Children's Convention (Convention on the Rights of the Child)

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The 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC, sometimes abbreviated as UNCRC) has been widely acclaimed as the first truly comprehensive international human rights instrument. Its inclusion of civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights within the same text; the fact that it focuses on the "private" sphere of the family alongside the "public" sphere of state activity; as well as the rapidity and extent of its ratification are used to support the assertion that the CRC is a quasi-universal legal instrument in terms of both its thematic and geographic reach.

The United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, the specialized UN agencies and procedures with a mandate over children's rights issues, and certain civil society organizations act as the primary monitors of the implementation of the Convention and its two Optional Protocols. Although the process of international monitoring aims to provide a benchmark against which states are expected to monitor and adjust their own performance with respect to the realization of children's rights at the national level, in practice states appear to be more concerned with accountability on the international level. Unlike most of the other core international human rights treaties, the CRC does not allow complaints from individuals alleging violations of their Convention rights to be addressed to the Committee on the Rights of the Child.

This entry will briefly outline the history of children's rights within international law before going on to examine the development of the CRC and the work of the mechanisms established to monitor its implementation.

HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT

The history of normative instruments for the protection of children's rights at the international level can be traced to the early part of the twentieth century and the work on international conventions prohibiting human trafficking, slavery, and exploitative labor. Following a proposal and intensive lobbying by the nongovernmental coalition Save the Children International Union, in 1924 the League of Nations adopted a Declaration of the Rights of the Child. The Declaration contained five principles, including the obligation to protect children from exploitation and the notion that children should be the first to receive assistance in times of distress.

In 1959 the United Nations General Assembly adopted a slightly more detailed Declaration of the Rights of the Child that enumerated ten principles and exhorted parents, individuals, voluntary organizations, and local and national authorities to strive to observe the principles through the implementation of legislative and other measures.

Despite their stated focus on the rights of children as bearers of human rights, these early instruments took an essentially protective and charitable approach. Throughout the 1970s there was increasing discussion surrounding the need to formulate a binding international convention that would draw together, harmonize, and update existing standards in line with new thinking on the status of children. Although the human rights of children are clearly covered by the existing international human rights instruments, it was widely felt that the rights of children should be encapsulated within a specific convention in order to reflect the relatively recent view of children as subjects of specific rights and to adequately respond to the particular vulnerability of children to abuses of their general and specific human rights. There was, however, some measure of fear that the creation of a new convention dealing exclusively with children's rights would lead to the ongoing marginalization of these issues within the United Nations human rights system. In the end, it was the advocates of a specific child rights convention who were successful in persuading the international community that such a step was necessary in order to ensure the promotion and protection of children's rights.

DRAFTING PROCESS

The original draft of a convention on children's rights was presented to the UN Human Rights Commission by the Polish representative in 1978 as part of the preparation for the International Year of the Child in 1979. The initial text was virtually a copy of the 1959 Declaration with the addition of a monitoring body that was granted only very limited powers. The commission felt that it was necessary to substantially rework the proposal in order to develop an effective international treaty that adequately reflected contemporary ideas about children's rights. A working group consisting of members of the commission was then established to further develop the text into a binding international convention. After many years of negotiation, the working group submitted the final draft of the Convention on the Rights of the Child to the Commission on Human Rights and then to the UN General Assembly in 1989.

An important feature of the drafting process for the CRC was that nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) were closely involved in the development of the text, so that by the time the Convention was actually close to adoption, these organizations had forged strong collaborative relationships not only among themselves but also with government delegations and with specialized agencies such as the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). The involvement of NGOs was largely responsible for the attitude that the implementation of the CRC should occur on the basis of constructive dialogue and have as its hallmarks mutual assistance, support, and cooperation, rather than confrontation. For this reason, the work of the Committee on the Rights of the Child is understood as being advisory in nature as well as performing the function of monitoring the implementation of the Convention. As will be seen below, civil society organizations continue to play a particularly important role in the implementation and monitoring of the CRC.

ADOPTION, RATIFICATIONS, AND ENTRY INTO FORCE

The CRC was adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 20 November 1989, and it entered into force on 2 September 1990. The rapidity with which the instrument gained the twenty ratifications necessary for it to enter into force is unparalleled by the other human rights instruments that have been adopted under the auspices of the UN.

