



# Convention on the Rights of the Child

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

### Summary record (partial)\* of the 2877th meeting

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Monday, 12 May 2025, at 10 a.m.

*Chair:* Mr. Chopel (Vice-Chair)  
*later:* Ms. Kiladze

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\* No summary record was prepared for the rest of the meeting.

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*In the absence of the Chair, Mr. Chopel, Vice-Chair, took the Chair.*

*The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.*

### **Opening of the session**

1. **The Chair** declared open the ninety-ninth session of the Committee on the Rights of the Child.
2. **Mr. Ori** (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)), welcoming the newly elected members of the Committee and congratulating those who had been re-elected, said that the Committee's work was more crucial than ever, in particular as gains that had once seemed secure were now under threat. Children were increasingly affected by a convergence of crises. One of those crises, a global funding shortfall, had exacerbated matters.
3. The outlook was daunting. According to projections by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), at least 14 million children would experience interruptions in vital nutrition support and services in 2025 as a result of funding cuts. In addition, it was likely to be much more difficult to vaccinate millions of vulnerable children against measles, and in nearly 50 countries immunization services, disease surveillance and outbreak responses had already been disrupted.
4. As the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights had noted, human rights were like air, something that went unnoticed until it was gone and it became impossible to breathe. Untold numbers of children, denied their rights, were suffocating, so to speak. As he had noted early in the year, there was an urgent need for coordinated global efforts to safeguard the rights of the child. It was more crucial than ever for Governments to fulfil their obligations under the Convention.
5. The funding crisis was having a direct impact on the Committee's work. The pre-sessional working group meetings originally scheduled to take place in the wake of the current session had been cancelled, for example, and it was highly likely that funds for the third session of the year of the human rights treaty bodies that, like the Committee, met three times a year would not be secured. The lack of predictability and the piecemeal approach, often involving last-minute confirmation, to the organization of work created considerable uncertainty that led to wasted time and effort and higher costs.
6. OHCHR had received only 73 per cent of its approved regular budget in 2025 and only 87 per cent in 2024. A hiring freeze was in place until August 2025. As a result of the 2024 limitations, the backlog of reports of States Parties had grown, as had the number of individual communications that were pending consideration. What was more, there would be a reduction of 10 per cent in the services – documentation and interpretation, for example – provided to the human rights treaty bodies by the Secretariat. The ability of the treaty bodies to hold dialogues with States Parties, consider individual communications and participate in capacity-building activities would thus be even more severely hampered in 2025 than it had been in 2024. The damage to the credibility of the treaty body system was real.
7. On a more positive note, the annual meeting of the Chairs of the human rights treaty bodies was set to take place in less than a month. At their meeting, which would be held in Geneva, the Chairs would discuss the cash-flow crisis, review the decisions they had made at their previous meeting and consider other matters of relevance to the treaty bodies and their work. They would also meet with representatives of States Members of the United Nations, the senior leaders of United Nations agencies and other relevant stakeholders.
8. The full-day meeting of the Human Rights Council on the rights of the child, which had been held in mid-March 2025, had focused on early childhood development. Children had taken the floor at the meeting, and there had been an informal discussion in which a group of young people, representatives of Member States and the High Commissioner had taken part.
9. The first session of the open-ended intergovernmental working group on an optional protocol on the rights to early childhood education, free pre-primary education and free

secondary education was to be held in September 2025 in Geneva. In preparation for that session, OHCHR was working closely with the sponsors of the resolution in which the Council had decided to establish the working group. There had been calls for submissions from a wide range of stakeholders, including children

10. **Ms. Guerras Delgado** (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights), briefing the Committee on recent developments at OHCHR that were of relevance to the Committee's mandate, said that work on the High Commissioner's second report on the mainstreaming of children's rights, which would be presented to the Human Rights Council at its fifty-ninth session, had been completed. Other reports to be presented to the Council at that session included the High Commissioner's study of the use of digital technologies to achieve universal birth registration and a report on ensuring quality education for peace and tolerance for every child.

11. OHCHR had participated in a cross-regional dialogue on the prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration of returnees from conflict zones held on 30 April 2025 in Astana. The focus of the dialogue had been on the repatriation of children associated with foreign terrorist fighters from detention camps in the north-eastern part of the Syrian Arab Republic. The Child and Youth Rights Unit of OHCHR had given a presentation on taking a child rights-based approach to education with a view to reintegrating those children.

12. The Unit had also provided input on children's rights for the 2025 high-level political forum on sustainable development, which would be held later in the year. A report on the rights of the child and violations of the human rights of children in armed conflict, which would be presented to the Council at its sixtieth session, was in preparation. Steps were being taken, in accordance with Council resolution 56/6, to identify options for a global framework to protect children in the digital environment.

13. Together with Save the Children International, Member States and other partners, the Unit was organizing a round table to further enhance the participation of children in the Council, while OHCHR was continuing to contribute to the development, led by civil society organizations and academic institutions, of global guidelines on the participation of children in global events. Lastly, the Unit was providing support for the fifth World Congress on Justice with Children, which would be held in the coming weeks in Madrid. The Congress would have a special focus on advancing child-centred justice and preventing and responding to violence affecting children.

14. **Ms. Grandjean** (United Nations Children's Fund), welcoming the new members of the Committee, said that the session was opening at a time when the international human rights system was under great strain. The cancellation of the pre-session, a component of the reporting cycle that made it possible to hear from children and civil society, was most regrettable. Also regrettable was the postponement of the biennial meeting of the Committee, UNICEF and OHCHR.

