



Changing the Narrative: Promoting positive change with children around 40 years of civil society advocacy in Geneva

CONFERENCE PACK

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Child Rights Connect is equally grateful to the concerted efforts of its global Children's Advisory Team, the adults supporting our child advisors, and the volunteers supporting the conference; to all other moderators and speakers; and to the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights for facilitating the convening of the conference within the programme of work of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child.

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Child safeguarding and empowerment

Child Rights Connect prides itself as a **child safe organisation**, committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing, and the prevention of abuse, of all children involved in its activities, and swift and appropriate action to be taken by adults should an incident or concern arise. A child rights approach underpins Child Rights Connect's work with and for children, both in what it seeks to achieve and how it goes about achieving it.

This conference, and follow up to it, is founded on the rationale that positive societal change can and should happen *with* children. A central approach has been to involve the safe, empowering, inclusive and sustained participation of children leading up to, during and in follow up to all activities. The conference has and will continue to rely on Child Rights Connect's permanent Children's Advisory Team (CAT),¹ a team of child advisors who are empowered as human rights defenders to shape and take forward activities on children's rights. **CAT child advisors and other children are participating in the conference, both in person and online.**

Conference participants are called on to familiarise themselves with the Child Rights Connect Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedure,² available in English, French and Spanish and in child-friendly formats³ (also available in English, French and Spanish). The following key principles are highlighted to make sure that children are safe and empowered to participate actively and on an equal footing with adults during the conference:

1. Use accessible language

Children repeatedly tell Child Rights Connect that language used by adults is very technical and difficult to understand, and that using more accessible child-friendly language can empower them to follow discussions and feel able to participate actively. This relates to all settings, including when adults are speaking on a panel, facilitating/managing discussions, asking questions or giving comments, or talking to children during breaks.

- ✓ Make a conscious effort to adapt the language you use to make sure it is not too technical. Try to use less words and not overcomplicate.
- ✓ You can use clear language without talking down to children – make sure that you respect their views and opinions in the same way as adults.
- ✓ Speak slowly. Remember that child participant's mother tongue may be different to the three languages of the conference (English, French and Spanish; and Bulgarian for Working Group 1).
- ✓ Respond to your audience and if children look confused or bored, try to re-phrase and re-adapt the language you are using.
- ✓ Avoid acronyms.
- ✓ Remember you can remind other adults about using child-friendly language and help them!
- ✓ If a question or comment from a child is unclear, you could reflect on the elements you did understand and then encourage them by taking the time to explore what they want to say. Work with what you have and try not to make the child feel intimidated or 'on the spot.'

2. Be sensitive and give encouragement

Children have told Child Rights Connect that meetings and events are not usually child-friendly spaces and that they often feel intimidated and overwhelmed in such formal settings and procedures. Children have

¹ <https://childrightsconnect.org/our-children-advisory-team/>.

² <https://childrightsconnect.org/policies/>.

³ <https://childrightsconnect.org/version-policies-everyone/>.

suggested that being sensitive to a child's feelings and encouraging them can help them to feel empowered and respected.

- ✓ Encourage a child to share their voice but emphasise their choice to do so.
- ✓ This may be the first time that children are participating in a conference of this kind and the procedures may not be familiar to them. Remember that not everything is obvious for everyone.
- ✓ If children appear nervous, try to support them with encouraging comments, like 'it is great to hear your opinion and you explained really well your idea that ... your very interesting experience helps us to now think about...'
- ✓ Crucially, remember to thank them for their participation.
- ✓ Be careful about the way you phrase a comment or question which could be perceived differently. For example, 'I can't believe you didn't have notes!' could be a compliment to their ability to talk on a certain topic, but it might be taken as 'you should have prepared notes!'. Actively reflect on how something might be interpreted differently.
- ✓ Do not interrupt a child when they are speaking – be lenient with time when children are speaking, recognising they often feel nervous and exposed. If children are interrupted during their intervention, it may make their experience a negative one.

3. *Listen*

Children repeatedly tell Child Rights Connect after participating in events that they do not feel that adults take them seriously. Children want to feel listened to and suggest for adults to make an extra effort to actively listen to and take their views into account equally.

- ✓ Make an extra effort to pay attention when children are talking (such as not having a separate conversation or being on your phone) to help ensure they feel respected and listened to.
- ✓ Remember that children are equal rights holders and should be taken seriously as experts in their own right.
- ✓ Do not tell a child their opinion or answer is wrong. It is possible to highlight alternative viewpoints or approaches but be careful and respectful in the way you frame your reply.

4. *Safety*

Children have told Child Rights Connect that they often feel at risk of reprisals when acting as a human rights defender. This can include bullying online and offline, feeling excluded from others and being targeted when they return home. Adults can help by being aware of when a child may need help and following child safeguarding measures.

- ✓ The priority is to ensure all child participants are free from any harm before, during and after their participation in the conference. The Child Rights Connect Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedure mentioned above applies – please read it carefully and apply it at all times.
- ✓ Remember that the child participants can freely choose to stop participating / remove themselves from any discussion or role they may have at any time, and no pressure should be given otherwise.
- ✓ Please do not take or share photos or videos of the child participants without their prior approval and do not share information about them on social media which would make them identifiable. It is our shared responsibility to keep child human rights defenders safe.
- ✓ If you have any concerns about the safety of any child, please contact the Child Participation and Safeguarding Focal Point, Ms Zsuzsanna Rutai (safeguarding@childrightsconnect.org), who will be present throughout the conference. She will be there to support child advisors if they have any concerns or incidents arise, alongside supporting adults accompanying each child.

Programme overview

- Venue:** Ecumenical Center, 1 route des Morillons, 1218 Le Grand-Saconnex – please see the map and practical information later in this conference pack
- Online:** **Please note that there are separate links for each session** (as shown in the annotated agenda below).

