



Promoting the Development and Implementation of the Putting Children First (PCF) Principle in China

Advocacy Note
June 2020

Table of Contents

I. Putting Children First in the National Policy Frameworks of China.....	3
II. Macro Space of Policies Development for Children in China	4
III. Selected Issues related to Child Development in China	6
1. Child Affected by Multidimensional Poverty and Policy Responses.....	6
2. Child-Sensitive Social Assistance.....	7
3. Children with Disabilities	7
4. Early Childhood Development (ECD) for Children Aged 0-6 Years Old.....	9
• ECD for Children Aged 0-3 Years Old	9
• Early Childhood Education (ECE) for Children Aged 3-6 Years Old	10
5. Vocational Education	11
6. Health Issues for Children	11
• Injuries	11
• Overweight and Obesity	12
• Adolescent Mental Health	12
• Environmental Health	12
7. Care and Support for Children: Child Protection System Response	13
8. Child Friendly Cities Initiative (CFCI)	14
IV. Policy Recommendations	15
Child Poverty Measurement and Child-sensitive Social Assistance.....	15
Children with Disabilities	15
Early Childhood Development for Children Aged 0-3 Years Old.....	16
Early Childhood Education for Children Aged 3-6 Years Old	17
Vocational Education	17
Prevention of Child Injuries.....	18
Prevention of Child Obesity	18
Prevention of Adolescent Mental Disorders.....	18
Prevention of Child-related Environmental Risks	18
Care and Protection of Children without Adequate Parental Care	19
Integrated Urban Policy and Planning for Children in China - the Child Friendly Cities in China	20

V. Annex.....21
List of Child Development Indicators..... 21

Promoting the Development and Implementation of the Putting Children First (PCF) Principle in China

Advocacy Note

I. Putting Children First in the National Policy Frameworks of China

Over 40 years since the country started its reform policy, China has achieved extraordinary economic and social development progress. Despite the rapid growth, the structural inequality remains in the country, resulting in a number of key challenges to the 2030 Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) achievement. Most of China's SDG gaps and challenges arise in realization of the core SDG principle of "leaving no one behind." In response, the priorities of China's 14th Five-Year Plan (FYP) will place greater emphasis on moving from "high speed" to "high quality" development.

While having made remarkable progress in the realization of children's rights, China's rapid socioeconomic development also poses new challenges on children's wellbeing and these development risks are diversified and evolving. China has the second largest world child population including 271 million children - 147 million boys, 124 million girls under 18 in 2015.¹ Among it, although the annual number of new births in China peaked at 17.86 million in 2016², it fell significantly to 14.65 million in 2019³ despite the implementation of the universal Two-Child policy. Additionally, within the child population, a large variation by age group is apparent and has implications for the equitable deployment of resources to age-appropriate essential social services.

The overall access of children to essential social services is relatively low, and inequities in access between urban and rural areas, and across regions remains. Not all essential social services for children are part of the national Basic Public Service (BPS) list, and the legal frameworks, institutional leadership responsibilities, and coordination mechanisms within the governments are yet to be clearly defined. Also, children continue to experience deprivations and vulnerabilities. The *2016 State Council Opinions on Strengthening Protection for Vulnerable Children* highlighted three risk factors making a child vulnerable: living in the poorest families; living with disabilities; lacking adequate parental care and guardianship; and these aforementioned factors are interlinked with each other.

Along with the rapid urbanization, large numbers of children are still affected by the accelerated internal migration. An estimated 103 million children are affected by migration, of whom 69 million are children left behind by one or both migrating parents (2015)⁴, in both cases experiencing limitations to their rights impacting their care, development and protection. There are other vulnerable groups including children with disabilities, who face extra obstacles in realizing their full potential. China is also prone to natural disasters, environmental hazards and public health emergencies all with the potential for significant impacts for children and their families. Epidemics such as the COVID-19 have posed serious threats to the

1 National Bureau of Statistics, UNICEF China, UNFPA China, 'Population Status of Children in China in 2015: Facts and Figures', 2017.

2 National Bureau of Statistics. 'Statistical Communiqué on the National Economic and Social Development 2016'.

3 National Bureau of Statistics. 'Statistical Communiqué on the National Economic and Social Development 2019'.

4 NWCCW, NBS, UNICEF, Children in China: An Atlas of Social Indicators, 2018.

lives of children and challenge the achievement of planned results. What's worse, nationally representative data is particularly lacking in the area of child protection and menstrual hygiene management, significantly hindering the monitoring of children's wellbeing .

At the same time, China is experiencing a demographic shift including an ageing population, a declining fertility rate, an imbalanced gender ratio, a rising middle class, and changing patterns of migration. Such transformations have direct impacts on the supply of China's labor force and potential of decreased productivity, thereby having urgent implications on children development - balancing the care for the children, and ensuring those most vulnerable ones' access to the BPS particularly given it is widely perceived that the future human capital development depends on the equal access and quality of the BPS for all the children.

All of the above attest to the need to continue to prioritize the evolving needs of children in the national policy frameworks. Currently, putting children first (PCF) is the essential paradigm that both the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and development agenda for the UN SDGs advocate for with national governments. With the CRC as the internationally recognized touchstone document in child rights advocacy (*China ratified the CRC in 1991 and it took effects in 1992*), it highlights the importance of extending extra care to the child, strives for creating an enabling environment for children to reach full and harmonious development, and requests the involved governments in reaching its goals and fulfilling its obligation vis-à-vis the CRC. Also, as identified in SDGs (*the 2030 Agenda for SDGs was adopted by member states including China in 2015*) – the SDGs are universal and globally relevant for all children. 44 global indicators directly concern children in the 2030 Agenda, covering five dimensions of child rights – survive and thrive, learning, protection, environment, and fair chance. These prompt China to continue to embed the PCF paradigm into the strategic planning, programming, policy development and legislation processes, whilst taking concrete actions to provide a strong guarantee for the all-round and healthy development of children, through better implementation of policies and improved social governance.

Furthermore, the Government of China (GoC) has continuously prioritized children in its strategic development agenda. Since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC), the Chinese President Xi Jinping has urged all levels of the governments to create better development conditions for children to learn and grow, with a nation-wide consensus that children are the future and hope of the country. Within this rapidly developing environment, the GoC acknowledges the need for thoughtful leadership and expertise on child rights. In 2016, Premier Li Keqiang stressed at the Executive Meeting of the State Council that the Government must strengthen support to the vulnerable, especially the children left behind. During the 19th National CPC, the GoC underlined the necessities of building a sound caring service system for the rural children left behind, as well as improving the caring for the youngest (*children aged 0-6*) to address the existing child development inequities. Throughout years, while underpinning the importance of the government's leading role in making the child-related policies, the country has gradually formed a cross-ministerial coordination body with the inclusion of social force participation in supporting the child-related work.

