

4th cycle of Universal Periodic Review (UPR)

Child Rights Governance

September 2018-June 2023



Issues Covered

Child Focused Budget (CFB), Children Participation, Separate Directorate/Department for Children, Monitoring Mechanism, Non-adaptation of the Rules

Recommending States

Recommendation Nos. 147.13 (Belarus); 147.52 (Uruguay)

Situation Analysis

Child Policy 2011 and the 8th Five-Year Plan (8FYP) for 2021–2025 of Bangladesh endorse the importance of children's participation in the decision-making process and adequate resource allocation for children.

The government published a Child Focused Budget (CFB) (5 Jun 2015, *bdnews24.com*) for the first time in June 2015, which increased allocation in comparison to the last five fiscal years between FY 2015–16 and FY 2019–20, but the CFB report was not published in the last three annual budgets. In FY 2019–20, 2.78% of GDP (15.3% of the national budget) was allocated to children.

The Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) has not been followed in developing the child budget, which should be 20% of the public expenditure as targeted during FY 2018-19 (11 Jun 2022, *Financial Express*).

The government announced its plan to set up a Department of children in its 2020–21 budget speech. During the second UPR cycle, the Government officials expressed their support for creating a separate Directorate for children, but there has been no progress in this regard.

The government has formulated the National Social Security Strategy (NSSS) in 2015 and the corresponding National Action Plan for Phase II (2021–2026). The NSSS Action Plan for Phase II (2021–2026) incorporates social security programmes in five thematic clusters and 39 ministries but none of these prioritise children's issues.

Child rights organisations, in collaboration with the NHRC, developed a draft law to establish an independent body, the National Commission for Children's Rights (NCRC), to oversee the government's initiatives for the promotion and protection of children's rights and submitted the draft to the MoWCA. The proposed NCRC has yet to be established.

The Children Act was passed almost a decade ago, but the Rules of the Act have not been finalised.



National Framework

Legal Framework	Policy Framework
The Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh The Children Act 2013	National Social Security Strategy (NSSS) National Action Plan for Phase II (2021–2026) for implementation of NSSS National Children Policy 2011 Bangladesh's 8 th Five-Year Plan (2021–2025)

Challenges

Non-participation of children in the decision-making process

Irregular reporting on Child-Focused Budget (CFB)

Separate Directorate/Department for Children

Children's issues have not been addressed in the social security action plans

National Commission for Children's Rights (NCRC)

Rules of the Children Act

Impact

Children are absent in the decision-making process and there is no standard procedures to ensure their voices are heard.

The child budget implementation status was last published in FY 2017-18. Since 2020, no consultations have taken place with children in the budget development process. The Ministry of Local Government did not issue any circular to institutionalise child-friendly local budgets. It is therefore challenging to have a concrete picture of the implementation status of the CFB.

Despite the government's commitment, there is no time bound plan to establish the separate Directorate/Department for children and the scope of the same has not been identified either.

Children's issues are not explicitly addressed in the National Social Security Strategy (NSSS), and it's National Action Plan for Phase II (2021-2026), or the Social Safety Net programmes.

There is no independent body to closely monitor the status of children's rights in Bangladesh and address the relevant issues accordingly.

Non-adaptation of the Rules made the meaningful implementation of the Act difficult.

Questions

What strategies have been taken by the government to engage children in the decision-making process?

What steps have been taken by the government to regularise the adaptation of the Child Focused Budget (CFB)?

What steps have been taken by the government to establish the National Commission for Children's Rights (NCRC)?

What steps have been taken by the government to establish a separate Directorate/Department for children?

When steps have been taken by the government to finalise the Rules of the Children Act 2013?

Recommendations

1. Develop a standard operating procedure to ensure meaningful child participation in accordance with the Children Policy 2011.
2. Reintroduce publishing Child Focused Budget (CFB) and prepare implementation status reports.
3. Establish an independent National Commission for Children's Rights (NCRC).
4. Finalise a time-bound action plan to establish a separate department for children.
5. Form child help desks and place dedicated police officers for children at every police station, and appoint probation officers accordingly.
6. Establish and strengthen the monitoring mechanism for the operationalisation of help desks in accordance with the Children Act.
7. Take initiative for the effective functioning of the Children's Welfare Board by coordinating among the relevant departments.
8. Adopt the Rules of the Children Act 2013 in consultation with the stakeholders.

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