Time	Items and speakers
8h30 – 9h	Registration / online video and audio check (Lobby)
9h – 9h30	Opening (Main hall)
9h30 – 10h	Children as Changemakers (Main hall)
10h – 11h	Morning Plenary Panel: The anti-child rights rhetoric and challenges for the child rights movement (Main hall)
11h – 11:30	Coffee break (Lobby)
11h30 – 12h30	PARALLEL WORKING GROUP DISCUSSIONS Working Group 1: Anti child-rights narratives and attacks based on traditional and family values (Room II/III) Working Group 2: Political rights of children, in particular freedoms of expression, association and assembly (Main hall)
12h30 – 14h	Lunch
14h – 14h45	Keynote Address by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mr Volker Türk (Main hall)
14h45 – 16h	Afternoon Plenary Panel hosted by Iceland: Leveraging UN mechanisms and agencies to respond to challenges for the child rights movement (Main hall)
16h – 16h30	Coffee break (Lobby)
16h30-17h30	PARALLEL WORKING GROUP DISCUSSIONS Working Group 3: Access to justice for child rights defenders: paving the way to protect and empower children (Main hall) Working Group 4: Use of, and recourse to, established protective mechanisms for human rights defenders by <i>child</i> human rights defenders (Room II/III)
17h30-18h	Closing (Main hall)

Annotated programme

8h30 – 9h	Registration / online audio and video check
Lobby	<p>Participants attending the conference in person are invited to register in the lobby from 8h30 to obtain a conference name card for access to the conference, and a lunch voucher for the cafeteria.</p> <p>Online participants are invited to connect to the Zoom conference platform at 8h45 to check audio and video connections. Please note that there are separate links for each session (as shown below).</p>

9h – 9h30	Opening
Main hall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ María Herczog, President of Child Rights Connect ▪ H.E Ambassador Jürg Lauber, Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the United Nations and other Organizations in Geneva
Zoom link: https://bakermckenzie.zoom.us/j/98923234066?pwd=dXVHNnVzUjdVV1ZVOE5KN1NGYTJkUT09 Meeting ID: 989 2323 4066 Meeting Passcode: 382817	
Biographies	<p>María Herczog</p> <p>María Herczog Ph.D., is an economist, sociologist, and visiting senior lecturer at ELTE Budapest Law Faculty teaching on child rights, mediation and child protection. She has been the chair and program director of the Family Child Youth Association in Budapest, Hungary since 1993. Her expertise covers early child development, early childhood education and care, child welfare, child protection, child rights, family matters and conflict resolution. Ms Herczog has been working with UNICEF, the Council of Europe and WHO as a temporary scientific expert for over three decades. She was a member of the UN Committee on the Rights of Child between 2007-2015, a founding member of Eurochild, and its President between 2010-2016.</p> <p>H.E Ambassador Jürg Lauber</p> <p>Since 1 September 2020, Ambassador Jürg Lauber has been the Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the Office of United Nations and to the other international organisations in Geneva. From 2015 to 2020, he served as Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the UN in New York. Between 2011 and 2015 he served as head of the UN and International Organisations Division in Bern. Between 2009 and 2011 he was the Deputy Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the Office of UN and the other international organisations in Geneva and Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the Conference on Disarmament. Between 2007 and 2009 he served as Chef de cabinet to the President of the International Criminal Court in The Hague, Netherlands. As a diplomat he was previously posted in Bangkok, Bern, Beijing and New York.</p>

Background	<p>2023 marks the 40th anniversary of Child Rights Connect, celebrating 40 years of coordinated global civil society advocacy in Geneva for child rights. It also marks 25 years since adoption of the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders and 75 years since adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.</p> <p>Yet, across the globe – even in Geneva, the international capital of human rights – these celebrations coincide with attacks on democracy, shrinking civil society space and an unprecedented backlash against universal human rights, undermining the freedom, safety and action of those defending human rights. Child rights, their defenders (including child human rights defenders), and the larger child rights movement are not spared. Gathered under the banner of advocacy for the ‘protection of the family’ and ‘traditional values’, restrictions and attacks on child rights come from non-State groups (particularly conservative religious groups, civil society organisations and individuals), as well as States that lead conservative initiatives within UN human rights processes in Geneva. These restrictions and attacks target all those standing up for child rights, from the local to the international level, which in turn undermines the child rights movement as a whole.</p> <p>Against that background, this conference is focussed on countering anti-child rights rhetoric through changing the narrative around the role and impact of the child rights movement, and particularly of children acting as human rights defenders, in achieving positive societal change. The conference mobilises and gathers together children, civil society organisations, academics, United Nations experts and other State and non-State actors to jointly identify and assess obstacles faced by the child rights movement. In doing so, the aim is not only to assess key challenges but to also identify what needs to change so as to develop a strategy to respond to those obstacles, underpinned by changing the narrative around the roles of and positive changes brought about by the various actors across the child rights movement.</p> <p>The conference is convened in Geneva, a city widely considered to be the birthplace of child rights. Not only was the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) drafted in Geneva during the 1980ies, but so too was its predecessor the Geneva Declaration of the Rights of the Child, almost 100 years ago. For more than 30 years, Geneva has been the home of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC Committee), a body of experts from all over the world responsible for monitoring the compliance of States with the UNCRC. This work is supplemented by other human rights bodies and procedures based at the UN in Geneva that aim to ensure the fulfillment of children’s rights across the globe. At the academic level, Suisse Romande is also a centre for children’s rights, with much important research and insight coming out of the University of Geneva’s Centre interfacultaire en droits de l’enfant (CIDE) and the Institut international des droits de l’enfant (IDE) in Sion. From civil society, a group of organisations in Geneva in 1979 committed to seeing children’s rights enshrined in an international treaty. Four years later, in 1983, their collaboration was formalised as the <i>Ad Hoc Group for the drafting of the Convention on the Rights of the Child</i>, which was integral to the creation of the UNCRC. Today, this coalition of more than 100 members and observers from every corner of the globe is called Child Rights Connect.</p>
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9h30 – 10h	Children as Changemakers
Main hall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Moderator: Dana Buzducea, World Vision International ▪ Representatives from the Child Rights Connect Children's Advisory Team, which has been selected as Changemakers by World Vision International
Zoom link: https://bakermckenzie.zoom.us/j/98923234066?pwd=dXVHNnVzUjdVV1ZVOE5KN1NGYTJkUT09 Meeting ID: 989 2323 4066 Meeting Passcode: 382817	
Biographies	<p>Dana Buzducea</p> <p>Dana Buzducea is the Global Advocacy Lead of World Vision International. With a strong commitment to addressing poverty, child protection, education, and healthcare, she has demonstrated exceptional leadership skills and strategic vision. Ms Buzducea collaborates with various stakeholders to design and implement innovative solutions for the most vulnerable communities. Her advocacy for children's rights, social justice and equity has garnered recognition and respect in the field. With relentless dedication, she works towards creating a more inclusive and just world, positively impacting the lives of vulnerable children worldwide.</p> <p>Representatives from the Child Rights Connect Children's Advisory Team</p> <p>The Child Rights Connect Children's Advisory Team (CAT) - which has been awarded the Changemakers Prize by World Vision International - is a diverse group of children aged 12-17 who play a vital role in promoting and protecting child rights worldwide. Selected based on their passion and knowledge, they provide valuable insights and recommendations on policies and programs affecting children. Working closely with Child Rights Connect, they bridge the gap between children's experiences and decision-making processes, ensuring that their voices are heard and considered. By actively participating in discussions, consultations, and advocacy initiatives, this team contributes to more inclusive and equitable policies and programmes that prioritize the rights and well-being of children globally.</p>
Background	<p>The World Vision Changemakers mobilization recognizes and empowers those who are driving positive change and creating a better world for all. These Changemakers are children and young people who are agents of change, making significant positive changes in their communities and beyond.</p> <p>The mobilization highlights innovative approaches to address pressing social issues and promote child rights and participation. The Changemakers mobilization provides a platform to the authentic voices of young Changemakers, whose tireless works have a powerful impact, including stopping child marriages, ending corporal punishment and raising awareness about hunger, health, education and violence.</p> <p>World Vision wants to recognize their contribution and leadership in advocating for ending violence against children, and amplify their voices across social media platforms, and at events with leaders. The hope is that hearing the voices and stories of these amazing Changemakers will inspire a new generation to help end violence against children alongside World Vision and their partners.</p>

