

# Putting Child Rights at the Core: A Call to Action for the UN!

This is a child-friendly version of the original position paper, which you can read [here](#).

**This document will help answer the questions: What is child rights mainstreaming? Why are we calling for a UN strategy (or plan) on child rights? What can I do?**

## BEFORE WE BEGIN ...

- Find out more about **child rights and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child** [here!](#)
- **What is the UN?** An international organisation set up in 1945 and made up of 193 countries (also known as UN Member States) who work together to improve the world for everyone. Protecting human rights is one of their main responsibilities.
- **Who is the UN Secretary General (or SG)?** They are the highest position of the United Nations (UN) and at the moment, it is Mr. António Guterres (you can find the previous SGs [here](#)). The SG promotes the work of the UN, speaks and acts for peace and works closely with the UN Member States.
- **What are human rights?** Things you are allowed to be, to do or to have because you are human. For example, everybody has the right to life, the right to food and shelter, the right to work, the right to education, and the right to freedom of expression. Human rights belong to everyone, no matter who you are or where you are and are all equally important.
- Find out more about your **rights to defend human rights** [here!](#)
- **What is “mainstreaming”?**: Making sure that something or an action is well-known, common or acted on. For example, gender mainstreaming, to think about and act on gender in all decisions and actions to achieve fairness among all genders.
- **What is a strategy?** A plan with a certain goal and actions to achieve that goal.



## WHAT IS HAPPENING?



The UN Secretary General (SG) has written two reports: the [Call to Action for Human Rights](#) (in 2020) and [Our Common Agenda: Responding to Current and Future Challenges](#) (in 2021). Both reports call for **change** at the UN and for:

- Mainstreaming **human rights across the whole of the UN**;
- Different parts of the UN to work on human rights together.

**KEY MESSAGE:** *there are some good practices but* **children's rights and child participation is still not known and common, or mainstreamed, across the UN!**

## CHILD RIGHTS MAINSTREAMING: WHAT, AND WHY?

**What?** When all children's rights are always taken into account across all actions and decisions. In practice, this means that children are:



- Able to know, exercise and enjoy their rights
- Respected as a **special group of rights holders** in society
- Respected as **key actors of civil society** with extra rights because they are children

It also means that governments (UN Member States) are putting into practice their promises under the [UN Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) (UNCRC).

This is called a **child rights approach!**

**Why?** Because without it, **some rights end up being ignored** or even taken away.

For example:

- When children cannot participate in the development of a new policy or law, for example, on the environment and climate, internet privacy or migration
- Most children are unaware that they have the right to be protected and empowered as [child human rights defenders](#)



## WHY THE UN?

- The **UN has a key role to play in child rights mainstreaming** since it plays a role to help governments meet their human rights promises
- The UN and governments worldwide must pay attention as more and **more children globally are acting as human rights defenders** and children are continuing to see their rights being taken away. For example, children living in countries affected by crisis or children forced to leave their homes



## WHY ARE WE CALLING FOR THE UN TO MAKE A CHILD RIGHTS PLAN?

- To make sure the whole UN **knows about** and **puts into practice** child rights mainstreaming!
- For the UN to spend **more focus, time and money on child rights**
- To give **guidance and support for all countries** on how to meet their child rights promises under the UNCRC
- To make sure that **children become more visible** and are **not forgotten!**

## BIG NEWS!

After sharing the original version of this position paper with the UN, **they have agreed to take action on child rights! As a first step, they are going to develop a 'UN Guidance Note on Child Rights Mainstreaming'!**

The UN has committed to developing it directly with civil society, including **children!** 😊

## SO, HOW CAN YOU GET INVOLVED?

- Learn more from [Child Rights Connect's website](#) about the different activities happening where you can participate and feed into the new UN child rights plan!
  - You can also email [Emma](#) at Child Rights Connect to find out more.
  - Share this paper with your peers so that more children can learn about child rights mainstreaming!
  - Watch this [video recording](#) of an event that recently took place on this topic (with child human rights defenders, government and UN leaders!)

