



# Convention on the Rights of the Child

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## Committee on the Rights of the Child Ninety-sixth session

### Summary record (partial)\* of the 2816th meeting\*\*

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Friday, 24 May 2024, at 3 p.m.

*Chair:* Ms. Skelton

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Closure of the session

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- \* No summary record was prepared for the rest of the meeting.
  - \*\* No summary records were issued for the 2806th to 2815th meetings.

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*The discussion covered in the summary record began at 5 p.m.*

### **Closure of the session**

1. **The Chair** said that, as had been made clear during the session, children's status as holders of rights was being questioned the world over. Their agency, autonomy and right to participation in matters of concern to them were subjected to the dominance of parental guidance. Children, as recognized in the preamble to the Convention, should grow up in a family environment, but that recognition should not be used to deny them rights of their own. The increasingly frequent refusal to recognize children as rights holders, a trend made evident by legislative and policy developments in a number of States parties to the Convention, was of serious concern to the Committee. The Committee had therefore drawn the attention of States parties to the statement in which it had clarified the concepts of parental guidance and evolving capacities of the child as enshrined in article 5 of the Convention. Those capacities must be recognized and respected by the adults who had control over children's lives.

2. Children had been expressing their concerns about a range of issues, including through protest, and the Committee had urged States parties to provide space for children's freedom of expression. In addition, it had worked with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) on the drafting of guidance for policing assemblies involving children. During its dialogues with the delegations of States parties, the Committee had noted with concern that the space for child human rights defenders and those advocating with them or on their behalf was shrinking.

3. As those dialogues had also shown, there had been backsliding, affecting girls in particular, in connection with access to sexual and reproductive health and sexual and reproductive education. In some States, girls had become more vulnerable to sexual abuse and exploitation and early pregnancy. Female genital mutilation was still a problem, and in some parts of the world efforts to eradicate it, which would have to be sustained for decades, were being made with considerably less urgency.

4. Some of the States parties whose reports had been considered during the session had emerged from armed conflict. The dialogues with the delegations of those States parties had been a reminder of the difficulty of ensuring that children, a fifth of whom lived in conflict situations, could exercise their rights after war came to an end. In the biannual report that it would submit to the General Assembly, which had been adopted during the session, the Committee had focused on children in armed conflict.

5. The Committee had also met with the Special Rapporteur on the right to development and discussed the two reports he was preparing, one on climate change and the other on the right to development for children and future generations. There had, in addition, been a briefing on children who were not protected under the Convention because they lived in countries not recognized as States. The Committee was concerned about all children living in such situations.

6. On 24 May 2024, the date of the closure of the Committee's ninety-sixth session, there were 196 States parties to the Convention, 173 to the Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict, 178 to the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography and 52 to the Optional Protocol on a communications procedure. No State had ratified or acceded to the Convention or any of the Optional Protocols since the opening of the session.

7. The Committee had held 30 meetings during the session, which had opened on 6 May 2024. The meetings with key stakeholders that would ordinarily have been held during the pre-session working group's week of meetings, which had been cancelled, had instead been held during the final week of the ninety-sixth session. Those stakeholders had included representatives of civil society from Argentina and Ecuador, States parties that had been chosen because they had reported under the simplified procedure and were set to appear before the Committee at its next session. Partner organizations had helped the Committee make the logistical arrangements for the stakeholder meetings that had involved remote participation, thereby enabling the Committee to solve the problems caused by the decision to limit the use by the human rights treaty bodies of the web conferencing application Webex.

8. All 18 members of the Committee had attended the meetings. On a few occasions, some members of the delegations of some States parties had participated remotely. Although the Committee had considered the items on its agenda, which it had adopted at its 2787th meeting, it had not been business as usual, as the Committee had had to work under much tighter time frames than usual in its closed meetings.

9. During the session, the Committee had considered periodic reports submitted under the Convention by Bhutan, Egypt, Estonia, Georgia, Guatemala, Mali, Namibia and Paraguay. It had also considered the report submitted by Panama under the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography. In all, it had considered the reports of nine States parties. If there were no further comments, she would take it that the concluding observations on the reports of those nine States parties could be adopted.

10. *It was so decided.*

11. The Committee had adopted decisions concerning seven communications. In its consideration of four of those communications, it had found that the States parties – Georgia, Denmark, France and Switzerland – had violated rights enshrined in the Convention. It had discontinued its consideration of the three other communications. The Committee had also discussed the four article 13 inquiries it was currently dealing with. No new inquiries had been initiated during the session.

12. In its ongoing discussion of its methods of work, the Committee had considered the action to take in follow-up to the treaty body strengthening process and the 2020 review. The discussions had also touched on the working paper on options and guiding questions for the development of an implementation plan for the conclusions adopted by the Chairs of the human rights treaty bodies at their thirty-fourth annual meeting. The thirty-sixth annual meeting was set to take place in late June 2024. In addition, the Committee had discussed a draft memorandum of understanding on closer cooperation with the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child.

13. The Committee's next general comment, on which it had continued its work, would be on children's rights to access to justice and effective remedies. A call for contributions had been posted to the Committee's website earlier in the day. Its ninety-seventh session would be held from 26 August to 14 September 2024.

14. **Mr. Chophel** (Rapporteur) said that, during the intersessional period, many Committee members, including the Chair, Ms. Aho, Ms. Al Barwani, Ms. Ayoubi Idrissi, Ms. Beloff, Ms. Correa, Mr. Gudbrandsson, Mr. Jaffé, Ms. Kiladze, Mr. Mezmur, Ms. Otani, Mr. Pedernera Reyna, Ms. Sidikou, Ms. Todorova, Mr. Van Keirsbilck, Ms. Zara and he himself, had taken part in national, regional and global activities relevant to the mandate of the Committee. The Committee's Twitter account, or its X account, which was managed by Mr. Jaffé, was a success. Its posts had been viewed more than 370,000 times during the intersessional period. The Committee's statement on Gaza, tweeted in March 2024, had attracted more views than any of its other social media posts.

15. **The Chair** said she took it that the Committee wished to adopt the report on its ninety-sixth session.

16. *It was so decided.*

17. After the customary exchange of courtesies, she declared the Committee's ninety-sixth session closed.

*The meeting rose at 5.25 p.m.*