II. Macro Space of Policies Development for Children in China

China is currently in the end of the third National Program of Action (NPA) for Children – the first NPA has been implemented since 1992. The three Programs of Action reflect the government's child rights priorities based on different socioeconomic development goals in these decades. The third NPA (2011-2020) has included child welfare as an additional, fifth main focus area. It continues to look at achieving

social service accessibility for all children, especially in rural areas and proposes to improve the quality of social services. In addition to PCF, basic principles of policymaking and resource allocation also include protecting children's rights, ensuring the best interest of the child, ensuring equal development for each child, and encouraging children's participation in family, cultural and social life. This NPA also includes specific goals in creating child-friendly social environments to support the healthy growth and development of children.⁵

Although the NPA is regarded as issue-specific document, if seen through the lenses of healthcare, education, legal protection and child welfare policy development, it is clear that the GoC is taking a more structured and systematic approach to child rights, gradually aligning itself with the CRC. According to the interim review report, most of the objectives listed in the third NPA have already been achieved, such as reduced infant mortality rate, under-five child mortality rate, and the three-year preschool kindergarten gross enrolment ratio. Yet, the interim review of NPA identified emerging issues that need to be addressed, including child safety and child online protection. In fact, child rights are multi-dimensional. In order to have an overview of the child development and child rights, we have provided a referential list of child development indicators in different areas in the Annex; and monitoring and evaluating these indicators is the basis of effectively incorporating PCF into policies and actions.

Apart from the NPA, as the overall guideline defining China's social and economic development objectives, the 13th FYP serves as an overall development guide to achieve this 2020 vision. Compared with the 12th FYP, the 13th FYP emphasizes creating a child-friendly social environment for children's healthy development beyond the right of survival. By further referring to the existed large urban-rural gap, the 13th FYP continues to emphasize the elimination of the urban-rural inequality and prioritize the investment in the rural and western regions. It has also increased its attention towards children - Early Childhood Development (ECD) 0-3 has been repetitively mentioned; Early Childhood Education (ECE) 3-6 as well as other education stages have been instructed to modernize; Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) has been giving strong support to young people particularly from poor families; maternal and infant healthcare and childbirth services have been included as a key element of "Action Plan for a Healthy China"; "child rights and PCF" has been stated as a policy goal; several child-sensitive services have been also included in the national catalogues of BPS.

Despite the big advancements in reflecting child priorities in the national frameworks, below are some areas that may merit further attention:

- First, a bigger visibility of child welfare in the FYPs and NPAs is welcome. Whilst the FYPs have mentioned the importance of child development and set the relevant broader objectives, the specific elements regarding children's welfare are not highly visible, as many programs still lack clear mechanisms for geographic roll-out and equalisation across provinces and different vulnerable groups.
- Secondly, a child-sensitive public finance system is not yet in place, and this may because: i) the GoC has yet effectively put the importance of investing in services for children's full development into their policy making and implementation; ii) some subnational governments have yet had clear understandings on the public expenditure responsibilities in terms of some of the essential social services related children (e.g. ECE 3-6); while some services (e.g. early childhood care 0-3) have traditionally been arranged for within the family structure and therefore not seen as being in the

⁵Brunswick, Effectively Advocating for Children in China (Prepared for UNICEF), 2016.

purview of the Government; and iii) other benefits (e.g. long-term productivity gains) of investing on these child-specific services are not clearly understood and/or underestimated.

- Thirdly, effective and efficient policy interventions need to be based on a well-designed and effectively implemented monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system with evidence-based insights⁶. Despite data on a rich reservoir of child indicators are available, China still faces evidence gaps in monitoring children’s development against the government targets and SDG goals. For example, although echoed in the 13th FYP for the needs of building systematic protection and caring services for migrant children and children left behind, they have yet had sufficient evidence generation to form targeted indicator systems for the relevant service provision. Furthermore, the current disaggregated data by age groups is insufficient to analyze the relative well-being of children compared to other population groups.

III. Selected Issues related to Child Development in China

1. Child Affected by Multidimensional Poverty and Policy Responses

Many children in China still experience multidimensional deprivations due to lack of access to equitable, adequate and affordable essential social services and social protection. Children who experience deprivations in childhood are very likely to face developmental and socio-economic challenges in the adulthood, which will again affect their own children and transmit poverty across generations.

China is approaching its national target of eliminating extreme poverty per the current national rural poverty line by the end of 2020. By the end of 2018, only 1.7 per cent of the rural population and 2.2 per cent of rural children lived below the 2,300 RMB (2010 price) national poverty line for rural China (equivalent to USD 2.3 per person per day (2011 PPP)). However, growth has been accompanied by significant inequities, as evidenced by China’s high Gini coefficient⁷, and the significant urban-rural income ratio⁸, and income gaps across geographic regions⁹. While multidimensional poverty is not measured in China, the latest unofficial estimates based on nationally representative data on household income and living conditions put the incidence of multidimensional poverty at 3.3 per cent (5.9 per cent in rural areas and 1.1 per cent in urban).¹⁰

Children are one of the most affected groups by multidimensional poverty. In 2015, a total of 65 million children (about 24 per cent of the child population) were found to be living in officially designated “poverty-stricken areas” which have outcomes well below the national average in nearly all dimensions ranging from education to health and sanitation.¹¹ Major challenges for China to address

6 Annex 1 provides a quick reference for key child development indicators for putting children first in policy decision-making. It is largely based on the 2018 edition of the Children in China: An Atlas of Social Indicators: a flagship data publication of UNICEF China and an authoritative source of data on the status of children in China. The list is not an exhaustive one but provides useful reference of key indicators needed for tracking and monitoring the progress and challenges in promoting children’s wellbeing in China. These indicators largely draw from data of the Statistical Yearbooks published by the National Bureau of Statistics and line ministries. The indicator list reflects relevant government plans and policies such as the Thirteenth Five-Year Plan (2016-2020), sectoral and cross-sectoral plans, and revised targets and actions proposed by the Government of China in the process of implementing the National Programme of Action on Children (2011-2020). It also referred to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

7 National Bureau of Statistics, China Yearbook of Household Survey, 2018.

8 National Bureau of Statistics, China Statistical Abstract, 2018.

9 National Bureau of Statistics of China, China Statistics Yearbook, 2018.

10 Feng & Di, Initial Estimate of Multidimensional Poverty in China, Hot Issues (Re Dian Ju Jiao), China Academic Journal Electronic Publishing House, 2017.

