

Recommendations for the Global Goal on Adaptation: Ensuring a Successful and Meaningful Outcome for Children at COP30

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Introduction

UNICEF, Save the Children, Young Lives, YOUNGO and UNFPA welcome the incoming Brazilian Presidency's [letter](#) of 23 October stating that **COP30 must be the COP of adaptation**, with tangible outcomes including delivering on the Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA) and its operationalization through concrete, measurable indicators. We also welcome Parties' progress towards this goal and commend the technical experts for developing a list of potential indicators addressing the GGA targets (Decision 2/CMA.5, paras 9-10). This provides a strong foundation for productive negotiations and a positive outcome on the GGA at COP30.

It is critical that the unique vulnerabilities of children, including adolescents,¹ and the impact of climate change on their health and education are adequately addressed in the GGA indicators, in line with Decision 3/CMA.6 (para 21 (f)) that the final outcome should include, ***"indicators that reflect the unique vulnerabilities of children to climate change impacts across the thematic targets and, potentially, cross-cutting indicators related to education and the health of children and young people."***

Children are uniquely susceptible to climate change impacts due to their distinct physiology, behavioural characteristics, and developmental needs. These findings are based on extensive research, including the [Born Into the Climate Crisis 2](#) report and evidence from the [Young Lives longitudinal study](#) at the University of Oxford. Almost every aspect of [child health and well-being is affected by climate change](#), and nearly a [quarter of a billion children's schooling](#) was disrupted by climate change in 2024. The climate crisis also exacerbates known drivers of harmful practices such as child marriage and exploitation, which are often linked to [climate-related educational disruptions/school dropout, displacement, and economic hardship](#). Adolescents face disproportionate long-term climate impacts on health, including effects on [mental health and psychological distress](#).

This brief provides three sets of specific recommendations for Parties ahead of COP30: (1) Close gaps in the indicator framework to strengthen the ability to track reductions in children's climate vulnerability; (2) adopt an ambitious, balanced and complete list of indicators; and (3) provide guidance on next steps for the effective operationalization of the indicators.

This approach aligns with the growing recognition among Parties of the disproportionate impacts of climate change on children (Decision 1/CMA.5, para 182), as well as the increasing national prioritization of targeted adaptation measures related to child health, education and social protection, as noted in the 2025 [NDC Synthesis Report](#) and the high number of National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) now including an [education-related priority or action](#) (84%).

1. Close the gaps on children's health, nutrition and education in the indicator framework

We welcome more consistent attention to children, including adolescents, and their specific needs throughout the framework. However, small but important amendments to the current list of 100 indicators would be highly beneficial to close remaining gaps (without adding new indicators):

1. Add concrete references to **education** in relevant metadata columns throughout the framework.
2. Address children and the resilience of essential social sectors that children rely upon within **NAPs**, including education, health, water and sanitation, nutrition and social protection, in indicator 10b01.
3. Promote consistent and specific **disaggregation by age** across all relevant indicators.
4. Incorporate **access to mental health and psychosocial support services** for children, including adolescents, within indicator 9c04.
5. Include a dedicated focus on **nutrition**, including components to monitor child nutrition, throughout all relevant indicators across thematic and dimensional targets.

Concrete recommendations and evidence for disaggregated data, child nutrition, health and education are outlined in Annex 1.

¹ Children are defined under international law as people under the age of 18. For the purposes of this brief, adolescents are defined as individuals aged 10-19.

2. Adopt an ambitious, balanced and complete list of indicators.

The successful completion of the UAE-Belém Work Programme at COP30 depends upon the adoption of a **full, comprehensive and balanced list of indicators, including indicators that consider cross-cutting elements**, including consideration of women and girls, Indigenous Peoples, people of African descent, **children** and persons with disabilities.

The current list of 100 potential indicators provides a strong basis for adopting a coherent set of indicators to monitor progress towards the GGA targets and support Biennial Transparency Reports and the Global Stocktake process. As the proposed indicators are interlinked and collectively address all GGA targets and sub-targets, any substantial modification or reduction risks undermining the technical robustness, relevance and coherence of the framework and Parties' ability to monitor progress towards the GGA targets and their associated subcomponents. It is important to recall that Parties are expected to focus on those indicators which are most relevant to their national circumstances and to report on indicators on a voluntary basis. In this context, we propose the following recommendations:

(i) Maintain all information included in the columns within the Potential indicators for the targets of the UAE Framework for Global Climate Resilience proposed by the expert group.

The expert group's [spreadsheet](#) and [technical report](#) represent a substantial body of technical knowledge and expertise. Several columns contain important details that can help address Parties' concerns raised at SB62 and the October mandated workshop, such as adaptation relevance, reporting burdens, and unique national contexts. For example, the column "**rationale of the indicator (with adaptation and global relevance)**" explains each indicator's relevance for adaptation; the columns focused on **disaggregation** capture cross-cutting considerations; and "**other targets it is relevant for**" promotes linkages across thematic and policy cycle targets. Relying solely on indicator titles would omit critical context necessary for coherence with the GGA framework and for guiding implementation.

