

The Global Coalition to End Child Poverty

October 2020

ARE COUNTRIES COMMITTED TO ENDING CHILD POVERTY BY 2030?

A review of SDG Voluntary National Review reports from 2017 to 2020

[Briefing note available here](#)

Key Messages

- Among the 179 Voluntary National Reviews (VNR) for the Sustainable Development Goals presented in the past four years, less than a third reported on monetary child poverty rate, and only 22 reported on multidimensional child poverty rate in their countries.
- In 2020, among the 45 VNRs, 11 reported on their baseline and progress towards reducing monetary child poverty, and 9 on multidimensional child poverty. On a positive note, 33 countries discussed measures being taken to support children living in poverty, through policies, programmes and budgets.
- With the impact of COVID-19 crisis on child poverty expected to be severe and long term, achieving SDG targets will require urgent and sustained efforts. Child poverty measurements provide crucial information to inform these efforts, design effective solutions, assess progress, and improve accountability.
- The Global Coalition to End Child Poverty is therefore calling on countries participating in the VNR process to report on child poverty targets, adopt comprehensive national plans to support children living in poverty.

Ending poverty in all its forms for everyone, including for children, is at the heart of the [Sustainable Development Goals](#), adopted five years ago by the global community. The SDG Agenda provides a clear framework for action: Countries must eradicate extreme child poverty by 2030 as internationally defined (PPP \$1.90) and halve the number of children living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions. As we enter the [Decade of Action](#) this year, time has come to accelerate our efforts to achieve this ambitious and critical goal - especially in light of the ongoing COVID-19 crisis, which is set to push back important progress made in poverty reduction.

One way to gauge progress on SDG implementation is to survey the data and the narrative content that countries present in their [Voluntary National Reviews](#) (VNRs). [The Global Coalition to End Child Poverty](#), a 20+ member partnership who works to support national processes to achieve the SDG Goal of ending child poverty, assessed VNRs from a child poverty perspective, looking at how countries mention and discuss their efforts to end child poverty, through measurement and policies.

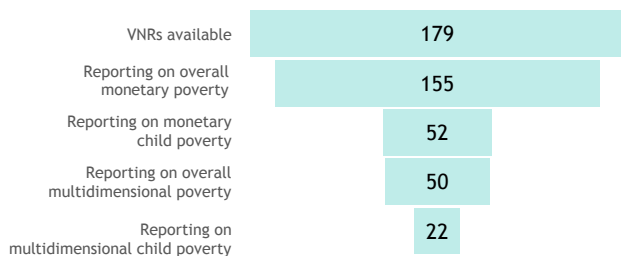
This second annual analysis builds upon [last year's brief](#) developed by the Coalition, which reviewed VNRs from 2017, 2018, and 2019.

Methods

All VNR reports submitted from 2017-2020 available on [the SDG portal](#) were reviewed for this analysis, with a particular focus on the 2020 VNRs. Following two steps approach, first by reviewing key report chapters that discuss poverty and inequality; second by performing key word search to capture mentions of child poverty, this brief quantifies countries reporting on monetary and multidimensional child poverty, policies, budget and programmes addressing child poverty. The full [briefing note](#) also provides examples of good practices and innovations.

It is important to note that there are countries who are monitoring, measuring and responding to child poverty, but are not including this in their VNRs. The analysis in this brief is only based on VNRs and, as advocated by the Coalition, sharing a comprehensive overview of child poverty efforts in VNRs strengthens global efforts to fight child poverty and achieve SDG1.

