

GUIDELINES FOR THE PARTICIPATION OF PARTNERS (NGOS AND INDIVIDUAL EXPERTS) IN THE PRE-SESSIONAL WORKING GROUP OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD¹

1. Under article 45(a) of the Convention, the Committee on the Rights of the Child may invite specialized agencies, UNICEF and "other competent bodies" to provide expert advice on the implementation of the Convention. The term "other competent bodies" includes non-governmental organizations (NGOs). This Convention is the only international human rights treaty that expressly gives NGOs a role in monitoring its implementation. The Committee has systematically and strongly encouraged NGOs to submit reports, documentation or other information in order to provide it with a comprehensive picture and expertise as to how the Convention is being implemented in a particular country. The Committee warmly welcomes written information from international, regional, national and local organizations. Information may be submitted by individual NGOs or national coalitions or committees of NGOs.
2. In order to rationalize its work, written information provided by national, regional and international NGOs as well as individual experts should be submitted to the secretariat of the Committee on the Rights of the Child at least two months prior to the beginning of the pre-sessional working group concerned. Twenty copies of each document should be provided to the secretariat. NGOs are invited to indicate clearly whether they wish the Committee to keep their information or its source confidential.
3. Requests of national, regional and international NGOs to participate in the pre-sessional working group should be submitted to the Committee through its secretariat at least two months prior to the beginning of the pre-sessional working group concerned.
4. Based on the written information submitted, the Committee will issue a written invitation to selected NGOs to participate in the pre-sessional working group. The Committee will only invite NGOs whose information is particularly relevant to its consideration of the State party's report. Priority will be given to partners who have submitted information within the requested time-frame, who are working in the State party and who can provide first-hand information that is complementary to information already available to the Committee. In exceptional cases, the Committee reserves the right to limit the number of partners invited.
5. The pre-sessional working group of the Committee provides a unique opportunity for dialogue with partners, including NGOs, regarding implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child by States parties. Therefore, the Committee strongly recommends that its partners limit their introductory remarks to a maximum of 15 minutes for NGOs coming from in-country and 5 minutes for others so that the members of the Committee can then engage in a constructive dialogue with all participants. Introductory remarks should be limited to highlights of written submission.
6. The pre-sessional working group is a meeting closed to the public, so no observers will be allowed.

¹ CRC/C/90, Annex VIII.