



November 20
Universal Day of Children's Rights

10 – 9 – 8 – 7 – 6 – 5 – 4 – 3 – 2 – 1

GETTING TO KNOW THE COMMITTEE ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

On Friday, November 20, only three days from today, we will be celebrating the Universal Children's Day. At this point, we are probably acquainted with the UN *Committee on the Rights of the Child* (CRC).

The CRC headquarters are in Geneva, Switzerland. You probably know about the magnificent Swiss chocolates and cheeses. You can find more information about this country [here](#).

The *Committee* started working on September 30, 1991, pursuant to article 43 of the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, adopted on 20 November 1989 by the General Assembly of the United Nations. Click [here](#) to learn more about the *Committee*.

Convention on the Rights of the Child - Article 43

1. For the purpose of examining the progress made by States Parties in achieving the realization of the obligations undertaken in the present Convention, there shall be established a Committee on the Rights of the Child, which shall carry out the functions hereinafter provided.

One of the main tasks of the Committee is to examine the reports of the States Parties to the Convention. States Parties undertake to submit follow-up reports regarding the measures they implement to guarantee the Convention's rights. State Parties must submit initial reports within two years of entry into force of the Convention, and follow-up reports every five years afterwards.

These reports should indicate the circumstances and difficulties that hamper the fulfilment of the States Parties' obligations under the Convention, and should contain enough information enabling the Committee to examine the situation and provide final provisions for a more precise application of the Convention in the country.

As stated in article 19, the signatory States undertake to ensure the protection of children under 18 years of age against aggression, abuse, exploitation and sexual violence. The principles enshrined in

the Convention are the right to life, participation, the best interests of the child, and non-discrimination.

Participation. Children, in their capacity as individuals and legal persons, can and should express their opinions on the issues affecting them. The political, economic, and educational agendas of every country should listen to their views and consider them. This generates a new type of relationship between the children, the State and civil society.

Survival and development. The States must take all measures possible to preserve children' life and its quality. They must ensure their harmonious development in the physical, spiritual, psychological, moral and social dimensions, taking into account their skills and talents.

Best interests of the child. When public or private institutions, state officials, courts or any other authority makes decisions about children, they must aim at achieving their maximum well-being.

Non-discrimination. No person or institution can hinder a child in any way on grounds of race, creed, color, sex, language, caste, birth situation or disability.

Stellah, from Madagascar, shares with us her testimony about the rights of children in her country.



"I see that in my neighborhood, respect of those rights is not applied. In the first place, the child has the right to study and to go to school, and however this is not the case. It seems that 60% of the children do not go to school and what is worse, those children do some small work to help the parents.

In the second place, the child has the right to be protected, to eat well, to be taken care of... the parents are concerned about their children; they wish to give us protection, health,

something to eat, but the great problem is poverty. This poverty does not favor the respect of rights of children; this is what I can see especially in my neighborhood. In the third place, according to me, to go to school forms part of my spare time, of my leisure, I go and find friends, teachers who educate me and show me the good path to follow. A child who works and does not go to school would not be able to benefit from that time. This right to education is still a challenge that I have noticed, if the child does not receive enough education, it will be difficult for him to find some distraction and wellbeing or happiness.

And lastly, the child also has the right to express himself and what he will say should not hurt the others. I see that at home, this occasion does not exist as it should; the child has very little chance to express himself and to speak about his concerns.

At present I speak in the name of all the children of my neighborhood, please, listen to us, understand us and help us".

FELAHARIMALALA Mialinavalona Stellah, 14 years.

1. Were you acquainted with the *Committee on the Rights of the Child*?
2. Are you in touch with the *Human Rights* and the *Rights of the Child* committees in your city, state or country?
3. Have you contacted any NGOs working in the defense of human rights and of the rights of the child?

[FMSI](#) would welcome your feedback, so please leave your comments at the Foundation's [Facebook](#) page.

We invite you to reflect on these important issues regarding the children of your country and of the entire world.

Stay tuned! See you tomorrow!

