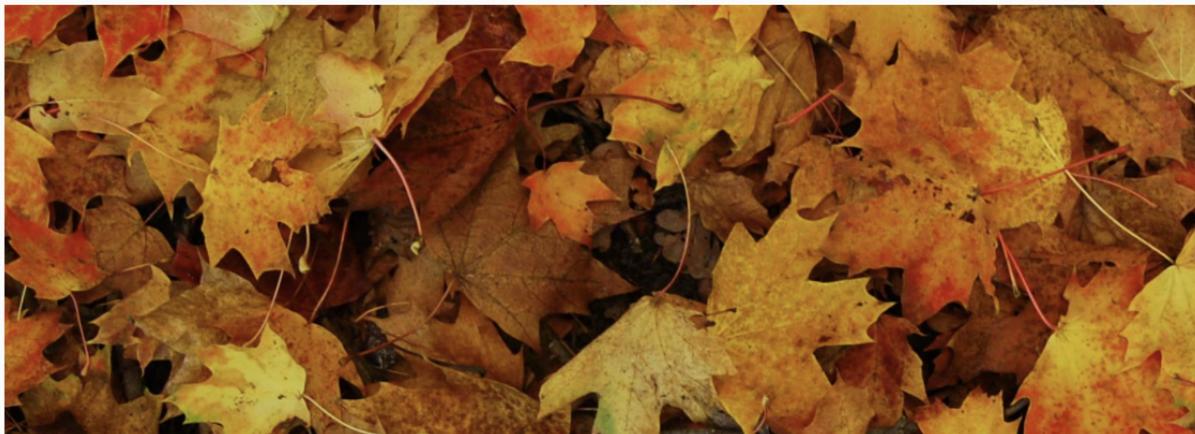

The Weekly Pulse

NEWS FROM ORGANIZATIONS AND COALITIONS IN GLOBAL CHILD ADVOCACY



Vol. 54: US government, Sexual Violence Against Children, Climate Change, PEPFAR

4 October, 2021

Quick Summary

The State Department [announced](#) that it will provide \$247 million in humanitarian assistance and \$89 million in development assistance to Venezuelans and the surrounding region. The goal of the funding is to help an additional 7 million Venezuelans through multiple programs, including protection for women, youth, LGBTQI+, and indigenous people. The funding includes “nearly \$120 million through the State Department’s Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration, \$216 million through the U.S. Agency for International Development, and over \$775,000 from the Inter-American Foundation”.

The Biden administration plans to [nominate John Nkengasong](#) to lead the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). This comes after advocacy organizations sent a [letter](#) to President Biden about the delay in nominating someone to that position.

Nkengasong has been the head of Africa CDC since 2016 and has experience working for the World Health Organization and the US Centers for Disease Control.

Several foundations that invest in children and youth globally met with leaders at USAID to underscore the importance of US government leadership and funding to address the critical issues that threaten children and youth around the world. The discussion explored potential collaboration and knowledge sharing on various issues, including prevention of violence and sexual exploitation, equal access to education, online and digital safety, gender equality, early childhood education, and family and community-based support for young people from early childhood through their life cycle.

Several leading child-advocacy organizations met with USAID senior leadership to underscore the need for a holistic, cross-sectoral approach to child development with senior leadership that has sufficient authority to influence policy, programming, and budget allocations. Among the myriad topics that require a cross-sectoral approach are efforts to address children's and adolescent health and nutrition, sexual and gender-based violence, early childhood development, education, and community support for families.

Advocates warn that the impact of climate change on children will be severe, in terms of food insecurity, displacement, and exposure to violence, including child sexual exploitation. Recently, youth activists are leading a **Global Climate strike** during the United Nations General Assembly to demand attention and action by governments. Many youth activists [argue](#) that, without more drastic cuts to CO2 emissions, the world will be light years away from the target goals. **The Guardian** published an [article](#) highlighting a study that children born today will experience many more climate disasters than their grandparents. The analysis states that "child born in 2020 will endure an average of 30 extreme heat waves in their lifetime, even if countries fulfil their current pledges to cut future carbon emissions. That is seven times more heat waves than someone born in 1960". The impact of climate change will affect some regions more than others. For example, "the 53 million children born in Europe and central Asia between 2016 and 2020 will experience about four times more extreme events in their lifetimes under current emissions pledges, but the 172 million children of the same age in sub-Saharan Africa face 5.7 times more extreme events."

Georgetown University [launched](#) a university-wide collaborative on Global Children's Issues designed to foster cross-disciplinary research and dialogue on critical and emerging global children's issues launched this week. This collaborative will leverage the university's network of "scholars, students, policymakers, practitioners, and other stakeholders to maximize critical thinking and advance solutions-oriented

problem-solving on the most pressing issues facing children worldwide”. The collaborative provides a way for the “university community to come together, across disciplines, to positively impact some of the most pressing challenges affecting children and families throughout our world,” said Vice President for Global Engagement Thomas Banchoff.

