizing children as major beneficiaries and rights-holders.

Since the ratification of the CRC in 1991, the Korean government has submitted the report 4 times including 5th and 6th Periodic Report in 2017. In the report, however, the part of International Cooperation was not focused as much. Almost a decade after joining the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development Assistance Committee (OECD DAC) in 2009, Korea is at an important juncture to review its roles and responsibilities as a middle power in development assistance, and reflect on its development assistance programs and future direction. More specifically, the Korean government needs to enhance the quality of development assistance by seriously considering how to implement the recommendations of the CRC Committee that the Korean government prioritizes children's rights in international cooperation, whilst recognizing the importance of international cooperation in implementing the CRC as provided in Article 4 of the Convention.

In 2011, the CRC Committee made concluding observations to Korea on its 3rd and 4th Periodic Reports on the implementation of the CRC to increase its contribution to international assistance to the internationally agreed target of 0.7% of its GNI; prioritize children's rights promotion in international cooperation agreements with developing countries; and to refer to the concluding observations of the CRC Committee on the Country Reports of partner countries. Yet, Korea's international development cooperation still shows a great gap with these recommendations. Therefore, the Working Group presents its recommendations in order to make sure that the CRC is respected and children's rights are respected, protected and fulfilled through the policies and programs of the Korean government.

## 3. The Need for a Child Rights Based Framework in International Development Cooperation for the Implementation of the Convention of the Rights of the Child

With the ratification of the CRC, the Republic of Korea is legally bound to implement the Convention. This indicates that Korea has to "undertake all appropriate legislative, administrative and other measures for the implementation recognized in the present Convention," (...) "with regard to economic, social and cultural rights", and to "undertake such measures within the framework of international cooperation."<sup>8</sup> Therefore, Korea is obliged to implement the Convention not just within Korea, but also in other countries. The General Comment No. 5 of the CRC Committee, addressing the general measures for the implementation of the CRC, emphasizes the need for international cooperation in Article 4 and other provisions. The CRC Committee recommends that the Parties carry out international development assistance that are directly and indirectly related to children within the framework of the

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<sup>7</sup> Korea NGO Council for Overseas Development Cooperation (KCOC) was founded in 1999 as an alliance of development NGOs that implement development cooperation programs in various parts of the world to fight poverty (135 member organizations, as of October 2018)

<sup>8</sup>supra note 1 Article 4.

CRC, and emphasizes that donor programs are rights-based.<sup>9</sup>

The Korean government established a clear legal framework for children's rights promotion through international development cooperation. The Framework Act on International Development Cooperation of 2010 declares that the promotion of children's rights in developing countries is basic principle and goal of its international development cooperation. However, the government lacks sufficient institutional foundation for the implementation of this legal framework. . *The First Basic Plan for International Development Cooperation 2011-2015*, a medium- to long-term strategy of the Korean government, merely mentions human rights as a main objective without any specific plan for implementation. *The Second Basic Plan for International Development Cooperation 2016-2020*, which is now being implemented, clearly links development cooperation policies to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Nonetheless, *the Second Basic Plan for International Development Cooperation 2016-2020* merely mentions "consideration for vulnerable/marginalized groups," including children, without any specific action plan. The Annual Implementation Plans include strategies to expand humanitarian assistance to vulnerable groups such as refugees, women and children, but does not present a distinct set of child policies. The government's humanitarian strategies, CPS, and major policies of KOICA also do not have specific plans to promote children's rights. While ODA programs for children are largely limited to education and health, there is no budget plan or program for particularly targeting human rights promotion, including children's rights.

