

WHAT^{is}?



AN OMNIBUS RESOLUTION

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The “What is...” leaflets have been developed to support the learning and education of children and adolescents. We gratefully acknowledge the existing resources that supported the development of this material. Some of the content found in the “What is...” leaflets was adapted or taken directly from a variety of sources, including: www.ohchr.org; www.un.org; <http://treaties.un.org>; www.cyberschoolbus.un.org; Child Rights Information Network, Guide to Mechanisms for Children’s Rights. England; Child Rights Information Network, 2008. http://www.crin.org/law/mechanisms_index.asp

WHAT is **?**

An Omnibus Resolution

Dear Reader,

Every year, the United Nations (UN) makes important decisions that affect and impact the lives of children and young people around the world. In 2009, there was a special focus on a child's right: 'to express his or her views freely in all matters affecting him or her' – or, in other words, children's participation.

We saw this as an opportunity to support children's understanding of not only the UN but also other important processes where children's rights are discussed at international, regional and local levels. We hope that this will encourage and support children and young people to get involved in these processes.

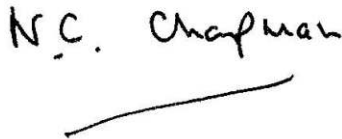
The 'WHAT IS?' leaflets are only one way for you to learn and build a greater understanding and awareness about some of the things that happen at the global/international level. You have a very important role to play in the decisions and processes that affect your life.

This information may be most useful to adults that work with children, teachers, older children, adolescents, youth and young people that are considering ways to get involved in and to influence international or UN related processes.

As needed or requested – we hope to add more leaflets and build on the information that is available to you. As a starting point, we have developed the following leaflets:

- Children's Participation
- The United Nations
- The UN General Assembly
- A Convention and a Treaty
- The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Special Representative
- The Omnibus Resolution
- The Security Council
- The Complaints Procedure for the CRC

Your voice, your experiences and your opinions matter and count! Our hope is that the information found in the 'WHAT IS?' series will support you to learn, create positive change, speak out, take action and have your voice heard.

Handwritten signature of Nigel Chapman in black ink, consisting of the initials 'N.C.' followed by the name 'Chapman' and a long horizontal stroke underneath.

Nigel Chapman
CEO, Plan International

Handwritten signature of Mark Vogt in black ink, appearing as a stylized, cursive 'M. Vogt'.

Mark Vogt
Director of War Child Holland

Handwritten signature of Elisabeth Dahlin in black ink, written in a cursive script.

Elisabeth Dahlin, Secretary General
Save the Children Sweden

What is an Omnibus Resolution?

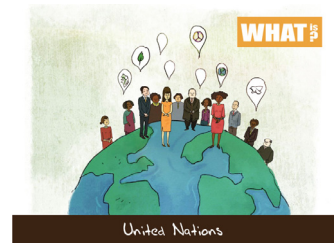
Before you understand exactly what an Omnibus Resolution is, it will be useful to understand:

What is a “Resolution”?

A United Nations Resolution is like a ‘decision’ or ‘recommendation’ that is made by the countries that are part of the United Nations. For all different issues, matters and subjects, Resolutions are written and often put to a vote. If a country votes ‘yes’ for a resolution, they are saying that they agree with it.

Resolutions are not considered to be ‘laws’ but they are seen as being representative of common opinion. Resolutions can be made by different bodies of the UN and they can deal with many different topics, including children’s rights, women’s rights, emergency assistance, budgets, partnerships and many, many more...

Please see the leaflet, What is the United Nations?, for more information about the different UN bodies.



A Resolution is often made up of three parts:

Part 1: an introduction that identifies existing Resolutions, meetings and conferences that have shaped the new Resolution and explain why the Resolution is needed.

Part 2: statements about the main topic of the Resolution and what it is about

Part 3: statements about what actions need to be taken or what decisions or recommendations are being made – including follow up.

Resolutions have numbers and letters assigned to them for identification purposes.

For example:

Resolution - A/RES/44/25

This Resolution (**RES**) was adopted during the **44th** session of the General Assembly (**A**) and is the **25th** Resolution from that session – see how the numbers and letters match up?

A/RES/44/25

This Resolution was adopted by the General Assembly on 20 November 1989. It is on this date and with this Resolution that the General Assembly adopted the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).

The General Assembly is the main body of the UN. The General Assembly is divided into six committees that meet to address a variety of topics and operates on the principle of one country one vote. All 192 member countries/states sit on the General Assembly.



The first part of the Resolution (2 paragraphs) provides a brief history of the CRC and how it was developed over a number of years. For example, it mentions Resolutions that were passed in 1978 and 1988 relating to the CRC.

The second part of the Resolution (5 paragraphs) explains the importance of protecting children and briefly outlines many of the problems that exist, such as: armed conflict, exploitation, hunger, abuse and more. This section also states that the CRC will help to protect children's rights and ensure the well-being of children.

The third part of the Resolution (7 paragraphs), calls for a number of actions to be taken. For example: that all governments sign and ratify the CRC; that information about the CRC should be shared widely; and a couple of actions related to follow-up and next steps.

