# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foreword</td>
<td>V</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our Key Achievements in 2019</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our 2019-2024 Strategy</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Context of Our Work in 2019</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highlight in 2019: Child participation at the heart of the commemoration of the 30th anniversary of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#TheAsiaIWant: Our dreams for children's rights in Asia</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The 2019 Asian Children's Summit</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Consultation Process</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children's Views and Recommendations</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violence Against Children</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children's Rights to a Healthy Environment</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children's Rights in the Digital Environment</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children on the Move</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dialogue Session and Moving Forward</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honoring the Pioneers of Child Rights Advocacy</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highlight in 2019: Improving the systems and policies for the rights of the child</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investing in Children</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Addressing the underlying causes of violence against children</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highlight in 2019: Child rights in rapidly changing settings</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digital Environment</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Climate Action and Right to a Healthy Environment</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highlights in 2019: Strengthening Civil Society</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working with the regional bodies</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The 2019 Asia-Pacific Partnership Meeting of Child Rights Coalitions and Networks</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Report</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Report</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Organization</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Dear Friends,

In 2019, we celebrated the 30th anniversary of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. We took stock of our progress, highlighted our gains, and recognized the need to continue working together for the rights of children.

The past year has been a busy one in the world scene and in Asia. It is summarized by some as “the year of protests.” Hong Kong gained the most attention with the demonstration against an extradition bill joined by millions. A significant part of this multitude are children who are leading other children. This particular event, and the ongoing climate action spearheaded by children from all over the world, stress the need to recognize, respect, and empower children in safely carrying out their human rights work. Children have rights to take civic action and take part in public decision-making and in shaping democratic societies. There is a growing recognition of children’s unique challenges and contributions as both human rights holders and defenders. For instance, in 2018, the CRC Day of General Discussion focused on the protection of the rights of child human rights defenders. With the changing contexts and shrinking civic spaces, solidarity among advocates, including children, becomes all the more indispensable.

Also in 2019, our dream of holding the first Asian Children’s Summit came true. We took the lead in creating a space for children from Southeast Asia, South Asia, and East Asia to come together to form their opinions and give recommendations on the realization of their rights. This was made possible through our collaboration with intergovernmental regional bodies and civil society organizations in the region. There, we gathered children’s recommendations on emerging themes that would inform the decisions and actions at the international, regional, and local levels. In an intergenerational dialogue, the children presented their recommendations to representatives from UN mechanisms, regional intergovernmental bodies, and civil society organizations. We commit to continue to bring forward these recommendations in our future advocacy actions. In addition, we do not only harvest these recommendations but also the lessons from the processes that will contribute to what a truly inclusive participation is.

We also honored the decades-long legacy work of the pioneers of child rights advocacy in Asia. We hope that the contribution of more leaders will continue to be recognized and celebrated, and that the movement will continue to hone more advocates.

Together with our members in various countries in the region, we developed the capacity of stakeholders in improving public budgeting for children’s rights, from the local to the national level. We also advocated for gender-transformative policies in ending child marriage.

We accomplished all these thanks to the important contributions of children and child rights advocates who participated in our various programs and activities.

On behalf of CRC Asia, I would like to thank our key partners – Save the Children, Plan International, and UNICEF – for supporting our work and helping us achieve our outcomes.

We look forward to working with you again in 2020 and in the years to come!

Amihan Abueva
Regional Executive Director
CRC Asia

*Artwork by Jamie Bauza from the publication “The Voices of Children at the 7th High-Level Cross-Regional Roundtable on Violence against Children” produced by the Office of the UN SRSG-VAC and CRC Asia in 2018*
CRC Asia is a regional network of organizations working together for the fulfillment of children’s rights. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocols serve as the foundation of our work.

Our mission is to be a strong voice for child rights by leading in strengthening child rights movements, promoting innovative approaches, and advocating better policies for and with children in the region.
We strengthened the collaboration of civil society organizations in advancing child participation in the region.

We enabled civil society to create spaces for collaboration with local and regional policymakers, building evidence on the importance of civic space in the realization of child rights.

We mobilized child rights organizations and coalitions from different sub-regions of Asia to create a platform that raised the voices of children. Arguably the first in Asia, the platform not only resulted to a set of children’s recommendations for UN mechanisms, regional government bodies, local policymakers, and civil society organizations, but also facilitated the exchange of information, experiences, and expertise on organizing meaningful and inclusive consultations with children from different backgrounds.

We supported our member organizations in designing civil society-led efforts with national and local governments to push for actions on ending child marriage and on improving children’s digital literacy. This improved our member organizations’ legitimacy and promoted their expertise and meaningful contributions in developing and monitoring the implementation of national policies.

We bridged a collaboration between two government regional bodies in Asia, while ensuring the role of civil society in this partnership. This resulted to collaboration of government and non-government regional bodies to mark the 30th anniversary of the United Nations on the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

We raised the voices of children in the region to inform international efforts on uphold children’s rights in the digital environment and their right to a healthy environment.

We brought the perspectives of children from Asia in the drafting of the UN CRC General Comment on the rights of the child in the digital environment, and in the development of inputs and recommendations to inform the work of the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and the Environment.

Our Key Achievements in 2019
CRC Asia has been an active player in upholding child rights in the region since our formation in 2008 and formal registration as a non-stock non-profit organization in 2012. Taking advantage of being a regional coalition, we coordinate advocacy efforts to give strength to our calls, utilize our diversity to broaden perspectives and capacities, and provide space for children and civil society participation.

This year, we begin our 2019-2024 Strategy that reflects CRC Asia’s commitments, thematic priorities, and approaches in working together and moving forward as a civil society coalition driving positive change for and with children. Our common vision brings us together despite the geographical distance and differences in organizational structures and design. Our pathway to achieve our vision is laid out in our long-term targets that drive the design of our programs. These targets can be aligned with the themes of child rights governance, child protection, and child participation, with the themes of non-discrimination, especially in terms of gender, disability, and race/nationality, and child participation cutting across. In reaching our targets and making our vision happen, we have six interwoven and interdependent strategies and approaches that will guide our work in the national, regional, and global levels in the next years.

Developed with inputs from children in Asia, our Strategy is designed to be systematic and adaptive, giving us direction towards our intended results but also allowing us to make adjustments without losing sight of our overall targets.
Child Rights Coalition Asia
Strategy 2019-2024

OUR VISION
ALL CHILDREN LIVING IN DIGNITY BY FULLY ENJOYING AND EXERCISING THEIR RIGHTS

OUR TARGET
Improving the systems and policies for children to claim their rights
CHILDRIGHTS GOVERNANCE
through child rights monitoring, implementation and public budgeting

Ensuring the strengthened protection of children from all forms of violence
CHILD PROTECTION
by addressing underlying causes

Accelerating the enjoyment of the right of the child to be heard
CHILD PARTICIPATION
in rapidly changing child protection settings
by providing space and support

MAKING IT HAPPEN
If there is an enabling environment for civil society and children to participate
GLOBAL

If partnerships within civil society and with children are broadened and deepened

If discrimination on the basis of gender, ability, and age are addressed

If civil society have the knowledge and skills to engage and identify the underlying challenges
REGIONAL

If opportunities for civil society and child participation are created and utilized

If the marginalized girls, boys, and other children have the knowledge and skills to participate
LOCAL
The Context of Our Work in 2019

2019 marks the 30th year of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN CRC), a landmark international treaty that recognizes children as human beings who are entitled to a distinct set of fundamental rights. While the lives of the 1.3 billion children in Asia have certainly changed in the past three decades, much has yet to be desired for children to have a healthy, safe and dignified life. According to UNICEF, significant progress has been achieved in sending children to school and saving their lives thru vaccination (UNICEF, 2019, p.1). However, challenges on achieving the full realization of child rights remain, especially with the multidimensional layers of risks and vulnerabilities that children face.

Poverty remains an obstacle to children’s enjoyment of their rights. In Southeast Asia, for example, although the region has enjoyed economic growth that has cut down poverty rate in the past years, “nearly 25 million children in the region suffer from multidimensional poverty” (ASEAN and UNICEF, N.D., p.15). Moreover, with violence against children (VAC) entailing weighty economic costs to individuals and society the Asia-Pacific region loses around USD 160 billion or 2% of regional GDP due to VAC (UNICEF, 2015). As such, there is an increasing recognition on the importance of human capital development for greater economic growth, and investing in human capital is, to a large extent, investing in children (The World Bank, 2019).

