Freedom, protection and education for all children, continues to be one of the greatest moral dilemmas of all time. In an effort to find answers to these challenges, the Laureates and Leaders for Children platform brings together Nobel Laureates, world leaders and youth, with an intent to form a powerful force that listens, speaks and acts for the children of the world.
In December 2014, the Class of 2014 Nobel Laureates shared their desire to contribute towards building a better world for all children. As a symbol of their resolve, the Nobel Laureates lit a candle for the children of the world.

In 2015, Mr. Satyarthi along with fourteen other Nobel Laureates wrote to the UN Secretary General on the need to increase financing for education. The letter was referred to during the declaration by the UN Secretary General at the Oslo Education Financing Summit which led to the formation of the International Commission on the Financing of Global Education Opportunities. Recognising the change that could be brought to the lives of children around the world if visionaries from various fields worked together, Kailash Satyarthi proposed bringing together Nobel Laureates and world leaders to interact with and work for the right of every child to have a free, safe and educated childhood. The Laureates and Leaders for Children platform was born in 2016.

In December 2016, the first Laureates and Leaders for Children Summit was hosted by the President of India at the Presidential Palace in New Delhi. 21 Nobel Laureates and world leaders, along with leaders from government, academia, business and civil society participated. Laureates and leaders identified challenges and discussed solutions with child and youth representatives. The summit declaration “Will for Children” signed by the participating Laureates and leaders reflected the resolve of the group to become a representative voice for children, to act for the rights of children around the world, to work towards ending violence against children and to support inter-agency and intergovernmental cooperation, child friendly business practices and adequate financing for these initiatives. At the culmination of the summit, Nobel Laureates and world leaders marched with more than 6000 youth, launching the 100 Million campaign, history’s largest youth-led mobilization to ensure that every child was free, safe and educated, thereby globalizing compassion.
Since this historic moment, the ripple effect of Laureates and Leaders for Children has been felt across the globe.

The Indian Labour Minister announced the ratification of International Labour Organisation (ILO) Convention 182 for the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour and enacted legislation in India against the most hazardous forms of child labour.

Former Prime Minister of Australia Julia Gillard and the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) will examine the links between child labour, slavery and economic growth in a global study.

Former First Lady of Panama Lorena Castillo de Varela declared her commitment to rid her country of child labour.

OECD’s Secretary General Angel Gurria committed to incorporating the well-being of children into OECD measures and indicators of inclusive growth. At the G20 Summit 2017, he called for the world’s governments to support Laureates and Leaders for Children, reiterating the need for urgent action to end slavery and ensure all children are educated. The result was a report released in November 2019 by OECD and the ILO on child labor in global supply chains.

At the 16th World Summit of Nobel Peace Laureates in February 2017, Nobel Laureates recognised the violence children suffer whether from conflict, climate change, early marriage, child labour or human trafficking, and poverty as a serious global crisis and called on governments to allocate the financial resources to implement the related UN Sustainable Development Goals.

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Mr. Satyarthi has lobbied world leaders such as HH The Pope, German Chancellor HE Angela Merkel, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Worship of Argentina HE Jorge Faurie, the Prime Minister’s Office of Canada and Norway, as well as the governments of France and Thailand, calling for a comprehensive UN convention to address the online abuse of children, one of the core issues recognised in the Dead Sea Declaration. The Secretariat has also engaged the governments of Afghanistan, Bhutan, Germany and Singapore on this issue. We also contributed to the WeProtect Global Alliance’s outcome document “Global Strategic Response to Online Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse” in December 2019, calling for a concerted and holistic effort towards stamping out online child sexual abuse. As part of this work, Laureates and Leaders for Children secretariat, through the Kailash Satyarthi Children’s Foundation US, was invited to join the WeProtect Global Alliance.

In 2019 as a movement, we presented a letter each to the Prime Ministers of India and Pakistan, urging them not to go to war. Over 6 days, in March 2019, 74 Nobel Laureates and 4 world Leaders signed their names on these letters.

