

OHCHR Statement – Committee on the Rights of the Child

31 January 2022, 10 am

- Thank you Chair and to the Committee for this opportunity to brief you on OHCHR's ongoing work on the rights of the child.
- As was noted in my colleague's opening remarks, the Office welcomes the decision taken by the Secretary-General to develop a system-wide **Guidance Note on Child Rights Mainstreaming**. This is especially important in the context of building back from the covid-19 pandemic with children's rights front and center, and to strengthen the integration of children's rights across the UN system. The decision followed a civil society position paper calling for the UN to put child rights at the core of its action.¹
- We are looking forward to working closely with UNICEF and other UN agencies in developing the Guidance Note over the course of the coming year. The process will involve strong civil society and child participation, and we particularly welcome this Committee having an important role in the development of the Guidance Note.
- To support its effective implementation, we urge that member States consider following up on the recommendations made at the 2020 High-Level Panel on child rights mainstreaming in the upcoming resolution of the Council on the rights of the child.
- At the coming 49th session of the Human Rights Council the High Commissioner's **report on the right so the child and family reunification** will be presented.
- This report – which relied on valuable inputs from this Committee, alongside other experts and from children themselves – highlights that a patchwork of approaches is being applied to family reunification, which is failing children who have been separated from their families.
- As in the draft resolution on the rights of the child, the report focuses on children separated from their families in cross-border situations of migration, armed conflict, and counter-terrorism measures.
- As the CRC principle of non-discrimination requires, a child's rights cannot be overlooked, or negated because of their age, gender, migration or other status, and their best interests must be upheld as a priority in all situations and decisions affecting them.

¹https://childrightsconnect.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/positionpaperourcommonagenda_crcnct_final.pdf

- The report recommends that the ongoing gaps in this regard need to be tackled urgently at all levels, and that States should follow up with a global strategy on family reunification based on the rights of the child.
- Family reunification is also the topic of the **annual full-day meeting of the Human Rights Council on the rights of the child** due to take place on Wednesday the 9th of March from 10-12 am and from 4-6 pm.
- The High Commissioner's participation at the event has been confirmed, and we welcome the involvement of this Committee and all stakeholders, including children.
- Another upcoming priority for OHCHR is the upcoming **report to the 2022 High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development** on the rights of the child, which will address this year's theme of *"Building back better from the coronavirus disease while advancing the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development"*.
- An **expert meeting on the marketing of harmful products to children** took place on 1-3 December, organized in partnership with WHO and UNICEF. The meeting was an opportunity to assess the impact of harmful marketing on children, and to discuss possible measures to address the issue. It was of an exploratory nature, and a meeting report will be made available soon.
- Concerning **the Office's work on youth rights**, we will be selecting a Youth Advisory Board to provide key inputs to our joint project with Education Above All and Silatech. This project aims to promote the human rights of youth in particularly vulnerable situations.
- Other key elements of the project are a toolkit on youth and human rights and a series of youth consultations taking place later this year, which will feed into the toolkit.
- Following a Human Rights Council resolution on youth, OHCHR is preparing a report to the Council on the *'Human rights implications of the COVID-19 pandemic on young people'*. It will explore the challenges that young people face in connection with the pandemic, best practices on how youth can be supported to overcome these challenges, and the role of young people in the COVID-19 response.
- Thank you again for the opportunity to provide you with this update, and we look forward to continuing to work with the Committee and its members in implementing OHCHR's child rights priorities going forward.