The 2019 KidsRights Index shows that “the lack of investment in children’s rights shows itself in children’s daily realities, as children are being discriminated, the best interests of the child are considered insufficiently and children are not included in decision-making on matters that affect them” (KidsRights Foundation, 2019, p.9). There are cultures in the Asian region in which children are not allowed to speak out or children usually do not feel safe to talk publicly because prevailing cultural practice encourages them to listen and keep their opinions to themselves.

The KidsRights Index is a unique data source which measures state’s adherence to and capacity of countries to improve children’s rights. It includes 20 indicators categorized as follows: Life (Under 5 mortality, Life expectancy at birth, Maternal mortality ratio); Health (% of under five year olds suffering from underweight, Immunization of 1 year old children, % of population using improved sanitation facilities...
urban and rural), % of population using improved drinking water sources; Education (Expected years of schooling of girls; Expected years of schooling of boys, Gender inequality in expected years of schooling); Protection (Child labour, Adolescent birth rate, Birth registration); Child Rights Environment (Non-discrimination, Best interests of the child, Respect for the views of the child/child participation, Enabling legislation, Best available budget, Collection and analysis of disaggregate data, state-civil society cooperation for child rights). However, as of this writing, data on specific countries and territories CRC Asia is present in, such as Taiwan (ROC) and Hong Kong are not in the Index. In terms of the non-inclusion of Hong Kong, the endnote explains that “the score for a domain is not calculated if more than half of the indicators of that domain have a missing value. A country is not included in the overall Index if the score on domain 5 ‘Child Rights Environment’ is missing. A country is also not included if more than half of the domain scores are missing.” (KidsRights Foundation, 2019, p.13).

Gender inequality and discrimination still exist in Asia. Girls entering adolescence and transitioning to adulthood withdraw from public sphere to focus on domestic life (Lloyd, 2006). Girls are also more likely to marry early than boys, and although the practice of child marriage is declining around the world, the rate of progress is not on track to meet the SDG target (UNICEF, 2018).

As old issues and problems continue to persist, children in Asia face rising challenges brought about urbanization, climate change, migration, and displacement. By the end of 2018, around 31 million children have been displaced due to armed conflicts and natural disasters worldwide (UNICEF, 2020). In the same year, “over 9.3 million people were internally displaced in East Asia, including 236,000 people internally displaced due to conflict in Myanmar and the Philippines. This accounts for one-third of new displacements globally and the trend is likely to increase” (UNICEF, N.D.). Furthermore, living in the most disaster-prone region in the world, children in Asia-Pacific are at risk of experiencing the direct and indirect impacts of frequent and unpredictable calamities (UNESCAP, 2015).

Gender inequality and discrimination still exist in Asia. Girls entering adolescence and transitioning to adulthood withdraw from public sphere to focus on domestic life (Lloyd, 2006). Girls are also more likely to marry early than boys, and although the practice of child marriage is declining around the world, the rate of progress is not on track to meet the SDG target (UNICEF, 2018).

Furthermore, while technological advancements can positively impact the enjoyment of rights of children, they can also pose threats. For instance, recent developments facilitate the inclusion of children with disabilities in different processes, but industries are finding new ways of delivering traditionally harmful substances, such as tobacco and alcohol, to children and young people. Also, with the rapidly changing digital environment, the challenge is finding the balance between children’s enjoyment of the advantages that the digital world can offer and children’s protection from online risks.
Highlight in 2019:
Child participation at the heart of the commemoration of the 30th anniversary of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

In commemorating the 30th anniversary of the UN CRC, we put children’s voices at the core. We organized a campaign for children to share their dream and a forum for children in Asia to speak out.

#TheAsiaIWant: Our dreams for children’s rights in Asia

We created a platform for children to voice out the future they want for children’s rights through the #TheAsiaIWant online campaign. Linking the campaign with The World We Want Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Action, we asked children to share their dreams and aspirations for children’s rights and the actions needed for these to be achieved.

Through this campaign, we heard children’s calls on providing quality education for all children without discrimination; increasing efforts on children’s mental health and psychosocial well-being; ensuring a sustainable environment for children; and giving children the space to speak out. Children also want an Asia that protects their rights such that they feel wanted and that they have a safe space where their problems can be freely discussed without judgment. Children want their views to be respected and they also want to give respect to different genders, races, culture, and ideas, whether in person or in cyberspace. Children want to have access to child-friendly justice systems and be protected from child labor and sexual exploitation and abuse. They want to live in a healthy and sustainable environment.

By utilizing the opportunities initiated by governments and civil society, we expanded the reach of the campaign to service providers and professionals working directly with children, such as police officers, social workers, firefighters, teachers, principals, and other school personnel.
The 2019 Asian Children’s Summit: Upholding Justice for Children and Leaving No Child Behind

We took the lead in creating a space for children from Southeast Asia, South Asia, and East Asia to come together to form their opinions and give recommendations on the realization of their rights. Collaborating with intergovernmental regional bodies and civil society organizations in Asia, we gathered children’s recommendations that would inform the decisions and actions at the international, regional, and local levels. These recommendations were presented to representatives from UN mechanisms, regional intergovernmental bodies, and civil society organizations during the Summit, and we will continue bringing forward these recommendations in our future advocacy actions.

Furthermore, the Summit served as a venue for cultural exchange and for strengthening children’s advocacy capacities, particularly on the Summit’s four key themes – the right to be protected from violence against children, right to a healthy environment, rights in the digital environment, and rights of children on the move – and on the Summit’s cross-cutting themes of children and the SDGs, child participation, and justice for children. These resulted to 47 child delegates, aged 8 to 18 years old from 21 countries in Asia, promoting the work of the child-led groups that they are representing, sharing the local culture and traditions that impact their situation, and learning from the experiences of one another.

The Summit also became the first collaboration of the two child rights-focused intergovernmental regional bodies in Asia and civil society organizations. The conduct the Summit, from the preparations until the ways forward, facilitated the strengthening of links between civil society organizations and the intergovernmental regional bodies. It also contributed to the advancement of child participation in the region through the exchange of information, experiences, and expertise in conducting a rights-based approach to children’s consultations.

The Consultation Process

We strived to conduct a meaningful and inclusive process from the country-level consultations, to the regional activity proper, and until the follow up actions. Prior to the regional activity in Bangkok, we conducted country-level consultations and selection processes to ensure that the Summit’s child delegates are adequately prepared and are able to represent the views of the wider group of children and young people in their respective countries. At this stage, children were provided information about the Summit, including its themes and sessions, and were asked to prepare the issues and recommendations that they want to raise during the Summit.
This stage also helped the children decide and elect who among them can best represent them in the Summit.

During the Summit, the selected child delegates were supported by their adult mentors whose responsibilities, among others, include being the translators. We also invited adult and child speakers to share their experiences and inputs to the Summit’s four key themes. A group of facilitators helped the child delegates in developing inputs and recommendations, as well as in preparing the child delegates’ presentations during the Dialogue Session. In between the learning sessions and workshops, we held a cultural night and a tour of the market booths prepared by the child delegates to introduce themselves and their child-led organizations, distribute their advocacy materials, and share their traditional wear, food, and games.

After the Summit, we strive to act on the children’s recommendations. We also asked the child delegates, with the support of their Adult Mentors, to share their experiences and the results of the Summit to the children who elected them as their representative.

Children’s Views and Recommendations

Violence against Children

Child delegates raised that, aside from the need for proper implementation and monitoring of established laws and policies addressing VAC, the laws are not quick enough to keep up with the evolving manifestations of VAC. Moreover, they said that VAC is caused by the lack of knowledge on VAC, or lack of action despite having the knowledge; economic problems that push the exploitation of children; problems related to mental health, including those that arise due to harmful disciplining actions of parents; exposure to substance abuse of adults; discrimination on the basis of gender, sexual orientation, race, culture, disability, and social standing; traditional practices that are harmful to children; and the cycle of violence.

Children’s recommendations on addressing violence against children

- Raise the awareness of the government, the community, lawmakers, religious leaders, tribal leaders, police, judges, lawyers, military, corporations, parents, teachers, children, and other stakeholders on VAC prevention and positive discipline to end physical and humiliating punishment. There should also be human rights education to end discrimination, to stop the cultural/traditional teachings or beliefs that violate human rights, and to break the cycle of violence. In addition, efforts should be done to raise the awareness on the impacts of substance abuse, such as drugs and alcohol, and to remove the stigma on mental health issues.

