



July 2026

Making Children Count – Sustainability Reporting Across Emerging Asia

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Authors

Gayang Ho, Hao Cai, Ines Kaempfer, Tra-My T. Le – The Centre for Child Rights and Business

The Project Team

Bhadraja Mullegamoda, Gayang Ho, Hao Cai, Ines Kaempfer, Tra-My T. Le, Verena Gumm – The Centre for Child Rights and Business

Concept and Coordination

Romain Sibille – UNICEF Asia and the Pacific

Editors

Ellen Schliebitz, Vivian van Bremen, Wenxun Pan - The Centre for Child Rights and Business

We wish to extend our deepest gratitude to the members of UNICEF Country Offices in Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Viet Nam and UNICEF thematic experts – Margarita Baula, Maeve Bayles, Meije Bello, Francisco Biber, Ernesto "Nonoy" Casiple, Karla Correa, Alison Feeley, Josianne Galea Baron, Judith Hannan, Ida Hyllested, Emiliano Livero, Ann Punam Marks, Arun Nair, Erik Nyman, Adrienne O'Dell, Nicholas Reese, Siran Wang, for their invaluable insight and guidance throughout the project. This study would not have been possible without the dedicated support of The Centre's teams in Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Viet Nam, whose contributions were vital to this study.

The project team also expresses their sincere thanks to the volunteers who generously contributed their time and expertise. Their meticulous adherence to study procedures and thoughtful feedback were fundamental to the successful completion of the manual sustainability report reviews. We particularly thank Amy Chapman, Elin Chan, Elliot Dodge, Enosh Kurz, Kai Kim Chiang, Kayla Kurelayi Nuerfulati, Muhammad Usman, Samrin Inayati, Tianchen Jing and Ting Lang.

Finally, we are grateful to the following experts for their technical inputs on our methodology and findings: Elisabeth Andvig (Norges Bank Investment Management), Xavier Arrufat (Awaait), Sara D'Anzeo (UN Women), Danielle Chesebrough (UNSSE), Katja Freiwald (UN Women), Tiffany Grabski (UNSSE), Matthew Gray (Morningstar), Cassidy Huang (World Benchmark Alliance), Outi Kauppinen (Evli), Ghislaine Nadaud (Robeco), Thao Nguyen (Amazon), Niiranen Elina (Evli), Lisa Remke (UNSSE), Elena Schmider (Access to Nutrition Initiative), Nicholas Sewe (World Benchmarking Alliance), Sameea Sheikh (Access to Nutrition initiative), Efraim Sintijak (Deloitte), Luda Svystunova (Amundi), Nina Vollmer (Global Child Forum), Eugene Wong (Sustainable Finance Institute Asia), Melanie Yap (KPMG), Gary Sachs (Deakin University).

We thank all participants and partners for their trust and collaboration in advancing the child rights agenda in corporate sustainability.

Cover photo: UNICEF/UNI636920/Himu



This report was developed by The Centre for Child Rights and Business, which led the design and implementation of this study – including the development of the child rights indicators framework, and the methodology for AI assisted scoring and the in-depth manual review: as well as the development of nine regional reports for UNICEF country offices.

The Centre for Child Rights and Business is a social enterprise working with businesses, partners and other key stakeholders to strengthen child rights and HRDD across global supply chains. Through on-the-ground implementation, applied research and advisory services, The Centre helps drive meaningful, long-term change for children, youth and families while supporting responsible business practices and evolving ESG and regulatory expectations. Learn more at www.childrights-business.org. Report published by UNICEF Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (APRO). Reproduction of any part of this publication requires permission.

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Executive Summary



Asia is setting the standard in corporate sustainability *A unique opportunity for children's rights*

Business impacts every dimension of children's lives.

Product formulation, sales and marketing, environmental impact, employment practices, employee behavior, data mining, and investments all shape children's lives — whether it's their health, nutrition, education, protection or overall welfare.

Across Asia, corporate sustainability reporting is accelerating faster than anywhere else. More than half of mandatory frameworks globally are being built or enforced here. Stock exchanges, securities regulators and investors are moving from guidance to obligation — and companies are responding.

Yet child rights remain one of the most significant unreported dimensions of corporate sustainability. Companies already hold data, face regulatory exposure, and respond to investor scrutiny related to their supply chains, workplaces, digital platforms, marketing practices and environmental impact. What is still missing is the connection to children as stakeholders.

This report finds that across 20 of 26 indicators, reported performance on child-relevant issues runs at least 50% below stated commitments — a gap that represents both unmanaged risk and unrealized opportunity.

For investors, this is an emerging frontier and an exciting opportunity to become child-lens investors, aligning capital that advances children's rights.

For regulators, the architecture to act is already in place — Human Rights Due Diligence legislation, supply chain due diligence, Environmental, Social and Governance and sustainable finance disclosure mandates. The opportunity is to embed children in these existing frameworks.

And for companies themselves, the entry points are clear: governance frameworks, supplier codes, workplace policies, and product standards. Acting now, ahead of further regulatory tightening and growing consumer and investor scrutiny — is not just ethical, it makes business sense.

This report provides that perspective across almost 11 emerging markets — combining a core analysis of 1,399 listed companies in nine markets with complementary studies in China and the Philippines. It shows us a great opportunity — and where we can start acting.

Join us to help shape the future of business practices in Asia.

Sanjay Wijesekera

UNICEF Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific

This report assesses how listed companies across emerging markets in Asia – specifically Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Viet Nam – integrate child rights into their sustainability disclosures in these nine core markets, with complementary studies in China and

the Philippines. The timing is critical. Sustainability reporting regulations are evolving rapidly across the region, with stock exchanges accelerating mandatory requirements and aligning with international standards. Sixteen of thirty-one global mandatory sustainability reporting frameworks are in this region — a significant

regulatory momentum that positions Asia as a global standard-setter in shaping how corporate sustainability obligations are designed and enforced. But children's rights are unevenly reflected in these regulations and requirements. In order to respond to this regulatory momentum, this review provides a timely baseline assessment of where child rights disclosure stands today, enabling stakeholders to anticipate expectations, identify gaps, and act before requirements become binding.

The analysis reviewed 1,399 companies across nine emerging Asian markets against 26 child rights indicators, complemented by 3 industry-specific indicators. The systematic gap: children are not identified as distinct rights-holders in corporate governance or business strategy. This is not

an additional requirement; it is a missing element within existing human rights due diligence, despite the region's high contextual risks.

Business activities affect children across multiple dimensions: supply chain labour practices, workplace policies for parents, product safety, marketing communications, data governance and environmental impacts. Yet corporate disclosures remain narrowly focused on high-level child labour commitments and philanthropy. For investors, this hides portfolio exposure behind unreliable data. Recognising children as distinct stakeholders closes that gap without adding new obligations. For companies, this disconnect means unmanaged regulatory, reputational and operational risks.

Key findings and discussions raised in this review

1. While there is a real progression on social and human rights disclosure in the region (74% of companies report formal human rights commitments) yet only 5% of sampled companies explicitly identify children as stakeholders, and just 1% include child rights in materiality assessments.

This region is defined by significant child labour risks, limited social protection and acute climate vulnerability — these issues are material business risks. Managing them effectively begins with recognising children as distinct stakeholders. However, most companies currently aggregate children within broader 'vulnerable group' categories — an approach that may systematically underestimate their specific exposure across workplaces, supply chains, markets, and communities. Integrating child rights into materiality assessments is sound risk management and responsible business practice.

2. Companies report commitment to protect children by supporting parent

workers – yet disclosures show this connection is insufficiently developed.

Many companies report flexible working arrangements and extended parental leave, but these initiatives on their own will not deliver their full potential for children unless they are complemented by wider family-friendly measures such as paying a living wage, providing breastfeeding accommodations and ensuring job security during family leave. Where working parents lack this broader package of support, children are more likely to experience negative impacts. Integrating these measures into a more comprehensive approach would help companies show more clearly how their people practices contribute to child wellbeing and communicate a more coherent account of the value they create for their workforce and the communities in which they operate.

3. Seven in ten companies publicly commit to ending child labour – yet only 2% address remediation, and just 3% support suppliers on child rights.

The lack of demonstrable steps to reduce this risk

or support child rights within their supply chains in sustainability reporting presents a gap between intent and action: without disclosing prevention and remediation efforts, companies might reflect weak due diligence systems and unmanaged exposure to regulatory, reputational and operational risks. Compounding this, 14% of companies report "no under 18s" worker policies, a stance that, while protective in intent, can obscure how young workers are actually managed and, evidence suggests, may push legally employable youth into informal, hazardous work.

- 4. Two-thirds of companies commit to human rights in their supply chains – yet only 3% assess and support their suppliers on child rights, and just 7% on living wages.** These shortfalls matter. Living wages and active supplier engagement and accountability are foundational to safeguarding children and preventing child labour. Without this clarity, supply chain commitments lack the substance required to manage risk effectively.
- 5. Companies are not reporting on the child rights impacts most material to their sector.** A garment manufacturer, a digital platform and an extractives company face structurally different child rights risks — yet disclosures apply the same generic human rights language regardless of business model or value chain position. Sector-specific risks remain invisible: absorbed into aggregate commitments that cannot serve as a reliable basis for

investor risk assessment, regulatory scrutiny or meaningful corporate accountability.

- 6. Across 20 of 26 indicators, reported impact runs at least 50% below stated commitments — a data reliability failure that distorts investor risk assessment.** This finding comes from an in-depth manual review of 155 out of the 1,399 companies — where supporting policy documents are included in the review — which confirmed a widespread intent-action-impact gap. Where companies cannot demonstrate impact, portfolio exposure to child-rights-related risks remains hidden, distorting risk assessments and undermining the quality of ESG data.
- 7. Mandatory reporting is a strong lever to strengthen child rights disclosures across all industry sectors.** The findings reveal that markets with fully mandated corporate sustainability reporting frameworks show stronger corporate reporting on child rights than those relying on partial or voluntary requirements. At the same time, mandatory reporting alone is unlikely to be sufficient: clearer regulatory and investor expectations – supported by comprehensive implementation guidance – appear to be what enables more systematic integration of child rights considerations into corporate sustainability and reporting. Taken together, these point to a clear path to action: targeted regulatory measures can accelerate progress, and the shortfalls identified in this report can be narrowed through effective policy intervention.

Implications and recommendations

The findings present key implications for companies, regulators and investors: the gaps identified in this review are not merely risk indicators; they also provide clear starting

points to strengthen sustainability reporting, anticipate rising regulatory demands on corporate responsibility across value chains, mitigate human rights due diligence gaps, and

improve reporting quality and transparency for investors.

The starting point is not building new systems — it is connecting the ones that already exist. To pave the path forward, the report shares a number of practical recommendations for each key stakeholder:

For regulators, strengthen and clarify mandatory reporting requirements so that child-inclusive disclosures become decision-useful and comparable. It also highlights where regulation can be most effective when paired with guidance that helps companies operationalise a child rights lens in governance, due diligence and impact mitigation, risk management, procurement, labour practices and grievance mechanisms. The review further shows how complementary action by other public authorities – such as labour, environmental and consumer protection bodies – can reinforce expectations and improve coherence across the wider policy framework.

For investors, the findings offer a more targeted way to align with a child-lens investing philosophy, using high-signal questions to assess a company's sustainability performance throughout the investment cycle about impact, governance and effectiveness. Used this way, child rights disclosure indicators function as a practical diagnostic, stewardship and investment decision tool, improving the reliability of data, sharpening risk identification and enabling more informed capital allocation and stewardship. These findings also open the way for investors to develop child-lens investment products, with a greater knowledge of the performance of sectors they can invest in within Asia to prevent child impacts and accelerate the development of businesses supporting children's rights.

For companies, identify – beyond the obvious – where children are affected across operations and value chains, strengthen due diligence and governance accordingly, and then report against specific outcomes and controls (not just policies). This enables

companies to move from broad commitments to a material, demonstrable, risk-based approach to safeguarding child rights, strengthening accountability and allowing stakeholders to assess companies' commitments to protect children's rights on the basis of implementation transparency and governance excellence.

One of the immediate strategic actions is to review the relevant data collected across HR, procurement, marketing, products design, legal and sustainability functions that are linked to addressing child rights. Currently, these systems are often siloed – a symptom of a fragmented strategy, not a lack of data. Coordination across functions enables companies to identify clear entry points and apply a child rights lens to strengthen existing commitments. This closes the gap between stated intent and demonstrable impact without building parallel systems.

Existing frameworks – United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs), Global Reporting Initiative (GRI), The International Labour Organisation (ILO) conventions, and the Children's Rights and Business Principles (CRBP) – have long demanded corporate accountability towards workers, consumers, and communities. Yet, children remain largely a blind spot in corporate sustainability and ESG disclosure, and weak child rights due diligence persists, signalling a fundamental risk management failure.

With sixteen frameworks already mandating sustainability reporting in this region, the reporting structure is in place, yet weak child rights due diligence persists. Companies, regulators and investors who close that gap will define the standard for the region — including for sector-specific risks, direct for agriculture, manufacturing, technology, food and beverage, and extractives, and indirect for financials, industrials and real estate. In doing so, they will build the inclusive, resilient economies that the next generation will inherit. UNICEF is ready to work alongside those who choose to act.



1. INTRODUCTION

Advancing Child Rights as a Strategic Priority in Emerging Asia¹

¹ Based on World Bank income classifications, countries included in this report – Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Viet Nam, covering lower- and upper-middle-income economies across Asia, are collectively referred to as Emerging Markets of Asia throughout this report.

For investors, publicly listed companies and regulators across emerging markets of Asia, integrating a child-lens in their investment decisions is increasingly recognised as essential to comprehensive risk management and long-term value creation.

Children are inherently interconnected with business ecosystems. Not only are children the future workforce and business leaders, but they are also today's stakeholders as consumers, children of employees and the most vulnerable members of the communities where companies operate. These considerations run through supply chains, workplace policies, product safety, marketing and data governance. They translate into material Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) risks and opportunities, which range from legal and reputational exposure (child labour, online risks, pollution) to asset viability, climate-related youth advocacy and shifting brand perceptions.

Furthermore, under Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, children have the right to participate in decisions that affect them. This provides a normative basis that extends to business activities shaping their lives, yet it remains almost absent from corporate governance and sustainability reporting.

Yet despite clear financial and operational consequences, child rights remain under-reported. The risks are well-understood; the disclosure systems have not caught up. Child-sensitive practices – such as family-friendly workplaces, ethical marketing – can support compliance, social license and brand loyalty.

This gap in reporting is widening as corporate accountability becomes more contested. In Europe² and North America³, mandatory due

diligence frameworks have faced delays and scope reductions, creating regulatory uncertainty for companies operating across jurisdictions. For some, the result has been a retreat towards strategic silence over proactive disclosure, driven by concerns about greenwashing liability rather than a weakening of underlying commitments. This regulatory uncertainty makes Asia's expanding mandatory frameworks a competitive advantage and drives companies and investors with cross-context exposure to have a direct interest in anchoring to standards built to last.

Against this backdrop, child-rights reporting is both an urgent challenge and a strategic opportunity: a broadly unifying focus through which companies can demonstrate credible governance and long-term sustainability, while giving investors visibility into hidden risks and offering regulators a practical route to stronger market transparency.

The core analysis covers 1,399 companies⁴ across nine low- and upper-middle-income economies across South and Southeast Asia – selected on the basis of an active stock exchange and sufficient listed company population to enable meaningful analysis. Using the Child Rights and Business Principles and the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights as reference frameworks, the study examines sustainability disclosures across FY24/25 reports. This report also draws on parallel studies conducted by UNICEF Philippines and UNICEF China, which provide deeper country-level analysis and extend coverage to Asia's most significant emerging capital markets. Overall, this analysis maps current practices and provides a baseline for informed decision-making, robust governance and child-inclusive corporate strategies.

² The EU's Omnibus I package, published in February 2026, postponed the transposition deadline and first phase of application for the Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD). <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2026/02/24/council-signs-off-simplification-of-sustainability-reporting-and-due-diligence-requirements-to-boost-eu-competitiveness/>

³ There has been a significant uptick in anti-ESG legislation at the state level, with 192 anti-ESG bills proposed in 2025 compared to only 76 bills supporting ESG initiatives. States like Texas have enacted laws restricting proxy advice based on "non-financial" factors. <https://iclg.com/practice-areas/environmental-social-and-governance-law/usa>

⁴ The study was initially designed to assess 1500 companies. Due to various limitations (as explained in the Methodology Guide), the final review was conducted across 1,399 companies.

1.1. Our Approach

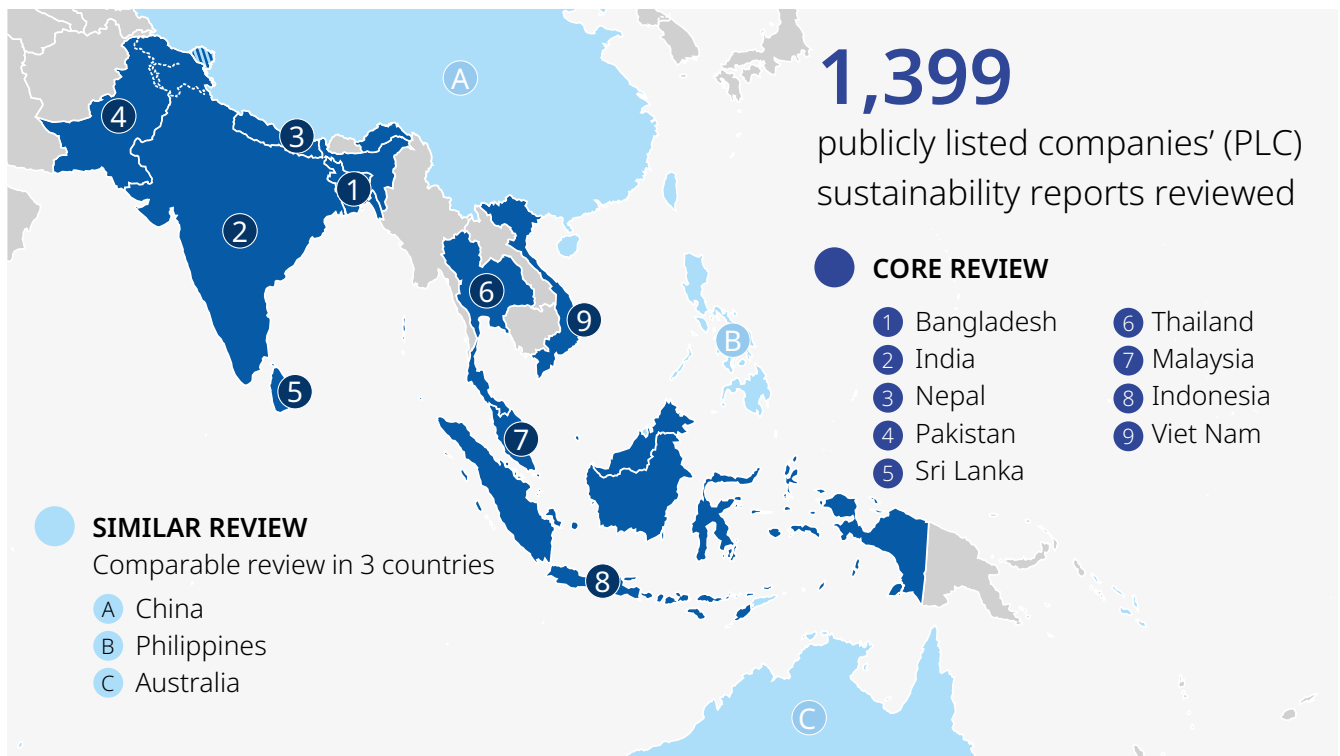
The approach to the core analysis builds directly upon earlier reports that have shaped the current understanding of child rights disclosures:

- Integrating Child Rights across the ASX- Safeguarding children: A new frontier for responsible investing and business – June 2022
- UNICEF Finland's Child lens on ESG: A study of Nasdaq Helsinki Companies - February 2024
- Corporate reporting on child rights: A global review of the current state of child rights disclosures - March 2025

- UNICEF Philippines' Investing in the Future: Why do children matter in the sustainability reports of publicly listed companies - April 2025
- Overall guidance for investors: Child-Lens Investing Framework – September 2023

The methodologies and insights from these five foundational works have directly shaped the design of this study across South and Southeast Asia, aiming to establish a new standard in the analysis of corporate reporting.