Under these circumstances, the Korean government needs to establish a rights-based framework for international development cooperation to adequately contribute to children's rights promotion.<sup>10</sup> The framework must be guided by the following principles: 1) comply with the basic principles of the CRC; 2) prioritize children, taking into account their vulnerability and uniqueness; 3) recognize children as rights-holders; and 4) emphasize the responsibility and accountability of duty-bearers.<sup>11</sup>

The framework needs to state the value and vision of children's rights in international development cooperation, and ensure that a children's rights perspective is applied to all ODA programs based on relevant policies, strategies, and implementation plans. For this to happen, it must be accompanied with the necessary budget, staff, capacity building, and other operational support. In addition, the government needs to establish a permanent, central body responsible for policy coordination regarding human rights-based approach, including children's rights, and framework implementation monitoring.<sup>12</sup>

## ■ Recommendation

**O Establish a comprehensive, integrated, and Child Rights-Based Framework for international development cooperation, which includes operational support such as allocation of budget and staff, for the protection and promotion of Child Rights.**

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<sup>9</sup> The CRC Committee. *supra*, note 3.

<sup>10</sup> Lee, Yang-hee. 2011. *International Development Cooperation and the Rights of the Child*; Park, Eun-hye et al. 2018. *Study on the Minimum Standards of Child Rights Based Approach to International Development Cooperation*. p. 190.

<sup>11</sup> Lee, Yang-hee. *supra*.

<sup>12</sup> Kim, Eun-mi. 2014. "Realization of the Basic Ideas of Korea's ODA: Promotion of the Rights of the Child," Prepared for a conference organized by Save the Children & Re-shaping Development Institute.

## Best practice

### **Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA)**

In *the Policy for Global Development* of 2003, SIDA introduced a rights-based perspective based on international human rights conventions in all sectors of international development policies, and adopted a children's rights perspective that recognizes children and youth as major stakeholders and rights-holders in development cooperation. SIDA began to focus on children's rights across its ODA programs in the early 2000s, and published *the Rights of the Child as a Perspective in Development Cooperation* in 2002. The policy document adopted a child mainstreaming approach, proposing a ten-point program and four areas of strategic action for children's rights that would serve as a standard for ODA policies. SIDA also established *the Children's Rights Guidelines* for the training of its own staff and officials of recipient countries, and appointed a children's rights officer.

## **4. The Need for a Child Rights Perspective in the Country Partnership Strategies for Promoting the Rights of the Child in Fragile States and Priority Partner Countries**

In 2011, the CRC Committee recommended the Korean government to prioritize the rights of the child in overall international cooperation agreements with partner countries. Accordingly, with the fundamental principle of leaving no one behind, the KCOC Working Group on the Rights of the Child presents future recommendations based on an assessment of whether children's rights is set as a priority in partnership with fragile states and CPS for priority partner countries in which the Korean government partner with.

The Korean government's ODA programs are largely guided by CPS for priority partner countries, and fragile state strategies. Therefore, children's rights perspective must be introduced in these strategies, in order for promotion of the rights of the child to be prioritized in development cooperation agreements as the CRC Committee recommended.

### **(1) The need for a Child Rights Perspective in fragile state strategies**

In *the Second Strategic Plan for Grant Aid 2016-2020*, the Korean government committed to allocate 40% of its bilateral grant aid to least developed countries and fragile states, based on *the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile State* adopted at the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation in 2011.<sup>13</sup> As of 2015, Korea's aid for fragile states accounts for about 40% of its bilateral ODA, higher than the OECD DAC average of 34%.<sup>14</sup> KOICA established *the Mid-term Implementation Strategy for Fragile States 2017-2019* in 2016, set the budget separately for conflict-affected and fragile states from 2015, and allocated 28.9% of its ODA programs to fragile states (KOICA 2016). The government has made efforts to improve partnership with fragile states by establishing *the Fragile States Strategy* in 2017 based on the 2012 OECD DAC Peer Review recommendation that Korea needs to set up a cross-government guidelines and implementation plans for aid effectiveness in fragile states.

As shown in Table 1 below, decent living standards for children are not secured within 41 among the 48 fragile states selected by KOICA<sup>15</sup> as potential assistance partners. These fragile states suffer from

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<sup>13</sup> KOICA. 2017. "Suitability of KOICA Assistance Systems for Conflict-affected and Fragile States," Development and Issues No. 38.

