**White House Summit for Children and Youth and Deliverables Concept**

**Objective**: Deliver a vision for concrete and tangible outcomes for all children, regardless of where they live. The U.S. government will make meaningful commitments to children and youth across the departments and in partnership with civil society. A summit would:

* Frame and amplify commitments to cultivate the current and next generation of young leaders.
* Model a new type of commitment and engagement with children and youth
* Reignite historical U.S. advances for child, youth, and family well-being.
* Foster whole-of-government planning and implementation of policies and programs aimed at optimizing the sustained and holistic development of all children.

**Background**: Climate change, COVID, strengthening democracy, and building a more diverse and inclusive society have rightly been identified by the Biden Administration as priority issues. However, to date the Administration has not focused on those who both bear the brunt and have the most to offer in finding solutions: children and youth. Children and youth are the thread that runs through these priority areas. They are suffering unique impacts and facing uncertain futures, yet are organizing to demand more of their governments and the international community. By investing more holistically in children, the Administration has an opportunity to address each of its priority issues through a lens that is accessible, relatable, and bipartisan. A summit provides a platform for the Administration to spotlight the challenges that children and youth face everywhere and an opportunity to demonstrate a new model of meaningful engagement in policy making with those most affected.

**Timing and Structure**: The Summit should be held in early 2023 to allow for engagement with civil society and invited governments and development of deliverables and proposals. The Summit should be a one-day event hosted by the Administration with one/two follow-on days of workshops for participants to develop an action plan based on summit outcomes and join working groups for implementation.

**Participants:** The Summit will bring together government representatives, civil society, philanthropy, private sector, children and youth representatives, and parents/guardians. Engagement across the Vice President’s office, National Security Council, Domestic Policy Council, Gender Policy Council, and all cabinet-level agencies will be essential for success. To ensure that international issues are not sidelined for domestic ones, State and USAID should be given prominent roles in planning.

In preparation for the Summit, civil society - especially youth groups - and the government should agree to several themes around which to base commitments. Small groups of young people will develop proposals on the selected issues over the course of at least six months. The small groups will work with mentors, consult broadly, and prepare formal recommendations to present at the Summit. These young people will regularly engage with the government to inform Summit planning and will participate in the Summit as official delegates. Following the Summit, they would participate in working groups and track implementation of Summit outcomes and action plan.

**Deliverables:** A Summit provides a platform for the Biden Administration to make tangible commitments and investments in children and youth at home and abroad. These deliverables could include:

* + Summit outcome document and action plan, negotiated with civil society
	+ Clear direction to USG agencies on prioritizing outcomes for children and youth. This could take the form of an Executive Order creating a new office, designated senior official, and mandating cross-agency integration and models for engagement with children and youth,
	+ Creation of a Presidential Task Force (HHS Inter-Agency task force)
	+ New funding announcements for children and youth
	+ White House Youth Advisory Council
	+ Child Impact Statement requirement across agencies

References and models:

* *Global lead toolkit*. youthpower.org. (n.d.). Retrieved January 25, 2022, from https://www.youthpower.org/resources/global-lead-toolkit
* example of city-level efforts as a model of engagement - [https://www.bmorechildren.com/youth-engagement](https://nam10.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.bmorechildren.com%2Fyouth-engagement&data=04%7C01%7CJMarron%40interaction.org%7C2b3841f693a441e696e308d9d45cea2c%7C1d364442a49d4c2198dc328a914d38a5%7C0%7C0%7C637774317798047997%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=0E9spCAbdRVVKkMaaS417alqDd4dVxed9VRmtoA9VXI%3D&reserved=0)

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**For internal discussion with Tides Grantees**

**Though there are pros/cons of having a Summit, at this point we recommend holding this concept back. While it could be offered if the White House asks or seems to be headed toward a summit, the drafters of this memo do not believe we should proactively push a summit at this time because of the overall tradeoffs and somewhat limited impact. Below are benefits and potential risks we have identified.**

**Benefits of a Summit:**

* This event can help place children on the front burner of US policy by announcing deliverables that have systemic impact across the U.S. government. Often events drive policy initiatives. The impact of COVID on children is emerging as a higher interest for Americans and leaders internationally, and a politically salient issue.
* Events are often forcing functions for deliverables. If they agree to a summit, they will want something to announce.
* Focuses energy across agencies as all figure out how to participate and what to highlight
* Highlights the issue; creates a record of engagement and important rhetorical signals that the Initiative can build on; demonstrates at least some political will
* Amplified awareness of issues facing children and youth, and the difference they are making
* Creates its own energy and opportunities for advocacy and engagement
* If done well, can create connections between govt and youth that can grow over time; create a forum for meaningful consultation and engagement that can last beyond the summit.

**Risks and Considerations:**

* If we don’t get meaningful engagement or any accountability mechanisms, it could be a flash in the pan, or worse – the Administration could see the Summit itself as the work to check the box, but it doesn’t result in real change.
* Given the effort that goes into summits, could be a distraction that focuses the community’s time and resources on logistics and form over substance. We are seeing this quite clearly with the Summit for Democracy.
* Could having the Biden Administration host it inadvertently politicize the issue?
* What level do we want the Summit? Leaders’ level gets the most buy-in and interagency support, but also is the biggest beast and we lose any “control” very quickly. A ministerial may be more achievable, but then is not interagency and cannot easily elevate it to WH level.
* The Administration has clearly stated its priorities of covid, climate, and democracy. As an alternative to a stand-alone summit, we could focus on getting children and youth focus and voices into the existing planned summits - Democracy, Covid, etc.