



## **Child Rights Connect Statement**

### **Opening of the 100<sup>th</sup> session of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child**

#### **12 January 2025**

Distinguished members of the Committee, representatives of UN agencies, colleagues and friends,

As the Committee holds its 100th session—an occasion that should be marked by celebration—Child Rights Connect expresses its deep concern over the recurrent cancellation of meetings of this Committee. These include the May 2025 pre-session, the September 2025 session and pre-session, and now the January 2026 pre-session, alongside cancellations affecting other treaty bodies. These developments point to a clear crisis within the treaty body system, which constitutes the backbone of the UN human rights pillar.

Child Rights Connect has repeatedly raised concerns regarding this situation and mobilised civil society in response, including through a [joint letter](#) issued in August last year, signed by almost 150 civil society organisations and addressed to the UN Secretary-General and Member States.

The cancellation of meetings, the late confirmation of sessions and pre-sessions, and the discontinuation of hybrid modalities severely undermine the CRC Committee's ability to fulfil its core mandate. As representatives of civil society, we are particularly concerned by the resulting restrictions on opportunities for civil society—especially children themselves—to participate meaningfully in monitoring States' implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocols. This is especially alarming at a time when children worldwide are increasingly affected by a convergence of crises, including deepening poverty and economic shocks, climate change, armed conflict, and the erosion of essential health and education services.

In this context, we nevertheless warmly welcome and appreciate the Committee's efforts in September to organise the cancelled May pre-session online, enabling it to continue its work despite significant constraints.

At a time of crisis, cooperation between treaty bodies and civil society is much more critical. Together with TB-Net—the network of NGOs supporting civil society engagement with treaty bodies—Child Rights Connect has been calling for the following measures:

- **Ensuring a minimum level of predictability in scheduling, despite ongoing financial uncertainty.** When sessions and pre-sessions are confirmed at a late stage, NGOs face serious challenges in securing visas, travel costs increase significantly, and some organisations lose earmarked funding, all of which make meaningful participation far more difficult.
- **Securing hybrid participation modalities.** At a time when civil society resources are extremely limited, hybrid participation enables organisations from all regions—including those without the means to travel to Geneva—to contribute meaningfully to the work of treaty bodies. This is not only a practical measure but also an equity measure that ensures broad and inclusive participation.
- **Ensuring that meetings between civil society and the Committee are maintained.** A good practice from other treaty bodies has been to organise an annual meeting with civil society in hybrid format. This is a practice that Child Rights Connect has repeatedly encouraged the Committee on the Rights of the Child to introduce, and we reiterate this call.



As a UN system-wide reform effort, Child Rights Connect is closely following the UN80 Initiative process. Together with our member organisations, we have recently developed [joint messages](#) to inform this reform process, calling for the Secretary-General's Guidance Note on Child Rights Mainstreaming to serve as a central framework for reforms undertaken under the UN80 Initiative. The Guidance Note mandates the mobilisation of the UN system to collectively strengthen and advance a shared child rights agenda across all pillars—peace and security, human rights, and development—including through meaningful and effective child participation, adequate budgeting, and coordinated implementation across mandates.

We also take this opportunity to share additional updates regarding our work:

- We are ready to start developing the child-friendly version of the Committee's General Comment 27 on children's right to access to justice and to an effective remedy upon its adoption, thanks to the collaboration of UNICEF and the support of our Children's Advisory Team.
- Together with our Working Group on Children in Armed Conflict, we are informing the organisation of the Human Rights Council Annual Day on the Rights of the Child to take place in March 2026 on the theme of children and armed conflict and the drafting of the related resolution on the rights of the child. For the first time ever, we organised a consultation between children in countries affected by armed conflict and the European Union to directly inform the drafting of the resolution.

Child Rights Connect and its members continue to operate despite the unprecedented funding crisis which is seriously hampering the functioning of child rights sector and, most importantly, is heavily impacting the respect, the protection and the fulfilment of children's rights worldwide in many ways. Nevertheless, we express our commitment to continue to support the Committee and stand ready to join the efforts to explore innovative ways of functioning with the Committee and OHCHR to minimise the impact of the cancellation of meeting and to effectively address the growing backlog.

I thank you.

Rossella Urru  
Interim Executive Director  
**child rights connect**