

**Security Council Open Debate on Children and Armed Conflict**  
**Wednesday, 16<sup>th</sup> June 2010, Security Council Chamber (GA-TSC-01)**

***Statement by Ambassador Kleib, Permanent Representative of Indonesia to the United Nations***

Let me begin by joining previous speakers in extending our appreciation to you, Mr. President, for convening today's debate on a very important issue.

We thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report (S/2010/181). We also would like to express our thanks to Ms. Radhika Coomaraswamy, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, Assistant Secretary-General Atul Khare and Ms. Hilde Frafjord Johnson of UNICEF for their respective briefings, as well as to Ms. Manju Gurung for her moving testimony.

There is no doubt that progress has been made in better protecting children in armed conflict. This progress is indeed an encouraging sign. However, despite the advances, children remain victims and targets in many instances. That is truly regrettable. Civilians must be protected at all times: in times of peace and in times of war. This must be emphasized to all parties. It must be made clear to warring parties.

Governments, even in the most complex of situations, have and will always have the main responsibility for providing protection and relief for children. The first and most important step in protecting children is in the prevention of conflict itself. It is essential to build the capacities that can assist Governments in resolving challenges non-violently in order to prevent the outbreak of war.

The task of protecting children during armed conflict becomes more complex every day. The ease with which small arms and sophisticated weapons can be delivered makes our efforts more difficult. It is even more daunting to protect the rights of children in such complex circumstances. Before their rights can be truly protected and promoted, children must first be extracted from armed conflict. It is unrealistic to discuss protecting their rights when parties are at war and children are in the midst of it. Children must never be involved in armed conflicts.

Efforts to protect former child soldiers and child victims should be conducted beyond the framework of security or rights-based issues. Any strategy to resolve armed conflict needs to take into account the reintegration of these children into society through programmatic responses at the community level, in order to increase opportunities for children to participate in society. For that reason, Indonesia has been steadfast in its position that this issue should also be discussed within the social, economic and developmental framework. The Security Council, in cooperation with other United Nations entities and regional organizations, can play a role in guaranteeing the achievement of this objective.

With regard to the report of the Secretary-General, we would wish to see more systematic and focused reporting on the resolutions. Reporting beyond the scope of the annexes should take into account the quality, reliability and objectivity of the information provided, based on the monitoring and reporting mechanism, as stipulated in resolutions 1612 (2005) and 1882 (2009).

Protection of children is the ultimate objective. It is therefore imperative that any consideration of imposing targeted and incremental measures on persistent perpetrators as a last resort should take into account the vulnerabilities of children and avoid unintended consequences to children.

We also wish to underline that extensive consultation with the countries concerned should be further strengthened so as to ensure that the recommendations are implementable and their goals realistic. Furthermore, we call upon the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict and the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to develop and refine a clear exit strategy for countries or parties to be de-listed from the annexes. Such an exit strategy would not only further clarify the steps that the parties need to take, but would also provide transparency and quell doubts about the work of the Office of the Special Representative and the Working Group; that is important if the process is to be seen as legitimate and fair.

To conclude, we recognize the call to address the challenges children face in armed conflicts on an equal footing with gender issues. It is indeed advisable that the work of gender experts be integrated with that of Child Protection Advisers, particularly in the future efforts of peacekeeping missions. War does not make distinctions based on gender. Boys and girls are equally traumatized and victimized by war. Thus, they need the same protection. Efforts by the Security Council

should be to save lives without regard to gender, ensure that warring parties lay down their arms, and establish peace and security, as mandated by the United Nations Charter.