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Security Council

Open debate **Children and Armed Conflicts**

Swiss Statement

presented by
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Permanent Mission of Switzerland
to the United Nations

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Mr. President,

Switzerland is pleased with the work undertaken by the Security Council in progressively strengthening the protection framework for children affected by armed conflict. We also commend the work of the SRSG on children and armed conflict for her work to ensure that children experience the full protection of their human rights in situations related to armed conflict, and by the dedicated work of UNICEF in this regard.

We have reliably called on the Security Council to strengthen its protection framework even more and consistently called for all six grave violations committed against children in armed conflict to be included amongst the Security Council Resolution 1612 listing criteria. We have supported a progressive approach in this regard. Also referring to General Assembly Resolution (A/RES/64/290), „The right to education in emergency situations“, we congratulate the Security Council who – through its resolution adopted today - fills an important gap in the child protection framework by including recurrent attacks against schools and hospitals as the latest trigger. A new trigger such as this will not only include on the Secretary-General's 'naming and shaming' list those parties to armed conflict that engage in recurrent attacks against schools and hospitals in contravention of international humanitarian law and human rights law, but also those who engage in recurrent threats or attacks against schoolchildren, patients, educational or medical personnel. In addition, such a new trigger includes UN country-level task forces monitoring attacks against schools and hospitals, threats or attacks against schoolchildren, patients, educational or medical personnel, and other relevant disruptions to educational and medical facilities.

Although we applaud the action taken by the Security Council so far in strengthening accountability for persistent perpetrators of grave violations against children, we call for further decisive action in three ways against such perpetrators. First, we urge all sanctions committees to ensure that these six grave violations against children are included as sanctionable criteria when mandates are established or renewed for relevant sanctions committees, as agreed in the Security Council's presidential statement of June 2010. Second, we call on the Secretary-General to include in his annual reports actions taken by existing sanctions committees regarding such provisions, and proposals for additional steps to ensure accountability of perpetrators. Third, we remain concerned with the accountability gap created by the absence of designated sanctions committees to deal with all persistent perpetrators listed in Annex 1 of the Secretary-General's reports. In this regard, we call on the Security Council to take decisive action against such perpetrators on an urgent basis and to consider how to address this gap through proactive means.

Having also already stressed the importance of follow-up regarding the implementation of Working Group recommendations, as called for in Security Council Resolution 1882, we call on the Security Council Working Group to request a response from the concerned country or party, including, where relevant, a report of their implementation of the Working Group recommendations.

We also welcome the new working arrangement providing additional administrative and substantive support for the Security Council Working Group on children and

armed conflict and expect the Working Group to consolidate currently used tools - such as field trips - and to expand the use of underutilized but potentially very effective available options, such as emergency meetings, to respond to surges in violations.

Switzerland once again appeals to Member States to facilitate contact between the UN on the one hand and other local and international actors on the other hand in order to ensure broad and effective protection for children, including for purposes of concluding action plans as per Security Council resolutions 1539 (2004), 1612 (2005) and 1882 (2009). These contacts wouldn't prejudice the political and legal status of those non-state actors.

We also urge again the Security Council to continue to include specific provisions for the protection of children in all mandates of UN peacekeeping operations as well as special political missions and peace building missions and to encourage troop and police contributing countries to include child protection in their pre-deployment training.

In addition, more effort still needs to be put in the effective prevention of recruitment and in the reintegration of child victims. Reintegration can only be successful if it is sustainable, inclusive and community-based.

Finally, since we observe with concern a growing trend in the context of the detention of children on grounds of association with armed groups, including threats of violence against or ill treatment of children for intelligence gathering purposes, Switzerland counts on the SRSG on children and armed conflict to propose in a working paper appropriate measures to better protect those children.

Thank you.