

Annual full-day meeting on the rights of the child

Panel discussion 1: Rights of the child and inclusive social protection

Panel discussion 2: Child rights mainstreaming in the United Nations

Concept note (as of 16 February 2024)

Date and venue: Thursday, 14 March 2024, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 3 to 5 p.m.
Room XX, Palais des Nations, Geneva
(broadcast live and archived on <https://webtv.un.org>)

Objectives: The annual full-day meeting on the rights of the child will gather high-level representatives of United Nations agencies and funds, human rights mechanisms, Member States, and other stakeholders, including children.

The meeting will feature two panels to consider, respectively, themes impacting children's rights that have received in-depth examination by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in his two most recent [reports](#) to the Human Rights Council.

The first (morning) panel discussion is dedicated to the rights of the child and inclusive social protection. It will be an opportunity to:

- Reflect on children's lived experiences of the structural, systemic and legal barriers that they encounter in accessing inclusive social protection, focusing particularly on children facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination.
- Discuss how States can create more inclusive social protection legislation, policies, and programmes, such that child rights are systematically considered in their design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

The second (afternoon) panel discussion, dedicated to child rights mainstreaming in the work of the United Nations, will:

- Take stock of developments since the 2020 high-level panel discussion on human rights mainstreaming dedicated to strengthening a child rights-based approach across all three pillars of the United Nations: human rights, peace and security, and development.
- Present the United Nations policy framework on strengthening a child rights-based approach in the United Nations system, including recent guidance from the Secretary-General as well as the initiatives of the High Commissioner in coordinating and mainstreaming a human rights-based approach, particularly in the design, implementation, and evaluation of the work of the United Nations at country level.
- Explore ways that States, independent experts and other stakeholders can strengthen and systemize consideration of an intersectional approach to children's human rights and child participation, focusing on the work of the Human Rights Council, its programme of work, commissions of inquiry and fact-finding missions, special procedures and the universal periodic review.
- Discuss how States can strengthen efforts more broadly to integrate an age- and child rights perspective in the work of intergovernmental bodies.

Panel discussion 1 ***Rights of the child and inclusive social protection***
11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Chair: **H.E. Ms. Heidi Schroderus-Fox**, Vice-President of the Human Rights Council

Opening statement: **Ms. Nada Al-Nashif**, United Nations Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights

- Panellists:**
- **Sheyla** (17 years), child rights advocate from Peru
 - **Ms. Regina De Dominicis**, Regional Director for Europe and Central Asia of the United Nations Children’s Fund
 - **Marie-Reine** (13 years), child rights advocate from Togo
 - **Dr. Bruce Aylward**, Assistant Director-General for the Universal Health Coverage, and Life Course Division, World Health Organization
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Panel discussion 2 ***Child rights mainstreaming in the United Nations***
3 to 5 p.m.

Chair: **H.E. Mr. Omar Zniber**, President of the Human Rights Council

Opening statement: **Mr. Volker Türk**, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

- Panellists:**
- **Vasile** (17 years), child rights advocate from the Republic of Moldova
 - **Ms. Ann Skelton**, Chair of the Committee on the Rights of the Child
 - **Ms. Shaheen Sardar Ali**, Member of the Independent International Fact-finding Mission on the Islamic Republic of Iran
 - **Ms. Pernille Fenger**, Director of the United Nations Population Fund Representation Office in Geneva

Outcome: *Panel discussion 1: Rights of the child and inclusive social protection*

The first panel discussion will aim to:

- Enhance the understanding of the systemic and structural barriers children face in accessing social protection and highlight the consequences of inadequate social protection on children’s rights and their empowerment.
- Set out the essential components required to dismantle these barriers and reach those children furthest behind to guarantee comprehensive quality coverage, emphasizing an approach which is intersectional, gender-responsive, disability-inclusive, and culturally sensitive.

Panel discussion 2: Child rights mainstreaming in the United Nations

The second panel discussion will strive to:

- Increase awareness of the policy frameworks related to a strengthened child rights-based approach in the work of the United Nations, including the Secretary-General’s [Guidance Note on Child Rights Mainstreaming](#) and the [Call to Action for Human Rights](#).
- Emphasize the need to invest in building child rights expertise, through human rights education, and integrating a child-rights based approach in decision-making processes and in the design, implementation and evaluation of all programmes, policies, legislation and other actions impacting their rights.
- Discuss the progress achieved and the persisting barriers to ensure more systematic integration of an age- and child rights perspective in the work of the Human Rights Council and its mechanisms, including through dedicated expertise on child rights.

- Widen the understanding of the challenges faced by children in engaging with the United Nations system, both at country level and in multilateral fora, including with the Human Rights Council and its mechanisms.
- Increase recognition of the role that children play as human rights defenders.

Mandate:

In its resolution 7/29 on the rights of the child adopted in March 2008, the Human Rights Council affirmed “its commitment to effectively integrate the rights of the child in its work and that of its mechanisms in a regular, systematic and transparent manner, taking into account specific needs of boys and girls” and “to incorporate into its programme of work sufficient time, at a minimum an annual full-day meeting, to discuss different specific themes on the rights of the child.” Pursuant to its resolution 49/20, the Human Rights Council will focus the first panel of its 2024 annual full-day meeting on the rights of the child on the theme “rights of the child and inclusive social protection”. The second panel will focus on “child rights mainstreaming in the United Nations”.

