



# Cayman Islands Human Rights Commission

*promoting, protecting and preserving human rights*

**Date: 20 November 2017**

## **Human Rights Commission's Statement on United Nations' Universal Children's Day 2017**

The Human Rights Commission (the "Commission") was created by the Cayman Islands Constitution Order 2009 (the "Constitution"). The primary role of the Commission is to promote observance and awareness of human rights. As part of this role the Commission engages in community outreach projects to fulfil our responsibility to the public. The Commission has identified s.17 of the Constitution – Protection of children, as one of the rights it wishes to highlight in 2017.

The Commission joins individuals and institutions in countries across the globe in celebrating the United Nations' Universal Children's Day 2017 on 20<sup>th</sup> November. Established in 1954, Universal Children's Day seeks "to promote international togetherness, awareness among children worldwide, and [improve] children's welfare".<sup>1</sup> This year's theme; 'Stop Violence Against Children!' was chosen to lend support to the UN's aim of "eliminating child labour and violence against children, and helping children who are feeling the psychological effects of war or armed conflict."<sup>2</sup>

20<sup>th</sup> November is a landmark day for the UN "as it is the date in 1959 when the UN General Assembly adopted the Declaration of the Rights of the Child. It is also the date in 1989 when the UN General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child (the "CRC"). Since 1990, Universal Children's Day also marks the anniversary of the date that the UN General Assembly adopted both the declaration and the convention on children's rights."<sup>3</sup>

Universal Children's Day is spearheaded by the United Nations Children's Fund ("UNICEF"). UNICEF upholds the CRC and works in 190 countries and territories to advocate for the protection of the rights of every child. The CRC specifies a number of children's rights which afford protection and basic liberties including:-

- "the right to life
- the right to health and health services
- the right to a family
- the right to education and play
- the right not to be tortured or subjected to inhuman treatment or punishment
- the right to be protected from exploitation, violence and abuse
- the right to have a voice, to be heard
- the right not to be discriminated against
- the right to freedom of expression, thought, conscience and religion".<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.savethechildren.org/site/c.8rKLIXMGIpI4E/b.7869959/k.5C54/Universal\\_Childrens\\_Day.htm](http://www.savethechildren.org/site/c.8rKLIXMGIpI4E/b.7869959/k.5C54/Universal_Childrens_Day.htm)

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/universal-childrens-day-2014-facts-history-aims-united-nations-day-1475670>

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.savethechildren.org/site/c.8rKLIXMGIpI4E/b.7869959/k.5C54/Universal\\_Childrens\\_Day.htm](http://www.savethechildren.org/site/c.8rKLIXMGIpI4E/b.7869959/k.5C54/Universal_Childrens_Day.htm)

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.compassion.com/world-days/universal-childrens-day.htm>

The Cayman Islands has been signatory to the CRC since 1994. As a State Party to this human rights treaty, the Cayman Islands is obligated to submit periodic reports, every five years, on the actions it has taken to guarantee such rights to children and young persons. Together with the CRC, section 17 of the Constitution affords protection of children by holding the Legislature responsible for implementing “laws to provide every child and young person under the age of eighteen with such facilities as would aid their growth and development”. The provisions of this section also ensure that every child has basic rights such as –

- “not to be required or permitted to perform work or provide services that-
  - (i) are inappropriate for a child of that age; or
  - (ii) place at risk the child’s well-being, education, physical or mental health or spiritual, moral or social development; and
- not to be used directly in armed conflict, and to be protected in times of armed conflict.”

The Commission encourages individuals in the Cayman Islands to get involved and show their support for Universal Children’s Day 2017 and the elimination of violence against children, for example by:-

1. Donating to local non-governmental organisations such as the Cayman Islands Crisis Centre (CICC) which provides programmes such as Estella’s Place and The TAYA Lounge (teens and young adults), which provides a safe and supportive environment for children and young adults who have been affected by some form of maltreatment or abuse;
2. Becoming familiar with the CRC to learn more about how this treaty affects the Cayman Islands and the significant obligations it places on the government to provide every child and young person with basic human rights and ensure their protection;
3. Spending the day engaging with your children, nieces, nephews, grandchildren or with friends’ children by taking them to the beach, a park or participating in other activities that contribute to their growth and development;
4. Holding a party for children and their families to celebrate the day; and
5. Watching a movie that highlights children’s rights such as *In This World* (2002), *Arna’s Children* (2004) and *Slumdog Millionaire* (2008).<sup>5</sup>

In order to lend its support to the UNs’ Universal Children’s Day the Commission has prepared an educational guide for children, teens and young adults which discusses the basic human rights extended to children such as the right to education, health care services and protection from mistreatment and abuse. If you are interested in receiving an educational guide you may visit the Commission’s website at [www.humanrightscommission.ky](http://www.humanrightscommission.ky) or request a printed version by e-mailing [info@humanrightscommission.ky](mailto:info@humanrightscommission.ky) or calling 244-3685.

Ends.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.wincalendar.com/Universal-Childrens-Day>