

The Day of General Discussion (DGD 2018) on children as human rights defenders



A note for children to help their understanding

Who is the Committee on the Rights of the Child?



The Committee is a group of 18 experts from all over the world.
Their job is to advise governments about Children's Rights in the
United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CRC/Pages/Discussion2018.aspx>

What are Human Rights?



Human Rights

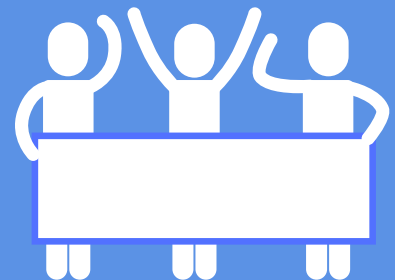
ensure that everyone can lead a good life.

Human Rights laws,
are legal agreements made by governments
to respect the Human Rights
of the people in their countries.

Who are Human Rights Defenders?

Human Rights Defenders (HRDs)
are people who take action to
PROMOTE & PROTECT
their own rights or those of others.

When defenders are under 18 years old,
they are
CHILDREN HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS
(CHRDs),
even if people do not think that
or call them that.



Who are Children Human Rights Defenders (CHRDs)?



They are children who work for their
OWN RIGHTS
OR the
RIGHTS OF OTHERS.

CHRDs work on **MANY ISSUES** like
bullying at school,
protecting the environment
or
stopping child marriages.

What is already being done to support and protect HRDs?

20 years ago
the United Nations (UN) published
an important document called
“the Declaration on Human Rights Defenders”

It advises governments
and others
about the rights
of those who
promote and protect human rights.

This includes children and adults.



Who is working on this issue?



The Committee on the Rights of the Child
ADVISES governments about
children's human rights in
the United Nations Convention
on the Rights of the Child (CRC).

It has decided to have this day of discussion.

There is also a person called
the **UN SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR (SR)**
on HRDs whose job it is to keep an eye
on what is happening to HRDs
across the world and to advise governments.

Why is it important to discuss Children as Human Rights Defenders (CHRDs)?

Encouraging everyone,
INCLUDING children, to be HRDs,
can stop governments from
breaking their promises about human rights
and help build societies that respect them.

Although lots of children are acting as HRDs,
often children are **NOT** included
in national and international documents
on protections and support for HRDs.



What are some of the challenges facing CHRDs?



- Children cannot access information that **ALLOWS** them to become defenders.
- They are **AFRAID** to speak up in case they get hurt.
- Laws **STOP** them setting up groups.
- **ADULTS** decide that children cannot get involved.
- Adults do not take children **SERIOUSLY**.

Which children's rights matter here?

- **ACCESS** to information.
- Express **VIEW**S freely.
- Have views taken **SERIOUSLY**.
- Be **SAFE** and protected from harm.
- **JOIN** a group or a public gathering (such as a protest).
- Human rights **EDUCATION**.



What is the purpose of the DGD?



The DGD is not just a meeting – it's a long term project.

The Committee wants as many people as possible to understand:

- The definition of CHRDs and their role.
- The experiences and the views of CHRDs.
 - What helps children to act as CHRDs.
 - What makes it difficult for them.
 - What protections they need.
- Any gaps in laws or rules, guidance, advice.
- Governments' obligations to protect and empower CHRDs.
 - How adults can provide support.

How can people, including children, get involved?

Have a discussion in their country on the topic of the DGD (2018).

- Send public or private information to the Committee before the DGD (2018)
- Ask to take part in the DGD in Geneva or watch it online.

(link to information and call for submissions: <http://www.childrightsconnect.org/day-of-general-discussion/>).



How is the Committee involving children?



THE COMMITTEE WILL MAKE SURE THAT

- Children across the world are asked for their views before the day.
- Child advisors plan the DGD.
- Children take part in the discussions on the day itself.
- There will be child-friendly versions of all reports and information.

What will happen at the day of discussion?

The Committee, governments, the UN, children's groups and children themselves will meet on **FRIDAY, 28th SEPTEMBER 2018**, in **GENEVA** in Switzerland.

They will discuss how best to encourage and protect the rights of CHRDs.

Everyone has agreed to do their best to make sure that children can take part in the DGD in a fun, interesting and useful way.



What will happen afterwards?



In early 2019, the Committee will publish guidance on this issue for:

- Children who are or want to become CHRDs to help them claim their rights.
- Adults to respect and support children.
- Governments to understand what they have to do.
- The UN to support and include the voices of CHRDs.
- UNICEF and other children's organisations to work with CHRDs and support them.
- The media to report fairly on CHRDs.
- Businesses and companies to stop harming the rights of CHRDs.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This child-friendly version of the DGD (2018) Concept Note was developed by the Center for Children's Rights at Queen's University Belfast with input from the DGD (2018) Children's Advisory Team.

The team – composed of 20 Child Advisors from 19 countries covering all regions of the world – was set up by Child Rights Connect (Feb 2018) to ensure that children are at the heart of the DGD.

They worked closely with Professor Laura Lundy and Dr Michelle Templeton who led the writing and design of the document.

We are also grateful for the leadership provided by the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child.