

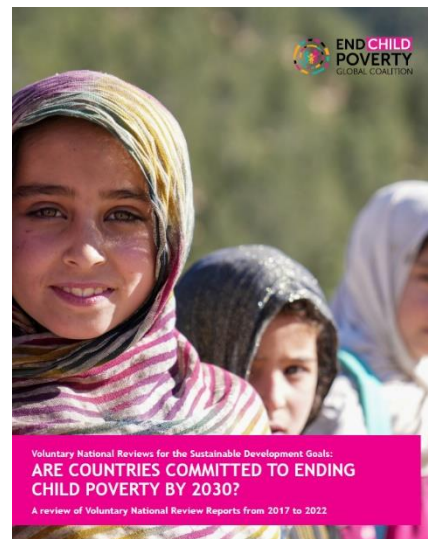
# ARE COUNTRIES COMMITTED TO ENDING CHILD POVERTY BY 2030?

A review of SDG VNR reports from 2017 to 2022

The combined crises comprising the climate emergency, the COVID-19 pandemic, and increased conflicts, food prices and inflation, highlight that urgent action is needed to halt worsening outcomes for children.

Countries must rapidly scale up efforts to achieve the ambitious SDG goals to eradicate extreme poverty for all people - including children - by 2030 as internationally defined (PPP \$1.90) and reduce at least by half the proportion of children living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions.

One way to assess progress on SDG implementation is to survey the data and narrative content that countries present in their [Voluntary National Reviews](#) (VNRs) to the United Nations [High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development](#) (HLPF). The [Global Coalition to End Child Poverty \(the Coalition\)](#), a 20+ member partnership who works to support national processes to achieve the SDG goal of ending child poverty, assesses VNRs from a child poverty perspective, looking at how countries mention and discuss their efforts to end child poverty, through measurement and policies.



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## Key Highlights

In its fourth annual VNR analysis (see [2021](#), [2020](#) and [2019](#) analysis), the Coalition highlights:

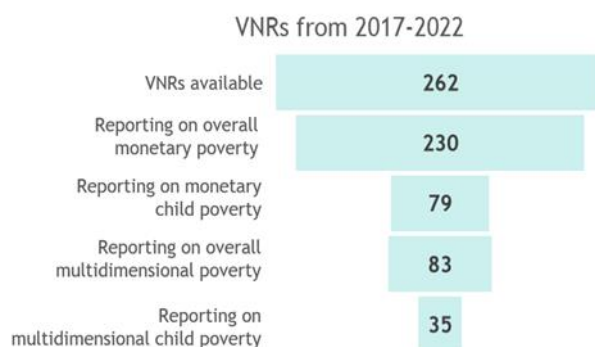
### Measuring Child Poverty

Between 2017 and 2022, there were 79 out of 262 VNRs (30%) from 179 countries (some countries have presented their VNR more than once) which reported on monetary child poverty but only 35 (13%) reported on multidimensional child poverty.

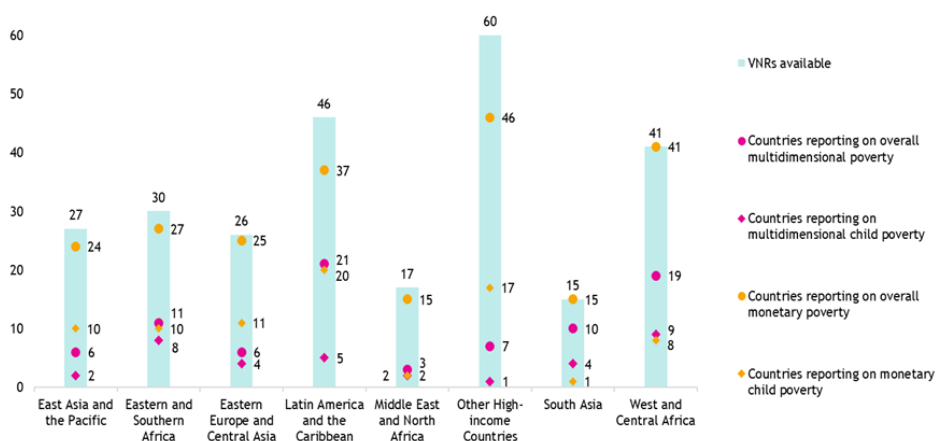
There was an increase in the number of countries reporting on multidimensional child poverty from 5 (out of 40) in 2021 to 8 (out of 43) in 2022. The proportion of countries reporting on monetary child poverty slightly decreased compared to last year (14 out of 40 in 2021, compared to 13 out of 43 in 2022).

