25 October 2022

Dear friends, Street Champions from Kolkata,

I want to express my warm and sincere gratitude for the inspiring letter you have sent me. Your testimony re-confirms the reason why this year it was essential to focus my report to the United Nations General Assembly on how the climate crisis increases violence against children. Children in street situations are specifically vulnerable to many challenges and in particular to the drastic changes that climate crisis brings to the communities around the world. At the same time, the added challenges that climate crisis presents also pushes more children and their families to living in the street.

We need to transmit to the world this information and a call for action, so children are placed at the center of all prevention and responses to the climate crisis. Children are the least responsible, and yet they are paying the highest price. This needs to be addressed urgently, and I will continue to advocate with decision makers for their action.

I also want to thank you for all your initiatives and actions. I know you supported other children in the streets connect to my interactive dialogue. Thanks for having shared video questions and messages. I know how active and committed you are.

Our interactive dialogue was a major milestone moment that influenced my mandate’s other engagements with decision makers these days. First, I included your messages and concerns in my statement to the Third Committee of the United Nations General Assembly, and I am happy to report that many Member States (countries) who took the floor, mentioned the importance of children’s participation, asked for guidance and good practices in this area, and supported the report’s key messages.

Later that week, my office co-organized an event to launch a document (an advocacy brief) for decision makers and practitioners everywhere, focusing on how the climate crisis increases violence against children. During that event, we also played a video combining children’s messages and questions from everywhere – including yours – to show how children are taking actions.
I know you are at the forefront of actions, and I want to leave you with one message: Don’t stop! Continue doing what you are doing. Please don’t give up. The world needs you, so together, we can make it safer, healthier, more just and inclusive.

I hope I have a chance to meet you if I’m ever in Kolkata. I do not have plans to visit Kolkata for now, but I will be sure to be in touch with you if I do.

Yours,

Najat Maalla M’jid
Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children