Health in the Cities

Ensuring the perspective of children and adolescents
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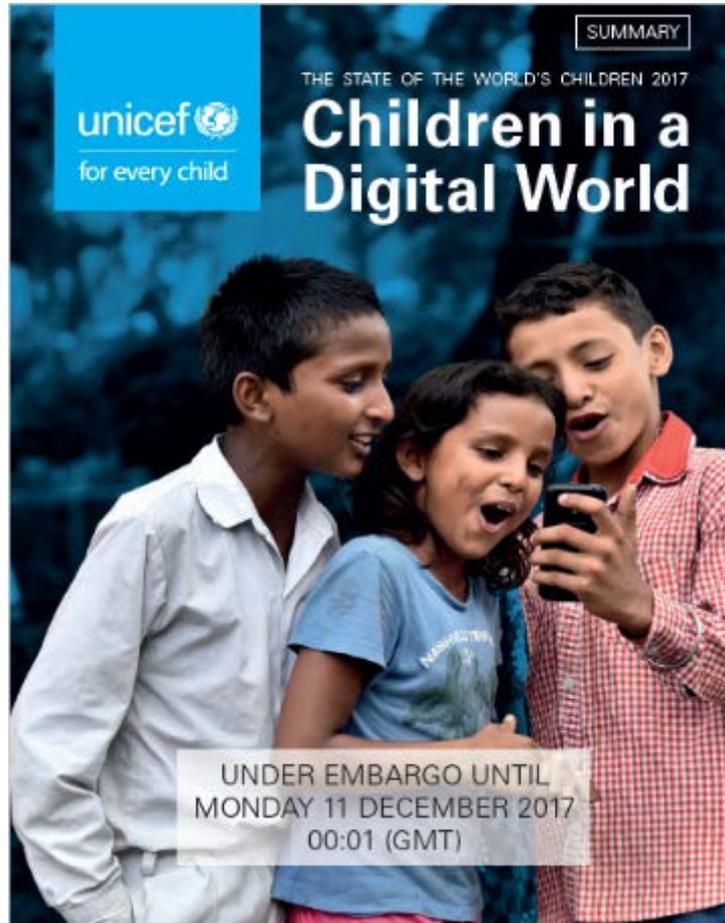**11 December 2017**

Physical health of children…and adults

Danger in the air:
How air pollution can affect brain
development in young children

Division of Data, Research and Policy
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- Direct effects of pollution on children's health are well established, with air pollution contributing to deaths from pneumonia and also linked to other respiratory infections

- Growing body of scientific evidence that air pollution may impact negatively on children's brain development

- Effects of pollution may span across generations, where the effects of pollution are passed on from mother to baby

- Air pollution is usually more severe in urban centres

- Nearly 17M babies live in areas where air pollution is 6 or more times higher than international limits. The vast majority – 12 million – are in South Asia

Mental health of children…and adults

- Youth (ages 15-24) are the most connected age group, especially in urban areas where connectivity tends to be higher

- Children are accessing the internet at increasingly younger ages

- Smartphones are fuelling a 'bedroom culture', with online access for many children and adolescents becoming more personal, more private and less supervised

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Real opportunities for children's health and development

- Digital technologies are bringing opportunities to children for learning, allowing children to participate in e-learning and to access a wide range of educational content that was unavailable to previous generations

- Opportunities for disabled children for learning and interacting *"The day I received an electronic notepad connected to the internet, my life literally changed"* Ivan Bakaidov, an 18-year-old with cerebral palsy.

- They can potentially increase student motivation making learning more fun and interactive

- Connected children see connectivity as an overwhelmingly positive part of their lives

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Real dangers for children's health and development

- Digital access can further widen economic and social disparities, including within cities

- No child who is online is entirely safe from online risk, and the internet has made it easier for bullies, sex offenders, traffickers and others who harm children to target the most vulnerable

- Risks are generally organized in three main categories:

