

Item 5 – Human rights bodies and mechanisms

General debate

Joint oral statement on behalf of Defence for Children International (DCI)*, ECPAT International*, Kindernothilfe*, International Federation Terre des Hommes* (IFTDH), Save the Children International*, Plan International*, SOS Kinderdorf International*, World Organization Against Torture (OMCT)*, World Vision International*, Youth Empowerment Alliance, Inc.*, the Child Rights Information Network (CRIN), Defence for Children – Costa Rica, the Global Initiative to End Corporal Punishment, the NGO Group for the CRC¹, NGO Group for the CRC/ Japan²

Thank you Mr President.

This statement is made on behalf of 13 NGOs representing over 100 international and national NGOs.

Mr President,

The lack of a communications procedure for children's rights violations has been a serious matter of discrimination against children. We thus welcome the presentation of a final draft Protocol on a communications procedure by Mr Stefanek.

We deplore however, that the focus of the last round of negotiations was to reach a quick agreement, by using "agreed" language of the OP ICESCR, rather than exploring ways to ensure that the new mechanism is child-friendly and child-sensitive. This led to overlooking some of the rights enshrined in the CRC and favouring lowest common denominators.

The deletion of the collective communications mechanism in the last day of the negotiations is also a regrettable loss. It would have provided a key complementary tool to address structural violations and protect unidentifiable or particular groups of child victims.

We also regret the choice of the Chairperson to suspend the formal session of the Working Group on the last day of the negotiations. This effectively excluded civil society, UNICEF, the Committee on the Rights of the Child and other experts – in a word, child rights actors – at a time where critical decisions were made. While States are responsible for negotiating international instruments, we believe that for an international treaty of this importance, a more serene and inclusive approach would have been more appropriate.

The final draft Protocol does nonetheless provide the core elements of a communications procedure and we strongly support this new mandate for the Committee on the Rights of the Child.

The final text protects the full range of children's rights, it will ensure that children have an international remedy when domestic mechanisms fail and, overall, it will strengthen the effective implementation of children's rights at national level.

*NGOs with ECOSOC status

¹ The NGO Group for the CRC is a network of over 80 child rights organisations around the world.

² The NGO Group for the CRC/Japan consists of 22 NGOs and 2 national NGO networks

We therefore urge the Human Rights Council to adopt the final draft Protocol and transmit it to the General Assembly for its final approval. We also encourage States to initiate discussions at capital level in view of the prompt ratification of what is an essential instrument for the promotion and respect of children's rights.

Thank you Mr President.