11 UNICEF, National Bureau of Statistics of China & UNFPA, Population Status of Children in China in 2015, 2017.

multidimensional poverty faced by children lie in the lack of national measurement and monitoring of multidimensional poverty with children as one of the target groups.

2. Child-Sensitive Social Assistance

In China, Dibao (*basic living allowance*) serves as a core component of the social assistance system and the “gatekeeper” which qualifies households and individuals for other social assistance programmes. It covers around 43 million people, making it the largest social assistance programme in the world. Nonetheless, the coverage rate, at 3 per cent currently, is significantly lower than many other countries.¹² Dibao uses income and assets-based criteria for identification of eligible beneficiaries. The average Dibao threshold for urban households (*maximum per capita household income for Dibao eligibility*) is less than 20 per cent of the median income per capita, and about 30 per cent of the median income per capita for rural households.¹³

By design, the Dibao cash transfer does not sufficiently prioritize children’s needs. While children represent 20 per cent of China’s total population, they account for only 16 per cent of the urban Dibao recipients and 13 per cent of rural Dibao recipients in China¹⁴. The current system design presents limitations in its efficiency ranging from lack of linkage between cash assistance and social services to inefficient targeting. As a result, there remain barriers for equitable access to Dibao for children, including but not limited to the following: disparities in access for households and children are dependent on their place of household registration (“*Hukou*”) rather than their actual needs; social assistance beneficiaries receive limited information and guidance in terms of better access to public services; and many children in need of assistance are still not covered by the current social assistance system.

3. Children with Disabilities

The total number of children with disabilities (aged 0-17 years old) in China is estimated to be around 5 million, equivalent to a prevalence rate of 1.6 per cent.¹⁵ Of these children with disabilities, 58 per cent were male and 80 per cent lived in the rural areas. While the government policy and investment targeting children with disabilities in China have been significantly improved, there remains a shortage of comprehensive data, and these children remain particularly vulnerable to exclusion and lack of opportunity.

Lack of child-centered, comprehensive laws to promote overall learning and development of children with disabilities, and limited enforcement of existing laws, along with lack of appropriate infrastructure limit the educational access to the children with disabilities. Quality of education is significantly hindered by lack of qualified teachers and shortage of teaching competencies. Discrimination and poor social awareness of people with disabilities further aggravate challenges faced and limit opportunities available to these children and their families. Inclusion of children with disabilities in mainstream schools has been shown to have positive learning and development outcomes for these children compared to segregation,

12 Calculated based on www.mca.gov.cn and NBS data.

13 Asian Development Bank, Inclusive Development Position Paper: Social Assistance Policy and Service Delivery (Input to the formation of the 14th Five Year Plan of the People’s Republic of China). Beijing, 2019.

14 NWCCW, NBS, UNICEF, Children in China: An Atlas of Social Indicators, 2018.

15 Based on the Second National Sample Survey on Disability (2006), conducted by the China Disabled Persons’ Federation (CDPF) and the National Bureau of Statistics.

as well as promoting of societal inclusion. Although the number of children with disabilities in mainstream schools has steadily increased, pre-primary and post-compulsory education of children with disabilities has not been systematically established.

Among the children with disabilities, cerebral palsy, mental retardation, speech difficulties, and autism are the primary risks causing disability. It is estimated that about 1.2 million infants are born prematurely in China annually, accounting for about 8 per cent of the total number of premature infants in the world, who are at risk to be disabled. Others may experience disability as a result of illness, inadequate stimulation, poor nutrition, air pollution or injury. For instance, injury is a leading cause of death and disability among children worldwide (*no data available for China*). Moreover, early childhood from the prenatal development to eight years of age is an important window of opportunity for preventing potential developmental delays, disabilities and behavioral disorders, to ensure the full participation, functioning and activities of every child including the children with disabilities in their lifespan. Although data is generally lacking, children with disabilities are less likely to have access to quality health care services and therefore experience greater unmet health care needs. And there are still some children with disabilities in China especially infants (*aged 0 years old*) who are not enrolled in any form of health insurance and have limited access to assistance and subsidies schemes. When considering the enormous cost of medical expenses for children with disabilities, the limited number of assistance and subsidies schemes is alarming.¹⁶

In other words, a certain number of children with disabilities cannot receive appropriate care and support including medical care, therapy and assistive technologies at the earliest time, in addition to the fact that the current rehabilitation service system in China cannot fully meet the needs of all children with disabilities particularly in terms of the remained disparities across different geographic areas, between the urban and the rural areas, as well as between the poor and better off families. For example, data of the *Development Report On The Cause For Persons With Disabilities in China* showed that only 46.7 per cent of officially recognised persons with disabilities who expressed basic rehabilitation service needs had actually accessed the services.¹⁷ There are more unmet needs in the rural areas than in the urban areas with about 30 percent of children with disabilities in the urban areas receiving at least one type of rehabilitation service versus 20 per cent of children in the rural areas. Similarly, children with disabilities from families who are economically better off generally access more rehabilitation services than children from poor families (*26.8 per cent versus 20 per cent*).¹⁸

Still, a certain degree of prejudice and discrimination against persons with disabilities exist in society. In particular, caring for children with disabilities can be unduly demanding in contexts where infrastructure and access to services and support are inadequate or non-existent, which may result in the children being abandoned or sent to child welfare institutions. And the current child welfare and protection systems for providing social service support to children with disabilities living with their families or children living with a caregiver have not been effectively established, and this in turn puts children with disabilities being at greater risks of abandonment.

While a comprehensive surveillance and monitoring system for persons with disabilities exists in China, the disability registration system requires a complex diagnosis and certification process, which prevents many families from registering, and hence very limited information is captured by the system.

¹⁶ NWCCW, NBS, UNICEF, *Children in China: An Atlas of Social Indicators*, 2018.

