

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

**STATEMENT**

**BY**

**STEFAN BARRIGA,  
DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE  
OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

**NEW YORK, 16 JUNE 2010**

**CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY**

Mr. President,

At the outset, let me join others in thanking you for organizing this important and timely debate. My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by Canada on behalf of the Group of Friends of Children and Armed Conflict, but we also wish to make a few points on our own. We welcome the report of the Secretary-General, which again makes for disturbing reading, and commend the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, Ms. Coomaraswamy, and her office for their highly dedicated work on this topic.

Mr. President,

We are alarmed by a new UNESCO study, which reveals an escalating number of systematic and deliberate attacks on students, teachers and school buildings in conflict settings. Both State and non-State actors are perpetrating such attacks. Nevertheless, the Working Group of the Security Council on Children and Armed Conflicts addressed the issue only in a small number of conclusions issued between April 2009 and May 2010. In our view, attacks on schools deserve a more prominent position on the Working Group's agenda, based on enhanced and verifiable information collected through the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM). The MRM in turn requires appropriate resources to fulfill its mandate. It is also worthwhile recalling that attacks on schools violate the Hague Conventions, the Geneva Conventions, including its Protocols, and are also criminalized in the Rome Statute of the ICC. We therefore urge all States to comply with their obligation under International Humanitarian Law in the prevention of such crimes and to prosecute attacks on education buildings as war crimes.

Mr. President,

In accordance with SC resolution 1612, the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism provides reliable information on situations listed in Annex I and II of the report of the Secretary-General. We commend the Council for adopting resolution 1882, which expanded the trigger for the MRM to include, in addition to parties that recruit and use children in armed conflicts, parties that commit rape and other forms

of grave sexual violence and/or parties responsible for the killing and maiming of children. However, to ensure the best possible protection of children, we believe that equal weight must be given to all six grave violations as triggers for the MRM. The differential treatment of grave violations of children's rights in various conflicts is difficult to square with the universality and interdependence of human rights and the principles of international humanitarian law. We therefore encourage the Council to continue to develop this mechanism and to consider, as a next step, the expansion of the MRM trigger mechanism to attacks on schools.

Mr. President,

Sixteen parties have been listed in the annexes of the report of the Secretary-General for more than five years. These persistent violators must be subject to the Council's strongest and most urgent action. Measures taken by the Working Group in response to persistent violators should be complemented by effective enforcement measures such as sanctions, including arms embargoes, bans on military assistance as well as the imposition of travel restrictions. We therefore call on the Security Council to include the recruitment and use of child soldiers in the mandates of relevant sanctions committees. The first briefing of the SRSG on Children and Armed Conflict to the Sanctions Committee on the Democratic Republic of the Congo is an important step in the right direction. In this context, we support an approach that allows direct contacts between the office of the SRSG and relevant non-State actors, with a view to preparing an action plan that will lead to the delisting of some conflict parties from the annex of the report of the Secretary-General. In addressing the issue of persistent violators, the Security Council should also be mindful of its competence to refer to the International Criminal Court (ICC), for investigation and prosecution, situations involving violations of the rights of children.

I thank you.