



Child Rights Connect Statement

Opening of the 97th session of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child

26 August 2024

Distinguished members of the Committee, representatives of UN agencies, ladies and gentlemen, Child Rights Connect welcomes this 97th session and 99th pre-session of the Committee, after months of uncertainty. We commend the efforts of the Committee and OHCHR in securing funding to ensure that the Committee could continue its core activities. We hope that the budget for next year can be secured in time to ensure that information on the schedule of reviews is available as early as possible to increase predictability and transparency which is essential for civil society and children to plan for their engagement with the Committee.

A matter of concern that remains is the backlog of reports. The [Conclusions of the 36th meeting of Chairs of the human rights treaty bodies](#) reported that by December 2023, the Committee on the Rights of the Child had the highest backlog of reports pending review (78 reports), a number that as of today remains similarly high. The Chairs' report adds that "It would take the Committee approximately 2.74 years to clear this backlog with their current working methods and Secretariat staffing levels". We are aware that the UN liquidity crisis complicated this. We nevertheless encourage the Committee and the OHCHR to look for creative solutions to address this situation and we stand ready to support the Committee in identifying possible scenarios to adapt working methods.

We also take this opportunity to share some updates:

- Child Rights Connect members have now adopted a new Strategic Plan for 2025-2029. We thank the Committee and OHCHR for their engagement in its development and look forward to working with you to implement the Strategy.
- In the past two years, we have been engaging together with our members and partners in the process of the Summit of the Future and resulting Pact for the Future. This has been a very opaque process for civil society. Notwithstanding the impact it will have on children, it has been very difficult to mainstream child rights amidst coordinated pushback from States. As we await the final Pact for the Future, we look forward to co-hosting an online side event together with children, the Committee, DKA Austria, UNEP, and partners from the Global South on 20 September to discuss the impact of this process on children's rights and the environment.
- We continue to mainstream children's rights at the Human Rights Council to create spaces for dialogue amidst the continued polarisation among States around child participation and the role of the family. During the upcoming session, we will host a side-event on the right of children to participate in public affairs to shed light on existing misconceptions.
- Following the report in March by the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders on child and youth defenders, we initiated a process with more than 50 representatives from civil society, UN bodies and children to come up with a joint strategic vision to further advance the rights of child human rights defenders (CHRDs). This joint Strategic Vision builds bridges among different sectors of the human rights community to bring new actors to the table. We will soon launch this Strategic Vision, and we will invite CRC members to endorse these efforts.
- Finally, we welcome the collaboration with the Committee on the General Comment 27 (GC27) on Children's Rights to Access to Justice and Effective Remedies to ensure that information is circulated among CSOs, including children. We hosted an open webinar for civil society in July

with two Committee members and we continue to provide support to the Committee to ensure that children and CSOs can contribute to its development.

I thank you.

Alex Conte
Executive Director
child rights connect