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Workshop on the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child: 30 years on, achievements and challenges*

Tuesday, 15 October 2019, 4.30–6.30 p.m.
Hall 3/0 (ground floor), Building A, Sava Centre

Concept note

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) was adopted 30 years ago. The CRC was a milestone in that it put children's rights centre stage and identified children as rights-holders.

The CRC enjoys widespread international support – it is the most widely ratified human rights treaty. In cooperation with organizations like the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, which supervises the implementation of the CRC, has been at the forefront of efforts to promote national action to make children's rights a reality.

Guided by the CRC, national policies that concern children directly are increasingly developed with "the best interest of the child" in mind. In a similar vein, channels have opened up for children to express their voices and contribute to decision-making on issues affecting them. At the national level, the creation of children's parliaments exemplifies this trend. At the international level, the entry into force in 2014 of the CRC's Optional Protocol on a communications procedure was a watershed, as it provides children with the opportunity to appeal to an international mechanism specific to them if violations cannot be addressed effectively at national level.

Yet, the reality shows that, despite important progress on these fronts, we are far from living up to the ideals and objectives enshrined in the CRC. Indeed, children continue to be subjected to all kinds of suffering, be it violence, forced labour and trafficking, or a lack of decent food and education. A particular concern is related to child migration. According to UNICEF, more than 12 million children were refugees or asylum seekers in the world in 2016, and some 23 million children were internally displaced – 16 million in conflict and 7 million as a result of natural disasters. These numbers are staggering, all the more so bearing in mind children's particular vulnerability in the face of such adversity and the risk of further suffering and exploitation as they try to find a safe haven.

The workshop on the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child: 30 years on, achievements and challenges* will look at the road travelled since 1989. It will take stock of the overall situation of children's rights and the global framework that is in place, including the Sustainable Development Goals, to protect children's well-being. It will zoom in on noteworthy national and international initiatives that have been developed, including with the help of parliaments, to give children a voice and to take their interests into account. It will also look at the remaining challenges, with a focus on the plight of children on the move, and the action that parliaments can take to protect children in such vulnerable situations.

Panellists will include experts from UNICEF, the International Organization for Migration, the Committee on the Rights of the Child, prominent NGOs working on child rights, and children.