

United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC)

Launch of general comment No. 26 on children's rights and the environment with a special focus on climate change

18 September 2023, 11:30 – 13:00

Room XVII, Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland

(Live broadcast and archived on <https://media.un.org/en/webtv>)

Programme (as of 15 September 2023)

Background

During its 93rd session in May 2023, the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child (the Committee) adopted its [general comment No. 26 on children's rights and the environment with a special focus on climate change](#).

To inform the content of the general comment, the Committee, together with its partners, launched a series of in-person and online consultations from October 2021 to February 2023, including [children's consultations](#) and [expert thematic workshops](#). The Committee received more than 170 written submissions from States, United Nations entities, national human rights institutions, civil society and children's organizations, and experts on both the concept note and the first draft of the general comment. It also benefited from 16,331 contributions from children from 121 countries. At the regional level, consultations were organized in Asia and South America.

An essential part of the development of general comment No. 26 has been the involvement of children themselves. To ensure that the general comment is representative of the diverse experiences and best interests of children globally, the Committee has taken a collaborative, intergenerational approach to its development. Coordinated by terre des hommes and supported by local child rights organisations, a [Children's Advisory Team](#) was established, bringing together 12 children aged 11 to 17 from different regions, backgrounds and with diverse lived experiences, to: (1) ensure that all children have opportunities to contribute to the development of the general comment, e.g. through child-friendly online questionnaires, educational material, communications and events; (2) provide guidance on the development of the general comment and its child-friendly versions based on children's feedback; and (3) raise awareness of the general comment among children worldwide.

The Committee's work to develop the general comment has been supported by a steering group coordinated by terre des hommes in collaboration with Children's Environmental Rights Initiative (CERI) and its [expert advisors](#) and partners including the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), UNICEF, UNEP and Child Rights Connect.

The Committee's general comment No. 26 is the outcome of remarkable global engagement and serves as a significant milestone towards the realisation of children's rights in relation to the environment and climate change. In light of this, the Committee will hold a formal launch of its general comment No. 26 on 18 September 2023 during its 94th session. Information on additional activities to mark the launch of the general comment, including a tree planting ceremony organized with the city of Geneva, Switzerland, can be found at <https://childrightsenvironment.org/launch/>.

Programme

Co-moderated by **Ann Skelton**, Chair of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, and **Maya-Natuk**, Child Advisor (17, Greenland)

- 11:30 – 11:45** **Introductory remarks**
- **Ann Skelton**, Chair of the Committee on the Rights of the Child
 - **Volker Türk**, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, via video message
 - **Āniva**, Child Advisor (17, Pacific Islands), via video message
 - **Christina Kitsos**, Vice-Chair of the Administrative Council, City of Geneva, Switzerland
- 11:45 – 11:48** **Video message** from Ms. Paloma Escudero, Special Advisor on children’s rights and climate action, UNICEF
- 11:48 – 12:27** **A conversation on the implications of general comment No. 26 for children and duty-bearers**
- **Velina Todorova**, Member of the Committee on the Rights of the Child
 - **George**, Child Advisor (16, Zambia)
 - **Arnold Kreilhuber**, Regional Director and Representative, Regional Office for Europe, United Nations Environment Programme
 - **Marisa Graham**, Ombudsperson for the Rights of Children and Adolescents in Argentina
 - Q&A with the audience
- 12:27 – 12:30** **Video message** from Mr. David Boyd, United Nations Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and the Environment
- 12:30 – 12:40** **Presentation of the child-friendly version of general comment No. 26**
- Introduction by **Philip Jaffé**, Member of the Committee on the Rights of the Child
 - **Esmeralda**, Child Advisor (16, Peru)
 - **Elisabeth**, Child Advisor (16, Rwanda)
 - Animation
- 12:40 – 12:55** **In our own words: the stories behind general comment No. 26**
- Introduction by **Madhvi**, Child Advisor (12, USA)
 - Video messages from **Olt**, Child Advisor (17, Kosovo¹) and children who participated in consultations, supported by *terre des hommes* and Child Rights Coalition Cambodia
- 12:55 – 13:00** **Concluding remarks**
- **Benyam Dawit Mezmur**, Member of the Committee on the Rights of the Child
 - **Kartik**, Child Advisor (17, India)

¹ All references to Kosovo should be understood to be in the context of United Nations Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).