Written input regarding General comment No. 26

UNICEF Sweden would like to take the opportunity to respond to the Committee's draft regarding the General comment No. 26.

UNICEF Sweden wants to start by saying that the draft appears well-written and comprehensive. We have therefore chosen to only comment on aspects where we see need to be strengthened or added. Upon drafting the below comments UNICEF Sweden has also consulted with young people from the youth associations of Fridays for future Sweden.

## Introduction 1-6

UNICEF Sweden is impressed by how the committee has involved children in the process and that children from different parts of the world have gotten the opportunity to speak up. In the draft it is described that children have been the driving force in environmental work and in this have contributed to the fact that there is now a general comment on the topic *environment*. UNICEF Sweden appreciates the efforts in enabling youth participation in the process, and we hope this will become a process you will use in the future as well in the preparation and not least in the selection of any upcoming general comments.

UNICEF Sweden would like the committee to in the introduction stronger emphasize that we are facing an ongoing climate crisis that impacts children's chances to live and grow up in decent conditions. In other words, the climate crisis needs to be taken seriously not "only" because it is an important issue that children care about but because children are already deeply impacted by the effects of climate change today.

The climate crisis does not have national borders, which is why we must pursue a global policy of solidarity. It is positive that climate change is described to impact not only the planet and our environment that children inherit, but is also negatively affecting a child's entire life. We suggest for this aspect to be clarified even further.

## A. A child rights-based approach to the environment

Just as the committee points out, it is important to, in the context of environmental work, stress the fact that environmental destruction affects all aspects of children's upbringing and that it affects a child both in the future and in the present. UNICEF Sweden would like the committee to put more emphasis on the marginalized children in vulnerable situations, such as children with disabilities and children in financially disadvantaged families.

## B. The evolution of international human rights law and the environment

In this section UNICEF Sweden would like to see a stronger link between the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement. This is to facilitate for readers to understand how these frameworks are interconnected and how they in turn are connected to the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

27. UNICEF ​​Sweden urges States to take children's anxiety about the climate crisis seriously, by extending mental health and other healthcare services and support to cover children whose mental health are negatively affected by climate related anxiety.

## C. The right to education (arts. 28 and 29 (1) (e))

36. In this section girls are mentioned as a group that is in a more vulnerable situation, and that they have a greater fear of unsafe toilets. We would like to see LGBTQI and children with disabilities to also be taken into account.

## F. Children’s rights and the business sector 90.

We appreciate the emphasis on business responsibility to prevent and remedy any potential or actual negative impact on children from its business operations. While stressing the importance for businesses to timely and effectively transit into a green economy, which enables children to enjoy their’ rights to a healthy and liveable planet, businesses must in such transition also secure a just and inclusive process where children’s rights and perspectives are taken into consideration.

This means taking a holistic approach to a just transition and ensuring that the company's strategy and priorities include mitigation (decarbonization) as well as investing in and supporting climate adaptation and community resilience. Adopting a child centred approach to just transition also means understanding and avoiding any unintended consequences on children and their families, such as job losses in the communities or extraction of raw materials critical for transition that are associated with severe child rights violations.

## G. The right to non-discrimination (art. 2)

UNICEF Sweden would also like to highlight the LGBTQI group when mentioning children who are at greater risk of being subject to discrimination.

## I. The right of the child to be heard (art. 12)

UNICEF Sweden would like to stress the importance of children's own lived experiences and opinions. It is our firm belief that we need to perceive children as experts of their own lives and value their own perspectives of how their lives are affected by climate change. We would like to see stronger wordings on the need to give children the opportunities to be seen as experts and that states should support children who want to be, or who already are involved in climate issues.

56. It is very positive that the General comments high-light the importance of children’s possibilities to participate digitally. In this regard we also want to draw attention to the need to include and enable participation of groups of children that cannot be reached digitally, due to for instance the lack of access to the internet, their very young age, or disabilities etc.

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