



Malaysia

Permanent Mission to the United Nations

(Please check against delivery)

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR HUSSEIN HANIFF
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF MALAYSIA
AT THE OPEN DEBATE OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL
ON “CHILDREN AND ARMED CONFLICT”
NEW YORK, 19 SEPTEMBER 2012**

Mr. President,

At the outset, I wish to congratulate you for assuming the Presidency of the Security Council for this month. I also wish to thank you for convening this open debate on “Children and armed conflict”. I would also like to commend you for your leadership in chairing the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict, which has produced significant decisions in moving the issue forward.

2. I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate Ms. Leila Zerrougui on her recent appointment as the new Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict. Additionally, I thank the Special Representative and the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, for their valuable briefing on the issue.

Mr. President,

3. Malaysia is deeply concerned on the increasing number of persistent perpetrators of severe violations against children; particularly the parties listed in the annexes to the Secretary-General’s report. I urge the parties involved to continue consultations with the United Nations and implement, without delay, the action plans. My delegation concurs with the Secretary-General’s recommendations, which urge the Security Council to ensure that specific provisions for the protection of children continue to be included in all relevant mandates of UN peacekeeping operations, as well as political and peacebuilding missions, and for the issue to be given the highest visibility possible.

4. Malaysia is equally disturbed by the fact that there is a significant increase of death incidents in the Occupied Palestinian Territory in 2011 where 20 Palestinian

children were killed and 448 more were injured. We are gravely concerned by the unending cycle of violence, where Palestinian children are detained and subjected to cruel and degrading treatment by the Israeli security forces. I reiterate my call particularly this Council, to bring the perpetrators to justice. The only way forward is to ensure that the Palestinians, especially the Palestinian children, are afforded their basic rights as human beings.

Mr. President,

5. Malaysia takes note on the inclusion in the Secretary General's report, of parties that executed attacks on schools and hospitals. We are saddened by the fact that these places, which are regarded as safe havens, are being ravaged with such deplorable acts. Malaysia calls upon the Security Council to address the issue as the attacks not only claim the lives of innocent people but are also depriving their rights to education and health. We believe that there is an urgent need to strengthen collaboration and child protection within the United Nations system. Realizing this ongoing crucial endeavor, Malaysia had co-sponsored a resolution initiated by Thailand, during the 66th Session of the General Assembly on "Strengthening collaboration on child protection within the United Nations system" to seek important organizational improvements that will further the cause of protecting children worldwide.

6. Additionally, we witness a wide range of international legal instruments that provide the legal framework for the "six grave violations" committed against children in armed conflict, namely recruitment and use, killing and maiming, sexual violence as well as abduction, denial of humanitarian access and attacks against schools and/or hospitals. I am pleased to inform that Malaysia, as a State Party to these conventions, recently acceded to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in armed conflict on 12 April 2012. This accession is a milestone and underscores Malaysia's commitment to the global protection of children.

Mr. President,

7. Malaysia acknowledges the two verdicts passed by the International Criminal Court (ICC) and the Special Court for Sierra Leone in March and April this year against former Congolese warlord, Thomas Lubanga, and former Liberian President, Charles Taylor, which set important international jurisprudence on the war crime of recruiting and using children. These verdicts send a clear signal to commanders that child recruitment is a war crime and perpetrators would be held accountable.

8. In relation to this, Malaysia feels that governments in conflict need to strengthen their capacity to investigate and prosecute adult recruiters before national courts. Measures to do so include criminalizing under-age recruitment and prosecuting and investigating perpetrators; raising awareness of child protection at the community level; as well as addressing the root causes of 'voluntary' recruitment, such as poverty, social grievances and survival, and providing children alternatives to enrolment.

Mr. President,

9. Malaysia reaffirms its strong commitment to the efforts in protecting and promoting the rights of its children, including by paying sustained attention to the issue of children in armed conflict. On the issue at hand, we feel that accountability in the context of children and armed conflict constitutes not only careful investigations and prosecutions of those responsible, but also a broader undertaking of political, legal and moral responsibilities by individuals and institutions for past violations that have occurred. Malaysia views accountability as a duty under both domestic and international laws. The national system in this regard, should be steered towards meeting international standards in order to establish an effective accountability measure in the hope of bringing justice, dignity and rehabilitation for children victimized by armed conflict.

Thank you Mr. President.