1.1.1. OBJECTIVES OF THE REVIEW



This map does not reflect a position by UNICEF on the legal status of any country or territory or the delimitation of any frontiers. The dotted line represents approximately the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir agreed upon by India and Pakistan. The final status of Jammu and Kashmir has not yet been agreed upon by the parties.

The core analysis focuses on the review of 1,399 publicly listed companies' (PLC) corporate sustainability reports across nine countries: Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Viet Nam.

The countries were selected based on the size of their capital markets⁵, and their relevance for UNICEF regional programmes. The study has three key objectives.

⁵ The countries selected need to have a stock market of minimum USD 10 billion in capitalisation.

Objective 1: Produce a review that is representative of the companies in this region

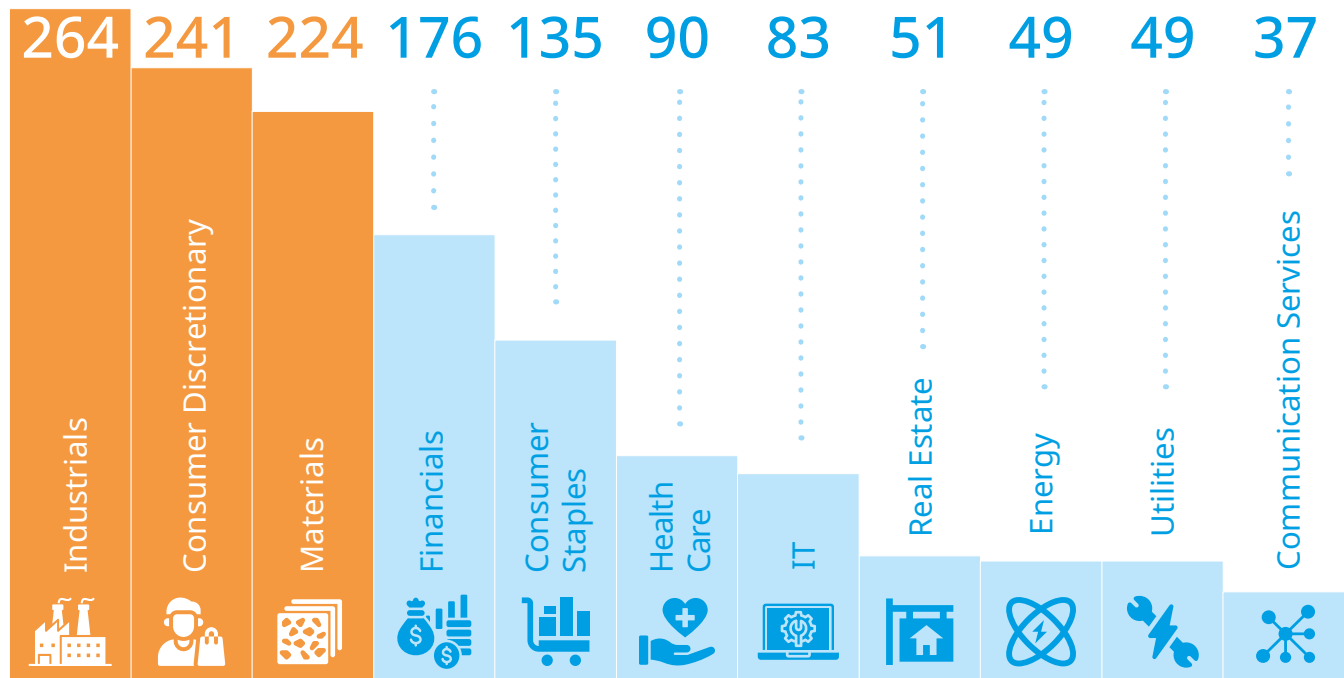
To ensure a representative market overview, a statistically representative sample was extracted from stock exchanges' lists across each country (See the distribution and representation

of companies selected in Appendix I). Within each country, the final selection of the companies is stratified by industry sectors⁶ and market capitalisation.⁷

Chart 1: Number of companies by market capitalisation



Chart 2: Number of companies by industry sector⁸



⁶ Companies across the nine countries were classified using the Global Industry Classification Standard (GICS) at the sector and industry group levels to ensure a consistent and internationally comparable framework. The use of GICS supports standardised sector mapping, transparent sampling and alignment with widely used investor and ESG reporting practices. Refer to the Detailed Methodology Guide for more details.

⁷ Market capitalisation (market cap.) is the value of a company that is traded on the stock market, and the segregation into large, mid and small is based on percentile-based method from the Morgan Stanley Capital International (MSCI) market cap value classification; Large = top 70%, Mid = 15%, Small = remaining 15%. Refer to the Detailed Methodology Guide for more details.



Objective 2: Evaluate companies across various aspects of child rights

The study evaluates publicly available corporate sustainability reports against 26 evidence-based indicators across 10 topics to assess 2024 disclosures on companies' commitment to child rights. In addition, three industry-specific indicators were applied only to relevant high-risk sectors, including the food industry's nutrition commitment, the media and information technology sector's child safeguarding, and the mining & construction sector's private security arrangements. Building

on UNICEF's studies and global benchmarks, such as the Global Child Forum and the World Benchmarking Alliance, the 26 indicators provided an overview of reporting patterns and outlined a roadmap for regional progress. An AI platform calibrated to specific criteria rates each company against these 26 indicators, with the combined scores being used as a benchmark to evaluate corporate disclosure quality.

8 The composition of industries in the research sample has undergone purposive refinement to reflect research objectives and contextual expertise provided by UNICEF Country Offices, therefore not directly representative of the overall industry composition of the stock exchanges. Industries and companies that typically have a negative impact on children—which cannot be outweighed by any corporate sustainability action—are excluded. These include companies that derive most of their revenue from weapons, gambling, tobacco, alcohol, adult content, or coal extraction. Breastmilk substitute (BMS) manufacturers violating the International Code on Marketing of Breast Milk Substitutes should be part of this exclusion list. However, these companies are not excluded from this study given their direct exposure in child nutrition and food systems, beyond their BMS product portfolio. The sample was also adjusted to prioritise high child-rights impact industries, as well as high market capitalisation companies. For more details, please see the Methodology Guide.

To generate actionable insights, the study included a manual review of reports from 155 publicly listed companies

over **10%** of the sample

to better gauge corporate intent, reported actions and reported impact.

Figure 1: 10 topics for assessment



Objective 3: Produce a comprehensive review with actionable insights

To generate actionable insights, the study included a manual review of reports from 155 publicly listed companies (PLC) — over 10% of the sample — to better gauge corporate intent, reported actions and reported impact. This approach helped identify the “intent-action-impact gap”

and opportunities to strengthen reporting beyond aspirational policy statements, providing a clearer view of the quality of corporate commitments. For each company, the review examined not only its primary sustainability report but also up to three supplementary policy documents.

1.1.2. TECHNICAL NOTES ON THE METHODOLOGY AND INTERPRETATION OF THE RESULTS

Methods of assessment

To assess a representative sample of companies⁹ sustainability reports across nine countries, the analysis combined a rigorously researched and tested set of indicators with AI-driven machine-learning algorithms for 1,399 companies and targeted manual reviews for over 10% (155) of sampled companies.

- Each company's score was supported by cited evidence.
- Each score was accompanied by a confidence assessment.

This hybrid approach, combining AI-driven and manual reviews, helped ensure the representativeness, credibility and usability of the findings.

⁹ Across the nine countries, there are a total of 13,213 listed companies.

Qualitative scores for rating disclosure depth

17 indicators applied a three-level scale:

0 "NO MENTIONS" (score 0)

No mention or no evidence of relevant PLC's published reports/ documents

5 "IMPLICIT MENTIONS" (score 5)

Instances where child rights are implicitly included within broader human rights or vulnerable groups frameworks

10 "EXPLICIT MENTIONS" (score 10)

Direct, specific mention of children and/or child rights

"Implicit mentions" are captured to distinguish between companies that address child rights explicitly and those that reference them only indirectly—whether as part of a general human rights framework or within wider discussions of vulnerable groups, such as women, migrants or persons with disabilities.

The remaining 12 indicators use a simple yes/no scoring scale, as "implicit mentions"

are not applicable. The scoring system is as follows:

- ➔ "0" denotes that the PLC's disclosures do not mention or provide evidence about relevant child rights.
- ➔ "10" indicates that the disclosure explicitly mentions relevant child rights.

Composite of the assessed companies

The sample proportionally calibrated to reflect the sector's composition of each stock exchange¹⁰ and segmented by market capitalisation using the classification of Morgan Stanley Capital International (MSCI). Finally, the sampling frame is refined based on consultation with UNICEF Regional and Country Offices to ensure strict alignment with due diligence requirements, country priorities and overall research objective.

The final sample prioritises: (1) large-cap companies, due to their capital market influence

and societal footprint; and (2) 'high-impact' industry groups linked to UNICEF's focus areas: Digital Rights, Just Transition, Family-Friendly Policies (company and supply chain) and Nutrition.

Alignment with UNICEF's priorities also includes a stronger focus on Asian companies and the exclusion of industries whose negative impacts on children no corporate sustainability action can offset (e.g. tobacco, alcohol, gambling, armaments). Full sampling details are provided in the Methodology Guide.

¹⁰ If the index consists of 15% in the materials sector, proportionally, 15% of materials sector companies will be in the sample.

This study is accompanied by the **Methodology Guide: Review of Child rights in Corporate Sustainability Reporting in Asia Pacific**, which sets out in full the sampling process, indicator development, scoring framework and analytical approach behind the findings.

The Methodology Guide was designed from the outset to do more than support this report. It is an **open methodology — documented in full and free to use, adapt and share** — built to serve as a lasting reference for assessing child rights in corporate reporting, beyond this study and this region.

UNICEF offers it as a public resource so that others can:

- > apply UNICEF's criteria and analytical prompts to assess company reporting in their own markets and contexts;
- > measure progress over time, benchmarking future performance against the baseline established here;
- > replicate the research in new countries and regions across the globe.

The intention is that the Methodology improves with use — refined and built on by those who apply it.

The Methodology is also transparent about the use of AI in the analysis — where it was applied, its limits, and the steps taken to safeguard quality and accuracy — so that anyone adopting the methodology can trust and reproduce it.



2. PANORAMA ON CHILD RIGHTS IN CORPORATE SUSTAINABILITY DISCLOSURE

This chapter outlines the sustainability disclosure landscape across South and Southeast Asia, drawing on an overview of corporate reporting trends and the most influential voluntary and mandatory reporting standards. It also summarises recent

developments in sustainability disclosures across the nine focus countries – Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Viet Nam – as well as China and Philippines,¹¹ highlighting the key standards shaping private sector reporting.

Global and Regional Trends in Child Rights Reporting in Corporate Sustainability Disclosure

Global sustainability disclosure is shifting from voluntary narratives to mandatory, standards-based reporting. This transition is shaped by the European Union's (EU) double-materiality frameworks and the International Sustainability Standards Board's (ISSB) focus on financial materiality¹²— a divergence that has created a fragmented landscape and increased demand for harmonisation.

In Asia Pacific, regulatory momentum is accelerating. The region is now home to 16 of the 31 frameworks globally on mandatory sustainability reporting requirements, a significant shift that positions the region

as a global standard-setter in shaping how corporate sustainability obligations are designed and enforced.¹³ (see Figure 2) New frameworks, such as India's Business Responsibility and Sustainability Reporting (BRSR) and the ASEAN Taxonomy for Sustainable Finance version 2 (ATSF-v2), are emerging to align with global standards and attract investments. However, implementation remains uneven across the region: environmental metrics dominate, social disclosures often lack depth, and gaps persist in assurance, data quality and alignment across industries. Recognition of the financial materiality of child rights also remains limited.



Companies that don't apply a child rights lens to their risk management are flying blind — missing material risks and opportunities alike. And if you've made public commitments without follow-through, that's not just an oversight. That's a liability. This is why the UNICEF framework is so instrumental.

– Tiffany Grabski,
UNSE (UN Sustainable Stock Exchanges)

Topics such as infant and young child nutrition are still largely viewed by the financial sector as ethical concerns rather than financially material, systemic issues, highlighting the need for greater education on their material relevance to investors.

– Elena Schmider,
ATNi (Access to Nutrition initiative)

¹¹ China and the Philippines are covered through complementary country studies and the ESG Panorama, but are not part of the 1,399-company core dataset.

¹² The **ISSB framework focuses solely on financial materiality**, requiring disclosure of sustainability-related information that could reasonably be expected to affect the entity's cash flows, access to finance, or cost of capital, thus impacting investor decision-making. In contrast, the **EU's double-materiality framework considers both financial materiality and impact materiality**. This means companies must disclose not only how sustainability issues affect their financial performance (financial materiality, or "outside-in" perspective) but also how their operations impact society and the environment (impact materiality, or "inside-out" perspective), even if those impacts are not yet financially material.

¹³ This is based on desk review via public announcements conducted in December 2025.



Based on the analysis of ESG reporting frameworks of the studied countries (see *Figure 3*), there are a few distinct characteristics of child rights disclosure in this region:

→ **Narrow scope in national frameworks:** Corporate sustainability frameworks (e.g. India's BRSR, Malaysia's Bursa, Pakistan's Stock Exchange) tend to focus on child labour – primarily on prohibition and basic grievance mechanisms – while broader child rights-related risks (e.g. supply chain safety, parental working conditions, community impacts, environmental harm, digital privacy, products risks, and child-directed marketing) are rarely covered.

- **Inconsistent child labour reporting requirements:** Child labour risk reporting varies widely in the region. Some jurisdictions set explicit indicators; others rely on broader human rights frameworks (e.g. Global Reporting Initiative (GRI), BRSR or ISSB). However, in all cases, disclosures commonly lack detail on prevention, mitigation and remediation.
- **Siloed approach to child rights:** Many companies do not treat child rights as a core to business strategy. Child rights are often put under broader human rights frameworks, which in turn are handled in siloed corporate functions, which limits strategic integration.



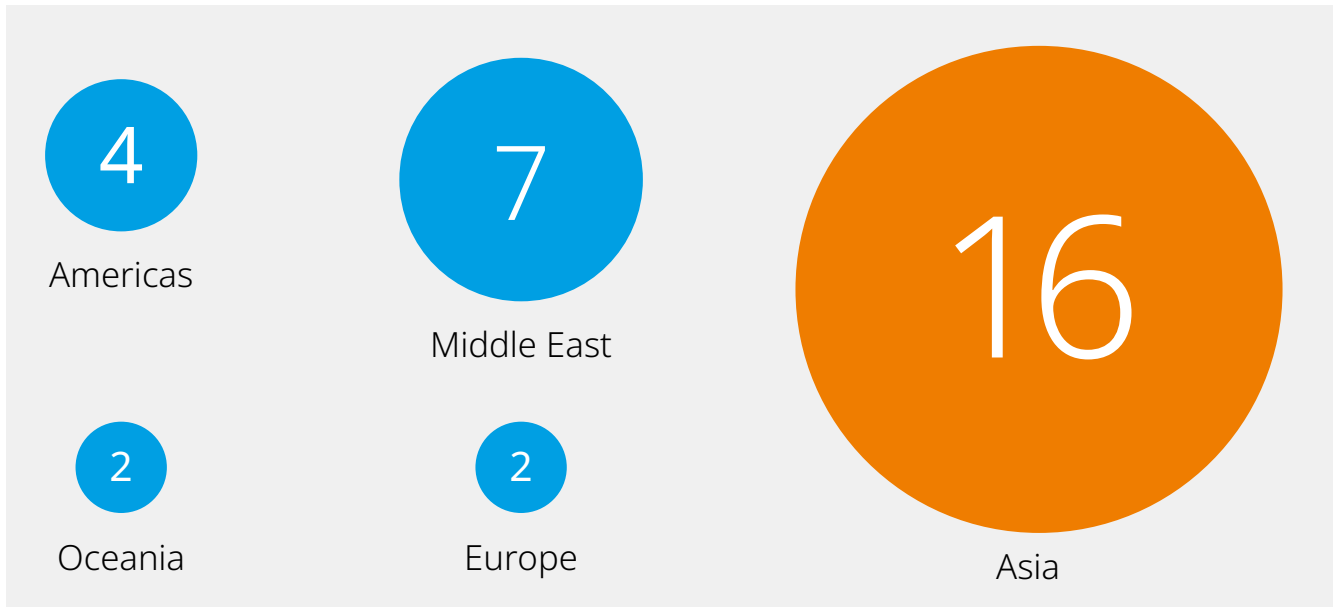
People working on human rights and ESG often focus mainly on the supply chain, and many times struggle to engage with market activities, product development, or other core business functions.

– Nina Vollmer (Global Child Forum)

Figure 2: Mandatory corporate sustainability reporting requirements worldwide (approved by December 2025)

Of the 31 mandatory corporate sustainability reporting frameworks globally, 16 are in Asia — more than all other regions combined.

Mandatory ESG reporting frameworks, by region



STATUS: MANDATORY (IN FORCE)

Accounting and Corporate Regulatory Authority (ACRA) — ISSB-aligned Climate-related Disclosures

Abu Dhabi Securities Exchange (ADX) – ESG Guidelines

Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC) / Parliament of Australia – AASB S2, Corporations Act 2001

Bahrain Bourse – ESG Reporting Requirements

Bursa Kuwait – ESG Reporting Guide

Bursa Malaysia – NSRF-mandated sustainability reporting for public-listed companies.

Comisión para el Mercado Financiero (CMF) – Mandatory Sustainability Disclosure

Comisión Nacional Bancaria y de Valores (CNBV) – IFRS S1 & S2 Disclosure

Canadian Securities Administrators (CSA) – Climate Disclosure Requirements

China Securities Regulatory Commission (CSRC) – ESG Disclosure Regulations for Listed Companies

Comissão de Valores Mobiliários (CVM) – ESG Disclosure Requirements

Dubai Financial Market (DFM) – Sustainability Guidelines

Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) – TCFD-aligned disclosure requirements

Financial Services Agency (FSA) – TCFD-aligned mandatory disclosures

Hong Kong Exchanges and Clearing (HKEX) – HKFRS SDS (ISSB-aligned), mandatory climate disclosures

Ministry of Finance (MOF) – Circular 96/2020/TT-BTC

Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) – GRI Standards, GCC Metrics

Otoritas Jasa Keuangan (OJK) – Sustainable Finance Regulation

Parliament of New Zealand / Financial Markets Authority (FMA) – Climate-related Disclosure Legislation

European Parliament and Council of the European Union – Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD)

Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) – Business Responsibility and Sustainability Report (BRSR)

Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC, Philippines) – Memorandum Circular 4 and MC 16

Stock Exchange of Thailand (SET) – Form 56-1 One Report

Singapore Exchange (SGX) – Sustainability Reporting Requirements

Shanghai Stock Exchange (SSE) – ESG Reporting Guidelines (SSE 180 & STAR 50 index cos)

Shenzhen Stock Exchange (SZSE) – ESG Reporting Guidelines (SZSE 100 & ChiNext index cos)

Taiwan Stock Exchange (TWSE) – Rules Governing the Preparation and Filing of Sustainability Reports

STATUS: MANDATORY (ADOPTED)

Amman Stock Exchange (ASE) – Jordan ESG Guidelines

Financial Services Commission (FSC) / Korea Exchange (KRX) – KOSPI Environmental Disclosure

Qatar Stock Exchange (QSE) – ESG Reporting Guidelines

Sustainability Standards Board of Japan (SSBJ) – ISSB-aligned mandated standards



UNICEF/UNI816516/Kruglinski

These characteristics highlight that child rights are still not fully recognised as a cross-cutting business responsibility, thus reinforcing the need to continue embedding children

as stakeholders across all sectors. (See further details about Corporate Sustainability Reporting Panorama in Appendix III)

Figure 3: Distinct levels of maturity in reporting in emerging markets of Asia (as of December 2025)

The ESG reporting requirements of the nine studied countries, as well as China and Philippines, are grouped into no guidelines, voluntary, mandatory and mandatory HREDD, indicating their maturity and progression.