10h – 11h	Morning Plenary Panel: The anti-child rights rhetoric and challenges for the child rights movement
Main hall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Moderators: Catarina (CAT child advisor from Brazil) and Doris (CAT child advisor from Zambia) ▪ Najat Maalla M'jid, Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children: <i>Threats and violent reprisals faced by child human rights defenders</i> ▪ Philip D. Jaffé, Professor at the CIDE and member of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child: <i>Challenges for child environmental activists</i> ▪ Barbara Hintermann, Director General, Terre des hommes Lausanne Foundation: <i>Civil society perspective</i> <p>Followed by an interactive dialogue</p>
Zoom link: https://bakermckenzie.zoom.us/j/98923234066?pwd=dXVHNnVzUjdVV1ZVOE5KN1NGYTJkUT09 Meeting ID: 989 2323 4066 Meeting Passcode: 382817	
Biographies	<p>Moderators: Catarina and Doris</p> <p>Najat Maalla M'jid</p> <p>Dr. Najat Maalla M'jid serves as the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General on Violence against Children. She plays a critical role in raising awareness and addressing the issue of violence against children on a global scale. As a medical doctor specialized in pediatrics and renowned child rights defender, Dr. Maalla M'jid brings a unique perspective to her work. Her extensive experience in child protection and her deep understanding of the impacts of violence on children's well-being make her an influential voice in the field. She works closely with a wide range of stakeholders including governments, civil society and faith based organizations, international bodies to develop strategies, policies, and programs aimed at ending violence against children. She is a tireless advocate for empowering and involving children as part of the solution.</p> <p>Philip D. Jaffé</p> <p>Philip D. Jaffé is an academic and human rights advocate, serving as a Professor at the Centre interfacultaire en droits de l'enfant (CIDE). He is a member of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. Professor Jaffé's expertise lies in child psychology, child protection, and the intersection of law and child rights. He has conducted extensive research, published influential papers, and provided expert guidance to governments, NGOs, and international organizations. He strives to influence policies and practices worldwide, ensuring the rights and well-being of children. Jaffé's dedication to advancing child rights has established him as a renowned expert and advocate in the field.</p> <p>Barbara Hintermann</p> <p>Barbara Hintermann is the Director General of Terre des hommes Foundation Lausanne. She plays a pivotal role in advancing the organization's mission of protecting and promoting the rights of children worldwide. With a strong background in international humanitarian and development aid and a deep commitment to social justice, Ms Hintermann has made significant contributions to improving the lives of vulnerable children. She has been instrumental in implementing innovative programs and initiatives</p>

	to address issues such as child exploitation, trafficking, and child labour. Barbara's leadership and strategic approach have fostered collaborations with governments, NGOs, and grassroots organizations to create sustainable change.
Background	<p>The child rights movement and child human rights defenders (including those advocating for climate justice), face unique challenges in their efforts to promote and protect children's rights. Some of the challenges they encounter include (to name only a few):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lack of awareness and understanding: Many people are not fully aware of children's rights and the importance of protecting and promoting them. This lack of awareness can lead to misunderstandings and misconceptions about child rights, making it easier for anti-child rights rhetoric to spread. ▪ Limited recognition and credibility: Child human rights defenders often face scepticism and lack of recognition due to their age. Adults often underestimate their capabilities or dismiss their concerns, which can undermine their credibility, empowerment and influence. ▪ Safety and security risks: Child human rights defenders may be exposed to various risks, including threats, harassment, intimidation, and violence. Their activism may challenge powerful interests or provoke backlash from those who oppose their cause, putting their personal safety and well-being at risk. ▪ Legal barriers and restrictions: Some countries have laws or policies that restrict freedom of expression, assembly, and association, which can hinder the work of adult and child defenders of child/human rights. They may face legal barriers, including arbitrary arrests, detention, or legal action, preventing them from fully exercising their rights. ▪ Stigmatization and social repercussions: Child human rights defenders may encounter stigma and social backlash within their communities or even from their own families. They may face social exclusion, bullying, or ostracization due to their activism, which can have significant emotional and psychological impacts. ▪ Lack of resources and political will: The child rights movement requires adequate resources, both financial and human, to effectively advocate for and implement child rights law and policies. Limited resources and a lack of political will can impede progress and make it difficult to counter anti-child rights rhetoric. ▪ Lack of specialized support and guidance: Child human rights defenders may lack access to specialized training, mentorship, and guidance to enhance their advocacy skills and navigate the complexities of human rights work. They may need support to address the unique challenges they face as young activists.

11h – 11:30	Coffee break
	Refreshments will be served in the lobby.

