

12th International Conference
Code red, the planet is burning!
**Children's rights to a healthy, safe and sustainable
environment in the midst of a climate crisis?**

5-6 May 2022

Online event

With simultaneous interpretation French & English



Organisers

University of Teacher Education (HEP-VS), St-Maurice & Brig
Centre for Children's Rights Studies (CIDE), University of Geneva (Valais Campus)
University of Applied Sciences, HES-SO Valais//Wallis
International Institute for the Rights of the Child (IDE), Sion
Cantonal Youth Services, Valais
Terre des Hommes, International Federation

In collaboration with

UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC)
Swiss Center of Expertise in Human Rights (SCHR)

Arguments

It is impossible to ignore the alarming scientific conclusions of the Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)¹ in August 2021. As fires were burning out of control on several continents, torrential rains had devastated entire communities, and persistent heat waves broke daily and monthly temperature records, the UN Secretary General simply stated that the report is a “code red for humanity”. The Report’s main takeaway is that even dramatic forceful proactive measures to reduce CO2 emissions will only at best mitigate a worsening situation, anything less opens the way for far more extreme weather events.

The loss of biodiversity, pollution, as well as climate change are significant interrelated contributors to the world experiencing political and economic instability, growing inequality, declining food and water security and increased threats to health and livelihoods.

Described as the “sixth mass extinction” by scientists,² human activity (such as land use change, pollution, overexploitation, and invasive alien species) has increased the loss of biodiversity. These anthropogenic developments are not cost neutral for the enjoyment of human (and children’s) rights, which depend on thriving, biodiverse, healthy habitats and ecosystems. For example, environmental degradation has been described as one of “the most pressing and serious threats to the ability of present and future generations to enjoy the right to life”.³

Children and young people have mobilized around the world, both in the North and the South, to require that governments and international organizations carry out the structural changes to avoid a catastrophic future for upcoming generations. While Greta Thunberg has become a household name and the public face of this movement, many thousands of children and young people activists have carried out school strikes and mass protests. These generational movements are present in Switzerland as well⁴ even though public events were necessarily dimmed by the ongoing coronavirus public health crisis.

Also of note is that children and young people have opened new legal fronts and have engaged in creative and promising strategic litigation, both on domestic (e.g., Canada, Australia, Mexico, The Netherlands, etc.) and supranational levels (e.g., fifteen children have filed a communication with the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child against five States and a group of Portuguese children have submitted a very substantive case to the European Court of Human Rights).

Notwithstanding the fact that humanity is dealing with a “code red”, the organization of a conference on children’s rights in relation to climate crisis and degrading environment addresses key issues at the heart of the children’s rights global agenda, inter alia, the right to life, the right to a healthy and safe environment, children’s right to be heard, to participate in decision-making, and to access justice to further their cause, not to mention the right of children to have their best interests taken into account in climate policy decisions.

¹ <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg1/>

² Vignieri, S. (25 July 2014). Vanishing fauna. *Science*. 345 (6195): 392–412; IPBES (2018): The IPBES assessment report on land degradation and restoration; Montanarella, L., Scholes, R., and Brainich, A. (eds.). Secretariat of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, Bonn, Germany

³ UN Human Rights Committee, General Comment No. 36, U.N. Doc. CCPR/C/GC/36, para. 62 (2019)

⁴ <https://climatestrike.ch/fr/movement>

In addition, the conference is envisioned as an opportunity to bring together child rights specialists from academia and civil society, Swiss children and children from abroad who are part of the movement to tackle the climate crisis, members of the Committee on the Rights of the Child working on General Comment 26 on children's rights and the environment with a special focus on climate change, as well as national and cantonal decision-makers who are engaged politically on these issues.

Objectives

The conference aims to:

- hold a proactive interdisciplinary dialogue between stakeholders (children, advocates, professionals, politicians, academia) that mobilized in relation to child rights and the climate crisis
- highlight initiatives and good practices that support children and young people and concerned parties at local, national and international levels
- deepen the scientific and legal knowledge that will support strategies for evidence-based public policy
- clarify how children should be able to exercise their rights to information, participation, and access to justice to protect against environmental harm.

The conference also serves as an official consultation of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child towards producing General Comment 26 on the children's rights and the environment, with a special focus on climate change.

Target audience

This conference is intended for policy makers and professionals working with and for children and young people (teachers, social workers, psychologists, doctors, mediators, any other professional concerned with children and the environment), as well as representatives of the academic and scientific community.

Presentations will take place in French (F) or English (E) and benefit from simultaneous interpretation in the other language.

Thursday 5 May 2022

- 09:00 Online welcome of the participants
- 09:15 Opening
Amb. Jürg Lauber (Switzerland), Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the United Nations
Mikiko Otani (Japan), Chair of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child
Prof. Yves Flückiger (Switzerland), Rector of the University of Geneva

1st module

The Climate Crisis and Children's Rights: International Perspectives

- 09 :30 *Session co-chaired by Hon. Clarence Nelson (Samoa), UN Committee on the Rights of the Child and Christian Nanchen (Switzerland), Cantonal Youth Services, Valais*

Prof. David R. Boyd (Canada), Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and the Environment
Children's Right to a Healthy Environment: A 21st Century Imperative (E)
- 09 :55 **Prof. Velina Todorova** (Bulgaria) and **Prof. Philip D. Jaffé** (Switzerland), U Committee on the Rights of the Child & University of Geneva
CRC General Comment n°26 on Children's Rights and the environment (E)
- 10:15 Break
- 10:35 **Indah Abayan** (Philippines), Child Rights Coalition Asia
Working with Children and CSOs in Promoting Children's Rights to a Health Environment in Asia (E)
- 11:05 **Ilaria Paolazzi** (Switzerland), Child Rights Connect
Jonas Schubert and **Katie Reid** (Germany), Terre des Hommes Germany
Child participation in the development of CRC General Comments, including General Comment 26 (E)
Bach and **Kartik** members of the General Comment 26 Children's Advisory Team
- 11:35 **Marie-Claire Graf** (Switzerland) and **Heeta Lakhani** (India), YOUNGO
A need for climate action – participation rights of youth (E)
- 11:50 Discussion with the participants
- 12:15 Break

