

Press Statement on Adoption of General Comment 26 by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child

For Immediate release – 31 May 2023

We commend the exceptional contributions of children and young people in the Southern African Region to address climate change. Their unwavering dedication and invaluable insights have played a pivotal role in shaping the Committee's general comment 26 on children's right to a healthy environment, with a special emphasis on climate change. This momentous achievement is a direct response to the urgent calls made by children and young people worldwide, who rightly recognize climate change as one of the most pressing challenges of our time.

The extensive consultation process, involving over 16,000 children, including even the youngest among them, reflects the inclusive and participatory nature of this endeavour. The general comment serves to highlight the existing breaches and vulnerabilities within the Convention regarding climate change, reaffirming children's entitlement to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment. Moreover, it provides comprehensive guidance on the obligations of States and the responsibilities of the business sector, while offering specific recommendations tailored to children in the areas of mitigation, adaptation, loss and damage, and climate finance.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the Committee for their diligent efforts in finalizing this essential document. The official publication of the general comment in July, followed by its launch during the Committee's upcoming session on 18 September, marks a significant milestone. Furthermore, numerous launches are being planned worldwide to disseminate its crucial insights and recommendations.

We express our deep appreciation to Terre des hommes Germany for their invaluable assistance in empowering children and young people to amplify their voices and actively engage in these momentous processes. Their unwavering dedication to nurturing the younger generation has played a pivotal role in driving positive transformation.

In the words of the young voices involved in the consultation process, global cooperation is paramount to addressing global warming and other associated challenges. The release of this general comment will undoubtedly bolster advocacy efforts in environmental child rights work, empowering stakeholders to effect positive change and inspire collaborative action on a global scale. Together, we can create a more sustainable and secure future for children, safeguarding their right to a healthy environment.

ENDS

For more information, or to arrange interviews, please contact [Nyasha Simon Dick], [Communications Officer], [Regional Network of Children and Young People Trust]: [n.simon@rncypt.org] [+263773917137]

Notes to editors

Regional Network of Children and Young People Trust (RNCYPT)'s work focuses on transforming how societies treat children and young people. They do this by ensuring that children and young people are active citizens who demand access to all their rights, hold duty bearers to account and mobilize communities for the respect, promotion and fulfilment of their rights.

For more information visit www.rncypt.org