

Security Council Open Debate on Children and Armed Conflict, March 7th, 2014, Security Council Chamber

Statement by Mrs. Morgan, Permanent Mission of Mexico to the United Nations

The topic of this open debate is of great importance to my delegation. Mexico thanks Luxembourg and its Minister for Foreign and European Affairs, Mr. Jean Asselborn, for making it possible for us to assess the progress in our common challenges in this area. Mexico believes that resolution 2143 (2014), adopted today, which we joined as a sponsor, strengthens our commitment to ensure that children be children, not soldiers.

Despite undeniable progress in recent years on the agenda of children and armed conflict made as a result of the cooperation among the Organization, Governments and civil society, thousands of children continue to be recruited as soldiers, sexually abused and excluded from the right to education and other basic services. The efforts and resources devoted by the international community since the adoption of resolution 1261 (1999) makes it possible for us today to use tools to monitor and prevent the recruitment of children in specific contexts, but it is clear that those are not enough. As with other functions of the Organization in the maintenance of peace and international security, the agenda of children and armed conflict calls for financial, human and technical capacities that are tailored to the needs in the field.

The novel tactics used by any parties to conflict, such as attacks on schools and hospitals, call for equally strong, effective and innovative responses from the international community. Mexico believes that the political will we have achieved around this challenge should be accompanied by a robust strategy to strengthen national and international capacities, especially in the justice and security sectors, from prevention to reintegration. In order to prevent the recruitment of children, we need a legal framework that responds to impunity and makes it possible for us to have effective age verification mechanisms. The Council in particular, as well as the United Nations in general, can provide decisive support to ensure that national plans and strategies in the post-conflict stage include care for children among their priorities.

My country condemns attacks on schools and hospitals as a tactic of war, as well as the use of unmanned aerial vehicles and explosives in densely populated areas, given the impact on the civilian population and on minors in particular. Such practices violate obligations under international humanitarian law and human rights law.

We welcome the “Children, not soldiers” campaign, launched yesterday by the Office of the Special Representative and the UNICEF, and reiterate our absolute commitment to its objectives. We also acknowledge Member States for having signed action plans in that regard. We also believe it is necessary to redouble our efforts to ensure respect for the rights of children by non-State actors. To that end, we propose devoting greater financial, human and political resources.

We recognize the work of Sanctions Committees that have included in their working criteria grave violations of the rights of children, and we urge the Security Council to adopt similar parameters in all its other committees.

Lastly, Mexico calls on the Council to continue including specific provisions to protect children in peacekeeping operations and special political missions. We call on troop- and police-contributing countries to such missions to train personnel before deployment so that they can respond in a timely

fashion to challenges in the field.