

P R E S S E S T A T E M E N T

## **SAVE THE CHILDREN CONCERNED HUNGER CRISIS IN AFGHANISTAN WILL ESCALATE**

*Kabul, 18. August 2021* – Save the Children is extremely concerned that a severe hunger crisis facing children in drought-hit Afghanistan will escalate with aid efforts on hold, putting thousands of young lives at risk as the world faces its biggest hunger crisis of the 21st century.

Even before the Taliban advancement, Afghanistan had the second-highest number of people facing emergency levels of hunger in the world. Half of all children aged under five were expected to suffer from acute malnutrition this year and require specialised treatment to survive.

In June Afghanistan officially fell into drought – the second drought in four years in a country already mired in hunger and poverty. A UN World Food Programme report that month said 14 million people in Afghanistan – over a third of the population - were suffering from hunger with a shortage of funding to provide relief. This included about two million children dependent on nutrition services

COVID-19, movement restrictions, the inability to work and rising food prices have also been pushing the food crisis into urban areas on a scale not previously seen. According to the UN, more than 80,000 children in Afghanistan have fled their homes since the start of June alone amid escalating violence.

**Hassan Noor, Asia Regional Director for Save the Children, said:**

*“Now is not the time to lose focus on our obligations to the Afghan people and the work that must continue to happen in Afghanistan. Children desperately need access to services, including nutrition support, to survive.*

*Even before the recent escalation in conflict, the situation for children in Afghanistan was dire. We must all commit to meet the increased need, including that of Afghan children who now find themselves displaced, either in Afghanistan or now as vulnerable refugees outside of the country. The international community has an absolute obligation to ensure their protection, their rights - and their survival”*

Globally a deadly combination of conflict, COVID-19, and the impact of climate change has pushed hunger and malnutrition levels to a record high with an estimated [5.7 million children under five on the brink of starvation](#) across the globe.

Save the Children is an independent, impartial and politically neutral organisation that has worked in Afghanistan since 1976 to deliver lifesaving services to children and their families across the country but has had to temporarily suspended services. The organisation provided health, education, child protection, nutrition and livelihoods services, reaching over 1.6 million Afghans in 2020.

We aim to resume our work on health, education and child protection as soon as it's safe to do so.

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**Über Save the Children**

Im Nachkriegsjahr 1919 gründete die britische Sozialreformerin und Kinderrechtlerin Eglantyne Jebb Save the Children, um Kinder in Deutschland und Österreich vor dem Hungertod zu retten. Heute ist die inzwischen größte unabhängige Kinderrechtsorganisation der Welt in 120 Ländern tätig. Save the Children setzt sich ein für Kinder in Kriegen, Konflikten und Katastrophen. Für eine Welt, die die Rechte der Kinder achtet. Eine Welt, in der alle Kinder gesund und sicher leben und frei und selbstbestimmt aufwachsen und lernen können – seit über 100 Jahren.