



Child Rights Connect Statement
Opening of the 96th session of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child
6 May 2024

Distinguished members of the Committee, representatives of UN agencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Child Rights Connect welcomes the holding of this 96th session of the Committee, amidst the challenges posed by the UN liquidity crisis and the drastic measures adopted as a consequence. On 10 April, Child Rights Connect issued a letter expressing deep concern about this situation, joined by almost 200 organisations from around the world, including NGOs, NHRIs and children’s ombuds, UNICEF national committees, and academia. We joined the Committee in expressing deep concern over the cancellation of the May pre-session and its impact on the work of the Committee, setting an unacceptable precedent. The cancellation of the pre-session on top of the announcement in January of the cancellation of hybrid arrangements for UN human rights bodies and mechanisms, are measures that affect the possibilities for children and civil society to interact with this Committee and contribute to your work, as well as the work of the UN human rights system as a whole. It is worrying to see that global trends of shrinking civil society space are clearly materialising at the UN level.

Nevertheless, we highly welcome the Committee's efforts to schedule pre-session meetings for two countries during this session, notwithstanding that this will stretch your capacities. We are aware that this is an exceptional measure in exceptional circumstances.

At a time when the work of the Committee continues to be more crucial than ever amidst the multitude of crises that disproportionately affect children in the world today, including armed conflicts, climate change, growing poverty and persisting inequalities, and shrinking civic space, we hope that additional solutions can be explored with the UN Secretariat and OHCHR to minimise the impact of the pre-session cancellation and to ensure reduction of the backlog.

We will continue to support the Committee to ensure that it can fully undertake its core activities with the effective participation of children and civil society, and continue to call on UN Member States to comply with their financial commitments to the UN by paying their dues in full and without delay. Strengthening joint efforts to ensure implementation of the Secretary-General’s Guidance Note on Child Rights Mainstreaming will be key to mobilise the UN system to collectively strengthen and elevate a shared UN child rights agenda, including through meaningful and effective child participation.

Finally, I wish to thank those Committee members that have provided feedback in our process to develop a new Strategic Plan for 2025-2029. We have now just completed a second round of consultations, based on which we are preparing a final draft of the Strategy for adoption by Child Rights Connect members at the end of June. Alongside developing a child friendly version of the adopted Strategy, we will share this with the Committee.

I thank you.

Alex Conte
Executive Director
child rights connect