



20 November 2024

## **Christian Conference of Asia's Statement on World Children's Day-2024**

World Children's Day, celebrated annually on 20 November, is an opportunity to amplify children's voices, honour their right to be heard, and reaffirm the global commitment made through the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). The vital voices of children are shaping the world. From climate action to access to education, and from ending violence to overcoming discrimination, children and young people are speaking out on the critical issues that define their lives.

On this World Children's Day, the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) reaffirms its commitment to advocating for children's rights, standing alongside them in the pursuit of a world where their dignity is upheld, their voices are heard, and their future is protected.

In Asia, millions of children are denied the opportunity to reach their full potential. Education systems – burdened by poverty, limited resources, and inequality – struggle to provide the foundation children need to thrive. Many children are denied basic healthcare, leaving them vulnerable to preventable diseases and suffering. Child safety remains a critical concern in Asia, with exploitation, forced labour, and trafficking affecting far too many young lives. Vulnerable children also face neglect and abuse, often in their own homes and communities. Discrimination and violence, rooted in ethnicity, religion, or socioeconomic status, further undermine children's well-being. These issues are exacerbated in conflict and emergency settings, where children are disproportionately affected and left without adequate protection.

World Children's Day 2024 calls on adults to "listen to the future." Honouring children's right to self-expression acknowledges their insights and aspirations for a better world. Yet, too often, children's rights are misunderstood, overlooked, or denied entirely. It is the duty of governments and leaders to fulfil their commitments under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, ensuring the protection, rights, and well-being of each child.

The role of the Church in affirming the dignity and rights of children is paramount. As Jesus taught, "Whoever welcomes this little child in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me" (Luke 9:48). Children are not lesser members of society but cherished and valued in God's kingdom. The Church must uphold their rights, listening with patience, compassion, and respect, advocating for a world that protects and nurtures children. We believe that churches in Asia can make a transformative impact by advocating for accessible education and healthcare, implementing child protection policies, fostering inclusive, violence-free communities, and creating platforms where children's voices are valued and taken seriously.

The CCA urges its member churches and councils to create safe spaces for children to share their thoughts and concerns, providing emotional and spiritual support that enables them to engage meaningfully. Through partnerships with families, communities, and organisations, the Church can ensure that children are heard, their dignity upheld, and their potential realised.

On this World Children's Day, let us reaffirm our commitment to the rights, dignity, and well-being of every child, recognising their voices as integral to building a just and compassionate future.

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