11h30 – 12h30	Working Group 1: Anti child-rights narratives and attacks based on traditional and family values
Room II/III	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Moderator: Mieke Schuurman, Eurochild ▪ Luis Pedernera, member of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child ▪ Evgenia Toneva, Know-how centre for alternative care for children at New Bulgarian University ▪ Denitsa, Alexandra, Donka, Alisya and Maria, child human rights defenders from Bulgaria ▪ Monica Ferro, UNFPA Geneva Office Director <p>Followed by an open discussion</p>
<p>Zoom link: https://bakermckenzie.zoom.us/j/93769512723?pwd=SUxnTVUxZHhRcUtNa09KZ2dHNnNSdz09</p> <p>Meeting ID: 937 6951 2723</p> <p>Meeting Passcode: 095566</p>	
Biographies	<p>Moderator: Mieke Schuurman</p> <p>Mieke Schuurman is a prominent advocate for child rights, serving as a key member of Eurochild, a leading network of organizations and individuals working to promote children's rights and well-being in Europe. With a deep passion for social justice and equality, Ms Schuurman has dedicated her career to advocating for the rights of children and improving their lives. Her expertise in policy analysis, research, and advocacy has been instrumental in shaping child-focused policies and influencing decision-makers at the European level. Through her work with Eurochild, Schuurman strives to ensure that children's voices are heard and their rights are protected.</p> <p>Luis Pedernera</p> <p>Luis Pedernera is a member of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, having acted as its Chair in 2019-2021 and now serving as its Vice Chair and focal point on reprisals. With over two decades of experience in the field, he is a leading advocate for children's rights, encompassing a wide range of child-related issues, including education, healthcare, juvenile justice, protection from exploitation, and access to justice. Beyond his work with the CRC Committee, Mr Pedernera has empowered local communities to champion children's rights at the grassroots level. His work on children's rights has been recognized globally, and he has received several awards and honours for his contributions to the field.</p> <p>Evgenia Toneva</p> <p>Evgeniya Toneva, PhD candidate, is a child protection specialist with professional experience in the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and interventions in the field of alternative care for children, children's rights and social work with children and families at risk. She is a human rights advocate very much engaged with the issues of vulnerability and social inequality. As a researcher at the Know-how Centre for Alternative Care for Children at the New Bulgarian University, Ms. Toneva has coordinated the first comprehensive national mapping of the child participation and activism in Bulgaria in 2022, followed by an initiative for opening space for participation and human rights defending for marginalized and disadvantaged children in the country that is currently being implemented.</p>

	<p>Alexandra, Donka, Alisya and Denitsa, child human rights defenders from Bulgaria</p> <p>Monica Ferro</p> <p>Monica Ferro is Director of the Geneva Office of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). With extensive experience in international development and gender equality, Ms Ferro has dedicated her career to advancing the well-being and empowerment of women and girls worldwide and is a leader and advocate for global reproductive health and rights. Ferro has been instrumental in shaping international policies and frameworks for gender equality and reproductive health. She has worked in collaboration with governments, civil society, and other stakeholders to promote access to sexual and reproductive health services, eliminate gender-based violence, and ensure that the voices of women and girls are heard and valued.</p>
Background	<p>Anti-child rights narratives and attacks based on traditional and family values are often used to oppose or undermine efforts to protect and promote children's rights. These narratives typically argue that certain rights or initiatives infringe upon parental authority or traditional cultural values. Some common aspects of such narratives include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Parental rights and authority: Critics argue that child rights initiatives interfere with parental rights and decision-making. They contend that parents should have sole authority over their children's upbringing, including education, health, and religious practices, without interference from external actors or institutions. ▪ Preservation of traditional values: Opponents claim that child rights agendas threaten or undermine traditional cultural, religious, or social values. They argue that introducing 'new' rights or practices may erode traditional family structures, gender roles, or societal norms that have been upheld for generations. ▪ Preservation of traditional gender roles: Traditional and family values can be invoked to reinforce gender stereotypes and restrict the rights and opportunities of children, particularly girls. Critics may argue that challenging gender norms and advocating for gender equality goes against traditional roles and threatens family structures. ▪ Protection of moral or religious values: Some argue that certain child rights issues, such as comprehensive sexuality education or LGBTQI+ rights, conflict with their moral or religious beliefs. They claim that promoting such rights infringes upon their freedom of conscience or religious freedom. ▪ Cultural relativism: Critics here assert that child rights are imposed by Western or external influences, disregarding the diversity of cultural practices and values worldwide. They argue that each culture should determine its own standards for child-rearing and protection, rather than adhering to a universal set of rights. ▪ Focus on family privacy: Opponents may emphasize the importance of family privacy, arguing that external interventions or scrutiny may disrupt family dynamics and relationships. They contend that families should have the right to address child-related matters within the confines of their own households, without external interference. ▪ Misinformation and fear-mongering: Anti-child rights narratives may rely on misinformation and fear-mongering to discredit child rights movements. Critics may spread misconceptions about child rights, portraying them as dangerous or threatening to societal norms and values.

11h30 – 12h30	Working Group 2: Political rights of children, in particular freedoms of expression, association and assembly
Main hall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Moderator: Hazel Bitaña, Child Rights Coalition Asia (CRC Asia) ▪ Ann Skelton, Chair of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child ▪ Nathaly Roa Pabón, Plataforma Colombiana de organizaciones sociales y populares por el protagonismo de niños, niñas y jóvenes ▪ Miguel (CAT child advisor from Mexico) and Anna (CAT child advisor from Venezuela) ▪ Sigrid Lipott, CIVICUS <p>Followed by an open discussion</p>
Zoom link: https://bakermckenzie.zoom.us/j/97720405744?pwd=QUN2Q0tBTEx0aVIMSUJlemgzSSs2QT09 Meeting ID: 977 2040 5744 Meeting Passcode: 137860	
Biographies	<p>Moderator: Hazel Bitaña</p> <p>Hazel Bitaña is a dedicated advocate for child rights and a prominent figure within Child Rights Coalition Asia (CRC Asia). With a deep passion for social justice and the well-being of children, she has played a pivotal role in advancing child rights across the Asia region. As part of CRC Asia, Hazel has been at the forefront of initiatives aimed at protecting and promoting the rights of children. She has actively collaborated with various stakeholders, including governments, non-governmental organizations, and children's groups, to advocate for policy reforms and advance child participation.</p> <p>Ann Skelton</p> <p>Professor Ann Skelton is a highly respected expert in the field of children's rights and serves as a member, and current Chair, of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. With extensive experience and expertise in child law and policy, Professor Skelton has made significant contributions to the advancement of children's rights globally. As a renowned academic she engages in research, teaching, and advocacy in the field of child law and protection. Her legal skills have been applied through strategic litigation at the national level, and her role as chairperson of the CRC Committee's complaints mechanism working group from 2020 to 2022.</p> <p>Nathaly Roa Pabón</p> <p>Nathaly is a professional in political studies and conflict resolution, feminist and antimilitarist with more than 15 years of community work in popular education, accompanying the processes of the CECUCOL Foundation in the promotion and defence of human rights, the environmental rights of children and youth, and the right to the city and the participation of children and youth.</p> <p>Miguel and Anna</p> <p>Sigrid Lipott</p> <p>Sigrid Lipott recently joined CIVICUS in the role of UN Advisor in Geneva. She has extensive experience in international organizations, NGOs, and civil society coalitions. Sigrid holds a doctorate in trans-border policies and two master's degrees in international and diplomatic science. She started her career as an assistant lecturer and researcher in the</p>

