

FORUM REPORT 2014 DUBAI



Global Child Forum on the Middle East and North Africa *13 November, Dubai, United Arab Emirates*

CO-ORGANISERS:



GLOBAL CHILD FORUM IS INITIATED BY H.M. KING CARL XVI GUSTAF AND H.M. QUEEN SILVIA OF SWEDEN



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The views expressed are those of certain participants in the discussion and do not necessarily reflect the views of all participant or of the Global Child Forum. Excerpts and quotes of participants are reproduced by Global Child Forum.

Introduction

by Ulf Karlberg, Chairman, Global Child Forum

A quarter of a century ago the world saw the introduction of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. In 2014, for the first time ever, the recipients of the Nobel Peace Prize were two remarkable children's rights activists; Kailash Satyarthi and Malala Yousafzai.

There has been a lot of progress since the United Nations codified the scope of children's rights back in 1989. However, a lot of work still needs to be done to protect and support children – now and in the future.

At the Global Child Forum, we see a future where children's rights are respected and supported by all stakeholders of society. Platforms that encourage informed dialogue are the key to partnerships between government entities, businesses, universities and the civil society. Only collaboration can lead to an effective, longterm improvement of children's rights globally.

With 2.3 billion children and young people in the world under the age of 18, protecting children's rights is not only an issue for certain countries and geographical

regions but a responsibility all of human beings. Today, the average person on the planet is young. Regions like the Middle East and North Africa see swelling birth rates, and increased unemployment among the young. It has never been more important to ensure that children have their civil, political, economic, social, health and cultural rights respected and taken care of.

2014 was also an important year for us at the Global Child Forum, as we held our first Regional Forum outside Sweden in Dubai, United Arab Emirates in November. With the great support from Her Majesty Queen Silvia of Sweden, and Her Royal Highness Princess Haya Bint Al Hussein.

There were participants from academia, business and civil society from many countries. We were happy to note that issues related to a better future for our children go beyond age, race, religious beliefs, languages, cultures and nationalities.

Our first Forum outside of Sweden proved that ex-



Mr. Ulf Karlberg



panding the conversation beyond the European home-turf has a great potential to deliver results with a wider range of active partners.

This report from the Forum in Dubai provides highlights from the presentations, panel discussions and ActionLabs. Additionally, findings from our global study on Children's Rights and the Corporate Sector, produced in collaboration with the Boston Consulting Group, are briefly presented with a special focus on the Middle East and North Africa region.

We hope that this report will serve as a brief, but inspirational guide to our Forum in Dubai.

We look forward to continued collaboration with all existing and new partners from across the world.

Let us continue to have an informed and honest dialogue about the real meaning of sustainability. Let

us continue to build effective collaborations for real results on the ground and share experiences for a better future for all children in a more sustainable world.

Not only by using nice words, supporting charity or just doing what legal frameworks might require – but by taking a lead and always strive for best practice.

Executive Summary

The Global Child Forum is an independent platform to encourage dialogue, thought leadership and multi-stakeholder partnerships that advance children's rights.

Five years ago H.M. the King and H.M. the Queen of Sweden established the Global Child Forum as a Royal foundation to support the United Nation's Convention on the Rights of the Child. This foundation is best known for its annual international Forum at the Royal Palace in Stockholm.

November 2014 marked the first regional Global Child Forum outside Sweden. The Global Child Forum on the Middle East and North Africa aims at widening the scope of dialogue and to include new decision makers with new perspectives from the Arab world. This event in United Arab Emirates gathered some 500 leaders from across the region and the rest of the world, from business, academia, financial institutions, government, media and non-governmental organisations.

During the Forum, the joint Global Child Forum – Boston Consulting Group (BCG) report “Children's Rights and the Corporate Sector in the Middle East and North Africa” was presented and discussed among experts. The report shows how 353 public listed companies selected from the Forbes Top 500 Companies in the Arab World list, address and report on children's rights. The companies were selected from nine industry sectors and benchmarked across nine key indicators, including child labour policy, performance reporting, board accountability and collaborations with children's rights organisations.

During the Forum regional conflict was highlighted as a significant challenge for the children in the Middle East and North Africa. With instability in Syria, Palestine and many other countries, many children are unable to access quality education, healthcare and they

live in fear of their lives. With the number of child refugees rising by the day, countries surrounding conflict zones are struggling to keep a pace with feeding, clothing, protecting and educating thousands of traumatized children and young people.

Despite the challenges that lay ahead, the forum identified several untapped opportunities, particularly through engaging with business and financial sectors. Whether it's large corporations, small businesses or creative entrepreneurs, the private sector can potentially support in areas of poverty and conflict and also provide solutions to some of the most important issues related to children's rights. The Forum drew attention to several positive practical examples of good work and best practice across the region. Companies in sectors such as banking, telecommunications and oil and gas have programmes in place to help children. This is described in the coming sections of this report. While legal frameworks to protect children's rights in some places in the region exist, the real results for children are uneven between countries.

Our report “Children's Rights and the Corporate Sector in the Middle East and North Africa” found that while 64 per cent of the companies in the region address corporate social responsibility in some way, only 11 per cent specifically address children's rights related issues.

Participants discussed how businesses and financial institutions could not only respect legislation regarding children but also use their full potential to go further. For example by boosting children's rights and becoming more accountable, transparent and using corporate knowledge and resources to create a better



future for the region's children and youth, in co-operation with governments and NGOs. Planning for effective education resulting in productive employment is one of the keys.

The Forum concluded with an agreement to reinforce the importance and relevance of children's

rights across the Middle East and North Africa, calling on cross-sector partnerships and action to continue to raise awareness of children's rights issues as part of the future sustainability agenda.

Programme

TIME	SESSION	Participants
8.30 a.m.	REGISTRATION	
9.00 a.m.	OPENING Introduction and Welcome	Her Majesty Queen Silvia of Sweden Her Royal Highness Princess Haya Bint Al Hussein Mr. Ulf Karlberg, Chairman, Global Child Forum Rt Hon Lord Dr. Michael Hastings, CBE
9.45 a.m.	KEY NOTE SPEECHES Statement of the League of Arab States The Importance and Relevance of the Convention on the Rights of the Child Children's Rights – Any of our Business?	His Excellency Ambassador Ahmed Benhelli, Deputy Secretary General, League of Arab States Mr. Badr Jafar, Founder the Pearl Initiative and CEO Crescent Enterprises Mr. Salil Shetty, Secretary General, Amnesty International
10.15 a.m.	HIGH LEVEL DIALOGUE Challenges and Opportunities for Children in Middle East and North Africa	Her Excellency Dr. Sheikha Al Maskari, Chairperson, Al Maskari Holding Mr. Daniel Endres, Director of the Division of External Relations, UNHCR Dr. Elie Mekhael, Advisor to League of Arab States Mr. Badr Jafar, Founder the Pearl Initiative and CEO Crescent Enterprises Mr. Salil Shetty, Secretary General, Amnesty International
10.45 a.m.	LEGISLATION, POLICY AND GOOD PRACTICE ON CHILDREN'S RIGHTS IN MENA	His Excellency Minister Plenipotentiary Enas Mekkaawy, Head of Women, Family and Childhood Department, League of Arab States
11.00 a.m.	NETWORKING BREAK	
11.30 a.m.	INTRODUCTION TO THE CHILDREN'S RIGHTS AND BUSINESS PRINCIPLES	Dr. Bo Viktor Nylund, Chief of Corporate Social Responsibility, UNICEF Mr. Frederic Sicre, Representative, UN Global Compact Ms. Manal Wazani, CEO, Save the Children Jordan
11.50 a.m.	THE GLOBAL AND REGIONAL BENCHMARK STUDY	Dr. Magdalena Kettis, Research Director, Global Child Forum Dr. Laura Lültsdorf, Principal, The Boston Consulting Group, United Arab Emirates Mr. Fredrik Vogel, Principal, The Boston Consulting Group, Sweden

12.05 p.m.	BUSINESS AND CHILDREN'S RIGHTS – PANEL DISCUSSION ON GOOD PRACTICE	Mr. Frederic Sicre, Partner, Abraaj Group Mr. Klas Balkow, President and CEO, Clas Ohlson AB Dr. Hans-Holger Albrecht, President and CEO, Millicom Mr. Sultan Al-Hajji, Vice President and Chief Strategy Officer, Total Dr. Howard Taylor, Vice President and Managing Director, Nike Foundation Mr. Marcus Bailey, COO and Head of Corporate Affairs, MENAP, Standard Chartered Bank
12.45 p.m.	NETWORKING LUNCHEON	
2.00 p.m.	ACTIONLABS: A: Education, Employment and Entrepreneurship B: The Children's Rights and Business Principles C: Children in a Digital World D: Employees are also Parents and Caretakers	
3.40 p.m.	NETWORKING BREAK	
4.00 p.m.	ACTIONLAB OUTPUT – FINDINGS AND OUTCOMES EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIPS FOR CHILDREN'S RIGHTS	ActionLab moderators Dr. Darian Stibbe, Executive Director, The Partnering Initiative
4.30 p.m.	THE KEY IS E	Mr. Emmanuel Jal and Mr. Paul Lindley, Co-Founders, The Key is E
4.50 p.m.	THE VOICE OF YOUNG PEOPLE	Ms. Inger Ashing, Executive Director, Global Child Forum Mr. Sunil John, CEO, ASDA'A Burson Marsteller Mr. Roland Angerer, Regional Director for Eastern and Southern Africa, Plan International Ms. Safiya Al Bahlani, Artist and Creative Designer
5.30 p.m.	CONCLUDING PANEL GOING FORWARD – WHAT HAPPENS NOW?	H.E. Minister Plenipotentiary Ms. Enas S. Mekawy, Head of Women, Family & Childhood departments, League of Arab States Mr. Salil Shetty, Secretary General, Amnesty International Ms. Mahira Hassan, CSR Manager, Vodafone Egypt Mr. Sultan Al-Hajji, Vice President & CSO, Total E & P UAE
6.00 p.m.	CLOSING REMARKS	Her Majesty Queen Silvia of Sweden
6.20 p.m.	SPEECH BY CULTURAL EVENT CELEBRATING 25 YEARS OF THE UN CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD	His Excellency Sheikh Nahayan bin Mubarak Al Nahayan, Minister of Culture, Youth and Social Development, United Arab Emirates BSAK Symphony Orchestra and Ms. Åsa Jinder
7.30 p.m.	INFORMAL BUFFET DINNER AT FORT ISLAND, MADINAT JUMEIRAH	

WELCOME BY

Her Majesty Queen Silvia of Sweden

Exactly twenty-five years ago, world leaders from almost all nations of the world adopted, signed and ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

This unique Convention aims to give every child a better life, for example equality and the right to take an active part in key decisions. Freedom from violence and fear, freedom from slavery, forced labour, trafficking, sexual abuse, prostitution, child soldier service etc.

