



# Senegal

## The rights of the child

### The rights of the child fact sheet

#### United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is a comprehensive international human rights treaty which sets out the fundamental civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights and freedoms of those under 18 and covers in detail what every child, without discrimination, needs to have a safe, happy and fulfilled childhood. Governments are required to report periodically to a committee of independent experts on their progress on achieving all these rights.

The convention came into force in 1990 and is presently the most complete and widely ratified such agreement, with the United States and Somalia being the only members of the UN not to have done so. Both countries have signalled their intention to ratify, but Somalia does not have a recognised government and the US is still undertaking its extensive examination of the treaty. It typically considers only one human rights treaty at a time (the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women is cited as the top priority) and it must evaluate the degree of compliance with existing laws.

A summary of the rights of the child:

1. Everyone under 18 years of age has all the rights in this convention.
2. The Convention applies to everyone whatever their race, religion, abilities, whatever they think or say, whatever type of family they come from.
3. All organisations concerned with children should work towards what is best for each child.
4. Governments should make these rights available to children.
5. Governments should respect the rights and responsibilities of families to direct and guide their children so that, as they grow, they learn to use their rights properly.
6. All children have the right to life. Governments should ensure that children survive and develop properly.
7. All children have the right to a legally registered name, the right to nationality and the right to know and, as far as possible, to be cared for by their parents.
8. Governments should respect children's rights to a name, a nationality and family ties.
9. Children should not be separated from their parents unless it is for their own good, for example if a parent is mistreating or neglecting a child. Children whose parents have separated have the right to stay in contact with both parents, unless this might hurt the child.
10. Families who live in different countries should be allowed to move between those countries so that parents and children can stay in contact or get back together as a family.
11. Governments should take steps to stop children being taken out of their own country illegally.
12. Children have the right to say what they think should happen, when adults are making decisions that affect them, and to have their opinions taken into account.
13. Children have the right to get and to share information as long as the information is not damaging to them or others.
14. Children have the right to think and believe what they want and to practice their religion, as long as they are not stopping other people from enjoying their rights. Parents should guide their children on this matter.
15. Children have the right to meet together and to join groups and organisations, as long as this does not stop other people from enjoying their rights.
16. Children have the right to privacy. The law should protect them from attacks against their way of life, their good name, their families and their homes.
17. Children have the right to reliable information from the mass media. TV, radio and newspapers should provide information that children can understand and should not promote materials that could harm children.
18. Both parents share responsibility for bringing up their children and should always consider what is best for the child. Governments should help parents by providing services to support them, especially if both parents work.
19. Governments should ensure that children are properly cared for and protect them from violence, abuse and neglect by their parents or anyone else who looks after them.
20. Children who cannot be looked after by their own family must be looked after properly, by people who respect their religion, culture and language.
21. When children are adopted the first concern is what is best for them. The same rules apply whether the children are adopted in the country where they were born or taken to live in another country.
22. Children who come into a country as refugees should have the same rights as children born in that country.
23. Children who have any kind of disability should have special care and support so that they can lead full and independent lives.
24. Children have the right to good quality health care and to clean water, nutritious food and a clean environment so that they will stay healthy. Rich countries should help poorer countries achieve this.
25. Children who are looked after by the local authority rather than their parents should have their situation reviewed regularly.
26. The government should provide extra money for the children of families in need.
27. Children have the right to a standard of living that is good enough to meet their physical and mental needs. The Government should help families who cannot afford to provide this.
28. Children have a right to an education. Discipline in schools should respect children's human dignity. Primary education should be free. Wealthy countries should help poorer countries achieve this.
29. Education should develop each child's personality and talents to the full. It should encourage children to respect their parents and their own and other cultures.
30. Children have a right to learn and use the language and customs of their families, whether these are shared by the majority of people in the country or not.
31. All children have the right to relax and play and to join a wide range of activities.
32. The Government should protect children from work that is dangerous or might harm their health or education.
33. The Government should provide ways of protecting children from dangerous drugs.
34. The Government should protect children from sexual abuse.
35. The Government should make sure that children are not abducted or sold.
36. Children should be protected from any activities that could harm their development.
37. Children who break the law should not be treated cruelly. They should not be put in prison with adults and should be able to keep in contact with their families.
38. Governments should not allow children under 15 to join the army. Children in war zones should receive special attention.
39. Children who have been neglected or abused should receive special help to restore their self respect.
40. Children who are accused of breaking the law should receive legal help. Prison sentences for children should only be used for the most serious offenses.
41. If the laws of a particular country protect children better than these articles of Convention then those laws should stay.
42. The Government should make the Convention known to all parents and children.

#### Sources:

[www.everychildmatters.gov.uk](http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk),  
[www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org)  
[www.unicef.org.uk](http://www.unicef.org.uk)  
<http://www.anationalvoice.org/rights/rotchil2.htm>