



JOINT STATEMENT BY LAUREATES & LEADERS FOR CHILDREN

We, the Laureates and Leaders for Children, call upon the world's Heads of Government to demonstrate wise leadership and to urgently care for the impoverished and the marginalised. Decisions made by our leaders, actions taken by us and the discourses that ensue in the next few weeks will be crucial. They are going to shape the future of polity, economy, culture and morality. Development priorities will be recalibrated, individual freedom, privacy and human rights will be redefined. We must take this opportunity to transform traditional diplomacy and politics into compassionate politics.

COVID-19 has exposed and exacerbated pre-existing inequalities in our world. While this virus does not differentiate between nationalities, religions or cultures, it is most adversely impacting those who are already marginalised – the poor, women and girls, daily wage earners, migrant labourers, indigenous peoples, victims of trafficking and slavery, child labourers, people on the move (refugees, internally displaced and others), the homeless, differently abled people, among others. The virus, restrictions placed on the majority of the world's population, and the aftermath will have a devastating impact on the most vulnerable amongst us.

The pandemic's public health emergency is set to exacerbate the abuse and exploitation of children. Trapped in homes to escape the virus, children are at greater risk of sexual abuse (offline and online) and domestic violence. Online child pornography is already growing, while traffickers are planning to exploit families once lockdowns are lifted. Beyond the impact of the public health crisis on marginalised communities, the economic impact is likely to trap more girls and boys in child labour. For example, school closures during the outbreak of the Ebola virus in West Africa from 2014 to 2016, contributed to spikes in child labour, neglect, sexual abuse and teenage pregnancies.¹ The 1997 Asian financial crisis and the 2009 global economic crisis have shown that more children are likely to be forced into child labour and trafficking, particularly in countries that have little or no social protection. As restrictions are lifted in countries, children will be trafficked, forced out of school and into labour, bearing the burden of sustaining their families. In addition, the World Bank has found that, for every additional year of secondary school, the likelihood of marrying before age 18 decreases by five percentage points or more. With more than 90% of the world's student population out of school due to school closures (as of 22 April 2020), child marriage rates are also anticipated to increase.

¹ <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/covid-19-children-heightened-risk-abuse-neglect-exploitation-and-violence-amidst>

Currently, nearly one in every five children worldwide lives on under \$2 a day. The World Bank announced on April 20th that it estimates COVID-19 will push 40 to 60 million people into extreme poverty in 2020. The International Labour Organization (ILO) has reported that tens of millions of informal workers have already become unemployed, with widespread problems with the food supply in poorer communities across the world. Governments need to do more to prevent devastating nutrition and health consequences for the 370 million children missing out on school meals amid school closures. These compounding factors mean that marginalised children are already going hungry and could starve.

Over the last several weeks, policy makers released more than US\$5 trillion in emergency support for the companies and people in the richest countries. That funding is needed and is important, but we also need to see the governments of the world come together and announce a rescue package for the most marginalised children. If, for once, our world gave the most marginalised children and their families their fair share – **20% of the COVID-19 response for the poorest 20% of humanity** – the results would be transformative. **One trillion dollars would fund all outstanding UN and charity COVID-19 appeals, cancel two years of all debt repayments from low-income countries, and fund two years of the global gap to meet the SDGs on health, water and sanitation, and education – a vital step, as quality education is the most powerful way to end exclusion and change the future for marginalised children. There would still be enough left to fund social protection safety nets which are crucial in the fight against child labour. More than ten million lives would be saved; a positive response by humanity to the tragedy of COVID-19.** We urge that the necessary resources be made available through national governments and international and regional financial institutions.²

We anticipate that the numbers of the most marginalised will grow. We must prevent the fallout of COVID-19 being borne by the world's children. Poverty and hunger, child labour, child marriages, child slavery, child trafficking and children on the move will likely increase during and after COVID-19. We need to ensure that the most marginalised do not fall off the world's radar. Post-COVID-19, we must strengthen institutional responses to such future catastrophes, and improve the existing child protection infrastructure. Cash transfers and ensuring food security for the marginalised, improving hygiene and sanitation, a robust healthcare system and promoting a free and equitable education system with free school meals will be critical.