- Create new laws that address the emerging forms of VAC and discrimination, and strengthen the implementation and monitoring of existing laws. The laws on price regulation, taxation, responsible consumption, or banning of substances should be strongly implemented also. The children also emphasized that despite the many laws on violence such as corporal punishment, sexual abuse, substance abuse, among others, the implementation of these laws are weak.

“Dear children, no one knows better than you the problems children face today. You are the key piece to end violence against children. We cannot end violence against children without children. Without you. You already played a key role in achieving change and in making the world a better and safer place for all; in making your own future. You are human rights defenders, active citizens, and drivers of positive change and we want to listen to your proposals, to support your initiatives, and to empower you, and to protect you”

- From the video message of Dr. Najat Maalla M’jid, United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence Against Children, during the 2019 Asian Children’s Summit

The 2019 Asian Children's Summit


Adult Speakers: Robbert van den Berg of ECPAT International; Najat Maalla M’jid, UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence Against Children; Iain Drennan of WePROTECT Global Alliance; Ilya Smirnoff of Childline Thailand Foundation; Nicola Brandt of UNICEF EAPRO; Itsaraporn Daoram of Terre des Hommes-Germany

Youth Speaker: Sadina from Nepal
Child Speaker: Licypriya from India

“\nThere should be new laws for targeted areas, we should strengthen the old laws and ensure their implementation. There should be no leniency with it when it comes to violence against children because that’s not only happening when it is happening, it has lifelong consequences. ”

- Anam, Child Delegate, 2019 Asian Children’s Summit
• Provide support to victims through helplines, community child protection committees, trained counsellors in schools and shelters, social workers, and support groups for children and adults. There should also be training on parenting skills, guidance for parents on providing care and support to children experiencing mental health concerns, and support for children and youth campaigns and other efforts on empowerment of children.
• Ensure that rehabilitation programs and services are available for those who are facing mental health problems, those who have become addicted to alcohol or drugs, and those who are becoming abusers after being a victim themselves. This helps break the cycle of violence.
• Address the economic problems that cause VAC by reviewing workplace policies of children’s parents and caregivers, and increasing their salaries and their reducing work hours; providing sustainable job opportunities especially in rural areas and providing vocational training to parents and young people; supporting sustainable livelihood by providing poor households with technical support and long-term loans with zero interest as capital for small enterprise; implementing poverty reduction programs and creating policies that address the economic needs; and providing government subsidy for alternative care to enhance services for child protection.
• Support the “socialization of human rights” or the implementation of international norms among peers, across cultures, and across generations at the regional, national, and local levels.
• Stop discrimination by promoting unity in diversity through working together and by promoting equality despite differences in gender, sexual orientation, race, culture, and disability.
• The children capped their presentation off by emphasizing that the causes of violence that they presented at the beginning – lack of knowledge, economic problems, mental health problems, substance abuse, discrimination, negative cultural practices, and the cycle of violence -- can be addressed by promoting self-improvement:
  ▪ Start ending violence with oneself.
  ▪ Gain knowledge and put them into action.
  ▪ Learn skills and be able to earn in the future.
  ▪ Advocate for a more solid support system.
  ▪ Get involved in an anti-corruption campaigns and urge governments to raise taxes in alcoholic beverages.
  ▪ Respect ourselves and each other; live without discrimination and comparisons based on race, gender, age, and ethnic groups.
  ▪ Become more open minded and stop replicating negative cultural practices and behaviors.
  ▪ Be a good role model to your child and teaching them in a positive manner (for parents and caregivers).

Right to a Healthy Environment

Child delegates brought up the relationship between mental health and the right to a healthy environment. People affected by disasters need help to deal with trauma and anxiety, so children’s mental health and psychosocial well-being should be included in discussion on environment. Furthermore, they identified four key issues that require a multi-dimensional approach: poor sanitation and waste management that lead to low hygiene, water pollution, diseases and destruction of aquatic habitats; release of toxins, particulate matters, smoke, and emissions that lead to air pollution, diseases and corrosion of monuments; extreme temperature and glaciers melt that lead to rising of sea level and natural disasters; and removal of forest and vegetation that lead to destruction of biodiversity, habitats, and ecosystems. They also discussed the people or groups who are responsible for the degradation of the environment; those who can act or help; and the need for protection of people who are defending the protection of the environment, especially in Asia wherein the defenders are being put in danger.

Children’s recommendations on upholding the right to a healthy environment

• For the Industries: International organizations should set standards and restrictions on multi-national corporations, all the emissions they produce and the resources that they use when they are manufacturing in different countries, impose heavy taxes on non-renewable resources so that this will raise the prices and disincentivize people from using non-renewable resources. Doing so, the money from these taxes can be put into a national fund to fund research and development towards greater eco-friendly technology. Provide subsidies on installation and price of clean energy sources that will incentivize people to use these renewable energy sources.
• On Education and Awareness Programs: Develop curriculums towards resilience-building, survival and safety skills especially in disaster-stricken areas. Where children and youth carry out real-life projects that can beneficially impact the environment. Encourage campaigns and competitions to promote awareness on environmental issues. Organize youth forums on the environment.
• On Mental Health and Psychosocial Support: Compulsory trained trauma care teams should be deployed with every rescue team and children who are displaced due to disasters should be given psychosocial rehabilitation. Governments should include child therapists to follow up on children victims.
• On Transportation: The Government should encourage the citizens to cut down the usage of cars using fossil fuels. Reduce the amount of carbon footprints by introducing the use of electric/environment-friendly cars.
• On child participation: Create and support a platform for children to speak at all levels.
• On Alternative Energy: Levy taxes on pollutant sources. Increase the availability of alternative sources. Use solar panels and wind turbines in order to save our economy and our environment.
• On garbage and waste management: Use and apply the 3Rs – Reuse, Reduce, Recycle.
• For the Government and the Law: Be strict! Make sure that the law is being implemented well. Governments should have a strong mechanism and specific program management for the environment.
• For the Forest and the Trees: plant more trees in order to save the environment and implement a law about the protection of the trees.
• All goals should be done not only with the government’s help, but also with the help of the society and the community.

Children’s Rights in the Digital Environment

Child delegates recognized that developments in the online platform happen quickly and while these have advantages, they are also aware of child rights issues that come up together with these developments. These include online sexual exploitation and catfishing; prevalence of fake news and inappropriate information; time management concerns; issues related to safety and privacy; proliferation of hate speech; and cyberbullying. While discussing these issues, their conversations also touched upon the lack of free or affordable parks and places where the children can go to relax or learn new skills outside the internet; the use of dating mobile apps by adolescents to compensate for the lack of warmth and belongingness at home; right to delete their personal information online; the lack of information, in a child-friendly local language, on how to report or block a certain content in a social media site; the challenge of improving the digital literacy for children who are out-of-school; and the question on the acceptable level of oversight regarding privacy.

Children’s recommendations on realizing the rights of the child in the digital environment

• On Online Sexual Exploitation and Catfishing:
  ▪ For the government: The government should enact the laws and ensure that the laws are comprehensive, covering all the challenges experienced by children online. The government should also go into the field to connect with the grassroots community. The government should set up an agency specifically to provide assistance to children and victims experiencing online abuse.

  ▪ For the business sector: Monitor the information on cloud to avoid inappropriate content. Require fingerprint or tongue print, instead of identity card, to validate user-identity because requiring identity card discriminates children in stateless situations.

  ▪ For the media: do not show clips or images of child victims over and over again. Do not re-victimize victims online/via social media. Instead, produce a lot of educational materials to prevent harm online.

  ▪ For the Ministry of Education: Schools should provide protection to children; craft curriculum for every school and across levels on how children can be protected from sexual exploitation online.

• On Fake News and Inappropriate Information:
  ▪ Create child-friendly apps where children can get information and where inappropriate content are blocked.

  ▪ Have strict regulations on online identity information before a social media account can be created. There should also be an internet information filter and user’s block, or when a post is reported more than four (4) times, the post will be deleted or not be shared further.

  ▪ There should be local service providers of social media apps for easier troubleshooting in a particular area.

  ▪ Fingerprints should be required when accessing adult content.