* Mandatory disclosure regime in force for a defined population of listed issuers.



3. CURRENT STATE OF CHILD RIGHTS REPORTING IN EMERGING ASIA

3.1. Reporting Trends in the Region

3.1.1. OVERALL TRENDS

Child rights reporting in South and Southeast Asia stalls at the 'moderate' level

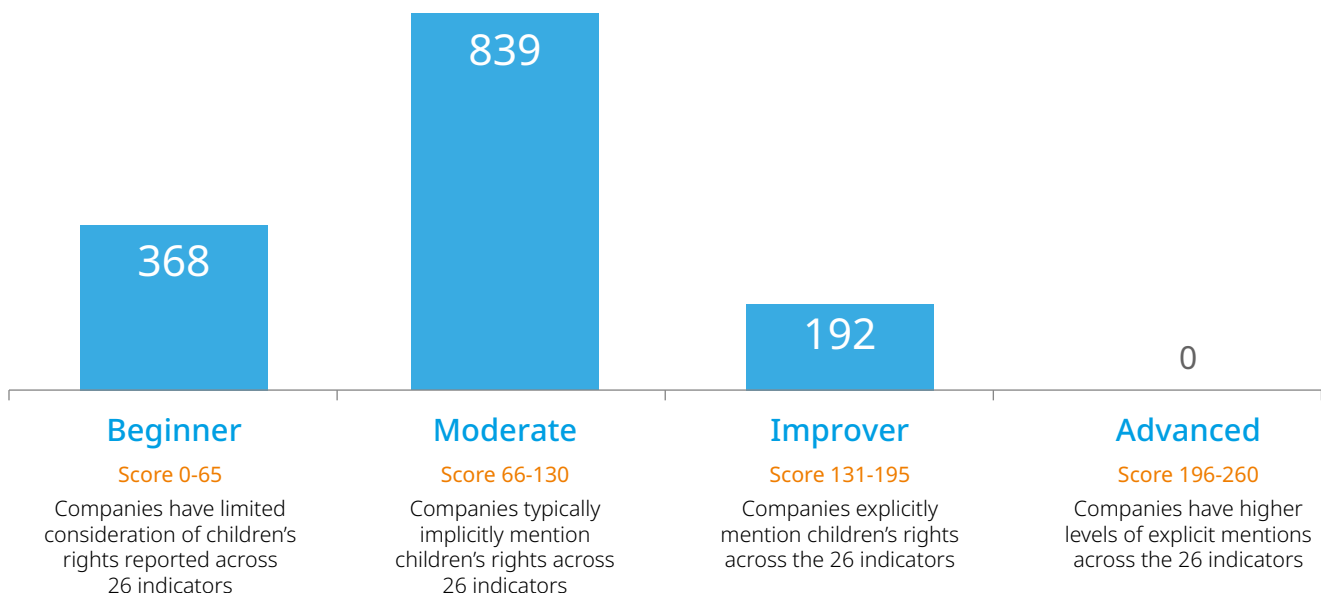
The core focus of this review is FY2024/2025 disclosures from the sampled 1,399 listed companies in 9 countries across South and Southeast Asia. The findings show fragmented, inconsistent reporting on child rights. Where possible, insights from China and Philippines are highlighted to demonstrate the common trends identified in these two upper-middle-income emerging markets.

In these markets, the overall advancement of corporate reporting on child rights remains heavily concentrated in the middle tiers, predominantly clustering at the "Moderate" level (see Chart 3 below).

Following findings – represented in chart 4 – illustrates the results from the review of these 1,399 companies' reports. We can observe a few key trends:

- ➔ Disclosures are narrow, at the moment still focusing mainly on:
 - ➔ **Child labour compliance:** 72% of companies disclose commitments to the elimination of child labour (indicator SC2), but only 2% of companies give more tangible information, e.g. on the remediation of child labour (indicator AR2).
 - ➔ **To some extent, Workplace and Family Friendly Policies:** Over the six indicators of Workplace (indicator WP1-6), companies score on average 30.5%, reflecting a stronger interest of companies to disclose on their working conditions initiatives and policies, including to some extent the support to working parents and caretakers.

Chart 3: Emerging Asia advancement in child rights disclosures (number of companies)

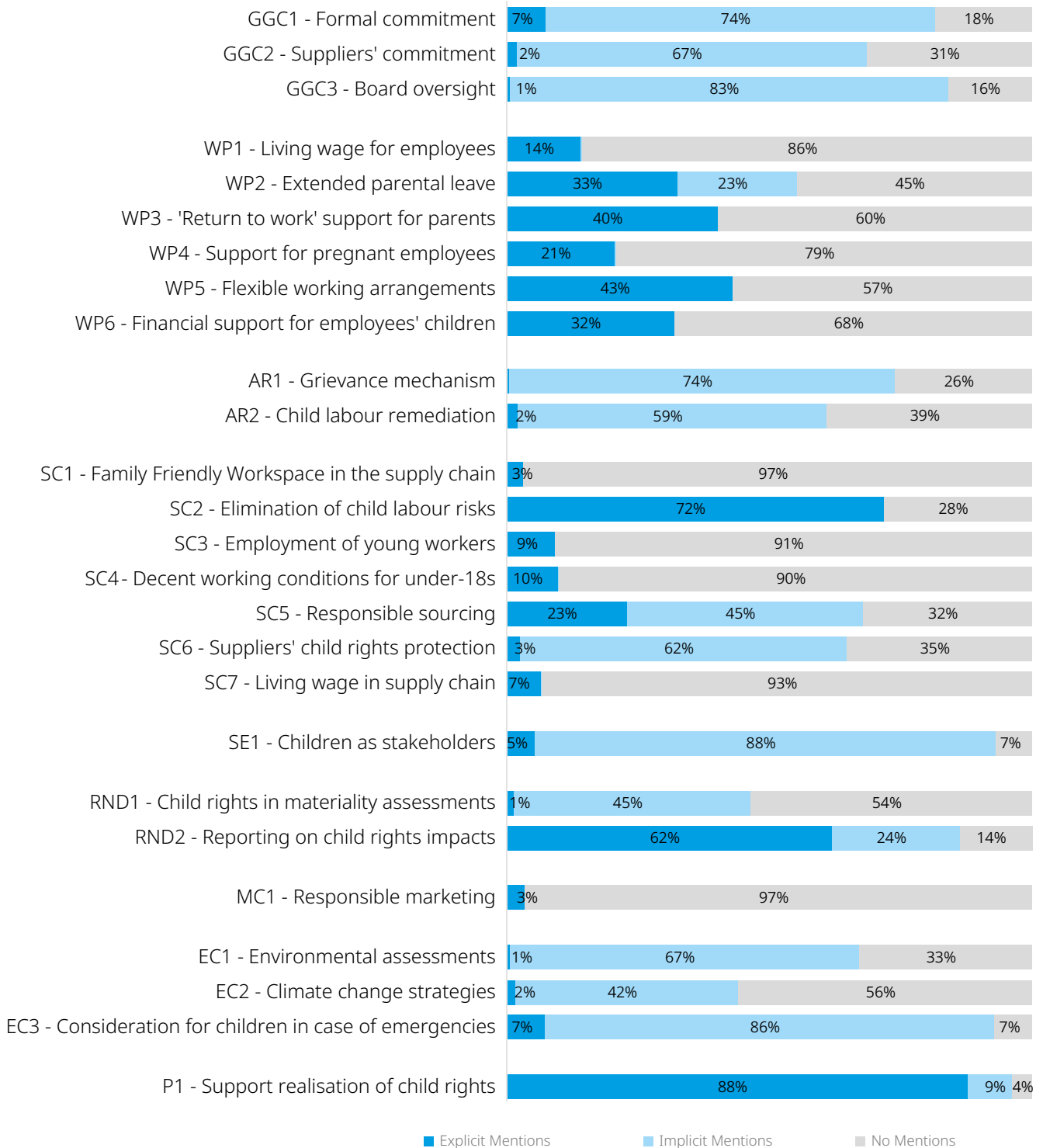




- **Community philanthropy:** 88% report a commitment to advancing child rights through partnerships or community projects (indicator P1).¹⁴ These efforts are largely philanthropic but may be limited in scope, focusing on CSR activities like funding local schools or ad-hoc health clinics. This philanthropic approach – where 62% of companies claim to address child rights impacts (indicator RND2) – might create a misleading impression of comprehensive child rights management, since output metrics (donation amounts, beneficiary headcounts) are an insufficient proxy for systemic risk mitigation.
- ➔ Wider business impacts on children are often missing. Companies limit their reporting to their own operations and rarely report on child rights efforts in their supply chains.
- ➔ Key shortfalls include governance, financial safeguards for families, ethical marketing and the protection of young workers.
- ➔ Children are rarely treated as a distinct stakeholder group (despite their unique vulnerabilities as dependents of workers, young workers and consumers and members of affected communities). Only 1% of companies explicitly include child rights in their materiality assessments (indicator RND1).

¹⁴ This is aligned with the findings in previous studies: Corporate Reporting on Children's Rights: A global review of the current state of children's rights disclosures; UNICEF Finland's Child lens on ESG: A study of Nasdaq Helsinki Companies; UNICEF Philippine's Investing in the Future: Why do children matter in the sustainability reports of publicly listed companies.

Chart 4: Overview of child rights disclosure of 1,399 companies across 26 indicators



Note: Percentages represent the share of companies within the total sample of 1,399 firms for each indicator

Building on these findings, the analysis assessed the extent to which companies integrate child rights into governance and strategic decision-making; address child rights risks in their own operations and risk

management; report on child rights impacts in their supply chains; and consider implications for outward-facing activities such as marketing and communications. Each of these dimensions is discussed below.



3.1.2.

CHILD RIGHTS IN GOVERNANCE AND BUSINESS STRATEGY

Formal commitment towards child rights is often subsumed under broader human rights

Most companies fold child rights into general human-rights policies rather than treating them as a distinct strategic priority.

74%

report formal human-rights commitments (indicator GGC1).

7%

explicitly commit to child rights (indicator GGC1).

1%

report board-level oversight of child rights (indicator GGC3).

For investors and regulators, this is a social risk management blind spot — and one that is likely to attract increasing scrutiny as (mandatory) human rights due diligence frameworks expand across the region.

Children, as stakeholders, are largely absent from strategy and materiality

Recognition of children as a distinct stakeholder group is very limited, despite multiple pathways of business impact.

88%

address children only in broader community engagement, without recognising their specific vulnerabilities (indicator P1).

5%

explicitly identify children as stakeholders and/or consult them – or representatives (indicator SE1).

1%

include child rights in materiality assessments, while 45% mention general human rights (which may implicitly include child rights) (indicator RND1).

Without explicit identification, companies risk treating child rights as a compliance issue rather than a development priority and may miss related material risks.



Example of a Thai industrial estate company recognising children as a stakeholder but not recognising child rights in its material assessment

A leading industrial estate developer in Southeast Asia presents a compelling example of partial integration regarding child rights. This company explicitly mentioned children as a vulnerable stakeholder group through its "Framework on Children's Rights Management", which is closely embedded with the Children's Rights and Business Principles (CRBPs). Importantly, this framework acknowledges that business operations must protect children across the supply chain. However, operationalisation of this framework is insufficiently disclosed. Whilst the supplier social assessments are mentioned in the reporting to be in line with GRI414 (traditionally focused on child labour), broader child rights considerations are not clear in supply chain management. Furthermore, a critical disconnect remains despite recognising its direct and indirect impacts on children in surrounding communities, the company states that the topic of child rights has not yet been elevated as a material sustainability topic.

Because the company already has strong stakeholder recognition and supply chain screening in place, formally elevating children's rights to a material topic is the clear, logical next step for its future reporting.

Disclaimer of non-endorsement of companies featured in this report

The companies and reporting examples featured in this report are presented as illustrative examples to highlight different approaches to ESG disclosure related to child rights, using publicly available information retrieved from company websites. Their inclusion does not imply endorsement, validation, or ranking of their policies, practices, or performance. UNICEF does not endorse any of the companies referenced in this report. Rather, these cases are intended to support the learnings and reflections on current disclosure trends and gaps.

3.1.3. INTEGRATION OF CHILD RIGHTS INTO BUSINESS OPERATIONS, HUMAN RESOURCES AND RISK MANAGEMENT

Support of working parents in companies' own workforce is narrow and inconsistently disclosed

Corporate sustainability reporting shows uneven support for working parents, focusing more on flexibility than on financial or other practical support. This is an important shortfall given the direct link between parental support and child safeguarding.

Whether this gap reflects a shortfall in practice or merely a shortfall in transparency, the absence of clear reporting inevitably weakens stakeholder confidence. For certain industries with highly salient child rights risk, such as Manufacturing, materiality in workplace is

43%

mention
flexible working
arrangements
(indicator WP5)

40%

disclose return-
to-work support
(indicator WP3)

14%

mention
a living wage
commitment
(indicator WP1)

32%

report financial support
for employees' children –
including for childcare
(indicator WP6)

21%

report commitments
for pregnant and
breastfeeding employees
(indicator WP4)

critical (See Section 3.2 for more details). It leaves investors and the public unable to verify that companies are not only complying with

regulations but also embracing the broader vision of a family-friendly workplace.

Children's voices are missing in environmental assessment and climate actions

The analysis clearly shows that children's voices are missing in corporate climate action strategies and when assessing environmental risk, children are rarely treated as distinct rights-holders.

This creates blind spots in risk management and governance, particularly given children's disproportionate exposure to climate harms such as negative impact on health, displacement, disrupted education and insufficient nutrition. This is particularly significant for a just transition: without child-specific analysis, transition plans may miss impacts on children in operations and supply chains, increasing regulatory and reputational risk. Integrating child rights strengthens due diligence and signals a more complete, inclusive climate governance to investors.

67%

commit to identifying human rights risks in environmental assessments (indicator EC1)

2%

reference children in climate action strategies (indicator EC2)

0%

explicitly identify children as rights-holders in environmental impact assessments (indicator EC1)



Example of an Indian company committed to identifying children in its climate change strategy but not explicitly mentioning children as a rights-holding group in its environmental assessment.

The company in energy sector explicitly mentions child rights impacts within its climate and low-carbon initiatives. Its Integrated Annual Report features dedicated "Human Rights/Child Rights Impacts" sub-headings across several sustainability initiatives such as waste management, responsible consumption and biodiversity protection. Water stewardship measures are explicitly linked to improved water security for surrounding communities and their children, and waste reduction efforts are connected to broader quality-of-life outcomes for the communities in which the company operates.

However, despite this encouraging approach to climate reporting, children remain disconnected from the company's formal environmental assessment processes. Assessments are routinely conducted with social and human rights dimensions, but child rights considerations remain implicit, absorbed into broader community and human rights considerations. The climate strategy's recognition of child rights impacts needs to be translated into the company's assessment processes formally identifying children as a key stakeholder group when evaluating environmental risks.

Limited facilitation for children to access grievances and remediation mechanisms

Most companies (74%) disclose general grievance and remediation commitments, but almost none explain how children can safely access these mechanisms or how child labour cases would be remediated, suggesting reporting that is often compliance or reputation-driven rather than operationally transparent.

- Child-specific grievance channels and child labour remediation commitments are rarely mentioned.
- While many state an intent to eliminate child labour, reporting on practical remediation mechanisms is largely absent (2%).

3.1.4. SAFEGUARDING CHILD RIGHTS IN SUPPLIER MANAGEMENT

Commitment to eliminating child labour risks without proactive support

Companies' child rights disclosures focus heavily on child labour risks. However, the commitment seems incomplete at best:

72%

of companies reported being committed to eliminating child labour

2%

mention their child labour remediation plan

3%

expressed that they have expectations for their suppliers to protect child rights

A commitment to eliminating child labour without disclosed prevention and remediation processes signals unmanaged risk — to investors, regulators, and the company itself. Regulators and institutional investors are increasingly looking for evidence of prevention, detection and remediation, not just policy statements". Below is an example of a company that provides detailed insight into its child labour remediation approach, supporting its commitments to addressing child labour risks.



Example of a leading chemical company in India with detailed disclosure on their child labour remediation plans

The company's disclosure features an explicit commitment to implementing child labour remediation with its suppliers, detailing the concrete steps taken when violations are found. When irregularities are identified through audits, the company commits to immediate responses, requiring suppliers to implement corrective measures within defined timeframes, offering training and support and systematically tracking implementation to ensure improvements are achieved. In serious cases, including child labour, it reserves the right to impose commercial sanctions. The company further extends its remediation efforts through collaborative initiatives, which explicitly targets child labour elimination and fair wages.



Lack of reported endorsement of young workers' right to safe work

Minimum working ages in South and Southeast Asia typically range from 14 to 16 years old (15 is common); many jurisdictions allow exceptions for light work. Yet despite this regulatory clarity, corporate reporting reflects little engagement with the issue of young workers.

The absence of reporting on this issue contributes to the lack of tangible data on how child labour risks are actually managed in companies' supply chains. Without greater transparency on distinguishing between prohibited child labour and legitimate, decent work for young workers, stated commitments to eliminating child labour may remain incomplete.

9% of companies disclose support for workers under 18 in their supply chains

10% reference safe-work commitments for this group

14% of companies adopt a "zero-tolerance" policy for workers under 18, a policy that, evidence suggests, can push legally employable young people into informal or hazardous work.

Insufficient commitment to extend family-friendly workplace policies to supply chain employees

The vast majority of listed companies in this study do not extend family-friendly workplace support to workers in their supply chains.

- ➔ Only 3% reported any such commitment.
- ➔ Despite 68% of companies stating their commitment to respecting human rights

or child rights in their sourcing practices, only 7% report supporting a living wage in the supply chain.

This disconnect between sourcing commitment and practical support for a family-friendly workplace can present a material risk in supply chain labour practices.

3.1.5. SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN IN MARKETING ACTIVITIES: A LOW PRIORITY FOR MOST COMPANIES

Disclosure on responsible marketing practices in relation to children is systemically omitted in this region:

- Only 3% of companies refer to commitments on ethical marketing practices, such as marketing targeting children, age-appropriate safeguards, etc.
- The vast majority fail to disclose – and by extension, fail to implement – safeguards against the risks posed by unchecked commercial messaging.

This widespread lack of accountability is a significant oversight in corporate governance frameworks and highlights potential risks, including negative public perceptions

of corporate integrity and ethical standards regarding children.

Across the food and beverage sector, UNICEF's analysis of corporate practices — documented in the research *Feeding Profit*¹⁵ — points to a persistent gap between marketing commitments in sustainability reports and actual commercial practices on product formulation, availability and advertising to children. Closing that gap requires disclosure that goes beyond policy statements to measurable, independently verified outcomes.

Below is an example of how one company has approached embedding child rights considerations into its marketing practices.



A Sri Lankan leading conglomerate on responsible marketing for children

A leading Sri Lankan conglomerate demonstrated their responsible marketing commitments towards children in their 2024 sustainability report. The organisation has developed a Child Protection Policy, explicitly embedding UNICEF's Children's Rights and Business Principles into its corporate ethos. To operationalise this commitment within its marketing practices, the company complies with the International Chamber of Commerce Advertising and Marketing Communications Code. At the governance level, a dedicated internal committee rigorously evaluates all advertising campaigns to prevent socially insensitive or unethical messaging.

The company expressed they are implementing a new food labelling and advertising regulation effective from 1 January 2025, that explicitly prohibits the direct or indirect promotion of food and beverages to children under twelve years of age. Furthermore, the use of children in these advertisements is strictly forbidden. To enhance transparency for caregivers, 100% of its manufactured Consumer Foods stock-keeping units (SKUs) display comprehensive ingredient information, solidifying the group's leadership in responsible, child-centric marketing practices.

¹⁵ [Feeding Profit | UNICEF](#)

SPOTLIGHT ON CHINA AND THE PHILIPPINES: CHILD RIGHTS IN GOVERNANCE AND BUSINESS STRATEGY

Two country-level studies complement these regional findings. UNICEF China and SynTao Green Finance published *Putting Children on the ESG Agenda*¹⁶ in April 2026, assessing 500 A-share listed companies across 32 child rights indicators. UNICEF Philippines, in partnership with the Securities and Exchange Commission published *Investing in the Future*¹⁷ in April 2025, assessing 86 Philippines listed companies against 29 indicators.

