



Child Rights Connect Statement
Opening of the 98th session of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child
13 January 2025

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

First of all, allow me to take this opportunity to thank the outgoing members of the Committee and the Chairperson, Ann Skelton, for your invaluable contributions and commitment to the work of this Committee. We wish you all the best in your future endeavours and we look forward to our continued collaboration.

As we reflect on the close of 2024, one of the most devastating years in history for children affected by armed conflict, the work of this Committee has never been more critical.

Child Rights Connect welcomes this 98th session and 100th pre-session of the Committee, amidst the continued UN liquidity crisis which has posed persistent difficulties for your work, including the late confirmation of the holding of pre-sessions. This situation, together with the decision from the General Assembly not to provide hybrid services for official meetings, makes it very difficult for civil society to effectively participate in pre-sessions and to contribute to the Committee's work. At the last pre-session in September, some countries did not have pre-sessional meetings because NGO representatives did not have enough time to secure their in-person participation. Similarly, for this upcoming pre-session, several NGO representatives decided not to come because they did not have enough time to secure visas.

While we welcome all the efforts made by the CRC Committee and its Secretariat to mitigate this situation, we hope that the late confirmation of meetings does not become a regular practice, and we express our support to continue looking for solutions that can ensure effective and timely participation by civil society in future sessions and pre-sessions.

We regret that the recently adopted UN General Assembly resolution on the Human rights treaty body system did not provide additional resources to implement the 8-year predictable calendar and other measures to strengthen the system. However, we echo the invitation to States to provide voluntary contributions and we welcome the intentions expressed by OHCHR to explore how to use the formula in Resolution 68/268 to take steps for a predictable schedule of reviews, which will be key for the effectiveness of the system.

We also take this opportunity to share some updates:

- Regrettably, the financial crisis affecting the UN also expands to civil society and the child rights sector, with a strong deprioritisation of children's rights among donors in the recent years. This has been strongly felt by Child Rights Connect and its members, and has limited our work and capacity. We hope that the Committee can continue to call for the strengthening of civil society space and the prioritization of children's rights among the donor community.
- To continue to enhance child rights mainstreaming among UN human rights mechanisms and to implement the Secretary General Guidance Note, Child Rights Connected hosted, together with our Geneva-based members, an Expert meeting in November with Permanent Missions in Geneva to brainstorm on how to counter the pushback on child rights. This event resulted in renewed commitments to strengthen the child rights agenda and child participation at the

Human Rights Council in 2025 and beyond. In addition, in December, we hosted a side-event during the Annual Meeting of Special Procedures calling for their systematic consideration of children's rights and prompting the sharing of good practices regarding child participation for a more robust framework that builds on this Committee's standards.

- Finally, we look forward to the publication of the first draft of the Committee's General Comment 27 on Children's Rights to Access to Justice and Effective Remedies and hope to continue our collaboration to mobilise civil society and children to share their views.

I thank you.

Agnès Gracia Corberó
Head of Programmes
child rights connect