



Dialogues with children on the margins of the UN General Assembly 2023

Background information

For the office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence Against Children (OSRSG-VAC), children's meaningful participation is a key component of her mandate and a cross-cutting priority¹. Throughout its different actions the OSRSG-VAC promotes a culture of meaningful and representative child participation, where children, as key stakeholders in all matters concerning their safety and wellbeing, are also actors and agents of change. A key aspect of a culture of meaningful participation is bridging the gap between children who are taking actions and decision makers, by facilitating access to information that can be used by children to input their own actions and initiatives, and by creating spaces for children to interact with decision makers and UN officials. To help meet this goal, the OSRSG-VAC has incorporated periodic reporting to children as part of its work, together with creating [child friendly versions](#) of all of the mandate's main reports. In the lead up to her presentations of her latest annual reports to the Human Rights Council and the General Assembly, the Special Representative has convened interactive dialogues with children from all regions. Outcomes from these exchanges have been conveyed to Member States during her interactive dialogues with both bodies. The following document outlines the mandate's plans for briefing children on the margins of the UNGA 2023.

Purpose: To inform children on the OSRSG's report to the UNGA 2023, and to collect their views to inform the OSRSG's presentation to the UNGA 2023

Every report of the OSRSG-VAC to the UNGA provides an overview of the work of the mandate during the last year and focuses on one specific aspect of violence against children. The focus of her 2023 report to the GA is the relationship between travel and tourism and violence against children.

In cooperation with civil society partners, the OSRSG will hold dialogues with children. During these exchanges, she will present to children a child-friendly version of her report to the UNGA2023, will answer children's questions, and she will ask children about their view, actions, recommendations, and main messages to decision makers around the issue of travel and tourism and violence against children. Outcomes from these meetings will inform her presentation to the UNGA and will help inform the general work of the mandate.

¹ A/RES/64/146, which calls upon all States to develop policies and effective mechanisms at the local and national levels to enable children to be heard and to participate safely and meaningfully in the monitoring and reporting processes related to the implementation of the Convention.



Methodology

To maximize efforts to reach children in different regions and time zones, the SRSR will hold 3 dialogues, all sharing the same purposes and methodology.

One dialogue will convene children from the Americas, another one will convene children from Europe, the Middle East, and Africa, and another, children from Asia and the Pacific.

These dialogues between children and the SRSR-VAC will combine questions from children to the SRSR, and then from the SRSR to children. Questions from children will only be submitted in advance (through both video and written formats), and will be selected by the OSRSR-VAC to be presented during the dialogues (instructions will be shared).

Each dialogue will be structured in four segments:

- 1) **Introduction and presentation of the child friendly version of the SRSR's report to the General Assembly 2023** by the SRSR and a member of her team.
- 2) **Questions from children to the SRSR:** This segment will be moderated by two children, who will introduce video (or written) questions, and will invite the SRSR to respond. *There will be no live questions or interventions from other children during this segment.*
- 3) **Questions from the SRSR to children:** This segment will be moderated by an adult facilitator, and will be the interactive part of the dialogue, where the SRSR will ask children their views, messages, and recommendations. Children will be able to take the floor (including the use of video and mic) to answer the questions.
- 4) **Closing by the SRSR**

Partners helping co-organize the conversations are encouraged (but not required) to conduct work with children ahead of the dialogues to help prepare them around the issue. Suggestions for preparatory work will be provided by the OSRSR-VAC team.

During the meetings, only children will be invited to intervene. Adults accompanying children will be allowed to listen into the dialogues.

Opportunities for children

Participants should be children aged 13 to 17 (younger children are welcome, but are encouraged to be accompanied by a trusted adult). An effort will be made to ensure diversity of participating children in their age, gender, cultural and socio-economic background, with particular attention to children in vulnerable situations such as those in street situations, with disabilities, children on the move, children in poverty, and others.



Children will be invited to participate through the following modalities:

- *Moderation*: two children per dialogue will be asked to help facilitate part of the conversation. Child facilitators will be provided with a set of questions – previously sent by children – for the SRSG, and will be invited to react after the SRSG’s response. After the dialogues, child facilitators will also be invited to share a brief video message outlining their main takeaways from the meeting. All moderating children - and their guardians - will be asked to sign a consent form.
- *Submitting questions*: Children will be invited to submit video or written questions ahead of the dialogues (deadline for submission is TBC). Child-friendly instructions to submit video questions will be made available, outlining the following information:
 - Video questions should be related to the connection between VAC and travel and tourism.
 - Video must not exceed 1 minute.
 - If possible, videos should include subtitles in English, regardless of the spoken language. If this is not possible, a written translation can be shared via e-mail.
 - Only the child’s first name, age and country should be displayed.
 - Selected videos will be combined by the OSRSG-VAC team to transmit sets of questions to the SRSG. Depending on the number of videos received, not all videos might be played.
 - All children submitting video questions - and their guardians - will be asked to sign a consent form.
 - Written questions will be collected through the event’s registration form.
- *Participating in the event*: Children are invited to participate in the event, and answer the questions from the SRSG.

Partner Organizations

Partner organizations will be asked to:

- Invite children to participate in the dialogues.
- Facilitate children the relevant information, including the child friendly version of the SRSG’s report, the instructions to submit video messages, and consent forms if applied.
- Carry out registration of children and provide the information to the OSRSG-VAC in the form of an excel sheet (fields to be provided by OSRSG-VAC).
- Take forward preparatory work with children, if needed.
- Facilitate the OSRSG-VAC team with information, including list of participants, and video questions and consent forms.
- Help identify two child moderators per dialogue.



Technology & Registration

The dialogues will be conducted via Zoom. If a group of children will be participating together in one room, it is encouraged to test your equipment, such as a larger screen, a microphone, and a speaker to make sure the environment is conducive. Partner organizations will carry out registration of children and provide information to the OSRSG. Children not affiliated to an organization will be able to register through the OSRSG website.

Dialogues will take place in English, with simultaneous translation into each region's most spoken languages.

Dates of the Dialogues

All dialogues shall happen on the lead up to the UNGA 2023. Date and time will be agreed with partner organizations. To adapt to children's availability, weekends and hours outside of regular work will be considered.

Safeguarding & Meeting rules

All partners are required to adhere to the mandate's safeguarding policy available [here](#). A child friendly document of the safeguarding policy is accessible [here](#) in multiple languages.

Safeguarding prevention measures will be presented at the opening of each dialogue, and safeguarding focal points will be appointed and introduced, together with a code of conduct.

All communication between the mandate and children will be taken forward through partner organizations unless a child registers individually.

How to be a partner organization

If your organization wishes to be a partner, please complete the [following 'organizational interest form'](#).

For any further queries, please reach out to Lucha Sotomayor luisasotomayorvarela@un.org