These reports, while not statistically comparable to the regional research, offer additional perspectives and mostly confirm the regional pattern.



Formal commitment towards child rights. Both markets show child rights commitments emerging primarily through broader human rights frameworks rather than as standalone policies, consistent with the regional pattern. In China, 40.2% of companies hold a formal human rights policy, but only 37.6% reference children implicitly through human rights policies and 2.6% hold an explicit child rights commitment. In the Philippines, over 50% of companies include human rights in materiality assessments and 34% provide human rights training, indicating that the human rights infrastructure exists and already captures the conditions most relevant to children. What is missing is the child-specific granularity. Board oversight of child rights and child rights in materiality assessments remain below 1% in both markets, pointing to a clear next step rather than a starting point.



Children as stakeholders. Both markets are at an early stage of recognising children as a distinct stakeholder group. In China, around 29% of companies implicitly include children within broader human rights consultations; explicit recognition remains the exception in both markets. Where reporting on child rights' impacts exists, it tends to focus on measurable compliance indicators (child labour case counts, parental leave metrics) rather than broader outcomes for children across operations and value chains.



Supporting working parents. The strongest performance area in both markets, though with different profiles. In China, 29.6% of companies disclose support for pregnant and breastfeeding employees, and 71.6% hold anti-child labour commitments in their own operations. In the Philippines, parental leave is the standout indicator: over 60% of companies disclose commitments, with several reporting post-leave return rates above 96%. Both markets show limited disclosure on living wages and flexible working arrangements, and neither extends family-friendly commitments into supply chains, a gap that limits the reach of otherwise positive workplace practices.

¹⁶ [Putting Children on the Environmental, Social and Governance Agenda: A Baseline Assessment of Child Rights Disclosure in China](#)

¹⁷ [Investing in the Future | UNICEF Philippines](#)



Environment and climate. Both markets reflect the regional trend of limited integration of children's specific vulnerabilities into environmental assessments and climate strategies. In China, only three companies reference children in climate action plans, and none explicitly links climate strategy to child rights. In the Philippines, children's distinct vulnerabilities are not addressed in environmental impact assessments, including in sectors such as mining and construction with direct community exposure. Emergency preparedness shows partial coverage in China. Around 60% of companies implicitly include children through broader community or workforce protection measures, but explicit child-specific provisions remain rare in both markets.



Supplier management. Both markets show a pronounced gap between own-operations performance and supply chain governance. In China, 71.6% of companies commit to eliminating child labour in their own operations against 18% for supply chains, promotion of child rights among suppliers stands at 1%; and no company extends family-friendly workplace measures into their supply chain. Philippines shows a similar pattern, with close to no disclosure on supply chain child rights assessment. The gap points to a shared opportunity: building on existing own-operations commitments to extend child rights expectations progressively through procurement and supplier engagement.



Marketing. Responsible marketing to children remains a blind spot in both markets. Under 1% of companies in each country report explicit commitments, pointing to an opportunity for greater alignment between existing national regulatory frameworks on advertising to children and corporate sustainability reporting practices. With under 1% of companies in each country disclosing explicit commitments despite existing national regulatory frameworks. In China, where consumer staples and food and beverage companies were assessed on a dedicated child nutrition indicator, only 11.5% disclose any commitment to protecting children's nutrition, and no company addresses marketing of high-sugar, high-fat, or high-salt foods to children specifically. In the Philippines, only one company from the food and beverage sector explicitly limits marketing of unhealthy foods to children, while 80% of companies show no evidence of any such policy, even among the fifteen food, beverage, and retail companies where this indicator is most directly applicable.



Children digital rights and protection show a similar pattern of regulatory compliance without child-specific depth. In the Philippines, only 5.6% of tech companies have comprehensive digital child protection measures in place, driven largely by sector-specific regulation. In China, 76.6% of media, entertainment, IT, and software companies make no reference to child protection in digital environments, with explicit child commitments limited to 8.5%, mostly concentrated in gaming and consumer software subsectors subject to the Regulations on the Protection of Minors in Cyberspace.

While child rights disclosures remain largely implicit across both markets, the conditions for progress are encouraging: human rights frameworks are embedded, social disclosure is becoming mainstream, regulatory ambition is growing, and community investment is widespread. Both markets have the infrastructure; what is needed is to embed children's rights in these developing frameworks.



Over the 6
workplace
indicators,
an average of

30.5%

of companies report commitment for
family friendly policies and practices.

3.2.

Reporting Trends by Business Sector

3.2.1.

WHAT DRIVES SECTOR-WIDE REPORTING PATTERNS?

Analysis of reporting trends by sector does not reveal clear, consistent patterns. Integration of child rights into sustainability reporting is low across sectors, indicating limited recognition of children as material stakeholders

and inconsistent application of rights-based disclosure practices. However, the analysis shows that:

CONSUMER-FACING AND/OR HIGHLY REGULATED SECTORS ACHIEVE RELATIVELY HIGHER AVERAGE DISCLOSURE SCORES:



Consumer Staples ¹

99.4



Health Care

98.6



Materials

96.9

LAGGING SECTORS ARE LARGELY SERVICE-ORIENTED OR BUSINESS TO BUSINESS (B2B) OPERATIONS, WITH NOTABLY LOWER AVERAGE SCORES:



Financials

80.5



Industrials

84.8



Utilities

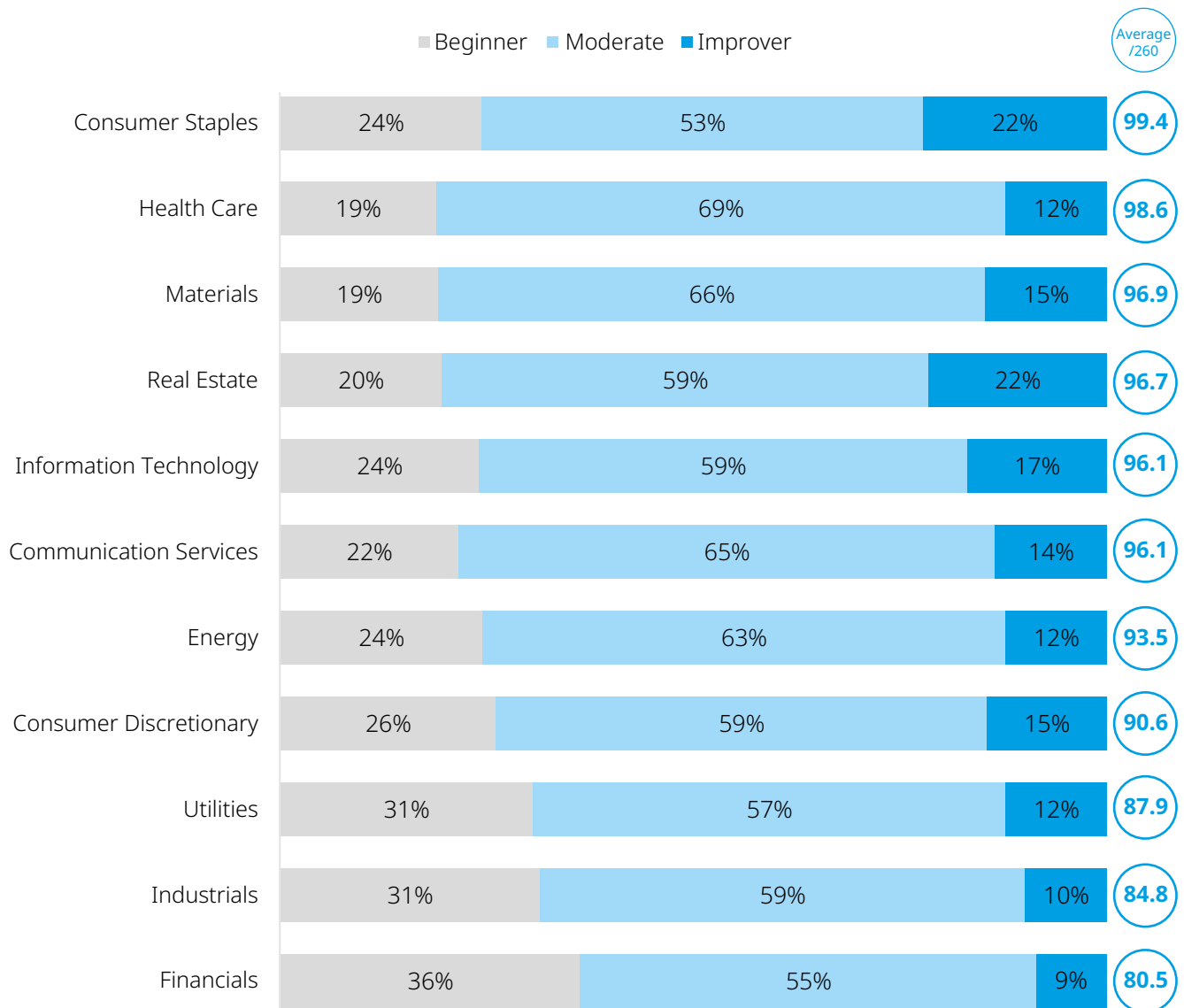
87.9

Stakeholder pressure, visibility and exposure to risk appear to shape reporting performance. Sectors closer to consumers and communities, or under tighter regulatory scrutiny, tend to disclose more. By contrast, where impacts are more indirect (e.g. via financing,

procurement, contracting, infrastructure siting or other enabling activities), companies can fail to recognize child rights as material, treat impacts as out of scope or lack the indicators and governance needed for credible disclosure.

¹ Using GICS's definition, the Consumer Staples Sector for this study comprises companies whose businesses are less sensitive to economic cycles. It includes manufacturers and distributors of food and beverages, and distributors and retailers of consumer staples products, including food retailing companies.

Chart 5 – Advancement in child rights disclosures across each industry sector against 26 indicators (n=1,399 companies; max. 260 points)



3.2.2. THE IMPACT OF RISK EXPOSURE ON REPORTING PERFORMANCE

This section examines how higher risk exposure shapes sector reporting patterns, specifically whether companies with significant exposure to child labour, environmental impacts, nutrition and digital risks place greater emphasis

on these issues in their public sustainability reporting.

Industry sectors have vastly different impacts on children, and it is critical that companies can report on the most salient impacts that they have.

| Figure 4: Most salient impacts per business sector

SECTOR-SPECIFIC CHILD RIGHTS RISK & DISCLOSURE PRIORITIES

Priority disclosure for materiality-based reporting – not comprehensive compliance

Sector	Material risk pathway	Priority disclosures
 <p>Agriculture / Consumer Staples</p> <p><i>Food production, agriculture supply chains</i></p>	<p>Child labour in supply chain (seasonal, beyond tier-1); migrant children & children of migrant workers (accompanying or left behind children)</p>	<p>SC2 child labour risk SC5/6 supplier audits + remediation SC3/SC4 young workers Migrant worker labour standards</p>
 <p>Technology / Communication</p> <p><i>Platforms, software, telcos</i></p>	<p>Digital safety (CSAM, cyber-bullying and online exploitation – including by staff, AI-generated content), privacy, age-appropriate design and verification; harmful content; data harvesting; targeted advertising; algorithmic design affecting children's mental health</p>	<p>PND2 Digital safety policy + KPIs MC1 marketing safeguards GGC1 child safeguarding / reporting / data governance SE1 children as stakeholders</p>
 <p>Food & Beverage / Consumer Goods</p> <p><i>Including F&B retail</i></p>	<p>Marketing and distribution of ultra processed products to children (off and online, digital platforms); nutrition standards; supply chain labour</p>	<p>MC1 responsible marketing KPIs PND1 nutrition policy + outcomes SC2 supply chain child labour SC6 supplier standards</p>
 <p>Extractives / Materials / Energy</p> <p><i>Mining, oil & gas, utilities</i></p>	<p>Community displacement; safeguarding from abuse in communities; child health, environment pollution and water contamination; child labour in artisanal mining; climate transition risks EIAs and emergency preparedness plans without child lens</p>	<p>GGC1 child safeguarding / contractors EC1/EC2 with child lens EIA scope + community impact data EC3 child-specific emergency preparedness Industry-specific: private security arrangements SC5/SC6 responsible sourcing in artisanal and conflict minerals</p>

Sector

Material risk pathway

Priority disclosures


Manufacturing /
 Industrials

*Garments,
electronics*

Parent workers' conditions/ FFP; young worker safety and safeguarding; living wage gaps affecting children; child labour; migrant children & children of migrant workers in supply chain (accompanying or left behind children); conflict minerals sourcing

WP1 living wage
 SC1 Family-Friendly Workplace in supply chain
 SC3/SC4 young worker conditions in supply chain
 SC5/SC6 responsible sourcing + supplier child rights standards
 AR2 child labour remediation with suppliers


Travel, tourism &
hospitality

Consumer discretionary

*Hotels, airlines,
online platforms*

Child sexual exploitation in tourism (prevention, detection & report); parent workers' conditions; child labour in hospitality supply chains; online platforms enabling exploitation of children



GGC1 child safeguarding policy & process
 WP2/WP3/WP4 parental leave, return to work, breastfeeding support
 WP6 childcare/education support
 AR1 grievance mechanism
 SC6 supplier standards


Construction
 Infrastructure

*incl. real estate
development*

Community displacement of families; safeguarding & hazardous conditions in communities near sites / workers camps; working protection and conditions among parent workers; worker migration separating families; children in informal settlements excluded from EIAs

EC1 child-sensitive EIA scope
 WP2/WP3/WP4 parental leave, return to work, breastfeeding
 WP6 childcare/education support
 Industry-specific: private security arrangements
 EC3 emergency preparedness
 WP3 living wage
 SC2 supply chain child labour
 AR1 grievance mechanism

Sector	Material risk pathway	Priority disclosures
 <p>Service industries</p> <p><i>Retail, care economy, cleaning services, service platforms, ...</i></p>	<p>Irregular and unpredictable shift schedules undermining childcare arrangements; high female workforce share with limited breastfeeding and parental leave support; low-wage workers lacking access to affordable childcare; and forced labour risks</p>	<p>WP1 living wage WP2/WP3 parental leave return to work WP4 breastfeeding support WP5 shift scheduling flexibility WP6 childcare support AR1 grievance mechanism SC1 Family-Friendly Workplace in supply chain SC2 forced labour and modern slavery in subcontracted workforce</p>
 <p>Financials / Real Estate</p>	<p>Financed activities enabling child rights violations in investee sectors; portfolio / financed emissions; community displacement (RE)</p>	<p>Financed activity child-risk screening EC2 + just transition GGC2 investee child rights expectations RND1 materiality assessment</p>



Child labour risks: Limited disclosure on mitigation despite considerable risk

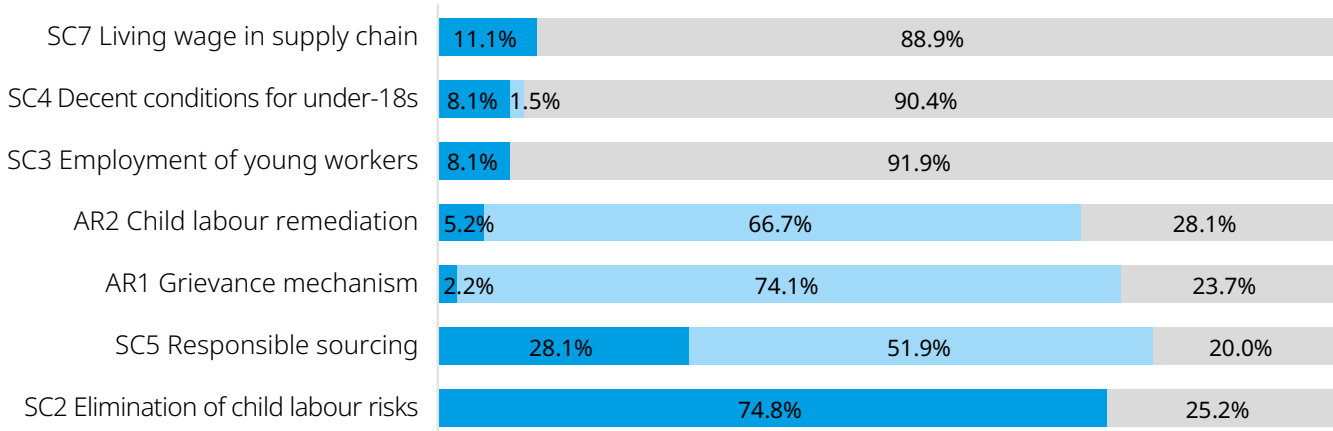
Across the three sectors with the highest supply chain child labour exposure in the region — Consumer Staples & Agriculture, Manufacturing & Garments, and Construction & Real Estate — a consistent pattern emerges. Child labour commitments are strong (71–84%), reflecting years of normative pressure from international supply chains and frameworks, as well as investor expectations. Yet the mechanisms that make those commitments operational — remediation plans, grievance channels, young worker protections, and living wages in supply chains — remain near-absent in explicit

disclosure. Commitments reflect intent; the data below assesses the extent to which companies report implementation.

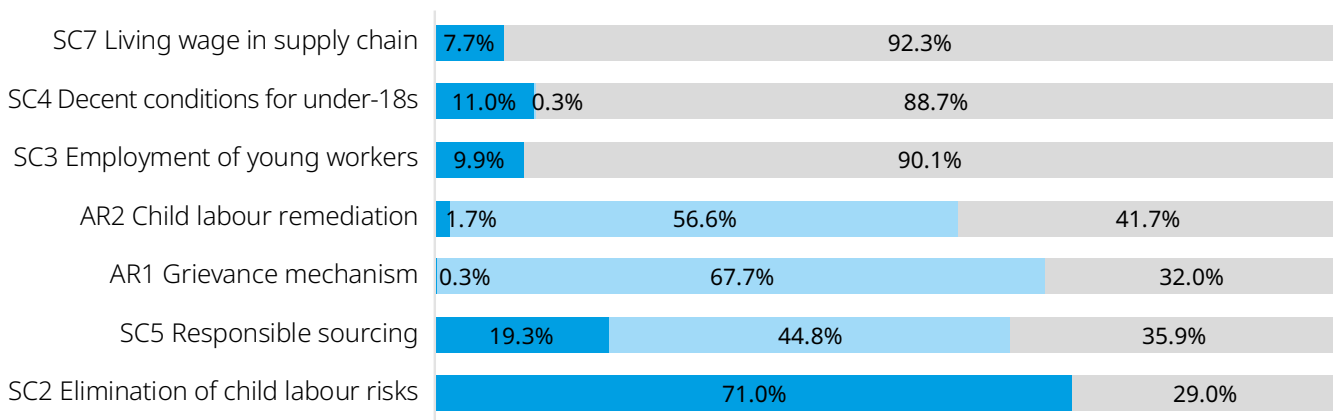
Despite structurally different risk profiles, the disclosure gap is consistent across all three sectors. On remediation (2–5% explicit), grievance mechanisms (0–2%), and living wage in supply chains (0–11%), the numbers tell the same story. Child labour commitment has become a reporting norm; translating that commitment into operational systems — remediation, grievance, living wage — is the next necessary step.

