**Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights**

**Opening of the 93rd Session of the Committee on the Rights of the Child**

*8 May 2023, 10:00 am, Palais Wilson*

* Thank you Chair, and thanks to the Committee for the opportunity to brief you on OHCHR’s work relating to the rights of the child. OHCHR is placing a special emphasis for its Human Rights 75 Initiative on engaging children and young people, to ensure they are directly involved and share their vision of human rights both today and for the future.
* To effectively implement the Secretary-General’s Call to Action for Human Rights and Our Common Agenda, it is crucial that the voices of children and youth inform not only the Vision Statement for Human Rights and the Summit of the Future in 2024, but also OHCHR’s next Organizational Management Plan, which is undergoing broad consultation and will set out the strategic vision for the coming years.
* As part of the Human Rights 75 Initiative, our Office has created a Youth Advisory Group of 12 young human rights activists from different regions around the world.
* We will be working with Child Rights Connect and other partners around HR 75 to engage with child human rights defenders around the world through different activities, including a dialogue with children, focus group discussions, and an online survey to understand and convey children’s vision for human rights.
* There are also national and regional consultations and activities, in which we encourage children and the organizations that support them to engage. We are also looking forward to welcoming child human rights defenders to the high-level event in December.
* By way of update on our interagency work, the system-wide Guidance Note on Child Rights Mainstreaming is now in the process of being finalized and agreed across UN agencies. It is intended to strengthen the integration of the rights of the child across UN entities, and this Committee’s input to the process has been well-noted and appreciated. We are now working with our partners on the plans for its implementation, and in parallel, on the High Commissioner’s related report to the Human Rights Council on strengthening child rights mainstreaming. This report will be prepared by the end of this year and presented to the Human Rights Council early next year.
* Regarding our recent intergovernmental work, the annual full-day meeting of the Human Rights Council on the rights of the child and the digital environment took place on the 10th of March, and for the first time children from different regions discussed directly with the High Commissioner on the challenges and opportunities they are experiencing online. Panellists emphasized the importance of operationalizing this Committee’s General Comment No. 25 on children’s rights in the digital environment, and examples of how governments are gradually taking steps to ensure that tech sector businesses respect children’s rights – but still, much more decisive action is clearly needed in this regard to protect and empower children online.
* The High Commissioner’s upcoming thematic report to the Human Rights Council on the rights of the child and inclusive social protection will be presented at its 54th session in September 2023, and will be accompanied by a child-friendly version which is being developed in collaboration with children from around the world. Children have provided inputs to the report through written inputs, focus group discussion and online consultations in English, French, and Spanish. We thank our partner, Child Rights Connect, for the support provided in this process.
* Finally, with respect to the ongoing focus of the Human Rights Council on youth, during the 54th session there will be a biennial panel on youth and human rights featuring youth panellists focusing on "young people’s engagement with climate change and global environmental decision-making processes."
* Thank you again for this opportunity to provide you with an update, and we look forward to continuing to work closely with the Committee and its members on the Office’s child rights priorities going forward.