With its 193 ratifications, the CRC is the international human rights instrument with the largest number of parties. Some commentators have observed that the ratification of the Convention has had important follow-on effects, in that many countries that became parties to a multilateral human rights treaty for the first time by virtue of their ratification of the CRC have since gone on to ratify other UN human rights treaties. The rapidity with which some states managed to take the internal legislative and administrative steps needed prior to ratification of the Convention has, however, led to a questioning of the sincerity of the commitment to children's rights in certain ratifying countries as well as to queries about the thoroughness with which the necessary pre-ratification preparatory work was undertaken.

The ratifications by states parties to the CRC have in many cases been qualified by general or specific reservations to its text. The number of reservations to the Convention is partly attributable to the fact that there are more states parties to the CRC than to any other human rights treaty and partly to the subject matter of the Convention, dealing as it does with the "private" sphere of family relations. Reservations, declarations, or statements may be made by states parties in order to exclude or modify the application of one or more provisions of a treaty, thereby limiting the scope of that state's obligations under the instrument. Under Article 51, paragraph 2, of the CRC as well as according to international rules governing the interpretation of treaties, reservations that are "incompatible with the object and purpose" of a treaty shall not be permitted. Several states have made general unilateral statements to the effect that the Convention is to be interpreted in light of religious laws and values or in accordance with their national legislation. Other parties have made extensive reservations to specific articles of the CRC, in particular to Article 1 on the age at which childhood begins and ends, on Article 21 in relation to adoption, and on Article 38 concerning the age limit for participation in armed conflict.

While some states parties have lodged objections against the wide-ranging nature of some of the reservations made to the CRC, the legal effect of these objections is not entirely clear. The Committee on the Rights of the Child, in its General Comment No. 5 (2003) (see below), notes that the aim of "ensuring full and unqualified respect for the human rights of children can be achieved only if States withdraw their reservations." To this end, the committee has successfully persuaded many states parties to remove their reservations to the CRC, in particular

regarding the relationship between religious laws and the Convention and concerning Article 21. The overall objective of the dialogue between the states parties and the committee with respect to reservations is the achievement of universal ratification, not only in terms of the number of parties but also with regard to the substantive application of the rights contained in the Convention.

The generality of some of the reservations made to the CRC could be used as an indication that the consensus concerning children's rights is not, in fact, as solid as it first appears. On the other hand, it has been suggested that ratification should be regarded as the first step in a process of increasing compliance and that the impact of reservations upon ratification may be remedied by engaging the states concerned in a dialogue about the ways in which the obstacles to full implementation could be removed.

OPTIONAL PROTOCOLS TO THE CONVENTION

On 25 May 2000 the UN General Assembly adopted two thematic Optional Protocols to the CRC. The Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict and the Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution, and Child Pornography both entered into force in 2002.

The protocols create additional reporting obligations for states parties in that they are required to submit initial reports within two years of ratification and periodic reports at intervals of every five years thereafter. The reports are considered by the Committee on the Rights of the Child. Unlike most of the other core UN human rights treaties, there is no provision made within the Optional Protocols to allow for individual petitions alleging violations of these instruments to be brought before the committee.

The Optional Protocols are fairly similar in structure and, interestingly, provide the possibility for states that have signed but not ratified the CRC to become parties. In this way, the United States, which is not a party to the Convention, has ratified both of the Optional Protocols and is therefore required to submit periodic reports on their implementation.

PROVISIONS OF THE CRC RELATING TO IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

Article 4 of the Convention specifies that states have obligations to undertake "all appropriate legislative, administrative and other measures" to ensure its implementation. The committee has interpreted Article 4 as requiring states to carry out a wide range of administrative, legislative, judicial, and other measures to give effect to the CRC; some of these requirements will be discussed in more detail below. Articles 42 and 44 of the Convention specify that states have obligations to raise awareness of the Convention and its provisions among children and adults.