  ▪ There should be anti-screenshot mechanisms available.

• On Digital Literacy: Include digital literature in school curriculums. Provide educational institutions with equipment, connectivity, and material. Increase investment in digital literacy. States should also have good policymakers for the future because digital literature is constantly changing.

• Time Management: Promote an educational system for
parents and children to learn about the safety measures in the digital world. Enhance the understanding of parents on finding a good balance between the online and offline world. Parents and children should help each other to know how they should manage their time.

- On Safety and Privacy: Reasonable limits may be set on children's internet usage. Computers may be placed in a common area of the house as a monitoring mechanism. Parents and teachers need to learn more about computers and the internet and what children and students are using them for. They need to be aware of the online activities of children, and discuss with the children the dangers and threats online including inappropriate websites and content, and remind children "never talk to or connect with strangers." Also, we should keep our personal information private and learn how to use privacy settings. Settings should be "private." We can check our internet service providers about parental control software

- On Hate Speech: Governments should make safety and privacy policies. Every school should make it a policy to have counseling services in place because most students are on social media. We should look at the consequences of negative comments from the other person's perspective. We should also respond to each compliment in the public stream in a child-friendly environment easily. Each individual must have the mentality to "be human, be transparent and never go negative." There should be an established toll-free number to report complaints easily that is accessible to everyone. There should also be awareness-raising campaigns for children and local people about the consequences of negative comments or hate speech.

- On Cyberbullying: Cyber police could work to find bullying incidents and also prevent it before it occurs – this could be led by the United Nations or UNICEF that have specialists on the well-being of children. Assailant should be punished to make them easily understand how horrible their actions are. However, assailants need to be cared for mentally too. Doctors or psychologists should talk to them as part of a psychological intervention.

Children on the Move

- Child delegates identified the issues that children on the move are experiencing in reality: extremely poor living conditions; lack of access to basic hygiene and sanitation; denial of refuge; denial of right to return, right to education, and right to religion; restrictions on movement; risk of being trafficked due to lack of legal protection; lack of opportunity; discrimination; lack of social acceptance; and lack of awareness of society, including children, on the rights and situation of refugees. Nonetheless, they are aware of the positive action towards children on the move, including the existence of non-government organizations that help in the rescue, rehabilitation, communication, and awareness-raising; the availability of shelters, which include recreation facilities, in some countries; the acceptance of refugees in some countries; the promotion of basic, albeit limited, necessities, in some countries; and guarantee of the right to return by some countries.

Children's recommendations on upholding the rights of children on the move

- States must ensure that no child is denied refuge in the country where he/she intends to seek it.
- The governments must ensure that shelters and health and sanitary facilities provide medicine and safe, clean and nutritious food and water to children seeking refuge.
- There should be legal protection of children's fundamental rights, including the right to live with dignity, the right to education, and the right to return.
- The governments should ensure children on the move's social and psychological rehabilitation through the actions of their concerned departments.
- The governments must ensure that every child seeking refuge is provided with education and recreation through the respective government shelter homes.
- The governments must be active in issuing identification documents of children on the move and children seeking refuge in a different country. Also, the process must be accelerated and not slow.
- States must be sensitive when dealing with legal processes involving children seeking refuge. Children should not go through hard and insensitive legal processes.
- The shelter homes that are run by the governments must fulfill the physical, mental, spiritual, and social needs of a child.
- Equal opportunity of education must be provided to each child, whether the child is a resident of the country or on the move.
- The response to children on the move should be in the context of family and best interest of the child. Hence, governments must make sure a child is not separated from his/her family once on the move.

“My name is Saengsa. I am 16 years old. I come from Thailand. I don’t have nationality. I have no registration status. I don’t have identification card because I left the neighboring country because of the civil war. I have lost so many opportunities just because I don’t have an identity card. I have lost an opportunity to access education. I experience discrimination. I can’t have scholarship even though I can study well. I came from outside the district like other children. I can’t choose my dream job. I have to stay hidden, but if I have an ID card many opportunities will follow as well as an equal start like other children.” – Saengsa, Child Delegate, 2019 Asian Children’s Summit
Questions from the Violence against Children Workshop Group

- How can governments make sure that children’s opinions are heard and considered in ending VAC?
- Which violence issues are the top priorities? How will government, international organizations, and UN work together with children and youth to solve priorities on VAC?
- There are already laws to prevent and address VAC. How can governments, UN, INGOs, and other stakeholders work together to implement law?
- Instead of acting on abuse or violence after it happens, how can all government work together to prevent VAC?
- How can other countries help Timor Leste’s government to accelerate the ratification of laws that protect all children from violence?
- What can all governments and UN/INGOs/NGOs do to help parents behave properly with their children, especially with children with disabilities and children with different sexual orientation?

Questions from the Right to a Healthy Environment Workshop Group

- How do we bring about cross-country collaborations while holding governments, especially developed countries, accountable for their actions and failure to uphold their promises? (i.e., collaborations between developed and underdeveloped countries for decreasing carbon emission)
- While most countries have some sort of legislation to address climate change, we aren’t seeing any effects. How do we assure enforcement of such laws?
- When actions towards climate change collide with religious and culture practices of the people, how do we find common ground?
- When many economies and livelihood depend on fossil fuels, how do we balance economic and environmental priorities?
- What are the existing laws, measures, programs and rules in place? How do you implement these? How do you track the online offenders?
- How can all the organizations, INGOs help the children protect themselves and make internet access points safer place?
- Should laws/rules be only be set by adults?
- When stateless children become victims of harm online, how and from whom can they get help?
- In adult content websites, there may be children anonymously entering the websites using some tools. How can we strengthen the security policy to prevent this from happening?
- When will we include digital media rules to the UN CRC to safeguard child rights and interest online?

Questions from the Children’s rights in the digital environment Workshop Group

- Why are there still adults who misunderstand refugees? How can we raise awareness of children on the move against these adults?
- Do governments have a monitoring system to control the cases brought about by each migrant company?
- Is it possible for the government to allow children who have been in the country for more than 10 years to become government officials?
- If you are a friend of a refugee, how will you help change his/her status and share your family so that he/she can have legal identity?
- The government already has policies to protect stateless children, but those policies still do not enable us to get access to our rights because of certain conditions that we have to meet. Why do you create those policies in the first place because they do not help us at all?
- Despite the existence of legislative systems and laws, why is it that the rate of VAC and violations of rights of children in general still remain high? Why are there no measures by the government and adults to make the society aware that children also have the rights?

Questions from the Children on the Move Workshop Group

- How do you implement these? How do you track the online offenders?
- When stateless children become victims of harm online, how and from whom can they get help?
- In adult content websites, there may be children anonymously entering the websites using some tools. How can we strengthen the security policy to prevent this from happening?
- When will we include digital media rules to the UN CRC to safeguard child rights and interest online?

The Dialogue Session and Moving Forward

We concluded the Summit with a Dialogue Session, in which the child delegates presented their recommendations to key stakeholders, such as the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC Committee), ACWC, SAARC, government, and civil society organizations.

Together with the presentation of their recommendations, we also asked children to prepare questions to adults. Although they were not all answered during the Session, these questions helped the adults get a glimpse on the information that children are seeking, to know and reflect on why these questions were being asked by the children.

After the Dialogue Session, the children, together with the adult mentors and the facilitators wrote their feedback on the content and the process of the Summit. In their evaluation, the children continued sharing the importance of including mental health and psychosocial well-being in the discussions. Afterwards, while the children enjoyed their free time, we gathered the adult dialogue guests to discuss the children’s recommendations to share experiences in conducting the Summit and gather feedback on the process. CRC Asia Secretariat presented the guidelines for the selection process that was prepared for all the organizations supporting children, including the consolidated barriers to inclusive participation and the good practices and lessons from various organizations. Aside from the recommendations from children that came out from the consultation and dialogue, the adults discussed some learnings on children’s rights-based participatory process, which was also considered as one of the key takeaways from the Summit. In addition, according to the dialogue guests, the important remark of the child delegates was for the adults to listen to children. The child delegates also highlighted that having laws are not enough because they cannot feel the implementation of these laws on the ground. In this regard, one of the ways forward for the Summit is to ensure that the children’s recommendations reach the decision-makers and stakeholders at the national and community levels. At the same time, these recommendations must also be shared at the global levels through submitting reports or inputs to the UN Special Procedures and upcoming international conferences.
Honoring the pioneers of child rights advocacy

As part of our commemoration of the 30th anniversary of the UNCRC, we recognized the decades-long legacy work of the pioneers of child rights advocacy in Asia. Taking note that the gains in child rights advocacy that the world enjoys and continues to fight for now is the fruit of the work of leaders in advancing child rights, we honored the contributions of Teresita “Tess” Silva, Angela Maria “Beth” Pangan, and Lourdes “Lulu” Balanon.