Now... what about Omnibus Resolutions?

Omnibus Resolutions are much more detailed and longer than regular Resolutions. They can cover many different issues in one document and they provide more specific information about an issue. They usually support existing processes and Resolutions but often call on states/governments to take additional actions.

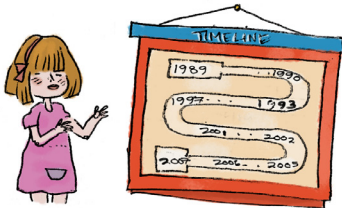
Just like Resolutions, Omnibus Resolutions can be used by different bodies of the UN and for a variety of issues/topics.

There is one Omnibus Resolution that is particularly important for children and children's rights.

It is:

The General Assembly Resolution on the Rights of the Child

Let's go back a few years...



Here is part of the actual text from the 1989 CRC Resolution (A/RES/44/25):

“Requests the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its forty-fifth session a report on the status of the Convention on the Rights of the Child”

Basically, the General Assembly was asking for a report, in one year, which would provide information about the implementation of the CRC.

A report is presented to the General Assembly every year and a Resolution on the CRC is adopted.

From 1990 – 1994, the Resolutions were quite brief and did not go into any great detail about a specific issue.

Then, in 1995, the Resolution changed. It went from 3 pages to 7 pages and included sections and details about the following issues:

1. Children affected by armed conflict (6 paragraphs)
2. The sale of children, sexual exploitation and abuse (5 paragraphs)
3. Child labour (6 paragraphs)
4. Children living and working on the street (5 paragraphs)

In 1996 the Resolution was 13 pages long and included a section about refugees and internally displaced children, as well as the 4 sections above.

In 1997 a section about children with disabilities was added.

In 2000, the sections changed and issues were regrouped. All of the above issues were addressed but a few new ones were looked at in some detail, including: health; education; freedom from violence; migrant children; identity; family relations; and birth registration.

In 2003 sections related to poverty, the girl child, children in conflict with the law and rehabilitation were added.

In 2005 a detailed section about HIV/AIDS was included in the Resolution.

In 2006 the focus was on Poverty; in 2007 it was on ending violence against children; and in 2008 the focus was on child labour.

The last few paragraphs of the Resolution look at next steps and planning for next year's Resolution. It is in this section that they may call for a special thematic focus for the coming year.



For example:

In the last paragraph of the 2008 Resolution A/RES/63/241, there is the decision to have next year's Resolution focus on...

'The right of the child to express his or her views freely in all matters affecting him or her'

The General Assembly Resolution on the Rights of the Child is one of the opportunities that the UN has to highlight children's issues. Each year, more specific and detailed recommendations are developed with the goal to see more done to protect children and their rights.

What is the process for creating the GA Resolution on the Rights of the Child?

Within the General Assembly there are different Committees that focus on different issues. There is one Committee, known as the Third Committee that focuses on issues related to human rights, protection of children and other social issues. It is the Third Committee of the General Assembly that is ultimately responsible for preparing the Resolution on the Rights of the Child.



Please see the leaflet, What is the UN General Assembly?, for more information about the Third Committee.

The Third Committee is made up of people representing the 192 countries of the United Nations.

There are five country groupings within the UN, they are:

1. Western Europe and other states
2. Eastern Europe
3. Latin America and the Caribbean (also known as GRULAC)
4. African States
5. Asian States

The European Union or 'EU' for short (composed of Western and Eastern Europe States) and GRULAC (composed of Latin America and the Caribbean) are in charge of drafting the omnibus.

Each year they take turns. One year GRULAC will start and when the countries of Latin American and the Caribbean have agreed, the draft Resolution goes to the EU to be discussed and negotiated. The next year, the EU will start the process.

The Resolution is developed from April – October through meetings, discussions and with the involvement of different countries but also with the involvement of non-governmental organizations (NGOs). NGOs can play a very important role in influencing the content of the Resolution. Many NGOs work together throughout the year to meet with governments and to make important suggestions that will make the Resolution stronger.

Each year the Third Committee meets from October – November to review and adopt Resolutions that deal with many different issues – the Resolution on the Rights of the Child is only one of over 50. Once a Resolution is adopted by the Third Committee, it will go to the General Assembly for final adoption.

The Resolution on the Rights of the Child is usually adopted by the Third Committee at the end of November and reconfirmed a month later by the General Assembly.



A full list of all GA Resolutions can be found at:

<http://www.un.org/documents/resga.htm>

Select Resolutions on the Rights of the Child:

1989: A/RES/44/25

1994: A/RES/49/211

1995: A/RES/50/153

1996: A/RES/51/77

1997: A/RES/52/107

1999: A/RES/54/149

2000: A/RES/55/79

2005: A/RES/60/231

2006: A/RES/61/146

2007: A/RES/62/141

2008: A/RES/63/241

WHAT NOW?

What did I learn from this leaflet?

What questions do I have and where might I find the answers?

How can I use this information and are there any actions I want to take after reading this leaflet?

Who do I know that might be interested in learning more about Omnibus Resolutions and what can I do to help them?



