



MALAYSIA

PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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**STATEMENT BY
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TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

**AT THE SECURITY COUNCIL OPEN DEBATE
ON CHILDREN AND ARMED CONFLICT**

TUESDAY, 2 AUGUST 2016

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Since this is the first formal meeting of the Council for this month, I wish to first pay tribute and congratulate Ambassador Koro Bessho and the Japanese delegation for their able leadership of the Council in July.

2. I thank Secretary General Ban Ki-moon for his remarks and his steadfast commitment to the children and armed conflict agenda.
3. I also wish to express my heartfelt appreciation to Special Representative Leila Zerrougui and Executive Director Anthony Lake of UNICEF for their insightful and compelling briefings.
4. My delegation pays tribute to them both, as well as the people and institutions they represent, for their tireless dedication to and relentless advocacy on the protection and rights of children affected by armed conflict.
5. Malaysia aligns itself with the statement to be delivered by Thailand on behalf of ASEAN.

Excellencies,

6. In making her call for action twenty years ago, Graca Machel appealed for daring solutions to address the impact of conflict on children. The international community rose to this challenge by embracing the children and armed conflict agenda, both in the General Assembly and the Security Council.
7. Under this agenda, the landscape of international child protection has evolved over the past two decades through the development of a unique set of tools within the UN system to end grave violations against children, channel assistance and support to children affected by conflict, and hold parties to conflict accountable for their obligations under international law.
8. In this regard, the important role played by the SRSG for children and armed conflict as a high-level advocate who gives children scarred by war a voice and as a champion for their cause must continue to be supported. Madame Zerrougui and her predecessors have been successful in galvanizing international commitment for child protection, both through close engagement with Member States and partners as well as through campaigns that raise broad awareness and support.
9. One heartening example is the progress achieved through the “Children, Not Soldiers” campaign, co-led by the Office of the SRSG and UNICEF, to eliminate the recruitment and use of children in national security forces. Malaysia commends the resolute commitment of Member States that have signed action plans to achieve this objective and calls for continued international support for their efforts beyond 2016.
10. The deployment of child protection advisers (CPAs) in UN peace operations has also been instrumental tool in mainstreaming and implementing the child protection mandate in the field. CPAs, together with other actors in the UN

Country Task Force, play an important advocacy role in dialogue with Governments and parties to conflict on child protection concerns, including developing action plans.

11. In this regard, we are closely following the consolidation of protection functions exercise in three UN peace operations – MINUSCA, MINUSMA and UNSOM. We call on the Secretary General to continue ensuring that dedicated child protection capacity is maintained and strengthened, including if and when embedded in larger human rights units, and urge for consultation with Member States on this issue.

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

12. Malaysia also reaffirms its strong support for the monitoring and reporting mechanism (MRM) established under Security Council Resolution 1612 (2005), which enables the collection of verified information on grave violations against children that is crucial in determining that such heinous acts do not go unreported.
13. We reiterate that accurate and objective facts, including information gathered through the MRM, should be the determining factor that guides our actions in seeking compliance by parties to conflict and holding perpetrators of grave violations accountable.
14. The mandate and the tools it created remain urgently relevant today as children continue to suffer the horrifying consequences of war. We echo Ms. Machel's call for daring solutions in the face of evolving trends and persisting challenges affecting children in situations of conflict.

15. Non-State armed groups remain among the biggest perpetrators of grave violations against children and ensuring their compliance with child protection obligations under international humanitarian law is an on-going challenge. We are deeply alarmed that non-State armed groups, including groups employing violent extremist tactics, remain the main perpetrators of recruitment and use of children. As one Boko Haram militia told a kidnapped girl who was repeatedly raped by the militias and subsequently trained to become a suicide bomber: It would not be painful to be a suicide bomber, it would be “just like if an ant bites you”.
16. Even more heartbreaking, children who had been kidnapped by the non-State armed groups are stigmatized and shunned by their own family and community upon their return or escape. They are treated with suspicions as possible suicide bombers or for having a baby fathered by their kidnappers.
17. We urge Member States to treat children associated with such groups primarily as victims and to consider alternatives to prosecution and detention where appropriate, as well as prioritize reintegration and rehabilitation programmes. The peace talks between the Government of Colombia and the FARC-EP provide a positive example in ensuring the protection and rights of children separated from armed groups.
18. Another challenge is addressing the needs of the large scale of children being displaced by armed conflict. The image of Alan Kurdi, the three-year-old boy who drowned as his family attempted to escape the Syrian conflict in 2015, is emblematic of the fate of hundreds of children forced to flee armed conflict.
19. Surviving a perilous journey however does not guarantee safety. Displaced children, particularly separated and unaccompanied children, are especially vulnerable to exploitation and grave violations by unscrupulous parties. It is therefore imperative that children in situations of displacement are given support

to adapt to their new surroundings, including access to medical and psychosocial services, education and recreational activities.

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentleman,

20. In conclusion, Malaysia firmly believes that the children and armed conflict agenda must continue to be strengthened and enhanced. Two decades since the establishment of the agenda, the hopes and dreams of children in many parts of the world continue to be dashed and their innocence robbed. The international community must redouble its efforts to secure peace and lift them from their depth of despair. While we have made much progress in using the tools at our disposal, much more need to be done. Our work is far from over. I pledge my delegation's enduring commitment towards this end.

Thank you.