



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

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

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THIRD COMMITTEE

ITEM 65: PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF THE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN

STATEMENT BY NOAH OEHRI, First SECRETARY

PERMANENT MISSION OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN TO THE UNITED NATIONS

Mr. Chair,

Earlier this year, the General Assembly adopted a resolution establishing an international day in recognition of the importance of play for people of all ages, especially children. Play is a truly universal language spoken by children across the globe irrespective of national boundaries, religion or culture. Liechtenstein was happy to support this initiative with the objective of raising awareness of the importance of play and the universal need to fostering safe and nurturing environments for children to grow and learn. While play is important for all of us, it is a fundamental right of every child under Art. 31 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. In fact, play has proven to have a myriad of benefits beyond being a recreational – and often fun – activity. It fosters creativity, intellectual development, contributes to mental well-being and helps children develop cognitive, physical, social and emotional skills they need to thrive in our ever-changing world. Moreover, engaging in play can be especially beneficial for children to overcome prejudice, heal from trauma or in situations of displacement, thus serving as a buffer from the effects of distress, violence or other harmful experiences.

Mr. Chair,

Too many children across the world cannot engage in play in a safe environment. This is particularly true for children affected by armed conflict. As the most recent report of the Secretary-General has

shown, the frequency of grave violations committed against children in armed conflict is shockingly high, with a 21 percent increase in 2023 and the largest numbers of violations in the last decade. Of particular concern is the dramatic rise in children killed in conflict. The dire situations in Gaza, Sudan and Myanmar are especially alarming. The large number of casualties and massive suffering among children in Gaza are simply unacceptable. And so is the targeting of homes, shelters, schools and hospitals, reason for which Israel has – at the same time as Hamas – been listed for committing grave violations against children in conflict. The children of Ukraine also pay an extraordinary price for Russia’s aggression, including 335 documented attacks on schools and hospitals and hospitals last year alone. It is our collective responsibility to ensure that every child can be spared the scars of war – the protection of schools, hospitals and other health facilities are key in this respect. The international justice system has played a key role in ending impunity for grave violations against children. The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court has been exemplary in its child-sensitive approach. It requires the Chief Prosecutor to appoint advisers with legal expertise on violence against children and the ICC to take measures to protect the safety, physical and psychological well-being, dignity and privacy of victims and witnesses, and to have regard to age in this respect. For one particularly subset of heinous crimes committed against children in Ukraine, the International Criminal Court has already responded by issuing an arrest warrant against Russia’s President and Children’s Rights Minister 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,

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. Despite its entry into force one decade ago, the OPIC has thus far only been ratified by 52 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.