   1. Content risk – what children and adolescents are exposed to

   2. Contact risk – who children and adolescents are exposed to

   3. Conduct risk – new negative behaviours by children or adolescents
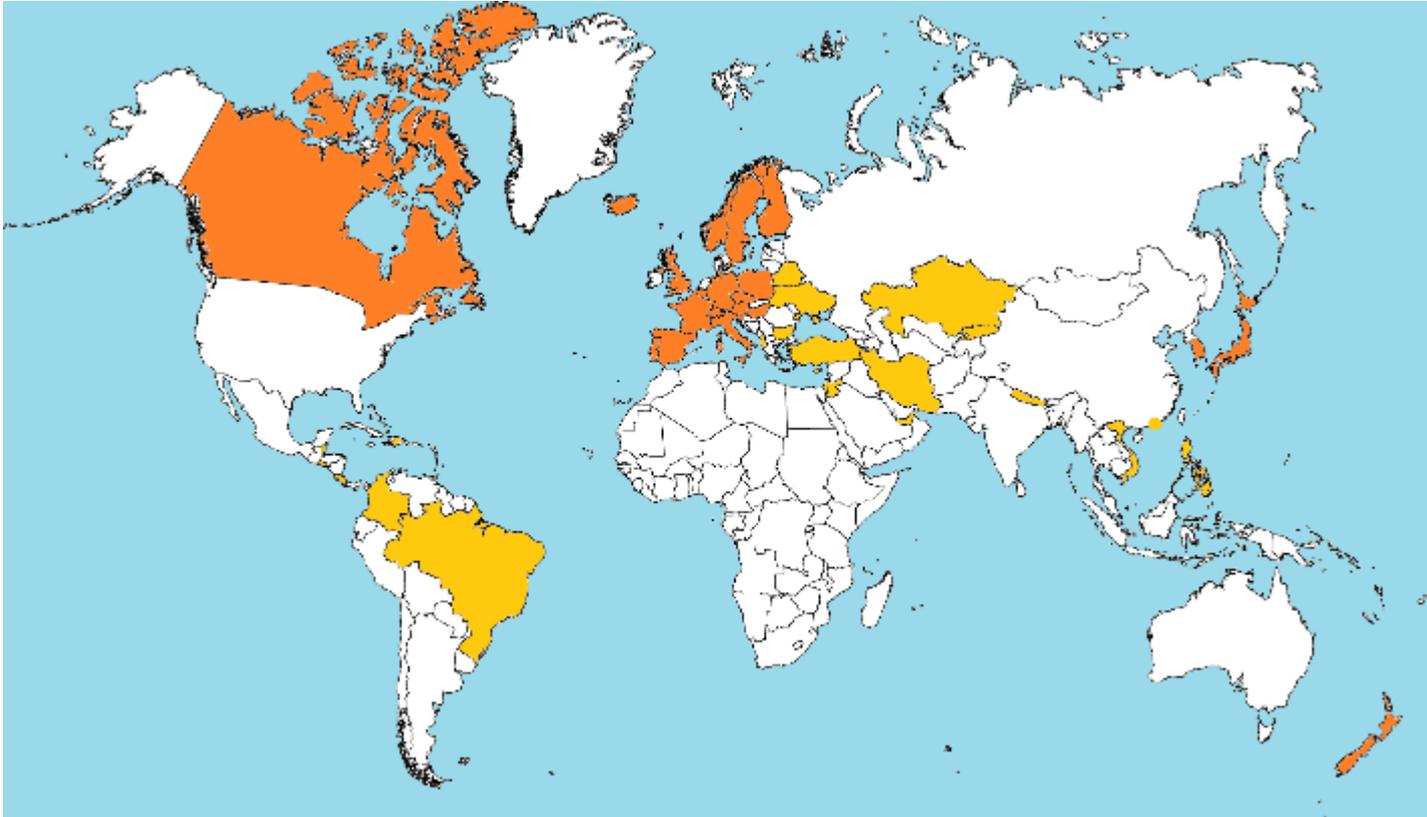
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Priority action recommended

1. Provide all children with affordable access to high-quality online resources

2. Protect children from harm online – including abuse, exploitation, trafficking, cyberbullying and exposure to unsuitable materials

3. Safeguard children's privacy and identities online

4. Teach digital literacy to keep children informed, engaged and safe online

5. Leverage the power of the private sector to advance ethical standards and practise that protect and benefit children online

6. Put children at the centre of digital policy

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A Child Friendly City is…

- **A city that translates the Convention on the Rights of the Child into tangible, meaningful and measurable results for children**

- **A city where children's voices, needs, priorities & rights are integrated in public policies, programs & decisions**

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The CFCI globally

- Launched in 1996 to act on the resolution passed during the second UN Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II)
- More than 40 countries currently engage in the CFCI and more than 3000 municipalities

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