

40th regular session of the Human Rights Council
Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders, 28th February
2019

Thank you Mr President. Mr Rapporteur,

This year marks the 30th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. More than ever before children around the world are standing up for human rights.

Child Rights Connect and its network welcome the Special Rapporteur's report on women human rights defenders and its reference to the Committee on the Rights of the Child's 2018 Day of General Discussion on 'Protecting and Empowering Children as Human Rights Defenders'.

The 2018 Day of General Discussion, through which the Special Rapporteur furthered his collaboration with the CRC Committee, was a ground-breaking step in building a global movement of children human rights defenders. It spotlighted children human rights defenders acting in many different contexts as defenders of the environment, actors in the civil society space and indigenous communities, amongst many others.

The DGD also drew attention to the particular challenges children human rights defenders face, including reprisals. Girls human rights defenders face additional barriers: a child defender noted that some girls were being denied the right to speak simply for being girls.

We welcome the inclusion of the special situation of girls defenders in the Special Rapporteur's report and the highlighting of the specific challenges they face, including lack of recognition and access to resources. This further strengthens the recognition of children human rights defenders, which is the condition for their protection and empowerment.

The CRC Committee stated that the 2018 DGD "made an important contribution to promoting a deeper understanding about the role of children as human rights defenders, and in promoting the right of the child to be heard in all contexts".

We urge Member States and the UN to build on the DGD's impact and continue to deepen the understanding of the rights and needs of children human rights defenders, including by listening to and engaging with them directly, to ensure their full protection and empowerment in line with the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the UN declaration on Human Rights Defenders.

Thank you.

Co-signatories:

- Child Rights Connect
- International Council of Women
- Together (Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights)
- Edmund Rice International
- International Catholic Child Bureau
- Consortium for Street Children
- Children of One World
- Humanium
- Children of Prisoners Europe
- Lumos
- Terre des Hommes International Federation
- Plan International Inc.
- Child Rights Information Centre (CRIC), Moldova
- International Child Rights Center (InCRC)
- Ekama Development Foundation
- Save the Children International
- Make Mothers Matter
- ATD Fourth World