While we acknowledge initial measures taken by the G20, as Laureates and Leaders for Children, fighting for the most vulnerable children in the world's poorest countries, we call on leaders of the G20 to take additional action beyond their own borders for those who urgently need coordinated international aid. We also call on all G20 leaders to honour existing global health commitments, including quickly working together and with stakeholders to close the financing gap in the WHO Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan. The WHO has played a vital role in supporting basic healthcare in less

² This includes innovative instruments like IFFEd, GAVI and CEPI.

developed regions of the world. Regional institutions, such as the Organization of American States, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, the Economic Community of West African States, the Arab League and others must also step up in this space.

All nations must unite in this effort to protect the most vulnerable and globalise compassion by taking this moment as an opportunity to innovate and develop new, transformative and sustainable solutions to eradicate child labour, trafficking and slavery, and ensure education for all. If we do not do this, we will lose a generation of children. If children are not safeguarded everywhere, then our global response to this crisis and beyond will have failed everywhere.

In solidarity for all our children,



Members of the Nizami Ganjavi International Center members (below) joined 45 Nobel Laureates in calling for the world's governments to unite and prioritize the world's most vulnerable children during their lockdowns and in the aftermath. In total, 88 Nobel Laureates and World Leaders signed the joint statement, conveyed to the world's Heads of Government.

#FairShare4Children

Nobel Laureates and Nobel Peace Laureate Organizations

HH the 14th Dalai Lama
1989 Nobel Peace Laureate

Most Reverend Archbishop Desmond
Tutu
1984 Nobel Peace Laureate

Prof. Elizabeth Blackburn
2009 Nobel Laureate in Physiology or
Medicine

Prof Mario R. Capecchi
2007 Nobel Laureate in Physiology or
Medicine

Prof. Aaron Ciechanover
2004 Nobel Laureate in Chemistry

Mdm Lisa Clark and Mr. Philip
Jennings
Co-Presidents, International Peace
Bureau
1910 Nobel Peace Laureate

Prof. Robert F. Curl Jr.
1996 Nobel Laureate in Chemistry

HE F. W. de Klerk
1993 Nobel Peace Laureate

Prof. Johann Deisenhofer
1988 Nobel Laureate in Chemistry

Mdm Shirin Ebadi
2003 Nobel Peace Laureate

Dr. Mohamed ElBaradei
2005 Nobel Peace Laureate

Prof. Joachim Frank
2017 Nobel Laureate in Chemistry

Mdm Leymah Gbowee
2011 Nobel Peace Laureate

Prof. Sheldon Lee Glashow
1979 Nobel Laureate in Physics

Prof. David J. Gross
2004 Nobel Laureate in Physics

Prof. Serge Haroche
2012 Nobel Laureate in Physics

Prof. Oliver Hart
2016 Nobel Laureate in Economics

Prof. Leland Hartwell
2001 Nobel Laureate in Physiology or
Medicine

Prof. Dudley Herschbach
1986 Nobel Laureate in Chemistry

Prof. Avram Hershko
2004 Nobel Laureate in Chemistry



Prof. Roald Hoffmann
1981 Nobel Laureate in Chemistry

Prof. Takaaki Kajita
2015 Nobel Laureate in Physics

Mdm Tawakkol Karman
2011 Nobel Peace Laureate

Prof. Yuan T. Lee
1986 Nobel Laureate in Chemistry

Mdm Mairead Maguire
1976 Nobel Peace Laureate

Mr. Mohamed Fadhel Mahfoudh
2015 Nobel Peace Laureate

Prof. Rudolph A. Marcus
1992 Nobel Laureate in Chemistry

Prof. Eric S. Maskin
2007 Nobel Laureate in Economics

Prof. Michel Mayor
2019 Nobel Laureate in Physics

Mdm Rigoberta Menchú Tum
1992 Nobel Peace Laureate

Prof. Edvard Ingjald Moser
2014 Nobel Laureate in Physiology or
Medicine

Prof. May-Britt Moser
2014 Nobel Laureate in Physiology or
Medicine

Mdm Nadia Murad
2018 Nobel Peace Laureate

Mr. Adolfo Pérez Esquivel
1980 Nobel Peace Laureate

HE José Ramos-Horta
President of Timor Leste (2007-2012)
1996 Nobel Peace Laureate

