



# Convention on the Rights of the Child

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## Committee on the Rights of the Child Ninety-fifth session

### Summary record (partial)\* of the 2757th meeting

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Monday, 15 January 2024, at 10 a.m.

*Chair:* Ms. Skelton

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\* No summary record was prepared for the rest of the meeting.

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*The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.*

### **Opening of the session**

1. **Mr. Cissé-Gouro** (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)) declared open the ninety-fifth session of the Committee on the Rights of the Child.

2. He said that, despite the fact that it was over 75 years since the signing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, more and more children were still being killed every day. Moreover, it was estimated that around one in five children was currently living in or fleeing from a conflict zone. He therefore wished to echo the appeal made by the High Commissioner for Human Rights to rekindle the spirit, impulse and vitality that had led to the Universal Declaration.

3. Since the previous session, Committee members had taken part in activities related to the launch of its general comment No. 26 (2023) on children's rights and the environment, with a special focus on climate change ([CRC/C/GC/26](#)). They had also carried out various engagements in the context of the twenty-eighth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, as well as missions to Cambodia and Thailand, and held a meeting with the Chair and Rapporteur of the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child.

4. In November 2023, three members of the Committee and one former member had visited the Pacific islands, where they had conducted follow-up visits to three States parties. They had also held a regional workshop in Samoa, which had included the regional launch of general comment No. 26. At the event, a number of children had spoken about their work as environmental and children's rights activists and offered their advice and aspirations for a clean and healthy environment.

5. In 2023, children had made an important contribution to the Human Rights 75 initiative. At a high-level event held in December, child advisers from Child Rights Connect had presented a vision for human rights based on a global survey of almost 4,000 children. They had called on the United Nations to increase collaboration with children at all levels and to ensure the equitable participation of all children, including younger children, children with disabilities and children without access to the Internet. Since children's voices, experiences and solutions were central to realizing human rights for all, it was crucial that children should be included in preparations for the Summit of the Future and the drafting of A Pact for the Future. As the High Commissioner had stressed at the high-level event, children must be asked not just to offer ideas but to contribute to decisions.

6. OHCHR remained committed to promoting efforts to strengthen the treaty body system. The High Commissioner had organized an informal briefing on the treaty body strengthening process in November 2023, which had been attended by representatives of 118 States and several members of various treaty bodies. As at 30 November 2023, 364 State party reports and over 2,000 individual communications had still been awaiting examination, while 957 urgent actions had remained open. For 2024, OHCHR had set itself the strategic objective of securing the support of States for treaty body reform, in accordance with the working paper it had prepared on the basis of the conclusions of the Chairs of the treaty bodies. The future trajectory of the treaty body system would ultimately be determined by decisions taken by States over the course of the following 12 months, culminating in the adoption of the biennial General Assembly resolution in December 2024.

7. On 14 March 2024, the Human Rights Council would host thematic discussions on two subjects related to children's rights, namely the right of the child to inclusive social protection and the integration of children's rights within the United Nations. OHCHR was working closely with Child Rights Connect and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to ensure that children would play an active part in those discussions, and it was hoped that Committee members would also attend the event.

8. **Ms. Grandjean** (United Nations Children's Fund) said that the issue of the protection of the family had returned to the agenda of the Human Rights Council in September 2023. There had been major disagreements on the matter, since the concept of family protection

was often interpreted in a way that deprived children of their status as individual rights holders and assertions were made that the CRC gave parents the right to limit their children's rights. In the context of the Council's discussions, UNICEF and the Universal Rights Group had jointly organized a policy discussion, attended by 13 State representatives, with a view to exploring common ground on the subject and seeking a consensus on the rights of the child. In that regard, it welcomed the Committee's authoritative interpretation of article 5 of the Convention.

9. In 2023, UNICEF had adopted an internal framework for action to ensure that it was better equipped to counteract any efforts to restrict children's rights, including by reinforcing knowledge of children's rights across the agency and strengthening its advocacy work. Over the course of 2024, it would also continue to update its online toolkit designed to guide its engagement with human rights mechanisms, including with the addition of new guidance on reporting on children and armed conflict and on children's access to justice.