	<p>area of international politics and treaties. Since 2015 she has worked across various policy and legal frameworks on the topics of human rights and minority rights, as well as on arms control and gender. Sigrid has experience in policy, project management, partnerships, and capacity building across these areas.</p>
Background	<p>Historically the exercise of children's political rights has been overlooked. This is despite the fact that children as human beings are entitled to enjoy all the civil and political rights under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), affirmed by the CRC Committee as applying to children.</p> <p>In practice, children experience more restrictions on the exercise of their political rights because they are children, often without a clear legal and evidential basis. Children's political rights are subject to the permissible restrictions provided by the UNCRC and the ICCPR. The CRC Committee reaffirms that such restrictions must be lawful, pursue a legitimate aim, be necessary and proportionate. However, there appears to little consideration of how these tests are or should be applied in practice when the rights holders are children.</p> <p>Moreover, even when none of these restrictions are applicable, adults may nonetheless stop children from exercising their political rights in order to ensure the child's effective enjoyment of his/her other rights (e.g. to be protected from harm, to education). This happens to individual children (e.g. decisions made by parents/ teachers) and children as a group (e.g. decisions made by legislators (such as minimum age restrictions), schools, police.</p> <p>In general, there remains little discussion of when and how children's political rights can be restricted, recalling that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ States have an obligation to first explore whether measures can be taken to ensure that a child human rights defender (CHRD) can act safely, thus avoiding the need to limit the exercise of children's political rights in order to protect them from harm. ▪ The best interests of the child cannot be reduced to protecting a child from violence. A proper understanding of a child's best interests includes their ability to enjoy the full range of rights, including their political rights. ▪ Parents'/ guardians' right to provide advice and guidance to a child in the exercise of their political rights is not absolute and remains subject to the requirement that it must be consistent with a child's evolving capacities. ▪ The tests of necessity and proportionality still apply to any attempt to restrict a child's political rights for protective concerns. Not all harms or impacts on a child's education should outweigh their political rights and not all restrictions need to be blanket bans, age-based or unlimited in time. <p>For further background, please see Child Rights Connect's Implementation Guide on the rights of child human rights defenders, especially Chapter 3.5.⁴</p>

⁴ <https://childrightsconnect.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/final-implementation-guide-the-rights-of-child-human-rights-defenders-forweb.pdf>.

12h30 – 14h	Lunch
	Lunch is available in the Cafeteria on the first floor of the Ecumenical Center.

14h – 14h45	Keynote Address by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mr Volker Türk
Main hall	<p><i>Child rights mainstreaming as a means of responding to the pushback against child rights and child human rights defenders</i></p> <p>The High Commissioner's keynote address will be followed by an interactive dialogue</p>
<p>Zoom link: https://bakermckenzie.zoom.us/j/98923234066?pwd=dXVHNnVzUjdVV1ZVOE5KN1NGYTJkUT09 Meeting ID: 989 2323 4066 Meeting Passcode: 382817</p>	
Biography	<p>Mr. Volker Türk serves as the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. Prior to taking this role in October 2022, Mr. Türk was the Under-Secretary-General for Policy in the Executive Office of the UN Secretary-General. In that role, he ensured UN system-wide coordination in the follow-up to the Secretary-General's "Call to Action for Human Rights" and his report, Our Common Agenda, which sets out a vision to tackle the world's interconnected challenges on foundations of trust, solidarity and human rights. He previously served as Assistant Secretary-General for Strategic Coordination in the Executive Office of the Secretary-General (2019-2021), and as Assistant High Commissioner for Protection at the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (2015-2019). With a wealth of experience in international law and human rights, Türk brings a strong background in diplomacy and legal expertise to his position. As the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mr Türk is responsible for leading the Office of the High Commissioner in its mission to protect and promote human rights globally. With a deep commitment to promoting and protecting human rights globally, he has dedicated his career to advancing justice, equality, and the rule of law.</p>

14h45 – 16h	Afternoon Plenary Panel hosted by Iceland: Leveraging UN mechanisms and agencies to respond to challenges for the child rights movement
Main hall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Opening remarks by hosts: Ásmundur Einar Daðason, Minister of Education and Children, and Throstur (CAT child advisor from Iceland) ▪ Moderator: Gloria (CAT child advisor from Cameroon) ▪ Catherine Russell, UNICEF Executive Director: <i>UNICEF responses to the regression of national laws and standards on child rights</i> ▪ Ann Skelton, Chair of the CRC Committee: <i>What can and will the CRC Committee do to support responses to the pushback against the child rights movement?</i> ▪ Mary Lawlor, UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders: <i>Positive societal change by child human rights defenders</i> ▪ Michel Forst, Special Rapporteur on environmental defenders, <i>Using the Aarhus Convention for environmental human rights defenders</i> <p>Followed by an interactive dialogue</p>
Zoom link: https://bakermckenzie.zoom.us/j/98923234066?pwd=dXVHNnVzUjdVV1ZVOE5KN1NGYTJkUT09 Meeting ID: 989 2323 4066 Meeting Passcode: 382817	
Biographies	<p>Opening remarks by hosts: Minister Ásmundur Einar Daðason and Throstur</p> <p>Ásmundur Einar Daðason is a distinguished Icelandic politician who serves as the Minister of Education and Children in Iceland. With a strong commitment to education and child welfare, Mr Daðason has been instrumental in shaping policies and initiatives to promote quality education and ensure the well-being of children in Iceland. As Minister of Education and Children, Ásmundur Daðason focuses on improving educational outcomes, fostering inclusive education, and supporting the overall development of children. He advocates for equal access to education and strives to create a nurturing environment where every child can thrive and reach their full potential.</p> <p>Moderator: Gloria</p> <p>Catherine Russell (video statement, available at https://icnk.io/u/3ViBBuVIQPJW/)</p> <p>Catherine Russell serves as UNICEF’s Executive Director, overseeing the organization’s work for children in over 190 countries and territories. She was appointed to the role by the UN Secretary-General on 1 February 2022. Ms. Russell brings to the role decades of experience in public service, including as Assistant to President Joe Biden and Director of the White House Office of Presidential Personnel (2020-2022) and as Ambassador-at-Large for Global Women’s Issues at the U.S. Department of State (2013-2017). Her work has focussed on empowering underserved communities around the world and developing high-impact policies and programmes to support women and girls, including in humanitarian crises. She has extensive experience building and managing diverse workforces, as well as mobilizing resources and political support for a broad range of initiatives.</p>

