





Human Rights Council 43rd session

**Annual high-level panel discussion on human rights mainstreaming**

***Thirty years of implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child: challenges and opportunities***

This statement is made on behalf of Plan International, Save the Children, and World Vision International.

When Member States adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child, they recognized that children’s rights apply at all times and in every context.

Yet this is far from reality for 415 million children in conflict worldwide. “Every war is a war against children”, said Eglantyne Jebb, who pioneered the Geneva Declaration on the Rights of the Child which later inspired the CRC. Today, more than ever, children bear the brunt of conflict and their rights are routinely violated. Recent research shows a 170% increase in grave violations, including sexual violence, committed against children in conflict since 2010.

With war more protracted, generations of children grow up in violence, fear, and insecurity. Data is insufficient to capture the long-lasting, wide-ranging impacts of war on children’s physical and mental health. Adolescent girls are at particular risk of sexual and gender-based violence or forced marriage. Violations of children’s rights undermine prospects of reconciliation, peace, and sustainable development.

We must put children’s rights, child protection, and gender equality at the centre of all humanitarian operations, peace processes, development initiatives, and accountability efforts.

Mainstreaming children’s rights in emergency settings requires practical actions. The following six areas require joint action from Member States, the UN, and civil society, who must:

1. Systematically prioritise child rights and protection in humanitarian response, including in needs assessments;
2. Develop specific guidance on child participation in peace processes;
3. Adequately fund child protection in emergencies through multi-year investment, both mainstreamed and targeted, with attention to mental health, psychosocial support, gender equality, and preventing gender-based violence;
4. Strengthen coordination on child protection standards between state and UN civil and military actors;
5. Ensure dedicated, gender-responsive child protection capacity and expertise in peacekeeping, investigations and accountability mechanisms; and
6. Address the root causes of conflict and integrate conflict sensitivity in programming to maximize the positive impact for children and improve the prospects for sustainable peace.