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Standing Committee on
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The Convention on the Rights of the Child 25 years on: Are children's lives better?

Interactive debate
Wednesday, 1 April 2015
11.30-13.30

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child entered into force 25 years ago. It marked a milestone in that it put children's rights centre stage and identified children as rights holders.

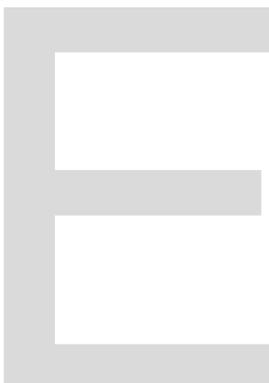
The Convention enjoys widespread international support – it is the most widely ratified human rights treaty. The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, which supervises the Convention's implementation, has been at the forefront of efforts to promote action at national level to make children's rights a reality, in cooperation with organizations like UNICEF.

At the 132nd IPU Assembly (Hanoi, April 2015), the IPU Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights will organize an interactive debate that will look at the progress made since 1990 to improve the lives of children around the world. The debate will focus on two issues relevant to the Convention.

The first is a critical indicator of children's rights today: stunting. Stunting refers to the impaired brain development that results from poor nutrition, water and sanitation. It affects millions of children around the globe, and implies multiple denials of child rights. Children who are stunted will not learn as they should and will not be able to earn as much as they could. With its emphasis on food, health and care, the Convention on the Rights of the Child makes it clear that good nutrition is a fundamental human right. It is the key that unlocks a lifetime of improved learning, growth and production capacity.

The second is achievements and challenges in the efforts to end violence against children. Children endure multiple forms of violence, most visibly at times of crisis played out in the public eye. But violence also occurs – albeit often out of the public eye – in time of peace. There is overwhelming scientific evidence of the long-lasting physical, psychological, emotional, and social consequences that children suffer well into adulthood because of such violence.

UNICEF data clearly show that violence against children is a global phenomenon, cutting across every geographical, ethnic, cultural, social and economic divide, and that violence against children is tolerated, even justified, by adults and by children themselves. The Convention on the Rights of the Child makes it clear that such violence is a violation of children's rights and that States have an obligation to protect children's physical and mental well-being.



Participants will be invited to discuss the following key questions:

- How can parliaments contribute to efforts to eliminate stunting and promote pro-nutrition policies? What good parliamentary practices exist?
- What steps have parliaments taken to strengthen their child protection systems – including through laws, policies and budget allocations – and make sure that children are protected from violence? What are the challenges that parliaments need to address?
- To what extent have parliaments been directly involved in the work of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child? For example, have parliaments contributed to the preparation or discussion of the national report, or participated in the report's presentation to the Committee and/or the implementation of the Committee's recommendations?