The Pioneers

Teresita “Tess” Silva
Founder and President Emeritus of Childhope Philippines

She is known for her passionate and unwavering service to the well-being of children, especially those in disadvantaged situations. Her dedication and leadership pushed forward the setting up of mechanisms that provide services for children in street situations in the Philippines and in Asia, empower children and their families in urban poor communities, and bring together civil society organizations in monitoring the realization of the child rights.

Angela Marie “Beth” Pangan
Social Worker and Founder and President of NORFIL Foundation

She is recognized for her outstanding work and leadership towards advancing the rights of children with disabilities and children without parental care. Her enduring service positively changed lives and inspired individuals and organizations to continue fostering an inclusive society and providing a healthy family environment where every child is cared for and loved.

Lourdes “Lulu” Balanon
 Former Undersecretary of the Department of Social Welfare and Development, Educator and Social Worker

She is admired for her critical role in institutionalizing rights-based policies and mechanisms for the realization of the rights of the child at the international, regional, national, and sub-national spheres. Her exemplary leadership and service established sustainable actions and facilitated partnerships among governments, civil society, frontline service providers, communities, families, children’s groups, and other stakeholders to uphold an enabling environment for children.

In partnership with the Child Protection Network Foundation in the Philippines, we honored the pioneers during the Ako Para Sa Bata international conference held in November 2020 in Manila, Philippines.
Highlight in 2019:
Improving the systems and policies for the rights of the child

We developed the capacity of stakeholders in improving public budgeting for children’s rights, from the local level to the national budget. We also advocated for gender-transformative policies in ending child marriage.

Investing in Child Rights

Ensuring budgets for children in the Plans of Action in Cambodia and in the Philippines

Together with our members in Cambodia and the Philippines, we pushed for the effective, efficient, equitable, transparent, and sustainable use of public funds for programs and plans of action for child rights.

Led by our member organization Child Rights Coalition Cambodia (CRC Cambodia), we gathered the commitments and contributions to collectively prioritize key areas in advancing child rights through a joint declaration signed by representatives from the government ministries, legislative body, private sector, civil society, and child-led and youth-led networks. Signed during the commemoration of the 30th anniversary of the UN CRC, the declaration was the culmination of the dialogue that aimed to discuss the progress of child rights in Cambodia, and to create a momentum for actors to step up their efforts to protect and promote all human rights.

Reports show that progress on the realization of child rights in Cambodia have been achieved in the past three decades, but there is a need for further action, strengthened cooperation between stakeholders, and increased resources for the implementation of plans of action and programs. Through the declaration, CRC Cambodia and its child-led and youth-led networks will build on this renewed commitment to expand the engagements with the target stakeholders and increase the funding for programs for children.

In the Philippines, through our member organization Civil Society Coalition on the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC Coalition Philippines), we helped improve the capacity of civil society organizations in exploring and utilizing budget analysis tools and strategies that can be used for advocacy on ending VAC, while anchoring on the SDGs and INSPIRE Framework and linking them to the

3 INSPIRE: Seven strategies for Ending Violence Against Children: https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/inspire-seven-strategies-for-ending-violence-against-children
monitoring and implementation of the government’s two national plans of action for children – the Philippine Plan of Action to End Violence Against Children (PPAEVAAC) and the 3rd National Plan of Action for Children (3rd NPAC). According to the observations of civil society organizations, the absence of a database on children is a problem in monitoring and evaluating plans, programs, and activities that respond to the needs and situations of children. Also, there is a need to check and influence local government units into allocating budget for child protection and improving the level of participation of children in budget analysis and planning.

In relation to this, we accepted the invitation of the City Government of San Fernando, La Union, Philippines to facilitate a planning workshop that aims to provide the members of its Local Council for the Protection of Children with knowledge, skills, and tools in developing child-responsive plans. Held in July 2019 in partnership with CRC Coalition Philippines and Social Watch Philippines, we helped the representatives of the city’s executive office, health office, social welfare office, youth council, school division, and police to have a deeper understanding of child rights situational analysis, public investment in children, and meaningful child participation, among others. This became a springboard for their discussions on the drafting of their short-term plan for children, which was expected to be expanded into a long-term plan with interdepartmental collaboration towards harmonized plans of the city.

Our engagement with the City Government of San Fernando stemmed from the promotion of our original publications and budget advocacy efforts in 2018.

Earmarking taxes for children’s health

In the Philippines, we successfully advocated for the banning of access of young people to e-cigarettes and for the imposition of the same tax rate on e-cigarettes as those on traditional tobacco products.

Together with our member organization, Mindanao Action Group for Children’s Rights and Protection (MAGCRP), we issued a position paper in 2019 as an input to the deliberation of the bills on increasing the excise tax on heated tobacco products (HTPs), e-cigarettes and electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDs), and alcohol products. Anchoring on UN CRC Articles 17 and 24 and UN CRC General Comment No. 4 on adolescent health and development, we urged for a law that addresses the misinformation on the impacts of HTPs and ENDs; bans the sale, promotion, and distribution of these products to children and young people; imposes taxes on these products with the same rate as traditional cigarettes and tobacco-based products; and increases the tax on alcohol products to reduce alcohol consumption and boost the resources for the implementation of the Universal Health Care.

In the approved law, persons below 21 years old are prohibited from accessing HTPs and ENDs. E-cigarettes get the same tax rate as traditional cigarettes and tobaccos, but heated tobacco products were given a lower tax rate. The law also prohibits vapor flavorings aside from plain and menthol, in line with our position to ban flavored e-cigarettes, which are targeted and attractive to young people.

Our efforts on earmarking taxes for the realization of children’s right to health is part of our on-going budget advocacy in partnership with our Philippine-based member organizations and other health-focused partner organizations in the country. In 2017, we called for transparency on public resources; earmarking for health, education, and protection; and participation of civil society and children in the budget process. One of the calls in our 2017 position paper that made it into the law is the imposition of tax on sugary drinks to urge those in the food industry to provide nutritious yet affordable options for children and their families. Although our other calls have not been accepted or only partly accepted in the law and its amendment, we will continue our advocacy on increasing budget allocation for social services and having a transparent public financial system contributes to increased public budget for children by impeding corruption and mismanagement of funds.
Ending Child Marriage in Thailand

Recognizing that addressing the underlying causes of VAC is crucial to achieve transformative results for children, we strived to put focus on eliminating harmful traditional practices for children. This year, we worked with the government to address the legal loophole that is used to legitimize early marriage in Thailand.

Through our member organization, Childline Thailand Foundation (CTF), we strengthened the collaboration between government agencies and civil society organizations to address early marriage in Thailand through a number of actionable conclusions, such as pushing for the formal divorce procedure for the high-profile case of child marriage involving a 41-year old Malaysian man marrying an 11-year old girl in Thailand; continuing the law reform to close up the last remaining loopholes in the Thai Civil and Commercial Code and the Act on Application of Islamic Law; and working on an administrative restructuring of the mechanisms to assist children at risk or who become victims of child marriage. While the laws are still in the process of reform, efforts should focus on changing the social norms that allow child marriage to perpetuate.

The July 2019 Roundtable organized by CTF in Bangkok and facilitated by CRC Asia’s Board Member Mr. Sanphasit Koompraphant was attended by 40 participants, including representatives from civil society organizations, the Office of the Islamic Committee of Narathiwat Province, Office of the Islamic Committee of Pattani Province, the Central Islamic Council of Thailand, the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, the Royal Thai Police, the Department of Special Investigation of the Ministry of Justice, the Southern Border Provinces Investigation Division, the National Human Rights Commission of Thailand, the Children and Youth Protection Division, and the Central Juvenile and Family Court. A Malaysian child protection officer was also present.
Highlight in 2019: Child rights in rapidly changing settings

We raised the voices of children and civil society from Asia to international discussions on the realization of children’s rights in the digital environment and the right of the child to a healthy environment.