¹⁷ *Development Report On The Cause For Persons With Disabilities In China*, 2017.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

Additionally, although the existing disability statistics play an important role in understanding the status and needs of children with disabilities and supporting policy decisions relevant to their development, there is a lack of comprehensive, accurate and consistent information to ensure children with disabilities can access to preferential policies and welfare protection services that they are eligible for and in need of.¹⁹

4. Early Childhood Development (ECD) for Children Aged 0-6 Years Old

China has 17 million children under five years old who are unable to reach their full potential – the second highest in the world due to poverty, malnutrition, lack of psychosocial stimulation, and suboptimal nurturing care practices and support. In poor rural areas, the situation is even worse, with more than one third of children under three years old are at risk of developmental delays.¹³

- **ECD for Children Aged 0-3 Years Old**

Primary caregivers play the most important role in a child's physical, intellectual and social emotional development and early learning. Limited caregiver understanding of how to provide nurturing care and best support a child's development, combined with limited availability of parenting education and resources and lack of access to the ECD services, contributing to deep disadvantages from the early years and to lifelong disparities. Important progress is being made, but family friendly policies (*including parental leave and childcare allowances*) are in limited and/or in their infancy (*e.g. promotion of nurturing care services for children under 3 years old*), while the families and children most likely to benefit from ECD services are least likely to have access. Limited diversity in the types of available ECD services does not meet individualized needs of families.

Around 40 per cent families want their child under 3 years old enrolled to access the early childhood care and education services, while less than 10 per cent of children are currently enrolled in the childcare centers. In parallel, affordable childcare centers are often not financially viable without sufficient government subsidies, given the high cost of rent and lack of qualified staff, and particularly limited within poorer areas, contributing to an economic developmental divide from the earliest age.

Further, early detection, prevention, support and referral services for the youngest children at risk of poor nutrition, neurodevelopmental delays or behavioral problems remains a challenge. A workable multi-sectoral mechanism of early identification and early interventions for children at risks of developmental delays and(or) disabilities in China has not been effectively established, especially in low resource settings. And vulnerable youngest child groups, including those in poor rural areas, of migrant parents who have left them behind with other caregivers, or those with disabilities are at increased risk of developmental delays, exposed to high risk of violence, neglect and abuse, losing out on their chance to meet their full developmental potential.

Besides that, cultivation and training of ECD professionals working in diversified ECD service platforms have similarly not kept pace. High demand and a limited regulatory environment and lack of quality assurance mechanisms has resulted in a high proportion of unqualified personnel, while uncompetitive salaries, poor career development opportunities and low social recognition act as barriers to recruitment of more highly qualified service professionals.

¹⁹ CHENG Zhaowen, et al., 'Progress, Problems and Challenges in Disability Statistics in China', *Disability Research*, no.4, 2016, pp. 75 - 79.

Among it, one is the health system lacks a trained workforce that is capable of early identification of children at risk of developmental delays, assessing their needs, and providing specialized care and support, particularly at county level and below in under resourced areas; and the other is within the existing daycare centers, a staffing shortage exists of nearly 40,000 professionals with training or a technical supporting system is generally lacking. These together as the greatest obstacle to the scale-up and quality development of the community-based childcare services to ensure a universal coverage.

Last but not the least, women remain the primary care givers in Chinese families, which is manifested in the usually absent fathers' role in childrearing, especially in the early childhood. Unequal division of care labour is also found to increase women's care burdens and further disadvantage them in the job market and at home.

All in all, although ECD is highlighted as a development priority during the G20 meeting in 2018, China lacks an overall national ECD programme with dedicated budget and resources for children under 3 years old that recognizes the importance of universal ECD services to address the increasing demands of caregivers on appropriate nurturing care skills and practices.

- **Early Childhood Education (ECE) for Children Aged 3-6 Years Old**

Despite the ECE progress, disparities in access and quality remain. Pre-primary education remains the weakest component of the Chinese education system. Per student investment in ECE remains the lowest level of investment when compared to other levels of education despite conclusive global evidence of ECE investment having the greatest return of any level of education and returns decreasing with age. Investment also largely depends on the economic power of the local governments. The general trend is of higher per student funding in richer eastern provinces, and lower funding in central and western provinces. Although the State Council issued the document of *Guiding Opining of Deepening Reform and Regulating the Development of the Preschool Education*, the funding gaps and the limited capacity of human resources, and along with the last mile service delivery gap prevent China to achieve the equitable preschool education coverage.

Furthermore, the most disadvantaged children are disproportionately excluded from access to quality pre-primary education, particularly in remote rural and urban poor areas, and for ethnic minorities and those affected by migration. These children make up those that would most benefit from ECE but are overwhelmingly overrepresented in the 16.6 per cent (2019) of children aged 3-6 not enrolled in pre-primary education. And the children with disabilities have lower rate of enrollment into preschools.

With relatively limited regulation and lack of national standards or quality assurance mechanism, quality of ECE is highly variable, and poorer within remote and rural areas compared to urban areas. Impediments to the quality of education include lack of appropriate facilities, teaching and learning materials and guidance, teaching qualifications and professional development. Additionally, a severe kindergarten teacher shortage exists, particularly affecting rural areas, with a lack of half a million teachers in 2018.

5. Vocational Education

Despite impressive gains, including achievement of universal access to primary education and elimination of gender enrolment disparities, inequities in school readiness, inclusive access and quality of the vocational education in China persist and constrain progress towards the SDG realization.

The transformation of China's economic growth model from labor intensive manufacturing and other unskilled labor sectors to innovation and high productivity-driven economic development requires a matching transformation of the skills of the Chinese labor force. During this historical process, vocational education has a vital role to play.

Although vocational education has made great achievements in development, it remains a weak link in the education system; and it faces multiple challenges including insufficient investment, poor quality and outdated curricula that does not prepare students to meet the most updated demands of today's industry. Addressing the shortcomings of vocational education is an essential step in accelerating modernization of the whole education system.

Meanwhile, despite the high levels of women's education and rates of female labour force participation in China, the talent pipeline is not optimized. A contributing factor is stereotypical norms and practices that discourage and impede girls and women to acquire Science, Technology, Engineering or Mathematics (STEM) expertise and take on related technical occupations.

6. Health Issues for Children

Persistent inequities exist in maternal, infant, child and adolescent health between urban and rural areas, and between the provinces and regions which must be addressed. Apart from emerging challenges to child health, there is also a shift from child survival to optimal development, leading to growing public demand for high impact and quality interventions.

- **Injuries**

In China, an estimated 10 million children are injured each year, and over 60,000 die from injuries including drowning - 21,000 children die of drowning in China, with boys at greater risk than girls and drowning mortality rate in rural China is 2.2 times higher than that in the urban areas, road traffic accident, and others. Injury accounts for more than half of the deaths among children aged 1-17 years old. In addition, nearly 10 per cent of all children with disabilities were caused by injury.^{20,21} Nonetheless, governments at all levels have insufficient understanding of the importance of child injury prevention with inadequate investments in the issue. A comprehensive coordination mechanism for child injury prevention has not yet been established due to insufficient policy support. And the capacity of service providers and caregivers on child injury prevention need to be further improved.