Chart 6 – Consumer Staples & Agriculture, Manufacturing & Garments, and Construction & Real Estate

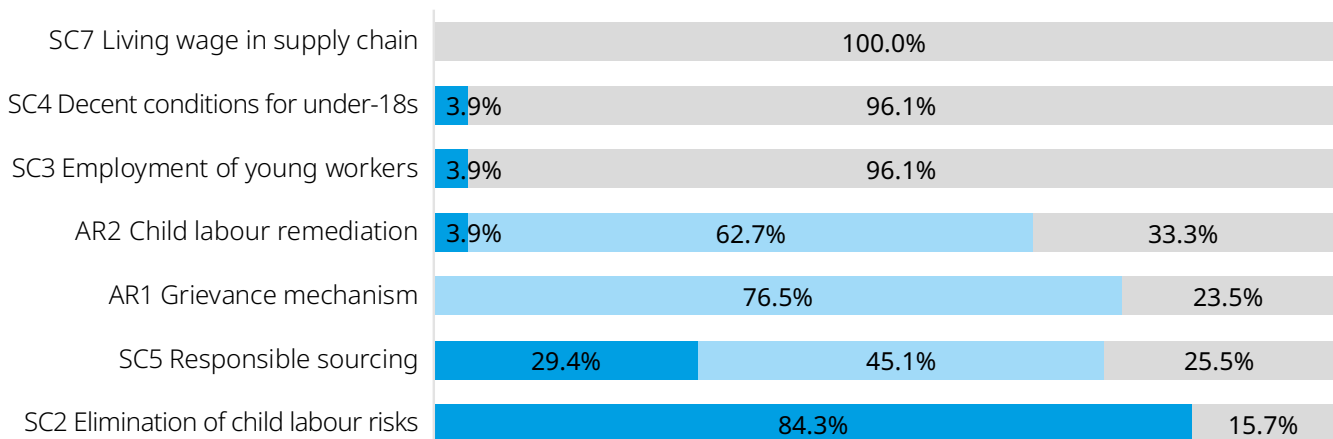
Consumer Staples & Agriculture (n=135)



Manufacturing & Garments (n=362)



Construction & Real Estate (n=51)



Explicit Mentions

Implicit Mentions

No Mentions



Climate crisis and the environment: Stronger progress, but children remain a blind spot

Sectors such as Energy, Utilities, Materials (Chemicals, Construction Materials, Metals & Mining) and Financials all have significant risks and leverage when it comes to the environment. Across these sectors, companies commonly report formal climate transition strategies and environmental impact assessments, reflecting that climate and environment are established topics in mainstream sustainability disclosure.

However, the depth and specificity of reporting are uneven. Environmental assessments (See

EC1 in Charts 7-10) are relatively widespread (68%-85% of companies across the four sectors) and are typically framed at a broad human rights level. By contrast, disclosure of climate strategy (EC2) is less consistent, with notable differences. Fewer companies from the Materials (40%) and Energy sectors (54%) report on climate change strategies despite their central role in the transition. As noted elsewhere in this report, disclosures rarely translate these climate and environment narratives into child-specific impact considerations.

Chart 7: Energy sector (n=49)

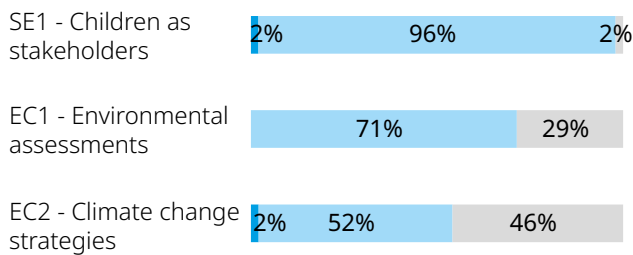


Chart 8: Materials sector (n=224)

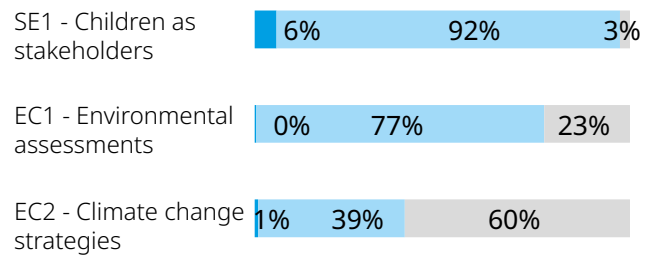


Chart 9: Financials sector (n=176)

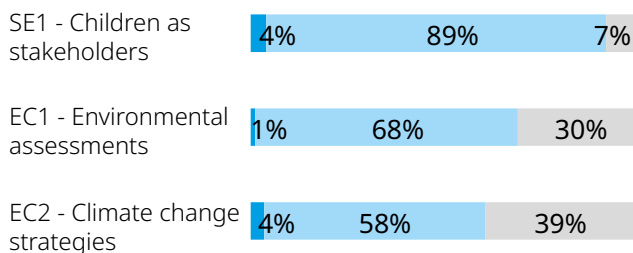
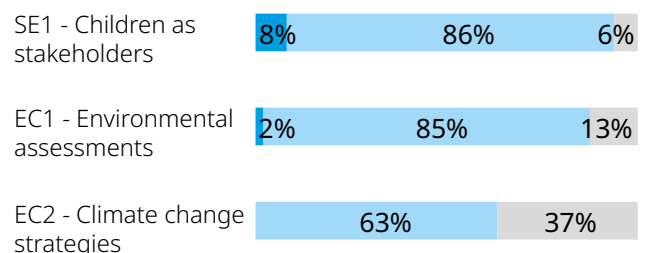


Chart 10: Utility sector (n=49)



Explicit Mentions

Implicit Mentions

No Mentions



Nutrition commitments: An overlooked area despite critical impact on child health

The analysis of the Consumer Staples companies, which mainly include food and beverage producers (n=112) and distribution & retail (n=10), demonstrates a disconnect between selective commitments to nutrition and responsible commercial practices.

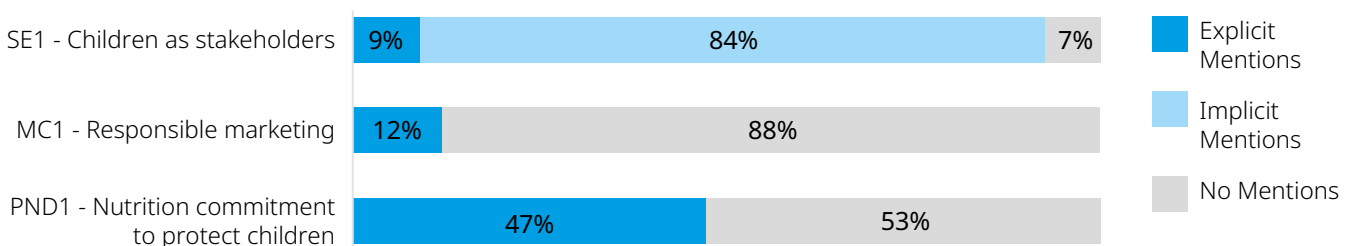
- ➔ 47% commit to child nutrition (PND1)
- ➔ 12% disclose responsible marketing to children (MC1)
- ➔ Only 9% recognise children as a distinct stakeholder group (SE1)

Where nutrition is reported, it is often framed for the general consumer base, with children folded into broad categories (e.g. “consumers” or “communities”). Commitments also tend to be narrow, focusing selectively on “healthier” product lines rather than the full portfolio, and are often light on benchmarks or outcome metrics.

Companies that commit to nutrition without corresponding marketing safeguards present

an incomplete picture of their responsibilities. Only a small number of companies show a more integrated approach by pairing nutrition aims with clear child-focused marketing restrictions (e.g. no direct ads under six; limits up to 16 tied to nutritional criteria) and accountability mechanisms such as third-party audits and public grievance reporting.

Chart 11: Consumer Staples sector (n=135)



Digital environment: Safety pledges without strong safeguards

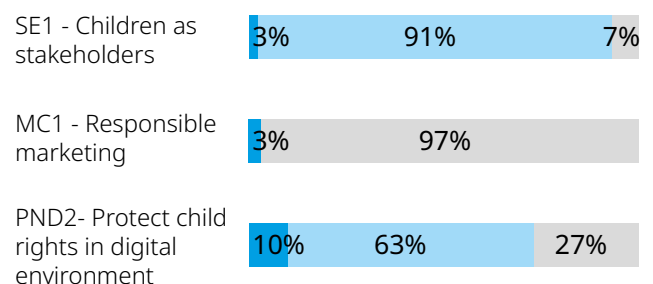
Youth and children are a fast-growing user base for social media and digital products, yet reporting in the sectors shaping children’s online environments remains limited and often non-specific:

- ➔ **Online protection (PND2):** 73% report some action, but it is mostly implicit (63%); only 10% set out explicit, actionable commitments.
- ➔ **Children as stakeholders (SE1):** 91% reference children only implicitly, indicating weak child-specific risk recognition.
- ➔ **Responsible marketing (MC1):** just 3% explicitly address marketing practices relating to children, despite concerns about

child data/privacy safeguards and targeted advertising.

Despite extensive research showing that children are significantly more vulnerable online and therefore need clear, specific protections, children seem to get limited attention in companies’ digital protection strategies. Disclosures tend to fold child protection into generic privacy/human rights or terms-of-use language (often alongside parental controls), rather than detailing safety-by-design and child-centred measures, such as protections against harmful content, cyberbullying, grooming/sexual exploitation, algorithmic design that affects mental health, and accessible reporting/complaints pathways.

Chart 12 – communication services and information technology sectors (n=119)





Only 10%

of Communication service and information technology companies report explicit and actionable commitment to child online protection.

SPOTLIGHT ON CHINA AND THE PHILIPPINES: CHILD RIGHTS REPORTING TREND BY BUSINESS SECTOR



China: IT and materials sectors demonstrate relatively stronger overall performance, with a high proportion of above average performers operating within multinational supply chains. Exposure to international sourcing expectations appears to be associated with more formalised approaches to labour standards management.

Software and entertainment companies show comparatively higher disclosure on child online protection, with 8.5% of relevant firms referencing child digital safety commitments, reflecting the broader regulatory environment shaped by the Regulations on the Protection of Minors in Cyberspace.

Financial services display relative strength in reporting on extended parental leave policies. This pattern is more evident among state owned financial institutions, where corporate practices tend to align closely with national demographic and workforce policy priorities.

On the other hand, Consumer Staples (which includes the Food and Beverage industry) shows notably weaker disclosure. Only 11.5% of assessed companies reference commitments, and responsible marketing to children is disclosed by fewer than 1%, an area where corporate reporting has not yet caught up with existing national regulatory measures and societal interest.

Real Estate and Communication Services exhibit the weakest overall performance across the child rights indicators assessed, with limited disclosure across most thematic areas.



Philippines: Financial Services leads on parental leave and equal opportunity, reflecting formal Human Resources reporting norms. Services (34% of sample) and industrials (30%) show limited child-specific governance beyond labour compliance. In communications and IT, data privacy policies are common but child-specific provisions remain rare. No sector explicitly discloses child nutrition commitments or responsible marketing to children.

Cross-cutting: environment and just transition. In both markets, companies in Energy, Materials, Extractives and Construction have yet to explicitly address children's heightened climate vulnerability in environmental assessments and transition strategies. In China, none of the assessed companies explicitly reference child rights in their climate strategies. Only three companies mention broader human rights risks in their low-carbon transition or climate strategies, which may implicitly include children, but do not directly address child-specific climate vulnerability. In the Philippines, no company addresses children in land acquisition or environmental impact assessments, including in sectors with direct community exposure. This remains one of the most significant shared opportunities across both markets.

Across both markets, the clearest lesson from the sector analysis is that disclosure follows external pressure, whether from international supply chain requirements, national regulation or investor expectations. Where those signals are present, companies respond.

The opportunity is to extend that logic: embedding child rights indicators into sector-specific disclosure guidance would allow the progress already visible in IT, Materials and Financial Services to become the norm rather than the exception.

3.3.

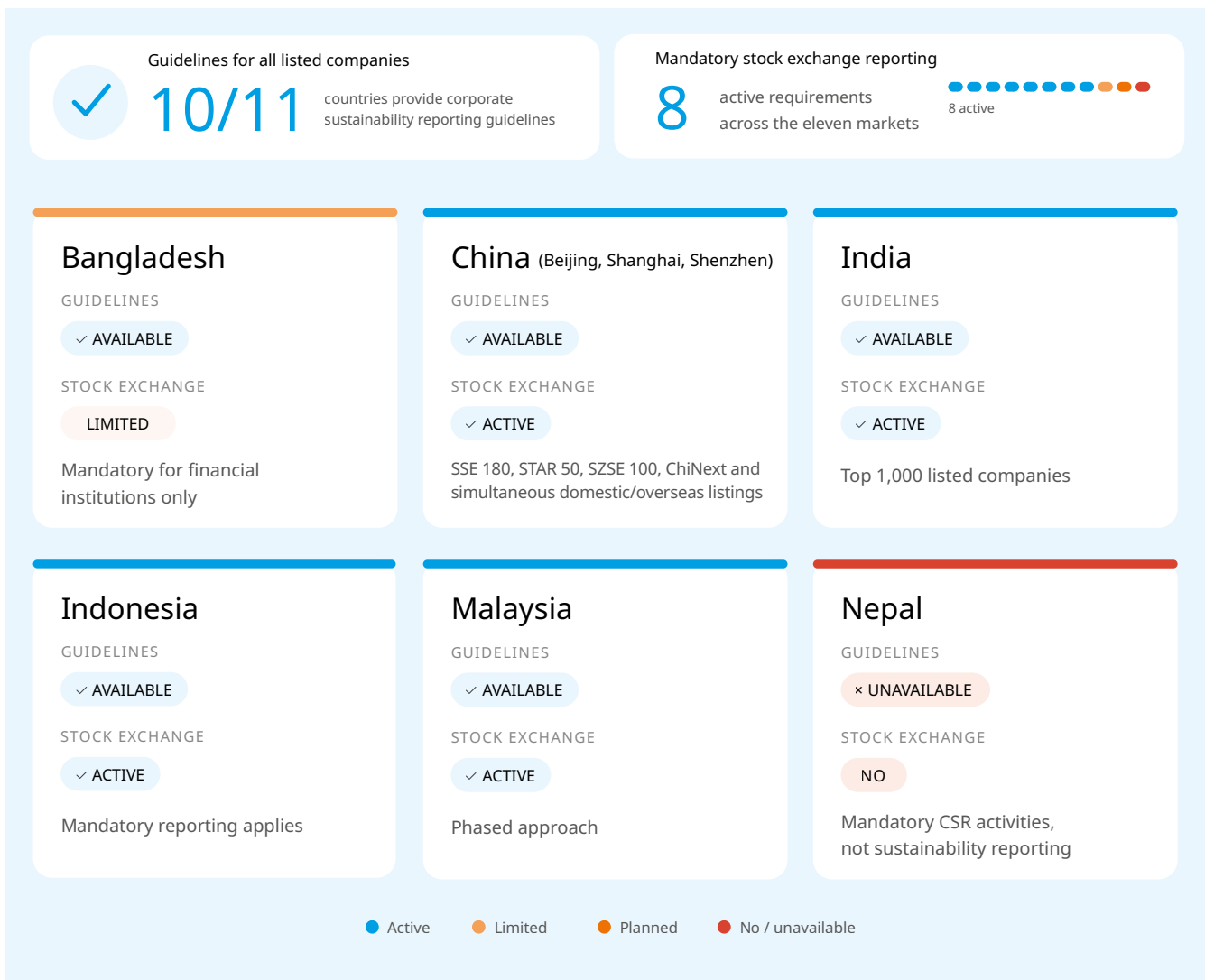
The Influence of the Voluntary and Mandatory Corporate Sustainability Reporting Frameworks on Reporting Trends

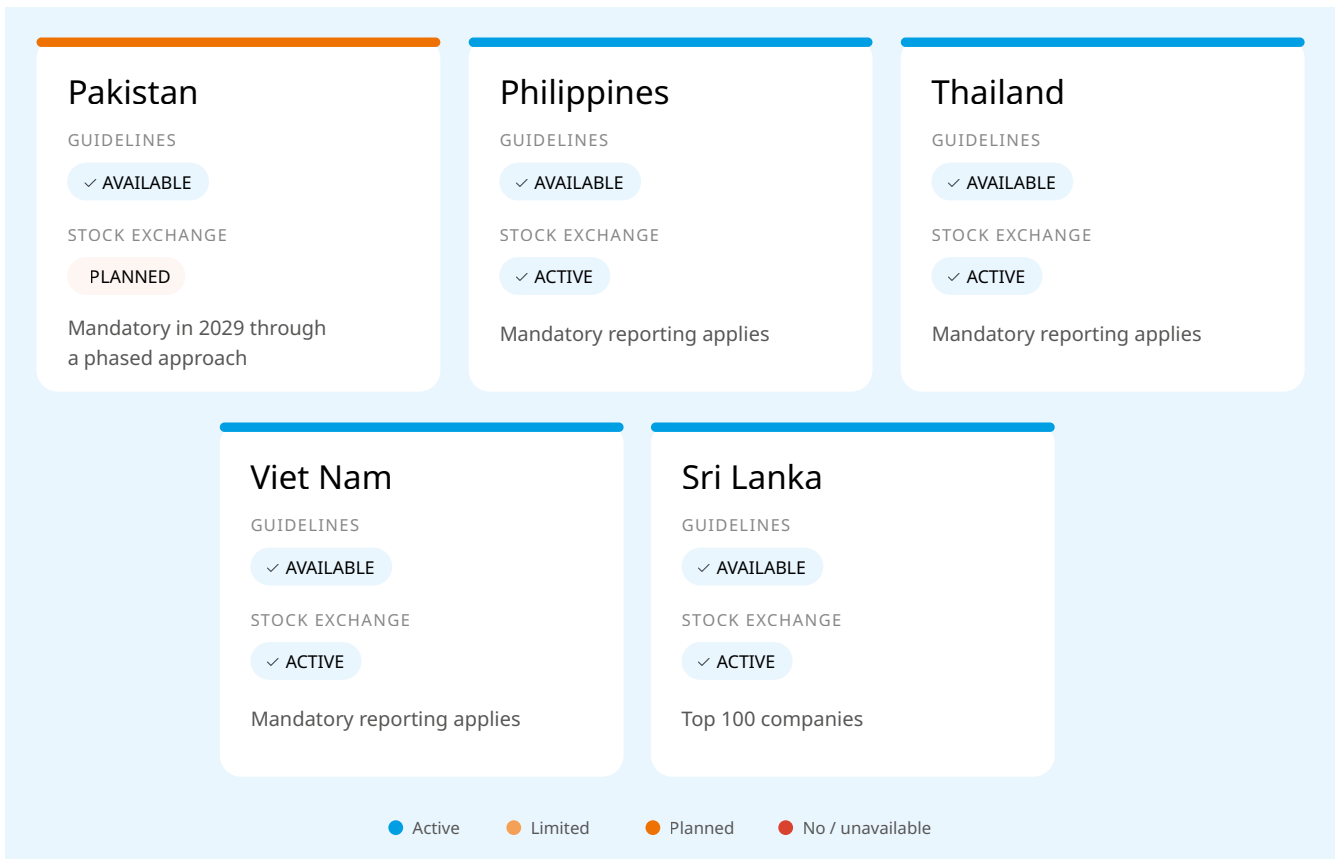
While the analysis of corporate sustainability disclosure has shown persistent opportunities in child rights reporting, marked regional variance in maturity was observed, with some countries delivering noticeably stronger reporting.

The review finds clear and consistent evidence that mandatory reporting frameworks

prompt greater corporate transparency: where sustainability requirements are more developed, companies tend to report more fully on child rights performance across industries and regions. *(See further details about Corporate Sustainability Reporting Panorama in Appendix II).*

Table 1 – Overview of reporting regulations (as of September 2025)





Mandatory corporate sustainability reporting frameworks drive higher performance in child rights reporting

This review of country-level results across the nine countries in South and Southeast Asia shows a clear link between stronger ESG reporting rules and better child rights disclosure. Countries with fully mandated reporting and prescribed metrics average 101 out of 260, compared with 45.4 out of 260 where reporting is voluntary or lacks guidance. This suggests that mandatory frameworks are a key lever for improving transparency and accountability.

Indeed, the analysis points to three regulatory “design choices” that shape disclosure quality:

→ **Mandatory integration with financial reporting:** Thailand’s 56-1 One Report and India’s BRSR are two strong examples of

hard-wiring sustainability into mainstream corporate reporting. India is notably more metrics-driven, requiring quantitative, verifiable data, which strengthens comparability and accountability.

