

SAVE THE CHILDREN INTERNATIONAL (SCI) POLICY: ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE (ESCC)

SECTION 1: PURPOSE

As a major global INGO working with children across 120 countries, we recognise the importance of environmental sustainability and climate change action to sustainably achieve our breakthroughs for the most deprived and marginalised children. This policy and the proposed complementary Action Plan aim to provide the framework to improve our environmental performance by:

- Minimising the negative environmental impact of our programmes and operations;
- Contributing positively to environmental sustainability and climate change action.

This policy is grounded in international environmental and climate change conventions such as:

[The Paris Agreement of the UNFCCC](#); [the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development](#); and the [Convention on Biological Diversity](#). It also draws upon key child rights documents such as [the Convention on the Rights of the Child](#), the [Sustainable Development Goals](#), and the [Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction](#). Finally, it builds on existing work such as Save the Children member country's environmental sustainability policies and SCI's global strategy. The policy considers the following as central to environmental sustainability and climate change:

- Biodiversity conservation and sustainable management of natural resources;
- Climate change mitigation and adaptation, and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR);
- Pollution prevention and resource efficiency;
- Intergenerational and environmental justice

SECTION 2: POLICY STATEMENTS

ORGANISATION

Environmental Performance

We recognise our activities have an impact on the environment and want to improve our environmental performance. Therefore, we will establish a baseline for our current environmental impact by 2020 and commit to setting targets for improvement by, for example, improving waste management, resource efficiency, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

We will continuously monitor our progress and report publicly. We will develop a systematic approach throughout our different functions, noting the centrality of Supply Chain, and establish an Environmental Management System (EMS) for the organisation. We will ensure we monitor compliance with this policy, and review it regularly to ensure it remains fit for purpose.

Staff Engagement and Training

This policy is mandatory for all SCI staff in all contexts to ensure that our activities are aligned with and carried out on the basis of the principles of environmental sustainability and climate change action. To ensure staff awareness and ownership of this policy we will: communicate with, train, and involve staff in the implementation and governance of this policy, and include environmental sustainability in job descriptions and performance reviews.

Governance and Accountability

We will ensure we hold ourselves to account through a governance group which will also provide strategic direction on the ESCC policy. Furthermore, we recommend considering the potential of an ESCC panel which includes children.

PROGRAMMING ESCC

Mainstreaming and Targeted Programming

We will work with our members, technical experts, supply chain and others to mainstream ESCC considerations in the design and implementation of our programmes in all contexts. Additionally, when relevant we will design specific actions to target environmental degradation, climate change adaptation or use ecosystems to ensure the safety and protect the livelihoods of the children and communities we serve. We will also communicate publicly about the impacts of climate change and environmental degradation.

Programme Quality

We will connect ESCC issues with existing programming principles, such as adaptive programming and engaging deeply with communities and stakeholders. Furthermore, we will actively look for new and innovative solutions related to, for example, sustainable and accessible energy sources for displaced people, ecosystem services in programming, and waste management. Finally, we will ensure adherence to environmental dimensions of international standards such as, but not limited to, the Core Humanitarian Standard, SPHERE, and the environmental guidelines of UNHCR.

Cross-Cutting Themes

Significant linkages exist between this policy and the cross-cutting themes of gender, disability, and resilience. This policy should contribute to the exploration, establishment and operationalisation of these linkages.

ADVOCACY

We will join others to campaign and advocate for local and global action on climate change and environmental degradation as they impact on children's ability to realise their rights and potential. As a leading child rights organisation, we will engage with and support young people to continue raising their voices on ESCC issues. Additionally, it is crucial that our partners and other stakeholders (such as national and local governments,

donors, and others) adopt and implement principles of environmental sustainability. We will therefore engage with and support processes that lead to greater environmental sustainability amongst our partners and stakeholders. Finally, we will advocate for ESCC issues with the public, donors, staff and partners, and highlight the negative impacts of environmental degradation and climate change on child rights in our public statements.

PARTNERSHIPS

We will work with our current strategic and implementing partners to strengthen our respective capacities and to learn from their perspectives on ESCC issues. We will seek new partnerships with environmental organisations that can provide specific knowledge and expertise, both at the Centre and at country level, and with local environmental organisations. We will also broaden our cooperation with our corporate partners to include ESCC issues, including drawing on their expertise in areas such as renewable energy and learning from their internal sustainability frameworks.

SECTION 3: DEFINITIONS

Word/Term	Definition
Biodiversity	The variety of life in the world or in a particular habitat or ecosystem.
Climate change adaptation	Adapting to the climate change already ongoing.
Climate change mitigation	Reducing emissions of and stabilizing the levels of heat-trapping greenhouse gases in the atmosphere.
Environmental (in)justice	“Environmental justice is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, colour, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies... It will be achieved when everyone enjoys the same degree of protection from environmental and health hazards and equal access to the decision-making process to have a healthy environment in which to live, learn, and work.” (US Environmental Protection Agency).
Intergenerational justice	The idea that current generations have a duty towards future generations.

Sustainable development

"Meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." (Brundtland Commission).