15. In the meantime, armed conflicts, climate change, poverty, violence and inequality continued to deprive millions of children of their rights. In fact, the idea that children had rights at all was still being challenged. At the most recent session of the Human Rights Council, for example, UNICEF had been compelled to try to counter attempts to deny children their status as holders of rights independently of their parents or guardians. Only a few of the experts and others who had taken the floor to discuss issues related to children had sought to highlight children's agency. There had even been considerable resistance to recognizing children's specific contributions to the defence of human rights.

16. The Committee could count on the continued support of UNICEF, including for the ongoing preparation of its next general comment, on children's right to access to justice and to an effective remedy. In that connection, UNICEF had worked with Child Rights Connect on a child-friendly version of the draft general comment and provided guidance for another round of consultations with children. In online consultations co-organized by UNICEF in April 2025, participants had emphasized the need for the critical role of grass-roots justice defenders to be emphasized in the new general comment.

17. A course on the rights of the child for UNICEF employees, which was in development, would be ready in September 2025. Updates were also being made to the UNICEF handbook

on the implementation of the Convention and to the guidance on the participation of children in the reporting process under the Convention. More information on the work of UNICEF in general could be found in its 2024 annual report, which would be released shortly.

18. The development of guidance on general measures of implementation of the Convention would begin later in 2025. The guidance would be informed by a study of national implementation strategies and national coordination mechanisms, the Committee's jurisprudence and the experiences of UNICEF country offices. She and her colleagues would be pleased to keep the Committee informed of and involved in that work.

19. **Ms. Urru** (Child Rights Connect), welcoming the newly elected Committee members, said that she hoped the Committee would have a productive session despite the regrettable postponement of the 101st pre-session. The Committee would do well to discuss the organization of its work for 2026 and what remained of 2025. It would be particularly helpful to know when the postponed pre-session would take place.

20. Child Rights Connect was deeply concerned about the impact on children of the unprecedented funding crisis affecting most of its member organizations and Child Rights Connect itself. Despite the trying circumstances, it had continued working with civil society, children, the Committee, UNICEF and OHCHR. Its recent activities had, for example, included the development, together with UNICEF, of a method of mobilizing children and consulting them on the preparation of documents such as the Committee's draft general comment on children's right to access to justice and to an effective remedy. The Strategic Vision for Promoting and Protecting the Rights of Child Human Rights Defenders had been introduced at the fifty-eighth session of the Human Rights Council. A global survey on the digital protection of child human rights defenders had also been launched.

21. In view of the serious challenges facing the United Nations and civil society, it was of critical importance for the child rights community as a whole to find synergies and work creatively. Child Rights Connect was ready to support the Committee and the broader community to that end.

### **Organizational matters**

#### *Solemn declaration by the newly elected members of the Committee*

22. **The Chair** invited the newly elected members of the Committee to make the solemn declaration contained in rule 16 of the Committee's rules of procedure.

23. **Mr. Ekesa, Ms. Ianachevici, Mr. Lumina, Ms. Scerri Ferrante and Ms. Taleb Moussa** solemnly declared that they would perform their duties and exercise their powers as members of the Committee on the Rights of the Child honourably, faithfully, impartially and conscientiously and observe the principles of independence and impartiality of the human rights treaty bodies adopted by the Committee.

#### *Election of officers*

24. **The Chair** said that, under rule 17 of the rules of procedure, the Committee would elect from among its members a Chair and four Vice-Chairs, who, together, would constitute the bureau of the Committee. It would continue its consideration of the agenda item in a closed meeting, in accordance with rule 21.

*The public part of the meeting was suspended at 10.40 a.m. and resumed at noon.*

25. *Ms. Kiladze took the Chair.*

26. **The Chair** announced that Mr. Lumina, Ms. Al Barwani, Mr. Jaffé and Ms. Beloff had been elected Vice-Chairs. It was an honour for her to have been elected Chair and, in view of the many crises affecting children, a major responsibility.

### **Adoption of the agenda**

27. **The Chair**, reviewing the items on the provisional agenda (CRC/C/99/1), invited the Secretary of the Committee to brief the Committee on the reports that had been received since the closure of the previous session.

28. **Ms. Franchetti** (Secretary of the Committee) said that no new reports had been received since the closure of the ninety-eighth session. As a result, there were still 62 reports that had not yet been considered. The number of States to have ratified the Convention, the Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict and the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography – 196, 173 and 178, respectively – had likewise remained unchanged since the closure of the previous session. One additional State, Estonia, had ratified the Optional Protocol on a communications procedure, bringing the total number of States to have ratified that Optional Protocol to 53.

29. There were still 64 overdue periodic reports under the Convention. There were also 37 overdue reports under the Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict and 47 under the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography.

30. **The Chair**, resuming her review of the agenda items, said that a total of seven reports submitted by six States Parties – Brazil, Indonesia, Iraq, Norway, Qatar and Romania – would be considered during the session. The consideration of the combined sixth and seventh periodic reports of Pakistan and of its report under the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child pornography and child prostitution had been postponed to a later session at the State Party's request.

31. The Committee would continue discussing how to further strengthen its cooperation with other United Nations bodies, specialized agencies and other competent bodies. It would also discuss its methods of work and consider any communications or other information it received under the Optional Protocol on a communications procedure. In addition, it would look into how to integrate the processes of organizing days of general discussion and preparing general comments and continue working on its draft general comment.

32. The Committee would be apprised of any developments relating to the dates of its future sessions, in particular in connection with the ongoing cash-flow crisis. Any other matters deemed relevant would also be discussed. If there were no requests for the floor, she would take it that the Committee wished to adopt the provisional agenda.

33. *It was so decided.*

*The discussion covered in the summary record ended at 12.10 p.m.*