

Joint Statement by UNICEF Executive Director Catherine Russell and the Chair of the Committee on the Rights of the Child Mikiko Otani on the occasion of Human Rights Day

NEW YORK/GENEVA, 8 December 2022 – “As the world observes Human Rights Day on 10 December, UNICEF and the Committee on the Rights of the Child remind world leaders that child rights are human rights, today and every day.

“Under the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) – the most widely ratified human rights treaty in history – children are human beings and individuals with their own rights, independent from the rights of their parents or guardians. The CRC challenges the perception that parents have rights of ownership over the child.

“In this way, children are entitled to the full scope of rights: economic, social, cultural, civil, and political rights.

“By adopting this international legal framework, all 196 States parties have legal obligations to respect, protect and fulfil the rights of every child under their jurisdiction.

“Yet millions of children continue to suffer violations of their rights when they are denied adequate health care, nutrition, education, and protection from violence every day. Moreover, their civil and political rights such as freedom of expression, thought, conscience and religion, and peaceful assembly are still not universally accepted, despite the critical importance of these rights to empower children to think and act on their own behalf.

“On Human Rights Day, we urge all State parties to safeguard the integrity of the CRC through global bodies such as the United Nations General Assembly, the Human Rights Council, and World Health Assembly, and through national policies, including by upholding children’s status as rights holders independently from their parents and guardians. Accountability for rights violations – a core human rights principle – is central to this.

“We also call upon the international community to recognise that children aged under 18 constitute a distinct group of rights holders under international law, and we join and encourage all efforts to integrate children of all ages systematically and explicitly in all action.

“We continue to call for the universal ratification and implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocols on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict (OPAC), on the Sale of Children Child Prostitution and Child Pornography (OPSC), and on a Communications Procedure (OPIC). Together with the CRC, these Protocols constitute the minimum standards for the empowerment, development and protection of all children.

“We echo the United Nations Secretary-General’s call for *all rights for all people* in his 2020 Call to Action for Human Rights. There cannot be sustainable development, peace and security until each and every child has their rights fulfilled, respected and protected.”

###

About UNICEF

UNICEF works in some of the world's toughest places, to reach the world's most disadvantaged children. Across more than 190 countries and territories, we work for every child, everywhere, to build a better world for everyone.

For more information about UNICEF and its work for children visit www.unicef.org

Follow UNICEF on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [YouTube](#)

About the Committee on the Rights of the Child

The [Committee on the Rights of the Child](#) monitors States parties' adherence to the [Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) and its Optional Protocols on involvement of [children in armed conflict](#), and on [sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography](#). The Convention to date has [196 States parties](#). The Committee is made up of [18 members](#) who are independent human rights experts drawn from around the world, who serve in their personal capacity and not as representatives of States parties.