1ª Cumbre Latinoamericana de Inversión en Primera Infancia 2026

MEXICO CITY DECLARATION ON INVESTMENT IN EARLY CHILDHOOD IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Mexico City, November 12, 2026

We, the Ministers of Finance, Economy, Health, Education and Planning; their duly authorized representatives, and high-level authorities responsible for early childhood policies in the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, gathered in Mexico City on November 11 and 12, 2026, on the occasion of the 1st Latin American Summit on Investment in Early Childhood, at the invitation of the Government of the United Mexican States and with the support of Theirworld, Somos Crianza, Pacto por la Primera Infancia, UNICEF, Save the Children Mexico, the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank, as well as civil society, academia, the private sector and philanthropy;

Reaffirming our obligations under the Convention on the Rights of the Child, adopted in 1989, and General Comments No. 7 (2005) and No. 19 (2016) of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, as well as our commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly Target 4.2, and to the Regional Agenda for Early Childhood, signed in 2017 and reaffirmed in 2024;

Bearing in mind the Seville Commitment, adopted at the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development and endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 79/323, which renews the global framework for financing for development and recognizes the importance of investing in social protection and human development systems, increasing investment in the care economy, promoting effective and equitable public spending, and aligning national budgets with sustainable development;

Recognizing that girls and boys are full rights-holders and that early childhood[1] is a stage with intrinsic value and the greatest window of opportunity for human development, during which the foundations for lifelong health, learning and social

[1]This concept shall be understood and addressed in accordance with the national legislation in force in each country.

interaction are established; also recognizing the importance of comprehensive health care during pregnancy and prenatal care;

Also recognizing that investment in early childhood is one of the public policy decisions at all levels of government with the highest economic and social returns, as it reduces inequalities at their roots, breaks the intergenerational transmission of poverty, expands the labor force participation of women and caregivers, and strengthens human capital and the growth of our economies, while the cost of inaction is borne by society as a whole and accumulates over decades;

Valuing the region's progress in regulatory frameworks, intersectoral national strategies, care systems and comprehensive early childhood development programs, which demonstrate growing recognition and ownership of this agenda;

Concerned that significant gaps persist in access to and coverage of quality services, particularly for children under three years of age, given that poverty disproportionately affects early childhood in the region compared to the adult population, and that economic, climate-related, health and migration crises deepen the exclusion of those living in the most vulnerable circumstances, including children with disabilities, Indigenous and Afro-descendant children, migrant children, and those living in rural or hard-to-reach areas, as well as their families;

Aware that, in an environment of tighter fiscal constraints, high debt-service costs and declining official development assistance, investment in early childhood is particularly vulnerable to cuts because it is intersectoral, long-term in nature and frequently lacks a single institutional owner; and that policy and regulatory commitments only become reality when translated into sufficient, predictable and protected resources that are efficiently executed and results-oriented;

Reiterating that each country bears primary responsibility for its own economic and social development and, consequently, for guaranteeing the rights of young children, with full respect for its policy space, and that contributions from international

cooperation, development banks, the private sector and philanthropy must be aligned with national strategies and complement, rather than replace, public efforts;

Welcoming the Act for Early Years campaign and its three priority areas: universal access to quality primary health care during pregnancy, childbirth and early childhood; universal access to inclusive, quality preschool education; and universal support for families, including affordable, quality childcare. Also welcoming the call for the 2027 International Summit on Financing for Early Childhood, to which this Declaration contributes the common voice of Latin America and the Caribbean;

With full respect for national sovereignty and the policy space of each country, in accordance with national circumstances, legal frameworks and fiscal capacities, and in coordination with the different levels of government, we agree on the following policy guidance and cooperation commitments, which are non-legally binding in nature. Their implementation will be articulated with national planning and budgeting instruments, without prejudice to human rights obligations or existing funding guarantees. This Declaration does not in itself constitute authorization for public expenditure, borrowing or the granting of financial guarantees:

I. Making Investment in Early Childhood Visible

1. Promote rights-based budgeting for early childhood by developing or strengthening existing national methodologies and tools to identify, track and evaluate public expenditure allocated to early childhood—through budget classifiers, tags or annexes—with the aim of progressively advancing toward their full adoption or consolidation by 2028, and periodically reporting on budget allocations and execution, while seeking to ensure the sustainability of national public finances, in accordance with each country's internal processes and fiscal capacities.

2. Estimate, by 2028 at the latest, the cost of a nationally defined comprehensive early childhood care package and the financing gap for its progressive universalization, and consider this estimate in our medium-term fiscal and expenditure frameworks and, where appropriate, in national integrated financing frameworks.

II. Increasing and Protecting Resources[2]

3. Progressively and sustainably increase public investment in early childhood, in accordance with targets, outcomes and indicators defined by each country based on its own costing exercises and priorities, taking demographic dynamics into account and promoting effective and equitable public spending across relevant institutions, prioritizing girls and boys in situations of greatest vulnerability.