Accessibility:

In an effort to render the Human Rights Council more accessible to persons with disabilities and to promote their full participation in the work of the Council on an equal basis with others, the panel discussion will be webcast and made accessible. International sign interpretation and real-time captioning in English will be provided and webcast. During the event, participants can access live English captioning on the StreamText web page (<https://www.streamtext.net/player?event=CFI-UNOG>). Hearing loops are available for collection from the Secretariat desk. Oral statements may be embossed in Braille from any of the six official languages of the United Nations, upon request and following the procedure described in the *Accessibility guide to the Human Rights Council for persons with disabilities* (<https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/accessibility>).

Format:

The duration of the annual full-day meeting will be limited to two hours in the morning and two hours in the afternoon. For both panels, the presentations by the panellists will be followed by an interactive discussion divided into two segments. A maximum of one hour will be set aside for the podium, including the opening statement, panellists’ presentations, their responses to questions and concluding remarks. The remaining hour will be reserved for two segments of interventions from the floor, with each segment consisting of interventions from 14 States or observers, 2 national human rights institutions and 4 non-governmental organizations. Each speaker will have 1.5 minutes to raise issues and to ask panellists questions. Panellists will respond to questions and comments during the remaining time available.

The list of speakers for both discussions will be established through the online registration system and, as per practice, statements by high-level dignitaries and groups of States will be moved to the beginning of the list. Delegates who could not take the floor due to time constraints will be able to upload their statements on the online system to be posted on the HRC Extranet. Interpretation will be provided in the six United Nations official languages (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish).

Background:

Panel discussion 1: Rights of the child and inclusive social protection

The right to social security is firmly embedded in human rights law – notably in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and Convention on the Rights of the Child. Social security is also included in SDG targets 1.3 and 1.a on poverty, target 5.4 on gender equality and target 10.4 on inequality.

According to a 2023 joint report of the International Labour Organization and the United Nations Children’s Fund, over 1.77 billion of the 2.4 billion children worldwide have no access to social protection, with significant regional disparities. The COVID-19

pandemic, the triple planetary crisis of climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss, conflicts, economic downturns and cost-of-living concerns have underlined the need for resilient, inclusive and comprehensive social protection systems anchored in children's rights.

[Our Common Agenda](#) stresses the need for a new social contract, including universal social protection coverage, which at a minimum means access to health care for all and basic income security for children and their parents/caregivers. Upscaling and improving social protection to ensure it becomes truly inclusive and upholds fundamental rights is essential to building resilient, sustainable child rights compliant societies.

Panel 2 discussion: Child rights mainstreaming in the United Nations

In 2020, the [annual high-level panel discussion on human rights mainstreaming](#) concluded with aspirations to link a strengthened child right-based approach across the United Nations system to better support of Member States in operationalizing the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, to which 196 States are a party.

In 2023, the Secretary-General set out a framework for United Nations action in [the Guidance Note on Child Rights Mainstreaming](#), mandating all entities across all pillars to systematically consider children in their work, to assess the impact of their actions on children, with a focus on integrating the meaningful participation of diverse groups of children in decision-making processes.

The Guidance Note has implications for the United Nations human rights and accountability mechanisms, and specifically the Human Rights Council, its commissions of inquiry, fact-finding missions, special procedures and the universal periodic review, as well as treaty bodies.

Strengthening a more coherent and systematic integration of child rights across all activities of the United Nations on human rights, peace and security and development, is considered as a critical element of the modernization process of the United Nations system. It goes hand-in-hand with the Organization's commitment to developing solutions with children, amplifying their voices, and nurturing their leadership potential.

Guaranteeing the entitlement of every child to all human rights and fundamental freedoms under international human rights law and empowering children to claim their rights is the principal objective of the Convention of the Rights of the Child – one that is endorsed near-universally by all Member States.

Background documents:

Panel discussion 1: Rights of the child and inclusive social protection

- Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the rights of the child and inclusive social protection ([A/HRC/54/36](#)), its [child-friendly version](#) and [accessible versions](#) (2023)
- International Labour Organization and United Nations Children's Fund, [More than a Billion Reasons: the Urgent Need to Build Universal Social Protection for Children](#) (2023)
- [Human Rights Council resolution 49/20](#) of 1 April 2022 on rights of the child: realizing the rights of the child and family reunification
- Report of the Independent Expert on the question of human rights and extreme poverty ([A/HRC/14/31](#)), 2010
- Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, General comment No. 19 (2008) on the right to social security (art. 9), [E/C.12/GC/19](#)

Panel discussion 2: Child rights mainstreaming in the United Nations

- Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on strengthening a child-rights based approach in the work of the United Nations ([A/HRC/55/36](#)) (2024)
- [Guidance Note of the Secretary-General on Child Rights Mainstreaming](#), July 2023
- Human Rights Council, [Annual high-level panel discussion on human rights mainstreaming](#), 24 February 2020
- Committee on the Rights of the Child, General comment No. 12 (2009) on the right of the child to be heard ([CRC/C/GC/12](#))
- Committee on the Rights of the Child, General comment no. 5 (2003) on general measures of implementation ([CRC/GC/2003/5](#))