20 NWCCW, NBS, UNICEF, Children in China: An Atlas of Social Indicators, 2018.

21 LIANG Xiaofeng of China CDC, et al., China Child Injury Report, 2017.

- **Overweight and Obesity**

Child overweight and obesity rates have increased over the past decades in both urban and rural areas, portending serious public health problem in the near future. Between 1985 and 2014, the prevalence of overweight increased from 1.1 per cent to 20.4 per cent among children aged 7-18 years old. There is a wealth of evidence that childhood overweight will significantly increase the risk of noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) in the late life and lead to social problems and mental health issues amongst young people. One of the most crucial factors of childhood overweight and obesity is food environment where children, adolescents and their caregivers are inevitably immersing themselves in. In China, the absence of essential regulations on marketing of unhealthy food including sugar sweetened beverages to children is deteriorating the food environment. As a result, children and adolescents are unprotected to be explored to the temptation of unhealthy food and the exploitation marketing of the industry, exaggerating the challenges of childhood overweight and obesity.

- **Adolescent Mental Health**

A recent survey conducted by the National Health Commission (NHC) and UNICEF in 2017 showed that 40 per cent of adolescents aged 10-19 years old reported self-harm at least once in the past 12 months, and over one third reported anxiety moods. Overall, more than 30 million children and adolescents under 17 years old had behavioral and emotional problems, of which over 50 per cent may need mental health services but remain untreated.²² This comes at a staggering cost to families and communities, as the consequences of not addressing adolescent mental health conditions extending to adulthood, impairing both physical and mental health and limiting opportunities to lead fulfilling lives as adults.

- **Environmental Health**

In many areas of China, children are exposed to unsafe, unhygienic and polluted environments, specifically unsafe sanitation in rural area (*44 per cent of the rural population do not have access to safely managed sanitation*) and polluted indoor and outdoor air (*In 2014, 43 per cent of children in rural China are exposed to indoor air pollution through burning solid fuel for cooking and heating;*²³ *In 2018, 64 per cent cities failed to reach air quality standards.*²⁴). According to a survey in three provinces in 2015, the public awareness rate on environmental health is only 8.4 per cent. For instance, toilet conditions have been improved especially in urban areas and public places and more people now have access to water toilet. This has also posed risk of costly water treatment, burden on infrastructure construction, pollution of water and depletion of source water. “Toilet revolution” has not leveraged a change in people’s knowledge, attitude and behavior, therefore facilities are not used and maintained properly, and the maximum health impact cannot be achieved not to mention an active individual investment. Due to the subsidy strategy, huge gaps between groups especially between the urban and rural areas, men and women in access to proper sanitation exist. A whole system approach is still needed to be shaped up in order to ensure sustainability.

Above all, the GoC’s prioritised attention to this issue is evident notwithstanding, there is still a disconnect between central environmental directives and localized abilities to meet and adapt to the changes required by the new environmental targets. Meanwhile, there is insufficient capacity of the national and

22 National Project on Mental Health (2002-2010), China Department for Disease Control and Prevention, Ministry of Health, 2002. In: China Health Information Profile. World Health Organization Regional Office for the Western Pacific, 2010.

23 Ministry of Environment, Report on Environmental Exposure Related Activity Pattern Research for the Chinese (Children), 2016.

24 Ministry of Ecology and Environment, 2018 China Ecology and Environment Situation Report, 2019.

sub-national governments as well as private sectors to specifically deliver and promote climate-resilient sanitation and environment programmes for children in their homes, in schools and in public spaces respectively. And appropriate technologies have not been identified or innovated and implemented according to the context of different areas.

7. Care and Support for Children: Child Protection System Response

While China has made progress in protecting children from violence and exploitation, gaps persist in laws and policies as well as in their implementation, service provision, capacities and evidence along with the emergence of new risks that need to be identified and addressed.

Children without adequate parental care appear to be among the most vulnerable to violence, abuse and neglect. A number of studies and media reported incidents have highlighted the vulnerabilities and risks faced by children left behind and raised serious concerns over the care and protection of these children who are separated from one or both parents and have inadequate care and support. The protection concerns related to children left behind include development of behavioral and psychosocial problems, prolonged separation, having little contact with parents, and being subjected to neglect and sexual abuse. According to the statistics released by the Ministry of Civil Affairs (2016), 8.05 million children under 16 years old lived with their grandparents, and 990,000 of them lived alone and/or their guardians have limited capacity to meet their development needs and fulfil childcare responsibilities.

Although children left behind have inadequate parental care and support and are significantly at higher risk of abuse and neglect than their peers who are not left behind by their parents, they are not the only ones and many children have to endure violence on a daily basis in silence without being identified and thus without support to them and their families. The All-China Women's Federation found that family violence affected nearly one-third of all families in China.²⁵ Moreover, inadequate care and support is one of the key drivers putting children with disabilities at risk of violence, abuse and neglect. While there is also a lack of data on violence against children with disabilities in China, global systematic reviews on the prevalence and risk of violence against children with disabilities, found that children with disabilities are 3.7 times more likely than children who do not have a disability to be victims of any sort of violence²⁶. They are 3.6 times more likely to be victims of physical violence, and 2.9 times more likely to be victims of sexual violence. Children with mental or intellectual impairments appear to be among the most vulnerable, with 4.6 times the risk of sexual violence than their peers without disabilities.

Child abuse and neglect by parents and other care givers has a deep impact on a child's life with both immediate and long-term impacts on their health and well-being, families, communities, and nations. It was estimated that in 2010 the total health related cost of child maltreatment represented 2.1 per cent of China's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) that year, or US\$ 122 billion (*including 0.84 per cent for physical abuse, 0.47 per cent for emotional abuse and 0.39 per cent for sexual abuse*).²⁷ These are only health-related costs, but if also taking into account those for education, justice, and welfare, would result in a much higher total.

25 SONG Xiuyan et al, Investigation of Chinese Women's Social Status in New Era, China Women Publishing House, 2013.

26 Jones et al., Prevalence and risk of violence against children with disabilities: a systematic review and meta-analysis of observational studies. *Lancet*. 2012 Sep 8;380(9845):899-907. doi: 10.1016/S0140-6736(12)60692-8. Epub, 2012.

