Results from the consultation on the First Draft of the General Comment No. 26 by the Youth Activists

**[About the Youth Activists and the consultation Process]**

We are the ‘Youth Activists,’ a student-led human rights advocacy group based in North London Collegiate School Jeju. Our primary goal is to find ways to contribute to a better world with whatever power we have as students. For this, we participate in national human rights monitoring programs, conduct surveys, translate official documents, and hold open discussions about the issues of our world. Currently, we are focusing on assisting the Korea Council of Children’s organisation in their various endeavours advocating for and enforcing children’s rights. Recently, the leaders of the group, Hailey Kim and Keonyi Kim, conducted a workshop with the youth activists to discuss the 26th General comment by the UN committee of the rights of the child (UNCRC). As the topic is centred around environmental issues, they also invited members of the school’s eco-committee members to participate and share their ideas; A total of two 30 minute sessions were conducted and the following opinions were accrued:

**Results from the consultation on the First Draft of the General Comment No. 26**

It has been revealed in the discussion that we, the participant children, have a strong consensus that current governments’ actions are merely impractical, ineffective, and inconsiderate. We have agreed that collective efforts should be made transnationally not to construct superficial eco-friendly images but to propose fundamental approaches to the existing environmental threats. These approaches will inevitably include education that provides us with relevant information, allowing us to more actively appreciate the natural world and recognize the severity of the environmental problems, in consideration of the general apathy found from us in exploring and finding information about the environment and climate change. Governments and the international community might also be able to establish effective communication with us and significant exposure to relevant information by taking advantage of social media, the channels we use the most.

However, we are to recognize the danger in governments’ tactless pedagogic methods to only provide us with positive and hopeful perspectives about the environment—or to ridiculously show us animal characters appealing to pain—in the name of protecting our innocence. Instead, adults and the international community should acknowledge the need to educate children about our world's authentic yet horrible reality to powerfully deliver the urgency of universal human participation in the resolution of the unprecedented global crisis. As lives on this planet, we should not be excused from human obligations to protect our world just for the sake of our innocence but rather should be identified as the growing generations with tremendous environmental responsibility. To achieve this prerequisite to bettering the world, governments must not merely educate us with idealised representations of reality but with objective reality.

It is also paramount that we should be actively given the deserved opportunity to voice up and involve ourselves in practical decision-making processes regarding environmental threats. We, children, have known, for decades, that due to the absence of children’s rights to vote, politicians and relevant organisations have not been encouraging us to be strongly opinionated about our own future. And this has resulted in the creation of a vicious cycle of implementing policies that are not considerate enough, which have been designed for us apparently, yet we do not want or need. We believe the fundamental cause of this lack of positions and places we can occupy to represent our thoughts lies in our society's structural problems where only the strong ones get to speak. It is likely unaffordable for governments to take care of children as much as they care for adults for this reason. Nonetheless, we reluctantly admit that this is the nature of our society and is therefore almost of the impossibility of modification—so we are only hoping that governments and the international community can be capable of improving this dark aspect of our world to confer us with a more robust ability to voice publicly. If possible, governments and the international community must establish and utilise official channels through which our ideas can be communicated to the policy making stages, executing fundamental reflections of our points of view.

To conclude, although we know the world will not change easily, or might not change completely, we would genuinely like to obtain more explicit chances to be involved in significant governmental decisions which could potentially impact our lives. With this, we could take universal human responsibility for the crisis presented to us. We will not be able to, for eternity, rely on adults; we must protect ourselves. And therefore we alarmingly call for practical changes from governments and the international community to regard the leading future generations of this world.