

**A General Comment for Article 19
of the
United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
Regional Consultations**

Background

The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (the Committee) has given the International Society for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (ISPCAN) and the International Institute for Child Rights and Development (IICRD) the opportunity to work on its behalf to draft a General Comment (GC) for Article 19 of the United Nations Convention (treaty) on the Rights of the Child.

Article 19 presents the Convention's central orientation to child protection and it embodies the pre-eminent international principles and standards in this area. A General Comment for Article 19 has the potential to meaningfully contribute toward securing the safety, well-being, health, development and futures of children.

Chronology

Sep 2008	United Nations Child Rights Committee gives IICRD & ISPCAN the opportunity to draft a General Comment (GC) for Article 19.
Jan/May 2009	Program of development organized to produce draft(s) – Working Group, Expert Advisory Panel and GC19 CRC Focal Group formed. Outlines produced and reviewed by CRC Focal Group. Components of outlines analyzed and supported by extensive material developed through review of CRC recorded perspectives, General Comments 1-12, and child protection and child rights literature and knowledge bases. Consultations held with UNICEF and WHO leadership and with the UN Special Expert on Violence Against Children.
Mar 2010	Writer selected and General Comment Draft 1 produced.
Apr 2010	Review and revision retreat held in Budapest with Working Group and available CRC Focal Group members.
May 2010	Draft 2 of General Comment produced incorporating results of discussions and recommendations from the Budapest retreat and additional perspectives from Program of Development Team members.
May 2010	Working session held in Sion, Switzerland with CRC and Executive Committee of Program of Development Team.
May 2010	Committee establishes its "Editorial Group" to work with Program of Development Writer and Executive Committee to advance the drafting process toward a version worthy of adoption by the Committee.
Jun 2010	Planning for regional consultations commences.
Jul/Aug 2010	Regional consultations will be held in various regions around the world.
Sep 2010	Draft 3 will be prepared.
Sep/Oct 2010	Draft 3, if considered ready by the Editorial Group, will be presented to the full Committee on the Rights of the Child for consideration.
Jan/Feb 2011	Targeted session of the Committee for adoption of the General Comment.

Regional Consultations

A series of regional consultations have been proposed to promote consideration of a General Comment for Article 19, provide information to advance the drafting of the General Comment, and to foster planning and readiness to support the implementation of a General Comment for Article 19.

The consultations aim to elicit regional perspectives on comprehensive child rights-based care-giving and protection; to elicit, at the request of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, perspectives on particular issues relevant to the draft General Comment (issues determined by the Committee's Editorial Group); to raise enthusiasm and conduct planning regarding the future implementation process of the General Comment, once

finalized; and, where possible, to include the voices/perspectives of children (i.e., under 18s, following rights respecting guidelines).

Substantive feedback from regional consultations is needed by the Committee on the Rights of the Child's Editorial Group and the Writer for the drafting program by **15 August 2010** to provide the opportunity for it to be incorporated into an initial 'Draft 3' of the draft General Comment by the beginning of September 2010. The initial Draft 3 is then expected to be fine-tuned in time for possible presentation by the Editorial Group to the full Committee on the Rights of the Child at its September-October 2010 session. If Draft 3 is found to be sufficiently close to desired status, further necessary refinements will be made to prepare it for possible adoption by the Committee in its January-February 2011 session. Feedback on regional experiences in general and on implementation of the final version of GC13 is welcome through to 31 October 2010.

Consultation configurations

Consultation forms and processes may successfully take a variety of forms. They may be large or small, of relatively short or long duration, incorporating face-to-face and/or virtual exchanges and deliberations. A standardized feedback form is available for use in association with consultations. Consultation configurations will be decided by those organizing them within the regions.

Children's participation in regional consultations

While a child-friendly summary of the General Comment is available, it is left to the discretion and experience of those organising the consultations in each region as to whether this is possible and, if so, what form it should take, with due regard given to necessary ethical and child protection considerations. Detailed guidelines on ethical and meaningful participation of children in consultations are available in the following documents:

- "So You Want to Consult With Children? A Toolkit of Good Practice", International Save the Children Alliance, 2003 (also available in French and Spanish): <http://www.savethechildren.net/alliance/resources/publications.html>
- "Practice Standards in Children's Participation", International Save the Children Alliance, 2005: http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/en/54_3169.htm

Proposed locations and contacts for Regional Consultations

- South East Asia – *Sanphasit Koompraphant* sanphasit@yahoo.com and *Patricia Ip* patipls@gmail.com with *Philip Cook* pcook@uvic.ca as WG resource support
- South Asia – *Karuna Bishnoi* kbishnoi@unicef.org and *Tufail Muhammad* cracppa@yahoo.com
- North America – *Sue Bennett* bennett@cheo.on.ca Philip Cook, Stuart Hart, Kim Svevo-Cianci
- Latin America – *Evelyn Eisenstein* evelynbrasil@click21.com.br or evelynbrasil@hotmail.com with Kim Svevo-Cianci as WG resource support
- Middle East and North Africa – *Fadheela Al-Mahroos* Fadheela@batelco.com.bh
- South/Sub-Saharan, East and West Africa – *Joan van Niekerk* joanvn@iafrica.com
- Central and Eastern Europe – *Lia Saralidze* liasaralidze@gmail.com
- Western Europe – *Marie Wernham* marie@createsolutions.org

Possible participants for Regional Consultations

- Regional members of the Committee on the Rights of the Child
- Members of the GC13 Working Group
- Regional representatives of: UNICEF; OHCHR, the Office of the Special Representative on Violence Against Children; WHO
- Regional States Parties supportive of child rights-based care-giving and protection
- Regional child rights and child protection leaders
- Representatives of regional ISPCAN and IICRD networks
- Regional and national NGOs

For information regarding Regional Consultations and those organizing them, please contact the General Comment for Article 19 Operations Manager, Nancy Taylor, at ntiicrd@uvic.ca.