More children are better off today than ever before. However, at the same time more children are victims of violence, conflicts, forced migration, trafficking and climate change than before.

I am a mother of three and a grandmother of two small children. His Majesty and I, like most parents, love and deeply care about our children. But we also care about other children, the children of the world who are suffering.

"We want to find new ways to help these children and their parents"

We want to find new ways to help these children and their parents. In 2010, at the 20 year anniversary of the UN Rights of the Child Convention, His Majesty, and I, launched the Global Child Forum, as an international platform helping to raise awareness of the rights of children. The Global Child Forum wants to inspire and engage more countries, more parts of the civil society and also especially more parts of the private sector to take action in the support of our future – our children.

We have held four successful international Forums at the Royal Palace in Stockholm since we started. This important meeting today in Dubai, is our first Forum abroad.

Together with Princess Haya, I have great expectations for the day.

I am very much looking forward to today's program with excellent speakers and interesting panel discussions.

I hope we can have an open, honest and very productive day together. Please take the opportunity to discuss and to network, whenever you meet. I look forward to participating in every part of the program and wish you all good luck.

"The Global Child Forum wants to inspire and engage more countries, more parts of the civil society and also especially more parts of the private sector to take action in the support of our future – our children"



EXCERPT FROM THE SPEECH BY

Her Royal Highness Princess Haya Bint Al Hussein

Wife of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai.

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you this morning to your event, on behalf of the United Arab Emirates. We are proud that you have chosen to have the first meeting of the Global Child Forum outside Stockholm in the United Arab Emirates.

The United Arab Emirates is all about the future and the future is, of course, all about our children. No country today is more devoted to giving children opportunities and helping them realise their potential more than the United Arab Emirates.

Many nations – and I am proud the United Arab Emirates is among them – have made children a priority. There has been remarkable progress globally in reducing mortality and disease among children and in ensuring they receive a proper education.

After decades of rapid economic progress in the United Arab Emirates, the challenges that face our young people have evolved and are much the same as those in Europe and North America – especially the negative health consequences of prosperity.

Child health in the United Arab Emirates has improved dramatically since unification in 1971, though there are still pockets in the population where health and nutrition need to be improved. We have seen the Infant Mortality Rate drop from 18 per 1,000 live births in 1990 to 6 in 2010. And the under-five mortality rate per 1,000 live births dropped from 22 in 1990 to 7 in 2010. The United Arab Emirates has already achieved the fifth Millennium Development Goal regarding improving maternal health and its Maternal Mortality

Rate per 100,000 live births since 2004 is zero.

The United Arab Emirates policies to expand immunisations and eradicate infectious diseases and promote health programmes for children have also largely succeeded. Under the Expanded Programme on Immunisation the overall coverage for all vaccines has exceeded 90% since 2000. Polio has been eradicated since 1994, and diphtheria since 1990.

On the education front, the news is very encouraging, especially with regards to girls and women. The right to education in the United Arab Emirates does not discriminate between males and females. On the contrary, females record higher enrolment rates than males at all educational levels making the United Arab Emirates on track to achieve gender equality in education. Education is free through university level at which the gender statistics are excellent. We are extremely pleased that the United Arab Emirates has the highest percentage of young women enrolled in graduate studies in the world.

On the other hand, there are areas that can still be improved. Poor diets and insufficient exercise have contributed to an explosion in diabetes and other non-communicable diseases throughout the Gulf and these problems begin in childhood. We need more innovative approaches to reach and engage our children on diet and exercise. We have made progress in raising awareness through the "Fat Truth" Campaign we conducted with UNICEF to promote physical activity and better nutrition among Emirati youth. But there is



still much to do for a more lasting impact.

Looking ahead, the United Arab Emirates's ten year National Childhood Strategy 2012/2021 was developed in cooperation between the Supreme Council for Motherhood and Childhood, the umbrella for children and children's rights in the United Arab Emirates, and UNICEF. The Strategy covers four interdependent children's rights themes, namely: survival, development, protection and participation. Local NGOs were also established to protect and look after children's rights and their well-being, such as the Dubai Foundation for Women and Children, which is the first licensed non-profit shelter that offers immediate protection and support to victims of violence, abuse and human trafficking in accordance with international human rights obligations. The United Arab Emirates has passed strict laws banning child labour and traffick-

*"We must defend
the rights of children
even when the most
powerful military
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ing of women and children and we expect passage of an even more detailed Child Protection Law very soon. We still need to do more in areas like early childhood development and better help those with disabilities.

There are hundreds of millions of children worldwide who are denied the opportunities we take for granted here in the United Arab Emirates. Intractable poverty and hunger, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, continue to take their toll and hold them back in life. We have yet to attain the Millennium Development Goals, including those for children, in scores of countries.

The United Arab Emirates, for its part, has embraced its obligation to help those in need and last year donated more than 5 billion dollars in foreign aid, or roughly 1.25 percent of its GDP, making it the leading country in the world. The only other nations that have repeatedly reached or exceed UN targets for develop-

ment aid have been Sweden and the other Nordic countries, the Netherlands and Luxembourg. Your Majesty, you can take great satisfaction in the superb record Sweden has built over decades in humanitarian and development aid.

United Arab Emirates aid funds have paid for projects in more than 170 countries and we view our obligations as global, not just regional. Dubai Cares – a private initiative begun by H.H. Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum – has made education, including gender equality, its special focus and has donated \$139 million for projects, with roughly \$66 million each going to African and Asian initiatives. Last year, H.H. Sheikh Mohammed Bin Zayed Al Nahayan, the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, announced a \$120 million donation to promote vaccinations following an earlier joint pledge with the Gates Foundation of \$100 million for vaccination projects in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Total contributions by the United Arab Emirates to GAVI Vaccine Alliance have reached \$33 million, while contributions to UNICEF to support polio eradication have been \$8.7 million.

Aid to Syrian and Palestinian refugee children has brought tens of millions of United Arab Emirates and private donations, with Sheikha Jawaher Bint Mohammed Al Qasimi's campaign Salam Ya Seghar for education and health now at \$15 million.

Finally, United Arab Emirates support for orphans has been particularly generous with \$188 million donated just since 2011 for housing, education and health, with \$89 million donated last year alone.

Too often international initiatives on the rights of the child are strong on platitudes, but weak on delivery. There is a long history of declarations, resolutions, and campaigns that have not yielded enough tangible results for children. Yes, there has been significant progress in many parts of the world, but we so easily overlook some of the most outrageous violations of child's rights, particularly when politics blinds us.

It is the most basic right of a child – the right to life – that has been infringed blatantly this year in the Middle East in Syria, Iraq and Gaza. All these conflicts have taken the lives of children, but the worst violation of their rights took place this summer in Gaza when 490 Palestinian children were killed, 560 orphaned and 3000 injured in the Israeli bombardment. One child died in Israel as well. Even if the truce holds, you can be sure the carnage is not over for Gaza's children. According to UNICEF, over 450,000 of these children now live in areas with unexploded ordnance.

While there were cries of outrage from nearly every major country when the UNWRA shelters in Gaza were bombed, they went unheeded and there were no sanctions by the United Nations or leading powers.



Some western media continued to carry claims that somehow these children were being used as "human shields" – youngsters were even blown apart while playing on the beach.

How were those children human shields? Gaza is a tiny enclave – even smaller now that 40 percent of it is a buffer zone. If you bombard it and prevent women and children from fleeing, you make their deaths inevitable.

But children do not suffer in Gaza just during battle. As a UN Messenger of Peace I have focused on the MDGs, particularly the eradication of hunger and malnutrition. In most of the countries I have visited hunger and poverty are the result of failed economics, environmental degradation, and lack of infrastructure. They are not artificially created as collective punishment as they have been in Gaza.

According to the United Nations: "Restrictions by Israeli authorities...have left 1.3 million Palestinians unable to meet basic food expenses." In Gaza, conditions are worse, with 6 out of 10 people relying on

emergency food aid to survive.

WHO has found that half the children under 2 in the West Bank and Gaza are anemic and there is also a high rate of anemia among pregnant women. In May 2012, WHO stated that the incidence of both malnutrition and stunting among children is not improving. In fact, half the infants in Palestine today are malnourished.

I ask you: – Would that be acceptable in Stockholm, Brussels or New York?

My compliments to the Government of Sweden for taking a concrete step towards peace by recognising Palestine. We need more countries to show your courage and compassion.

We must defend the rights of children even when the most powerful military and political forces are aligned against us. Your Majesty, I know you and your people have this level of commitment. I applaud you for it and I wish you a very productive forum.

Thank you.

EXCERPT FROM THE SPEECH BY

His Excellency Ambassador Ahmed Benhelli

Deputy Secretary General, League of Arab States

I would like at the outset to express on behalf of the Secretary-General of the Arab League and its delegation our pleasure to attend the launch of the Global Child Forum, which is held for the first time at a regional level, in the land of the United Arab Emirates, this Arabic lighthouse whose developmental career and renaissance we have followed with pride and appreciation, it is a source for thought and science, enlightenment and development model of economic success. It is an international centre for important events and conferences that deal with human issues and preoccupations in all areas, and the search for the most effective ways to improve it and provide a good environment for peaceful coexistence, social solidarity and build a secure future and a decent life for its citizens and guests.