Digital Environment

Inputs to the international document on the rights of the child in the digital environment

In 2019, we provided platforms for children in Asia to share their insights to the CRC Committee for the development of the UN CRC General Comment on children’s rights in the digital environment. Our member organizations Yayasan SEJIWA in Indonesia, ChildFund Korea, CWIN Nepal, Group Development Pakistan, CRC Coalition Philippines, and MAGCRP mobilized children from different situations and backgrounds, and held consultations with the children to understand the diverse ways in which children in Asia are using and accessing digital technology in their everyday lives. In coordination with Western Sydney University, which led the global consultations in partnership with 5Rights Foundation and London School of Economics, we gathered children’s opinions and experiences that relate, among others, to the use of digital media in the development of their language, culture and identity; the attitudes of adults to children’s online engagements; the role of digital media in children’s participation to decision-making process; and the children’s use of the digital environment to take action on issues that affect them.

Parallel to the children’s consultations, we sought the insights of civil society organizations in the region. During our 2019 Asia-Pacific Partnership Meeting of Child Rights Coalitions and Networks, we asked their opinions and experiences on the impact of digital media in children’s peer relationships; the positive and negative impacts of the digital environment to the children’s freedom of expression and freedom of information; the interplay between children’s education and children’s rights in the digital environment; and the balance between child protection and child participation in the online setting.

We brought all these inputs gathered in 2019, together with the children’s recommendations we have collected from previous digital environment-related activities, to the Experts Consultation Meeting on the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child General Comment held in October in London. In this Consultation Meeting of the CRC Committee, we raised several points, including the role of digital communication for children left behind by migrant parents; the need for translations not only to local language, but also to child-friendly local language; the
importance of digital literacy not only of children, but also of parents; the provision of offline and online human rights education to help children become responsible users of technology; and the potential of the digital environment to address discrimination by exposing children to different cultures, beliefs, and situations. We also brought up the need for the general comment to provide recommendations on regional cooperation, recognize the role of civil society and the responsibilities of the private sector, and further discuss the children’s right to play and leisure in the digital environment.

In addition, we mentioned the importance of taking into consideration the contexts of the children, e.g. national and local context, urban vs. rural context, which can be further understood by involving children and civil society in decision-making processes. We also asked for further guidance on children’s civil rights and freedoms, with the freedom of expression closely linked with the theme of children as human rights defenders and their role in civic space. Lastly, we asked the CRC Committee to consider how the General Comment will affect their process or working method, especially with the discussions on accessibility and child-friendly digital environment.

Our advocacy on online child protection and children’s rights in the digital environment started when the children in our first Regional Children’s Meeting in 2013. Since then, we have incorporated the advocacy on online child protection and realization of children’s rights in the digital environment in our programs and activities. In relation to having a guidance from the CRC Committee on this theme, we supported the Case for a General Comment on Children’s Rights and Digital Media prepared for the Children’s Commissioner for England by Sonia Livingstone, Gerison Lansdown, and Amanda Third, LSE Consulting in 2017.

Empowering children in the digital space

We created a space for children in Indonesia to share their recommendations to decision-makers and we strengthened the capacity of Thai children in using social media as an advocacy tool.

Led by our member organization Yayasan SEJIWA in Indonesia, we helped children to have a dialogue with parents, government representatives, private companies, and civil society organizations regarding the advocacy on online child protection. The dialogue served as a venue for the children, as well as for the parents and teachers, to share their insights on how the internet affected the children’s lives and how the government can help make the internet a safer place for children.

Prior to the dialogue, we mobilized the children to discuss what they want to do or say in the dialogue. Some of the children’s recommendations, which were shared during the dialogue, include the call for improving the digital literacy of parents, teachers, and students through partnerships between the government, civil society, and private sector; and filtering negative content for children. The children are also calling on the parents not to panic when children are using the internet; to respect the children’s privacy and trust that children can protect themselves online; and ask the children’s consent before checking what the children are doing. According to the children, they are open to appropriate supervision from parents, provided that it does not make the children uncomfortable.

Similarly, we provided a space for the parents and teachers to have preparatory discussion before the dialogue. The parents and teachers echo the call for improved digital literacy. They also asked organizations and the private sector, including influencers and content creators, to promote positive content for children.

In Thailand, our member organization The Life Skills Development Foundation (TLSDF) continued providing support to the Northern Thailand-based Child Rights Youth Activists Network that was officially formed in late 2018. During their planning meeting, the children identified using social media as a possible platform to advance their advocacy. In response, we conducted a workshop to improve children’s capacity in using social media and creating communication products for their campaigns, which include the advocacy to stop all forms of domestic violence, particularly physical and humiliating punishment; to have equal treatment of children, even those who are non-Thai citizens and living in statelessness; and to address adolescent pregnancy due to accepted practice of child marriage, especially in indigenous communities.

Through the workshop, children learned about the strategies and tools in using social media for children’s rights advocacy. The workshop also resulted to a group decision to create their own Facebook page, which they will use to communicate about their network’s activities.

Climate Action and Children’s Right to a Healthy Environment

In early 2019, we witnessed the efforts of children and young people joining the climate strike. We strived to respond to the children’s call by deepening our understanding on the issue, collaborating with other civil society organizations, and supporting children in Asia to voice out their opinions.

To be able to support the children taking action, we improved our knowledge on climate change and issues related children’s right to a healthy environment through a series of learning sessions, including the session during the 2019 Asia-Pacific Partnership Meeting of Child Rights Coalitions and Networks. As we continued to capacitate ourselves, we showed our solidarity to the September 2019 Global Climate Strike. We also improved our operational practices to reduce waste and patronize the use of sustainable materials.
Moreover, we joined Child Rights Connect’s Working Group on Children’s Rights and the Environment to help us not only in continuously broadening our knowledge and networks, but also in elevating issues of children in Asia to the global discussions on environment and climate change.

By late 2019, we have created spaces for children in Asia to voice out their experiences and views on environmental harm that affects the full enjoyment of the vast range of the rights of children. In the 2019 Asian Children’s Summit, we included children’s right to a healthy environment as one of the four key themes. Prior to the Summit, we also co-organized the Regional Expert Consultation for East Asia and Pacific in Bogor, Indonesia in October 2019, as part of the Global Initiative on Advancing Children’s Right to a Healthy Environment. In this consultation, we asked for the children’s recommendations on the following topics: healthy environment; ecological child rights; youth initiatives; and child rights, the environment and the business sector.

We organized this consultation in partnership with the Office of the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and the Environment, Terre des Hommes, Project Dryad, Global Child Forum, Indonesian Institute for Forest and Environment (RMI), Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), German Cooperation, UN Environment, and Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, Germany.

The results of the consultation are taken by the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and the Environment as part of his guiding documents in ensuring that children’s voices are considered in setting and implementing environment-related policies and standards.

Our message of support to the children joining the Global Climate Strike in March 2019

To all the children and young people joining the Global Climate Strike:

Child Rights Coalition Asia supports you. We commend you for making the world listen to your voices on the need to act on climate change.

We are with you as you take the lead in demanding immediate climate actions that will affect your future, as you ask for the global community’s attention to take your recommendations seriously, and as you let the world know that you are making this choice to speak up.

We support you as you exercise your right to be heard and enjoy your freedom of expression, freedom of thought, freedom of association, and freedom of peaceful assembly.

We recognize that this is an opportunity for you to develop important life skills and we are also learning from you. This fight will take a long while, but you have already taken on the difficult task of pushing forward the movement that gets people to work together to address climate change. For that we are forever grateful and we will try our best to do our part in taking action for the planet and for the current and future generations living in it.
Recommendations from the child delegates of the Global Initiative on Advancing Children’s Right to a Healthy Environment:
Regional Expert Consultation for East Asia and the Pacific held in October 2019 in Bogor, Indonesia

On Ecological Child Rights
1. Governments should provide funding for environmental and child rights programmes.
2. Asian governments should know about injustice connected to the environment, climate change, and children’s environmental rights.
3. Governments should organize more exchange possibilities for youth.

On Healthy Environment
1. For Governments: Integrate environmental education in the curriculum, Cross-sectoral collaboration in the government towards a healthy environment, Capacity-building support from the government.
2. For the private sector: Need to be more aware of their impact on the environment and children’s rights.
3. For the public sector: More awareness to take measures to reduce their emissions.
4. Support from general public: Platform to build youth movement to support each other.
5. Regional collaboration, regional social media campaigns.

