



## **Child Rights Connect statement**

### **Opening of the 84<sup>th</sup> extraordinary session of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child in Samoa 2 March 2020**

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

Thank you for the opportunity to address the Committee on behalf of the Child Rights Connect secretariat and its members.

Since the establishment of the Committee, Child Rights Connect is the main source of up-to-date information and technical assistance for civil society actors who want to collaborate with the Committee, either in the framework of the CRC reporting or in any other areas of work.

We welcome the Committee's initiative to pilot an extraordinary session outside Geneva as it is an opportunity to strengthen the space and capacity for child rights monitoring and reporting in a region that has the lowest rates of engagement of States and civil society, including children. As of today, there has never been any child-led alternative report submitted to the Committee by children in Pacific Islands States. We have also recorded a decrease in the numbers of alternative reports from national civil society actors as opposed to international NGOs.

This extraordinary session is already contributing to reverse this trend. As a global civil society network of child rights NGOs we were able to seize this unique opportunity to reach out and connect a wide number of civil society actors who showed a genuine interest in the Committee's work. We are happy to see that some of them are here today, but we also want to recognize the limitations that civil society in the region still face and would need further efforts to be addressed to ensure sustainable and continued engagement.

We are happy to see the Committee's commitment to include children directly in the session and we see this as a reflection of the Committee's growing efforts to ensure that children are at the core of the monitoring and reporting of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Our expectation is that all of us, including the Committee, States, the UN, civil society, and children, will play a key role and will strengthen collaboration to make sure that this session will have a positive and lasting impact beyond this week.

Exactly one week ago, at the high-level panel on child rights mainstreaming of the UN Human Rights Council for the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the CRC, Child Rights Connect and its members called on the United Nations to step up its efforts to mainstream child rights within all its work. The collaboration between the different UN bodies and agencies around this extraordinary session will have to be used as an

example to build on to foster child rights mainstreaming within the UN at international, regional and national level.

Thank you for your kind attention.

Ilaria Paolazzi  
Programme Manager  
**child rights connect**