10. UNICEF had recommended that specific references to children should be included in A Pact for the Future. It also argued that the issue of children's rights should be central to all the themes discussed at the Summit of the Future and that children should be meaningfully consulted before, during and after the Summit. UNICEF had therefore welcomed the Committee's call to world leaders on Human Rights Day 2023 to place children at the very core of the Summit, and it was amplifying that message in its exchanges with Member States and other United Nations partners.

11. **Mr. Conte** (Child Rights Connect) said that 2024 was an important year for the Committee, since it marked the thirty-fifth anniversary of the Convention and the tenth anniversary of the Optional Protocol on a communications procedure. Child Rights Connect looked forward to supporting the development of the Committee's new general comment, including by helping to ensure that children could share their views and recommendations with the Committee. The new general comment presented an opportunity to reinforce the principles of the Guidance Note of the Secretary-General on Child Rights Mainstreaming. Likewise, the Summit of the Future would test the capacity of actors across the United Nations system to implement the Guidance Note and establish a shared agenda on children's rights. Child Rights Connect greatly appreciated the Committee's call to place children at the centre of the Summit.

12. For its part, in 2024, Child Rights Connect would develop and adopt a new strategic plan for the period 2025–2029. It called on the Committee to hold an annual meeting with civil society organizations. Such meetings would provide the opportunity for the Committee to share news of its activities and for organizations to provide information on emerging trends and challenges that might impact the Committee's work and mandate.

### **Submission of reports of States parties**

13. **Ms. Franchetti** (Secretary of the Committee), reviewing developments since the closure of the previous session, said that the number of States that had ratified the Convention was still 196. Six reports had been submitted under the Convention, bringing the total number of reports pending consideration to 72. Three periodic reports had been received under the Convention: the periodic reports of Palau, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Cameroon. Overall, 67 periodic reports were overdue. No new States had opted out of the simplified reporting procedure since the previous session.

14. The number of States that had ratified the Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict was still 173, and the number that had ratified the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography was still 178. One State, the Republic of Moldova, had ratified the Optional Protocol on a communications procedure since the closure of the previous session, bringing the total number of States to have ratified it to 51.

15. Seychelles and Malta had submitted reports under the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, and Seychelles had also submitted its initial report under the Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict. There were 36 overdue reports under the Optional Protocol on the involvement of children

in armed conflict and 48 under the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography.

**Adoption of the agenda (CRC/C/95/1)**

16. **The Chair**, reviewing the items on the provisional agenda (CRC/C/95/1), said that reports under the Convention from six States parties would be considered during the session. For one of those States parties, namely Senegal, the Committee would also consider initial reports under the Optional Protocols on the involvement of children in armed conflict and on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography. The Committee had originally been scheduled to consider the periodic report of Israel during the current session. However, further to a request received by the Committee, that review had been postponed and it was now hoped that it would take place later in the year.

17. The Committee would continue its discussions on strengthening its cooperation with relevant bodies to enhance the promotion and protection of the rights of the child. In that regard, the Chair would report on her informal meeting with members of the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, and the Committee would hold an online meeting with the European Committee of Social Rights. The Committee would also continue its discussions on the treaty body strengthening process and the procedure to be followed in the consideration of and follow-up to reports of States parties. As from the current session, the Committee would implement its decision to proceed with the simplified reporting procedure as the standard operating procedure for periodic reports under the Convention and for initial reports under the Optional Protocols. During its dialogues with States parties, the Committee would be asking questions under a new cluster on children's rights and the environment, and an appropriate section would also be incorporated into its concluding observations. Any communications or information received under the Optional Protocol on a communications procedure would be considered. The Committee would discuss methods of work concerning future days of general discussion and general comments. Lastly, it would also announce the topic of its new general comment.

18. She would take it that, if there were no further comments, Committee members wished to adopt the provisional agenda.

19. *It was so decided.*

20. Before bringing the public part of the meeting to a close, she wished to reiterate that the Committee had marked World Children's Day on 20 November 2023 in a sombre mood. The state of children's rights around the world gave cause for deep reflection, and the Committee was acutely aware of its responsibility to ensure that children's rights were promoted and protected. It would continue to carry out that work and to make statements on the major issues of the day.

*The discussion covered in the summary record ended at 10.35 a.m.*