Spotlight

The Office for Global Women’s Issues at the U.S. Department of State, Search for Common Ground and the Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace & Security co-hosted a United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) [side event](#) titled “Preventing & Addressing CRSV as a Tool of War” on 29 September, 2021. This event, which was attended by policy makers and advocates, highlighted the progress and ongoing urgency around preventing the use of sexual violence during war. Speakers at the event underscored the ongoing use of sexual violence in conflicts around the world today.

One of the main points that **United Nations Secretary-General Pramila Patten** emphasized during her [opening remarks](#) was that, throughout conflict, women have been treated as “spoils of war”. Girls are also targets of sexual violence in conflict. She argued that rape has been a tool in the conflict in the past to cause unsocial rest, and used to claim stakes over people and territory. She stated that “Every new wave of warfare brings with it renewed risks and patterns of sexual violence. The effects are magnified when the perpetrators hold positions of power, which further erodes trust and confidence in governance institutions.” Every type of warfare uses sexual violence and power over women in some way.

Progress has been made to punish those who use rape as a weapon of war and is starting to be treated as a major issue. Patten explained that “sexual violence is less tolerated and more regulated. It is less silenced, and more systematically reported. More diplomatic measures to prevent, mitigate and address wartime rape have been put in place over the past twenty years than in the rest of human history combined”. Sexual violence still persists even after conflict, when “for every rape reported in connection with a conflict, 10 to 20 cases go undocumented and unaddressed”. The event recognized that more attention needs to go toward preventing retraumatization and helping victims of wartime rape.

Remarks by **Rachel Vogelstein, Senior Advisor at the White House Gender Policy Council**, emphasized that the U.S. government considers it a top priority to prevent and address gender-based violence including conflict-related sexual violence. Vogelstein said, “The ability to live a life free from violence is a cornerstone of our efforts to

promote democracy, advance human rights, and further gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls.” To achieve this goal, the White House has announced that it is preparing the first ever whole-of-government Strategy on Gender Equity and Equality, which will be released later this year and which will prioritize addressing gender-based violence. In addition, the U.S. government is commencing an effort to update and revitalize the 2016 U.S. Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence Globally and to develop the first ever U.S. National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence. In addition, the White House-led Atrocity Early Warning Task Force is working to ensure a whole-of-government approach to conflict related sexual violence, including prevention, response, and accountability as part of broader atrocity prevention activities. The U.S. government’s commitment to addressing gender-based violence “is reflected in our effort to address its rise in the wake of the COVID pandemic as a critical effort.” Vogelstein said that the breadth of work on this topic is both a “moral and strategic imperative.”

Virtual Events

- The Global Disability Innovation Hub and Clinton Foundation [webinar](#) “Clubfoot: Time to Act!” **4th October, 2021 at 10:30am EST.**
- The Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action annual [meeting](#) on “Preventing Harm Against Children” **4th-8th October, 2021.**
- USAID [conversation](#) on “Fresh Takes: A conversation with stakeholders about doing business differently to secure sustainable NTD programs” **6 October, 2021 at 8am EST.**
- The World Health Organization (WHO) [webinar](#) on “Focus on HEARING SCREENING: considerations for implementation guidance on the hearing screening for newborn babies” **6 October, 2021 at 11am EST.**
- The Thrive Coalition and the InterAction Children and Youth Working Group [webinar](#) “More than One Million Children Have Lost Parents to COVID-19: What’s Next for the World’s Vulnerable Children?” **7 October, 2021 at 8:30am EST.**
- USAID’s YouthPower2: Learning and Evaluation (YP2LE) Learning Network [launch](#) of the “Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) Toolkit” **12 October, 2021 at 5am EST and 11am EST.**
- UNICEF virtual [briefing](#) on “UNICEF State of the World’s Children Report on Mental Health & Well-Being” **12 October, 2021 at 11am EST.**
- Save the Children [celebration](#) on “Girls Take the LEAD: A High-Level Event in Celebration of International Day of the Girl 2021” **12 October, 2021 at 4pm EST.**
- The Consortium of Universities for Global Health (CUGH) virtual [summit](#) “The Road to COP27: Climate and Health Through Three Lenses” **15 October, 2021 at 11am EST.**

- Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack [conference](#) on the “Safe Schools Declaration” **25th-27th October, 2021.**

Reports, Articles & Resources

- USAID Gender & COVID-19 [Resources](#)
- The Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action [position paper](#) titled “From Theory to Practice: Towards a Framework for Primary Prevention in Child Protection in Humanitarian Action”
- UNICEF [report](#) on “The climate crisis is a child rights crisis Introducing the Children’s Climate Risk Index”
- The Global Social Service Workforce Alliance [report](#) on “The State of the Social Service Workforce 2020”
- The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation “Goalkeepers 2021” [report](#)
- ECPAT-USA E-Learning for Traveling Professionals [course](#) on “Preventing & Responding to Human Trafficking and the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children”
- GAVI: The Vaccine Alliance published an [article](#) on “The pandemic has hurt women's health. This is why that's bad for everyone”.
- PLAN International [policy brief](#) “Protect Our Education: Making Schools in Conflict Safer for Girls”.



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