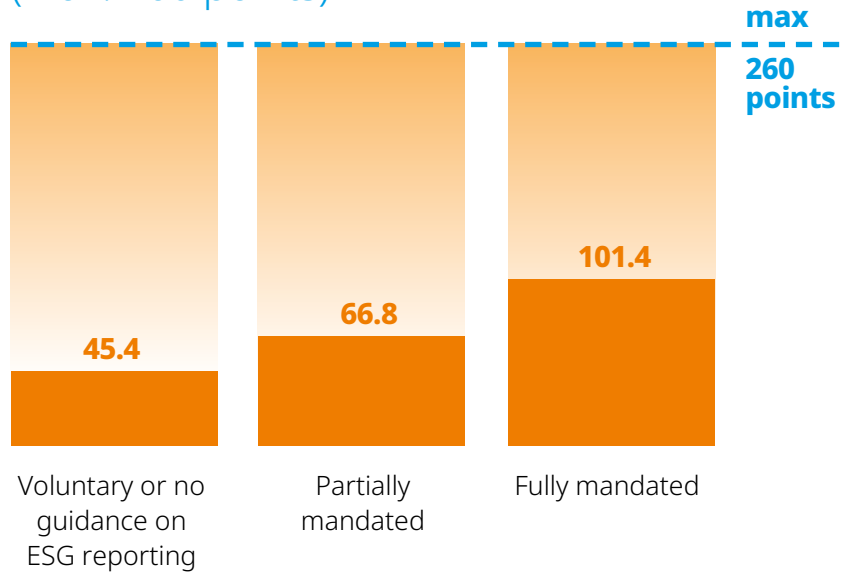
→ **Standardised guidance:** Sri Lanka is one of the countries that strengthens disclosure by directing companies to use SASB social metrics, giving a clear, consistent structure for reporting impacts on children and families.

→ **Voluntary frameworks with strong scaffolding:** Pakistan illustrates how well-designed voluntary guidance can advance practice ahead of formal requirements.

The Security and Exchange Commission of Pakistan's (SECP) ESG Disclosure Guidelines and ESG Sustainability Portal appear to have improved FY24/25 reporting for some companies, despite mandatory reporting only beginning in mid-2025.¹⁸

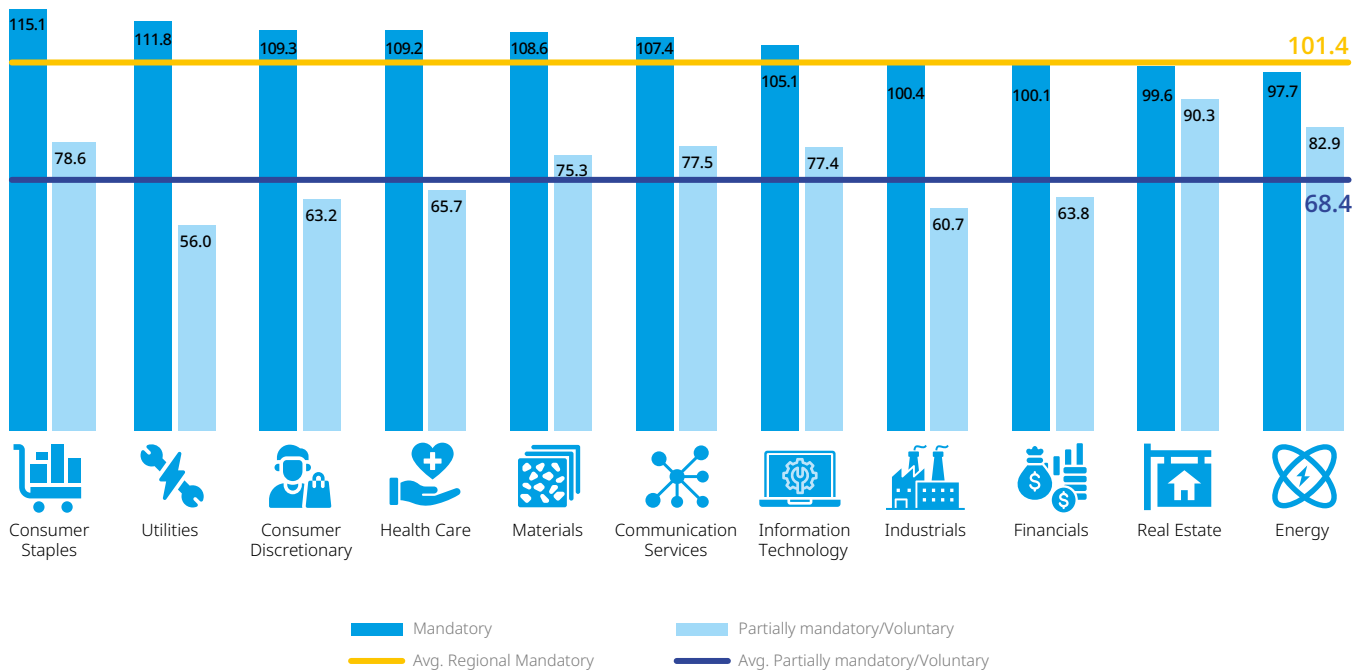
These approaches also influence consistency across sectors. Fully mandated regimes show tighter score ranges (98-115), while voluntary or partially mandated systems remain more uneven (56-90), indicating that clearer requirements help reduce variability and raise performance among lagging sectors.

Chart 13: Relationship between maturity in sustainability reporting frameworks and child rights disclosure scores against 26 indicators (max. 260 points)



Note: The average scores are of the companies in countries with voluntary, partially and fully mandated reporting frameworks

Chart 14: Company average score in each sector by national corporate sustainability reporting frameworks



¹⁸ Pakistan is aligned with ISSB's IFRS S1 and S2 standards.

SPOTLIGHT ON CHINA AND THE PHILIPPINES: IMPACT OF REGULATIONS ON CHILD RIGHTS DISCLOSURES



China (Beijing, Shanghai, Shenzhen). China's tiered mandatory ESG disclosure architecture is among the most advanced in Asia. Of all current instruments, only The State-owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission of the State Council (SASAC) Reference Template for SOEs explicitly mentions child labour. The three stock exchanges' Guidelines on Self-regulation of Listed Companies – Sustainability Report, which incorporate impact materiality alongside financial materiality, provide a strong structural foundation for deeper integration. The gap is one of specifications rather than framework design: child rights indicators remain absent beyond child labour and corporate reporting still reflects this blind spot.



Philippines. The SEC's Sustainability Reporting Guidelines (SRG) drove ESG reporting coverage from 22% in 2017 to 95% by 2024 – one of the fastest uptake rates in the region. The outcome illustrates both the power and limits of mandatory reporting: disclosure clusters where the SRG is specific – anti-child labour (~70%), parental leave (~60%) and remains near-absent where it is not.

Both markets confirm that mandatory reporting is necessary but insufficient for child rights transparency. The trajectory is encouraging: frameworks are becoming more comprehensive, the social dimension of ESG is gaining traction, and dialogue between child rights advocates and standard setters is deepening. In both countries, the building blocks are in place. Embedding a focused set of child-specific indicators into existing frameworks should be the logical and achievable next step. This would give investors the data to assess social risk more accurately, give companies a clearer basis for managing their impacts on children, and give regulators the comparability needed to drive meaningful market-wide progress.

A young boy with dark hair and eyes, wearing a blue and white striped school uniform, stands in a crowded, dimly lit environment. He is holding a stack of books in his left arm and a single white flower in his right hand. He looks directly at the camera with a serious expression. The background is blurred, showing other people and what appears to be a school setting.

4. DEEP DIVE INTO THE CHILD RIGHTS DISCLOSURES

To complement the automated assessment, an in-depth manual review of 155 companies across nine countries was conducted. This enabled refinement and validation of AI-generated findings

(see Detailed Methodology Guide), as well as a deeper analysis of disclosure quality, particularly the extent to which companies report on intent, action and impact.¹⁹

Chart 15: Percentage of companies reporting intent, reported actions and impact, disaggregated by indicators (n=155)

Indicator	Impact (Outcome Layer)	Reported actions (Implementation Layer)	Intent (Narrative Layer)
GGC1 - Formal commitment	18%	52%	54%
GGC2 - Suppliers' commitment	12%	37%	46%
GGC3 - Board oversight	6%	21%	32%
WP1 - Living wage for employees	2%	5%	10%
WP2 - Extended parental leave	28%	23%	23%
WP3 - 'Return to work' support for parents	26%	10%	11%
WP4 - Support for pregnant employees	6%	13%	6%
WP5 - Flexible working arrangements	3%	15%	19%
WP6 - Financial support for employees' children	10%	19%	14%
AR1 - Grievance mechanism	11%	34%	34%
AR2 - Child labour remediation	1%	3%	3%
SC1 - FFW in the supply chain	1%	2%	3%
SC2 - Elimination of child labour risks	12%	29%	52%
SC3 - Employment of young workers	3%	5%	12%
SC4 - Decent working conditions for under-18s	1%	5%	9%
SC5 - Responsible sourcing	6%	10%	19%
SC6 - Suppliers' child rights protection	8%	22%	36%
SC7 - Living wage in supply chain	0%	6%	6%
SE1 - Children as stakeholders	6%	16%	29%
RND1 - Child rights in materiality assessments	5%	23%	30%
RND2 - Reporting on child rights impacts	16%	30%	33%
MC1 - Responsible marketing	1%	2%	2%
EC1 - Environmental assessments	6%	13%	17%
EC2 - Climate change strategies	1%	6%	7%
EC3 - Consideration for children in case of emergencies	10%	26%	30%
P1 - Support realisation of child rights	56%	39%	46%

¹⁹ To strengthen the analysis, additional documents such as company policies were reviewed alongside sustainability reports, with a focus on assessing the quality of disclosed statements. Assessing the real-world impact of companies' sustainability measures and activities was not within the scope of this study.

4.1.

The Mismatch in Reported Intention and Impact

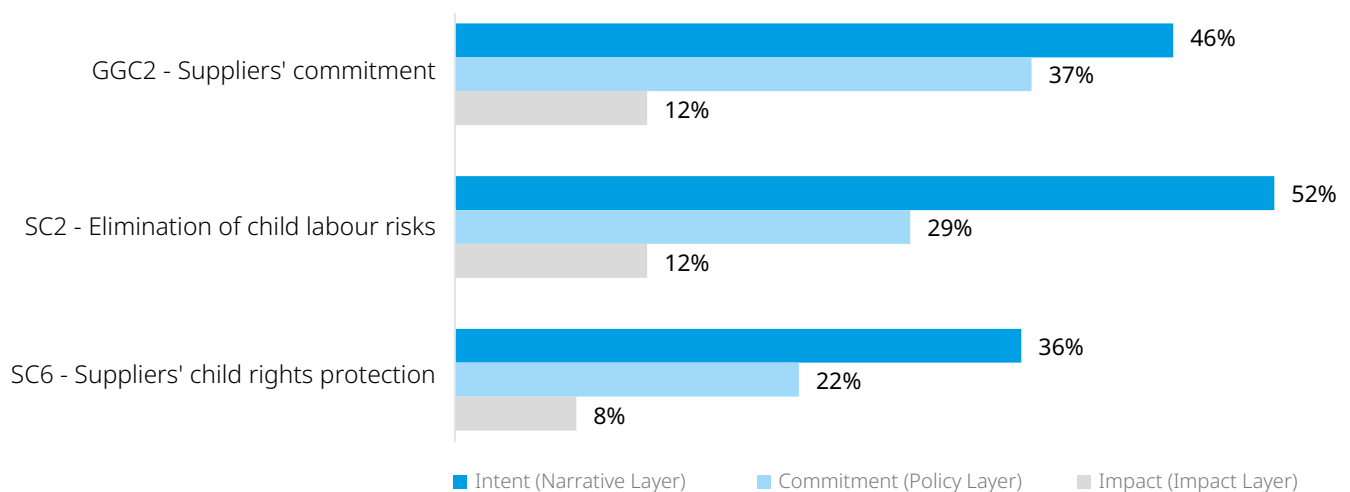
Across the 26 indicators, a clear say-do gap is evident. Companies are far more likely to state intent than to demonstrate outcomes. In total, 20 indicators show a decline of more than 50% between reported intent and reported impact, with eight declining by 80% or more. For example:

- ➔ **Living wage in supply chains:** 6% report a commitment; 0% report any impact, a decline of 100%.
- ➔ **Flexible working arrangements:** 19% report intent; 3% report impact, a decline of 84%

The most common commitments relate to child rights and child labour in supply chains. Nearly half of companies articulate supplier expectations (e.g. GGC2/SC2), often referencing international standards. But disclosure thins sharply from intent to delivery:

- ➔ 52% express intent to address child labour risk.
- ➔ 29% disclose actions (44% decline).
- ➔ 12% disclose outcomes (77% cumulative decline).

Chart 16: Indicators related to supporting child rights and eliminating child labour risks in supply chains



The say-do gap is primarily a systems problem, not an integrity problem. Companies often hold the relevant data – across HR, procurement, marketing, legal, sustainability and others – but

those systems are not connected to produce child-specific disclosure. The fix is coordination, not transformation.



Example of a company bridging the say-do gap in supply chain child rights.

A prominent Sri Lankan agribusiness demonstrates an example of translating corporate commitments into tangible measures on child rights within its supply chain.

To operationalise its approach, the company has established a Child Protection Policy and appointed dedicated Child Protection Focal Points across its estates to oversee implementation and safeguard vulnerable children. It is also a pioneer signatory of a regional mother- and child-friendly industry initiative, through which it delivers targeted programmes at estate level. Recent efforts include tackling period poverty and distributing educational supplies, with the company disclosing the number of beneficiaries reached through these initiatives.

One area for further development is its zero-tolerance approach to employing anyone under eighteen. This reflects a strong protective intent. International standards (ILO Convention 138) distinguish prohibited child labour from legally permissible, safe work for young people above the minimum working age; aligning the policy with that distinction would allow the company to safeguard children while preserving young people's access to safe, decent work and opportunities to build skills.



Example of a company reporting 'details of assessments of value chain partners'

A leading conglomerate in India highlighted their 'Sustainable Procurement Policy' in their BRSR report.

Under their policy they have reportedly:

- Sent a detailed checklist to all the suppliers
- Taken 3% of their suppliers (by value of business done with such partners) through self-assessments on child labour, and noting that they intend to do a thorough assessment of the suppliers
- Arranged a weekly interaction call for all the suppliers to address their queries and keep track of the information provided
- Conducted targeted training sessions and one-on-one interactions with the value chain partners to help them better understand the BRSR Core requirements

These actions provide a clear indication of the company's intent to strengthen sustainable procurement practices and build supplier awareness. However, the absence of disclosed outcomes from these activities limits the ability to assess their effectiveness. Without insight into results—such as changes in supplier performance or risk reduction—the impact of these efforts remains unclear.

4.2.

Where Companies Can Show Commitments: Parental Leave and Community Programmes

Companies tend to provide more concrete disclosure where metrics are easiest to produce. In family-friendly workplace reporting, parental leave is where this shows up most clearly: for extended parental leave (WP2) and return-to-work programmes (WP3), companies that report often move beyond policy language and include basic outcome data — uptake, retention after leave, or the number of employees supported —

sometimes in more detail than the commitment itself. This appears driven less by leadership than by measurability: parental leave sits in routine HR and compliance systems, so data is readily available. By contrast, related areas such as support for pregnant and lactating employees or living wages are disclosed less often and with far thinner evidence on results, leaving workplace strategies partial rather than joined up.



Example of a company with strong foundational benefits but missing next-level integration

A leading Bangladeshi financial institution demonstrates strong family-friendly workplace disclosures. Its reporting centres on equitable pay, explicitly stating that remuneration is based on merit and experience rather than demographic factors like gender or race.

The company reports providing six months of fully paid maternity leave and five days of paternity leave. It also discloses practical childcare support measures, including subsidising 65% of daycare costs at partnered facilities near key office locations, aimed at supporting working parents.

Despite these foundational strengths, the disclosure is thinner on several “next-level” elements of a comprehensive family-friendly approach, particularly an explicit living wage commitment (beyond minimum pay disclosure), a clear “return-to-work” programme for parents after leave and specific support measures for pregnant and breastfeeding employees beyond maternity leave provisions.

A similar pattern is visible in partnerships (P1). Here, 56% of companies report “impact”, but only 39% report “implementing commitments”. The “impact” is typically framed as CSR outputs – donation amounts or beneficiary headcounts – while disclosures often omit the partnership

fundamentals that signal sustainability: the length and level of commitment, a clear programme agenda, defined roles and measures to ensure initiatives endure beyond short-term contributions.



Example of a company bridging the say-do gap through sustainable, long-term educational partnerships

A prominent crop sciences company in India has engaged in educational collaborations with government stakeholders in India, including initiatives focused on STEM, digital literacy and experiential learning. The company reports integrating its industrial resources into these efforts, including facilitating visits by public school students to its manufacturing sites for practical, real-world exposure.

The company further states that it has adopted 125 government-backed innovation labs, including 50 in all-girls schools, and reports reaching over 20,000 students in grades 6 to 12. It also indicates the use of a "Train-the-Trainer" model, through which more than 230 government teachers and lab coordinators have been trained, with the aim of supporting longer-term self-sustaining continuity of these interventions.

Furthermore, the company reports that it builds infrastructure resilience by installing solar panels for digital classrooms, to help provide reliable, affordable green energy.



Example company reporting on impacts of standalone programmes but weak formalisation of government partnerships

One of the largest home retailers in Malaysia demonstrates a meaningful commitment to children's rights through its own social impact foundation, with consistent annual investment in community-based programmes that align with government priorities. These initiatives are well-documented, with clear reporting on financial investment and measurable impact, including the number of children reached. Notable highlights include the launch of a scholarship programme for high-potential undergraduates, explicitly recognised as a driver of national development.

However, these initiatives can largely be seen as standalone foundation activities rather than programmes formally embedded within government frameworks or national child rights agendas. While the company's responsiveness to government policy shows genuine intent, the next step would be to formalise relationships with relevant government bodies so that its programmes contribute to systemic and scalable impact on national child rights priorities.



5. WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR KEY STAKEHOLDERS

The findings show where child-rights reporting stands and where it falls short against emerging expectations. Children are not yet recognised as distinct rights holders within corporate governance. As a result, companies risk overlooking child-specific vulnerabilities such as supply chain labour risks, the impacts of parental working conditions, child safeguarding measures, climate displacement, and marketing practices, all of which carry distinct regulatory, reputational and operational consequences. Closing those

gaps is a multistakeholder job: stock exchange regulators and investors shape incentives, minimum standards and influence the quality of disclosure. This chapter sets out practical actions for each group to embed a child rights lens into sustainability reporting and strategy. Doing so strengthens risk-based compliance because children are highly exposed, lack an effective platform to voice their concerns, and are rarely engaged by companies, even when corporate activities directly shape their lives and affect their rights.

5.1. For Regulators, Stock Exchanges and Standard Setters

The analysis shows that mandatory regulation is in the region the strongest driver of child rights disclosure. Fully mandated sustainability reporting produces stronger commitments than partial or voluntary regimes. But mandates only work if guidance is specific; otherwise, disclosure becomes a checklist.

Given regulation's proven leverage, the priority is not more frameworks, but sharper, child-specific content within existing mandatory

requirements — and faster alignment across the regional and national bodies that set the standards companies must follow.

The actions below follow an implementation sequence. Embedding a child-lens guidance in existing standards is the immediate step and does not require new legislation. Introducing dual materiality and sector-specific addenda should then be the next, medium-term priority.



UNICEF/UNI880992/Satu

5.1.1. SECURITIES COMMISSIONS AND STOCK EXCHANGE: STRENGTHENING MANDATES WITH SPECIFICITY

In most markets in this region, securities commissions set mandatory requirements through law or regulation, while stock exchanges implement these through

listing rules and guidance. Both levers matter — commissions mandate, exchanges operationalise.

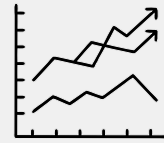
Publish prescriptive implementation guidance



Provide step-by-step guidance, clear definitions, reporting templates and short examples of acceptable disclosure



Add an official “child lens” mapping to major standards (e.g. ISSB, GRI²⁰), so child-rights reporting is embedded in existing climate/social workflows



Embed standardised, child-centric metrics into reporting requirements with defined and specific Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to measure companies' impact

In this regard, UNICEF is partnering with the UN Sustainable Stock Exchange Initiative to produce a Model Guidance on Child-Lens Investing, providing a ready-made framework

for exchanges to translate these expectations into market-facing guidance for listed companies²¹.