On Youth Initiatives
1. Increase awareness via social media.
2. Support people to change their lifestyles and personal behaviors connected to environmental issues.
3. Collaboration: opportunities for exchange, creating an action day for youth to work together on a campaign, for example Sunday’s for Change (SFC).

On Child Rights, the Environment and the Business Sector
1. Governments must observe and restrict companies in using natural resources.
2. Governments must regulate the production of disposable plastic products.
3. Governments must regulate dangerous goods (pesticide, mercury products).
4. The UN should urgently issue a treaty related to child rights, the environment, and corporations.
5. There should be collaboration with every community around the world to make a petition regarding children’s right to a healthy environment for the business sector.
6. There should be six-monthly reports from civil society organizations and community support.
Highlights in 2019: Strengthening Civil Society

We contributed to ensuring civil society space in the region by creating opportunities at the regional level for civil society participation, and by facilitating the creation and strengthening of partnerships. Through our collaboration with regional and international bodies, we create more opportunities for children and civil society to be part of platforms and initiatives with a wide reach.

We created the space for civil society organizations to engage and influence the work of the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC) through providing technical inputs to the 2019 ACWC Partnership Conference, and by submitting civil society’s inputs to the midterm review of the ASEAN Regional Plan of Action on the Elimination of Violence against Children (RPA EVAC).

Before and after the Partnership Conference, we also contributed to the midterm review of the ASEAN RPA EVAC. We submitted our inputs, which were informed by the views and experiences of our member organizations. In late 2019, we also contributed to improving the ASEAN human rights bodies’ understanding on best interest of the child and child participation through the conduct of the ASEAN Dialogue on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child General Comments held in December 2019 in Manila, Philippines in partnership with the Philippine Representative to the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR) and with the support of the Embassy of Norway to ASEAN.

Working with the regional bodies

Near the end of 2018, we started providing support to the upcoming ACWC Chair in planning for the ACWC Partnership Conference held in March 2019. The Partnership Conference aimed to build and strengthen partnerships between the ACWC and other stakeholders on the implementation of ACWC’s 5-year work plan, the ASEAN RPA EVAC, and the ASEAN Bohol Work Plan to implement the ASEAN Convention Against Trafficking in Persons (ACTIP). During the planning of the Partnership Conference, we proposed for the extension of invitations to civil society organizations, noting that participation in this forum could affect the level of civil society participation in the existing and future work of ACWC. Moreover, in this Partnership Conference, our suggestions to include civil society and children in the implementation process of ACTIP and to develop a child-friendly version of the ACTIP were included in the output document.
The Dialogue was attended by AICHR Representatives, ACWC Representatives on Children’s Rights, Member of the CRC Committee, Representatives from ASEAN Sectoral Bodies, Representatives from ministries of foreign affairs and embassies, Representatives from coordination bodies on children’s rights, legislators, and civil society organizations. We also invited a child speaker, Erika from the Philippines, to share her experiences in exercising her right to participate in the decision-making processes at the community, national, regional, and international levels.

The Dialogue resulted to recommendations, which include the review of reservations made by some ASEAN Member States on the UN CRC articles; awareness-raising of decision makers on the General Comments; institutionalization of the monitoring and evaluation processes on the implementation of UN CRC General Comments; strengthening of efforts to educate children about their rights; and streamlining of efforts to promote and protect children’s rights in ASEAN, among others. These recommendations will serve as inputs to the formulation of policies at the country and regional levels.

This 2019 Dialogue is a follow-through of our first project with AICHR Philippines in 2018, which recommended the popularization of UN CRC General Comments to develop a deeper understanding on child rights and to strengthen the collaboration and cooperation between ASEAN and the CRC Committee. Through the Dialogue, we also utilized the civic space to influence the work plans and decisions of AICHR.

Key results of the meeting:
- A set of recommendations for the general comment on the rights of the child in the digital environment.
- A coordinated campaign for the 30th anniversary of the UN CRC.
- A set of good practices, challenges, and recommendations on CSO engagement to CRC Reporting.
- Improved understanding on children’s right to a healthy environment.
- Improved awareness on innovative approaches to public budgeting for children’s rights and justice for children.

Children’s Rights in the Digital Environment

Moderator:
Jinyi Park, Advocacy Adviser for Global Advocacy and Partnership at ChildFund Korea

Speakers:
- Anjan Bose, Child Protection Specialist Child Protection Specialist at UNICEF
- Maria Luisa Sotomayor, Communications and Advocacy Specialist for Digital Safety at UNICEF
- Atty. Mikiko Otani, Member of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child
- Wanchai Roujanayong, Chair and Thailand’s Representative on Children’s Rights to the ACWC
- Amal Salman Aldoseri, Vice-Chair of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child

The 2019 Asia-Pacific Partnership Meeting of Child Rights Coalitions and Networks

Our annual partnership meeting remained to be platform for civil society strengthening and policy advocacy for child rights coalitions and networks in Asia-Pacific.

The 2017 UNICEF State of the World’s Children Report focused on “Children in a Digital World” and showed how digital technology is changing childhood. With the opportunities for enhanced learning, social inclusion, and new relationships comes the risk of harm and violence. The UNCRC Guidelines on the Optional Protocol to the CRC on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography contains provisions on the modern form of
sale and sexual exploitation in the digital environment. It also aims for a more effective implementation of the OPSC by State parties both in the traditional and digital means. In addition, the UNCRC General Comment on children’s rights in the digital environment is currently being drafted.

At the ASEAN level, the Declaration on the Protection of Children from All Forms of Online Exploitation and Abuse seeks to address the “borderless nature of the production and sharing of online child sexual abuse material”. The Declaration would serve as a commitment for parties to move forward in protecting the rights of children in the digital environment.

**UNCRC 30th Anniversary**

**Speaker:**
Emma Grindulis, Programme Officer at Child Rights Connect

Child Rights Connect recently conducted a Global Study on the CRC reporting process which affirmed the critical role of national coalitions in advancing the rights of the child. The report recommended strong, inclusive, united and supportive coalitions that are engaged in a full reporting cycle based on a long-term advocacy plan. It also recommended using the CRC reporting cycle with the awareness of and engagement in the Committee’s other areas of work such as individual communications, general comments, days of general discussion, Committee elections, and child participation; using CRC reporting in connection with other UN human rights mechanisms including other treaty bodies, Universal Periodic Review, Human Rights Council, Special Rapporteurs and the SDGs and with regional mechanisms; and empowering children through CRC reporting and the Committee’s standards to become human rights defenders.

We also shared the beginnings of the #TheAsiaWant social media campaign which asks children and young people: “What are your dreams for children’s rights and why? What are some of the things that need to happen to achieve that dream?”

**Children’s Rights and the Environment**

**Moderator:**
Billy Wong, Executive Secretary of the Hong Kong on Committee on Children’s Rights

**Speakers:**
- Jonas Schubert, Child Rights Officer at Terre des Hommes
- Emma Grindulis, Programme Officer at Child Rights Connect
- Wanun Permpibul, Director of Climate Watch Thailand
- Seonmi Choi, Regional Advisor on Environment and Climate Change at UNICEF East Asia and the Pacific Regional Office

In March 2019, the UN General Assembly Human Rights Council produced a resolution recognizing the contribution of human rights defenders to the enjoyment of human rights, environmental protection and sustainable development. They also promoted the participation and engagement of children in young people and called on states to provide a safe and empowering context for initiatives organized by young people and children to defend human rights relating to the environment.

In this session, we discussed how environmental damage is a pressing human rights challenge which results in violations of children’s rights that have irreversible, lifelong, and even transgenerational consequences. We also acknowledged that certain groups of children such as those from indigenous, low-income, or other marginalized communities are at a higher risk from both natural and anthropogenic environmental crisis.

In moving forward, we should emphasize that the environmental and climate crisis are imminent development issues requiring development justice. The UNICEF publication “Unless We Act Now: The Impact of Climate Change on Children” also offers recommendations such as enhancing data and improving the evidence base, increase strategies to ensure continued education under a climate change scenario, improve learning to address climate change impacts and empower children to be agents of change, and systems strengthening strategies which include an intersectoral collaboration of relevant government agencies and stakeholders and improved accessibility of climate and contingent financing specific to the education sector to deal with climate-related disasters and integrate climate change adaptation into education sector planning.

