



**MEDIA ADVISORY TO
ASSIGNMENT EDITORS & NEWS PRODUCERS**

**Canadian track record under review by
U.N. Human Rights Council's Committee on the Rights of the Child
for first time since Harper-era**

Read this statement online at: <https://tinyurl.com/child-food-rights-2022>

(May 9, 2022—Ottawa): On Tuesday-Wednesday, May 17-18, 2022, officials from the governments of Canada and a sample of provinces will appear before the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child to respond to questions about their efforts to protect and support the rights of Canadian children.

The Committee is a panel of 18, mostly lawyers, social workers, child protection administrators, and a physician. The *Convention on the Rights of the Child* is a non-binding treaty that was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1989 and ratified by Canada in 1991. It is the most widely ratified treaty in history and has been referenced by 27 Supreme Court of Canada judgements and hundreds of provincial court rulings as an aid to interpreting Canadian law. Opinions of the Committee on the Rights of the Child are considered persuasive benchmarks for laws affecting children's rights by courts around the world.

The [Centre for Health Science and Law urged](#) the Committee to review Canada's record and intentions on:

1. Implementing a national school food program promised in the 2019 budget, 2021 federal election platforms, and 2022 federal budget;
2. Restricting advertising to children and teens;
3. Restricting the advertising and promotion of breastmilk substitutes which Canada supports in Geneva, but not in Ottawa;
4. Implementing Child Rights Impact Assessments, analogous to [environmental impact assessments and gender-sensitive budgeting, and economic impact assessments, which are often mandatory and routine](#)); and
5. The practice of touting provincial or territorial programs as indicative of progress in Canada without clarifying that they are not the usual practice in Canada or implying the federated system of governance is a barrier to fulfilling children's rights, especially where the federal government has exclusive or concurrent jurisdiction with provinces.

Background: In [2019 and 2020, 33 Canadian non-governmental organizations submitted responses to the government's official self-evaluation](#), of which 12 were updated in April 2022, including an [update by the Centre for Health Science and Law \(direct link\)](#) and the [Canadian Coalition for the Rights of Children](#). See also, CHSL's updated submissions at: www.tinyurl.com/food-child-rights-CANADA

The [Committee](#) is expected to meet in person in Geneva, but Canada has decided to participate remotely via Zoom; an option that the Committee offers during COVID-19 that shortens the hearing to four hours from six. The hearing can be observed on UN WebTV without pre-registration on [May 17, 2022 9-11 a.m. EST](#) and [May 18 2022, 19-11 a.m. EST](#).

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