	<p>Ann Skelton</p> <p>Professor Ann Skelton is a highly respected expert in the field of children's rights and serves as a member, and current Chair, of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. With extensive experience and expertise in child law and policy, Professor Skelton has made significant contributions to the advancement of children's rights globally. As a renowned academic she engages in research, teaching, and advocacy in the field of child law and protection. Her legal skills have been applied through strategic litigation at the national level, and her role as chairperson of the CRC Committee's complaints mechanism working group from 2020 to 2022.</p> <p>Mary Lawlor (video statement)</p> <p>Mary Lawlor is serves as the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders. With an unwavering commitment to defending the rights of individuals working to protect and promote human rights, she brings a wealth of experience and expertise to her role. She is currently an Adjunct Professor of Business and Human Rights in Trinity College Dublin. She was the founder of Front Line Defenders - the International Foundation for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders. Ms. Lawlor has been previously Director of the Irish Office of Amnesty International from 1988 to 2000. Her current work as Special Rapporteur encompasses addressing issues such as freedom of expression, assembly, and association, as well as protecting human rights defenders from threats, harassment, and reprisals. As the UN Special Rapporteur, Ms Lawlor plays a vital role in monitoring and reporting on the situation of human rights defenders, advocating for their protection, and raising awareness of their invaluable contributions.</p> <p>Michel Forst</p> <p>Michel Forst serves as the United Nations Special Rapporteur on environmental defenders, a mandate established within the framework of the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention-UNECE), an international agreement concerning environmental rights. From 2014 to 2020, he served as the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders. With a strong commitment to protecting the rights of individuals working to promote and defend human rights, Mr Forst has played a significant role in raising awareness about the challenges faced by human rights defenders worldwide. He brought extensive expertise and experience to his role, having served in various capacities within the human rights field, including as a prominent academic, an activist, and the Secretary-General of the French National Consultative Commission on Human Rights.</p>
Background	<p>United Nations mechanisms and agencies play a crucial role in advancing child rights and can be leveraged to respond to the challenges faced by the child rights movement. Two key challenges exist in this regard.</p> <p>The first concerns lack of awareness of child rights issues by – and of their relevance to – bodies, mechanisms and agencies of the UN. This often results in a lack of willingness by some of them to take up or fully consider child rights issues. Although progress has been seen in some areas (such as increasing levels of child participatory processes within some mechanisms) the overriding approach that has been seen to this point will need to change in light of the forthcoming UN Secretary-General's Guidance Note on child rights</p>

	<p>mainstreaming, which will call on all bodies, mechanisms and agencies to apply a child rights approach to their work.</p> <p>Another challenge concerns the complexity of the UN system and the way that various parts of it function and inter-relate. In this regard, a key mandate of Child Rights Connect is to assist its network members to better understand how to effectively engage with UN mechanisms, and build their capacity to do so in an effective way that incorporates a child rights based approach.</p>
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16h – 16h30	Coffee break
	Refreshments will be served in the lobby.

16h30-17h30	Working Group 3: Access to justice for child rights defenders: paving the way to protect and empower children
Main hall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Moderator: Marta Gil Gonzalez, Terre des Hommes Lausanne Foundation & the Global Initiative on Justice With Children ▪ Benoit Van Keirsbilck, member of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child ▪ Arjun (CAT child advisor from Nepal) and Hala (CAT child advisor from Palestine) ▪ Kalālapa, youth representative of Our Children’s Trust ▪ Gülşen Güler, Young Justice Leaders (Pathfinders SGD 16) <p>Followed by an open discussion</p>
<p>Zoom link: https://bakermckenzie.zoom.us/j/95589052512?pwd=Uyt3K3hyckQzTTThVK2xCY0N4WXpCQT09</p> <p>Meeting ID: 955 8905 2512</p> <p>Meeting Passcode: 542890</p>	
Biographies	<p>Moderator: Marta Gil Gonzalez</p> <p>Marta Gil Gonzalez is a prominent advocate for children's rights. Within Terre des Hommes Lausanne Foundation and the Global Initiative on Justice with Children, she has played a vital role in designing and implementing programmes, advocating for policy changes, and raising awareness about the unique challenges faced by children in the justice system. Her work focuses on advancing the rights of children in vulnerable situations, particularly those in conflict with the law or victims of exploitation and abuse. Marta has played a pivotal role in the development of strategies and initiatives that support the implementation of international norms and standards for the protection and promotion of children's rights, particularly in the areas of inclusive and non-discriminatory justice with a focus on gender justice and the support to children and youth social movements working towards equality and equity in justice.</p> <p>Benoit Van Keirsbilck</p> <p>Benoit Van Keirsbilck is the Director of the Belgian section of Defence for Children – International (DCI) and a member of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (since 2021). He is Chief Editor of the Journal of Children’s Law (Belgium) and member of the</p>