At a minimum, the following columns should be retained: indicator name, disaggregation levels (as relevant & feasible), disaggregation levels (additional information), corresponding sub-target/component, description of the indicator (with definition, qualitative information), rationale of the indicator (with adaptation and global relevance), other target(s) it is relevant for, and units. Additionally, the columns on metadata availability and data availability provide valuable guidance for the operationalization of the framework.

(ii) Refrain from removing indicators from the set where possible.

Removing indicators could risk rendering the framework unfit-for-purpose for adequately monitoring GGA targets in their entirety. Given the mandate that the final list of indicators will not exceed 100 indicators, the expert groups applied a highly selective and cautious approach in prioritizing selected indicators. Each proposed indicator makes a meaningful contribution to monitoring adaptation progress. Removing individual indicators would weaken the framework's overall coherence and ability to capture the full scope of adaptation under the GGA.

(iii) Adopt a full list of indicators at Belém, with further refinement and operationalization of indicators to continue after COP30.

While some proposals on how to move forward suggest adopting a limited subset of indicators at COP, this approach should be avoided, as it risks leaving some indicators unresolved or pending adoption indefinitely. Even where certain indicators require additional metadata development, they should still be adopted as part of the final list, with a clear note that further technical work will follow. This will ensure that all indicators receive appropriate attention and that necessary work to operationalize them is prioritized. As reaffirmed at SB62, data availability should neither constrain the development of new indicators nor serve as the sole criterion for their initial implementation.

3. Provide guidance to effectively operationalize the indicators.

Looking ahead, it is essential that the roadmap and processes established by Parties to operationalize the GGA indicators include specific measures to: support **child-sensitive data collection and capacity building**, and **ensure the prioritization of children and other vulnerable groups** in the national and global monitoring of GGA targets, as well as in the development and implementation of National Adaptation Plans and related adaptation policies and strategies.

It is critical that technical work on the indicators continues after their adoption. Collaboration with international agencies, national statistical offices (NSOs), organizations with subject matter expertise and/or data management experience, and civil society will help streamline this process and minimize the reporting burden on countries. Additional work is required to develop methodologies, definitions, and technical processes essential for implementation, including the development of standardized definitions for vulnerable groups and conducting a

comprehensive assessment of the types and levels of disaggregation that are both relevant and feasible for each of the 100 indicators.

We support the seven steps proposed by the experts in their [technical report](#) for implementing the proposed indicators. Parties will need to agree on a **roadmap** for operationalization, including a dedicated body to oversee or coordinate activities to support national and global monitoring of GGA targets, in line with these steps. In line with the expert recommendation to collaborate with **custodian agencies**, **we suggest that supporting agencies would be expected to:**

- Lead the development of methods and standards for data collection, under the guidance of Parties;
- Contribute to national statistical capacity building and data collection;
- Establish mechanisms for compilation and verification of national data; and
- Maintain global databases and provide internationally comparable data to the UNFCCC for inclusion in the GGA global database.

A practical pathway to **support in-country data collection and monitoring is to establish a multi-partner taskforce led by** Constituted Bodies (CBs), in collaboration with UN agencies, NSOs and other partners. Relevant CBs include the Adaptation Committee (AC), the Least Developed Countries Expert Group (LEG) and the Consultative Group of Experts (CGE). Given their extensive experience supporting Parties in adaptation and reporting processes, CBs are well-placed to guide this technical work. Regular engagement with Parties – through annual or biannual sessions at SBs or COP – would ensure that the process remains both Party- driven and technically robust.

NSOs can enhance the robustness, legitimacy, and trust of the technical process, drawing on their use of standardized and internationally agreed methodologies. **International agencies can further contribute** to the post-COP30 process by providing subject matter expertise, developing international data standards, indicators and methodologies; collecting data, and applying best practices in monitoring, reporting and evaluation. This may lighten some of the technical work required to operationalize indicators with no metadata in place, for example. In general, **drawing on existing technical expertise will ensure that GGA monitoring builds on established systems, reduces duplication, and minimizes reporting burdens.**

Elements for a possible decision – Parties could:

- Invite the Adaptation Committee, in collaboration with the Least Developed Countries Expert Group and the Consultative Group of Experts, to oversee the operationalization of the indicators for the Global Goal on Adaptation, engaging relevant United Nations entities, international organizations, official statistical bodies at the national, regional and global level; research and academic institutions, and non-governmental organizations in this effort;
- Request that this group take forward the adopted indicators and undertake the necessary technical work to make them fit-for-purpose and adaptation relevant, including, inter alia:
 - Development of normative definitions to guide new areas of measurement
 - Development and testing of methodologies for data collection and development of estimates using different data sources
 - Development of methods to aggregate data for analysis and reporting at different levels
 - Development of technical guidance and support for in-country data collection and monitoring
 - Development of mechanisms for compilation and verification of country level data
 - Expansion of existing global databases to support monitoring of global progress towards GGA targets
 - potentially through a phased approach, with the aim of ensuring the indicators are ready to be reported on for the second Global Stocktake;
- Ensure that Parties are provided with consistent opportunities to review progress, to discuss cross-cutting issues, and to document experience and lessons learned.

