

Opening statement of Mikiko Otani, Chair of the Committee on the Rights of the Child  
at Public Opening of the 89th session of the Committee on the Rights of the Child

31 January 2022

**It is our regret that the Committee's first session of this year was disrupted again by the COVID-19 pandemic, cut to half, and the consideration of the reports of several States parties were postponed. However, I am pleased that the Committee could hold the 89th session in-person at least for two weeks. In this regard, the Director General of the United Nations Office at Geneva and the High Commissioner for Human Rights deserves our thanks for agreeing to the in-person session and I am in particular grateful for the dedicated support provided to the Committee by our Secretariat team. I also thank my colleague members for their collective decision on the organization of the current session. UNICEF and the Committee's civil society partner organization raised concern about the truncated session. In the next two weeks, we will focus on our work to get the agenda before us completed and prove that in the in-person meetings we are more productive and effective. To make up two weeks that were reduced from the current session, the Committee is planning to add one week to the 90th session in May and another week to the 91st session in September in consultation with the Office of High Commissioner for Human Rights and the United Nations Office at Geneva.**

**Before I proceed to the adoption of the agenda, I would like to highlight some of the activities of the Committee since the end of the last 88th session in September 2021. Of the most notable is the progress of the drafting process of the general comment 26 on the children's rights and the environment with a special focus on climate change. We are thankful to the States for their submissions on the concept note. The online**

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consultation launched in December 2021 has already been receiving an unprecedentedly high number of responses and the child online consultation is planned to start in February 2022.

The Committee has also been active in co-organizing events on various child rights issues. On 19 October 2021, the Committee co-sponsored the side event of the 76th session of the UN General Assembly “Progressing child rights mainstreaming through a UN common agenda,” co-organized by Amnesty International and Child Rights Connect, where I emphasized the need of the coordinated UN system-wide support to States to implement the Committee’s recommendations. In this relation, it is very encouraging that the Secretary-General decided to develop a Guidance Note on child rights mainstreaming. On 4 November 2021, the Committee co-organized, with Child Rights International Network and Children & Young People’s Commissioner Scotland, the side event to COP 26 “An interactive discussion on children’s access to climate justice.” Finally, on 13 December 2021, the Committee co-hosted the high-level virtual event on “Strengthening Child Participation in UN processes” organized by Save the Children.

Equally important inter-sessional activities of the Committee were the issuance of the several statements, which include among others, two joint statements with the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, one on the occasion of the International Day of the Girl Child and the other on children born of conflict related rape and their mothers. All the public statements of the Committee are available on the Committee’s webpage.

**In all areas of the Committee's activities, collaboration with other UN human rights bodies and civil society has become a clear trend and child participation has been increasingly strengthened. As our effort to encourage more children all over the world to participate in the work of the Committee, a new video message in English, French and Spanish was launched on the 2021 World Children's Day.**

**Finally, I would like to mention that this year 2022 marks the 20th anniversary of the entry into force of two Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, on the involvement of children in armed conflict and on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography. The Committee is planning to co-organize two events to commemorate and further promote these important child rights instruments with other UN mandates and the support of States and civil society in February and March 2022.**

**I thank you for your kind attention.**

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