There are large variations between regions on the reporting of child poverty in the VNRs. In Latin America and the Caribbean and Eastern Europe and Central Asia proportionally more countries report on monetary

child poverty, while Eastern and Southern Africa, South Asia and West and Central Africa are the regions with the highest proportion of countries reporting on multidimensional child poverty specifically. Compared to other regions, high income countries report less often on both overall and child poverty measures and only one country has reported on multi-dimensional (child) poverty.



Countries Reporting from 2017 to 2022 in VNRs by Region



## Addressing Child Poverty through policies, budgets and programmes:

To achieve the 2030 agenda on child poverty, SDG targets 1.3, 1.4 and 1.b highlight the importance of social protection systems, improved access of the poor to essential public services and pro-poor public social spending. Most countries outlined in their VNR between 2017 and 2022 the measures implemented to support families and children in poverty through policies, programmes and budgets.

The measures are broadly divided into the following categories:

- Building and expanding child-sensitive social protection systems
- Improving access, quality and utilization of public services by the poorest
- Prioritizing child poverty in national development plans and strategies.

Among the 43 VNRs submitted in 2022, 32 countries outlined efforts to address child poverty through policies, programmes and/or budgets. Positively, efforts in building and expanding child-sensitive

## SDG Global Database

Another key platform for SDG reporting in addition to the VNRs is the United Nations [SDG Global Database](#) which provides access to data on more than 210 SDG indicators, including the poverty-related SDG indicators.

According to the SDG database (as of October 2022), 145 countries have reported on monetary poverty using national poverty lines (SDG 1.2.1), 66 countries have reported on multidimensional poverty (SDG 1.2.2), 45 countries have reported on multidimensional child poverty (SDG 1.2.2 disaggregated by child population) and only 11 countries have reported on child-specific multidimensional poverty (where the child is the unit of analysis, not the household - SDG 1.2.2).

The majority of countries which report on multidimensional poverty disaggregated by age (SDG 1.2.2) are from the Western European Region, followed by Eastern Europe and Central Asia and Latin America and Caribbean.

The 11 countries which report on child-specific multidimensional poverty are all from four regions: Eastern Europe and Central Asia (Armenia), Eastern and Southern Africa (Angola, Burundi, Lesotho, Malawi, and Zambia), West and Central Africa

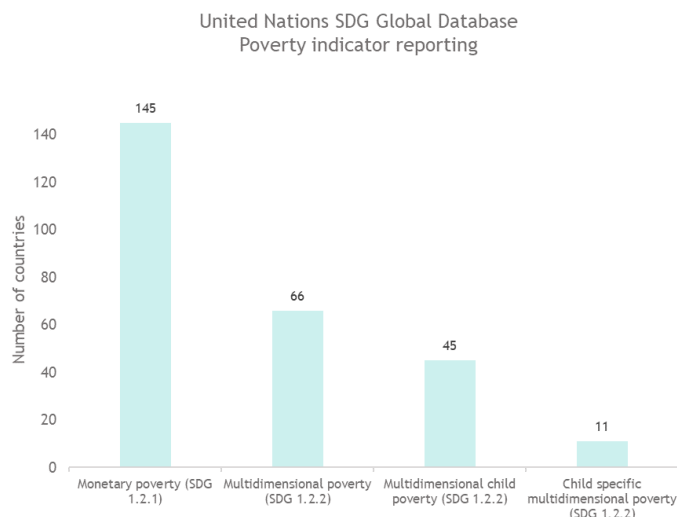
social protection systems were among the most common country-level responses to child poverty highlighted in the VNRs - in particular, the expansion of cash transfers targeted towards poor and vulnerable families with children. In addition to social protection measures, several countries noted the policies and programmes they have implemented to strengthen access to education, health and other key social services.

