



Children’s Global Consultation on Sustainable Development and Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

Find out more and how to get your messages across!

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1. WHAT IS HAPPENING?

The United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights is developing new guidance – in a document called a General Comment – on sustainable development and economic, social and cultural rights. The Committee members are meeting with children to gather your views and input. Find out more below!

What are economic, social and cultural rights and sustainable development?

Economic, social and cultural rights are human rights linked to human survival and needs that governments must protect if people are to enjoy healthy and secure lives. They are rights to things like access to water, freedom from hunger, health, housing, social security, work, and education.

Sustainable development is about making the world a better place for everyone without destroying the opportunities for future generations. It means keeping three things in mind at once:



Social progress (which is about having fair and equal communities);



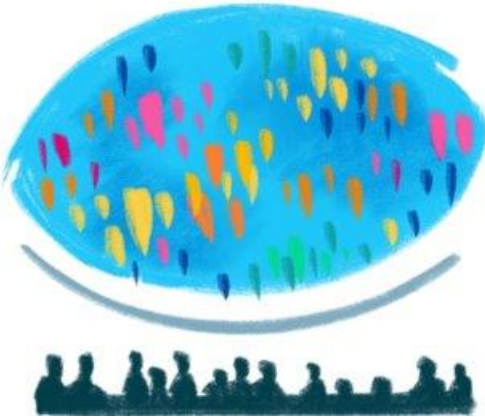
Economic Development (which is about having access to jobs and security);



Climate and environment (good living conditions on our planet and the natural world around us).

The Committee wants to make clearer how sustainable development connects with and affects the rights set out in the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights.

What is the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights?



The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) is an important agreement by countries who have promised to protect human rights linked to human survival and needs, to ensure that people live healthy and secure lives. The Covenant makes clear what these rights are, who has these rights, and the responsibilities of governments. All the rights are connected, they are all equally important and they cannot be taken away from people.



Check out this [link](#) to learn more!

What is the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights?



The United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR, or 'The Committee') was set up in 1985 and is a group of 18 people – that change every 4 years – who are independent experts in the areas covered by ICESCR. The Committee checks whether the ICESCR is being put into action by the 171 countries (also called States or State Parties) that have agreed to follow the standards included in it.

What is a General Comment?

General Comments are written by the Committee to explain parts of ICESCR in more detail, for example about specific groups and issues. These General Comments give more guidance on how governments and other organisations and groups can better make these rights real.



Why do children's rights matter here?

Your economic, social and cultural rights are impacted by the actions of States, by how they provide and respect these rights.



Check out this [link](#) to learn more about children's rights!

2. HOW CAN YOU TAKE PART?

For the first time, the Committee members are meeting with children from all around the world to hear your views when developing its new General Comment.



When? On the 5th and 6th of April 2022



Time? The meeting will last 2 hours. The time of the meeting depends on your time zone.



Meeting for Asia and the Pacific: 5th April 2022 from 6.30 to 8.30 AM Central European Time (CET) (English)



Meeting for Europe and Africa: 6th April 2022 from 10 AM to 12 Central European Time (CET) (English and French)



Meeting for the Americas and the Caribbean: 6th April 2022 from 4.30 to 6.30 PM Central European Time (CET) (English and Spanish)



Where? Online (Zoom)

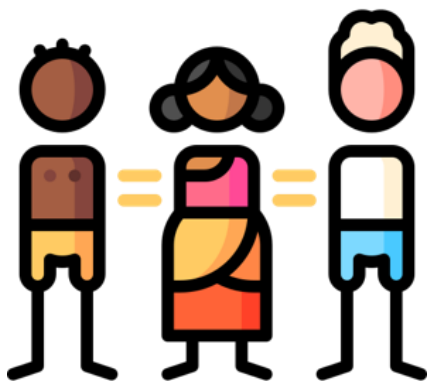


In which languages? The main languages for the consultations will be English, Spanish and French. Children speaking other languages can ask an adult to assist.

3. WHAT WILL BE DISCUSSED?

The Committee is looking into the following three themes. During the meeting, you can share your views by speaking to one or several of the themes mentioned or you can share your views about your own questions and topics. Feel free to choose whatever you prefer.

Theme 1: Equality and non-discrimination



A key part of sustainable development is for everyone to be able to participate in and benefit from sustainable development, including children.

Yet children in many parts of the world feel the effects of an unequal development and do so more than other groups. This is because children face greater risks of poverty and social exclusion when compared to many other groups. As well, the impact of environmental harm is often felt most severely by children and future generations who have contributed little or nothing to its making.

Questions to stimulate your thinking:



Think of how unequal development affects you and other children in exercising your economic, social, and cultural rights. For instance, access to water, food, freedom from hunger, health, housing, social security, work, and education. **How do you think States can address these unequal situations?**



Many children worldwide are acting as human rights defenders, calling for more equal societies, and developing their own projects to support sustainable development. **How can States support your activities and involve you when developing laws and policies related to these actions?**



Many climate activists and strikers are bringing cases to courts and international human rights bodies to try to get climate justice. **What measures should States put in place to ensure that children can access courts or other independent bodies to get a solution when Covenant rights are violated? Or when government actors and others fail to comply with the principles of sustainable development?**

Theme 2: The impact of climate change and environmental harm on realizing economic, social and cultural rights



Climate change and environmental harm affect children’s enjoyment of their economic, social and cultural rights in many ways.

The problems related to sustainable development and environmental harm are global and go beyond country borders. For example, where a river is polluted in one country and goes on to travel through other countries. The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights makes clear that governments must work with other governments to ensure that economic, social and cultural rights are protected across the world. However, often governments do not do this.

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Questions to stimulate your thinking:



Children’s economic, social and cultural rights are affected by climate change and other harm to the environment. **What must States do to stop harm to the environment and repair the damage it does – or might do – to your rights?**



What must States do to ensure that you and your communities can grow and develop while protecting the environment?



What can States do to make sure that they help/support each other and ensure that all countries can grow in a sustainable way?

Theme 3: Sustainable Development and Natural Resources



Natural resources, such as land, forests, fisheries, and water, are important for all people to live. However, some people have access to more resources than they need, and others don't have access at all. The growing global population and high levels of consumption affect the fair use and sharing out of resources needed to ensure everyone enjoys their economic, social, and cultural rights worldwide.

In addition, some companies (or 'businesses') play a big role in using up natural resources to make money for themselves.

Questions to stimulate your thinking:



What should States do to promote a fair use and distribution of natural resources? Do you have suggestions?



What should States do to make sure that business helps ensure (and doesn't harm) fair use of resources?

Is there any other issue related to children's economic, social, and cultural rights and sustainable development that you consider important and is not in this list? Please let us know!

4. WHAT IS NEXT?



You can ask more information on how to join the Children's Global Consultation by contacting Child Rights Connect: Leire Ibañez Larrea (she/her) at ibanez@childrightsconnect.org and Ana Carla Carlos (she/her) at hrc.programmes@childrightsconnect.org.



After the Consultation, we will keep you posted with new opportunities to engage with the General Comment process.



Once the Committee develops the first draft of the General Comment, the Committee will tell you about how the discussions from and points made in the meetings with children have been taken into account.



Later in 2022 or beginning of 2023, the CESCR will organise an event called a *Day of General Discussion*, to which you will be invited to participate if you have joined the Children Consultations.