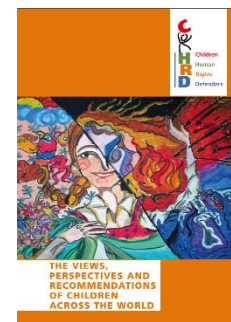
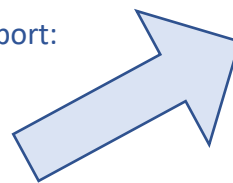


# Committee on the Rights of the Child Day of General Discussion (DGD) 2018: Protecting and Empowering Children as Human Rights Defenders

## Child-friendly version of the DGD Recommendations

- **What are human rights defenders?** They are people who take action to PROMOTE & PROTECT their own rights or those of others. When defenders are under 18 years old, they are **CHILD HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS (CHRDs)**, even if people do not think that or call them that. CHRDs work on MANY ISSUES like bullying at school, protecting the environment or stopping child marriages.
- You can find more child-friendly information about the **2018 Day of General Discussion (DGD)** and what was discussed by clicking [here](#). The Committee on the Rights of the Child holds a DGD in Geneva every two years focused on a specific topic about children as included in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) or a related subject. The topic of the DGD in 2018 was ‘protecting and empowering children as human rights defenders’: It took place on 28th September and involved more than 400 participants including approximately 60 children, as well as non-government organisations, governments, students, academics, UN agencies and others.
- The recommendations in this document capture the DGD discussions and were endorsed by the Committee on the Rights of the Child (the Committee). The Committee is a group of 18 independent experts (get to know them [here](#)) who advise governments on how to keep the promises they made under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). Want to know more about the Convention? [Click here!](#)
- The recommendations have been made to different responsible groups and these are colour-coded in this document.
- You can also find out what **over 2500 children human rights defenders told us** by clicking on this report:





## 1. States (or governments) (the group to which the below recommendations have been made)

### 1.1. General recommendations (the type of recommendation)

- States should create safe spaces for child human rights defenders, where they can fully and freely express their opinions and ideas about theirs and others' rights without fear of doing so. Children should have no fear and should not experience any kind of intimidation or action against them, including violence, for expressing their views. States must take measures to protect them.
- States should seriously consider the view of children, including child human rights defenders, when making decisions that affect the lives of children.
- States should help families protect and empower child human rights defenders.
- States should make sure that protection measures are not used to restrict the actions of children human rights defenders, including online.

### 1.2. Law, policy and implementation

- States should create national laws and policies that protect and empower human rights defenders which include children human rights defenders, and address the needs of children of all ages and genders, and especially children in vulnerable situations, children in humanitarian situations, children in alternative care, indigenous children, and children with disabilities. States should also make sure that other national laws and policies are in line with the Convention on the Rights of the Child and support children to act freely as human rights defenders.
- During the drafting of laws, States should seek the views of child human rights defenders and act on their concerns, recommendations and requests of representative groups of children, child-led organisations and child participation mechanisms such as children's parliaments.
- States should set aside what is needed (such as enough money and people with the right skills) to turn laws and policies for child human rights defenders into action.

### 1.3. Freedom of expression and participation in decision-making

- States should give child human rights defenders the information they need to express their opinion and take part in decision-making processes, like deciding how to spend their money or creating a new school curriculum. The information should be free, wide-ranging and accessible (such as in a language and format children can understand) in different ways including on the internet.
- States should make sure that child human rights defenders in vulnerable situations can also freely express their opinion and be given support (based on their age and gender) to actively participate on issues relating to them. This includes- children with disabilities, children in emergency situations, children in alternative care, children living in poverty and minority and indigenous children.
- States should create Children's Parliaments and other spaces or processes for child participation and make sure that they have a clear and meaningful agenda and goals. They should also \_set aside what is needed (such as enough money and people with the right skills) to be accessible to all children regardless of their age, sex, where they live, if they have a disability, or any other characteristic.

### 1.4. Education

- Education helps children to become and act as human rights defenders. States should make sure that all children have free primary education and good education. States should make sure that children receive human rights education, including on children's rights and the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Defenders.
- States should make sure there is child participation in schools, as a key part of their learning process, where children learn to express themselves, develop their opinions, listen to others and become active citizens.
- States should make sure that education supports children to develop skills to deal with conflicts, including bullying and harassment, in a non-violent way. School staff should be taught how to help children to resolve conflicts in an non-violent way and not only using discipline.

### 1.5. Environment

- States should protect child human rights defenders acting on, and making, recommendations about environmental issues.
- States should promote positive stories about child human rights defenders working on environmental issues, including in the media, and support the participation of children and youth in actions they take forward to develop environmental policies and programmes and putting them into practice.
- States should make sure that child human rights defenders acting on land rights, pollution, climate change, and access to natural resources, are protected against intimidation, harassment and violence.
- States should support activities organized by environmental child human rights defenders, such as by offering information and awareness-raising activities and promote children's access to the media.

