

Informal consultation on how to better achieve children's identity rights - Birth Registration, Nationality and Family Relations

Background

When a child enters the world, one of the first markers of their existence is the name they are given. This is often followed by the formal registration of their birth, recording key details such as their name, when and where they were born, and to whom they were born. These elements are fundamental to establishing nationality and confirming family relations. Together, they constitute the earliest formal recognition of a child before the law and form the core elements of a child's identity. While there is no single, formal legal definition of identity, these elements are widely recognized as central components of the concept. Taken together, they provide an essential foundation for legal identity, protection, and access to rights.

International human rights law provides important protections for children's identity. Articles 7 and 8 of the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child recognize the child's right to a name, nationality, and family relations. Other international Conventions likewise refer to these rights including the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness 1979; Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women; 1990 Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families and 2006 Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance.

While children's identity rights are protected under international law, in practice they are often treated in silos, split across legal frameworks, institutional mandates, and policy discussions. The IDRWG promotes a holistic approach, recognising that birth registration, nationality, and family relations form an interconnected set of rights that must be safeguarded together. When one element is weakened, the others can quickly unravel: lack of birth registration can obstruct proof of family ties or access to nationality; discriminatory nationality laws can drive exclusion and statelessness; and disruptions to family relations—through migration, displacement, enforced disappearance, conflict, adoption, or separation—can have lasting consequences for a child's identity and other rights. Ensuring access to birth registration is therefore not only an identity measure, but also a key pathway to prevent childhood statelessness. Nationality, which is a core element of a child's identity, is also widely recognized as an enabling right for the enjoyment of other rights in practice, and denial of nationality in childhood can lock children and families into long-term exclusion.

As 2030 is less than four years away, there is a pressing need to achieve legal identity for all (SDG 16.9) noting that there are at least 200 000 million children under five that do not have a birth certificate. Moreover, safeguarding identity rights are particularly relevant at this time due to emerging implementation risks and opportunities created by digitalization and CRVS-ID linkages. This includes considerations for how to ensure that birth registration processes do not inadvertently create barriers to inclusion and to nationality acquisition or lead to "undetermined" status without due process and pathways to resolution.

Proposed Stakeholder informal consultation

At a time where there are less resources and the UN system is undergoing reforms; it is essential to identify ways to leverage common resources and build synergies. To promote a more holistic understanding of the interconnections involved in protecting children's identity rights, the IDRWG is proposing an informal consultation bringing together key stakeholders to discuss the interdependence of the different elements of identity and consider the need for progressive guidance in integrated way.

This meeting is envisaged as an informal space for States, UN treaty body experts, UN agencies, CSOs and those with lived experience can share strategies, challenges, and emerging good practices across three interconnected dimensions of children's identity rights.

Date: 18 June 2026 (9h – 10h30 with light breakfast)

Modality: Informal consultation (in person/online/closed)

Meeting link : <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89851666495?pwd=6SDoGdf1BWcGfZTgcCA6tosbHZ7IcX.1>

ID de réunion: 898 5166 6495 and **Code secret:** 149355

CAGI – La Pastorale

Route de Ferney 106 ; 1202 Genève (entrance next to Canadian Permanent Mission)

Meeting objectives:

- Discuss how to pool resources to promote the widest dissemination and implementation of international norms on child's right to identity in existing recommendations and resolutions
- Explore opportunities for increased integration of children's identity rights in ongoing human rights procedures and mechanisms, including resolutions, general days of discussion, general comments etc
- Consider the establishment of an informal group of Child Rights Champions made of States, treaty body representatives, UN agencies and CSOs – a potential first topic could be on the child's right to identity
- Consider a webinar series/side events promoting promising practices

Organisers: The Identity Rights Working Group (IDRWG) and the Thematic Working Group to End Childhood Statelessness as part of the Global Alliance to End Statelessness (TWG) are co-organising this informal consultation. The IDRWG was established in 2021, is the world's first group dedicated to safeguarding children's identity rights. It is an informal consortium of like-minded organisations committed to peer learning, knowledge exchange, and joint action to advance children's identity rights, in particular the rights to birth registration, a name, nationality, and family relations. The TWG is composed of governments, inter-governmental bodies, UN agencies, CSOs and other professionals interested in ending childhood statelessness. The TWG is currently co-chaired by UNICEF and CHIP.

Attendees (tbc):

1. Corinne Elisabeth Vermeulen, CEDAW Committee Vice-Chair (confirmed remotely)
2. Olivier de Frouville, CED Committee Vice-Chair (confirmed remotely)
3. Philip Jaffé, CRC Committee Vice-Chair (confirmed)
4. CMW Committee member (confirmed for 8 June and potentially remotely)
5. Karla Cahue Leal, Permanent Mission of Chile (confirmed)
6. Permanent Mission of Mexico (confirmed if there are no HRC negotiations)
7. Miriam Ragala, Permanent Mission of Morocco (confirmed)
8. Michael Meier, Permanent Mission of Switzerland (confirmed)
9. Other Permanent Mission (to be confirmed)
10. Bhaskar Mishra, UNICEF (confirmed remotely)
11. Marin Roman, Global Alliance to End Statelessness and UNHCR (confirmed)
12. Helen Griffiths, Child and Youth Rights Unit, OHCHR (confirmed)
13. Ghada Alrayan, Apatride Network (confirmed)
14. Iris Amaldi, ATD Fourth World (confirmed)
15. Laurence Bordier, Child Identity Protection (confirmed)
16. Patricia Coutinho, Council of Europe (confirmed)
17. Mia Dambach, Child Identity Protection (confirmed)
18. Carlotta Lopresti, International Commission on Civil Status (confirmed)
19. Deneisha Moss, Institute on Statelessness and Inclusion (confirmed)
20. Pascal Rudin, IFSW (confirmed)
21. Danae van der Straten Ponthoz and Zoe Bertrand, Global Survivors Fund (confirmed)