



## SLOVENIA

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**Statement by Ambassador Darja Bavdaž Kuret,  
Permanent Representative of Slovenia to the United Nations  
at the Security Council Open Debate on  
"Children and Armed Conflict"  
New York, 31 October 2017**

Mr. President,

Let me begin by thanking France for organizing this open debate and the Secretary-General for his annual report. We wish to congratulate Ms. Gamba on her appointment as Special Representative and express Slovenia's strong support for her mandate. My delegation would also like to thank Mr Mubin Shaikh, for his testimony this morning.

Slovenia aligns itself with the statements delivered by the EU as well as Panama on behalf of the Human Security Network and Canada on behalf of the Group of Friends of children an armed conflict and would like to make some additional remarks in the national capacity.

Mr President,

Progress has been made since the issue of children and armed conflict was put on the UN agenda, however the situation of children is still alarming. Reports on the plight of children affected by different armed conflicts around the world must be a call for action. We share concerns about the scale and severity of the violation committed against children in the period covered by the report. The alarming level of killing and maiming, recruitment, sexual violence, abductions and denial of humanitarian access is highly disturbing.

We cannot but agree with the conclusion of the Secretary-General that any engagement in hostilities and responses to all threats to peace and security must be conducted in full compliance with international humanitarian law, human rights law and refugee law. In this respect we join in calling on Member States that have not yet done so to endorse the *Save School Declaration* and the *Lucens Guidelines* to protect schools and hospitals from military use during armed conflict.

Stronger steps should be taken to address accountability and to end impunity for for such violations. Monitoring and accurate and timely reporting in this respect is crucial to ensure that perpetrators can be held accountable. The Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism, established in accordance with Security Council Resolutions, is therefore a key mechanism of the UN's children protection mandate.

Mr President,

Children in armed conflict should primarily be treated as victims. It is important to efficiently and sustainably address short, medium and long term impacts of armed conflicts on children in an effective and comprehensive manner. It is therefore essential to address their well-being as a whole and to ensure their development and future.

Slovenia has always been very active in assisting victims of armed conflict and it remains committed to alleviate the pain of children affected by armed conflict, including by providing psychological and physical assistance and rehabilitation. In recent years well over 500 children have been rehabilitated in Slovenia. Social rehabilitation training for pre-school and school counsellors and Mine Risk Education program are just two examples that have shown to be of great importance for strengthening the overall well-being and development of children affected by conflicts.

This commitment was reaffirmed a month ago when Slovenian Parliament adopted a new Resolution on international development cooperation and humanitarian assistance, with assistance in armed conflicts, especially to children, being one of priority areas.

Mr. President,

The issue of children and armed conflict, as a cross-cutting issue, needs a comprehensive approach, where human rights, security and development go hand in hand. It is our common duty to do our utmost to prevent children from suffering. In this respect we urge the Security Council to continue to address the issue of children and armed conflict and to seek the most effective means to improve their situation.