



COMMITTEE ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

20 YEARS SINCE THE COMING INTO FORCE OF THE OPTIONAL PROTOCOL TO THE CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD ON THE SALE OF CHILDREN, CHILD PROSTITUTION AND CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

**23 March 2022, Online (via Zoom)
08:00 NYC, 13:00 Geneva, 21:00 Tokyo (duration: 90 min)**

CONCEPT NOTE

Context:

The Convention on the Rights of the Child, adopted in 1989, and its Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography (OPSC) of 2002, are the most comprehensive international legal instruments that promote and safeguard the rights of the child and protect children from sale, sexual exploitation and sexual abuse. Together, these treaties represent the commitment of the international community to address the factors which contribute to such criminal acts against children. As of June 2021, the number of States parties to the OPSC stands at 177.

In 2022, the Committee on the Rights of the Child (Committee) celebrates the 20th anniversary of the coming into force of the OPSC, which took place on 18 January 2002. To celebrate this historic event, the Committee, in collaboration with the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Sale of Children, the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary General on Violence Against Children, the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery (Slavery Fund), Child Rights Connect and ECPAT, is convening a panel discussion to support States parties' implementation of and reporting on their commitments under the OPSC, and to encourage ratification by States which are not yet a party. The panel discussion will also highlight the continued relevance of the OPSC to current realities, including its use in combatting the sale and sexual exploitation of children in the digital environment, as well as the context of travel and tourism and of the COVID-19 pandemic, subjects which have received close treatment by the Committee.

Objectives:

- (1) ***Highlight key moments and achievements*** of the OPSC since its coming into force in 2002.
- (2) ***Increase knowledge*** of the OPSC among all stakeholders, and on how to implement it and report on its implementation using the Committee's 2019 Guidelines regarding the implementation of the OPSC (CRC/C/156), and of the Special Rapporteur's 2022 report on addressing the sale and sexual exploitation of children, and its annex with a checklist to assist States in moving towards a more effective implementation (A/HRC/49/51).
- (3) ***Encourage ratification of the OPSC***, by States which are not yet a party.
- (4) ***Raise awareness about the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery***, and particularly amongst survivors of slavery.

Proposed format:

The Committee, in collaboration with its partners, is convening a public online celebration that brings together children, members of the Committee, States, NGOs, National Human Rights Institutions, professionals working on children's rights and other interested stakeholders, to reflect on the achievements of the OPSC in the past 20 years, and what is needed to secure its implementation within the current context, both with respect to digital advances, travel and tourism, and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the sale and sexual exploitation of children. The ninety-minute event will follow the format of:

- (1) "Moving from ratification to implementation in the digital age" – Roundtable discussion (70 minutes).

In a roundtable moderated by 2 co-facilitators, a conversation will take place between the speakers, alternating between adults and child advocates. Emphasizing concrete examples of good practices, the discussion will include emerging forms of exploitation due to the digital environment and within the context of travel and tourism, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on increasing children's risk to sale and sexual exploitation, the heightened risk faced by particular groups of children, including migrant, refugee and displaced children, the gender dimensions of sexual offences against children, access to complaint mechanisms and remedy, including direct relief provided by the Slavery Fund, and the establishment of continuous child participation processes in the development of prevention, protection and rehabilitation measures.

(2) The screening of a video from the Voices of Survivors project (5 minutes).

Showcasing the recommendations and powerful quotes of the survivors of online sexual exploitation.

(3) Interactive session with the audience (15 minutes).

Moderators:

- Chair of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, Ms. Mikiko Otani
- Founder of One Child, Ms. Cheryl Perera

Roundtable speakers:

- UN Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, Ms. Mama Fatima Singhateh
- Special Representative of the UN Secretary General on Violence against Children, Ms. Najat Maala M'jid
- Board member of the UN Voluntary Trust Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery, Mr. Suamhirs Piraino-Guzman
- Grantee of the UN Voluntary Trust Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery, Mr. Emmanuel Drewery, Executive Director of PREDA (Philippines)
- Head of Security, Hotel Santa Clara, Cartagena (Colombia), Mr. Joaquín Sabach
- Global Head of Safety, Meta, Ms. Antigone Davis
- 5 Child advocates from: Bolivia, Canada, Nigeria, Pakistan, and Trinidad and Tobago

High-level statement: H.E. Kozo Honsei, Ambassador, Deputy Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of Japan to the UN and other International Organizations in Geneva

Outcome:

The 20th celebration is a momentum for States' to invest in more effective implementation of the OPSC by using tools developed by the Committee and its partners, and ensure this is done with the meaningful participation of child advocates. The public online event will reinforce the Committee's mandate to monitor the OPSC, through encouraging ratification, reporting, and use of the OPSC by all stakeholders.

Contact:

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**Simultaneous interpretation available into English, French and Spanish,
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