27 Fang et al, The burden of Child Maltreatment in China: A Systematic Review, 2015.

China's child protection system, including its guardianship system is still at its initial development stage. The current laws on protecting children from abuse and neglect include very limited implementation measures, and there is no organization having a lead in child protection service provision, let alone coordinating it. Parents rely heavily on the extended family for childcare, and prevailing social norms which perceive what happens in the home as a private affair, constrain reporting and state intervention. Meanwhile, interventions are rarely preventative and are only triggered when a case reaches a severe threshold and often after children have been significantly affected by the violence endured. There are limited community-based structures and services to ensure the timely identification and reporting of highly vulnerable children and their families, so as to facilitate their referral to social assistance, basic social services or targeted protection services and even the latter remain largely absent or inadequate. The lack of overall coordination and monitoring of interventions on essential service sectors for children such as education, health and child protection also impedes the efficiency of relevant law enforcement such as the Anti-Family Violence Law (*adopted in 2016*). Finally, the workforce substantially lacks adequate knowledge and skills to prevent and response to violence.

8. Child Friendly Cities Initiative (CFCI)

By 2019, China's urbanization rate reached 60 per cent with a migrant population of 236 million.²⁸ Besides the development opportunities, the unprecedented scale and speed of urbanization have presented development challenges for children in the urban areas – cities harbour inequalities, deprivations and their lack of access to the urban essential social services and protection. CFCI is seen as a key platform for an integrated platform for an integrated, cross-sectoral and city/community-driven programme, with a focus on every child reaching their full potential through equal realization of their rights. It is essential to develop effective and holistic strategies for its landing in China at the national and sub-national levels.

Founded on the CRC, CFCI commits to fulfilling child rights in cities and local systems of governance and ensures that the best interests of the child are a primary consideration in all actions concerning children, which is coherent with PCF. Globally, CFCI is seen as a concrete approach for local governments and stakeholders to pay more attention to meeting the rights and needs of their youngest citizens and therefore CFCI can be a useful entry point for ensuring urbanization from a child rights perspective. In China, CFCI is a new one still under development, and with essential building blocks of formalizing and localizing CFCI has yet been established, specifically including:

- A systematic analysis, supported by primary and secondary evidence, on the situation and well-being of the urban children under the framework of CFCI. The absence of such a child rights-based situation analysis hinders the understanding on the true nature and scale of difficulties affecting children in cities.
- An integrated national policy and regulatory framework for CFCI - CFCI is yet incorporated or clearly mentioned in China's existing policies and strategies concerning child and urban development. Plus, there are no technical guidelines, standards, criteria, or M&E plans to guide local cities' actions.
- A multi-disciplinary approach. CFCI is a multi-disciplinary one cutting across the thematic focuses and functions of almost all the ministries and national-level governmental agencies. At present, the national institutional and coordination mechanism is not in place to clearly specify who is the leading

²⁸ NBS data newly released in February 2020.

ministry in management, coordination and communication, or how to synergize among all the relevant ministries.

- Child participation in policies, programmes and decision-making affecting children. Meaningful participation of children remains limited or unsubstantial in the country.

IV. Policy Recommendations

Child Poverty Measurement and Child-sensitive Social Assistance:

- To establish regular national measurement and monitoring of (*both rural and urban*) poverty in its relative and multidimensional terms, with designated measure and analysis for children, which shall be used to inform planning and implementation of poverty reduction and social assistance programs.
- To include targets related to reducing relative and multidimensional poverty of children in the country's poverty reduction and development plans at the national and subnational levels.
- To move away from poverty reduction in rural areas only to address child poverty in both rural and urban settings, and with special attention paid to rural children left behind and migrant children in the urban areas.
- To consolidate resources and coordinate interventions in different sectors for children to improve the efficiency of the reduction of multidimensional child poverty.
- To link cash assistance to the poor and vulnerable households and children with social service provision.
- To strengthen the social service delivery system and mechanisms so as to better reach and provide more quality services for children and their families.

Children with Disabilities:

- To advocate the public to respect the right to survival, protection, development and participation of children with disabilities, address the physical, attitudinal, communication and social barriers faced by them.
- To get all children and adolescents with disabilities (aged 0-18 years old) registered and monitored in a comprehensive data system, with a mechanism for cross-sectoral data-sharing so as to strengthen the overall collection and consolidation of information, monitoring, research and follow-up in the areas of education, rehabilitation, social assistance and other child welfare and social services; for example, to strengthen the Education Management Information System (EMIS) by systematically including pre-primary children (aged 3-6 years old) so as to accurately monitor the education and development of children with disabilities.
- To increase financial investment for children with disabilities and strengthen the monitoring of fund allocation and usage, with prioritization of inclusion into mainstream education schools, adaptation/construction of inclusive facilities, improved teaching quality and differentiated funding based on circumstances and needs.
- To develop child-centred and comprehensive laws and policies based on the rights to education, protection, employment and participation - pre-primary and post-compulsory education should be systematically established for all children with disabilities to support their life-long development.
- To foster the networks and facilitate the cooperation among society, communities, schools and families so as to ensure their career development, social participation and better access to diversified resources.

- To strengthen quality of teaching and recruitment of qualified teachers in relation to special education and for school personnel and teachers with disabilities including development of/increased support to teacher education; refinement of certification standards and support for teacher incentive/recruitment mechanism; and specific professional development.
- To establish a workable mechanism of early detection, assessment and early intervention of children with disabilities through multi-sectoral cooperation, and with improved awareness and affordability of the services; and to improve and standardize the targeted support for infants and young children at risk of developmental delays to prevent progressing to disability, particularly in under resourced areas.
- To further strengthen the roles of parents and caregivers, and improve their knowledge, skills and beliefs to ensure quality care for children, particularly those at risk of disabilities or developmental delays in early years.
- To prevent children from disability resulted by injury by implementing effective prevention and intervention measures in communities, child related facilities (e.g. schools, childcare centers, etc.), and households.
- To increase social assistance for children with disabilities in the rural areas and the young children with disabilities, including improving standards of medical assistance, increasing living subsidies for children with disabilities facing financial difficulties and nursing subsidies for children with serious disabilities.
- To enhance the integrated child protection systems as a whole while making the protection of children with disabilities a priority; and to ensure the effective delivery of child protection and child justice services for those children with disabilities.
- To allocate resources rationally regarding provision of comprehensive family support services for children with disabilities, including financial, rehabilitation, respite care, counselling, social and psychological support, and assistance and support to access basic services.
- To reduce the construction of large-scale child welfare institutions and rehabilitation centres, transform child welfare institutions to child welfare service centres so as to provide community-based family care support services for children with disabilities.

