

STATEMENT

COMMITTEE ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD*

The Committee on the Rights of the Child, currently meeting in Geneva for its 53rd session, is deeply saddened by the tragic consequences of the devastating earthquake that hit Haiti last Tuesday, 12 January 2010. This is the last, and the most terrifying, of a series of natural disasters that have badly affected the country, which is the poorest in the Americas, in the last few years. Children, who are always those most concerned by these tragedies, constitute almost half of the Haitian population.

The Committee wishes to express its most genuine sympathy to the children and all people of Haiti at this moment of national mourning, faced by a devastation that affects the life, security and future of a very vast section of the population, particularly those living in or in the vicinity of Port au Prince.

The Committee is encouraged by the initial reaction of the international community to this catastrophe, and would like to call upon all organizations and individuals to do their utmost to contribute to the relief efforts. While appreciating the tremendous challenges facing all those involved – including the Government and the people of Haiti, UN relief agencies, donors, governments and non governmental organizations – the Committee would like to stress the special vulnerability of children as well as their rights in this particular situation. Measures are urgently needed to protect children, especially those who have become separated from their families, from any possible harm, abuse and exposure to diseases. The relief efforts should also take into account the rights and the special needs of children in terms of food, health care, water and sanitation.

The Committee would like to stress the importance of all efforts aimed at enabling as soon as possible the return of children to normalcy and stability, in order to regain hope for the future.

Geneva, 15 January 2010

* The Committee on the Rights of the Child is the monitoring body of the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC).