

**ORAL STATEMENT BY CHILD RIGHTS CONNECT**

**ANNUAL HIGH-LEVEL PANEL DISCUSSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS MAINSTREAMING
43rd Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council**

Monday 24 February 2020

Madam President, distinguished panelists,

Child Rights Connect and its members welcome today’s panel as an opportunity to strengthen the UN’s focus on children and renew our commitment to child rights.

Thirty years since adoption of the Convention on the Right of the Child, children continue to face persistent challenges:

* Children are widely excluded from decision-making and most of the decisions affecting their rights are still taken without their views;
* Even when consulted, children are not listened to or taken seriously;
* Children are not a priority for many stakeholders, or they are subsumed within other groups, such as youth.

This resonates with the challenges that we, children’s rights defenders, witness when advocating for child rights at the UN.

Madam President, have we done enough to build and use a common understanding of child-rights mainstreaming and its practical implications for the UN?

Mainstreaming requires the proactive and systematic application of a child rights-based approach. This means:

1. Recognizing and treating all children, including the most vulnerable and marginalized, as right-holders;
2. Empowering all children to know, exercise and claim their rights;
3. Strengthening States’ capacity to fulfil their obligations to ensure accountability as well as effective remedies; and
4. Recognizing children as key actors of civil society and, in many instances, as important human rights defenders.

While we acknowledge that efforts are being made, we call on the UN to further its commitment to a child rights-based approach by developing a Child Rights Strategy that applies to all bodies and agencies. This should:

1. Identify and address systemic gaps and accelerate implementation of the Convention’s General Measures of Implementation; and
2. Include a framework for child participation that is meaningful, safe and allows for practical implementation of children’s right to be heard across the full spectrum of rights.

I thank you.

Alex Conte
Executive Director, **child rights connect**