

# **CHILDREN'S RIGHTS POLICY**

## **PREAMBLE**

Children are the foundation of the future but remain one of the most vulnerable segments of the population. It is the responsibility of society to evolve comprehensive policy programmes for them. Undoubtedly, children, around the world have increasingly gained access to rights. However, there is still much work to be done despite the Convention on the Rights of the Child's unanimous adoption by the United Nations General Assembly on 20 November 1989 and enforcement on 2 September 1990. According to the World Health Organisation, more than one in every four deaths of children under five is directly or indirectly related to environmental risks, and children are among the first victims of adverse environmental effects including droughts, floods, storms, food crises and pollution.

## **VISION**

To reform children's policies in order to ensure them equal access to free health care, free education, free childcare, decent housing and adequate nutrition. Therefore, the Greens seek to ensure –

- Social justice for children
- The eradication of child poverty, social exclusion and trafficking
- A healthy environment for all children
- Humane attention to the situation of migrant children
- Reduction in greenhouse gas emissions to combat the negative effects of climate change on children
- An end to unpaid child labour and slavery

## **OBJECTIVE**

The Greens will support and promote children's physical, social, mental and psychological development and rights. Therefore, the Greens will –

- Inculcate values, ethics, morals, civic sense, and responsibility in all spheres impacting children's lives, including education
- Implement child development, protection, education, and funding programmes - would put access to education for girls and boys as a separate item as it is a key issue in many apgf countries
- Work for children's freedom to let them play, flourish and grow
- Demand an end to children's detention
- Set out plans to guarantee every child a good childhood -- a decent place to live, safety and security in their community, time and space to play and opportunities to learn and develop inside and outside of school
- Ensure children's physical, social, mental and psychological development
- Prioritise social justice for children, especially the most vulnerable
- Advocate and enshrine laws and policies to create loving and nurturing environments that are free of physical, emotional and sexual abuse, neglect, exploitation and discrimination
- Ensure that children have equitable access to resources, education and opportunities for personal growth, learning, and participation in decision making affecting their lives

## **ACTION PLAN**

The interests of children will be prioritised at all levels of political and government planning and policy-making. Children will also be included in the development of plans and strategies that affect them. Therefore, the Greens will –

### **Rights, Needs and Interests**

- Legislate that children’s rights, needs, and interests are prioritised at all levels of political and government planning and policy-making
- Involve children in the development of plans and strategies that affect them
- Ensure that children from diverse ethnic groups and communities are involved in the development of plans and strategies that affect them
- Develop policies at all levels of government addressing the special needs of children from diverse groups and communities

### **Safety and Security**

- Support and advocate for policies that increase children’s safety and security in their communities
- Take measures to protect children from all forms of violence, abuse, and neglect
- Take measures to protect children from the negative impact of climate change and environmental health risks
- Protect migrant children from trauma and exploitation

### **School and Education**

- Pursue education reforms that reduce class sizes and broaden curricula to include sport, culture, environment and human rights
- Create opportunities to learn and develop inside and outside of school
- Ensure that every child has the opportunity to access quality education until 18 years of age
- Ensure that children’s formal education does not come at the expense of their development outside of school, recognising the value of learning and growth outside of the classroom

### **Access to Public Places and Physical Activities**

- Ensure that children have access to safe and friendly public spaces
- Ensure that children have a wide range of affordable indoor and outdoor activities in the fields of sports, music, arts and culture
- Create quality outdoor green spaces in recognition of their necessity for healthy physical, psychological and social development
- Provide and encourage children to participate in co-curricular activities at school
- Encourage and support parents and caregivers to promote children’s physical activity and healthy exercise

### **Social and Emotional Development**

- Adopt measures ensuring that children’s right to a loving and nurturing environment free of physical, emotional and sexual abuse, neglect, exploitation and discrimination

- Implement funding programmes, service delivery and decisions regarding child protection consistent with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Create policies and programmes that support children's social and emotional development
- Remove restrictions that arbitrarily segregate children, such as on the basis of sex, religion, and class, and support initiatives promoting inclusion and diversity
- Encourage parents and caregivers to be active contributors and role models in their children's physical, mental, social and emotional development
- Create supportive and enabling environments for children to express themselves to their community and at all levels of government

### **Equitable Access to Resources**

- Ensure that children have equitable access to resources, education and opportunities for personal growth, lifelong learning, and participation in decision making about their lives
- Create mechanisms that ensure the needs of children are taken into account by those involved in developing and implementing policies that affect them
- Enact measures ensuring that all children have access to appropriate services regardless of socio-economic or other factors
- Legislate for paid parental leave for up to 12 months and the ability of parents and caregivers to negotiate flexible working arrangements with their employers
- Actively monitor child poverty
- Reform and provide greater investment in child welfare services
- Establish a universal child payment, unlinked from employment or other requirements

### **Health**

- Provide adequate funding for children's health services, particularly for addressing mental health, suicide, drug and substance use, sexual and reproductive health, disability or special care and protection needs
- Ensure promotion of healthy food, including a ban on junk food advertising on television
- Ensure that healthy and safe food is available in schools
- Provide facilities for mothers to breastfeed
- Ensure access to free high quality healthcare, including prenatal, antenatal and early childhood care

### **Justice**

- Develop and implement strategies to keep children out of the criminal justice system, and reduce the risk of reoffending
- Ensure that child imprisonment is an absolute last resort for children who have committed serious violent or dangerous offences, noting existing and potential new alternatives to imprisonment
- Create a national child affairs apex body with elected and representative members
- Create well-funded high quality services for child survivors of abuse and neglect
- Take measures to address the sexualisation of children in media and advertising

**References:**

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