



International Play Association
Promoting the Child's Right to Play

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**UN STANDS UP FOR CHILDREN'S RIGHT TO PLAY, ARTS AND LEISURE IN
A LANDMARK MOMENT FOR CHILDREN**

United Nations adopts in-depth interpretation of 'forgotten' children's rights

GENEVA - (1 February 2013) Today the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child announced the adoption of an official document, or "General Comment" (GC), that clarifies for governments worldwide the meaning and importance of article 31 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). Article 31 ensures that **"States Parties recognize the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities...and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts."**

Article 31 has long been considered "the forgotten article" of the Convention. The General Comment adopted today, however, will right that wrong by clearly defining the responsibilities of governments that are implicit in the article.

The stated objectives of the General Comment are:

- a) To enhance understanding of the importance of Article 31 for children's well-being and development, and for the realisation of other rights in the Convention.
- b) To provide interpretation to States parties with regard to the provisions, and consequent obligations, associated with Article 31.
- c) To provide guidance on the legislative, judicial, administrative, social and educational measures necessary to ensure its implementation for all children without discrimination and on the basis of equality of opportunity.

The International Play Association (IPA), which since 2008 has led an international group of co-signatories to the request for a GC, has been closely involved in its development. Theresa Casey, President of IPA, warmly welcomed today's adoption of the General Comment:

Play, recreation, rest, leisure and involvement in cultural and artistic life are all interrelated and critical to a happy, healthy childhood. Problems arise when such activities are considered luxurious or frivolous. Nothing could be further from the truth. They are all fundamental rights of children and IPA will do its best to continue supporting policy makers and practitioners who turn these rights into concrete actions. We are delighted by the Committee's decision to emphasize the importance of Article 31 in a General Comment, and are honored to have assisted in the effort.

IPA's work was supported by the Bernard van Leer Foundation.

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About The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)

Adopted in 1989 by the UN General Assembly, the CRC is a treaty that defines and illuminates - in 54 separate articles - a wide range of human rights due to those under the age of 18. In a statement in 2000, Nelson Mandela described the CRC as "that luminous living document that enshrines the rights of every child without exception to a life of dignity and self-fulfillment."

The Committee on the Rights of the Child is the body of independent experts that monitors implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child by its State parties.

(For more information, please visit <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/>)

About International Play Association (IPA)

International Play Association (IPA) is a non-governmental, voluntary organization founded in 1961. It has members in 50 countries and active groups around the world. IPA is an interdisciplinary organization bringing together people from all professions who work for and with children. IPA holds triennial conferences in different countries. The next conference will be held in Istanbul, Turkey, in May 2014. (For details see www.ipaworld.org)

A global survey in 2009 conducted by IPA and regional supporters in eight locations worldwide identified significant barriers to children's play. The Global Consultation was integral to establishing the need for the development of the General Comment on article 31.

'There isn't an age to stop playing because playing never dies inside us!', child participant in IPA consultation in Brazil 2011.

'Governments have to remember that you were children and you had dreams to play freely in the past', child participant in IPA consultation in Lebanon 2011.

About Bernard van Leer Foundation

The Bernard van Leer Foundation is an international grant making foundation based in The Hague. Its mission is to improve opportunities for children up to age 8 who are growing up in socially and economically difficult circumstances. The Foundation sees this both as a valuable end in itself and as a long-term means to promoting more cohesive, considerate and creative societies with equal opportunities and rights for all. (For more information, see <http://www.bernardvanleer.org>)

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