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## **Global Survey of World's Children Finds Concern Over Pollution, Natural Disasters**

***ChildFund Alliance's third annual survey of 6,200 children throughout Africa, Asia and the Americas reveals children want more parks, less litter***

**RICHMOND, Va., Nov. 20, 2012** – A global survey of more than 6,000 children in 47 countries finds that, although almost one in three 10-to-12-year-olds personally has experienced such catastrophes as drought, flood or fires, their most pressing ecological concern is not natural disasters but the growing threat of pollution.

### **Top Environmental Worry**

More than one in four children (29%) cited various forms of pollution as the "environmental problem they worry about most," edging natural disasters, named by 20 percent of children. Percentages citing pollution were higher within the industrialized world. One in three (33%) children in developed countries cited pollution as their top concern, with half as many (16%) singling out global warming. Within developing countries, pollution was named as the top choice by 26 percent of children surveyed, while 23 percent cited natural disasters.

Children in Africa and Asia placed natural disasters as their biggest worry, cited by 26 percent and 27 percent, respectively.

Among children in the Americas, pollution was far and away the biggest concern, selected by 43 percent of respondents. Next was deforestation, named by one in six (16%) children within the nine countries in Latin and South America and the Caribbean who participated in the survey.

"The *Small Voices, Big Dreams* survey is an ambitious, comprehensive undertaking, carried out largely on a one-on-one basis with children in literally every corner of the globe," said Anne Lynam Goddard, president and CEO of ChildFund International, a member of the ChildFund Alliance. "Although often overlooked and discounted, theirs are important voices, including their telling perspectives on the myriad threats to our environment. Children in developing countries, in particular, have a front-row seat to environmental devastation, devastation that is often compounded within the world's poorest nations.

Their observations underscore the fact children on every continent understand the importance of sound environmental stewardship, even in the face of hardship and deprivation."

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### **Natural Disasters**

Asked if they had personally experienced a natural disaster, almost three in 10 (29%) children said they had been the victims of floods, with a similar percentage (28%) saying they had endured drought. Another 24 percent said they had been through an earthquake and 22 percent a forest or bush fire.

The continent with the highest percentage of children experiencing a natural disaster was Africa. Almost half of the African children surveyed (46%) said they had gone through a drought; 44 percent a forest or bush fire; and 36 percent a flood. Within developed countries, more than one in three (35%) children surveyed said they had experienced an earthquake.

### **Changes Needed**

When asked if they could do one thing around their community to change the environment, one in five children overall (22%) said they would plant more trees or build more parks, which was also the top answer among children from developing countries (28%), especially those in Asia (36%). Among children from developed countries, the most popular answer was to stop or decrease littering, which was cited by 29 percent of respondents.

For a copy of the 2012 Summary Data Report as well as other materials related to the *Small Voices, Big Dreams* survey, visit <http://www.ChildFund.org/dreams2012>.

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### **Methodology**

The *Small Voices/Big Dreams* Survey was undertaken by the ChildFund Alliance from June through August 2012. In the majority of developing countries, and non-English-speaking developed nations, ChildFund staff conducted one-on-one interviews with children in their local language. In some of the English-speaking developed countries, children completed an online survey. All non-English responses were translated by ChildFund employees. The survey was conducted in 47 countries with children aged 10 to 12 years. This included 36 developing nations in Africa, Asia and the Americas as well as 11 developed countries. A total of 6,204 children were surveyed – 3,665 children in developing countries and 2,539 children in developed nations. Five of the six questions were open-ended, meaning the children were not given a list of answers from which to choose, with one closed-ended question. All translated responses were provided to GfK Roper, one of the world's largest research companies, to process the data.



ChildFund International is a global child development and protection agency serving more than 17.8 million children and their family members in 31 countries. For more than 70 years, we have helped the world's deprived, excluded and vulnerable children survive and thrive to reach their full potential and become leaders of enduring change. As a member of ChildFund Alliance we create supportive environments in which children can flourish. [To sponsor a child in need, visit the ChildFund website.](#)