<sup>14</sup> Committee for International Development Cooperation(CIDC). 2017. *Fragile States Strategy 2017*. p. 3.

<sup>15</sup> KOICA. 2016. *KOICA Mid-term Implementation Strategy for Fragile States 2017-2019*, p.16.

serious child stunting, child labor, child marriage, and other issues that urgently require integration of the child rights based approach in its overall policies, strategies, and implementation plans in detail.

<Table 1: Fragile states with children at risk><sup>16</sup>

Most children missing out on childhood (13 states)	Many children missing out on childhood (23 states)	Some children missing out on childhood (5 states)
Afghanistan, Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Sudan, Guinea, Niger, Madagascar, Mali, Cameroon, Nigeria, Central African Republic	Burundi, Haiti, Liberia, Sudan, Timor-Leste, Yemen, Zimbabwe, Côte d'Ivoire, Syria, Bangladesh, Congo, Ethiopia, Guinea-Bissau, Nepal, Uganda, Solomon Islands, Togo, Iraq, Pakistan, Comoros, Gambia, Kenya, Eritrea	Myanmar, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Sri Lanka, State of Palestine, Lebanon

\* Fragile states selected by KOICA as potential assistance partners, sorted by the End of Childhood Index rankings on p. 31 of the Save the Children Report.

\*\* The End of Childhood Index measures under-5 mortality, child stunting, out-of-school children and youth, child labor, child marriage, adolescent births, displacement by conflict, and child homicide.

Currently, the cross-government *Fragile States Strategy* specifies “vulnerable groups (children and women)” as priority beneficiaries without any detailed plan for its implementation and assistance. This makes it difficult to identify the actual impact of programs on the lives of children carried out by central and local government agencies. *KOICA Mid-term Implementation Strategy for Fragile States* also lacks specific directions for promotion of children’s rights, only citing the need to “promote social, political, and economic inclusiveness through social protection of, and employment creation for vulnerable groups (refugees, children, youth, and women).” The Korean government must establish differentiated assistance strategies based on the diverse child vulnerability characteristics of each fragile state in order to achieve inclusive development that leaves “no child behind”. Furthermore, an analysis of the CRC Committee’s concluding observations on each fragile state must be applied to overall processes in planning, implementation, and evaluation of programs for fragile states so that those programs can effectively provide benefits for children and girls, who are among the most vulnerable and marginalized.

**(2) The need to apply Child Rights Perspective and the CRC Committee’s concluding observations to Country Partnership Strategy (CPS)**

The Korean government combines loan and grant aid in country partnership strategies for each of the 24 priority partner countries. Country Partnership Strategy (CPS) serves as a reference for overall international development cooperation agreements and programs implemented by ODA executing agencies including both loan and grant aid, such as KOICA. Therefore, a children’s rights perspective needs to be introduced in CPS in order to prioritize children’s rights and to take into account the concluding observations of the CRC Committee on partner countries in all international development cooperation agreements.

CPS for priority partner countries clearly states that all aid programs must be in accordance to the SDGs, international aid norms such as the Busan Global Partnership Implementation Strategy, and the OECD DAC recommendations throughout the entire process, and that a gender perspective must be taken

<sup>16</sup> KOICA. 2016. *supra.*; Save the Children. 2018. End of Childhood Report: The Many Faces of Exclusion.



into account as a cross-cutting issue in all ODA programs. However, a child rights based approach, and consideration of the CRC Committee's recommendations on partner countries are absent in the overall strategy, including the current status analysis of child vulnerability in partner countries and its detailed implementation plans. A children's rights perspective needs to be recognized as a cross-cutting issue in CPS, along with gender equality.

## ■ Recommendation

### **O Implement the CRC Committee's concluding observations when developing strategies and implementing programs differentiated for each fragile state**

- Conduct thorough vulnerability assessments with a focus on children and girls, and establish strategies and programs differentiated for each fragile state. Refine country partnership strategies for fragile states that are also priority partner countries, based on the vulnerability assessments on children and girls.