In September 2019, we contributed to the outcome document at the 17th World Summit of Nobel Peace Laureates in Merida, Mexico, calling urgently to build a culture of peace.

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The then First Lady of Panama Lorena Castillo de Varela shared the 2018 Dead Sea Declaration with UN Secretary-General António Guterres.

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"The idea of a united, safe and inclusive future has never been more urgently needed than today. Today, our children are not safe; therefore, for me, humanity is not safe. The very idea behind Laureates and Leaders for Children and the Summits is to build a sense of urgency, collective responsibility and a strong moral voice to galvanise political will."

- Kailash Satyarthi
Nobel Peace Laureate 2014
Founder, Laureates and Leaders for Children Summit

"I feel a special commitment to the cause that unites us today, to fight and defend every vulnerable child in the world and guarantee them a dignified life."

- HE Juan Carlos Varela Rodriguez
President of Panama, 2014-2019

"Words without actions are meaningless. What you see here are our demands, and our pledges, along with actions we will take to make the pledges reality. We do this because we have hope. This goal is what is keeping us connected."

- Angel Mbuthia
Representative of All Africa Students’ Union
Supporter of 100 Million for 100 Million Campaign
(Addressing Laureates and Leaders at the Laureates and Leaders for Children Summit 2018, Jordan)

"I have never doubted the power of youth to lead social movement and achieve political change."

- Khiabet Salazar
National Youth Coordinator, 100 Million for 100 Million Campaign, Peru
ILO External Collaborator for the International Program on the Eradication of Child Labour
(Speech at second Laureates and Leaders for Children Summit 2018, Jordan)

"To the youth, you are here at the Dead Sea, the lowest point on the Earth and the only way to go is up. Through this Summit, you have uplifted us so much. Keep it going, because there is nothing you can’t achieve."

- HRH Prince Ali Bin Al Hussein

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"We are judged by how we look after children."

- HE Mary Robinson
President of Ireland (1990 to 1997) and President of Mary Robinson Foundation Climate Justice

"There can be no better indication of a society’s soul than the way it treats their children and so many have failed."

- HRH Princess Haya bin Al Hussein (through video message)

"We are judged by how we look after children."

- HE Mary Robinson
President of Ireland (1990 to 1997) and President of Mary Robinson Foundation Climate Justice

"It is time for us to stop writing too much and start doing."

- Mdm Leymah Gbowee
Nobel Peace Laureate
Youth from Zaatari, the largest refugee camp in the world, left the camp for the first time since their arrival in Jordan, to join an international youth delegation participating in the Summit.

The Dead Sea Declaration, an outcome of the 2nd Summit, called for greater investments in ensuring a child’s right to a safe and healthy life, free of all forms of violence and abuse, in accordance with the UN SDGs on children. We also called for increased focus on the child-centric SDGs in all aspects of our work.

STEERING COMMITTEE

As the Convenor, HE Jose Ramos Horta, President of Timor-Leste (2007-2012) and Nobel Peace Laureate, leads the steering committee of Laureates and Leaders for Children consisting of HRH Prince Ali bin Al Hussein of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan; First Lady of Panama HE Lorena Castillo de Varela (2014-2019); Nobel Peace Laureate and Child Rights Advocate Mr. Kailash Satyarthi and Human Rights Activist and President of the Robert F Kennedy Human Rights Ms. Kerry Kennedy.

Supported by a secretariat which operates from the Kailash Satyarthi Children’s Foundation US based in Washington, DC, the committee ensures commitments and initiatives from the summit turn into sustainable action.
GET INVOLVED

Laureates and Leaders for Children is an ever-growing platform looking to join and promote pioneering work for the safety, health and education of all children. The secretariat works with civil society organisations, socio-political, economic and human rights-based forums, funding partners, implementation partners, INGOs and governments.

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