Hence the interest of the United Arab Emirates in children, the child of today, and the man of tomorrow, and raise him on the values of human-Semitism, and enable him to use the advanced modern tools, and openness to others and interact with him, as the man who is honoured by God will remain the source of wealth and its centre and builder of the future which nations and people are looking forward to.

Therefore, we find this keen interest from the leaders of the United Arab Emirates and its officials in paying attention to the affairs of childhood, in hosting in October the Regional Conference. This was held under the title of "protection of refugee children in the Middle East and North Africa region", and today the United Arab Emirates hosts the Global Child Forum,

which seeks to provide support for child protection, and the advancement of the status of the child. This forum comes as an extension of a series of successful global forums that are held annually in the Kingdom of Sweden by a noble initiative of H.M. King Carl XVI Gustaf of Sweden, the honorary president of the forum and H.M. Queen Silvia of Sweden.

Talking about child protection and his rights makes it imperative that I focus in my presentation on the Arab situation of children. This painful reality, where the child in the midst of this raging fire, wars, senseless violence and terrorism, where the child becomes the first victim, because of what he faces from killing and displacement, and abusing his rights. The falling of thousands of children from cruelty and violence, without any regard to his minimum rights, in the absence of the application of legislation and international rights of the child. It is not only a heinous crime against innocence, and a murder of hope, and the destruction of the future of the countries that their children suffer these tragedies and calamities, but the effects of these tragedies in their life may cause complexity and the difficulty of adapting to reality and keep up with his time, and can produce a disabled generation, physically and psychologically.

The Arab League has put attention to children's rights among its priorities, and there is more interest from specialized Arab ministerial council summits on this important topic, the last decision made by Arab leaders, during their meeting in Baghdad in 2012 was



the adoption of the "Marrakesh Declaration" which stressed the continuing efforts to advance the rights of Children and seek to improve them in the context of human rights and to give children's issues the priority it deserves.

The League of Arab States is also working with the United Nations to adopt a third Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, considering issues of child protection rights are universal humanitarian issues, are processed within an international framework that ensures concerted efforts to improve the conditions of children, and to protect them against all violations, by providing a legal environment and appropriate legislation to save these rights so they are not compromised.

In the end, let me express my gratitude and appreciation to H.H. Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, United Arab Emirates Vice President and Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai, and H.M. Queen Silvia of Sweden and HRH Princess Haya bint Al Hussein, wife of H.H. Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, and sincere thanks and appreciation to the United Arab Emirates for the state, leadership, government and people of good hospitality and warm reception, with best wishes for the Global Child Forum's work and the results of the process that contributes to the protection of the child and open the doors of hope and confidence for the future.



EXCERPT FROM THE SPEECH BY

Mr. Badr Jafar

Founder of the Pearl Initiative and CEO of Crescent Enterprises

I'm here today in my capacity as a businessperson.

A businessperson who believes wholeheartedly that the overarching purpose of business is to enrich the lives of those who the business touches, often referred to as its stakeholders.

So who are these stakeholders?

The stakeholder concept was first used in a 1963 internal memorandum at the Stanford Research Institute. It defined stakeholders as "those groups without whose support the organisation would cease to exist." That definition prompted businesses to think of these groups as being our shareholders, our employees, our customers, our suppliers, the government.

But the flaw with this definition of stakeholders, is that it sets us up to easily miss out an extremely important group that is clearly affected by business: our children. Why?

Because we don't think of officials, employees, or investors as being children - even though some of us sometimes behave as such!

So if we instead start to think of a corporate stakeholder as anyone that can affect, or be affected by the actions of a business as a whole, then surely an all-encompassing group would simply be families. Our businesses ultimately affect our families, and everyone in it, no matter how old or young.

The fact of the matter is, ladies and gentlemen, over 1/3 of humanity are children under the age of 18. In this region of the world, it is even higher at 42%.

So with 3 billion children and youth around the world, and 190 million in our region alone, how on earth can we even begin to question whether children are any of our business! Of course they are.

As I said, I'm a businessman. And as a businessman, I am compelled to take a deep look at my business and determine whether I truly have the best interests of this huge portion of our population in mind.

Now, talking about the interests of children in the

context of business often brings to mind images of child labour. It goes without saying that businesses should never take advantage of children.

But in reality it goes well beyond that.

Our employees are often parents, and supporting them in their parenting roles will make a positive impact on their children. Looking at our products and services, and considering how they can serve children and their well-being is another thing business can address. In fact, increasing child participation by simply listening to their opinions can open new realms of creativity and innovation.

Investing in the development of this next generation of leaders, and nurturing their abilities, contributes directly to our bottom line as a nation, society, and economy.

I truly advocate that whenever we as the Private Sector look to how we can align our businesses with the needs of society, we must believe in the value creation we will generate as a result - for those we impact, as well as for our bottom line.

This is true sustainability, and as we continue on our path to the Dubai 2020 Expo and beyond, 'Connecting Minds, Creating the Future', we must constantly challenge ourselves with this introspection.

And with 80% of businesses around the world family controlled, and almost 90% of all non-oil GDP in the Middle East and North Africa Region generated by our family businesses, surely alignment with the needs of ALL members of our families, including children, should come naturally.

But does it?

Maybe some of the more relevant questions we should be asking ourselves are:

Do our businesses truly understand the impact they have on children, and how they relate to day-to-day operations?

Do our businesses have the tools and expertise



Rt Hon Lord Dr. Michael Hasting, CBE, Global Head of Corporate Citizenship, KPMG International, Her Excellency Dr. Sheikha Al Maskari, Chairperson, Al Maskari Holding, Mr. Daniel Endres, Director of the Division of External Relations, UNHCR.

Dr. Elie Mekhael, Advisor to League of Arab States, Mr. Salil Shetty, Secretary General, Amnesty International, Mr. Badr Jafar, Founder, the Pearl Initiative and CEO of Crescent Enterprises.

necessary to safeguard children's rights in a truly meaningful way?

And finally, do we have the right connections in place to enable businesses and governments to learn from each other's experiences, and to work together to enhance our impact on children?

I obviously can't speak on behalf of the entire sector, but if I was to answer this on behalf of my own Group, I would honestly say "not yet". Furthermore, being invited to address this forum really made me think about why this is the case, and to think about what it would take to be able to stand here in a year's time and answer "yes we do".

The challenge we face is that business leaders are unlikely to deepen their understanding of a particular issue – even one that may seem fundamental – unless it is made relevant to them.

This is something that the Children's Rights and Business Principles document being launched today does very well, and I commend the UNICEF, UN Global Compact and Save the Children for compiling this practical guide.

It takes a seemingly intricate subject, and makes its relevance to business abundantly clear.

It identifies the different ways in which the decisions of a business can impact children's rights – both in its own backyard and in distant markets around the world.

And perhaps more than anything, it provides simple recommendations on what can be done to ensure that action is taken in furtherance of these objectives.

Now these Principles are for ALL business, multi-national as well as local, regardless of their size, sector, ownership structure or location.

However since we are gathered here in a part of the world often referred to as the "Middle East", allow me to give this matter some regional context.

While we may be one of the world's oldest civilizations, today we have one of its youngest populations. The Middle East has a higher proportion of children to adults than at any time in our history. At the same time, the number of children affected by the multitude of emergencies in the region is at an all-time peak. It's very sad to witness that the rights of scores of children are neither being respected or supported, as adults engage in conflicts or security arrangements.

Whichever way you look at it, the regional business community has a vested interest, let alone an obligation, to ensure that we are providing opportunities for our

youth and generating a positive impact on our children.

However, helping business to recognise their interest in, and impact on, children will only ever be part of the solution.

Awareness alone can only take us so far.

If we are really going to produce results, we need to ensure that businesses also have access to the tools, expertise, and partnerships necessary to convert their commitment to children's rights into action.

So permit me to summarise 3 takeaways:

Embedding children's interests into our businesses is not ornamental, but fundamental;

Compiling and distributing case studies on best business practices related to children's rights are one of the best ways to encourage further action; and

If you're not pro-active, you might find yourself destroying business value forever.

Fellow delegates: Everyone in this room has a uniquely important role to play in advancing this issue.

Think about one thing you can do to help, however simple it might seem, and before you leave here today – make that pledge.

I'd like to commit here and now to have the Pearl Initiative work in tandem with the Global Child Forum,

and our partners, to conduct a case study program to document case studies from every Gulf country.

Ladies and Gentlemen, we, here in the United Arab Emirates and the wider Gulf, are playing a hugely important role in the ongoing process of the creation of a truly global community, and the cornerstones of our vision must embrace our core values, and in turn deliver on our responsibilities.

H.H. Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Prime Minister of our United Arab Emirates and Ruler of Dubai has said that "Many leaders promise, we deliver."

As leaders from across all sectors, let us collectively deliver on the promise that the business sector will safeguard the interests of children, and in that we will be safeguarding our prosperity and progress.

Children are our best investment. They are our most sustainable resource.

There simply can't be a greater legacy to pass on.

Thank you!



EXCERPT FROM THE SPEECH BY

Mr. Salil Shetty

Secretary General, Amnesty International

Thank you your Excellences. At most meetings, Highnesses normally leave when the speakers come, I am very happy that you are both still here and are listening to this; thank you for staying back. Congratulations to the Global Child Forum for celebrating the 25th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and also for spotlighting the Middle East and North Africa region, because this part of the world has gone through such a big turning in the last few years – and it does need a sharp focus. I think that was a smart move and very much behind the Nobel Peace Prize which was given to two children's rights activist, Kailash Satyarthi and Malala Yousafzai both of whom are very close friends of mine, and I will be attending the ceremony in Oslo for the presentation in a few weeks time.