	<p>Advisory board of the UN Global Study on children deprived of liberty. Mr Van Keirsbilck is member of the Interdisciplinary Center for the rights of the child, that organises academic courses and develops research.</p> <p>Arjun and Hala Kalālāpa</p> <p>Kalā is a 19-year-old Native Hawaiian who grew up on the north shores of both Kaua'i and Oahu. She has witnessed and experienced the effects of climate change on both islands. Most notably, in 2018, North Shore communities on Kaua'i received nearly 50 inches of rain within 24 hours, producing some of the most extreme flooding conditions in Hawai'i's record history and road-based access into and out of Kalā's community was cut-off for several weeks. Kalā currently attends college at USC and plans to return to Kaua'i in the future after finishing college to continue to advocate for the protection of Hawai'i's natural resources.</p> <p>Gülşen Güler</p> <p>Gülşen Güler is a UK-based researcher who examines the relationship between data, justice, society and power. She is also a trained justice social worker where she witnessed the limitations and embedded biases in digital reporting systems as well as the real-world harm these have caused. Her lived experiences in this field led her to specialize in data literacy and digital inclusion. Her work is informed by intersectional feminism, situated learning, and sociotechnical imaginaries. Gülşen is also one of the Young Justice Leaders (Pathfinders) whose efforts will lead them to the 2023 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Summit in which SDG 16+ will be a focal point of discussion.</p>
Background	<p>The CRC Committee (in its 2018 Day of General Discussion on children as human rights defenders), recognised that States should ensure that child human rights defenders (CHRDs) can access child-friendly complaint mechanisms at the national and international levels to report and file complaints of human rights violations, including violations of the rights that children are entitled to when they act as human rights defenders and that are spelled out in the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders.</p> <p>The increasing global mobilisation of CHRDs is helping to shed light on the violations that children are subjected to as well as the barriers that prevent them from accessing justice. Violations include for example systematic and undue restrictions to their civil and political rights (right to be heard, right to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly), punishment by schools, threats, violence, executions, and disappearances in many jurisdictions. Yet, CHRDs who are victims of human rights violations face barriers to seek justice, including the lack of child-friendly information on existing mechanisms that are specialised on the protection of human rights defenders, the lack of lawyers specialised on both civil and political rights and children's rights, parents' fear of negative consequences which leads to lack of consent for legal action, and the lack of child rights mainstreaming within strategic litigation on human rights defenders' rights. The pandemic and climate change have only added to such challenges in the future of a child-friendly justice system. Yet, children are seen to carry on with hope and power as agents of change.</p> <p>In the context of climate justice (ensuring the promotion of equality and collective responsibility in the context of mitigating climate change), the large extent to which children are impacted by the climate crisis provides children with an inherent right to</p>

	<p>participate and be heard in matters of climate justice. Through the draft General Comment No. 26, the CRC Committee has made it clear that children must have access to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment. In fact, climate justice is an area where children are highly engaged and are claiming to be an entitled part of the discussion, including by using different justice pathways to defend their rights.</p> <p>The overall aim of this Working Group is to identify (a) what needs to change and (b) what the child rights movement needs to do differently in order to enhance access to effective remedies and reparation for CHRDs who are victims of human rights violations. The Working Group will engage with the need to enhance both the protection and empowerment of CHRDs in relation to access to justice, looking in particular into the situation of CHRDs exercising their right to freedom of peaceful assembly and participating in strategic litigation for matters of climate justice, as concrete examples.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ As to protection: the UNCRC recognises the specific vulnerability and special status of children. States must ensure that children are protected from all forms of violence, abuse and exploitation (Article 19). This is also extended to situations where they are conducting pacific demonstrations such as a peaceful assembly (Article 15). Children should be able to act as defenders in a safe and enabling environment and not be criminalised for such actions. States should enable protective measures for this to be possible. The police and justice institutions play a pivotal role to ensure the rights of children to peaceful assembly, and freedom of expression as a way to claim and defend matters that affect them directly. Those institutions should lead and apply a child-friendly approach when dealing with child rights defenders in the spheres of their mandates and roles, including by empowering them. That extends to facilitating access to justice for children that are willing to use justice avenues to claim their rights. ▪ As to empowerment: States and non-state actors must work towards empowering CHRDs as effective climate justice actors, based on their specific needs and rights as enshrined in the UNCRC. Using individual agency, capacity building, and access to legal aid and justice are crucial elements of legal empowerment. Meaningful participation of children in climate justice is only enhanced by the systematic empowerment of children if challenges are properly addressed: such as adult-centric structures and discrimination which contain blanket provisions which require children below a certain age to be represented exclusively by a legal representative. Defenders are defined by the work they do and not by who they are. Thus, both child or adult defenders deserve to be protected and equipped with the necessary tools of empowerment so they can be effectively supported in their fight as agents of change for a child-friendly justice system across the world. This will ensure that a child-right approach is truly taken in when adults begin recognising them as the independent rights holders they are.
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16h30-17h30	Working Group 4: Use of, and recourse to, established protective mechanisms for human rights defenders by <i>child</i> human rights defenders
Room II/III	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Moderator: Leo Ratledge, Child Rights Information Network (CRIN) ▪ Mikiko Otani, member of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child ▪ Smiljana Frick, Child Rights Information Center Moldova ▪ Anghelina (CAT child advisor from Moldova) ▪ Gheorghe Galbura, young human rights defender from Moldova ▪ Viviana Krsticevic, CEJIL <p>Followed by an open discussion</p>
Zoom link: https://bakermckenzie.zoom.us/j/94045399402?pwd=MCtoTWtGTkUydFg3Qjh2NnczYlcrUT09 Meeting ID: 940 4539 9402 Meeting Passcode: 083346	
Biographies	<p>Moderator: Leo Ratledge</p> <p>Leo Ratledge is the Co-Director of the Child Rights International Network (CRIN). He leads on legal and policy work within CRIN and is jointly responsible for the organisation's strategy and direction. He has worked internationally on the human rights of children since 2010, particularly specialising on access to justice for children, addressing impunity for sexual violence and how children's rights are impacted by emerging technologies. He has substantial experience working with international and regional human rights mechanisms as well as working collectively with coalitions to campaign for the realisation of children's rights.</p> <p>Mikiko Otani</p> <p>Mikiko Otani is a dedicated advocate for children's rights and a member of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, having served as its Chair from 2021-2023. With a profound commitment to promoting and protecting the rights of children and women globally, Ms Otani has a strong background in law and has worked on various child- and women-focused initiatives, both domestically, regionally and internationally. Having worked in various capacities in academia and civil society organizations, engaging with governments and UN mechanisms, she brings extensive experience and expertise in the fields of access to justice, child participation and human rights education. Her contributions to the Committee's work have helped to strengthen the children's rights agenda globally.</p> <p>Smiljana Frick</p> <p>Smiljana Frick has worked for more than a decade with the Child Rights Information Centre (CRIC) in Moldova. She holds postgraduate degrees in philosophy and in childhood studies, with her focus of expertise since then on children's participation in human rights mechanisms. She published a collection of children's reports to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child and has collaborated with civil society organizations, including children and youth in different countries, to advance this practice. Building on the results of the participation of children from Moldova in the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), Smiljana</p>