Early Childhood Development for Children Aged 0-3 Years Old:

- To further increase public financial investment in the ECD services, especially in the central and western areas, and for the most vulnerable groups, by linking the ECD policies to poverty reduction policies, and by establishing an incentive mechanism to leverage local investment and mobilize social resources.
- To strengthen intersectoral partnership so as to ensure the provision of integrated ECD services including early learning experiences, health and developmental screenings, nutritious food, parenting resources and support, and access to health and social services.
- To enhance and fully execute family friendly and gender responsive policies to guarantee parents' legitimate rights and interests, such as parental leave for both *parents (fathers and mothers)* and child allowance, create a family-friendly supporting environment to improve the nurturing care practices of parents and caregivers, and encourage both parents to equally share childcare and parenting responsibilities.
- To institutionalize parenting education (*e.g. parent's and caregivers' knowledge and skills*) into the public service system and provide in diverse settings (*e.g. community and early childhood education and care settings*), governments lead and engage non-profit entities to provide technical assistance

to the various types of ECD services, and set up quality standards and a cross-sectoral quality assurance system to provide credentials and regular supervision.

- To optimize the existing essential public health system to better address the growing public demands for high impact and quality nurturing care services on ECD, and tackling challenges such as early newborn essential care, prematurity, malnutrition, and developmental delay, as well early life disabilities.
- To encourage the development of a multi-tiered model for early childhood care, with a combined public-private provision, for the different income groups of parents. Such an approach would help meet the diverse needs of children and their families, including formal settings of day care, community-based collective care and childcare at workplaces, as well as non-formal types such as community-based parenting support, children's play groups and toy libraries.
- To support higher vocational institutions and colleges to strengthen the specialty in ECD education and increase the number of qualified professionals; as well as set up a continuous in-service training system funded/subsidized by government and social organizations.

Early Childhood Education for Children Aged 3-6 Years Old:

- To develop and enforce pre-primary education law ensuring the right to affordable, quality ECE.
- To increase pre-primary education investment, including through increased public funding and mobilization of social investment to support affordable ECE services, regardless of public or private ownerships, but with a focus on marginalized groups and on improving quality of the ECE services.
- To increase teacher recruitment, retention and teaching quality through establishment and enforcement of salary/entitlements standards for teachers and prioritized investment in salaries /entitlements, provide special allowance to the teachers working in the remote areas and establish professional support system to improve the quality of preschools; and to further link pre-service and in-service teacher training system, and establish flexible system to support professional development.
- To develop a comprehensive quality assurance framework, including development of clear quality targets and standards, regulatory procedures and functional inspection mechanism, and to sustainably invest in enhancing capacity of public and non-public service providers for the framework implementation.

Vocational Education:

- To strengthen vocational education policy framework covering education policy, human resource policy, science and technology policy and industrial policy. Upon it, to develop effective mechanisms for coordinating these sectors in formulating and implementing the revised vocational education law and all related policies.
- To improve and promote the national qualification framework system, establish a national credit bank for vocational education, and promote the recognition, accumulation and transformation of the full range of learning achievements in it, including strengthening of soft skills (life skills) within this framework in order to prepare young people for better futures.
- To review and improve the skill-learning framework for adolescents, with special attention paid to removing gender stereotyping in skill-learning curriculum and programs.
- To expand the public investment in vocational education at the national and subnational levels. Among it, to build a more effective inter-governmental educational fiscal transfer system to provide adequate budget resources to local governments across the country, including in poorer rural areas and for vulnerable population groups, and to narrow the vocational education investment gaps among the three regions of China - the West, Centre and the East.

- To introduce innovative and contextualized approaches to the learning of foundational and transferable skills, especially in senior secondary technological and vocational education and training (referring to examples of OECD countries).

Prevention of Child Injuries:

- To establish and implement a systematic mechanism with multisectoral government coordination at all levels to identify and reduce the risks of child injury in households, schools and communities in terms of building a safer environment for children, and with sufficient financial support from the governments at all levels.
- To improve regulation related with road safety should be including child restraint system.
- To strengthen the capacity building for the relevant government sectors for child injury prevention.
- To further raise awareness of caregivers and relevant stakeholders on preventing the injuries of children.
- To strengthen the role of private sector in terms of road safety and child product safety so as to promote child injury prevention.

Prevention of Child Obesity:

- To protect children from exposure to the marketing of unhealthy food through promoting legislation and regulation, specifically including:
 - 1) To restrict or forbid exploitative marketing tactics including celebrity endorsements, toy lure, packing with cartoon or child image, etc.
 - 2) To promote front of pack labelling to identify foods that are high in free sugars salt and/or saturated fats, and warn children off them.
 - 3) To regulate the way that the food and beverages are sold to build up a healthier food retail environments and check outs, for example, any sales promotion behavior on healthy food should be restricted.

Prevention of Adolescent Mental Disorders:

- To provide adolescent mental health service package designed to cater to the specific needs of adolescents aged 10-19 years old, with improved availability, accessibility, and quality.
- To advocate to integrate adolescent mental health services into the basic public health service package and optimize the adolescent health financing.
- To support adolescents to cope with stress through school-based or community-based peer support volunteers, engage adolescents themselves in the design and delivery of interventions.

Prevention of Child-related Environmental Risks:

- To further address the myriad environmental problems with which China is currently facing with– this needs immense political will, a more complete legal framework, investment with a clear vision of ecological civilization, cross-sectoral and cross-ministerial coordination (all-inclusive stakeholder approach) and greater public awareness.

- To develop child-sensitive climate changes and environmental health related policies, guidelines and programmes at the national and sub-national levels particularly for vulnerable groups such as children, with a robust M&E system on child related environmental risks of all aspects.
- To promote toilet revolution in the rural areas of China by implementing nature-based solutions and appropriate technology based on local context.
- To continue to upgrade energy resource and relevant facilities especially for the rural areas by improving technology innovation.
- To strengthen monitoring of child related environmental risks and take necessary interventions where children are exposed to polluted environment.