Sir Richard J. Roberts
1993 Nobel Laureate in Physiology or
Medicine

Mr. Guy Ryder
Director-General, International Labour
Organization
1969 Nobel Peace Laureate

HE Juan Manuel Santos
2016 Nobel Peace Laureate

Mr. Kailash Satyarthi
2014 Nobel Peace Laureate

Prof. Gregg L. Semenza
2019 Nobel Laureate in Physiology or
Medicine

Prof Fraser Stoddart
2016 Nobel Laureate in Chemistry

Prof. Jack W. Szostak
2009 Nobel Laureate in Physiology or
Medicine

Prof. Kip S. Thorne
2017 Nobel Laureate in Physics

Mdm Jody Williams
1997 Nobel Peace Laureate

Ms Malala Yousafzai
2014 Nobel Peace Laureate



Members of the Nizami Ganjavi International Center

HE Abdulaziz Altwajri
Former Director General of ISESCO

HE Rosalía Arteaga Serrano
President of Ecuador (1997)

HE Sali Berisha
President of Albania (1992-1997)
Prime Minister (2005-2013)

HE Helen Clark
Prime Minister of New Zealand (1999- 2007)
Administrator of UNDP (2009-2017)

Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca
President of Malta (2014-2019)

HE Mirko Cvetković
Prime Minister of Serbia (2008-2012)

Mdm Nathalie de Gaulle
President and Co-Founder NB-INOVA

HE Herman De Croo
President of the Chamber of
Representatives (1999-2007), Belgium

HE Jan Fischer
Prime Minister of the Czech Republic (2009-
2010)

HE Ameenah Gurib-Fakim
President of Mauritius (2015-2018)

HE Tarja Halonen
President of Finland (2000-2012)

Dr. Noeleen Heyzer
Member of the High-Level Panel of the UN
Secretary General on Mediation

HE Dalia Itzik
Interim President of Israel (2007)
Speaker of Knesset (2006-2009)
HE Jadranka Kosor
Prime Minister of Croatia (2009-2011)

HE Tzipi Livni
Minister of Foreign Affairs of Israel (2006-
2009);

HE Zlatko Lagumdžija
Prime Minister of Bosnia and Herzegovina
(2001-2002);
Deputy Prime Minister (1993-1996)
Minister of Foreign Affairs
(2001-2002, 2012-2015);

HE Péter Medgyessy
Prime Minister of Hungary (2002-2004);

HE Amre Moussa
Secretary General, Arab League (2001);
Minister of Foreign Affairs of Egypt (1991-
2001)

HE Djoomart Otorbaev
Prime Minister of the Kyrgyz Republic (2014-
2015)

HE Rosen Plevneliev
President of Bulgaria (2012-2017)

HE Petre Roman
Prime Minister of Romania (1989-1991)
Speaker of Parliament (1996-2000)

Dr. Ismail Serageldin
Vice President World Bank (1992- 2000);
Co-Chair, Nizami Ganjavi International Center



HE Petar Stoyanov
President of Bulgaria (1997-2002)

HE Laimdota Straujuma
Prime Minister of Latvia (2014-2016)

HE Boris Tadić
President of Serbia (2004-2012)

HE Eka Tkeshelashvili
Deputy Prime Minister (2010-2012)

HE Marianna V. Vardinoyannis
Goodwill Ambassador of UNESCO
Board of Trustees of MENTOR International
Foundation

HE Vaira Vike-Freiberga
President of Latvia 1999-2007
Co-Chair, Nizami Ganjavi International Center

HE Filip Vujanović
President of Montenegro (2003-2018)

HE Viktor Yushchenko
President of Ukraine (2005-2010)

HE Kateryna Yushchenko
First Lady of Ukraine (2005-2010)