### 1.6. Online access and protection

- States should ensure access to safe online platforms and training on online safety for child human rights defenders.
- States should make sure that internet providers and companies help all children to connect to and access the internet, and that safety settings are clear and are in a format and language that children, including for children with disabilities, can read and understand.
- States should encourage technology businesses to involve children in the development and monitoring of activities and tools for the protection of children, when they use the Internet.
- States should consider accepting, or ratifying, [the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a Communications Procedure](#) since this can sometimes help child human rights defenders to make complaints for violations of their human rights to the Committee and seek an effective solution.

## 1.7. Reporting to the Committee

Find out about reporting to the Committee on the Rights of the Child [here](#).

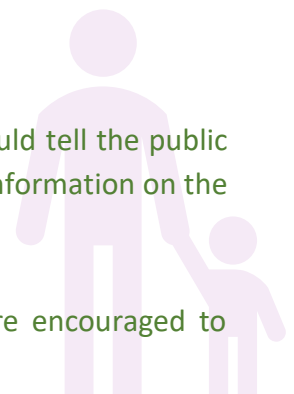
- When States report to the Committee, they should include information on the situation of child human rights defenders and the steps taken to protect and empower them.
- States should encourage and give opportunities for child human rights defenders to participate freely in the preparation of their State reports to the Committee, such as by organising national children’s consultations.
- States should not limit or negatively influence the participation of children in the reporting process to the Committee such as by restricting information or empowering spaces for child participation. ▽

The **Children’s Ombudsperson** (also known as a Commissioner for children) is a person, sometimes with an office of staff, helping to protect and promote the rights of children in a certain country.

**National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs)** are separate from government, and work to protect and promote human rights at the national level.

## 2. Children’s Ombudspersons and National Human Rights institutions

- Children’s Ombudspersons and national human rights institutions should tell the public about their role in protecting and promoting human rights and share information on the work they do for/with child human rights defenders.
- Children’s Ombudspersons and national human rights institutions are encouraged to work more closely with child human rights defenders.
- Children’s Ombudspersons and national human rights institutions should support child human rights defenders to report and seek solutions for human rights violations.





### 3. The Committee on the Rights of the Child

- The Committee should ask States to develop and put into practice laws to protect child human rights defenders and make sure child human rights defenders can participate in the development and action of such laws.
- The Committee should continue to find more and better ways to communicate with child human right defenders and make extra efforts to make sure that its reporting process is accessible to all children, including those from marginalized groups like children in street situations, children living in poverty or children with disabilities.
- The Committee should work more with the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders to provide support to States to make sure their laws and policies protect and empower child human rights defenders.

A **Special Rapporteur** is an independent expert who is appointed/selected by the United Nations to investigate, monitor and recommend solutions to specific human rights problems, like education or the environment. Sometimes they focus on specific groups, like persons with disabilities or human rights defenders, and sometimes they focus on specific countries like Myanmar or Syria.

- The Committee should promote a positive image of children human rights defenders by sharing examples of the role they play in making children's rights a reality.

### 4. The United Nations



- The United Nations should give child human rights defenders information on the United Nations to support and enable them to effectively engage in its different activities on human rights. This information should be age-appropriate and in a language and format they can understand.

- The United Nations should promote the participation of child human rights defenders in its work around children's rights and create child-friendly platforms and processes to support children's in-person or virtual engagement.
- Treaty bodies should include children human rights defenders in their work. For example, they should seek children's views when they review States on their child rights promises.
- Treaty bodies should ask States to create laws to protect and empower children human rights defenders.

Treaty Bodies are groups of experts who monitor how governments are taking forward their promises on human rights. Each Treaty Body has their own set of human rights listed in something called a Treaty, that governments sign-up and commit to. There are 10 Treaty Bodies in total. Find out more [here!](#)

##### 5. Civil society (individuals and groups of people in society that are not part of the government)

- Civil society should empower and work with child human rights defenders, support their activities and share information on their work.
- Civil society should help promote knowledge of children's rights and child human rights defenders to many different audiences in a form accessible to all children.
- Civil society should contribute to promoting positive attitudes towards child human rights defenders, in particular girls.
- Civil society should ensure the participation of child human rights defenders in their human rights work, including working together with children and seeking their views in monitoring, reporting and campaigning activities.
- Civil society should help child human rights defenders to report and seek a solution for human rights violations.

- When working together with children human rights defenders, civil society should make every effort to minimize any negative result of these activities on children. This should include protecting child human rights defenders from any form of intimidation and punishment, or fear of such.

## 6. The media

- The media should promote a positive image of child human rights defenders, and positively advertise the human rights activities carried out by children.

## 7. Businesses and companies

- Businesses and donors should make sure that their activities do not, directly or indirectly, harm child human rights defenders.
- When businesses and donors plan and implement their activities in communities, they should make sure that child human rights defenders are involved in the process.

## 8. Parents, family and community members and adults working with or for children



- Adults should actively seek information about children's rights and learn about their responsibilities in the protection and empowerment of children. Adults should also recognize children as human rights defenders when they act to defend theirs or others human rights and be inspired by them.
- Adults should respect and support children who are, or want to become, human rights defenders.
- Adults should encourage child human rights defenders to express their views. When making decisions that affect children, adults should listen to children's views and act on them.