##

Human Rights Council

**Social Forum**

**1 – 2 October 2019**

***Palais des Nations*, Geneva**

**“THE PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF THE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH THROUGH EDUCATION”**

CONCEPT

Education is both a fundamental human right in itself, and an essential means by which children and youth are empowered to claim their rights and become agents of change for sustainable development. It serves as a powerful tool to break down cycles of exclusion, and will be central to the overall achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The 2030 Agenda defines a holistic vision for education under SDG 4, emphasizing the need to ensure lifelong learning, to reach those being left behind, and to activate the key role of education in realizing sustainability and human rights.

All children and youth have an equal right to a quality education regardless of their gender, family income level, migration, disability or other status. Yet today millions are being excluded from education and the transformative opportunities that it generates: - according to UN data, more than half of children and adolescents are not meeting minimum literacy and numeracy standards, and deep disparities persist according to gender, location and other circumstances. Moreover, global trends of increased conflict, situations of emergency, climate change and migration have profound implications. The gaps between the reality on the ground and the imperative to realize the right to education for all children and youth calls for a paradigm shift, with solutions to reach those being left behind, which also ensure that education becomes “fit for the future”.

**Outcomes:** On the basis of the contributions of stakeholders including Governments, international organizations, civil society, as well as children and youth, the Social Forum will cast light on how the rights of children and youth can be protected and promoted through education, and how it can fulfil its transformative potential. Recommendations will be submitted to the Human Rights Council through a report presented at its forty-third session.

**Mandate:** In resolution [38/17](http://ap.ohchr.org/documents/dpage_e.aspx?si=A/HRC/RES/38/17) the Human Rights Council decided that the Social Forum would focus on “the promotion and protection of the rights of children and youth through education”.

**Background:** The Social Forum is an annual meeting convened by the Human Rights Council. It is a unique space for open and interactive dialogue between civil society actors, representatives of Member States, and intergovernmental organizations, on a theme chosen by the Council each year. The 2019 Social Forum takes place on the 30th Anniversary year of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and at a time that youth has become a priority for the United Nations. It is also aligned with International Youth Day 2019, which will focus on “transforming education” to make it more inclusive and accessible for all youth. It is a key opportunity for dialogue on promoting and protecting the rights of children and youth through education, relying upon the contributions of all stakeholders.