I am standing here to speak on behalf of Amnesty International, which is a people's movement, with more than 7 million members, activist and supporters - most of whom are young people. When I say to them that "you are the future", they get very annoyed and one of the things they always say is "no, we are the present". We always talk about failing the future, but unfortunately society will fail young people and children, and are not failing the future but are failing the present.

My focus today is to highlight three aspects, where unfortunately we have not been able to achieve what we should have achieved in relation to the Convention on the Rights of the Child. And I am in particular referring also to the Middle East and North Africa Region. The three aspects are education, child labour and children in conflict. On education, as many of you who followed the convention would know, Article 28 talks very emphatically about the centrality of education for all. In reality we have 60 million girls who are still out of school, this includes a lot of children in this part of the world. The other big challenge, of course, is quality. Even in countries where children are going to school, the quality of education unfortunately remains very lacking. We know – I think people in this region know more than anybody else – that the cost of having

uneducated and alienated youth is very, very expensive for societies. Child marriage is still a problem, and discrimination of all types is still a big challenge in this part of the world. The second issue is child labour. Article 32 is very clear on the need to protect children from exploitation and labour; particularly labour that is hazardous to the health of children. Amnesty International has done a lot of work on issues connected with children, including war and construction labour around the ages of sixteen to eighteen; not to mention sex work and child exploitation, which is another big issue. Finally, I want to highlight children in conflict. Many people are working to defeat this and it is very important. If there is one aspect of which this region has failed its children, it is in addressing the issue of children in conflict. The worst and the most horrific example is Syria. Half of the population of Syria is now either displaced internally or are refugees outside; approximately 9 million of the country is in this situation. 5 million children in Syria are in BIP (Behaviour Intervention Plan) Districts. And article 22 of the convention is very specific about providing assistance to child refugees.

Amnesty International's icon is a candle. We say that there are two options when you are in a difficult situation, either you curse the darkness or you light a candle. Our preference is always to light a candle and to find the solution.

I am happy that Badr Jafar [founder, Pearl Initiative] already mentioned that you don't need to wait for governments to change the law. Businesses can take action; there is no need to wait for anybody. People can take action! Amnesty International is a people's movement. Governments always follow people, if people are willing to fight. Please do the right thing. The convention is clear, start to demand it in your own homes. There are many people who have domestic violence at home, treat them differently. Don't abuse their rights. So you can do a lot yourself.

Thank you.



Challenges and Opportunities

for Children in Middle East and North Africa

The first regional Global Child Forum was kicked off with a high level dialogue on the status quo for children in the Middle East and North Africa region. What are the positives of being a child in the region today? What are the issues that are holding them back? What can we do to change this? These are some of the questions that were examined in a debate featuring speakers from local and global entities.

“Let us start with what we have done right,” said Her Excellency Dr. Sheikha Al Maskari, Chairperson of Al Maskari Holding, an Abu Dhabi-based family-owned company. H.E. Dr. Sheikha Al Maskari was keen to dispel the notion that the region as a whole is chronically unstable and highlighted the positive progress countries such as the United Arab Emirates have made. She emphasised the importance of government bodies that provide medical care and education in the United Arab Emirates. “We are all the blessed children of our founder, Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahayan, who raised generations of Emiratis with the belief that ‘think big and you will achieve it’.”

In the same vein, the foundations for children’s rights are built on a solid relationship between the leadership and the people. “There is definitely a conducive legislative environment in the Middle East and North Africa region for children’s rights,” added Dr. Elie Mekhael, Advisor to the League of Arab States. “For example, government and civil society are represented on major executive boards for both human and children’s rights.”

Despite solid frameworks, children and children’s rights in the region face many challenges. “The quality of education is low, especially in high conflict areas,” said Dr. Mekhael. “Education on sustainable development is practically non-existent and because of this,

there is no participation from children on decisions for their future.”

Conflict was also mentioned as a major obstacle for the development of children by Daniel Endres, Director of the Division of External Relations at the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Democratic and political instability in Syria, for example, has resulted in 1.5 million child refugees and an additional 50,000 young people being displaced every month. “That’s one child being made a refugee every minute,” he estimated.

Unpredictable situations such as the civil war in Syria have many serious consequences on children in the region, chiefly pushing them towards child labour or early marriage. “Conflict means that entire childhoods are lost,” continued Endres.

While there are many challenges, there are also opportunities for improvement. H.E. Dr. Sheikha Al Maskari advocated for grassroots oriented action. Stable family units, she explained, are the best possible influencers for children. “Educate parents and equip them with the right tools to raise their kids. Empower parenthood to ensure strong values are passed on from one generation to the next.”

Endres, meanwhile, noted that the region’s propensity to support small and medium enterprises is a unique characteristic that can be harnessed for the good of society. “Businesses have an avant-garde approach to things, especially here [in the Middle East and North Africa region]” he said. “With their lateral thinking and acumen, businesses will find solutions to the issues around children’s rights.”



Aisha Al Midfa, Dubai Foundation for Women and Children

INTRODUCTION TO

Children's Rights & Business Principles

Children are fundamental to the interests of the business sector, and as such conscious steps are required to put children at the centre of all corporate initiatives, representatives from UNICEF, the UN Global Compact and Save the Children stressed during a plenary session on Children's Rights & Business Principles.

The comprehensive set of principles, developed by the three global entities, is meant to guide companies on the range of actions they can take in the workplace, marketplace and community to respect and support children's rights. They help to elaborate both expectations and opportunities for business in relation to children, who are often overlooked as stakeholders of business. Frederic Sicro, Representative of the UN Global Compact, put the issue into perspective stating: "We cannot create a sustainable future for the world without putting children at the core. The private sector must accept the responsibility to support children's rights."

Highlighting the danger of confining children's rights within corporate social responsibility, Sicro added: "This is not about corporate social responsibility. CSR is dead. Embed in business models a sustainable and long-term value creation. Companies must realise that healthier children signify a bigger client base. Companies must respect that female executives are also mothers. It is not just about creating value but values."

Dr. Bo Viktor Nylund, chief of CSR at UNICEF, said the UN agency has adopted Children's Rights & Business Principles with the overall approach to sustainability, working with partners to develop the right tools. In this regard, it has been engaging companies to respect children's rights in three ways: "The first is the programmatic approach of receiving support from the corporate sector, working in conflict areas, in countries such as Syria, Jordan, Southern Sudan and so on.

Secondly through innovation, recognising the fact that companies have the potential to contribute solutions to bottlenecks and hard to reach places. UNICEF is keen to reach out to businesses for new initiatives such as online and virtual education.

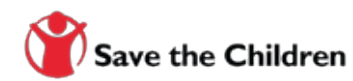
"Thirdly, we urge companies to conduct internal assessments of their own impact on children's rights and engage with us on dialogue on this topic. Companies can cooperate in this area in so many ways. For instance, the telecom industry can come forward to ensure online child protection and prevent exploitation by online intruders."

Highlighting the role of Save the Children, Manal Wazani, CEO of Save the Children Jordan, said the organisation, which has been active in the region for 70 years, has made substantial progress in the region on children's rights. While governments have been the main flag bearers, the private sector, civil society and NGOs have also helped drive the agenda forward, she said.

"Unlike the government sector, the private sector operates trans-nationally and influences not only production of goods but marketing of goods. The private sector has therefore a broad impact on children. Businesses need to be more aware of their responsibilities and the impact of their products and their advertisements on children," she said.

ALL BUSINESS SHOULD:

- 1 Meet its responsibility to respect children's rights and commit to supporting the human rights of children.
- 2 Contribute to the elimination of child labour, including in all business activities and business relationships.
- 3 Provide decent work for young workers, parents and caregivers.
- 4 Ensure the protection and safety of children in all business activities and facilities.
- 5 Ensure that products and services are safe, and seek to support children's rights through them.
- 6 Use marketing and advertising that respects and supports children's rights.
- 7 Respect and support children's rights in relation to the environment and to land acquisition and use.
- 8 Respect and support children's rights in security arrangements.
- 9 Help protect children affected by emergencies.
- 10 Reinforce community and government efforts to protect and fulfill children's rights.



Launched in 2012 by Unicef, UN Global Compact and Save the Children.
www.childrenandbusiness.org



Mr. Fredrik Vogel, Principal, The Boston Consulting Group



Lt Colonel Faisal Mohammad Al Shimmari, Chief Information security officer, Abu Dhabi Police GHQ

THE GLOBAL AND REGIONAL BENCHMARK STUDY

Children's Rights and the Corporate Sector

Our research shows that reporting on children's rights varies with geography, size and industry sector. In the Middle East and North Africa region the basic materials, healthcare and banking and investment sectors scored the highest. Globally, companies with more than US\$2.5bn turnover score higher when it comes to addressing children's rights said Dr. Magdalena Kettis, Research Director at the Global Child Forum, while presenting the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) results of the Children's Rights and the Corporate Sector.

The first Children's Rights and the Corporate Sector study results were revealed in Stockholm in April 2014. The report, which looks at the way in which 1,032 companies address the status of children when doing business, was followed by the launch of a regional report at the Global Child Forum in Dubai. Conducted by Global Child Forum and the Boston Consulting Group, Children's Rights and the Corporate Sector in the Middle East and North Africa Region examined the way 353 publicly listed companies, across nine industry sectors in 15 countries address children's rights.

Taking a microscopic view of the global study, Dr. Laura Lülldorf, Principal at the Boston Consulting Group, United Arab Emirates, delivered an overview of the findings, looking at key indicators such as child labour, adherence to international protocol and charity, among others. "Profitable companies generally have systems in place for transparency so businesses in Europe and the Asia-Pacific scored very high across nine indicators of this study," said Dr. Lülldorf. "Unfortunately, with a score of 0.9, the Middle East and North Africa region is proving to be a low performer when it comes to children's rights. This score indicates that less than one criterion has been fulfilled in the region."

