

**JUSTICE FOR GIRLS INTERNATIONAL AND JUST PLANET**

**14 JULY 2015**

**The Scope and Nature of Children's Right to life in relation to Climate Change**

Joint Submission of Justice for Girls International & Just Planet  
for consideration by the Human Rights Committee  
during the half-day general discussion in preparation for  
General Comment No. 36 - Article 6: Right to life  
of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,  
at its 114th Session, Palais des Nations, Room XIX – 14 July 2015

**Oral submission by:**

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1. My name is Glen Woodroffe.
2. I'm here on behalf of Justice for Girls International and Just Planet.
3. I would like to thank the Committee for the opportunity to make this joint submission today.
4. I am here to convince you of three things: (1) that climate change is one of the greatest threats to the right to life; (2) that children are disproportionately impacted by this threat; and (3) that children need to be protected from this threat. Climate change is a grave and certain threat to the survival of children today and future generations. ***I am urging you to pay attention to our submission for these reasons.***
5. The relevance of Article 6 is evidenced in the fact that the World Health Organisation estimates that at least 150,000 people a year die from climate change. It is projected that this number will significantly increase. Death from climate change is caused by extreme-weather, water-borne diseases, drought, starvation, vector-borne infections (including malaria), and even war.
6. According to UNICEF over 99 per cent of deaths already attributed to climate-related changes occur in developing countries. Children make up over 80 per cent of those deaths. Climate change is therefore an urgent children's rights matter because children are disproportionately harmed by its impacts. ***This Committee must respond to what is a present and unfolding catastrophe.***
7. With an emphasis on the need to expansively and holistically interpret Article 6, we urge this Committee to provide an interpretive framework for children's right to life that is consistent with the scope and meaning of children's right to life, survival and development elucidated by the Committee on the Rights of the Child.

8. I remind this Committee that there is consensus amongst world scientists, articulated by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, that climate change is an imminent threat to humanity. This is caused by the emission of green house gases released by the burning of fossil fuels. Without intervention climate change could reach a tipping point that is irreversible.

9. The IPCC has solidified the foreseeability of irreparable harms caused specifically by States' failures to reduce green house gas emissions. It is very clear that States have an obligation under Article 6 to prevent runaway climate change.

10. This Committee has previously noted in General comment 17 that the Article 24 duties to protect children's rights are often underestimated by States.

**11. General comment 36 must therefore expressly guide States Parties on the scope and nature of their duty to protect children's right to life. In doing so, it is clear that this General comment must address the threat of global climate change.**

**12. I urge the Committee to thoroughly consider our written submission. Thank you for your time.**