



## Virtual briefing on a child rights-based approach to COVID-19

12.30h-14.00h (CEST), Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> May 2020

Online via Teams

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### BACKGROUND

The COVID-19 global pandemic threatens children in all countries, especially children in situations of vulnerability. All children's rights are being impacted, to a different extent depending on the context, including children's rights to survival and development, physical and mental health, food, protection, education, recreation, well-being and care, as well as their civil and political rights.

At the same time, as pointed out by the UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence Against Children, children are "surprising the world with new ideas and forging ways out of this crisis. Children groups are using digital technology to support each other, exchange information and share information. From South America to Asia children are meeting online, exchanging views and identifying gaps in government responses".

As recommended by the Committee on the Rights of the Child, States must ensure that international human rights' obligations regarding children, including those under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and other UN and regional human rights treaties, remain in place and are at the centre of all responses to COVID-19. In this context, children should be involved in providing solutions, through appropriate consultation and civic engagement mechanisms, dialogue and dissemination of child-friendly and accessible information.

In this regard, the Policy Brief of the Secretary General provides guidance on four critical issues and more concrete guidance has been developed by UNICEF and OHCHR, as well as by civil society.

During the High-level panel discussion on human rights mainstreaming held at the 43rd session of the Human Rights Council in commemoration of the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, UN agencies, States and civil society came together to commit to advance the mainstreaming of children's rights through a child rights-based approach. Now, more than ever, we must come together in solidarity to ensure a proper child rights mainstreaming.

A comprehensive approach that looks at the full spectrum of children's rights is needed to ensure the adoption of coherent measures. Although, we have never before faced similar challenges, this provides us with an opportunity to learn from the situation and strengthen the application of a child rights-based approach by the United Nations and Member States.

### OBJECTIVES

This virtual briefing is intended to be an initial exchange with Permanent Missions in Geneva to discuss children's rights in the context of the COVID-19 pandemics.

**The virtual briefing will be an opportunity to:**

- Hear children's views on how they are mobilising themselves during times of COVID-19 in order to share their experiences, support others and contribute to providing solutions;
- Familiarise participants with the existing guidance on how to adopt a child rights-based approach in COVID-19 responses;
- Share examples of how the existing guidance is being operationalized at the national level;
- Explore opportunities for collaboration and how can the UN and civil society provide technical assistance to States in this regard; and
- Identify gaps where further guidance is needed and if additional virtual briefings on concrete themes might be needed.

**PROGRAMME**

**Opening remarks (10'):**

Lena Handwerk, First Secretary, Permanent Mission of Germany to the United Nations Office in Geneva

Klemen Ponikvar, Counsellor Human Rights Issues, Permanent Mission of Slovenia to the United Nations Office in Geneva

Ajlin, Young Leader from Bosnia & Herzegovina – *The role of children and young people in child-led advocacy actions to cope with COVID-19 crisis*

**Speakers (20'):**

- Gehad Madi and Renate Winter, Vice Chairpersons, Committee on the Rights of the Child - *The impact of COVID-19 on children and how to adopt a child rights-based response to COVID-19*
- Juliet Harris, Director, Together - Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights – *Good practices at the national level in applying a child rights-based response to COVID-19*
- Imma Guerras-Delgado, Team Leader Child and Youth Rights, OHCHR– *Guidance and technical assistance to States on a child rights-based approach to COVID-19: challenges and opportunities to mainstream children's rights*
- Patricio Cuevas-Parra, Director Child Participation and Rights, World Vision – *Empowering children and young people during the COVID-19 pandemic: good practices and recommendations*

**Q&A (Questions 40' and answers 20') moderated by Alex Conte, Executive Director of Child Rights Connect**