

## STATEMENT

### About Save the Children

This is a statement by Save the Children Sweden and my focus will be on the Rights of the Child.

In this regard, Save the Children would like to bring your attention to several updates and concerns regarding children's rights in Sweden and in Swedish foreign policy. They can be found on the slide before you and in the advocacy brief that we will distribute to you. However due to time constraints, I will focus only on 2 issues

### Issue 1: Child poverty - Standard of living

Our primary concern is to acknowledge the rising income inequality among children in Sweden and on the most vulnerable children. Children that in early years experience the layers of discrimination.

There are no previous recommendations concerning child poverty or economic inequality. However, there are several recommendations regarding standard of living from the Child rights committee.

The rate of child poverty in Sweden has substantially decreased in recent years. Although, numbers from 2016 shows that one out of ten children are living with income poverty. Having a migrant background or a single-parent household are factors that increase the risk of growing up in poverty. In addition, our survey "young voices" show that one out of three children have worries about their economic situation.

III. The state parties has decided on a strategy and created an authority to combat segregation and social exclusion. Although income inequality is not addressed specifically in this strategy. During 2018 the government took decisions on minor improvement concerning the child benefit and maintenance support, however these improvement does not reach all children. I.e. the daily allowance for asylum seekers have not been adjusted since 1994. Starting from 2020 this allowance will be withdrawal if you settle in a socioeconomic area. Nor does the transfers reach children living in household with debts or undocumented children.

### *We recommend the Swedish government to:*

- Have a child rights perspective when deciding the annual rise of the national norm for social assistance and make sure it reaches the most vulnerable children.
- Take concrete steps to ensure that social transfers and benefits reach all children in Sweden, regardless of their legal status
- Initiate national programmes to support families living in income poverty, in particular lone mothers, families with debts, children living in permanent income poverty and families seeking asylum.
- Increase the daily allowance for asylum-seeking families

## **Issue 2: Housing**

During its previous Universal Periodic Review, in 2010 and 2015 Sweden received a recommendation from Switzerland referring to homeless children, their specific needs and calls for action.

The right to housing is one of the most basic human rights ensuring human dignity. Access to housing is also a precondition for the exercise of many other fundamental rights. A consequence of economic poverty and vulnerability is that the number of children being evicted and families with children in homelessness increases. Save the Children's study (with numbers from 25 municipalities) from 2018 shows that 5390 children are living in homelessness. Particularly vulnerable are single women with a foreign background and unaccompanied children and youths. The main cause of homelessness is low income combined with the lack of affordable housing, but also exclusionary mechanism such as family size.

The state have had a strategy to combat homelessness, since 2009 it is no longer valid. Year 2018 a state survey concerning housing supply was initiated. Although it has not rendered any specific action.

### ***We recommend the Swedish government to***

- Ensure that families are not forcibly relocated or evicted, and that the right of the child to adequate housing is always respected.
- The state to adopt and implement a plan of action in order to reduce homelessness among children and their families. This plan should include both a housing supply- and social service-perspective.

Please make sure to read our advocacy brief where we expand migration, family reunification, humanitarian protection, including child rights in Swedish development cooperation. I am looking forward to your questions.

Thank you.