### **O Require all ODA executing central and local government agencies, which implement programs in fragile states based on the cross-government *Fragile States Strategy* of 2017, to establish Child Rights based implementation plans, and conduct regular monitoring and evaluation regarding its impact on lives of children**

### **O Strengthen partnership with NGOs to improve effectiveness of child participatory programs in fragile states**

- In fragile states where institutional reforms cannot take place immediately, work with local NGOs or international NGOs that already have strong partnerships with children, parents, schools, and local communities in order to enhance child participation including the most disadvantaged children groups in particular

### **O Implement the CRC Committee's concluding observations for partner countries in all CPS, as an effort to introduce a Child Rights Perspective in all international development cooperation agreements.**

## 5. The Need for Child Safeguarding in ODA

From a children's rights perspective, international development cooperation programs have diverse potential risks of abuse, neglect, violence, and exploitation against children. As demonstrated by the sex abuse scandals in West Africa of 2002,<sup>17</sup> sexual exploitation and violence against children is one of the most serious problems in the field of humanitarian assistance and development cooperation. Cases of sexual exploitation, committed by UN peacekeepers in conflict areas and development program managers of donor countries, have been reported to the international society even after the scandals in West Africa.

Funded by taxpayers to fight poverty and promote humanitarianism, ODA programs must be implemented with due diligence to prevent any violation of children's rights in partner countries. This is an obligation of development assistance donors based on the principle of "Do No Harm", and a matter of accountability to domestic taxpayers. Therefore, the government needs to establish mechanisms to minimize potential risks of child rights violations, and rectify problematic practices. With the growing number of actors and stakeholders engaged in fundraising and partnership expansion for development cooperation based on SDGs, it is crucial that the government takes full caution to prevent any violation of child rights in the process and outcome of its ODA programs, and to establish appropriate accountability mechanisms.

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<sup>17</sup> Audrey Gillan. "Sex abuse scandals tarnish work of aid agencies in Africa" Guardian. April 20th 2002

Article 3 of the Framework Act on International Development Cooperation introduced in 2010 states the promotion of child rights in developing countries as a basic principle of international development cooperation. However, both loan and grant aid institutions lack a separate child safeguarding policy, or sufficient child safeguarding<sup>18</sup> standards in their existing policies. In the 2013 parliamentary audit and inspection of KOICA, it was discovered that 11 violent crimes took place during foreigner training programs between 2009 and 2012, including a sexual violence case against a Korean high school girl.<sup>19</sup> KOICA worked with the civil society in 2015 to introduce child safeguarding standards in several internal regulations and processes, including the Code of Conduct for the Development Alliance Korea, the review criteria and agreements for Public Private Partnerships, types of disciplinary measures taken by the Disciplinary Committee, the World Friends Korea program standards, and the volunteer oath for the World Friends Korea. These measures are problematic in the sense that it only requires stakeholders and partner institutions to submit written agreements to KOICA, without stating the management and oversight responsibilities of KOICA such as implementation of children's rights impact assessments and relevant responses, implementation monitoring system, and violation reporting mechanisms.

KOICA needs to better institutionalize its child safeguarding policy in order to prevent the violation of child rights within the planning, implementation and outcome of its development programs. With the expansion of programs based on corporate engagement, including the Inclusive Business Solution, the Creative Technology Solution, and vocational training, KOICA also needs to set up measures for potential violation of children's rights in these programs.

The Economic Development Cooperation Fund ("EDCF") of Korea Eximbank, responsible for loan aid, introduced a safeguard policy in 2016,<sup>20</sup> and stated in their Social Assessment criteria the need to identify potential impact of large-scale development projects on the local community and vulnerable groups such as children and women, and to prepare countermeasures, following the 2012 recommendations of the OECD DAC.

