



Child Rights Connect statement
Opening of the 91st session of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child
29 August 2022

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

We welcome and look forward to this extended 91st session, which will allow the Committee to continue catching up on the backlog accumulated during the COVID-19 pandemic.

We wish to congratulate our Children's Advisory Team for delivering their statement, which marks the first time ever that children have addressed the Committee on the Rights of the Child at the opening of their session. We very much welcome this opportunity and the indication this gives that child participation is evolving within the Committee and the broader UN human rights system.

Our organizational Children's Advisory Team was inspired by the Committee's 2018 Day of General Discussion on protecting and empowering children as human rights defenders. A strong link remains between the Committee members and our child advisors. In that context, we welcomed the participation of both the child advisors and members of the Committee at Child Rights Connect's General Assembly this year, during a focussed discussion on child rights mainstreaming across the UN. Our child advisors have been playing a leading role in the process of development of the SG's forthcoming Guidance Note on child rights mainstreaming, and we encourage a continued partnership between children and the Committee in this area.

Also regarding the UN Guidance Note, Child Rights Connect encourages the Committee to give its own inputs in response to the consultations. We see it as critical for all stakeholders to join our efforts in this process to continue pushing for a stronger focus on child rights at the highest UN level, including through implementation of 'Our Common Agenda' and the 2023 Summit of the Future.

On Monday next week, Child Rights Connect and UPR-Info are convening a briefing on child human rights defenders and the Universal Periodic Review. We encourage Committee members to participate in this event, as a follow-up to its commitments to advance UN recommendations on child human rights defenders and children's civil and political rights. We look forward to discussing these topics informally with Committee members during the session.

We welcome that UNICEF's biennial meeting with the Committee will include discussions regarding the push-back against child rights, and we very much hope that Child Rights Connect representatives will be able to participate in that meeting. I would like to highlight that Child Rights Connect will mark its 40th anniversary next year, and that the push-back against child rights and the challenges faced by children's rights defenders will be the focus of our anniversary project.

In due course, we would like to ask the Committee to consider holding an annual meeting with civil society organisations, starting from its session in January 2023, during which the Committee could share their updates and priorities for the year. We have repeatedly advocated for such a meeting, as we are convinced of the value of such an exchange between civil society and Committee members.

I thank you.

Alex Conte
Executive Director
child rights connect