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INVEST IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF EARLY CHILD DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES AS A
FOUNDATION FOR PEACE AND SECURITY, SOCIAL JUSTICE AND SOCIAL COHESION.

Dear Sir or Madam,

The COVID-19 outbreak is exacerbating existing crises around the world and where inequalities are becoming starkly evident, further violating the rights of vulnerable children. The pandemic severely affects young children's physical and mental health, their social and emotional development, safety, economic security and more, particularly in conflict-affected and fragile settings. According to a recent article in *The Lancet*, in areas with the most severe disruptions in health systems and essential services, it is estimated that an additional 6,000 children under the age of 5 could die every day over the next six months, half of whom would be new-borns.

In this global call to action, the Early Childhood Peace Consortium entreats governments, policy makers and community leaders to safeguard the increasingly undermined rights of young children living in fragile contexts and to prioritize investment in their survival, development and protection. We stand in solidarity and collaborate with the United Nations and the wider international community in the global response to this pandemic-induced humanitarian crisis.

Early childhood development strategies and services are now more important than ever, to mitigate the immediate and long-term impact of the COVID-19 crisis and its indirect consequences on the most vulnerable young children and families. Supporting and empowering them today can not only interrupt cycles of racial injustice and inequality, but build a strong foundation for peace and security, resilience, social justice and social cohesion. We invite you to join us in this global call to action, to ensure young children are not forgotten amidst this pandemic and to invest in their – and our – shared futures in a just world.

Respectfully,

Rima Salah, PhD