VNRs from 2017-2020



What do the VNRs reveal

Measuring Child Poverty

- Monetary Child Poverty:** SDG indicator 1.2.1 specifies the reporting of the proportion of the population living below the national poverty line, and this should be disaggregated by age, recognizing children as a distinct category. This year, while all 45 reviews discussed poverty eradication, only 11 reviews explicitly point out the **monetary poverty rate for children**, compared to 17 out of 46 last year. Measurement used include national or international criteria, such as absolute poverty line, relative poverty line, extreme poverty line and at risk of poverty.
- Multidimensional Child Poverty:** Income alone is not sufficient to assess the multiple and overlapping deprivations children face in their daily lives, affecting,

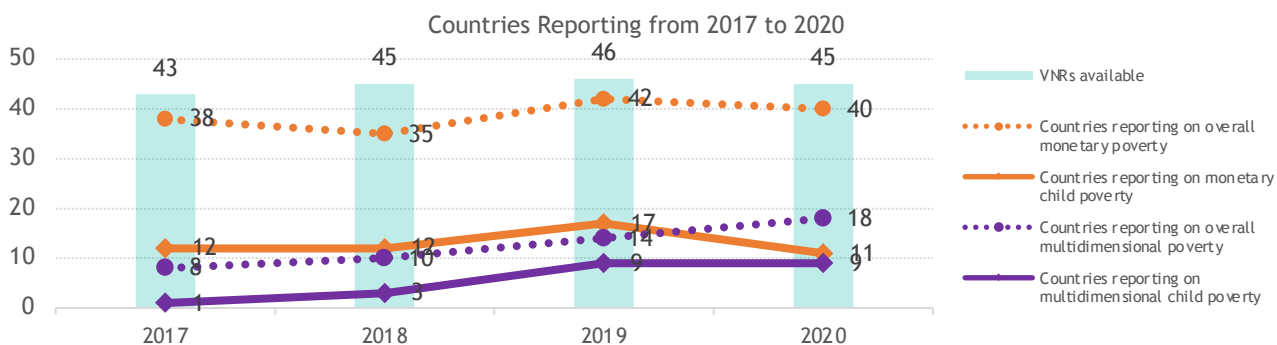
for example, their health, education and living standards. **9 out of 45 countries reported multidimensional poverty data on children this year**, corresponding with the SDG target 1.2.2 - “reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women, and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions”.

Addressing Child Poverty through policies, budgets and programmes

Turning the SDG promise into real results for children requires significant national attention, comprehensive national policies and programmes, with accompanying actions plans and budgets for implementation. SDG targets 1.3 and 1.4 highlight the importance of social protection systems and floors and improved access of the poor to essential public services. This year, among the 45 countries who submitted their VNRs, **33 mentioned their efforts to tackle child poverty** through various policy and sector-specific actions. 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.

Despite the increase in the number of countries that discussed child poverty policies and programmes in their VNRs, coordinated and comprehensive national plans to reduce child poverty were largely absent in all but five countries.



COVID-19 and Child Poverty

The economic downturn generated by COVID-19 threatens to hit children and families the hardest. The number of children living in multidimensional poverty has soared to **1.2 billion** as a result of the crisis, an increase by 15%. To protect children from the lifelong impact of poverty, immediate and at-scale actions to expand social protection programmes, including cash benefits and family friendly policies, and access to critical essential services like healthcare, nutrition and education is critical.

Among the 45 VNRs submitted this year, the majority highlighted the impact of the pandemic on public health, societies and economies as well as on the reporting process itself. Yet focus on children living in poverty were largely missing from the COVID-19 analysis of the VNRs - despite children’s extreme vulnerability to monetary and multidimensional poverty.

The Way Forward

With the impact of COVID-19 crisis on child poverty expected to be severe and long term, achieving SDG 1 targets will require urgent and sustained efforts. To reach this enormous but achievable goal, the Global Coalition to End Child Poverty encourages countries to:

- report on SDG 1 child poverty indicators to establish baseline, monitor progress and guide policies
- build comprehensive national agenda to reach the SDG child poverty targets
- engage with non-state stakeholders, including children and individuals living in poverty in designing strategies and solutions, and monitoring progress.

The Coalition hopes to see the child poverty numbers improve as we go into the Decade of Action and stands ready to support countries as they start their VNR preparation process.