However, the safeguard policy is merely defined as a "useful measure," not mandatory guidelines, and only partner countries are responsible for its implementation. This type of passive approach from the government, which limits its responsibility to partner countries, cannot minimize the risks of children's rights violations in the process and outcome of programs. This is illustrated in the collapse of the Xe Pian-Xe Namnoy Dam in Laos,<sup>21</sup> a Public Private Partnership loan aid program of the EDCF, which eventually threatened the lives of children. This is why the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights already expressed its concerns in 2017 that Korea's public financial institutions do not consider or promote human rights in loan aid programs, and made recommendations for improvement.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> In this report, child safeguarding refers to organizational responsibility and institutional mechanism to prevent and respond to violence, exploitation, and abuse against children.

<sup>19</sup> Koo, Gyohyung. "Park, Byeong-seok, Violent crimes pervasive in KOICA's foreigner training programs." The Kyunghyang Shinmun. Oct. 31th 2013

<sup>20</sup> EDCF. 2016. Safeguard Policy. P.21

<sup>21</sup> Reliefweb. 2018. Lao PDR: Flooding Office of the UN Resident Coordinator Situation Report No. 02. According to the UN Resident Coordinator Situation Report,, the collapse caused 9 deaths, 131 missing persons, and more than 1,494 displaced persons, including many children, as of July 25, 2018.

<sup>22</sup> Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. 2017. Concluding observations on the fourth periodic report of the Republic of Korea. P.4

## ■ Recommendation

### ○ Introduce Child Safeguarding Policy and Guidelines in KOICA

- Develop a child safeguarding policy and guidelines that include child protection impact assessment and responses, implementation monitoring system, and violation reporting mechanism, for the prevention of potential risks from all grant aid stakeholders, including KOICA, corporations, civil society organizations, local partners, and volunteers.

### ○ Strengthen Child Safeguarding Standards in the EDCF policy and make them mandatory

- Stipulate that the safeguard policy is mandatory, and introduce child rights impact assessment and relevant measures, implementation monitoring system, and violation reporting mechanism within the policy.
- Ensure that the Korean government, not just partner countries is responsible for implementation, management and oversight of the safeguard policy.
- Demand corporations and organizations to consider children's rights promotion in grant and loan aid programs.

## Best Practice

### **Australia: Child Protection Policy<sup>23</sup> by Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade**

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (“DFAT,” formerly known as “AusAID”) of Australia established a child protection policy in 2008 for the first time, in the aftermath of a series of sexual abuse of children in developing countries in the 2000s. The child protection policy of DFAT focuses on the prevention of, and response to potential risks for children in the context of international development cooperation. It also puts forward principle-based Minimum Child Protection Standards, that help all stakeholders, including government institutions, corporations, local partners, volunteers, civil society organizations, and universities receiving ODA funds, to clearly understand and fulfill their responsibility to protect children. A third-party assessment in 2011 found that the policy contributed to improved risk management based on practical and preventative measures for child abuse and exploitation, and enhanced the brand reputation of DFAT. Amendments of the policy in 2013 and 2017 enabled more systematic and effective implementation by providing detailed guidelines on operation, hiring, and media utilization for different types of programs and beneficiaries, sectors, and stages, not just on organization management.

## **6. The Need for Recognizing “Child” as a Cross-cutting Issue in International Development Cooperation**

According to UNICEF, among the 767 million people under the absolute poverty line of USD 1.9 a day, 385 million are children under 18.<sup>24</sup> In developing countries, 9.2% of the adult population live under the poverty line, while 19.5% of all children. Thus, it can be concluded that children comprise of the largest group living in poverty, and are the most socially marginalized and vulnerable to poverty. International development cooperation programs, with the mission of fighting poverty, must prioritize children and take into account the vulnerability and uniqueness of children in every sector.

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<sup>23</sup> Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. 2018. Child Protection Policy.

<sup>24</sup> UNICEF. 2016. Ending Extreme Poverty: a Focus on Children

As mentioned earlier, there is no development assistance strategy taking children into account, despite the fact that *the 2nd Basic Plan for International Development Cooperation 2016-2020* cites children as a vulnerable group to prioritize. In addition, “children” rarely appear in KOICA’s *Mid-term Sectoral Strategy 2016-2020*, except in chapters regarding health and education.