As with other international human rights treaties, the CRC does not formally oblige states to directly incorporate its provisions within their national legal framework. It is clear, however, from the committee's General Comment No. 5 (2003) that it regards the justiciability of Convention rights at the national level and, in particular, the creation of child-sensitive procedures and remedies as essential steps in ensuring the full implementation of the CRC.

The idea that states have positive obligations to adopt domestic measures concerning the acts of private parties is also one that is apparent from the text of the CRC, and it is a notion that has been made explicit in the General Guidelines Regarding the Form and Contents of Periodic Reports (reporting guidelines) that have been drafted by the Committee on the Rights of the Child (see below). For example, the reporting guidelines request that states provide information about the steps that they have taken to prevent and respond to instances of abuse and neglect of children by caregivers. The "indirect horizontal effect" of the CRC, in that it indirectly governs relationships between individuals at the national level as a result of the positive duties it places on the states parties, is one of the features of the Convention that has been widely acclaimed.

With regard to economic, social, and cultural rights, Article 4 of the Convention states that "States Parties shall undertake such measures to the maximum extent of their available resources and, where needed, within the framework of international co-operation." This phrase is similar to the concept of "progressive realization" contained in the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights. While it would appear on the face of it that resource-poor countries are somehow under a lesser obligation to ensure implementation of economic, social, and cultural rights, the Committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights in its General Comment No. 3 (1990) emphasized that states nevertheless have obligations to "strive to ensure the widest possible enjoyment of the relevant rights under the prevailing circumstances." The

Committee on the Rights of the Child reiterates this point in its General Comment No. 5 (2003) where it provides that "whatever their economic circumstances, States are required to undertake all possible measures towards the realization of the rights of the child, paying special attention to the most disadvantaged groups."

Article 43 of the CRC creates the Committee on the Rights of the Child as the main monitoring mechanism for its implementation. The work of the committee will be discussed in more detail below. Furthermore, the CRC explicitly mentions the role that is to be played by the specialized agencies of the UN, and UNICEF in particular, with regard to fostering the effective implementation of the Convention and ensuring international cooperation for this purpose.

The mechanisms established by the CRC focus on monitoring the overall implementation of the Convention at the national level rather than on individual cases or the violation of specific rights. For this reason, the monitoring process under the CRC is continuous as well as systemic as it aims to evaluate the extent to which the rights contained in the Convention are actually being implemented by states parties.

THE COMMITTEE ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

The Committee on the Rights of the Child is established under Article 43 of the CRC for the purposes of "examining the progress made by States Parties in achieving the realization of the obligations" undertaken in the Convention. As previously mentioned, the process of reporting by the states parties to the CRC is the primary mechanism through which the national implementation of the Convention's provisions is assessed and monitored. The Committee on the Rights of the Child develops its own rules of procedure and working methods; some of the most salient aspects of these will be outlined in greater detail below. In general, however, the working methods and procedures used by the committee do not differ greatly from those of the other UN human rights treaty bodies.

Article 43 lays out the modalities of functioning of the Committee on the Rights of the Child and provides that its members "shall be elected by States Parties from among their nationals and shall serve in their personal capacity, consideration being given to equitable geographical distribution, as well as to the principal legal systems." The committee members come from a variety of disciplinary backgrounds: lawyers, judges, social workers, psychologists, development economists, doctors, teachers, and children's rights activists. Members also have very different backgrounds and levels of experience in relation to children's rights issues. The process of election, depending as it does upon largely political factors, is open to criticism because considerations of merit may sometimes be secondary to other objectives.

The committee was initially composed of ten individual experts. However, its membership was increased to eighteen in 2003 following recognition that more resources were required to keep pace with the volume of reports being received from the 193 states parties. The committee made a further attempt to deal with the reporting backlog during 2006 when it sat in two chambers, each composed of nine committee members. The delay in reviewing reports is a testament to the fact that the Convention is in some ways a victim of its own success, as the other human rights treaty bodies consider fewer state reports.

Future developments in relation to the proposed reform of the UN treaty body system will almost certainly have a significant impact upon the working methods of the Committee on the Rights of the Child and therefore upon the monitoring and interpretation of the CRC itself. The effects of these systemic changes on the implementation and monitoring of children's rights remain to be seen, however; there is some degree of reticence to these changes among the members of the Committee on the Rights of the Child as well as among a number of civil society organizations, who fear that children's rights may become further marginalized if they are considered together with other human rights issues.