Our organizations stand ready to support Parties to refine, finalize and operationalize the GGA indicators.

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Annex 1. Recommendations related to the final list of potential indicators

1. Closing the gap on education

Under **Target 9(e)** “Increasing the resilience of infrastructure and human settlements to ensure basic and continuous essential services for all,” we recommend the following amendments:

- **Add reference to education in Indicator 9e01** (*Proportion of informal settlement upgrading programmes that (i) include climate change adaptation and (ii) are locally led and co-designed*), under Column D (*Disaggregation levels*):
 - “Disaggregation by [...] sector/asset—housing, transport, water, energy, health, **education**, ICT and social services;”
- Under Indicator **10c03** (*Number of people who experienced direct social and economic impacts associated with climate-related hazards per 100,000 people*), we suggest **adding a reference to education and children (including adolescents)** under Column D (*Disaggregation levels*):
 - “**Children, adolescents and other people experiencing school closures and other disruptions to their education.**”

2. Address children, adolescents and essential social sectors and services (education, health, water and sanitation, nutrition, social protection, etc.) within National Adaptation Plans.

Under Indicator **10b01** (*Number of Parties with adopted National Adaptation Plans, policy instruments, planning processes and/or strategies*):

- **Add reference to children** under Column D (*Disaggregation levels*):
 - part a) “(iii) specific measures targeting vulnerable populations, **including children**” and
 - part c) “an inclusive and participatory development process including Indigenous Peoples, **and children**, where applicable.”

3. Promote consistent and specific disaggregation by age throughout relevant indicators.

Indicators that have a strong relevance to the unique vulnerabilities and adaptation needs of children, adolescents and young people should **include specific reference to the need to disaggregate by these vulnerable groups** in Column D (*Disaggregation levels*), in addition to the existing reference to “social groups” in Column C.

- This applies to: **9a05** (drinking water); **9a06** (sanitation), **9a09** (people assisted with planned relocation); **9b08** (undernourishment); **9b09** (food insecurity); **9c01** (mortality associated with heat exposure); **9c08** (health EWS); and **10a07** (pre-emptive evacuation).

4. Incorporate access of children to mental health and psychosocial support services.

Under Indicator **9c04** (*Extent of implementation of Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) preparedness and response for climate change-sensitive events*), we suggest **adding a reference to children and adolescents** under Column D (*Disaggregation levels*):

- “Wherever possible, the indicator should be disaggregated at a sub-national level and specify whether MHPSS services are provided in regions in which Indigenous Peoples predominantly live, and **whether there are dedicated MHPSS services available to children, adolescents and young people.**”

5. Include a **dedicated focus on nutrition** within the final set of indicators.

While there is currently no explicit inclusion of indicators related to nutrition, we see opportunities to include methodology to monitor nutrition within the current list. These suggestions draw from universally accepted, globally available nutrition and diet related data. There may be additional opportunities to specifically define a nutrition component within indicators 9b03, 9b04, 9b05, 9c02, 9c08, 9c09, 9f01, 9f08, 9f09, and 10d01.

- **Within food indicator 9b09: Prevalence of moderate or severe food insecurity associated with climate-related drivers and events** – the current method (and that of indicator 9b08) only allows the tracking of diet quantity. We propose to include **diet quality** – a fundamental precursor to good nutrition. **Minium Diet Diversity (MDD) for children 6-59 months and Minimum Diet Diversity for Women (MDD-W)** are universally accepted indicators collected globally through population-based surveys, available through various databases including the UNICEF Infant and Young Child Feeding Database. Both can be disaggregated to associate data with climate-related drivers and events.
- **Within food indicator 9b09: Prevalence of moderate or severe food insecurity associated with climate-related drivers and events** - we propose to include the Early Childhood Food Insecurity Experience Scale within the indicator description as children’s food insecurity experience often differs from adults and young children are at most risk of malnutrition driven by food insecurity.
- **Within health indicator 9c05: Number of destroyed or damaged health facilities and number of disruptions to health services associated with climate-related events** – we propose to ensure that disruptions to direct **nutrition services** are included within this indicator (if necessary, by adapting the methodology of indicators collected under the Sendai Framework).
- **Within implementation indicator 10c03: Number of people who experienced direct social and economic impacts associated with climate-related hazards per 100,000 people** – we propose to include prevalence of **child wasting and child stunting** as a direct social impact of climate-related hazards (if necessary, by adapting the methodology of indicators collected under the Sendai Framework).