



## Joint Appeal for Most Vulnerable Children of India Amid COVID-19

Date: 25<sup>th</sup> March 2020

To

**Shri Narendra Modi**

Hon'ble. Prime Minister  
Government of India  
E Block, Central Secretariat  
New Delhi 110 011

### **Sub: Joint Appeal for effective response and mitigation of impact of COVID-19 on the most Vulnerable Children of India**

Respected Hon'ble Narendra Modi ji,

The timely measures taken by the Government of India, under your leadership, to prevent the spread of the COVID 19 outbreak in India is highly commendable. Your March 24<sup>th</sup> announcement of complete lockdown of the whole country is a much needed action to prevent and control this outbreak. We, as *Joining Forces For Children – India*- an alliance of six leading child development organizations, appreciate the government's decision and commit our support to the Government of India in this time of national crisis.

Hon'ble Prime Minister, as you are aware the COVID-19 outbreak **will adversely impact the condition of children**, who constitute **40%** of our population. Of them, the most **vulnerable and marginalised girls and boys, and especially girls will be exposed to multi-dimensional risks**. This includes disruption to their healthcare, protection, education and overall wellbeing, including social interaction with friends, peers, family members, teachers and adult caregivers.

Joining Forces For Children – India is actively working towards the well-being and protection of vulnerable children and young people in India, and have stepped up our interventions to respond effectively to this global and national crisis. To ensure that the well-being of the most vulnerable children are not compromised, on behalf of the children, we appeal to Government of India to:

- **Prioritise and identify the most vulnerable and at risk children for prevention and response interventions:** These include children in street situations, homeless children, migrant and internally displaced children, refugee children, children in child care institutions, children with disabilities and special needs, children of daily wage workers. In all these situations special focus may be given to girl children.
- **Provide uninterrupted access to critical services for the most vulnerable children:** Government should seek to ensure, on priority basis, access to critical services such as healthcare, nutrition, food security, social protection, protection against violence, mental health & psychosocial support and continuity of learning, to overcome the immediate & long-term impact of the crisis.



- **Provide child-friendly outreach messages** and run child friendly public information campaigns, in collaboration with civil society organizations, to parents, caregivers, teachers and others who work directly with children, for effective prevention and psychosocial support. Childline toll-free number 1098 can be declared as the COVID-19 emergency outreach number for children/parents/caregivers to be accessible for children in distress due to COVID-19
- **Protect children in child care institutions:** A separate policy guideline for child care during COVID-19 should be prepared for children's homes and care centers. This policy should ensure mechanisms for awareness, prevention, timely reporting and effective responses. Caregivers of child care institutions should be placed in the category of essential services to ensure continued care and protection during lockdown.
- **Prevent separation and stigma of child and caregiver** during any treatment and isolation, through development of appropriate care protocols.
- **Scale-up investment in child protection system strengthening** through Child Protection Services (CPS) and Juvenile Justice System structures, with particular support to states having child protection related vulnerability for large population.

We once again appreciate the efforts of Government of India and your leadership, and stand in solidarity to ensure the well wellbeing and protection of the most vulnerable children under these challenging circumstances.

Thanking You,

**Joining Forces for Children, India**

**Signatories:**

- ChildFund India
- Plan India
- Save the Children, India
- SOS Children's Villages of India;
- Terre des hommes
- World Vision India

**Copy to:**

- Minister ,Ministry of Women and Child Development
- CEO, NITI Aayog
- Chairperson, National Commission for Protection of Child Rights