4. Establish safeguards to protect investment in early childhood against economic, health, climate-related and food insecurity crises, natural disasters and government transitions, incorporating climate change adaptation measures and comprehensive risk management to strengthen the resilience and continuity of essential early childhood services, recognizing such investment as a priority expenditure and promoting, in accordance with our legal frameworks, that it not be reduced in real terms, while seeking to preserve the continuity of essential early childhood services.

5. Expand fiscal space for early childhood through a combination of measures that each country considers most appropriate, including more progressive and efficient tax systems, improved oversight and management of tax expenditures, and other measures determined by each country in accordance with its national priorities.

6. Explore, as appropriate, the strategic use of innovative financing mechanisms for early childhood—such as results-based instruments, voluntary national debt-for-development swaps, blended finance and concessional financing—ensuring that they are aligned with national priorities, transparent, supported by clear monitoring and accountability mechanisms, compatible with debt sustainability, and strengthen public systems without creating parallel structures.

III. Investing Better, with Equity and a Focus on Results

7. Direct resources toward interventions with proven effectiveness in health, nutrition, early education, care, protection and family support, applying quality standards and

[2]These actions shall not generate immediate financial obligations and must receive the direct approval of the Ministry of Finance of each country. (El Salvador)

prioritizing children under three years of age and those facing the greatest barriers, progressively taking into account dimensions of vulnerability associated with poverty, disability, ethnicity, territorial exclusion, human mobility, and exposure and vulnerability to the adverse effects of climate change and other environmental risks, including the identification of children at risk and their early intervention and support.

8. Strengthen intersectoral coordination and coordination across levels of government in the planning, budgeting and implementation of early childhood policies, promoting the strengthening of institutional and financial capacities of subnational governments, where appropriate; reinforcing existing national coordination bodies and their coordination with Ministries of Finance and Planning; and strengthening their role in budget planning and public policy monitoring, in accordance with each country's institutional arrangements and respective mandates.

9. Link resource allocation to child development outcomes through interoperable information systems, including individual-level tracking systems, with appropriate privacy and data protection safeguards in strict compliance with applicable national legislation; and adopt child development indicators aligned with SDG 4.2 and periodic expenditure evaluations.

10. Invest in the quality of services and in the people who provide them, through improved working conditions and continuous training for both public and private service providers.

11. Strengthen families as the primary environment for child development through measures such as breastfeeding and parental leave, cash transfers, social protection and care systems, among others, that provide families with time, resources and support promoting family-friendly workplaces.

IV. Accountability and Follow-up

12. Submit, by March 2027 at the latest and ahead of the International Summit on Financing for Early Childhood, specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound national investment commitments for early childhood, specifying the

outcomes they seek to achieve and how progress will be measured, for inclusion in the Regional Matrix of Commitments that Latin America and the Caribbean will present at the 2027 International Summit on Financing for Early Childhood.

13. Publicly report on progress in fulfilling these commitments in 2027 and periodically thereafter through 2030, using existing national monitoring and accountability mechanisms and an aggregated regional report, with the participation of civil society and taking into account the voices of children and their families.

14. Promote South-South and triangular cooperation and technical exchanges among Ministries of Finance and entities responsible for early childhood in the region, as a complement to international development cooperation. Also promote the progressive development of comparable indicators on public and private investment in early childhood and related outcomes.

We Call Upon:

15. Multilateral and regional development banks and international financial institutions to expand concessional financing, guarantees and technical assistance for early childhood, aligned with national plans and systems, and to consider protecting essential social expenditure, including expenditure allocated to early childhood, in the design of support instruments for countries, particularly in times of crisis.

16. The United Nations System and international cooperation partners to provide countries with non-reimbursable technical cooperation in costing, expenditure classification and expenditure reviews, as well as in monitoring results.

17. The private sector and philanthropy to assume their shared responsibility through three channels: family-friendly workplace policies and care services for their employees; the incorporation of a child-focused perspective into their investment decisions; and blended financing mechanisms that catalyze and complement public investment, focus on development impact rather than solely on the amount of financing mobilized, ensure additionality, equitably share risks and benefits, and establish clear transparency, monitoring and accountability mechanisms.

18. Civil society and academia to contribute evidence, citizen oversight and support for the implementation of this Declaration.

We entrust the Government of Mexico, in its capacity as host, **in coordination with the focal points designated by participating countries** and with the technical support of UNICEF **and other organizations that agree to undertake this role, with consolidating, disseminating** and presenting this Declaration and the Regional Matrix of Commitments at the 2027 International Summit on Financing for Early Childhood, **subject to prior validation by each country of the information and commitments pertaining to it, without such coordination implying mandatory financial quotas or contributions. We also recognize the role of Somos Crianza as an independent civil society actor in supporting the independent monitoring process.**

We will implement this Declaration with the aim of ensuring that every girl and boy in Latin America and the Caribbean has, from the very beginning of life, the public investment required for their full development.

Adopted in Mexico City, on November 12, 2026.