While the study showed some positive behaviour among Middle East and North Africa companies there is room for improvement. "Around 42 per cent of all companies in the Middle East and North Africa region have indicated that they donate to a child related charity. Meanwhile, the global average is 49 per cent," said Frederik Vogel, Principal, Boston Consulting Group Sweden. "64 per cent of the companies report on corporate social responsibility, but only 11 per cent of these address children's rights."

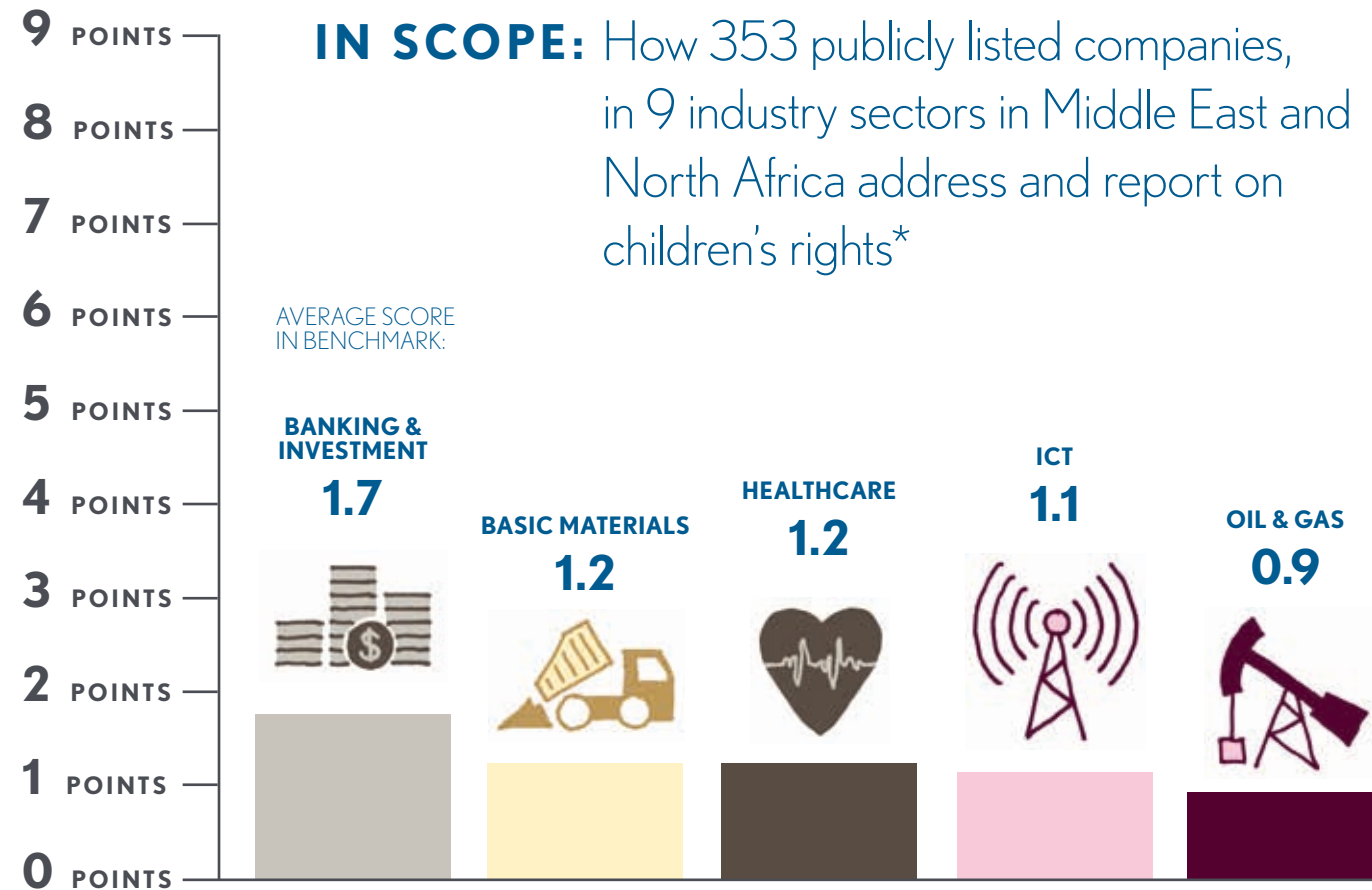
Similarly, companies in the Middle East and North Africa region also fell short when compared to global averages in incorporating programmes related to children's rights (25 per cent regionally versus 49 percent globally) and adhering to international standards for children's rights (nine per cent versus 52 percent).

However, there are also some high achieving sectors leading the way towards a more equitable and stable future for children. "The Middle East and North Africa banking sector scored 1.7 in the study, surpassing the regional benchmark for children's rights," continued Vogel. "They have the potential to be champions in this regard."

While the Middle East and North Africa region scored relatively low in the inaugural study, there are plenty of opportunities for improvement. "Next steps for companies in the region should include three actions," advised Vogel. "Create internal transparency, assign board accountability and leverage existing expertise. Such activities have the potential to have a tenfold improvement in score, thereby making the corporate sector in Middle East and North Africa more child friendly."

Children's Rights and the Corporate Sector

- in the Middle East and North Africa



TOP THREE SECTORS

Banking & Investment

Basic materials

Healthcare

INDUSTRIAL
GOODS

0.8

CONSUMER
GOODS

0.8

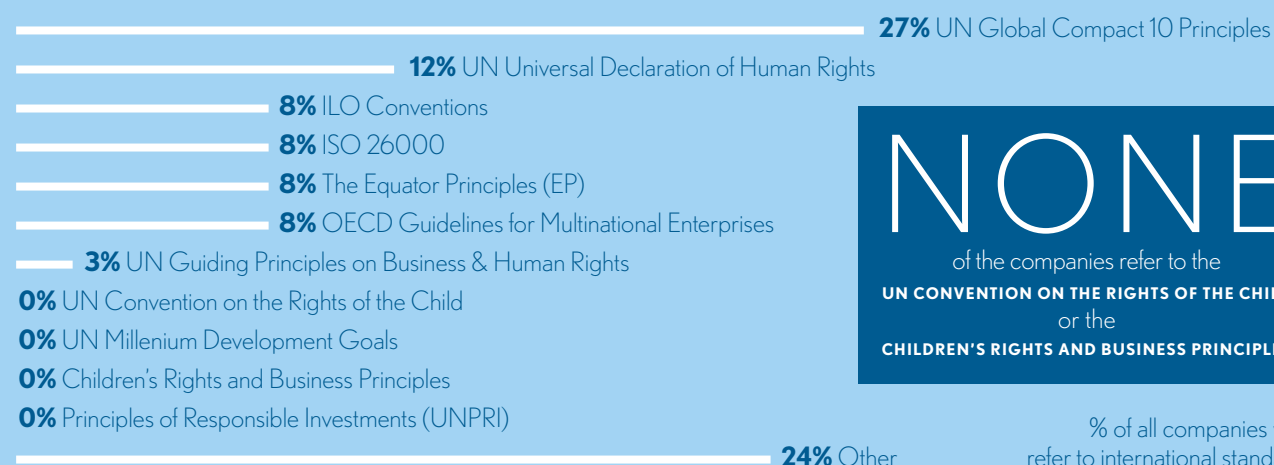
TRAVEL
& TOURISM

0.7

FOOD &
BEVERAGE

0.6

11% of all companies refer to international standards



42 PER CENT
of all companies report that they donate to child related charity

AND
A QUARTER
of all companies report that they have own programs related to children.

5%

of all companies include children's rights in the responsibilities of the board

64

per cent of all companies address Corporate Social Responsibility,

but only

11

per cent address children's rights

INDICATORS

- Company has a child labour policy. Can be part of human rights policy, supply chain policy, group wide policy or separate child labour policy
- Company addresses child related issues other than child labour such as: product safety, responsible marketing, sexual exploitation, environment/water/sanitation impacting children
- Company publishes performance reporting on child related issues
- Board of directors or a board committee explicitly states that children's rights/child labour are part of their responsibilities
- Company conducts risk or materiality analysis regarding child labour/children's rights
- Company refers to international standards - these include children's rights (UN Global Compact, ILO, UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, ISO 26000, Children's Rights and Business Principles, UNPRI etc)
- Company collaborates with organisations with focus on children's rights (e.g. UNICEF, Save the Children, Plan, Ecpat)
- Company is driving own strategic programs or projects regarding children's rights (could be e.g. health or education focus)
- Company donates to charity related to children's rights

PANEL DISCUSSION

Business and Children's Rights

Corporate negligence of children's rights came under intense scrutiny during a plenary session on Business and Children's Rights. The discussion urged companies to consider how children can be made part of key business priorities and consider that children are always important stakeholders to business, and of course in the community.

The challenge for companies is to look at children's rights not just as a fragment of their CSR programme but part of their wider business strategy, the panel concluded. At the same time, Dr. Hans-Holger Albrecht, President and CEO of Millicom, insisted that the role of CSR in achieving this goal cannot be completely overlooked. "CSR is a crucial element in ensuring children's rights, especially when 50 per cent of the population in our market is under the age of 18. A combination of business and CSR is key," he stressed.

The Children's Rights and the Corporate Sector study by Global Child Forum and the Boston Consulting Group, which was released at the forum, demonstrates how poorly children rank in business agendas across the Middle East and North Africa. Most sectors, with the exception of the banking industry, basic materials, and healthcare sectors, fail to demonstrate proactive engagement in children's rights.

"The survey shows that banking and investment are performing best in the promotion of children's rights. The priority should be to allocate capital and people in this area and serve ethical customers," said Frederic Sicre, Partner at Abraaj Group and a member of the UN Global Compact. Commenting on the findings, Marcus Bailey, COO and Head of Corporate Affairs, Middle East and North Africa, Standard Chartered Bank, said: "Banks make a difference when children are protected. Lend ethically to customers who you know will be responsible to children."

