



**PERMANENT MISSION
OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN
TO THE UNITED NATIONS
NEW YORK**

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CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

THIRD COMMITTEE

ITEM 65: PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF THE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN

STATEMENT BY NOAH OEHRI, SECOND SECRETARY

PERMANENT MISSION OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN TO THE UNITED NATIONS

Mr. Chair,

Education is a fundamental human right and a global public good, whose contribution to the creation of a more peaceful, just, inclusive, prosperous and sustainable future cannot be overstated. In situations of armed conflict, moreover, education is also a lifeline for children, as schools constitute a protected space for learners and teachers. However, attacks on educational facilities have further increased to a staggering number last year. In 2022, more than 3'000 attacks against schools and universities were registered around the world, an increase of almost 20% since the previous year. In the Central Sahel region, the number of schools closed increased nearly six-fold between 2019 and 2023 as a result of the propagation of violent conflict. And in Ukraine alone, UNICEF reports that over 1300 schools have been completely destroyed. Such attacks not only constitute flagrant violations of international humanitarian law, but also deprive an entire generation of children from their right to learn in a safe environment. Liechtenstein therefore supports the Safe Schools Declaration and hopes that more Member States will endorse this important initiative. We must stand together to protect education from attack – and hold those responsible for such crimes accountable.

For one particularly subset of heinous crimes committed against children in conflict, the International Criminal Court has already responded by issuing an arrest warrant against Russia's President and Children's Rights Commissioner for the war crime of unlawful deportation and transfer of children. We thank the ICC Prosecutor for prioritizing justice for children in his investigations into war crimes and crimes against humanity in Ukraine.

Mr. Chair,

Climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution – the triple planetary crisis – will adversely affect the life trajectory of children much more than adults. These developments contribute to growing political and economic instability, global inequality and food insecurity, which place a significant burden on the prospects of future generations. The increasing number of cases brought forward by youth before domestic and international courts over recent years reflect how young people are making their voices heard for intergenerational justice in the fight against climate change. In response to their demands, we must not only address the root causes of climate change through ambitious emission reduction targets and further climate action, but also pay particular attention to its adverse impact on the rights of children. In this respect, the recently published General Comment No. 26 by the Committee on the Rights of the Child recalls that States must ensure a clean, healthy and sustainable environment in order to respect, protect and fulfil children's rights. Furthermore, the Committee underlines the importance of access to justice pathways and remedies for children, who – despite their pioneering role of several cases – still encounter barriers to attaining legal standing in many States.

Mr. Chair,

Optional Protocol 3 to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (OPIC) is an important instrument to support the agency of youth. It allows children, groups of young people or their representatives to bring a complaint regarding a violation of their rights before the Committee on the Rights of the Child. This is an effective way for children to seek justice if domestic legal systems have not been able to provide a remedy for violations against them. This communications procedure empowers young people as agents of change in the face of the particular challenges they face. Opened for signatures over a decade ago, the OPIC has thus far only been ratified by 51 Member States, including my own country, Liechtenstein. We call upon

all Member States who have not yet done so to ratify this and the other Optional Protocols in order to hear the voices of children and protect their rights.

I thank you.