**Justice for Children**

**Moderator:**
Ilya Smirnoff, Executive Director of Childline Thailand Foundation

**Speakers:**
- Prof. Manfred Nowak, Independent Expert for the UN Global Study on Children Deprived of Liberty (recorded video message)
- Atty. Mikiko Otani, Member of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child
- Dr. Seree Nonthasoot, Former Representative of Thailand to the AICHR
- Valerie Khan, Executive Director of Group Development Pakistan
- Pehn Son, Executive Director of CRC Cambodia

Implementing appropriate measures for children in conflict with the law is one of the areas that, according to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, “States parties still have a long way to go in achieving full compliance.” In 2018, the Committee decided to update General Comment No. 10 (GC 10) to reflect developments and address negative trends relating to juvenile justice. The upcoming UN CRC General Comment No. 24, (GC 24) replacing...
GC 10, seeks to emphasize the UN CRC requirement to develop and implement a comprehensive juvenile justice policy; provide clarity on the setting of a minimum age of criminal responsibility, the upper age limit of the juvenile justice system, and related matters; encourage the establishment and full implementation of alternative measures that can be applied at all stages of the process; ensure the guarantees for a fair trial for children who are not diverted to alternative measures; and ensure the application of appropriate dispositions for children who are convicted and the avoidance of deprivation of liberty, except as a measure of last resort, and if used, for the shortest appropriate period of time and in appropriate conditions.

The drafting of the GC 24 provides an opportunity to promote important policies. This can be informed by studies such as those being developed by the AICHR, which aims to provide a comprehensive regional report on the practices and conduct of interrogation by officials toward children in conflict with the law (CICL) and to share/learning good practices on the same within the jurisdiction of ASEAN Member States. Experiences within our coalition, such as the setting up of the first child protection court in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province can also help inform the development of a multi-disciplinary approach to child justice systems.

Public Budgeting for Children

Moderator:
Christopher Peñales, Focal Point at Mindanao Action Group for Children’s Rights and Protection

Speakers:
- Indah Abayan, Policy Advocacy Officer at CRC Asia
- Dato Junaidi Rahman, Brunei Darussalam’s Representative on Children’s Rights to the ACWC
- Marc Joseph Alejo, Convenor and President of CRC Coalition Philippines
- Ali Aulia Ramly, Child Protection Specialist at UNICEF Indonesia

This session emphasized the importance of ensuring that child rights programs get funded. Recently, CRC Asia has been engaged in child rights public budgeting advocacy in the Philippines, such as by facilitating the budgeting process of local government units to ensure funding for children. We also developed a resource material on public budgeting for children’s rights. Findings in the Philippines also show that in the study sites, the budget allocation of local governments for children are low, even falling short of the mandated 1% of a local government’s Internal Revenue Allotment (example of vertical intergovernmental fiscal transfer from national to sub-national level), while there is no budget allocation for child participation. Investments in the strengthening of prevention programs and the conduct of child rights situational analysis (CRSA) to facilitate the development of child responsive programs, among others, were among the recommendations to the national and subnational/local government units.
Financial Report

Statement of Financial Position
As of 31 December 2019, in PHP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assets</th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Current Assets</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cash</td>
<td>1,334,160</td>
<td>4,500,432</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receivables</td>
<td>1,342</td>
<td>206,786</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other Current Assets</td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td>30,000</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Non-Current Assets</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property and Equipment</td>
<td>150,378</td>
<td>86,634</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Assets</strong></td>
<td>1,515,880</td>
<td>4,823,853</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Liabilities and Fund Balances</th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Liabilities</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Payables</td>
<td>102,397</td>
<td>214,877</td>
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<tr>
<td>Current Statutory Payables</td>
<td>23,178</td>
<td>700</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deferred Support</td>
<td>1,216,664</td>
<td>4,498,378</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Non-Current Assets</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operational Fund</td>
<td>23,264</td>
<td>23,264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property Fund</td>
<td>150,378</td>
<td>86,634</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Liabilities and Fund Balances</strong></td>
<td>1,515,880</td>
<td>4,823,853</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Support</th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2019</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grants and Donations</td>
<td>14,844,529</td>
<td>8,647,609</td>
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<tr>
<td>Membership Fees</td>
<td>43,642</td>
<td>65,550</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Support</strong></td>
<td>14,879,171</td>
<td>8,713,519</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expenses</th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Project Costs</td>
<td>14,837,225</td>
<td>8,547,375</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Expenses</td>
<td>42,664</td>
<td>167,487</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Expenses</strong></td>
<td>14,879,889</td>
<td>8,714,862</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other Comprehensive Income</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interest income from bank account</td>
<td>718</td>
<td>1,703</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unrealized foreign exchange gain (loss)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Excess (Deficit) for the Year</strong></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Social Report

CRC Asia’s Policies and Procedures
This guides the governance structure of the organization. The General Assembly, composed of CRC Asia’s member organizations, is the highest decision-making body of the organization. It is supported by the Board of Trustees and the Secretariat.

CRC Asia’s Policies and Procedures was updated in July 2019.

CRC Asia’s Child Safeguarding Protocol and Code of Conduct
This protects the rights of children who may be directly or indirectly involved in CRC Asia’s programs and activities.

It ensures that staff, representatives, and staff of member organizations take all judicious steps to ensure that children they are in contact with are treated with respect and dignity, are protected, and are kept safe from harm. It contains the reporting and responding standards.

CRC Asia’s Child Safeguarding Protocol and Code of Conduct was updated in 2013. A review was conducted in 2019 and is in the process of revision.

CRC Asia’s Finance Policies and Guidelines
This guides the effective implementation of CRC Asia’s financial management system. It describes the various components of financial management such as finance procedures, budgeting, internal controls, procurement, accounting, and bookkeeping.

CRC Asia’s Finance Policies and Guidelines was updated in 2017.

CRC Asia’s Anti-Fraud Policy
This provides guidelines for the organization to prevent, detect, investigate, and act on fraud against the organization or that may be committed by anyone associated with the organization. It includes policies on whistleblowing and retaliation.

CRC Asia’s Anti-Fraud Policy was adopted in 2017.

CRC Asia’s Policy against Workplace Harassment
This ensures that CRC Asia provides a work environment that is free from sexual harassment and other types of discriminatory harassment. It has a reporting procedure and a protection against retaliation.

CRC Asia’s Policy against Workplace Harassment was adopted in 2013.

In 2019, CRC Asia received a communication regarding a staff of an organization, which is a member of one of CRC Asia’s member coalitions. The report concerning child safeguarding and fraud was received by CRC Asia’s Regional Executive Director and coordinated for action with the head and Board of Trustees of the member coalition. Following an investigation, and with a criminal case pending, the member coalition suspended the membership of the organization. The criminal case is being monitored.
The Organization

CRC Asia Member Organizations

Child Rights Coalition Cambodia
Hong Kong Committee on Children’s Rights
Yayasan KKSP, The Education and Information Centre for Child Rights (Indonesia)
Yayasan SEJIWA (Indonesia)

ChildFund Korea
Village Focus International (Lao PDR)
Protect and Save the Children (Malaysia)
Rakdek, The Life Skills Development Foundation (Thailand)

Group Development Pakistan
Child Welfare League Foundation (Taiwan)
Civil Society Coalition on the Convention on the Rights of the Child (Philippines)
Mindanao Action Group for Children’s Rights and Protection (Philippines)

Equality Myanmar
Child Workers in Nepal Concerned Centre
Childline Thailand Foundation
Vietnam Association for the Protection of Child’s Rights
Board of Trustees
President: Elizabeth P. de Castro
Secretary: Victoria Juat
Treasurer: Lourdes Balanon

Members:
Sanphasit Koompraphant
Penh Son
Aung Myo Min
Mary Ann Ballesteros
Ester Isberto

Key Partners

Affiliations
Consultative Relationship with AICHR since 2015
Member of Child Rights Connect since 2016
Member of the Global Partnership to End Violence against Children since 2017

Secretariat

Amihan Abueva
Regional Executive Director

Hazelyn Joy Bitaña
Program Manager

Luz Indah P. Abayan
Policy Advocacy Officer

Rosheic Sims
Program Officer

Irma Torres Dela Cruz
Finance Officer

Francis R. Copino
Administrative Associate
References


United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific Data Explorer https://dataexplorer.unescap.org/