Require child rights to be addressed in materiality assessments

Clarify that children may be affected as workers (young workers), children of workers, community members, consumers and end-users. Make this explicit in materiality guidance and require companies to state where children were considered and what was concluded.

And require companies to disclose how children and their representatives were engaged in the process — not as a procedural add-on, but as a quality marker for whether the assessment reflects actual child rights risks.

²⁰ This regulatory alignment is more urgent than ever, as the GRI is revising its framework to introduce strengthened labour standards with a sharpened focus on workers' rights, forced labour, explicit child labour protections and freedom of association (exposure drafts issued December 2025; consultation closed March 2026). By anticipating these shifts and embedding child-centric metrics directly into these evolving global standards, regulators can ensure that companies move beyond box-ticking and truly understand how to measure, manage and report their tangible impacts on children's lives.

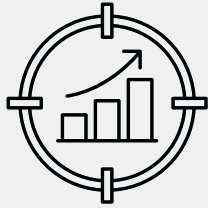
²¹ Currently under development, with estimated release date by October 2026.



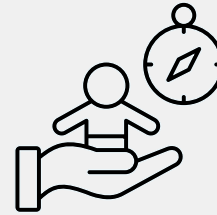
At national level, the bodies responsible for adapting international frameworks are the most actionable lever for embedding child rights metrics into mandatory disclosure templates that companies are already required to use.

Endorse the dual materiality framework for child rights reporting

Require companies to assess and disclose:



Financial materiality: how child rights issues create risks/opportunities for the company



Impact materiality: how the company affects children, regardless of immediate financial implications

This aligns with the direction of leading global frameworks, including GRI's proposed labour-standards revision (draft, December 2025) and the ongoing convergence between ISSB and

impact-oriented reporting. Regulators that move now will be ahead of the next revision cycle, not reactive to it.

Collaborate with industry bodies and child rights organisations to provide sector-specific guidance

Work with industry bodies and child rights organisations to publish short sector addenda (what to report, core risks, suggested metrics) for areas like digital services, food and beverage marketing and extractives/community impacts²². UNICEF provides global resources

on the digital environment, food marketing and climate change. Adapted to local regulatory frameworks, cultural contexts and industry structures, they can guide companies in high-impact sectors.

5.1.2.

REGIONAL AND NATIONAL STANDARD SETTERS: EMBEDDING THE CHILD LENS IN EXISTING FRAMEWORKS

National and regional bodies that translate international frameworks into binding domestic standards are the most direct lever for embedding child rights metrics without requiring legislative change.

At national level, **the bodies responsible for adapting international frameworks are the most**

actionable lever for embedding child rights metrics into mandatory disclosure templates that companies are already required to use.

At the Southeast Asia regional level, the ASEAN Capital Markets Forum and ASEAN Taxonomy Board are defining the social standards that national frameworks will tend to align with.

²² Find specific sector-oriented guidance here - [Focus of our work | UNICEF Child Rights and Business](#)

Embedding child-specific indicators into ASEAN Taxonomy social provisions and ACMF sustainable finance guidance would create a regional baseline cascading across all markets.

Similarly, at South Asia regional level, the South Asian Federation of Exchanges would create a parallel baseline for South Asian markets, when embedding child-specific indicators into SAFE's harmonisation agenda for exchange-level disclosure standards.

Other bodies with direct leverage on material child rights risks can also raise the standards – including IOSCO's Asia Pacific Regional Committee on disclosure standards, the ILO Regional Office and its Better Work programme on supply chain labour conditions, and the Responsible Business Alliance on electronics sector audit protocols, among others active across the region's highest-risk sectors.

5.1.3. GOVERNMENT MINISTRIES: BUILDING THE ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

Securities commissions and stock exchanges can require companies to disclose — but disclosure is only as meaningful as the underlying obligations it reports against. Where no substantive legal duty exists, child rights reporting risks becoming performative. Government ministries create the obligations

that make corporate disclosure credible. The principle across all of these is the same: ministries that strengthen sectoral obligations create the conditions under which corporate reporting becomes a genuine accountability mechanism rather than a reputational exercise.

Across the full range of material child rights impacts²³, the priority actions are:

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UNI834648/Sufari



Labour ministries: distinguish prohibited child labour from safe work for young workers; align minimum wage with living wage realities; extend family-friendly workplace obligations — parental leave, breastfeeding support, access to affordable childcare including on-site or employer-subsidised care centres, and flexible work arrangements — to supply chain workers, with corporate reporting duties.

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Justice and human rights ministries: establish mandatory human rights due diligence (mHRDD) obligations covering child rights across value chains — the legislative foundation that transforms voluntary HRDD into enforceable corporate accountability.

²³ Find sector-oriented guidance here - [Focus of our work | UNICEF Child Rights and Business](#)

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Do Khuong Duy

Environment and planning ministries: require environmental and social impact assessments to explicitly assess risks to children in affected communities; integrate child protections into national just transition policies with corresponding corporate disclosure duties.

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Rai - Highway Child

Health and agriculture ministries: establish child nutrition and food marketing standards — including restrictions on ultra processed and high fat, salt and sugar (HFSS) food marketing to children — that generate disclosable corporate obligations rather than voluntary commitments.



Digital and communications ministries: strengthen child online safety duties of care for platform operators, creating verifiable obligations against which corporate disclosure becomes accountable rather than self-declared.

UNICEF/
UNI789730/Mukut

Trade, industry and finance ministries: embed child rights standards into trade agreements, industrial policy and sustainable finance taxonomies — creating demand-side pressure across cross-border supply chains and capital allocation that complements securities regulator mandates.

SPOTLIGHT ON THE PHILIPPINES: THE ROLE OF PARTNERSHIPS TO INFLUENCING COMPANIES' PRACTICES AND DISCLOSURES



The partnership between [UNICEF](#) and the [Securities and Exchange Commission \(SEC\)](#) in the Philippines aims to promote responsible business conduct by integrating children's rights into corporate governance, sustainability agendas, and investment practices.

Under [UNICEF Philippines](#) 9th Country Programme of Cooperation (CPC 9 / CPD 2024–2028), this collaboration supports the Child-Sensitive Social Policy strategic shift. It advances the integration of child rights into Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) reporting, shifting corporate practices to respect and support children.

Specific details of the partnership under CPC 9 include:

- > **Capacity Building:** [UNICEF](#) and the [SEC](#) conduct capacity-building activities and training sessions for publicly listed companies (PLCs) on integrating children's rights into policies, risk management, supply chain practices, and child safeguarding.
- > **Baseline Studies:** In early 2025, the two organizations presented a baseline study, "[Investing in the Future](#)", which evaluated 2023 sustainability reports of PLCs to set a standard for how businesses impact and can protect child rights.
- > **Regulatory Alignment:** The partnership complements the [SEC's](#) Memorandum Circular No. 4 and the new MC 16-series of 2025, which requires PLCs (and large non-listed companies) to submit Sustainability Reports on ESG practices.
- > In 2025, the partnership moved from evidence to action. UNICEF and the SEC delivered two public webinars on integrating child rights into sustainability reporting, reaching over 20,000 viewers, and trained SEC staff across its corporate governance and sustainability department.
- > **Strategic Focus:** The collaboration drives the [Child-Sensitive Public Policy](#) framework of CPC 9, which aims to ensure domestic investments and corporate activities benefit and protect the most vulnerable families and children in the workplace, communities and marketplace.

5.2. For Investors

This study does not ask investors to add another checklist. Instead, it offers insights on how to sharpen existing risk assessments. It gives guidance to identify a company's ability to address child issues, signalling maturity in managing operational and supply chain risks, thereby reducing overall portfolio risk. The findings help investors to recognise the gap in this material risk (regulatory, operational, reputational, supply chain disruption) and a stewardship opportunity. The aim is simple: ensure portfolio companies can identify, prevent and remediate impacts on children, and can demonstrate that they do so in practice.

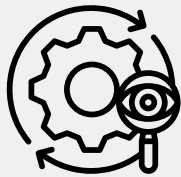
UNICEF has pioneered the development of a new field of investing, [Child-Lens Investing](#), to provide tailored guidance to investors. This is complemented with detailed guidance on the [Tool for investors on integrating child rights into ESG Assessment](#), and with [Investing in the Present and the Future | UNICEF Child Rights and Business](#).

The following recommendations build on that foundation, drawing on the specific findings of this regional review to inform screening, engagement and advocacy.

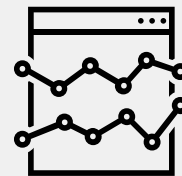
5.2.1. SCREENING AND RISK ASSESSMENT (WHAT TO LOOK FOR)

Flag the “intent-action-impact” gap

Integrate child-lens screening and due diligence policies as part of a fund's sustainability strategy and during portfolio construction, to screen for companies that publish commitments but disclose little on:



Due diligence processes (risk assessment, audits, grievance channels, remediation)



Outcomes (findings, cases, fixes, trend data)

A large shortfall is a warning sign of weak systems, not just weak reporting. Where commitment scores are high and impact disclosure is near-zero across multiple

indicators, investors should treat this as elevated “child washing” exposure — an active reputational and regulatory liability, not a data quality issue.

Check whether children are explicitly covered in risk assessments

Human rights language is not enough. As part of the desk research and due diligence portfolio construction, evaluate and look for evidence that

the companies' human rights risk assessments and mitigation strategies reflect the distinct vulnerabilities of children in their operating contexts.

Apply sector-specific red flags as screening criteria or active ownership topic



Consumer staples / Agriculture:

child labour beyond Tier-1; seasonal and informal labour controls; migrant children and children of migrant workers.



Consumer staples / F&B Products and marketing:

responsible marketing to children; nutrition commitments with child-specific safeguards.



Extractives / manufacturing:

community health and displacement impacts; living wage and FFP gaps in supply chains; young worker safety.



Technology / platforms:

child online safety, privacy-by-design, mental health, age assurance gaps; data use; response mechanisms.



Construction / hospitality / services:

community displacement, commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC), and family-friendly workplace gaps for subcontracted workers.



Financials: financed activity child-risk screening; portfolio exposure to child labour in investee sectors.

See the sector priority matrix in Chapter 3 for a full mapping of material child rights risks and priority disclosure indicators by sector.

Use a simple indicator set to benchmark

Investors can use the indicators in this review, drawn from the Children's Rights and Business Principles and covering governance, workplace, supply chain, community, products and marketing, as a diagnostic tool to rank portfolio companies and prioritise engagement.

Investors may input these data points as part of their negative or positive screening, as part of due diligence questionnaires and portfolio construction, and as a data tool to track their stewardship initiatives.



**HUMAN RIGHTS
LANGUAGE IS
NOT ENOUGH.**

As part of the desk research and due diligence portfolio construction, evaluate and look for evidence that the companies' human rights risk assessments and mitigation strategies reflect the distinct vulnerabilities of children in their operating contexts.

5.2.2. ENGAGEMENT AND TRANSPARENCY (WHAT TO ASK FOR)

From risk avoidance to risk transparency: sharper investor inquiry for stronger due diligence

Investors can use better line of inquiry to drive greater transparency and engagement with listed companies.

For example:

- On child labour, avoid “Do you have a zero-tolerance policy?” Instead, ask questions that push disclosure beyond risk avoidance towards clear risk identification, effective mitigation and remediation.
- On family-friendly workplaces, ask for outcome data — parental leave uptake by gender, return-to-work rates, childcare provision, living wage gaps relative to family sufficiency — and whether these extend to supply chain workers, not only direct employees.
- On participation, ask whether children or their representatives were consulted as part of human rights due diligence — a direct expectation under the UNGPs and a signal of whether risk identification reflects children's voices.

Investors can also exercise their stewardship role, using their rights and influence to expand corporate behaviour on child rights intent, actions and impact. They can set clear expectation documents and timelines; engage directly with investees, or escalate through votes, collaborative engagement or filing/endorsing shareholder requests where companies repeatedly provide generic statements without processes or outcomes.

These steps translate child rights from a “social topic” into assessable investment risk and measurable stewardship priorities. For an extended guidance on stewardship policies for children's rights —including three material engagement topics (child labour, digital environment, and family friendly policies) — investors may consult UNICEF's “Investing in the Present and the Future: Stewardship for Children's Rights”²⁴.

See the recommended comprehensive list of lines of inquiry for Investors in Annex IV.

Advocate for greater transparency

Investors are among the most credible voices regulators and standard setters hear on what makes disclosure decision-useful and materially relevant. Mandatory sustainability reporting with clear child rights guidance improves disclosure quality – and investors are well-positioned to advocate for exactly that.

Investors can advocate for greater transparency by engaging regulators and stock exchanges

to set explicit child rights disclosure requirements, using the indicators from this analysis as a reference. This is a step to gain stronger transparency on whether companies are aligned with international reporting standards and substantiate their corporate responsibility reporting. With GRI proposing to strengthen labour rights disclosure, companies would be required to report on human rights due diligence

²⁴ [Investing in the Present and the Future | UNICEF Child Rights and Business](#)

processes across their value chain, including not just direct employees but also contractors, temporary workers and the wider supply chain. By embedding child rights into these existing frameworks, investors can better detect unmanaged risks without duplicating effort. The result is stronger risk mitigation, not more checkboxes.

By adopting a child rights lens, investors can organise networks and initiatives under their collective stewardship role and demand investee companies to improve these practices. Investors can also press ESG index and data/ratings providers to clearly incorporate material child rights factors in scoring methodologies, improving comparability and standardisation.

What does it mean for the distinct types of investors?

Child rights risks are material and cross-cutting, but the entry points per profile of investor will vary by mandate and ESG maturity.

- > Development finance institutions (DFIs)** — including ADB, IFC and bilateral development banks active in the region — can strengthen existing child safeguarding requirements in project finance by integrating these indicators into social due diligence, portfolio monitoring and investee engagement, particularly in agriculture, extractives, infrastructure, manufacturing, garments, food and beverage, technology and digital services, and hospitality – the sectors where child rights risks are highest.
- > Impact investors and thematic funds** will find the indicator framework useful for refining investment theses, identifying sectors where business activities directly affect children (healthcare, education, nutrition, digital services, climate resilience, and high-exposure sectors such as agriculture, manufacturing and extractives where investee operations may affect children negatively), and shifting fund reporting from output-based to outcome-driven metrics.
- > Mainstream institutional investors** should use the intent–action–impact gap as a screening tool to detect weak governance where commitments are not matched by implementation, and to sharpen materiality assessments in high-exposure sectors — agriculture, manufacturing, consumer goods and technology.
- > Stewardship-oriented ESG investors** can use the indicator framework to benchmark companies across sectors, prioritise engagement where disclosure is weak despite strong stated commitments, and build the evidence base for escalation or shareholder action.
- > Regional financial institutions and banks** can incorporate the indicators into credit risk and due diligence processes, develop sector-specific risk frameworks, and identify pipelines for sustainable finance linked to child-related investment needs.

Across the distinct types of investors, the core message is the same: child rights remain under-integrated in investment practice.

In the world's fastest-moving region for mandatory sustainability reporting, investors who integrate child rights indicators will sharpen risk management, improve engagement quality, and contribute to more transparent and resilient markets — while staying ahead of regulatory direction.

5.3. Companies

Sustainability reporting rules are evolving quickly across the region, and the companies that perform best will anticipate requirements rather than react to them. For example, GRI has announced its proposed draft on all labour-related disclosures in December 2025, with a strong focus on *Workers in Business Relationships (GRI 414)*, *Forced Labour (GRI 409)*, *Child Labour (GRI 408)*, and *Freedom of Association and Collective Bargaining (GRI 407)*, with final standards expected in late 2026. There is a strong emphasis on ensuring all workers' rights in the value chain are protected. This signals corporate responsibility reporting is moving towards stronger due diligence and

value chain reporting, and companies that translate existing commitments into verifiable control systems now, with KPIs, supplier requirements and monitoring processes, will be better positioned when these expectations become binding.

The analysis highlights that companies need to identify their material risks to demonstrate credible management of those risks in their existing reporting (*See the sector priority matrix in Chapter 3 for the highest-value disclosures by sector*).

The findings point to clear entry points for improvement, as follows:

Strengthen action and impact disclosures

Companies report intent far more often than results. Commitments without demonstrable action carry disclosure risk — and, as regulatory scrutiny of social claims intensifies, an increasing liability for reputational and legal exposure. For some, this reflects an implementation blind spot; for others, actions exist but are not documented publicly. These companies can address this by:

→ **Using existing data:** The in-depth review found that relevant information often resides in internal policy documents but is not reflected in public reporting. Closing that gap requires coordination across legal, sustainability, procurement and HR.

→ **Linking actions to impact:** Where policies are disclosed (e.g. parental leave), add measurable targets and outcome indicators such as uptake, retention, employee experience and implications for caregivers' work–family balance.

→ **Testing implementation, starting with the most material impacts per sector:** Identify where operations, products, supply chains and community impacts most directly affect children (see sector priority matrix, Figure 4), and assess whether existing commitments address those specific pathways — not just in policy documents but in practice.

Integrating child rights into materiality assessments: A strategic investment to mitigate the contextual risk

In a region with more than 1.1 billion children, persistent child labour risks, limited social protection and high climate vulnerability, child-related impacts are a core operating-context

risk. Yet only 1% of companies integrate child rights into materiality assessments, leaving a major blind spot in corporates' risk management and sustainability strategy.

Treating children as distinct stakeholders and applying established frameworks (e.g. UNGPs, OECD Guidelines, and CRBP²⁵) helps companies identify salient risks, assess severity and design mitigation with meaningful participation from children's and young people's representatives and child rights experts — and with board-level oversight

to ensure child rights commitments carry governance weight beyond policy intent.²⁶

The starting point is not building new systems – child rights data probably already exists across HR, procurement, marketing, legal and sustainability functions. The gap is coordination, not capacity.

Test whether commitments are implemented, starting with the most material impacts per sector

Different sectors face different child rights risks – a garment manufacturer's most material exposure is in its supply chain, while for a food and beverage company's is in marketing to children, and a technology platform's is digital.

The Figure 4 above provides an entry point: companies should identify where their operations, products, supply chains, and community impacts most directly affect children, and assess whether existing commitments address those specific pathways.

For example, child labour is one of the most acute supply chain risks in the region. While 72% of companies commit to eliminating child labour, few disclose prevention systems,

risk identification, remediation or outcomes. As practical next steps, companies can:

- Review current safeguarding commitments against actual practice and realities,
- Disclose the processes used to detect risk and the actions taken when cases are found, and review whether any blanket 'zero under-18s' policy excludes legally permissible safe work for young people.

Closing the gap between what companies say and what they do – and report – turns child rights commitments from statements of intent into evidence of responsible business conduct.

Extend protections to workers – parents, caretakers, young workers – in the supply chain as a form of child rights risk mitigation strategy

For many companies, the largest potential impacts on children sit with suppliers and business partners. A risk-based approach, therefore, needs to reach beyond direct operations.

Embedding child-sensitive human rights due diligence in supply chains — covering risk identification, mitigation, monitoring and remediation — is the structural foundation

for the actions below, and the element most aligned with emerging regulatory expectations across the region. Companies should consider three strategic actions:

- Set baseline human rights standards for supply chain workers, including living wages, safe work, leave and protections for caregivers²⁷.

²⁵ [Homepage - Child Rights and Business | UNICEF Child Rights and Business](#)

²⁶ UNICEF & Danish Institute for HR guidance on "Children's rights in Impact Assessment" – <https://www.unicef.org/childrightsandbusiness/media/541/file/Childrens-Rights-in-Impact-Assessments.pdf>

²⁷ UNICEF guidance on Building Family-Friendly Workplaces – <https://www.unicef.org/childrightsandbusiness/reports/building-family-friendly-workplaces>

In a region
with more than

1.1 billion

children, persistent child labour risks, limited social protection and high climate vulnerability, child-related impacts are a core operating-context risk.

