Statement of Mikiko Otani, Chair of the Committee on the Rights of the Child

at the virtual consultation with stakeholders on the Summit of the Future

15 February 2023

The Committee on the Rights of the Child believes that all the discussions about the Summit of the future need to involve children. It is because how children live their first eighteen years of their lives is the foundation of their future and of the future world they will live. It is also because children are best placed to shape the future and to suggest how it should look like. Children’s challenges, issues, experiences, concerns, views and expectations must be paid clear and sufficient attention as a critical element to “forge a new global consensus on what our future should look like.”

While the emphasis on participation of youth and the attention to future generations are welcomed, the Committee is concerned about the lack of explicit recognition of the role of children, including in the modalities resolution of the Summit. Article 12 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child adopted by the General Assembly in 1989 recognized the rights of the child to be heard and have their views taken seriously on all matters affecting the child. Issues discussed for the Summit of the Future, such as peace and security, digital, climate change, education and new technologies - all are the matters that affect the child now and future.

Children have expectations for the UN to protect and create better present and future for them. They have views and opinions to share, though they currently face insurmountable barriers and their participation is limited and often discouraged. They want to participate in the discussions. If the UN is truly committed to become a more inclusive multilateral platform for partnership and solidarity having people at center – as outlined in Our Common Agenda – children cannot be excluded from the process for the Summit of the Future, as the Secretary-General said that this is a “once-in-a-generation opportunity” to develop the frameworks of multilateralism so they are fit for the future. Children should be both subjects of the Summit and the resulting Pact for the Future, and active participants before, during and after the Summit.

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