



Statement of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on Human Rights Day 2023

10 December 2023

Children should be recognized and involved as key actors in the Summit of the Future

On the occasion of the Human Rights Day and ahead of the year 2024 for the Summit of the Future, the Committee on the Rights of the Child calls on world leaders to place children at the very core of the Summit, by involving children as active participants in the process and integrating child rights in the Pact for the Future and its annexes.

Seventy-five years ago, the United Nations proclaimed that all human beings are equal in dignity and rights, as the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world. This includes children, who are human beings and individual subjects of rights. States have accepted the international legal obligations to respect, protect and fulfill children's rights recognized in the almost universally ratified Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Yet full realization of children's rights in all places of the world is far from reality. Children continue to suffer and face risks of many and multiple forms of violations of their rights, due to poverty, violence, inequalities, armed conflict, displacement, climate change and other crises. How children grow up today is the foundation of their future and the future society they build and live in. Children's experiences, concerns, challenges, views, expectations and visions must receive specific and sufficient attention as essential elements to "forge a new global consensus on what our future should look like," in the discussion toward the Pact for the Future.

Children have views and diverse and rich experiences to share but they face insurmountable barriers and their participation is limited and often discouraged. If the UN is truly committed to become a more inclusive multilateral platform for partnership and solidarity having people at its center as outlined in Our Common Agenda, children must be an integral part of the process for the Summit of the Future, a "once-in-a-generation opportunity" to develop the frameworks of multilateralism so they are fit for the future.

The Committee welcomes the Secretary-General's Guidance Note on Child Rights Mainstreaming, which underscores the urgent need of systematic attention to child rights for the UN to be fully inclusive and able to deliver on its mandate across all pillars, including upholding "all rights of all people", achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and ensuring peace and security. The Summit of the Future will be a test for implementing the Guidance Note for the mobilization of the UN system to collectively strengthen and elevate a shared UN child rights agenda.

The Summit should integrate a child rights perspective into all discussions and decisions, including on climate crisis, peace and security, digital compact and future generations.

Children are disproportionately affected by climate crisis. As rights holders, children are entitled to protection from environmental harm and to be recognized and fully respected as



environmental actors. Conflict affects millions of children worldwide, subjecting them to serious physical, mental, and psychosocial harm. Peace is fundamental for protection of children from the impact of armed conflict and children must be recognized as peacebuilders and key agents of change, not solely as vulnerable victims. Digital technology now permeates every aspect of children's lives. It affords new opportunities for the realization of children's rights, but also poses the risks of their violation or abuse. The digital environment should support, promote and protect their safe and equitable engagement.

Children deserve special attention and a space at the table, as important partners and stakeholders today to build peaceful, just and inclusive societies, and ensure the lasting protection of the planet, also as the most significant future decision makers for future generations. There cannot be sustainable development, peace and security until each and every child has their rights fulfilled, respected and protected.
