

152. þing IPU 15.-19. apríl 2026

General Debate (AGB)

Ræða: Kolbrún

Mr President, dear colleagues.

It is a great pleasure for me to say a few words about the political, economic and social situation in the world from the perspective of our very vital theme.

Millions of children live in poverty around the world. According to the World Bank and UNICEF, more than 400 million children live in extreme poverty, surviving on less than \$3 a day, with the largest concentration in Sub-Saharan Africa. Yet child poverty is not limited to low-income countries; it is a global challenge affecting both low- and high-income societies. Poverty takes many forms—from extreme deprivation, where children lack the basic necessities to survive, to relative poverty, where children are unable to participate fully in the opportunities and living standards considered normal in their society.

In Iceland, one of the world's richest countries, far too many families face housing insecurity and lack the means to support their children's wellbeing. These children often do not have the same opportunities as their peers nor the ability to choose and pursue their own interests.

Children who grow up in poverty are more likely to face poor health, learning difficulties, and social isolation. These challenges often persist into adulthood, limiting access to education, stable employment, and adequate income, and reinforcing cycles of intergenerational poverty. The costs to society are significant, placing pressure on health, education, welfare, and justice systems.

We know what works: strong social protection systems, family-friendly policies such as paid parental leave, universal access to quality health and education, and ensuring that all children can participate fully in society. Addressing child poverty is not only a moral imperative—it is also a smart investment in a more just, stable, and prosperous future.

Thank you.

(299 words)