



Child Rights Connect statement
Opening of the 92nd session of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child
16 January 2023

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

Child Rights Connect this year celebrates 40 years of untiring, coordinated and increasingly child-participation-oriented advocacy to advance children's rights globally. 40 years of providing inputs to the Committee and the UN system, calling for more progressive standards, and crafting spaces for child human rights defenders to participate on equal footing.

We are grateful to have our closest partner, the Committee, actively engaged in the milestone event we are organizing on 26 May, which will focus on changing the narrative around the child rights movement and creating a more conducive environment for the realization of children's rights worldwide. Linking to the 25th anniversary of the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders and 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the event will be a unique opportunity to jointly reflect and strategize around challenges faced and responses to these.

Amongst other things, these discussions will feed into an important project that we are starting to work on, the first ever study of the Council of Europe (CoE) on the situation of children acting as defenders of human rights. Through direct consultation with CoE Member States and children, we will collect new data on good practices and gaps related to legislation, policies, institutions and programmes to enable national implementation of the Convention and the Declaration on Human Rights Defenders. The study will be finalized towards the end of 2023 and will surely be a helpful tool for the Committee in its monitoring of States parties.

As you know, civil society is very much looking forward to seeing the first draft of the SG's Guidance Note on child rights mainstreaming. We urge the Committee to provide comments to the core group and take an active role in promoting the use of the Guidance Note amongst UN entities when finalized. The 2023 annual meeting of Treaty Bodies' Chairpersons could be a good platform to raise awareness on the need to mainstream children's rights across the system and strengthen coordination between Committees on substantive as well as procedural matters, including on child participation.

We highly appreciate the key role that the Committee's Chair is playing to advance child rights mainstreaming in the UN system. We urge the Committee to continue and do even more, in particular to ensure that UN States facilitating the 2024 Summit of the Future will allow children to participate and will include a child rights perspective into the Pact for the Future. This will be a milestone for the whole UN system, and the risk is high that children will be forgotten and subsumed within youth. We call on the Committee to appoint a focal point for the Summit of the Future.

Allow me to say that we are extremely concerned about UNOG's decision to stop providing interpretation for online meetings from mid-2023. This will undermine all we have achieved to expand civil society including children's participation through the digital shift triggered by the covid-19 pandemic. We have called on the High Commissioner to take action and ensure that Committee pre-sessions are safeguarded. We also reiterate the importance for the Committee to hold an annual meeting with civil society, starting from May 2023.

Finally, we wish to say a big thank you and goodbye to the outgoing members with whom we look forward to maintaining close collaboration.

I thank you.

Alex Conte
Executive Director
child rights connect