



Child Rights Connect statement
Opening of the online 88th session of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child
6 September 2021

Distinguished members of the Committee, representatives of UN agencies, ladies and gentlemen,

I take this opportunity to welcome the coming back of Committee members to Geneva and wish you a fruitful session. Child Rights Connect welcomes the efforts made to hold a higher number of State reviews as compared to the last session. This is an important step in addressing the worrying backlog, a consequence of the COVID-19 crisis, but we hope to see a much greater number of State reviews from January 2022 onwards. As we understand that the Committee will discuss how to address the backlog during the session, we continue to stand ready to support efforts to allow for an effective and speedy recovery from the impact of the pandemic. We also understand from the report of the last Chairpersons meeting that the Committee will discuss the fixed calendar and how it could be implemented in practice. This is a very welcome step, and we call on the Committee agree on a common position.

We also welcome the Committee's decision to develop a General Comment on the environment with a special focus on climate change. This is a key issue for Child Rights Connect and our Children's Advisory Team. We look forward to collaborating with the Committee and hope to see joint efforts to advance the standards and practice on child participation in General Comments, including through the development of specific working methods. These are needed to increase transparency and consistency, not only within the CRC work but also as a model for the broader Treaty Body system. We are currently planning a child participation process for General Comment No 27 of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on sustainable development, and we have come to realise this is a challenge without a formal standard practice by the CRC.

We also want to thank again the Committee and UNICEF for co-organising the event on equitable access to justice for children at the High-Level Political Forum. With more than 160 participants, this was an important opportunity to say with a unified voice that much more needs to be done in this area. We now look forward to discussing follow-up steps with you as soon as possible, in order to not lose the momentum we jointly created. From our side, as we continue our efforts to step up our work on the OPIC and the follow-up to Concluding Observations, we were able to hold an important capacity building activity for the NHRI and civil society in Palestine, exploring how OPIC can be a tool to promote the implementation of the Concluding Observations. We have also conducted our second fully fledged training on the OPIC for the children's group of the MERCOSUR and we are preparing another training for child advisors of the Inter-American Institute on the Rights of the Child. The level of interest and engagement from children is impressive and fast-growing.

In relation to CHRDs, we have been empowering civil society and children in Moldova on how to use our Implementation Guide on the rights of CHRDs for monitoring, advocacy and reporting. We have supported the submission of the first ever report to the UPR focusing on CHRDs and we are currently preparing children from Moldova to participate in the UPR pre-session. We are learning a lot from this pilot project and we are facing challenges from the lack of jurisprudence and contradicting positions of human rights mechanisms on children's civil and political rights, which is increasing our concern that much more needs to be done in this area.

I thank you for the attention.

Ilaria Paolazzi
Deputy Director
child rights connect