International development cooperation has a profound impact on children’s lives, directly and indirectly. Therefore, children must be a priority not just in health and education sectors, but also in rural development, drinking water, transportation and other major sectors of international development cooperation. According to KOICA’s *Mid-term Sectoral Strategy 2016-2020*, grant aid programs of KOICA have five priority sectors - *education, health, governance, agriculture & rural development, and technology & environment & energy*; water, transportation, energy, technology and innovation - and two cross-cutting issues - gender equality and climate change. “Children” must be included as an additional cross-cutting issue so that development programs in all sectors, not just in health and education, take into account child rights principles, and recognize children as rights-holders.

#### • **Child and Agriculture & Rural development**

According to the 2017 FAO’s global report, there are 152 million child laborers in the world, of which more than 70% are in the agriculture sector. 70 million children aged 5-17 years are exposed to harmful materials such as pesticides and chemical fertilizers, in risk of dangerous farm machinery, long working hours and high labor intensity, which have profound impact on the health and well-being of children. Therefore, rural development programs need to consider child labor issues and safe working environments for children, and adopt the ILO Guidelines on Child Labor in Agriculture.

#### • **Child and Water**

Drinking water facilities must be easily accessible by children, and the safety and quality of water must be guaranteed. It is crucial to take into account the most vulnerable children, including those with HIV/AIDS or with disabilities.<sup>25</sup> Program planning must take into full account the immune status of children with HIV/AIDS and the accessibility of children with disabilities, and encourage their participation so that they are not excluded in the process and outcome of development programs.

#### • **Child and Transportation**

Every year, 222,770 children and youth aged 0-19 years die on the road, and traffic accident is the fifth most ranked cause of death for children aged 5-14.<sup>26</sup> A survey found that 70-90% of children in Africa walk to school on the road without sidewalks, and they are often victimized by traffic accidents. Traffic accidents have profound impact on the growth and health of children.<sup>27</sup> In particular, children of poor families in developing countries cannot often afford appropriate medical treatment for traffic accidents. Therefore, the impact of transportation and roads on the health and lives of children must not be neglected. To stop the victimization of children in unsafe road environments, child safety must be a priority in transportation programs.

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<sup>25</sup> SIDA.200. The Rights of the Child in Swedish Development Cooperation.

<sup>26</sup> FiA.2018. Unfinished Journey: the Global Health Response to Children & Road Traffic.

<sup>27</sup> Billingsley et al. 2016. Step Change: An Action Agenda on Safe Walking for Africa’s Children.

## **Best practice**

### **Belgium: The Rights of the Child in Development Cooperation<sup>28</sup>**

The Law on Belgian International Cooperation (“The Law”) of 1999 states the goals and principles of development cooperation, and specifies focus sectors and cross-cutting issues. Cross-cutting issues stated in the Law include the environment, gender, social economy as well as children’s rights. This indicates that the Belgian government must respect children’s rights in all sectors of development cooperation.

Respect for children’s rights is further guaranteed by technical recommendations in the areas of protection, service provision, and participation. The government published *the Rights of the Child in Development Cooperation* in 2007,<sup>29</sup> which explains basic directions for children’s rights promotion based on the Law, and *the Strategy Paper: Respect for the Rights of the Child in the Belgian Development Cooperation* in 2007,<sup>30</sup> which sets out corresponding strategies in detail. These documents work as practical tools for protection, respect and fulfillment of children’s rights in Belgium’s international development cooperation programs.