The system of periodic reporting.

Article 44 of the CRC describes the periodic reporting system and provides that states are to submit an initial report on the measures they have adopted to give effect to the rights in the Convention within two years of ratification. States parties are required to report every five years thereafter. The form and content of the periodic reports are governed by the reporting guidelines, which were first issued in 1991 and updated in 1996 and again in 2005. The reporting guidelines provide that reports "must strike a balance in describing the formal legal situation and the situation in practice," and the committee therefore requires information on follow-up, monitoring, resource allocation, statistical data, and challenges to implementation. The reporting guidelines group the substantive Convention rights into clusters: general measures of implementation;

definition of the child; general principles; civil rights and freedoms; family environment and alternative care; basic health and welfare; education, leisure, and cultural activities; and special protection measures.

The concept of "general principles" developed within the reporting guidelines is an idea that is unique to the CRC. The committee has identified Articles 2 (nondiscrimination), 3 (best interests of the child), 6 (right to life, survival, and development), and 12 (respect for the views of the child) as being provisions that are essential to the consideration of each of the rights contained in the Convention. The general principles may be regarded as improving the clarity and focus of state reporting by virtue of the fact that they must be taken into consideration in relation to each of the other rights in the Convention.

On the other hand, there is a risk that deriving general principles that regroup rights contained in different parts of the Convention will lead to "front loading," whereby all of the information that would previously have been considered under the other substantive provisions of the CRC is moved to the beginning of the report. Related to this problem is the concern that by listing certain crosscutting principles, the committee has created a hierarchy of norms within the Convention. Finally, the process through which the general principles were developed and the criteria upon which they are based are not clear, a situation that is problematic given that this decision by the committee has far-reaching effects upon both the structure and content of state reports and the interpretation of the Convention.

The reporting cycle.

The Committee on the Rights of the Child meets in Geneva and normally holds three month-long sessions per year, which are each divided into a three-week plenary session and a one-week pre-sessional working group.

The reporting cycle consists of a review of reports by a working group of the committee, which generally meets in closed session for one week immediately following the previous committee session. The pre-sessional working group decides on a list of issues that is sent to the state as a preliminary indication of the questions that the committee feels should be priorities for discussion at the plenary session. This provides the committee with the opportunity to request additional or updated information in writing from the government, and it enables the state to better prepare itself for the consideration of the report, which generally occurs three to four months after the working group meeting.

One of the major benefits of the working group system is that it permits NGOs to become actively involved in the reporting process. The committee has adopted guidelines to encourage written submissions to the pre-sessional working group from NGOs, and these must be sent to the secretariat of the committee at least two months prior to the pre-sessional meeting. This process allows the committee to compare the information received from civil society organizations with the state report, and based on the written submissions, NGOs are invited to attend the pre-sessional working group. The pre-sessional working group system has, however, been criticized by NGOs that argue that there is only very limited time for discussion during the week-long meeting.

The next phase in the reporting cycle is the consideration of the report in an open, public plenary session, during the course of which members of the state delegation and committee members take the floor. On average, the committee considers nine reports during each three-week session and devotes one day to its public examination of each report as well as two to three additional hours in closed session to discuss its concluding observations for the country. In order to increase the efficiency of the process, the committee has begun appointing two of its members to act as country rapporteurs to lead the discussion on each country report.

Following the dialogue with the state party, the committee meets to discuss its concluding observations, which include both suggestions and recommendations. In general, the concluding observations are structured as follows: introduction, positive aspects, factors and difficulties impeding implementation, principal subjects of concern, suggestions, and recommendations. The observations are made public on the last day of the committee session and are adopted along with the session report. In its reporting guidelines, the committee notes that it is important that states parties make the committee's concluding observations widely available at the national level and that this is in keeping with the spirit of Article 44, paragraph 6, of the CRC.

Follow-up mechanisms.

In general, the formal mechanisms for following up on state reports remain quite limited. It is assumed that the concerns expressed by the committee in its concluding observations will be addressed in a detailed manner by the state party in its subsequent periodic report.

