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Children's rights in a changing climate : a perspective from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

Human rights are seriously affected by climate change, but children and children's human rights are of most concern. The purpose of this article is to show how climate change and the associated phenomena harm children and their rights. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is the most universally ratified human rights treaty in the world. It is also one of the most complete ones, as it covers both civil and political rights, as well as socio-economic and cultural rights. This research examines the rights enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in the light of climate change effects. It identifies which children's rights are most affected by climate change. To do this systematically, the rights of this covenant have been categorized into 4 groups: rights which satisfy basic needs (right to life, right to health, right to water, right to food and right to housing); specific children's rights (right to be cared for by parents, right to education, right to play, and right to leisure and access to culture); participation rights (right to active participation, right to freedom of expression, association and assembly, accountability and right to an effective remedy); and civil and political rights (right to a nationality, right to birth registration and right to preservation of identity, right to equal protection against discrimination, right to privacy and family life and right to property). The article identifies how, which and to what extent rights listed in the covenant are undermined by sudden climate change events, as well as by the gradual consequences of climate change. It shifts the perspective on how we address climate change consequences: from human impacts to real human rights' violations.