Laura Lülendorf, Principal of Boston Consulting Group, United Arab Emirates, said there is increased

consciousness in the region about the ethical aspects of investments, which raises hopes for children's rights. "People are choosy about where they put their money and which banks to trust. Growing concerns over ethical investments in recent times have created strong trends towards Islamic investments in the region." She added that the study showed that there are higher expectations for every industry in the region and that each company must look at themselves first and make a difference.

Dr. Howard Taylor, Vice President and Managing Director of Nike Foundation, highlighted how Nike is supporting girls literacy rates to reduce poverty. "There are 200 million girls living in extreme poverty today. We are keen to make a difference, and in this direction, we are looking for additional partners to extend education to more girls. Building girl-centric brands is crucial and this requires a whole range of niche partnerships," he explained.

Klas Balkow, President and CEO of Clas Ohlson, one of the largest retailers in the Nordic region, urged companies to put children at the core of their business strategy. "It is important to look at operations from the eyes of a child. We do not have a separate function in the area of children's rights but have adopted an integrated function to achieve this goal. We use partnerships to guide us in key areas. In order to be child-centric, it is also important to be transparent in the way you operate."

Sultan Al-Hajji, Vice President & CSO of TOTAL E&P United Arab Emirates, identified community engagement as a critical element to boost children's rights. "We have been in the region for 75 years and all through this period we have been part of the community in the region, and listening to the community. Whatever we do for children is within the community situation."

Stressing that children's rights are part of the bigger

Mr. Marcus Bailey, COO & Head of Corporate Affairs Menap, Standard Chartered Bank, Mr. Fredric Sicre, Managing Director, The Abraaj Group, Mr. Klas Balkow, President & CEO, Clas Ohlson AB, Dr. Laura Lülendorf, Principal, Boston Consulting Group, Mr. Sultan Al-Hajji, Vice President & CSO, Total E & P UAE

community picture, Al-Hajji added: "A better life for children cannot be a reality without creating better life for the entire society. When you make life better for parents, you make life better for children."

Dr. Albrecht was critical of the indifference to children's issues prevailing in several countries stating that "as far as some countries are concerned, children do not exist". At the same time he added, technology

will continue to empower people to make a difference. "The digital revolution has offered completely new opportunity to improve the situation. Today mobile banking reaches 60 per cent of the population in Africa, empowering women and making it possible for mothers to protect their families and in the process improving the lives of children."



Education, Employment and Entrepreneurship

High youth unemployment rates are a regional as well as global challenge. Research has indicated that education is one of the biggest challenges preventing young people from attaining fulfilling jobs and business leaders agree that education is a key challenge in hiring young people. ActionLab A emphasized that children are not just passive recipients of aid and policies, but are the future economic actors of our societies. Children's rights in this context are about ensuring their safe development through education and an upbringing in a society where children grow into economic actors that thrive through employment and entrepreneurship.

The actionlab focused on finding answers to some key questions for the region: How can we educate children to prepare them for the jobs of today and tomorrow? What are the challenges in providing young people with the skills for their future? How can business assist in bridging the teaching gaps? Regional macro and micro perspectives of education, employment and entrepreneurship were provided through the conversation with the audience.

Child development and education have been identified as key objectives for countries around the world. In 2000, universal primary education was listed as a Millennium Development Goal by the United Nations, with specific targets and timelines. Dr. Joanna Rubinstein, from the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network, spoke: "Because of the diversity in Middle East and North Africa between countries, we see very different results - some countries are doing well but outcomes are mixed not least because of lack of investment from the private sector. This is a problem especially in the poorer countries," she said.

The Middle East and North Africa region faces economic and structural challenges in alleviating youth unemployment. The World Bank has estimated that a US\$100m investment will be necessary to maintain the current infrastructure in the Arab world. The ma-

croeconomic circumstances paint an even graver picture, according to Patricia McCall, Executive Director, Arab Stabilisation Plan and Centre for Economic Growth. While public spending is at current level, growth rates will concurrently need to be at 6-7 per cent in order to bring youth unemployment down to 10-12 per cent in this region. "The regional average growth rate is currently at 2-3 percent, which leaves much to be done," said McCall.

While many education systems today fulfill the requirements of basic literacy, they do not seem to always be producing employees, a panel speaker suggested. "There is a gap between education systems and what's available and needed in the job market," said Jamie McAuliffe, President and CEO, Education for Employment. "There are so many examples of young and qualified people in the Middle East who spend months and months looking for work after they graduate from school or university."

A persistent skills gap between education and the job market has caused a high rate of youth unemployment in the Arab world some panelists appeared to agree on. "Today, 23 per cent of young people are unemployed in the Middle East and North Africa region," said Dr. Elie Mekhael, Advisor to the League of Arab States. "To overcome this, we need to build a conducive environment for entrepreneurship."

Supporting businesses may be a solution for the Middle East and North Africa region and beyond. "Not everyone is a visionary, but you can support enterprise development and social entrepreneurs..." said Paul Payne, Operational Manager at The Key is E. Payne highlighted that social entrepreneurship programmes supported by The Key is E have helped troubled youth in some of the toughest neighbourhoods in the United Kingdom. A personal sense of initiative is certainly a skill that can be taught, and that everyone in their personal capacity can contribute through.



Dr. Elie Mekhael, Advisor to League of Arab States, Mr. Paul Payne, Operations manager The Key is E, Mr. Sultan Al-Hajji, Vice President & CSO, Total E&P UAE, Mr. Jamie McAuliffe, President & CEO, Education for Employment, Ms. Patricia McCall, Executive Director, Arab Stabilization Plan & Center for Economic Growth, Dr. Joanna Rubinstein, Director of Connecttolearn & Assistant Director of the Earth Institute for International Programs, Columbia University, Dr. Darian Stibbe, Executive Director, The Partnering Initiative.

Payne also suggested that governments, social businesses and NGOs should focus on education that is not always provided inside the classroom. "There is a macro-problem. Soft skills such as confidence and communication are often not taught in public schools," explained Payne. "And these tools are important because they help young people build enterprises and careers."

While small businesses devise unique and innovative ideas that have demonstrably helped many young people in getting jobs, the broader corporate sector also has a part to play in providing solutions to the most pressing social issues of today, said Sultan Al Hajji, Vice President and Chief Strategy Officer, Total United Arab Emirates. "In a region where 70-80 per cent of the revenues are derived from oil, big enterprises can and have provided solutions to many societal problems," he told. "The focus should always be on the question of what are the specific issues in the region. Access to electricity for example: you can provide solar panels to people in Angola or Cameroon but it won't work in Abu Dhabi because electricity here is subsidised." We need local solutions to global problems.

While the panelists provided various suggestions on

the roadmap to create a better future for children in terms of employment, some points of agreements emerged.

"Mentorship is key," as expressed by McAuliffe. "And it needn't be just with businesses and young people. How about businesses mentoring teachers? Teachers are the first point of contact with children in education systems – yet they do not necessarily have experience in business. Mentorship programs with business and teachers plug an awareness gap that helps children in the long run."

Large enterprises need to integrate education and training into their operations and consider contributing to societal development. "Educational systems can't do it all. Education may produce the employees of today, but not necessarily employees for the next ten years. This is why large companies have to continually train their employees," said Al Hajji and provided various examples of how this has been done.

"Scalable education programs focusing on technology, training teachers and social engagement through mentorships are crucial," concluded Dr. Rubinstein. "What we need is a global commitment to education."

ACTIONLAB B

Implementing the Children's Rights and Business Principles in Middle East and North Africa

Why exactly should businesses focus on children? This ActionLab debated the responsibilities and opportunities that businesses have to young people today. Children, after all, are key stakeholders for companies as consumers, employees and community members. Integrating responsible principles into operations have many benefits, with more cohesive risk management, better reputation, access to a motivated workforce, improve the next generation of talent, and most importantly, great potential to build strong, educated communities and healthy economies.

Implementing principles that adhere to children's rights is a process. No company is in the same place in terms of children's issues and business impacts. In the Middle East and North Africa region, for example, an estimated 80 per cent of all businesses are small and medium enterprises (SMEs), which often lack the resources or knowledge of best practice to integrate principles into their activities. Therefore, children's rights and business principles need to be adapted to each company's journey and lessons have to be shared across sectors and industries.

Family businesses represent the prototype business model in the Middle East and North Africa region,

with their own particularities. Strong values based on tradition or religion need to be considered, with respect to the fact that these businesses or privately held companies have historically not needed to report on different aspects of their operations. Additionally, gender norms also need to be considered when implementing children's rights into business principles in the region.

To date, participants agreed that a lot of work has been done in Middle East and North Africa with regards to children's rights, particularly in the areas of emergencies, conflicts, health and education. However, future efforts need to focus on risk management, as well as in identifying gaps and negative business impacts in Middle East and North Africa.

It is imperative that businesses think of children's rights holistically. Swedish companies like Clas Ohlson AB and IKEA have implemented successful policies after examining their entire supply chain.

While values are important, businesses in the Middle East and North Africa region need to start working on policies and impact assessments, since children's rights have so far been led by reputational factors. Practical recommendations for action oriented approaches include top management leading issues on



Ms. Julia Schulties, Corporate Social Responsibility, UNICEF, Ms. Imelda Dunlop, Executive Director, Pearl Initiative, Dr. Bo Viktor Nylund, Chief of Corporate Social Responsibility, UNICEF, Mr. Klas Balkow, President & CEO, Clas Ohlson AB, Ms. Ambreen Bhaloo-Jamal, Child Rights and Business Africa Advisor, Save the Children.

children's rights within their organisation, identifying potential partners with relevant technical expertise, reviewing business impacts for potential "abuses" within companies, integrating children's rights into the business model and finally, identifying ambassadors who will champion the cause within the company.

