



Canadian Coalition
for the Rights of Children

Coalition canadienne
pour les droits des enfants



25 Years of Implementation: How are we doing?

2016 is the 25th anniversary of Canada's ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. After ratification comes implementation to achieve progressive realization of all rights for all children. Implementation of the Convention remains a challenge in Canada.

One measure of progress is the steps taken to respond to recommendations Canada received in the last review in 2012. Canada's next report is due on July 11, 2018. Following is a sample to illustrate progress and the wide range of areas for attention before the next review.

Significant Progress

The following actions are examples of positive response to the Concluding Observations (C.O.):

Canada Child Benefit: C.O. 68 (b): "*assess the impact of tax benefits and social transfers and ensure that they give priority to children in the most vulnerable and disadvantaged situations.*" Better targeting and increased rates improve resources for children in lower-income households.

Ratification of ILO Convention 138 on minimum age of employment: C.O. 80: "*Consider ratifying the ILO Convention No. 138 on the minimum age for admission to employment.*" This is a first step toward improving labour laws and working conditions for young people.

Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Children: C.O. 47.b: "*Ensure that the factors contributing to the high levels of violence among Aboriginal women and girls are well understood and addressed in national and province/territory plans;*" C.O. 49(b): "*. . . vigorously ensure that all cases of missing girls are investigated and prosecuted to the full extent of the law.*" The mandate of the inquiry includes study of prevention by addressing causal factors, improved prosecution of offenders, and more support for victims throughout the process.

Protection from Under-age and Forced Marriage: C.O. 51: "*take all necessary measures . . . to protect all children from underage forced marriages and to enforce the legal prohibition against polygamy.*" Passage of Bill S-7 made forced marriage illegal in Canada. Charges have been laid against the leader of a polygamist group in BC, based on evidence of abuse of young girls.

Gender Analysis: C.O. 33 (c): "*Ensure the incorporation of a gender perspective in the development and implementation of any programme or stimulus package, especially programs related to combatting violence, poverty, and redressing other vulnerabilities.*" Gender impact assessments have been mandated for all cabinet proposals.

Good Intentions

Following are examples of issues addressed in the Concluding Observations that are being pursued, with some expected action before the next report:

- National early childhood development and care strategy
- National plan to address violence against women and children
- Disparity in access to services, especially for indigenous children
- Poverty Reduction Strategy with multiple indicators and targets for children
- Repeal of Section 43 of the Criminal Code which allows corporal punishment

No Action Yet

The following are examples of issues that need serious attention before the next review:

Systemic changes:

- * Use Convention as comprehensive framework for children's policies
- * Improve data on children, analysis, and public access to data
- * Children's Budget – transparency in spending for children
- * Use Child Rights Impact Assessments in policy development
- * Consistent use of the Best Interests of the Child
- * Consider voice of the child in all decision-making that affects them
- * Public awareness, education, and training in children's rights
- * Establishment of a national children's advocate to work with provincial advocates

Specific issues:

- * End use of detention for asylum-seeking children
- * Equal access to education and health care for children in alternative care
- * Change citizenship rules for children born abroad to Canadian parents
- * Regulate the use of psychotropic drugs and stimulants on children
- * Abolish the use of user fees in compulsory education
- * Ensure biological information related to adopted children is preserved
- * Rehabilitation program for former child soldier Omar Khadr

Next Steps

The CCRC has proposed an early, open, broad process in Canada prior to the UN review in 2018, to review progress made and develop next steps to make substantive progress in implementation of the Convention in Canada. After 25 years we can do better.

More Information

The full Concluding Observations report is available on the CCRC website: rights of children.ca. The 2012 comprehensive review done by the CCRC, *Right in Principle*, *Right in Practice*, will be updated for the next review. If you are interested or have relevant information, please contact Kathy Vandergrift, info@rightsofchildren.ca.



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