Even though most countries discussed child poverty-related policies and programmes in their VNRs, coordinated and comprehensive national plans to reduce child poverty were not reported on, except in five countries (El Salvador, Gambia, Greece, Luxembourg, Sao Tome and Principe).

Governments still fall short of reporting national plans that put children living in poverty as the highest priority, drawing concerns over the inadequate resources allocated to ensure that children and their families can escape the intergenerational cycle of poverty.

(Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Sao Tome and Principe, and Mali), and the Middle East and North Africa (Egypt).

Unfortunately, the UN SDG Global Database does not include age disaggregated figures for SDG indicator 1.2.1 on the proportion of the population living below the national poverty line, which calls for disaggregation by both sex and age.



## Inclusive Recovery

In line with the theme of the 2022 HLPF "*Building back better from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) while advancing the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*", most 2022 VNRs reflect the long-lasting impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on countries' economies and efforts to reduce poverty.

While most countries report on the social protection measures implemented in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, only a few of them highlight child-specific measures. Furthermore, it becomes clear that the

## The Way Forward

With only eight years remaining until the end of the 2030 Agenda, more efforts than ever are needed to reach the SDG 1 targets. For this, the Global Coalition calls upon countries to:

- 1. Report on SDG 1 child poverty indicators, including monetary and multi-dimensional poverty to establish baseline, monitor progress and guide policies**

Whenever possible, these indicators should be disaggregated by specific age groups (e.g. 0-5, 6-12, 13-17 years old), sex, disability status, subnational, urban/rural, intra-urban etc. The different dimensions of multidimensional child poverty data should also be unpacked and analyzed, to understand better how it needs to be addressed in national contexts.

- 2. Develop and implement a comprehensive national agenda to reach the SDG child poverty targets**

The importance of a comprehensive national strategy to end child poverty is more critical than ever, as multiple crises impact on the global prospects of ending extreme child poverty and halving multidimensional child poverty. Only through strong social protection systems and coordinated and comprehensive actions, rather than fragmented and temporary measures, can we avoid failing an entire future generation and achieve the SDG 1 target of ending extreme child poverty until 2030.

- 3. Support the participation of non-state stakeholders, including individuals living in poverty in developing the VNR**

The Agenda 2030 explicitly recognizes children as agents of change. Non-state actors, such as civil society and donors, also have a role to play in monitoring progress and ensuring that Member States are putting in place strategies, policies and programmes to address child poverty. The Coalition urges all countries to ensure that the VNR process has the attention, engagement and input of non-state

focus of most governments has now shifted to building and supporting the economic and social recovery from COVID-19, which involves building longer-term systems of support rather than short-term emergency measures.

It is essential that States prioritize investment in key public policy areas such as social protection and quality public service provision with a strong focus on ensuring that the most vulnerable have access to these systems.

stakeholders, including children and the poorest and most vulnerable groups.

- 4. Share innovative national strategies to measure and address child poverty**

The examples highlighted in the full report show how individual countries have strengthened their focus on the various dimensions of child poverty and addressed the impacts of COVID-19. The Coalition encourages Governments to share their experiences of innovations and new strategies to address child poverty with the global community and stands ready to act as a platform to facilitate inter-country exchanges through research and advocacy.



## Methodological Note

The findings above are mainly based on the VNR reports from 2017-2022 available on the SDG portal. To identify and quantify references to child poverty, monetary child poverty, multidimensional child poverty, and policies and programmes to address child poverty, the Coalition followed a two-step approach:

1. Reviewed key chapters that discussed poverty and inequality; and
2. Performed a key word search to identify references to child poverty

The brief also contains a review of the United Nations SDG Global Database, with a focus on analysis of SDG 1-related poverty indicators (SDG 1.2.1 and 1.2.2) through quantifying country reporting data with regional disaggregation.

It is important to note that there are countries who are monitoring and responding to child poverty, but are not including this in their VNRs, and consequently these efforts are not reflected in our child poverty focused VNR analysis.



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