



Child Rights Connect statement
Opening of the 90th session of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child
3 May 2022

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

We welcome and look forward to this extended 90th session which will allow the Committee to start catching up on the backlog cumulated during the COVID-19 pandemic. The backlog remains a major concern for civil society, and we encourage the Committee to continue to use all existing opportunities to prioritise the review of States parties through all possible means. The publication last February of the session schedule for the rest of 2022 was a key welcome step in increasing predictability and transparency in the CRC reporting process. The Committee's publication of a yearlong planning document is highly appreciated by civil society as it allows them to anchor their advocacy on a clear timeframe. We hope that yearlong planning for 2023 can be published soon.

A matter of concern remains the different length of meeting times with State representatives online and in-person. While the online review of States is welcome in the absence of the possibility for the government delegations to travel to Geneva due to COVID-19 restrictions, we remain concerned about the shorter length of online reviews due to persisting technical constraints.

We also wish to welcome the Committee's decision to move towards a predictable review cycle of 8 years, with a mid-cycle follow-up procedure focusing on the six main areas identified in Concluding Observations, and to offer the simplified reporting procedure as the standard procedure for reporting with the possibility for States parties to opt out if they prefer to report under the traditional procedure. We hope that this will inspire other Treaty Bodies and advance efforts around treaty body strengthening. We would like to ask the Committee to share additional information on when and how this decision will be implemented and its implications for civil society.

Another welcome step is the Committee's joint statement with the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders concerning the killing of an indigenous child human rights defender in Colombia. Too many States still do not believe that the rights of child human rights defenders are under threat – not just through killings but also violence, punishment, restrictions to education and civil and political rights, and the like. Noting that negotiations around the last Human Rights Council resolution on human rights defenders did not include reference to children, it is clear that States need to be further convinced through evidence and recommendations from the UN and civil society. Too little attention is generally paid to the rights of child human rights defenders, and the terminology "child human rights defender" is not used enough to make clear to States that implementation of the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders is at stake. We have in this regard noticed a decrease in Committee recommendations related to child human rights defenders and we are soon going to provide the Committee with a memorandum to provide you with additional elements to advance this discussion.

Finally, we look forward to welcoming you at our General Assembly reception on the evening of 2 June, and then during the day on 3 June for a discussion with our members, our child advisors and the core-group of UN agencies leading on the development of the SG's Guidance Note on child rights mainstreaming. We also look forward to the reception with you and the CAT Committee on 10 May to advance collaboration around the issue of torture and children.

I thank you.

Alex Conte
Executive Director
child rights connect