## **■ Recommendation**

- Recognize “Child” as a cross-cutting issue for programs in all sectors to promote Child Rights**

## **7. The Need for Special Consideration for Child in Humanitarian Assistance**

The world is facing unprecedented humanitarian crises with a large number of refugees and displaced persons fleeing conflicts, natural disasters and persecution. As of 2018, more than 136 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance - 2.5 times greater than 53 million in 2010.<sup>31</sup> As of 2017, there are 68 million refugees around the world, of which 52% are children under 18. This is 41% higher than in 2009, illustrating the “crises of children” with a lost generation in prolonged conflicts.<sup>32</sup>

In particular, armed conflicts are causing enormous humanitarian suffering. Recently, conflicts are often prolonged as in Syria, Yemen, Iraq and South Sudan. Civilians are affected more directly as they occur in highly populated areas. It is children who suffer the most in these circumstances. Globally, 1 in 6 children live in conflict-affected areas, and the number of children killed or injured in conflicts is growing rapidly.<sup>33</sup> As of 2016, the total number of children affected by conflicts stands at 357 million, which is a 75% increase from 200 million in 1995. Almost half of them – 166 million – face “six major risks” defined by the UN, namely, death from armed conflict, disability from injury, sexual violence, abduction, forced conscription, bombing of school and hospital, and obstruction of aid. Therefore, special efforts must be

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<sup>28</sup> Eun-hye et al. supra. note 10.

<sup>29</sup> Belgian FPS Foreign Affairs. 2007. *The Rights of the Child in Development Cooperation*.

<sup>30</sup> Belgian FPS Foreign Affairs. 2007, *Strategy Paper: Respect for the Rights of the Child in the Belgian Development Cooperation*.

<sup>31</sup> UNOCHA. 2018. *Global Humanitarian Overview*.

<sup>32</sup> UNHCR. 2017. “Forced Displacement Worldwide at Its Highest in Decades”.

<sup>33</sup> Save the Children. 2018. *The War on Children: Time to End Violations Against Children in Armed Conflict*. P.7

taken for the protection of children and youth, including prevention of child soldiers and their integration to society after conflict, care for mental trauma from murder, mutilation and sexual violence in conflict, birth registration of children on the move, and prevention of bombing of educational facilities, including schools.

In tragedy created by adults, refugee children face the “dual risks” of losing the basis for livelihoods in their homeland as well as education opportunities, which are crucial to restore their lives. Currently, half of school-aged refugee children, or 3.7 million receive no education at all. Only 50% of refugee children receive primary education, and 22% of refugee youth receive secondary education. These numbers fall well short of the global enrolment rates of 91% for primary education and 84% for secondary education.<sup>34</sup> Lost education opportunities mean lost potential for appropriate personal growth and lost choices throughout their lifetime. Quality education for refugee children is particularly important, as it builds their resilience to cope with psychological and emotional trauma. The problem is that most of the refugee host countries are middle- and low-income countries. Under these circumstances, refugee children are not given education opportunities, and it is difficult to expect adequate learning results due to low quality of education language barriers and other restrictions. Thus, the international community must provide technological and financial support for host countries.

Korea’s humanitarian assistance budget has increased steadily between 2012 and 2016, from USD 16.6 million (0.9%), USD 36.8 million (1.6%), USD 72.9 million (3.1%), USD 44.2 million (1.9%) and USD 67.3 million (2.7%), respectively. In particular, the 2017 budget for humanitarian assistance increased by a great amount of 8% from the previous year. The share of the humanitarian assistance budget in the total ODA volume has had its ups and downs, and the Korean government continues to focus on reaching the OECD DAC average of 6 %, the long-term target declared in its first *Humanitarian Strategy* of 2015. However, there was no specific plan for effective use of the increased budget and implementation. *The 2nd Basic Plan for International Development Cooperation 2016-2020*, drafted more recently, does not provide objectives, scale and numbers regarding humanitarian programs. Therefore, it is impossible to find out where and how the increased budget has been used, and monitor whether the increased budget is aligned with any strategic direction.

Korea’s First *Humanitarian Strategy* states that “expansion of assistance for vulnerable groups such as children, women, and refugees, who require special consideration” is its primary strategy to improve effectiveness. However, it does not state any specific implementation plan. In addition, it is difficult to find out whether the priority in strategy effectively translates into actual assistance, and how much it contributes to the promotion of children’s rights, because the government does not disclose detailed data per program. Therefore, the Korean government needs to establish more specific implementation plans, and mechanisms for monitoring actual progress in order to ensure effectiveness.