The committee may transmit state reports that contain requests or identify a need for technical advice or

assistance on particular issues to relevant agencies and bodies such as UNICEF, the International Labour Organization (ILO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the World Health Organization (WHO), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). The technical advice could relate to the reporting process itself or could be focused on substantive issues connected to the implementation of Convention rights.

Since 2003 the Treaties and Council branch of the OHCHR has organized several regional and subregional workshops on the implementation of the committee's concluding observations. Also, at the end of 2003 the committee reinstated the practice of making informal visits to states parties with a view to either assisting with the follow-up to its concluding observations or with the preparation of upcoming periodic reports.

General Comments and interpretation of the Convention.

The increasing activism of the Committee on the Rights of the Child is apparent from the number of general comments and thematic recommendations (decisions) that it has adopted in order to assist states and other bodies charged with the implementation of the Convention.

During the first ten years of the committee's existence, no general comments were drafted. Between 2001 and 2003, however, the committee adopted five general comments and since 2003 it has adopted a further five interpretive general comments. These comments cover issues ranging from the aims of education, to the role of independent national human rights institutions in the promotion of children's rights, to HIV/AIDS, adolescent health and development, the treatment of unaccompanied and separated children outside their country of origin, early childhood, corporal punishment, the rights of children with disabilities, and juvenile justice.

General Comment No. 5 (2003), which focuses on general measures of implementation of the Convention, specifies the steps that states parties need to take in order to fulfill their obligations under the CRC. These include a range of judicial, legislative, and administrative measures, such as the removal of reservations to the CRC, ensuring the justiciability of children's rights within national law, the development of comprehensive national action plans on children, conducting child impact assessments and evaluations, improving data collection and analysis, making children visible in budgets, increasing capacity on children's rights through training, and improving coordination and cooperation on children's rights at the national and international levels.

The legitimacy of the committee's role in adopting authoritative interpretations of the Convention through the use of general comments and recommendations is perhaps less open to question than the process of deriving general principles from the text as described above. Article 45(d) of the CRC itself provides the committee with a broad mandate to make "general recommendations" to states. Nevertheless, the process of adoption of general comments, including the order of priority in which issues are identified as being ripe for interpretation and the use of external consultants and agencies as the lead drafters for particular comments, may give rise to queries surrounding the transparency and legitimacy of the procedure.

Thematic studies and general days of discussion.

Each year since 1992, the Committee on the Rights of the Child has held a general day of discussion on specific Convention provisions or on related issues. These general days of discussion are public meetings, open to delegates from states parties, UN agencies and bodies, NGOs, national human rights institutions, professional bodies, youth groups, researchers, and other interested persons. The discussion leads to recommendations being adopted and, in many cases, these recommendations form the basis for a general comment on a particular issue.

The general days of discussion on children in armed conflict (1992) and on children and violence (2000 and 2001) resulted in recommendations being made to the UN General Assembly under Article 45(c) of the CRC requesting that the UN secretary-general undertake studies on these themes. The UN Study on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Children was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1996 and the Study on Violence against Children was adopted in 2006. Each of these studies has made important recommendations in relation to the implementation and monitoring of states' obligations under the CRC.

OTHER MONITORING MECHANISMS

As previously mentioned, Article 45(a) of the Convention gives a special role to UN specialized agencies such as UNICEF with respect to encouraging the national implementation of children's rights and in facilitating international cooperation for this purpose. UNICEF in particular

has, since the entry into force of the CRC, made great efforts to move its focus from a welfare-based approach toward a rights-based framework anchored in the Convention. Many commentators have noted that while this paradigm shift has influenced the discourse of the organization, it has yet to fully permeate its programming and practical functioning.

The specialized agencies of the UN that work with children's rights issues contribute to the implementation and monitoring of the Convention through the development of programs, studies, and indicators that focus on particular aspects of children's rights in various countries.

Nongovernmental organizations.

The role of NGOs in evaluating and monitoring the implementation of the norms contained in the CRC has already been highlighted. Article 45(a) of the Convention explicitly provides for NGO input to the reporting process and Article 45(b) states that other "competent bodies" may respond to requests for technical advice or assistance on children's rights issues.