ACTIONLAB C

Children in a Digital World

Children come in contact with information and communication technology, ICT, at very early ages. ICT provides unprecedented opportunities for children, but also exposes children to risks. How can we eliminate the risks and leverage the opportunities? ActionLab C dealt with the topic of Children in a Digital World in a regional perspective; how all children in Middle East and North Africa region can benefit from the evolution in the digital world and be provided with a safe online space. Regional research was presented, as was experience from government, business and civil society.

The panel included Lieutenant Colonel Faisal Mohammad Al Shammari, Chief Information Security Officer (CISO), Abu Dhabi Police GHQ, Peter Lyons, Director of Middle East and North Africa, the GSMA, Marie Laure Lemineur, Head of Combating Sexual Exploitation Online Programme, ECPAT International, Tanya Rudd, Business Planning Manager, Microsoft Gulf, Rouda Alamir Ali, Programme Officer, ITU Regional Office for the Arab States, Maggy Mina, Child Protection Officer, Women, Family and Childhood Department, League of Arab States.

A larger and larger part of children's lives takes place online. The things children do offline they tend to do online as well. The online reality accentuates the need to strengthen children's life skills like critical thinking, assessing information and protection against abuse. The possibilities to accelerate quality education, learning, health, play and development through Information and Communication Technology are enormous. While many children are fluent with the language of the digital space, many are vulnerable to the dangers of the virtual world.

The ActionLab gathered experts from government, non-profit organisations and businesses to find answers to some of the following questions related to online

child safety: How can we teach young people to protect themselves on the internet and how do we keep track of worrying behaviour? How can we leverage and scale up the good examples utilising ICT as a opportunity for children, e.g. for learning and education?

"How do we teach children to protect themselves and gain control online?," Anna Hårleman De Geer, Secretary General of the World Childhood Foundation asked. "We should not scare them, but we need to know how we can teach children how to protect themselves on the internet."

Closer parent-child engagement was identified as a solution to protecting children. Parents, for example, often ask their children how their day has been, and should in the same way open the conversation with the child about his or her day in the virtual world, e.g. by asking "How was your day on the Internet?". Parents should engage with their children about the children's lives and interactions online.

Marie-Laure Lemineur, Head of Combating Sexual Exploitation Online Programme, ECPAT International said that, "Online crimes are as common as offline crimes. So offline behavior must be applied to online behavior." To mitigate crimes in online and offline spheres, several measures were proposed. The focus should be on training teachers and parents, not only about ICT, but also about how children behave in the digital world as children typically know more about the internet and social media than adults. A European survey showed that 95 per cent of children on the internet know what kind of risks exist, but may nevertheless expose themselves in different ways to the same risks.

Stakeholders; governments, businesses and civil society organisations must work together towards clearer obligations and should be responsible for the digital industry.



Ms. Anna Hårleman De Geer, Secretary General, World Childhood Foundation, Lt Colonel Faisal Mohammed Al Shimmari, Chief Information Security Officer, Abu Dhabi Police GHQ, Mr. Peter Lyons, Director Of Middle East & the North Africa, The GSMA, Ms. Marie-Laure Lemineur, Head of Combating Sexual Exploitation Online Programme, ECPAT International, Ms. Tanya Rudd, Business Planning Manager, Microsoft Gulf, Ms. Aisha Al Midfa, Dubai Foundation for Women and Children.

Parents, however, retain the primary responsibility for their children's safety and wellbeing. Better communication between children and adults will make children more open and transparent about their online behaviour.

It is not always the case that adults know less about an issue facing children, than the children themselves. With regards to ICT, children are the experts on the technology. Adults need to listen to children to protect them from the harms that they may not be fully aware of. Listening to children is always important.

Also, children listen to other children. Discussing key issues related to online security in a classroom may kick off a discussion amongst youth and also raise awareness about online dangers and solutions.

"Ultimately, it is not about technology," concluded De Geer. "It is about behaviour."



Employees are also parents and caretakers

The gathering in the Johara Ballroom of the majestic Madinat Jumeirah conference centre in Dubai comprised of a diverse group of people from all parts of the world, but they all shared identities as employees and parents. What brought them even closer together was the panel of ten children's rights experts from business, state and civil society organisations. Together, the group set the tone for a highly vibrant ActionLab on the topic: Employees are also Parents and Caretakers, which provided perspectives on CSR and Social Policy. The ActionLab called on companies and other organisations to view their employees as parents and help nurture a healthy and sustainable new generation.

Speakers illustrated good examples where social policy had contributed to significant advances in child welfare, but the speakers also shone light on remaining challenges. Improving child rights, said Afra Al Basti, Director General of Dubai Foundation for Women and Children, is not an easy task. As a leader of a NGO, she shared challenges she faced starting the organisation working to end violence: "We had to go to the community; to primary schools, secondary schools and universities. We had to knock on doors. It took five years to build adequate community support. Media plays an important role in conveying our message. We want to secure a safe environment for families, for women and children. Our priority is to keep the family structure intact," she explained. Expressing concern over growing cases of human trafficking particularly in children, Al Basti said: "Children undergo immense trauma and violence as they are sold from one country to another. As an organisation, we provide all the necessary support, including legal and health services, to rehabilitate these children. We need more joint efforts, and collaboration in achieving this mission is important to achieve success in this task. The United Arab Emirates community

comprises different nationalities but we all have a passion when it comes to the welfare of children."

Looking ahead, Al Basti said the priority for any organisation in this field must be to sustain the focus. "When your entity gets big, chances are that you will lose focus. That is why we started prioritising and started focusing on families. Our goal in the next ten years is to build a shelter in every single place in the United Arab Emirates."

Moza Al Shoomi, Director of Child Department at the United Arab Emirates Ministry of Social Affairs, told that the United Arab Emirates government is focused on measures to protect children and ensure their well-being. As a good example, she shared: "In the United Arab Emirates, we have a large number of working women in all fields, even in the military. Where women are at work, the wellbeing of children is a prime concern. Therefore, any government entity in the country, federal or local, with more than 50 female employees is required to set up nurseries within the office premises for their employees' children," Al Shoomi said.

According to a survey conducted by the United Arab Emirates Ministry of Social Affairs, government entities that have established nurseries have seen employee productivity improve and less staff taking sick days; up to 95 per cent of women feel more secure and experience stability in their families; the nurseries protect up to 96 per cent of children from domestic accidents and fewer women are quitting work after the having a child.

Speakers pointed out that companies often ignore the fact that a large number of employees are parents as well. "In a country like China, parents form the key workforce. The Gulf countries have 11 million migrant workers, out of which two million are women," said



Her Excellency Afra Al Basti, Dubai Foundation for Women and Children

Sanna Johnson, Regional Director Asia, Northern Caucasus & Middle East International Rescue Committee. Johnson cited the findings of a study conducted in China among working parents with children at home, which concluded that 59 per cent employees felt distracted or felt they had committed some mistake in their work. Up to 46 per cent of them decided to quit work and 70 per cent felt inadequate as parents and in later years had lost touch with their children. "In a civil society, we need to keep in touch with our children. It is true we need to work to survive but at the same time companies need to respect the rights of the children. If we need successful businesses, we also need confident and happy parents," Johnson said.

Antoaneta Popova, Founder & CEO of iLearn CSR Academy Middle East urged companies to keep in mind that children are important stakeholders. "Today we spend 80 per cent of our time at work. We need to keep in mind that a happy mother makes happy children. Companies must take steps to integrate human rights in HR policies," Popova stressed.

Eric Van Der Hoeven, General Manager of Danone Nutricia, called for regional solutions to create real results. Helena Thybell, Global Manager of H&M Conscious Foundation, stressed that the real solution lies within the society itself and in finding partnerships between different actors to find solutions for societal problems and children's rights challenges. Bineta Mbacke, Public Affairs Manager of Nestle SA, emphasised the gender perspective and also said that companies must produce locally to retain close relationship with

the community and create sustainable communities. "Creating an improved lifestyle is critical to children's welfare," she said.

Mahira Hassan, CSR Manager of Vodafone, added voice to the call for localised effort: "We believe in the power of localisation. Use all the resources to support the community and work with governments to improve the condition of the society. Provide the right direction for NGOs and government initiatives."

Soraya Ramoul, Director of Novo Nordisk, stressed the role of companies in creating a healthy generation, drawing attention to the growing threat of lifestyle diseases such as diabetes. Ramoul said: "Health concerns, especially the escalating epidemic of diabetes, are serious threats to the future of our children. Companies need to act responsibly keeping in mind children's health. After all, it is all about acting for the future."

Summarising the outcome of the ActionLab, the moderator, Lisa Witter, Executive Director of WithoutViolence, an organisation working to reduce violence in the lives of children, said governments and corporate sector must help support employees by providing on-site child care, and contribute to diabetes prevention. The ActionLab also identified 'trust' as critical to good partnerships, and 'start small, start local' as one of its key takeaway messages.



CLOSING REMARKS FROM

Her Majesty Queen Silvia

I would like to thank you all for participating in today's Global Child Forum.

It has been a great pleasure to be with you today, very inspiring indeed!

I have learnt so much and I have also met many new friends and very interesting people with great ideas and plans for action.

Today, I have seen very clearly, how little it actually takes to help a child – all of us here can make a real difference; as a powerful nation, as a powerful organisation and as a private person as well!

We just have to do it! We just have to implement the rights of the child!

Companies and financial institutions can, and often do, work in ways that strengthen children's rights. But companies and financial institutions can also have a negative impact on children's situation. Business leaders are often not aware of the harm they can do to children by their decisions. But ignorance is no excuse. Due diligence is an obligation. It's very important to make sure that the enterprises implement children's rights in their operations and strategies and involve their employees in how to protect children.

When corporations act as responsible social partners they generate greater wealth for all in the longer term – as we have seen today. A true focus on children's rights and development is unquestionably the single best investment any economic actor can make – whether it is a company, bank or a government.

Opportunities for dialogue, like this meeting today, help us look forward as a global community. Investing in children is necessary to build pluralistic and inclusive societies, which is the foundation for future development of prosperity and peace.