2nd module

The Fight for the Climate: Children's and Young People's Experiences and Actions

- 13:30 *Session co-chaired by Dr Rinchen Chopel (Buthan), UN Committee on the Rights of the Child and Steven Fricaud (Switzerland), International Institute for the Rights of the Child (IDE)*
- Prof. Caroline Hickman** (United Kingdom), Bath University
A new global survey illustrates the depth of anxiety many young people are feeling about climate change (E)
- 14:00 **Laura Santacoloma** (Colombia), Dejusticia
Fighting Deforestation of the Amazon (E)
- 14:20 **Stacy Algrain** (France), Founder of « La Corneille »
Pollution de l'environnement et préservation de la diversité : penser et agir (F)
- 14:40 **Frederique Seidel** (Switzerland), World Council of Churches (WCC)
Cooler earth – higher benefits for children (E)
- 15:00 Discussion with the participants
- 15:15 Break
- 15:30 *Session co-chaired by Steven Fricaud (Switzerland), International Institute for the Rights of the Child (IDE), and Nicole Langenegger Roux (Switzerland), University of Applied Sciences (HES-SO Valais)*
- Prof. Tobias Brosch** (Switzerland), University of Geneva – Department of Psychology
Eco-anxiety among young people : Challenges and opportunities (E)
- 16:00 **Prof. Elisa Morgera** (United Kingdom), University of Strathclyde Law School, Glasgow
Children's human right to a healthy ocean and a safe climate. (E)
- 16:20 **Josefa Cariño Tauli** (Philippines), Global Youth Biodiversity Network
Youth Leadership and Mobilization towards a Future in Harmony with Nature (E)
- 16:40 Discussion with the participants
- 17:00 End of the day

Friday 6 May 2022

3rd module

Education for Sustainable Development and Rights

- 09:00 *Session co-chaired par Bragi Guðbrandsson (Iceland), UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, and Dr Maude Louviot (Switzerland), University of Teacher Education Valais*
- Dre Isabelle Bosset** (Switzerland), Éducation21
Education au développement durable (EDD): aux confluent de la science, de la politique, et de l'éducation (F)
- 09:30 **Éric Nanchen** (Switzerland), Foundation for the Sustainable Development of Mountain Regions (FDDM)
Éducation au développement durable en Valais (F)
- 10:00 **Prof. Bronwyn Hayward** (New Zealand), University of Canterbury
Rethinking Climate education: Strong ecological citizenship and children's rights in a chaotic climate future (E)
- 10:30 Discussion with the audience
- 10:45 Break
- 11:00 *Session chaired by Prof. Nicole Langenegger Roux (Switzerland), University of Applied Sciences (HES-SO Valais)*
- Prof. Tristan Loloum** (Switzerland) et **Prof. Marion Repetti** (Switzerland), University of Applied Sciences Valais (HES-SO Valais)
L'environnementalisation du travail social (F)
- 11:30 **Donna Goodman** (USA), Donna Goodman Productions
Skills and Knowledge that children need to survive and thrive to fully empower their rights in this perilous time on Earth (E)
- 12:00 Discussion with the participants
- 12:30 Break

4th module

Policy Issues and Perspectives

- 13:45 *Session chaired by Sophie Kiladze (Georgia), UN Committee on the rights of the Child, and Steven Fricaud (Switzerland), International Institute for the Rights of the Child (IDE)*
- Sara Alsén** (Sweden), Blueair
Clean air for children (E)
- 14:05 **Prof. Ann Skelton** (South Africa) and **Prof. Benyam Mezmur** (Ethiopia), UN Committee on the rights of the Child
Strategic litigation (E)
- 14:35 **Mireya García de Murcia** (Spain), Council of Europe's Children Rights Division
Building an Europe for and with children : a Strategy fit for a challenging reality (E)
- 15:00 *Roundtable discussion moderated by Özlem Lakatos (Switzerland), CIDE - University of Geneva*
- Lisa Mazzone** (Switzerland), Swiss parliament (Green Party)
Noé Gauchard (France), Youth for climate
François Kuhnis (Switzerland), University of Applied Sciences Valais (*HES-SO Valais*), Collectif Hes-Eco (climate group)
Julie Schnydrig (Switzerland), Pro Natura
Manon Racine (Switzerland), University of Applied Sciences and Arts Western Switzerland (HETSL / HES-SO) Faculty of Social Work & occupational Therapy Department, Association REESpire
- 16:00 Synthesis and closing remarks
Prof. Philip D. Jaffé (Switzerland), UN Committee on the Rights of the Child & University of Geneva
- 16:15 End of the conference

Useful information

Registration fees: 1 day: CHF 80.- (student / Southern Hemisphere: CHF 60.-)
2 days: CHF 140.- (student / Southern Hemisphere: CHF 100.-)

Registration online: www.unige.ch/cide/fr/actualites/la-une/xieme-colloque-intl-en/

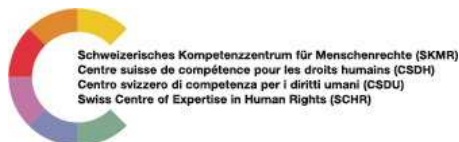
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