



Human Rights Council 47th session

Agenda Item 3

Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association

1 July 2021

This is a joint statement by Child Rights Connect, Plan International, Defence for Children International and Save the Children.

We thank the Special Rapporteur for his report focusing on access to justice and for highlighting that children should always be considered as being in a situation of vulnerability when accessing justice.

Research shows that age is a factor for discrimination when accessing justice and that **children are confronted with additional obstacles due to their special and dependent status in society**. For example, most children lack knowledge of their rights as well as the legal capacity to initiate and participate in legal proceedings. This is true for all children but might be exacerbated for the child with a disability, the girl child, the minority and indigenous child, to name just a few of the most excluded.

Recognizing this as a default situation of vulnerability for the exercise of the child's right to effective remedy is a necessary step for States to ensure that children in all their diversity, including the most excluded, can access remedies for violations of all rights, including the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association.

There is also a generalised lack of understanding that children have, and are entitled to exercise, rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association and the right to access justice. We welcome the report of the Special Rapporteur as it serves a twofold purpose, first it clarifies that civil and political rights of children and their right to access justice are a reality for children, and second it provides guidance where standards are lacking and insufficient.

We would like to stress that States should:

- adopt and implement legal and policy frameworks guaranteeing all children's civil and political rights enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), building upon and including the views of children in all their diversity;
- remove practical and legal barriers that impede access to justice for children, as well as adopt the necessary reform measures to ensure redress mechanisms are accessible to all and tailored to the needs of children (child- and gender-sensitive); and
- ratify the third optional protocol of the CRC to enhance access to justice for children.

Together with the Committee on the Rights of the Child and UNICEF, we aim at stepping up efforts to bring the deserved attention to this discussion, and we would like to invite you to join a panel discussion to take place on the sides of the High-Level Political Forum on the 13th of July on "Equal access to justice for all children".

Thank you.