



**We, Ombudspersons for Children from G8 countries, call on you the G8 leaders to immediately address the specific effects of the financial crisis and climate change on children. The situation is critical. As we speak, children's lives, present and future, are seriously compromised because of inaction. But the crisis also gives us an opportunity for necessary change. For that, children need your responsible leadership.**

Ombudspersons for Children are independent promoters and protectors of the rights of all children. In our daily work, we are the eyes and ears of children, and we experience first hand the toll these world challenges take on children's lives. In both developed and developing countries, we see urgent challenges as domestic violence, abuse and neglect are increasing, families are becoming more fragmented, more and more children are placed in institutions because parents are unable to support them, children are dropping out of school to support distressed parents, and there are growing disparities. We see an increase in health concerns, child mortality and morbidity, so-called natural disasters disrupting children's lives, exploitative and hazardous labour conditions, and increased international migration where children move on their own, leaving behind their families and the support and care they provide.

While the effects of the financial crisis and climate change on adults' lives is well-known, their disproportionate and specific impact on children is not well-understood, and too often neglected. As the financial and environmental crises strike our planet, a hidden crisis unfolds. That of rich societies where members feel less and less connected to each other, isolation grows, and sense of solidarity and shared responsibility has been diluted in the anonymity of big cities, private interests, and the search for a lifestyle where satisfaction lies in owning rather than sharing and connecting.

We are speaking on behalf of the world's children, as well as G8 children. Today's children did not generate the problem. Yet they should be part of the solution.

**More than ever, it is time to invest in childhood.** As we wait, the cost of mitigating the impact of the financial crisis and climate change on children keeps soaring. It is our obligation and moral imperative to fulfill the rights of children globally.

**To do so, you as G8 leaders, should commit to:**

- 1) **Invest in national and global social protection.** Resources allocated now will have immediate and long term benefits to society and the economy. Violations of children's rights are the result of inequalities. Measures to reduce disparities must be part of G8 decisions.
- 2) **Address climate change now.** The G8 must increase resources and promote behaviour change for adaptation and mitigation. Children of today will soon become voters and they will vote for their futures.
- 3) **Maintain and increase development cooperation.** The world is interconnected. Problems are global. G8 leaders are the frontline for shared solutions.
- 4) **Mobilize human resources.** Educate society to change behaviour and share responsibility. Children are the primary agents for social change and its main resources.
- 5) **Establish, increase, maintain, and reinforce Ombudspersons for Children in more countries and regions.** They are the bridge builders and a conduit for action and accountability.

Children are concerned. They will monitor your actions and inactions in addressing these issues. As we are celebrating the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, we urge you to accelerate its implementation, especially in difficult times.

We, Ombudspersons for Children, as public, independent oversight agencies, are the proactive forces that will support your efforts to that end. We are confident that your leadership and commitment will be up to the challenges ahead of us in the best interests of all children.

**Nuoro, Sardinia (Italy), 26 June 2009**