

43rd session of the Human Rights Council

**Annual high-level panel discussion on human rights mainstreaming**

**Theme:**

***Thirty years of implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child: challenges and opportunities***

*Concept note (draft as of 4 February 2020)*

- Date and venue:** **Monday, 24 February 2020, 4 – 6 p.m., Palais des Nations, Room XX, Geneva**  
(will be broadcast live and archived on <http://webtv.un.org>)
- Objective:** The annual high-level panel discussion will gather high-level representatives of United Nations agencies and funds to discuss how to advance the mainstreaming of children's rights within the United Nations system through a child rights-based approach. A child rights-based approach involves the entitlement of every child to all human rights and fundamental freedoms under international human rights law, empowering children to claim their rights, and supporting States to meet their obligations and be accountable for the realization of children's rights.
- High-level representatives of the three main pillars of the United Nations – human rights, development, and peace and security – will share their views, experiences, lessons learned and good practices on the key elements of a child rights-based approach within their respective mandates and commitments to mainstream children's rights going forward.
- Chair:** **H.E. Ms. Elisabeth Tichy-Fisslberger**, President of the Human Rights Council
- Opening statements:** **H.E. Mr. Tijjani Muhammad-Bande**, President of the 74th session of the General Assembly of the United Nations  
**Ms. Michelle Bachelet**, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
- Moderator:** **Mr. Benyam Dawit Mezmur**, Member of the Committee on the Rights of the Child
- Panellists:** **Ms. Henrietta H. Fore**, Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)  
**Mr. Achim Steiner**, Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (TBC)  
**Mr. Oscar Fernandez-Taranco**, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support
- Outcomes:** The panel discussion will contribute to the following outcomes:
- Increased general understanding of children's rights and children's rights mainstreaming in the United Nations system;
  - Renewed commitment to promote and implement a child rights-based approach across the United Nations system;
  - Strengthened coordination and collaboration between United Nations entities and the three main pillars of the United Nations – human rights, development, and peace and security.
- Guiding questions:** The panel discussion will be guided by the following overarching questions:
1. How can United Nations entities better support Member States in building capacity to operationalize the general measures of implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child?
  2. In which ways can the United Nations system empower children so they can exercise and claim their human rights?

3. Which measures can be taken to ensure that children’s views, including those of children who are most at risk of being left behind, inform the actions of United Nations bodies and agencies, in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?
4. In what ways can mainstreaming children’s rights strengthen the work of the United Nations on human rights, peace and security and development? And how will this help to bring together the three pillars and strengthen the coherence of the work of the United Nations?

**Mandate:** In paragraph 42 of the annex to Human Rights Council resolution 16/21, the Human Rights Council decided to hold an annual high-level panel discussion to interact with heads of governing bodies and secretariats of United Nations agencies and funds within their respective mandates on specific human rights themes, with the objective of promoting the mainstreaming of human rights throughout the United Nations system. In its resolution 40/15, the Council noted that 2019 marks the thirtieth anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and called for renewed efforts towards the full implementation of the Convention by all parties. It invited the President of the Human Rights Council to consider the theme “Thirty years of implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child: challenges and opportunities” for the annual high-level panel discussion on human rights mainstreaming to be held at the forty-third session of the Council. The Council confirmed this as the theme for the 2020 mainstreaming panel on 27 September 2019.

**Format:** The panel discussion will be limited to two hours. The opening statements and initial presentations by the panellists, the latter guided by the moderator, will be followed by an interactive discussion divided into two slots and chaired by the President of the Human Rights Council. A maximum of one hour will be set aside for the podium, including the opening statements, moderator’s introduction and panellists’ presentations, their responses to questions and concluding remarks. The remaining hour will be reserved for two slots of interventions from the floor, for States and observers (2x12), national human rights institutions (2x1) and non-governmental organizations (2x2).

The list of speakers for the discussion will be established at the beginning of the panel discussion and, as per practice, statements by high-level dignitaries and groups of States will be moved to the beginning of the list. Each speaker will have two minutes to raise issues and to ask panellists questions. Interpretation will be provided in the six United Nations official languages (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish).

**Accessibility :** In an effort to render the Human Rights Council more accessible to persons with disabilities and to promote their full participation in the work of the Council on an equal basis with others, the event will be made fully accessible. During the debate, international sign interpretation and real-time captioning in English will be provided and webcasted. In Room XX, four seats are reserved for participants using wheelchairs, in the seventh (last) row. Hearing loops are available for collection from the Accessibility focal point at the Secretariat desk. Oral statements may be embossed in Braille from any of the six official languages of the United Nations, upon request and following the procedure described in the “Accessibility guide to the Human Rights Council for persons with disabilities” (available at <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/Pages/Accessibility.aspx>).

**Background:** As highlighted by the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child in its General Comment No. 5 (2003) on general measures of implementation of the Convention of the Rights of the Child, “in their promotion of international cooperation

and technical assistance, all United Nations and United Nations-related agencies should be guided by the Convention and should mainstream children's rights throughout their activities."<sup>1</sup> However, thirty years following the adoption of the Convention, the United Nations system still lacks a holistic, child-centred approach that recognizes children as rights-holders who are potentially impacted by the decisions and actions of all of its entities. The Committee on the Rights of the Child's guidance provides a basis for the high-level discussion on how United Nations entities use the standards enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child within their respective mandates, and the challenges and achievements they experience in doing so.

**Background documents:**

- [Human Rights Council resolution 16/21](#) of 12 April 2011 entitled "Review of the work and functioning of the Human Rights Council"
- [Human Rights Council resolution 40/15](#) of 22 March 2019 entitled "Thirtieth anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child"
- [Convention on the Rights of the Child](#)
- [Committee on the Rights of the Child, General Comment No. 5](#) (2003) on general measures of implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (arts. 4, 42 and 44, para. 6)
- [General Assembly resolution 70/1](#) of 25 September 2015, "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development"
- [Celebrating 30 years of the Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) – OHCHR web page with pledges by States
- United Nations Development Group, [UNDG Human Rights Mainstreaming Mechanism Statement for Rio + 20](#)

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<sup>1</sup> CRC/GC/2003/5, para. 64.