Care and Protection of Children without Adequate Parental Care:

- To improve and strengthen implementation and enforcement of law in protect children and adolescents from violence, including *Law for Protection of Minors, Family Education and Social Assistance Law*.
- To boost dedicated public investment in a child centred, family focused child welfare and protection system, highlighting that child being safe is shared responsibility of the family, the community and the state. It rests family-centred approach across the service continuum, and purports that children should be protected whenever possible within their own homes, communities and cultures.
- To fully develop a comprehensive child protection and welfare system encompassing three levels of the continuum services including:
 - 1) Family focused guardianship support (*largest component, services and support offered to everyone in the community and services to children and family in need*), and to prevent separation of children. Social service of family support particularly positive parenting, counselling, phyco-social support services, family visitation should be invested as the largest component of the system.
 - 2) Three levels of statutory parental guardianship supervision (*from village, township to county*) to ensure the relevant services could be provided to children who are or suspected be at risk of significant harm, and for whom intervention is needed for their ongoing safety.
 - 3) State guardianship and alternative care aiming to meeting the ongoing safety needs of children unable to remain safely in the care of their parents, as well as therapeutic services to address trauma. Community care alternatives such as kinship or foster care, should be prioritized in providing care and protection for a child, and are sustainable options until family reunification can take place. Institutional care should only be used as a short-term last resort for children when all other options have been exhausted.
- To expand the overall care and protection system from solely on children left behind to all children in need.
- To strengthen administrative data system in social service, health and education sectors that could timely track and report sex- and age- disaggregated data related to vulnerable children and violence against children.
- To expand the research and surveillance evidences so as to have national prevalence estimates for key forms of violence against children and adolescents for policy making.
- To strengthen and include community-based guardianship support services in public services.
- To increase public investment in human resource for quality child protection service provision, by increasing the number of professional social workers for children and through improving the effectiveness of procurement of public services for child protection.

Integrated Urban Policy and Planning for Children in China - the Child Friendly Cities in China:

- To position CFCI into the national social and economic development and planning, and better align it with China's new urbanization strategies, and promote it as a comprehensive platform for concretizing PCF and addressing the urban development issues concerning children in the areas of education, health, safety, social welfare, protection and etc.
- To identify policy gaps and opportunities so as to develop an integrated national policy and regulatory framework under the guidance of the national socio-economic development plan, in which CFCI could be clearly addressed and the technical guidelines on procedures, standards, criteria, and M&E are articulated.
- To conduct thorough child rights situation analysis in line with the CFCI framework at the national level and with deep dive in selected sample cities.
- To map the institutional set-up to establish a CFCI national coordination and management mechanism that the leading agency is clearly identified, and cross-ministry coordination arrangement is specified.
- To strengthen the national and subnational capacities by developing a capacity building framework on child rights and child participation in the context of CFCI so as to help decision-makers and relevant stakeholders better understand their implications on policies, programmes and social governance.

V. Annex

List of Child Development Indicators

The indicator list provides a quick reference for key child development indicators for PCF in policy decision-making. It is largely based on the 2018 edition of the *Children in China: An Atlas of Social Indicators*: a flagship data publication of UNICEF China co-authored with the National Working Committee on Children and Women (NWCCW) and the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), and an authoritative source of data on the status of children in China.

The List is not an exhaustive one but only provides a quick reference of key indicators needed for tracking and monitoring the progress and challenges in promoting children's wellbeing in China. These indicators largely draw from official data of the Statistical Yearbooks published by the NBS and line ministries. The list reflects relevant government plans and policies such as the 13th FYP (2016-2020), sectoral and cross-sectoral plans, *NPA (2011-2020)*. It is also referred to the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*.

Area 1: Population Demographics
Child population
Proportion of families with children
Total number of births
Sex ratio at birth
Life expectancy at birth
Child dependency ratio
Total fertility rate
Birth rate
The rate of natural increase
Area 2: Economic and Social Development
Poverty rate among children
Poverty rate among rural children
Percentage of children among the <i>Dibao</i> recipients
Area 3: Maternal and Child Health
Under 5 mortality rate
Neonatal mortality rate
Infant mortality rate
Still birth rate
Maternal mortality ratio
Hospital delivery rate
Antenatal care coverage
Postnatal care coverage
Rate for postnatal care for babies
Area 4: Immunization
Immunization coverage of vaccines included in the National Immunization Program
Incidence of major infectious diseases (polio, measles, tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis) among children
Mortality rate of major infectious diseases (polio, measles, tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis) among children

Area 5: Nutrition
Prevalence of underweight among children under five
Prevalence of stunting among children under five
Prevalence of anemia among children under five
Prevalence of child overweight and obesity
Prevalence of anemia among pregnant children
Rate of early initiation of breastfeeding (within 1 hour of birth)
Exclusive breastfeeding rate (<6 months)
Rate of introduction of solid, semisolid or soft foods (6-8 months)
Rate of continued breastfeeding at one year (12-15 months)
Rate of continued breastfeeding at two years (20-23 months)
Rate of minimum dietary diversity
Rate of minimum meal frequency
Rate of minimum acceptable diet
Area 6: Child injury
Injury-related mortality rate among children aged 0-17
Road traffic injury mortality rate among children aged 0-17
Prevalence of injury-related disabilities among children aged 0-17
Area 7: Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
Percentage of population using safely managed drinking water services
Percentage of population using safely managed sanitation services
Percentage of population using handwashing facilities with soap and water
Percentage of population having at least basic drinking water services
Percentage of rural population benefiting from centralized water supply
Percentage of rural population having access to piped water
Percentage of population having at least basic sanitation services
Percentage of population having access to sanitary latrines in rural areas
Percentage of population having access to harmless sanitary latrines in rural areas
Proportion of basic education schools with centralized water supply
Proportion of basic education schools with sanitary latrines
Air quality index
Area 8: Education
Number of students at all education levels
Number of teachers at all education levels
Percentage of female students at all education levels
Pupil-teacher ratio at all education levels
Number of schools at all education levels
School attendance rate among children aged 6-17
Gross enrolment ratio in pre-primary education
Participation rate in pre-primary education before enrolment in primary education
Net enrolment rate in primary education
Gross enrolment ratio in junior secondary education
School attendance rate among children of junior secondary school age
School attendance rate among children of senior secondary school age
Migrant students as a percentage of all students in primary education in receiving cities

Migrant students as a percentage of all students in junior secondary education in receiving cities
Number of boarding primary school students
Number of boarding junior secondary school students
Cohort survival rate in nine-year compulsory education
Transition rate at all education levels
Percentage of government expenditure on education in GDP
Enrolment ratio of compulsory education for children with visual, hearing, and intellectual disabilities
Illiteracy rate of youth aged 15-24
Area 9: Children affected by migration
Share of children left behind in total child population
Share of migrant children in total child population
Children's participation rate in migration
Area 10: Children with disabilities
Children with disabilities as a percentage of total child population
Children with disabilities as a percentage of all persons with disabilities
Number of children with disabilities by disability type
Number of children with disabilities aged 0-6 receiving basic rehabilitation services
Proportion of students with disabilities attending regular and special education classes of regular schools to the total number of students with disabilities enrolled
Area 11: Child Protection
Prevalence of physical violence against children
Prevalence of psychological violence against children
Prevalence of sexual violence against children
Prevalence of child neglect
Number of trafficking cases involving young children and women