

**OPEN DEBATE OF THE
SECURITY COUNCIL:
CHILDREN AND ARMED CONFLICT**

STATEMENT

BY

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TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

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CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Mr. President

Last week, the international community observed the Universal Children's Day. Meanwhile, millions of children affected by armed conflict continue to suffer in many parts of the world. Addressing the extreme hardship of children affected by armed conflict in this open debate of the Security Council is therefore both a timely and very important initiative, for which we would like to commend the Presidency of the Council. We also thank the Special Representative of the Secretary General, Ms. Coomaraswamy, for her high dedication and full commitment in bringing this agenda forward and for contributing to tangible progress towards the 'era of application' of all relevant Security Council resolutions, including Resolution 1612. Full implementation of that resolution will depend, to a very large extent, on political will. The Council members, and in particular its Permanent Members, have a special responsibility to show the necessary leadership in effectively ending impunity for all grave violations of children's rights in all armed conflicts. Targeted sanctions by the Security Council will have to be complemented by the work undertaken by the International Criminal Court and by national courts in bringing the perpetrators and instigators of such violations to justice.

Mr. President

Resolution 1612 established the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM) as an essential basis for the activities of the Working Group of the Council for Children and Armed Conflict. We would like to take this opportunity to thank the Working Group as well as all actors involved in the operation of the MRM for their efforts and commitment to help children affected by armed conflict. The independent review carried out by the Office of Internal Oversight Services acknowledges the important function of the MRM in raising the attention to CAAC issues at the local, national and international levels. At the same time, we concur with the assessment that there is a need for clarifying the intended use of the information gathered through the MRM, in particular by identifying how the MRM can service the information needs of different destinations for action in an efficient and effective

way. This includes the gathering of information for key destinations that advance the ending of impunity as well as in the area of child protection and victim assistance. While recognizing that a comprehensive approach encompassing all these aspects of the CAAC agenda may be difficult to realize in certain places and circumstances, we wish to stress that a full use of the potential of the MRM is in the interest of all actors involved, i.e. Governments, the United Nations, NGOs and civil society, as it is to the benefit of the children concerned.

Mr. President

Enhancing the potential of the MRM also entails the extension of its scope to all six categories of grave violations of children's rights. Equally important is the inclusion of all relevant conflict situations on equal terms. It is, in fact, difficult to understand how a differential treatment of grave violations of children's rights in various conflicts would be compatible with the universality of human rights and the principles of international humanitarian law. Political considerations must not override the fundamental rules of protection for the most vulnerable members of society.

Mr. President

Liechtenstein has been actively involved in the development of the UN mechanisms to address the plight of children affected by armed conflict since their inception. We will continue to do so as a member of the "group of friends of children affected by armed conflict" and are therefore looking forward to the ten-year review of the Graça Machel report. At the same time, we wish to stress that the United Nations, ten years after the publication of the report, is lagging behind the high expectations placed on its ability to alleviate the hardship of millions of children in armed conflict. The Security Council is best placed to change this public perception.

I thank you.