United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

The UNCRC is a human rights treaty made up of 54 articles that set forth the civil, political, economic, social, health and cultural rights of children considering their need for protection due to their status and vulnerability. It was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 20 November 1989 and came into force on 2 September 1990.

Optional Protocols

An optional protocol amends or adds to an existing human rights treaty. The UNCRC has three Optional Protocols used as additional measures to intensify the protection of children from specific child rights violations.

Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict (CRC-OP-AC) – This ensures that no children under the age of 15 will take part in armed conflict.

Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography (CRC-OP-SC) – This provides measures of implementation to end any form of abuse of children such as sexual exploitation, worst forms of child labor, organ donation, illegal adoption and child abuse images.

Optional Protocol on a Communications Procedure – This sets up the reporting mechanism to the United Nations for child abuse cases when domestic measures have been exhausted.

UN Committee on the Rights of the Child

The UNCRC Committee is composed of eighteen independent experts who are elected by States parties. The CRC Committee members serve in their personal capacity for a term of four years and can be re-elected. The UN requires members of the CRC Committee to be of “high moral standing and recognized competence” on children’s rights. This independent body monitors a State Parties’ implementation of the UNCRC and its Optional Protocols. The CRC Committee provides a comprehensive assessment of a State party’s progress and recommendations on how to improve the UNCRC implementation.

Philippines: Timeline of Commitments


August 21, 1990 – Ratification of the UNCRC

May 28, 2002 – Ratification of the CRC-OP-SC

August 26, 2003 – Ratification of the CRC-OP-AC

The Philippines has yet to ratify the Optional Protocol on a Communications Procedure.