

# Children's Rights Alliance

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## Press Release

### Our Voices, Our Realities: Children tell UN about growing up in Ireland

The Children's Rights Alliance today (Thursday, 29 June) will be launching "Our Voices, Our Realities: A Report to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child by Children Living in Ireland".

Jillian van Turnhout, Chief Executive of the Children's Rights Alliance, said:

"This groundbreaking piece of work is the first report by children living in Ireland to the United Nations, and one of the first reports by children to the UN in the world. This launch is about celebrating the hard work the young people have put into the report. The report has a special vibrancy and energy to it, as it details young people's own words what it is like to grow up in Ireland today, both the joys and the serious, daily struggles."

132 young people from toddlers to teenagers took part in workshops to create the report. A selection of their work was chosen by a reference group of seven young people. These young people met with the UN Committee on 7<sup>th</sup> June 2006 in Geneva and represented the views of all the children who participated in the creation of the report. They will be speaking about their experience at the launch today.

Children in Ireland are particularly concerned by how many children are afraid; how difficult life is for young asylum seekers; how little access there is for young people with disabilities; how many children complained about public transport; and how many complained of the lack of activities.

Jillian van Turnhout, continued:

"Over the past few years, much work and energy, on the part of both national agencies and NGOs, has gone into creating and developing opportunities for children to be heard. However, Ireland still has a long way to go before hearing children's voices becomes part and parcel of how plans, services and decisions affecting children are made. Hopefully, this report will encourage this work.

Supporting children's right to be heard is a shared responsibility that will require co-operation and leadership. We hope that today will be a big step forward in showing people that children have opinions on a wide variety of issues, not just on issues like play and recreation.

We have been very impressed by how responsive the UN Committee members have been to the young people's views. When our adult delegation met with the UN Committee they specifically asked us about the concerns the young people had expressed. They are listening, and hopefully the Government will too."

**END**

#### **Notes to Editor:**

The Children's Rights Alliance is a coalition of 80 non-governmental organisations working to secure the full implementation in Ireland of the principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

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*“Our Voices, Our Realities” and “From Rhetoric to Rights” will be available on Thursday at [www.childrensrights.ie](http://www.childrensrights.ie)*