

MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release
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Charities call on governments to listen to the voices of children with new play

EveryChild and **Save the Children UK** have collaborated with **iceandfire** to stage a new play based on the real testimonies of vulnerable children from around the world.

20 years on from the adoption of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) **Listen to Me** will tell stories of children living on the streets, fleeing conflict, trapped in bonded labour and growing up in abusive households and asks why we are still failing children.

A resource pack for schools, theatre groups and youth organisations, including the full script, video footage of the original performance, lesson plans and other supporting materials, will be available soon to download at www.everychild.org.uk/listentome or www.savethechildren.org.uk/listentome. Please register online to receive the resource pack. **Listen to Me** is being performed to an invited audience of children's rights experts, charities, opinion formers and politicians at the prestigious Unicorn Theatre, the UK's flagship theatre for young people in London, **on 16 November**.

The play presents a diversity of responses to the UNCRC from ten children, detailing the positive differences it has made as well as the instances where it has failed to protect their rights. Testimonies have been gathered from children in India, Bangladesh, Ukraine, Malawi, Guyana, Cambodia, Colombia and Wales.

Kavitha is a 12-year-old Indian girl who was rescued from bonded labour but still faces discrimination because of her caste:

"Because of my caste, my fellow classmates ignore me and won't mingle with me or sit with me. Even teachers won't touch me after knowing that I am from an Arunthathiyaar community. In some situations I cry and ask - Why has God made me born in this region?"

This is the first time that Save the Children and EveryChild have used theatre to tell these stories to decision makers and government representatives. According to Adrian Lovett, Save the Children's Director of Campaigns and Communications:

"Save the Children are working flat out to get every child their rights - but while progress has been made, we all have so much more to do. Child rights are at the heart of our global campaign EVERY ONE and are crucial to our life-saving work in the UK and around the world. 'Listen to Me' puts children's rights centre stage. It's a powerful challenge to decision-makers and to all of us."

Anna Feuchtwang, Chief Executive of EveryChild, says:

"It is shocking that 20 years on from the adoption of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child there are at least 24 million children growing up without parental care. Every child has the right to be heard and this play gives some of the most marginalised children a voice - I hope that policy makers attending the play will not just listen, but will act."

Background Notes:

EveryChild is an international development charity working around the world to stop children growing up vulnerable and alone. More than 24 million children live without parental care, which often threatens a child's chance of survival through lack of nutrition, shelter and health and puts them at greater risk of violence and exploitation, and of missing out on school, and their childhood. Working with local partners, EveryChild keeps children safe when they are alone and vulnerable, within their community, or through crisis care and support. They protect vulnerable children by keeping families together. And they get children back to a safe and caring family, wherever they can. www.everychild.org.uk

iceandfire explores human rights stories through performance. A theatre company with a distinct, contemporary voice we create work of excellence across our four work strands: production, outreach, education and participation. www.iceandfire.co.uk

Save the Children UK works for children's rights in the UK and around the world, ensuring children get access to proper healthcare, food education and protection. They deliver life-saving supplies in emergencies, campaign for children's rights and improve their futures through long-term development work. Eglantyne Jebb, co-founder of Save the Children, developed a Declaration of the Rights of the Child, which formed the basis for the present UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Save the Children UK is a member of the international Save the Children Alliance, which consists of 28 independent Save the Children organisations working in 120 countries. www.savethechildren.org.uk

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