The NGO Group for the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which was formed in 1983, played an instrumental part in the drafting of the CRC and continues to act as a liaison between national NGOs and the Committee on the Rights of the Child with respect to monitoring the implementation of the Convention. This group coordinates the submission of alternative NGO reports to the Committee on the Rights of the Child and encourages the work of national coalitions on children's rights issues.

Although the collaborative atmosphere that has developed between civil society organizations, the Committee on the Rights of the Child, and states has many positive aspects, there is a danger that this consensual approach to the CRC and children's rights more generally may lead to a glossing over of important differences in interpretation. It is clear that in other areas, an element of reasonable disagreement with respect to conceptual and legal problems performs an important role in furthering discussion and in finding innovative solutions to underlying differences.

Mainstreaming of children's rights within other parts of the UN human rights system.

Other elements of the UN human rights system also perform significant functions with respect to implementing children's rights. As previously mentioned, the Committee on the Rights of the Child does not have the competence to examine individual petitions from children alleging violations of their rights. Instead, it encourages children or their representatives to refer to the other UN treaty bodies that do have a mandate to review individual complaints: the Human Rights Committee, the Committee against Torture, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the Committee on Migrant Workers, and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

In practice, however, very few individual complaints involving the human rights of children themselves are received by the UN treaty bodies. For example, of the petitions involving children that have been addressed to the Human Rights Committee, the majority concern deportation decisions that would lead to family separation or custody disputes in which one parent requests the right to have access to his or her child or children. Rarely have children themselves made use of the individual communication procedures.

A further implementation and monitoring mechanism for children's rights is the system of special procedures established by the UN Human Rights Council. These procedures, such as the thematic special rapporteurs on the sale of children, child prostitution, and child pornography; on torture; on the right to education; or on extrajudicial, summary, or arbitrary executions, all have urgent action and appeal mechanisms that they can use in favor of individual children or groups of children who are at risk of suffering rights violations. These mechanisms are increasingly taking the situation of children into account in their work and frequently base their interventions upon the relevant provisions of the CRC and its interpretations by the Committee on the Rights of the Child.

Domestic and regional application of the CRC.

In line with the obligations taken on by parties upon ratification, the Convention is being progressively applied by states within their domestic laws. A large number of parties to the CRC have adopted constitutional and legislative provisions that guarantee children's rights, often with direct effect and even imperative weight. While the formal recognition of the rights contained in the CRC is a significant first step toward ensuring the implementation of the Convention in national law, if these provisions are not enforced, monitored, or translated into meaningful policies on children's rights, then they may actually do more harm than good.

In the forty-seven member states of the Council of Europe, children's rights have benefited from the additional protection of the European Convention on

Human Rights, in particular through the binding case law of the European Court of Human Rights. This increased protection can be seen in many areas as a result of the court's dynamic interpretation of the protection of the right to life (Article 2), the right to private and family life as well as the right to identity (Article 8), and the principle of nondiscrimination (Article 14 and Protocol 12), and of the matching positive duties of contracting states.

ASSESSMENT

The CRC has been ratified by 193 states, a fact that gives it the potential to influence the situation of children in virtually every country in the world. As of 2008, however, there was little information available concerning the direct impact of the Convention on the realization of children's rights at the national level—that is, there were few studies on the impact on individual children.

One of the most salient features of the Convention and its current monitoring system is its emphasis on the obligation to establish a strong legislative and policy basis for the promotion and protection of children's rights domestically. The aspect of international accountability, presumably made concrete in the periodic reporting system, is directed toward encouraging states to develop sustainable mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating their own progress in relation to children's rights.

In general, the facilitation of constructive dialogue between states, the Committee on the Rights of the Child, specialized agencies, and civil society has thus far led to significant changes being made to policy, institutions, and legislation at the national level in a large number of states parties. These are important first steps in the process of realizing the rights of children but will need to be backed up with concrete data and continuous monitoring of national efforts if they are to effectively fulfill the Convention's promise.

[*See also* Civil and Political Rights: International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights: International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights; International Labour Organization; United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF); United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO); United Nations General Assembly; United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights; United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees; United Nations Human Rights Council; *and* Women: Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.]

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