

Global Online Questionnaire

17 December 2021 - 15 February 2022

General Comment No. 26

The United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child is listening to the calls of children and young people and taking a major step to hold governments accountable for ensuring children live in a clean, green, healthy and sustainable world. The Committee is creating a General Comment on Children’s Rights and the Environment with a Special Focus on Climate Change ([General Comment No. 26](#)) – authoritative guidance on what governments must do to uphold the rights of the child under the Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN CRC or Convention) in the face of climate change and other environmental challenges.

Consultations

From December 2021 – October 2022, the Committee is hosting a series of offline and online [consultations and workshops](#) with the global community, including specific consultations with children and young people, to inform the General Comment launching in March 2023.

Global online questionnaire

This global online questionnaire has been created to collect information that will inform the first draft of the General Comment. All interested parties are invited to participate- States, regional organizations and UN agencies, national human rights organizations and children’s commissioners, children’s and adolescent groups, non-governmental organizations, research institutions, and other stakeholders. Participants can answer any question they wish to and are encouraged to submit responses where they have experience, knowledge and capacity. Submissions will not be translated and should be submitted in English, French or Spanish.

The questionnaire covers topics outlined in the [concept note](#) for the General Comment published by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. Respondents are encouraged to include all child-rights related issues they may wish to highlight within the context of what the UN Environment Programme has called the “triple planetary crisis” of pollution, biodiversity collapse and the rapid decline of nature, and especially climate change.

The questionnaire is arranged into 4 subsections which cover: (A) environmental impacts on children; (B) the benefits of a child rights approach; (C) children’s rights whose realization requires a healthy environment; (D) and the role of child rights in environmental protection. Please include sources, relevant research and data, statistics, evidence, findings from

consultations with children, examples of laws, policies and programmes, and evidence of good practice that would contribute to the drafting process.

The deadline for submissions is 15th of February, 2021 at 11:59pm (EST).

Please note: A questionnaire for children and young people will be circulated at the end of January, 2022. Then the first draft of the General Comment, informed by submissions, will be shared for review in June 2022.

To receive updates and announcements related to the General Comment we invite you to [sign up to our newsletter](#).

For any questions, including clarifications on questions, please [contact us](#).

Full name:

Title (i.e. Policy Advisor):

Organization/Institution:

In which country do you live?

Email Address:

Please select which applies:

- I am applying on behalf of my organization or institution.
- I am applying on behalf of myself.

Please select which categories you would like to respond to:

- Environmental impacts on children
- A children’s rights approach to environmental issues
- A safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment an integral part of the enjoyment of children’s rights
- The role of children’s rights in environmental protection

Environmental impacts on children

- What are the main impacts of climate change, pollution and nature and biodiversity loss for children’s lives? Please highlight any ways in which children are uniquely affected, including examples of injustice imposed on specific groups of children (e.g. girls, children with disabilities, Indigenous children) and differences or inequalities between countries.

- In which ways do responses to these environmental crises also have the ability to adversely affect children (e.g. forced displacement, increasing food or energy prices)?

A child rights-based approach to environmental issues

- What is the value of a child rights-based approach in addressing the environmental (climate) crisis and achieving sustainable development? What does this mean practically for the adoption of related laws, policies, programmes and practices?
- How should the "[four general principles](#)" (namely non-discrimination; best interests; the right to life, survival and development, and the views of the child) shape decisions related to children's rights and the environment? Please provide concrete examples.
- How can concrete guidance on environmental rights developed in other areas of international law inform the General Comment No.26?
- What are the legal, policy and practical implications of applying the [intergenerational equity principle](#) in the context of children's rights and the long-term effects of climate change and other environmental harm?

A safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment as an integral part of the enjoyment of children's rights

- To what extent does the right to health and its explicit reference to environmental pollution in this context ([Art.24 2\(c\)](#) of the UN CRC) serve to protect children's rights from environmental harm, including climate change?
- Are there other Convention rights whose realization requires a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment (e.g. life, survival and development, an adequate standard of living, food, water, play)? Why is this the case? Should particular rights receive more attention (e.g. freedom from exploitation and all forms of violence, participation in cultural life)?
- Given the scale and urgency of action needed, what implications are there for States to ensure they meet their obligations in relation to these children's rights in the context of responses to the climate crisis (e.g. mitigation, adaptation), pollution prevention, and the protection of ecosystems and biodiversity? What concrete legislative, policy, administrative and other appropriate measures are required for their implementation?
- How should the acknowledgment that States face constraints due to limited resources and have discretion to balance different social goals be understood in light of their environmental obligations under the UN CRC? How might the concept of [sustainable development](#) provide helpful guidance to balance different children's rights in this respect?
- How can States further strengthen protection of children from violations of their rights resulting from environmental harm caused by the business sector enterprises? At the same time complementing the general guidance given in [CRC General Comment No. 16](#) on State obligations regarding the impact of the business sector on

children's rights? What gaps remain with respect to the business sector's own responsibilities towards the relationship between children's rights and the environment, and what concrete measures are required to address these?

- How can the obligations that States have to address environmental harm violating children's rights beyond their national borders be more effectively upheld?
- What are the main gaps and strategic priorities for strengthening international cooperation in the context of children's rights and the environment, including international assistance that contributes to the creation of safer and healthier environments for children in other countries?
- What are the concrete implications of the human right to a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment for the rights protected under the UN CRC? Could you provide (positive) examples of how the child's right to a healthy environment has been recognized and implemented at the international, regional or national levels?

The role of children's rights in environmental protection

- How should the General Comment treat the child rights-based approach to environmental and climate education and corresponding obligations of States, taking into account [articles 28 and 29 1\(e\) of the CRC](#), and expanding on the general guidance given in [CRC General Comment No.1](#) on the aims of education?
- What should be legal, policy and practical priorities, including for non-State actors (e.g. media, business sector), for strengthening the availability, accessibility, adequateness and quality of environmental information in order to ensure that children understand how environmental harm may undermine their rights and can participate in environmental protection? Please provide examples.
- Please provide examples of laws, policies, practices and jurisprudence that enable or hinder the exercise of the child's rights to freedom of expression, assembly and association in relation to the environment and climate change. What further actions are needed to uphold and catalyze the implementation of these rights, taking into account additional risks and barriers that certain groups of children face in this respect? What actions should States take to support the activities of child environmental human rights defenders? Please provide existing examples where possible (e.g. funding schemes etc).
- How can the right of all children to be heard and taken seriously in the context of decision-making on the environment, especially climate change, be better upheld and strengthened? Please provide examples of how children's right to participate in public and political affairs has been facilitated or restricted in relation to the development of laws, policies, regulations, projects and activities on the environment and climate change at all levels.
- What specific measures should be taken to create more space for children, especially young children, in environmental and climate decision-making?

- What concrete steps are required of States to strengthen children’s access to timely and effective remedies for violations of their rights relating to the environment and climate change-related harm? E.g. measures with respect to accessible and child-friendly complaints mechanisms and legal procedures, rights of legal standing, including class actions and the ability to represent interests of future generations, the burden and standard of proof, human rights obligations of businesses, extraterritorial obligations and jurisdiction, and adequate reparation etc.
- Please provide good examples of specific measures (e.g. laws, policies and practices) that States have adopted to ensure that children have access to justice in the context of environmental and climate protection, and examples of positive outcomes (e.g. jurisprudence, practical impacts).

If you have any materials you find useful to share, you can upload them.

We would like to contact you in the event that we have questions or require clarification on your submission. If you choose to not be contacted this may mean that if we cannot resolve a potential issue, your submission or a specific response may not be accepted.

I consent to being contacted on matters related to my submission.

I do not consent to being contacted on matters related to my submission.

We aim to credit everyone that has contributed to the General Comment by highlighting their names or institution’s names publicly (i.e. General Comment website). If you apply on behalf of yourself we will use your name and if you apply on behalf of your institution we will use its name.

I consent to my name or organization’s name and submission to be credited publicly.

I do not consent to my name or organization’s name and submission to be credited publicly.