→ Set clear workplace and child rights risk expectations for Tier-1 suppliers, including identification and remediation protocols. For established relationships, move from audit-based compliance towards capacity-building. This produces more durable outcomes. In sectors with complex supply chains (such as agriculture, garments, electronics) extend due diligence progressively to Tier-2 and beyond, prioritising nodes with the highest child labour and migrant worker risk, but also with high female worker

presence. Treat decent work as child protection: when workers and working parents lack living wages, comprehensive family friendly support, and basic protections, children absorb the harm. Improved labour standards in companies' own operations and in their supply chains are more effective child protection strategies than solely scattered philanthropic investments.

Monitor and report on outcomes, beyond commitments: disclose what was found, what action was taken and what changed.

Extend the child rights lens to operating communities

Workplace and supply chain are the most common entry points, but operating communities represent a significant blind spot for children's rights risks. Extractive, construction or manufacturing operations affect communities, and children, through pollution, displacement and emergency events – impacts

that rarely appear in current disclosure. Applying a child lens to existing environmental impact assessments and community engagement processes is necessary in new infrastructure development and closes a gap that investors and regulators are increasingly likely to scrutinise.

Align CSR Investment with Material Child Rights Impact

The vast majority of companies – 88% – invest in child-focused community programmes, yet these remain fragmented, output-driven, and disconnected from material risks. The child vulnerabilities documented in this review – in supply chains, worker families, and operating communities – directly affect workforce stability, market resilience and social license to operate.

Moving from fragmented philanthropy to strategic impact means three things in practice. First, anchoring investment in the same child related risks identified through due diligence rather than generic community programmes. Second, shifting from counting beneficiaries to measuring outcomes such as enrolment rates, nutrition status and child protection incidents that are attributable to the investment. Third, aligning social

investment reporting with HRDD obligations so that documented remediation efforts meet regulatory and investor expectations, not just reputation management. Emergency preparedness is part of this equation. Companies that invest alongside humanitarian actors in child sensitive crisis response protect both communities and operational continuity.

Companies ready to make that shift should redirect social investment towards the child rights risks their own due diligence has identified — measuring outcomes, not outputs, and aligning reporting with HRDD obligations.

UNICEF is ready to support this redirection, connecting companies to evidence-based programmes across the region that turn child rights commitments into measurable impact.



6. CONCLUSION

By reviewing the reports of 1,399 companies across 9 markets, and insights from similar research in China and Philippines, we conclude that child rights reporting across Emerging Asia lags behind progress on social and environmental disclosures. Yet, in a region home to more than 1.1 billion of children – nearly half of all children on earth – credible safeguarding of child rights is becoming a defining marker of comprehensive corporate quality and investment durability.

The central systemic issue is clear: children are not yet recognised as distinct rights-holders within corporate governance and business strategy. This fundamental governance gap leaves material risks unmanaged and undermines the credibility of due diligence systems, especially as regulatory demands on corporate social responsibility and accountability intensify.

The region has unique strategic assets. Asia is home to 16 of the 31 frameworks globally on mandatory sustainability reporting requirements, creating a solid base to embed child rights into materiality assessments and reporting indicators. The report establishes a regional baseline. Analysing 1,399 listed companies against 26 child rights indicators, it documents systematic underreporting, a persistent intent-impact gap, and the near-invisibility of children in governance, materiality assessments, supply chain due diligence, and climate strategies.

Critically, it also shows that change is possible: fully mandated reporting regimes with prescriptive guidance drive higher and more consistent ESG disclosure. This baseline allows stakeholders to measure progress, target interventions and move from ad hoc responses to systemic improvement.

Three leverage points emerge as most capable of shifting outcomes at scale. First, **mandatory child-lens reporting requirements** – when combined with clear, sector-informed guidance – create the structural foundation for transparency. Second, **child and sector-sensitive materiality** assessments direct companies to identify children as distinct stakeholders, turning a blind spot into a management priority. Third, **using a child-lens investing approach and coordinated investor engagement** that demands evidence of action and impact, not just policy statements, generates positive pressure to closing the accountability loop.

Social impact due diligence is not new; the UNGPs, GRI and ILO conventions have long established the normative foundation. What is changing is regulatory specificity and enforcement, and child rights sit at the centre of that shift. This report equips stakeholders to stay ahead of regulatory change, promote stronger transparency and demonstrate that the 'S' in ESG can well be disclosed when guided by clear parameters. Companies and investors that recognise child rights as material to corporate reporting and adopt a child-lens to their investing practices will be best placed to lead the progress that lies ahead.

Beyond disclosure, this report maps where children are most impacted by business activities, where governance gaps are greatest, and where business leverage is strongest. Stakeholders can use its indicators to benchmark, its leverage points to prioritise and its regional comparisons to advocate for regulatory alignment. Capturing these would require investments that are deliberately outcomes-focused, structured beyond corporate community initiatives and aligned with where children are most at risk.



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For regulators, it provides clear guidance on these most salient impacts of business on children, and on the gaps on disclosures and on intent-action, which can guide how to embed children's rights in existing corporate sustainability reporting frameworks. For investors, it enables engagement that moves from policy checks to evidence of outcomes. For companies, this report offers a practical diagnostic tool to self-assess intent, action and impact.

Together, these elements form a coherent system: regulators set specific rules, companies manage risks, and investors reward transparency on material child rights impacts and stronger support to children's rights, turning these from an overlooked issue into a driver of corporate quality and investment durability.

The final takeaway is that this region has the regulatory infrastructure and readiness to do more. With 16 frameworks on mandatory sustainability reporting and a willingness to align with international reporting standards, there are opportunities for companies, investors and philanthropic actors to channel support more purposefully towards the workforces, supply chains, markets, communities and the environment, where it will matter most. Respecting children's rights is not only a corporate responsibility and child-rights disclosure is not "an additional nice to report" for companies; it is a foundation for the inclusive, resilient societies on which long-term business sustainability depends. UNICEF invites partners across the region to build that future together, for every child.



7. APPENDIXES

Appendix I

Distribution and Representation of the Assessed Companies

| Table 2: The distribution and representation of the assessed companies across nine markets across South and Southeast Asia

Country	Stock Exchange(s)	Number of listed companies selected for the review	% of listed companies from the stock exchange selected for the review
Bangladesh	DSE	82	13%
India	NSE/BSE	467	6%
Indonesia	IDX	175	18%
Malaysia	Bursa	155	14%
Nepal	NEPSE	52	18%
Pakistan	PSX	98	18%
Sri Lanka	CSE	52	18%
Thailand	SET	209	24%
Viet Nam	HOSE/HNX	109	15%

Appendix II

Corporate Sustainability Reporting Panorama

This appendix provides additional context and complements **“Chapter 2 Panorama on Child Rights in Corporate Sustainability Disclosure”**, including an analysis of the current ESG reporting trends and influential reporting standards in South and Southeast Asia.

Adoption of International Frameworks and Benchmarks

In a previous study of six South-East Asian countries – Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines,

Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam – 85% of the sampled 420 companies are using GRI for reporting.²⁸ While GRI is a dominating reporting standard in Asia, PWC found there has been a 21% increase in the use of the Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures (TCFD) framework. To compound this, 80% of companies studied disclosed measurements of Scope 1 and 2 on emissions²⁹, a signal that much attention has been given to environmental responsibility.

²⁸ <https://www.globalreporting.org/news/news-center/asean-companies-get-serious-about-climate-change/>

²⁹ The Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures (TCFD) encourages companies worldwide to disclose their scope 1, 2, and 3 emissions as part of their climate-related financial disclosures. Scope 1 emission sources are direct emissions made by sources a company owns or controls. Scope 2 emissions are indirect emissions as a result of a company's energy purchases, and scope 3 emissions are all other indirect emissions that result from a company's activities.

When looking at corporate disclosures on child rights, GRI and other widely referenced global frameworks differ in their approaches to incorporating child rights into material topics. For instance, both GRI and the European Sustainability Reporting Standards (ESRS) provide explicit requirements for reporting on issues related to children. In contrast, the

Sustainability Accounting Standards Board (SASB) addresses child rights, but only within specific sectors. Meanwhile, frameworks such as the International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) Sustainability Disclosure Standards, the Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP), and the TCFD currently do not specifically include child rights in their reporting standards. (See Figure 4 for details).

Table 3: An overview of the international reporting standards and the integration of child rights disclosure

Standards	Reporting Focus and Structure	Child Rights Requirements
GRI (Global Reporting Initiative)³⁰	Structured into Topic Standards and Sector Standards, focusing on material impacts and stakeholder inclusiveness.	<p>GRI 408: requires reporting on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Operations and suppliers at significant risk for incidents of child labour and young workers exposed to hazardous work. → Measures taken to contribute to the effective abolition of child labour. <p>Sector Standards highlight child labour as a material topic in sectors like oil and gas, mining, and agriculture.</p> <p>GRI 102/103: In relation to climate change and energy, the standard requires organisations to consider its impact on vulnerable groups. There is no specific mention of children, but children are identified as one of the vulnerable groups.</p>
SASB (Sustainability Accounting Standards Board)³¹	Industry-specific standards focusing on financially material sustainability topics, with metrics tailored to each sector.	<p>Child rights are addressed under various sectors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Consumer Goods (Apparel, Toys, Food & Beverage): Metrics related to child labour in supply chains and product safety for children. → Extractives & Minerals Processing (Metals & Mining, Oil & Gas): Metrics on child labour due diligence → Financials: No direct mention of child rights
IFRS (International Financial Reporting Standards) Sustainability Disclosure Standards (S1 and S2)³² issued by the International Sustainability Standards Board (ISSB)	Provides a global baseline for sustainability disclosures, focusing on financial materiality. IFRS includes the International Integrated Reporting Framework – IR Framework, previously established by International Integrated Reporting Council.	Does not explicitly mention child rights or child labour.

³⁰ <https://www.globalreporting.org/how-to-use-the-gri-standards/gri-standards-english-language/>

³¹ <https://sasb.ifrs.org/standards/materiality-finder/>

³² <https://www.ifrs.org/>

Standards	Reporting Focus and Structure	Child Rights Requirements
CDP (formerly Carbon Disclosure Project)³³	Focuses on environmental impacts, encouraging companies to disclose on climate-related risks and opportunities.	Does not include child rights or child labour in its reporting framework.
TCFD (Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures)³⁴	Concentrates on climate-related financial risks and opportunities, structured around governance, strategy, risk management, and metrics.	Does not explicitly mention child rights or child labour.
CDSB (Climate Disclosure Standards Board)³⁵	Aims to align environmental and social disclosures with financial reporting, focusing on natural and social capital.	Includes child labour as a human rights issue, aligning with international standards like the UN and ILO.
ESRS (European Sustainability) Reporting Standards)³⁶	Part of the EU Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive, emphasising double materiality—reporting on both financial and sustainability impacts.	Child rights considerations include: ESRS S1: Engagement with stakeholders, including children, in assessing material impacts. ESRS S2: Reporting on workers in the value chain, with attention to child labour risks. ESRS S3 & S4: Impacts on affected communities and consumers, considering child rights.

Among the emerging markets in Asia, nine of them refer to GRI in the guidance documents provided by stock exchanges.

Table 4: Reporting instruments referenced in stock exchange guidance documents across nine countries

	Bangladesh	China	India	Indonesia	Malaysia	Pakistan	Sri Lanka	Philippines	Thailand	Viet Nam
GRI	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
SASB			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
TCFD		✓		✓	✓	✓		✓		
IFRS-ISSB		✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	
CDSB						✓				
CDP			✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	

Note: Nepal was not included here because Nepal Stock Exchange is still developing its guidance for sustainability reporting.

Source: SSE ESG Disclosure Guidance Database

³³ <https://www.cdp.net/en>

³⁴ <https://www.fsb-tcf.org/>

³⁵ <https://www.cdsb.net/>

³⁶ <https://www.unicef.org/reports/unpacking-childrens-rights-under-european-sustainability-reporting-standards>

National ESG and Sustainability Reporting Regulations

The region is experiencing a significant shift towards mandatory and structured sustainability reporting, driven by regulatory frameworks across various countries. This movement reflects

a growing recognition of the importance of ESG factors in corporate practices, aligning with global sustainability goals. In the eleven countries examined, national central banks play a vital role in regulating ESG reporting within the financial sector.

Table 5: Overview of ESG reporting regulations based on public information from various stock exchanges

Country	Provision of ESG Reporting Guideline to all listed companies	Mandatory ESG reporting by national stock exchange	Mandatory ESG reporting for financial institutions by central banks
Bangladesh	✓	✗ Mandatory for financial institutions only	✓ Phased approach 1. 2024 – limited scope 2. 2027 – full disclosure
China (Beijing, Shanghai, Shenzhen)	✓	✓ Constituent companies of the SSE 180 Index, STAR 50 Index, SZSE 100 Index, and ChiNext Index as well as those listing simultaneously domestic and overseas	Voluntary environmental disclosure by financial institutions nationwide (JR/T 0227—2021), but mandatory environmental disclosure in Shenzhen, Huzhou and Pudong District of Shanghai
India	✓	✓ Top 1000 listed companies	✓
Indonesia	✓	✓	✓
Malaysia	✓	✓ Phased approach	✓
Nepal	✗	✗ Mandatory CSR activities, not sustainability disclosure	✗ Mandatory CSR activities, not ESG reporting
Pakistan	✓	✗ Mandatory in 2029 through phased approach	✗
Sri Lanka	✓	✓ Top 100 companies	✗
Philippines	✓	✓	✗ Voluntary guidance provided in BSP Circular No. 1085 Sustainable Finance Framework, and BSP Circular No. 1128 Environmental and Social Risk Management Framework

Country	Provision of ESG Reporting Guideline to all listed companies	Mandatory ESG reporting by national stock exchange	Mandatory ESG reporting for financial institutions by central banks
Thailand	✓	✓	✗
Viet Nam	✓	✓	✗

Appendix III

Line of Inquiry for Investors

Examples of how better line of inquiry provide greater transparency and engagement

On Risk Identification:

How do you identify where your business may be linked to impacts on child rights (operations, supply chain, products/services, communities)?



This probes whether the company has conducted meaningful, child-sensitive risk identification.

Describe the most recent child-rights issue you identified. What happened, what actions did you take, and what changed as a result?



This assesses detection systems and remediation capabilities.

On Alignment with International Standards:

How do you meet international standards on child rights/child labour beyond local legal compliance?



This signals an expectation of 'beyond compliance' performance.

How does your government affairs function ensure that lobbying activities align with your human rights commitments?



This tests whether policy engagement undermines stated principles.

On Remediation and Root Causes:

Beyond audits, what prevention and remediation systems do you use to address child rights risks?



This encourages discussion of complementary approaches such as worker voice mechanisms, unannounced assessments and capacity-building with suppliers.

What systems do you have in place for children or their representatives to raise concerns, and how do you ensure these are accessible and safe?



This probes whether grievance mechanisms are designed for children's needs.

Can you describe a case where you identified child labour and how you ensured remediation for the child?



This assesses whether remediation restores the child's rights, not merely removes them from the workplace.

On the Full Spectrum of Child Rights:

How do your policies on working hours, parental leave and wages affect the children of your workers?



This connects workforce practices to child rights outcomes.

In your climate transition planning, how have you considered the distinct vulnerabilities of children to environmental impacts and economic restructuring?



This addresses the just transition blind spot identified in the analysis.

How do you assess the impact of your products, services and marketing on children?



This probes beyond supply chain to downstream impacts.

On Leverage and Collective Action:

How do you work with industry peers, government and civil society to address sourcing communities' challenges on child labour prevention and remediation?



This signals an expectation of systemic engagement.

How do you use your leverage with suppliers and business partners to drive better outcomes for children (both in regard to environmental and social challenges)?



This examines whether the company influences those it does business with.

Appendix IV

Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Full name
AASB	Australian Accounting Standards Board
AASB S2	Australian Accounting Standards Board S2
ACMF	ASEAN Capital Markets Forum
ACRA	Accounting and Corporate Regulatory Authority (Singapore)
ADB	Asian Development Bank
ADX	Abu Dhabi Securities Exchange
AIGCC	Asia Investor Group on Climate Change
AI	Artificial Intelligence
ASE	Amman Stock Exchange
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ASIC	Australian Securities and Investments Commission
ASX	Australian Securities Exchange
ATNI	Access to Nutrition Initiative
ATSF-v2	ASEAN Taxonomy for Sustainable Finance version 2
B2B	Business to Business
BRSR	Business Responsibility and Sustainability Reporting (India)
BSE	Bombay Stock Exchange
BSE (Beijing)	Beijing Stock Exchange
BSP	Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas
Bursa	Bursa Malaysia Berhad
BVC	Bolsa de Valores de Colombia
CDP	Carbon Disclosure Project
CDSB	Climate Disclosure Standards Board
CMF	Comisión para el Mercado Financiero (Chile)

Abbreviation	Full name
CNBV	Comisión Nacional Bancaria y de Valores (Mexico)
CRBP	Children's Rights and Business Principles
CRC	UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
CSDDD	Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive
CSA	Canadian Securities Administrators
CSE	Colombo Stock Exchange
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
CSRC	China Securities Regulatory Commission
CSRD	Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (EU)
CVM	Comissão de Valores Mobiliários (Brazil)
DFI	Development Finance Institution
DFM	Dubai Financial Market
DSE	Dhaka Stock Exchange
ESG	Environmental, Social and Governance
ESRS	European Sustainability Reporting Standards
EU	European Union
FCA	Financial Conduct Authority (UK)
FFWP	Family-Friendly Workplace
FSA	Financial Services Agency (Japan)
FSC	Financial Services Commission (South Korea)
FMA	Financial Markets Authority (New Zealand)
FY	Fiscal Year
GICS	Global Industry Classification Standard
GRI	Global Reporting Initiative
HFSS	High Fat, Salt and Sugar
HKEX	Hong Kong Exchanges and Clearing
HKFRS SDS	Hong Kong Financial Reporting Standards Sustainability Disclosure Standards
HNX	Hanoi Stock Exchange

Abbreviation	Full name
HOSE	Ho Chi Minh City Stock Exchange
HR	Human Resources
HRDD	Human Rights Due Diligence
HREDD	Human Rights and Environmental Due Diligence
IDX	Indonesia Stock Exchange
IFC	International Finance Corporation
IFRS	International Financial Reporting Standards
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IR	Integrated Reporting Framework
ISSB	International Sustainability Standards Board
IT	Information Technology
JPX	Japan Exchange Group
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
KOSPI	Korea Composite Stock Price Index
KRX	Korea Exchange
MOF	Ministry of Finance
MSCI	Morgan Stanley Capital International
MSX	Muscat Stock Exchange
NEPSE	Nepal Stock Exchange
NFRA	National Financial Regulatory Administration (China)
NSE	National Stock Exchange (India)
NSRF	National Sustainability Reporting Framework (Malaysia)
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OJK	Otoritas Jasa Keuangan (Indonesian Financial Services Authority)
OSH	Occupational Safety and Health
PLC	Publicly Listed Company
PSE	Philippine Stock Exchange
PSX	Pakistan Stock Exchange

Abbreviation	Full name
QSE	Qatar Stock Exchange
RBA	Responsible Business Alliance
SAFE	South Asian Federation of Exchanges
SASAC	State-owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission (China)
SASB	Sustainability Accounting Standards Board
SEBI	Securities and Exchange Board of India
SEC	Securities and Exchange Commission
SECP	Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan
SET	Stock Exchange of Thailand
SGX	Singapore Exchange
SOE	State-Owned Enterprise
SRG	Sustainability Reporting Guidelines
SSBJ	Sustainability Standards Board of Japan
SSE	Shanghai Stock Exchange
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
SZSE	Shenzhen Stock Exchange
TCFD	Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNGPs	United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights
UNSSE	UN Sustainable Stock Exchanges Initiative
USD	United States Dollar

for every child,

Whoever she is.

Wherever he lives.

Every child deserves a childhood.

A future.

A fair chance.

That's why UNICEF is there.

For each and every child.

Working day in and day out.

In more than 190 countries and territories.

Reaching the hardest to reach.

The furthest from help.

The most excluded.

It's why we stay to the end.

And never give up.