

**Session 3: Human rights and SDG implementation at the national level**

3 December 2019

**Statement of Child Rights Connect**

This year marks the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). The 2030 Agenda itself recognizes children as '**agents of change**' emphasizing the importance of their participation in SDG implementation and accountability, which will accelerate the realization of their rights under the UNCRC. Child participation is critical for both the successful implementation of Agenda 2030, and a sustainable development for all that leaves no one behind.

Children around the globe are contributing to SDGs implementation. For instance:

- Members of the Child Parliament in Zambia have used their interactions with the Zambian Parliament to advocate for further investment in children to achieve implementation of the SDGs.
- In India, through a peer to peer approach, children are leading an initiative to encourage out-of-school children to continue their education and support them in the process. Moreover, a city level children's group of street children has been established in Kolkata to empower them in voicing their opinions in national and international forums.
- Plan International's Champions of Change programme engages and empowers boys and girls in all their diversity in a community-wide strategy to challenge harmful social norms and promote gender equality, in over 40 countries including Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras.

With this in mind, Child Rights Connect considers that:

- It is crucial to renew the focus and commitment to meaningful 'child participation' when it comes to the 2030 Agenda. This includes recognizing and engaging children as **active citizens** and ensuring every child's right to be heard and participate in all settings (informal and formal, offline and online), particularly the most deprived and marginalized children. This should include participation through voluntary national reviews' reporting processes, follow up and inclusion in multi-stakeholder mechanisms for SDG review, and the provision of increased spaces and protections for **children human rights defenders** in all their diversity.
- States should integrate a **gender-transformative and age-sensitive child-rights based approach** to achieve Agenda 2030, ensuring no child is left behind and placing human rights principles of universality and non-discrimination at the heart of decision, policy and law making.
- The views of all children should be included in governance with increased public investments and accountability. In view of this, governments should take effective action to integrate the Sustainable Development Goals into national plans, sector strategies, policies and budgets with an explicit focus on reaching the furthest behind first. This should include investments and strengthening of intergenerational and multi-stakeholder partnerships to drive progress across the SDGs.

Keeping these recommendations in mind, how do you think increased child participation, the empowerment of all children as civic actors, and the recognition of children as human rights defenders, especially those most deprived and marginalized could be ensured in SDG implementation and accountability?

Thank you.