



# World Council of Churches

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## General Secretariat

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To the World Council of Churches  
member churches  
World Council of Churches Central  
Committee members

Geneva, September 2019

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

We have a particular reason to celebrate with children and adolescents during this year in our Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace: 2019 marks the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).

By adopting the CRC on 20 November 1989, world leaders made a promise to protect every child and fulfil their rights. Churches played a significant role. Christian ideas about human dignity and equality have strongly shaped the concept of human rights and the instruments of the United Nations. The Convention went on to become the most widely ratified human-rights treaty in history, and it has helped transform children's lives.

But the commitments made in 1989 will only be fulfilled when every government and every citizen upholds children's rights and every child can claim their rights. I therefore encourage all of you to mark 20 November this year with special celebrations for children and advocacy initiatives.

This anniversary takes place during a moment in history when millions of children around the world are marching peacefully in the streets, demanding that adults change our economic and social systems to preserve God's creation and their future. Children and youth of today have become prophetic voices for the issue that affects them most deeply: the survival of the planet and its people.

The WCC is grateful for the collaboration with so many of you in addressing this priority: Activities include changing church operations and consumer behaviour that are not compatible with the CRC, divesting from fossil fuels in our banks and pension funds, measuring congregations' ecological footprint, and promoting eco-certifications. These measures are urgent. Only concrete changes from all of us can address the eco-anxiety that is spreading among children and adolescents as a serious form of psychological violence.

When you plan special events or celebrations to mark the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the CRC, tools made available by the WCC and partners, which may be downloaded from links on the next page, can be of support.

Children need a reconciled world, and they have the right to hope. Let children know about the Churches' Commitments to Children, on 20 November and every day. I look forward to hearing about your actions and to celebrating real improvements for all children's lives through churches' efforts.

Thank you for your commitment and hard work for children. May your efforts be blessed.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Olav Fykse Tveit". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit  
General Secretary

## Suggested Resources for Churches

More than 100 tools and strategies to strengthen the work for children are available for you on [www.oikoumene.org/resources-children](http://www.oikoumene.org/resources-children). Below you will find a selection of resources, which could be of particular interest to you for the CRC@30 initiatives.

- The church and child rights: "Théopopettes," promoting discussions with children. **Special episode** - "WCC – We Care About Children". The English version of this new educational tool for churches and partners has just been [launched](#). Download all the episodes [here](#). A recording of the French version (*live event at WCC, November 2018*) can be viewed [here](#)
- Learn more about the worldwide efforts from the [Churches' Commitments to Children Online Platform](#)
- All CRC30 branding assets can be found on [WeShare](#).
- UNICEF has a [video](#) that features children who have made a real difference in their communities and in the world. The video carries the message: 'Children are standing up for their rights, what will you do?' It is a call for adults to take concrete actions to realize child rights, once and for all. We will advocate for action on child rights throughout 2019 at the global, regional, and national levels, culminating on 20th November, World Children's Day.

## Collaboration for Children in the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace

Your actions undertaken around the [Churches' Commitments to Children](#) are encouraging, and your churches bring hope to children: A network of over 400 member-church representatives and partners are now collaborating and exchanging through our [Online Platform](#) around the action plan proposed in the "Churches' Commitments to Children," using their influence to advance the three main objectives of our programme: to promote child protection, child/adolescent participation, and climate justice initiatives for and with children. The results observed across member churches so far are excellent, and even more can be achieved with our partners on the occasion of the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the CRC.

Through our birth we are not only born into our small family; we are born into the one humanity. In baptism we are born again into the family of the church. This larger family is called to be a sign of reconciled and united humanity. In the light of the image of being a family, one human family, the collaboration with partners around the Churches' Commitments to Children is particularly promising and important. The [Global Partnership to End Violence against Children](#) and the [INSPIRE](#) strategy provide excellent opportunities for this collaboration.

Ending all forms of violence against children is the goal of the [Global Partnership to End Violence against Children](#), where I serve as a Board member and a representative of a faith-based organizations. Together with other representatives from international organizations and corporations, we partner with UNICEF. I encourage member churches to become familiar with the INSPIRE [strategy](#) and to consider this strategy for collaboration with our partners in the implementation of Commitment 1 of the Churches' Commitments to Children (churches promoting child protection).