## ■ Recommendation

- O Establish a new strategy, implementation plan and roadmap to expand relevant assistance, and to develop performance assessment criteria and mechanisms for monitoring impact on child rights promotion in order to more effectively respond to emergencies for children.**
- O In the process of implementation planning, join the efforts of the international society by supporting political commitments on child protection and education, and earmarked funds designed to effectively implement the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants adopted in 2016, and the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework.**

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<sup>34</sup> Save the Children. 2018. Time to Act: A Costed Plan to Deliver Quality Education to Every Last Refugee Child. P.4

## Best Practice

### **Norway: Humanitarian Strategy with a Focus on Child Protection<sup>35</sup> by Ministry of Foreign Affairs**

Norway's Ministry of Foreign Affairs revised its humanitarian strategy in 2018 to effectively deal with the changing humanitarian landscape, adopting a new and integrated approach to civilian protection, reform and innovation, and prevention of humanitarian crisis. In particular, it focuses on *protection* to respond to changes in conflicts, including the increase in urban warfare and indiscriminate use of explosive weapons in highly populated areas, and the prolonged and complicated nature of war. The top priority in protection is children and youth, who are often victimized and most vulnerable in armed conflicts. The strategy also identifies a list of priorities, including the following:

- 1) Support for "Education in Emergencies";
- 2) Support for "Safe Schools Declaration" that denounces attack against students and teachers, and occupation of educational facilities;
- 3) Family reunification;
- 4) Treatment of post-traumatic stress disorder; and
- 5) Fighting gender-based violence such as human trafficking, forced child marriage, and organized prostitution.

In addition, it is emphasized that Norway expands the efforts to protect children in conflicts as a main foreign policy objective and speaks for those children in the international society.

## **8. Conclusion**

The Korean government became a member of the OECD DAC and officially joined the ranks of donors in 2009. Since then, it has made efforts to expand its international development cooperation to tackle global challenges such as poverty and inequality, and achieve sustainable development goals together with the international society. However, **Korea's ODA/GNI ratio remains at 0.14%, much lower than the DAC average of 0.32% as well as the international target of 0.7%. It is also observed that children, a major group of beneficiaries and actors in development cooperation, are not fully taken into account in Korea's overall ODA policies and programs.** This means that Korea has failed to effectively implement the 2011 recommendations of the CRC Committee and Article 4 of the CRC. It is urgent that Korea takes practical measures to prioritize promotion of the rights of the child in its international development programs and policy implementation.

Therefore, the KCOC Working Group on the Rights of the Child urges the Korean government to:

- (1) **Carry out all international development cooperation activities** that directly and indirectly impact children **based on an integrated, Child Rights-Based Framework;**

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<sup>35</sup> Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 2018. Norway's Humanitarian Strategy: An effective and integrated approach.

- (2) **Take into full account of the CRC Committee’s concluding observations on partner countries throughout its overall strategy and implementation processes regarding its priority partner countries and fragile states;**
- (3) **Establish Child Safeguarding Policies and Guidelines for KOICA**, responsible for grant aid, and **oblige the EDCF**, responsible for loan aid, **to fully implement stronger Child Safeguarding Standards in its safeguard policy;**
- (4) **Introduce “Child” as a cross-cutting issue in KOICA programs** to ensure Child Rights are respected in all sectors of development cooperation; and
- (5) **Set up specific implementation plans and a roadmap to effectively deal with humanitarian crisis that make children most vulnerable, and performance assessment criteria and mechanism for Child Rights promotion.** It is well worth considering **joining the efforts of the international society** such as the UN Global Compact.

**Child Rights based framework, strategy and specific implementation plans will ensure effective implementation of the CRC in all Korea’s international development cooperation as well as serve as significant measure to achieve inclusive growth worldwide where no child is left behind.**

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