And there is no better time to do this than now, as we are celebrating the 25th anniversary of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

It has been an exciting day, filled with interesting and challenging ideas generated by all of you who are deter-

mined to change the world to the better for children.

I am thankful for your commitment and touched by your idealism and professionalism.

As we bring this Forum to a close, I leave you with the thought that we should all ask ourselves: What can I do personally that advances the cause of children? Not only in the longterm future but tomorrow and next week? Finally I would like to express my special gratitude to Her Royal Highness The Ruler of Dubai, to the Royal Highness Princess Haya, and to all supporters and partners in Dubai, the Middle East and North Africa region that have made this Forum possible. I also want to thank all speakers and especially His Excellency Sheikh Nahayan Bin Mubarak Al Nahayan, the Minister of Culture, Youth and Social Development for also being the Patron of a most enjoyable cultural event. My sincere wish is that all of you gathered here today, will join hands to make the implementation of the Rights of the Child a reality.

Thank you for all your support and good cooperation with us at the Global Child Forum.

Thank you.



SPEECH BY

His Excellency Sheikh Nahayan bin Mubarak Al Nahayan

It is a great pleasure to welcome H.M., Queen Silvia of Sweden, to Dubai and the United Arab Emirates. Thank you, your Majesty, for joining us and for sharing your wisdom with us. Your presence at the Forum is a reflection of your Majesty's conviction that building connections across national and geographic distances and forming global coalitions will give expression to human hopes and dreams for a better future. I thank you, Your Majesty, for your efforts to improve the human condition and to sustain the progress of society.

Your Majesty's presence here today is also a clear indication of the growing cooperation between Sweden and the United Arab Emirates, and we are grateful for this relationship.

We are also honoured this evening by the presence of so many leaders of society, and I thank each of you for joining us on the occasion of this important Forum.

Your Majesty, Ladies and Gentlemen:

I know that the speeches and conversations at today's Global Child Forum have stimulated creative thinking about effective ways to advance children's rights. You have honoured our country by conducting such a vitally important forum here in our midst.

In the United Arab Emirates, we share your concern for the rights of children. Since the birth of our nation in 1971, we have acted on the belief of our nation's founder, the late Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahayan, who declared that our essential responsibility is to prepare our children for the future. Our current leaders -His Highness the President, Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al-Nahayan, H.H. Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid

Al-Maktoum, Vice President, Prime Minister, and Ruler of Dubai, and His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al-Nahayan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces - have made education our country's greatest priority. As the late Sheikh Zayed said (and I quote), "A country's greatest investment lies in building generations of educated and knowledgeable youth." In addition to our concern for the intellect, skills, and vision of our young boys and girls, we have paid deep attention to their health and the health of their mothers.

The United Arab Emirates is fully committed to the goals of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, a landmark convention enthusiastically supported around the world. The convention has made a distinctly positive difference for children. Since the enactment of the convention, far fewer children worldwide die at an early age and more are realising their right to education.

Nonetheless, UN statisticians tell us of the needless deaths of millions of young children every year and of the absence of schooling for millions of young girls and boys. Most of us are little likely to witness those deaths or come in contact with the uneducated children. But we cannot ignore their plight. We must continue to support the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. That moral imperative inspired H.M. the King and H.M. the Queen of Sweden to initiate the Global Child Forum in 2009 to promote informed dialogue and innovative thought that might actually give life and education to those disenfranchised children.

Thanks to the Global Child Forum, the Embassy of Sweden, the Dubai Foundation for Women and Children, the Supreme Council for Motherhood and Childhood in the United Arab Emirates, the Arabian CSR-Network, and the League of Arab States, today's activities have surely produced some wonderful ideas worth pursuing. We must rescue the children. The impairment of their human rights denies them their dreams, and yet the future of the world must be fuelled by the realised dreams of its children. Desperately sick, malnourished, and uneducated children remain silent about their dreams. To them those dreams seem, and usually are, impossible to fulfil. So it has always been. Over 100 years ago Sweden's great Selma Lagerlöf, the first woman to be awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature, wrote these sensitive words (and I quote a translation to English):

"It is often the case with the silent children about us, that they cherish a dream which they dare not talk about."

Lagerlöf's insight reminds me of a story you may have recently read.

As reported by Michael Wines in the New York Times, a young man named Justus Uwayesu has enrolled to study biomedical engineering at Harvard University. When he was three years old in his native country of Rwanda, his parents, both illiterate farmers, died in the genocidal slaughter that killed some 800,000 people in 100 days. For the next four years he drifted from place to place, unhealthy and unschooled. Then driven by starvation, he and his brother walked from their rural village to Kigali in search of food and help. They ended up in a huge garbage dump on the edge of the city, home to hundreds of orphans and herds of pigs. They lived in a wrecked car and did nothing but search for food and clothes and beg on the streets for the next year and a half. Begging on the streets, Justus saw a world beyond him. "At noon," he said, "kids would be coming back from school in their uniforms, running and playing in the road. Sometimes they would call me nayibobo" — literally, forgotten child. "They knew how different we were from them."

"It was a really dark time, because I couldn't see a

future," he said. "I couldn't see how life could be better, or how I could come out of that."

When Justus was nine years old, a woman from America visited the dump. She saw children and called to them. All of the children except Justus ran away. He alone stayed put, and the woman asked him why.

"I want to go to school," he replied.

Justus voiced his dream, and Clare Effiong, a Nigerian woman who had left a diplomatic position at the UN to establish her own charity in the US called Esther's Aid for Needy and Abandoned Children, rescued him from the garbage dump and put him in school. Now, on a full scholarship, Justus is studying at Harvard.

Your Majesty, Ladies and Gentlemen:

The tragic situation faced by too many children around the world must not be allowed to continue. For how can those children, and through them their countries, ever hope to be a part of the new economies developing today? The answer is that they will not and cannot be a part of the emerging knowledge-based economies unless they can have access to better education, better health, better nutrition, and better living conditions. Much work remains to be done in order for all of the world's children to enjoy their full rights on par with their peers.

Let us vow tonight to give all children around the world the power to voice their dreams and to realise their dreams. Let us vow to give all children around the world a healthy life and a sound education. All of us here have lived into adulthood and have benefitted from proper diet, health care, and education along the way. We have cherished dreams that we have been able to voice and to realise in our active and productive lives.

Humankind has no right to withhold the possibility of such lives from millions of children. On the contrary, humankind has the obligation to make such lives possible. You at this Global Child Forum are meeting that obligation. I admire your dedication, your industry, your generosity, and your imagination. Your actions will enable more of the world's neglected children to join Justus in daring to talk about their dream and in finally realising their dream. Thank you all for your wonderful ideas and your good hearts.

Thank you again, Your Majesty, for honouring us at this Forum. It is a special privilege and a high personal honor for me to again welcome your Majesty to the United Arab Emirates.

Thank you.



By: Yeowatzup, Flickr.

Summary and concluding remarks

Collaboration was a theme throughout many of the plenary sessions, ActionLabs and discussions during the Global Child Forum on the Middle East and North Africa. As at all previous international Global Child Forums, participants in Dubai reiterated the importance of new and effective cross sector partnerships to improve children's rights as an important part of the sustainability agenda.

Delegates of all ages, religious beliefs, cultural, ethnical and employment backgrounds in different languages expressed a keen desire to form partnerships. However, there are some obstacles ahead.

In the Middle East and North Africa region particularly, conflict delays or stops the planning and realisation of many good intentions. In countries in the region with relative stability, issues surrounding children's rights do however have the potential for much improvement, specifically in the areas of corporate governance. The joint Global Child Forum and Boston Consulting Group (BCG) report "Children's Rights and the Corporate Sector in the Middle East and North Africa" revealed that few companies and financial institutions in the region integrate children's rights into their corporate strategies.

We believe that children's rights should be included in corporate strategies and activities to ensure that children are respected and supported by business.

The main challenge is clear. Different sectors think and work differently. Partnerships between all sectors of society are necessary but do not happen without focussed efforts from the corporate and financial sector, which now ought to take the initiative and lead ahead.

Governments have the national responsibility for the legal framework to protect children's rights but need to be more transparent in their efforts. Leaders in the region have shown a commitment to children and youth. The next step for them is to demonstrate that

they want to work with others in a non-bureaucratic way, to achieve effective results that can be measured – beyond bold political statements.

In the same way, businesses need to understand that they do not work in a vacuum but are part of large local and national communities. Incorporating actions across every aspect of the value chain can make companies of all sizes ethical and respected corporate citizens, particularly in relation to the children, which are the most important part of any future society.

Any government, company or financial organisation that seriously want to work for a sustainable future must see children as the main future stakeholder. During the Global Child Forum on the Middle East and North Africa we saw many regional and international examples of this. Clever and forward thinking governments, companies and other organisations taking a lead and demonstrating best practice – in a human, professional and also profitable way where everyone wins.

We all have to ensure that today's children are the winners in the future.

GLOBAL CHILD FORUM AND ITS CO-ORGANISERS WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE FOLLOWING ORGANISATIONS

The logo for Noor Bank, featuring the word "NOOR" in black and "BANK" in blue.The logo for The Boston Consulting Group (BCG), featuring the letters "BCG" in green and "THE BOSTON CONSULTING GROUP" in smaller green text below.The logo for Shangri-La hotel, featuring a gold crown icon, the Arabic text "فندق شانغريلا دبي", and "Shangri-La hotel" in black, with "DUBAI" in smaller black text below.The logo for Emirates, featuring a red square with a white falcon icon and the word "Emirates" in white.The logo for Burson-Marsteller, featuring three globes in orange, blue, and red, with the text "Burson-Marsteller" below.The logo for Dubai Media Inc, featuring the Arabic text "مؤسسة للإعلام دبي" and "DUBAI MEDIA INC" below.



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AND H.M. QUEEN SILVIA OF SWEDEN