	<p>supports CRIC and the NHRI in Moldova to empower children to influence development of a comprehensive law on human rights defenders in the country.</p> <p>Anghelina</p> <p>Gheorghe Galbura</p> <p>Gheorghe Galbura is a young human rights defender from Moldova, working with children and empowering them in the process of advocacy for sexual education in schools.</p> <p>Viviana Krsticevic</p> <p>Viviana Krsticevic is Executive Director of the Center for Justice and International Law (CEJIL). With a strong commitment to justice and the protection of human rights, Ms Krsticevic has played a vital role in advancing the rights of individuals and communities throughout the Americas. She has been at the forefront of litigation and advocacy efforts, working to hold States accountable for human rights violations. Ms Krsticevic has been involved in landmark cases before regional and international human rights bodies, contributing to the development of jurisprudence and the strengthening of human rights standards in the region. Krsticevic's expertise spans various areas, including gender equality, indigenous rights, freedom of expression, and access to justice.</p>
Background	<p>Child human rights defenders (CHRDs) face challenges when using or making recourse to established protective mechanisms for adult defenders. These challenges include limited awareness and understanding of available mechanisms, age-related barriers, safety risks and vulnerabilities, limited resources and support, legal and policy gaps, and stigmatization.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ CHRDs often lack awareness of protective mechanisms and how to access them. They may not be familiar with specific mechanisms for human rights defenders or struggle to navigate complex processes. Additionally, their age can present barriers as they may not be taken seriously or encounter difficulties accessing mechanisms designed for adults. ▪ Safety risks and vulnerabilities pose significant challenges for CHRDs. They are exposed to threats, harassment, and violence from actors opposing their activism. These risks may hinder their ability to engage with protective mechanisms and/or to seek effective support. ▪ Limited resources and support further compound the challenges. CHRDs may lack access to crucial resources such as legal support, counselling services, and safe spaces. This hampers their ability to engage with protective mechanisms and seek assistance when needed. ▪ Legal and policy frameworks may not adequately recognize and protect CHRDs. By enlarge, existing mechanisms are not tailored to CHRDs' unique needs and challenges, leaving them without sufficient guidance and support. ▪ Stigmatization and social repercussions also pose obstacles. CHRDs may face discrimination, bullying, and social isolation within their communities. This discourages them from seeking help from protective mechanisms and exacerbates their vulnerability.

17h30-18h	Closing
Main hall	Alex Conte, Executive Director of Child Rights Connect, will provide comments on next steps and follow up to the conference. María Herczog, President of Child Rights Connect, will give brief closing remarks.
Zoom link: https://bakermckenzie.zoom.us/j/98923234066?pwd=dXVHNnVzUjdVV1ZVOE5KN1NGYTJkUT09 Meeting ID: 989 2323 4066 Meeting Passcode: 382817	

Practical information

Conference venue

The conference is convened at the Ecumenical Center (1 route des Morillons, 1218 Le Grand-Saconnex).

Where indicated by the blue bus sign below, public transport is available on buses 5, 8 and F (stop: Crêts-de-Morillon).

For **bus timetables**, go to <https://www.tpg.ch/en/itineraires>.

Registration will open at 8h30 in the lobby of the Center.

Conference sessions will be held in either the Main Hall (ground floor) or in Room II/III (first floor). Please see the conference programme for details on where each session is held.

Coffee/refreshment breaks will be in the lobby. **Lunch** will be available in the cafeteria (first floor) – participants will be provided with a lunch voucher when registering.

Internet is available in all parts of the conference venue. The wifi network is 'Ecumenical Center' and the password is 'oikoumene'.

Online participation

As a hybrid conference, online participation will be facilitated through **Zoom**. **Please note that there are separate links for each session** (as shown in the annotated agenda).

Please join the meeting at 8h45 to check audio and video connections. Please connect using your organisation's name and your own name/surname.

The **following suggestions** are made to help ensure a smooth and productive meeting:

1. If you are a speaker or child participant, please keep yourself muted when not speaking so as to prevent feedback and minimise background noise.
2. When speaking, please use your camera unless your network connection is slow.
3. Please make focussed interventions to allow others to also engage, bearing in mind the limited time available.
4. Please keep the chat window open to follow comments/questions.
5. Please see the guidance below on engaging in interactive dialogues and open discussions.
6. Please eliminate distractions by closing other applications that are not needed. This may also help connectivity.
7. To respect everyone's privacy, please do not take screen shots of the meeting without prior consent. In particular, please do not take or share photos or videos of the child participants without their prior approval and do not share information about them on social media which would make them identifiable.



Interpretation

Simultaneous interpretation (English - French - Spanish) will be available during all parts of the conference (Bulgarian interpretation will be added for Working Group 1). In-person participants will have access to headsets. Online participants can choose their preferred language by clicking the Interpretation icon on the Zoom platform.



Please speak slowly and clearly to assist the interpreters.

Interactive dialogues and open discussions

For plenary panels and the keynote address by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, interactive dialogues will follow speakers' presentations. For working group sessions, open discussions will follow presentations.

To facilitate interactive dialogues and open discussions in a hybrid setting:

1. In-person participants are asked to raise their hand. A facilitator will provide participants with a microphone (connected to the online audio and interpreters).
2. Speakers and child participants online will be able to use the 'raise your hand' function on Zoom to respond to questions, comment on issues or raise their own question(s).
3. All other online participants are asked to use the Q & A function on Zoom to raise questions or make comments. A facilitator will communicate questions and comments to the room.

For working group sessions, Jamboard will be used to facilitate an interactive experience. A link will be provided at the beginning of each working group session in the Zoom chat, allowing online positing of ideas and comments.

Next steps / follow up

All parts of the conference will be recorded, with recordings to be made available on the conference website.⁵ The Child Rights Connect Secretariat intends to use these to help it draw key findings and recommendations from the conference so that these can be used to strengthen on-going advocacy as well as to identify potential global responses to the challenges being faced by the child rights movement and child human rights defenders. In turn, this will inform development of the Strategic Plan for 2025-2029 for the Child Rights Connect network, which will be considered for adoption at the organisation's General Assembly in mid-2024. Conference discussions may also inform the contribution of Child Rights Connect to the *Human Rights 75* Initiative of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, which will affirm the need to put children's rights at the core of any new vision for the future of human rights.

Child Rights Connect encourages all participants to provide feedback on how the conference went. This is important for the Secretariat, to inform the further development of a strategy on responding to challenges faced by the child rights movement and to help improve its work. The survey is anonymous and survey responses will remain confidential.

Child participants are invited to fill in this online questionnaire: <https://forms.gle/c6xef7GBLqFLnMMH7>

Adult participants are invited to fill in this online questionnaire: <https://forms.gle/2Y88hV1UgATbZpGx9>

⁵ <https://childrightsconnect.org/changing-the-narrative/>.