

**Children and Armed Conflict**  
**12 July 2011, United Nations Security Council Chamber**

***Statement by Mr. Sinhaseni Permanent Representative to Thailand***

Mr. Sinhaseni (Thailand): Let me begin by joining others in congratulating Germany on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for the month of July. On a more personal note, Mr. President, it is a pleasure to see you in the chair. My delegation also congratulates and thanks Germany for holding this open debate, which allows States that would not otherwise have the chance to present their views on this important issue to do so.

Thailand attaches great importance to the promotion and protection of the rights of children. We uphold the best interests of the child in our national policy and its implementation, particularly the right to education and universal access to it, which is guaranteed by the Constitution. We also share the concern of the international community over the issue of children and armed conflict.

We note the efforts and intentions of the Council, as evidenced in today's adoption of resolution 1998 (2011), to better protect children in situations of armed conflict. We support the effective implementation of relevant Security Council resolutions on this issue and would like to offer a few modest suggestions on ways to further improve work on this important issue.

First, according to resolution 1379 (2001) and subsequent resolutions, the scope of the children and armed conflict mandate continues to cover armed conflict situations that are on the Security Council's agenda or that may be brought to the attention of the Security Council by the Secretary-General, in accordance with Article 99 of the Charter of the United Nations, which in his opinion may threaten the maintenance of international peace and security. It has come to our attention, and as my Pakistani colleague has mentioned, that the Office of Legal Affairs has stated, in the 2009 United Nations Juridical Yearbook, its opinion regarding the mandate on children and armed conflict:

“You will recall that for a number of years this terminology has been used by the SRSG for children and armed conflict and included in the title of annex II without a clear mandate of the Security Council, nor, for that matter, its endorsement; a situation which gave rise to legal, political and practical difficulties for the Secretary-General, the SRSG and the Secretariat as a whole.”

In moving forward and resolving such a serious systemic impediment, Thailand would like to suggest that the work of the Special Representative be guided by the definition of situations of armed conflict in accordance with international law. In addition, we hope that the Secretary-General will review and streamline future reports consistent with the authorized mandate. We are gravely concerned that any attempt to reinterpret the mandate without due regard to the original intention of the Security Council will undermine this important mandate and the work of the Council on this issue in the long-run.

Secondly, one can never emphasize enough the importance of coordination. There are various mechanisms within the United Nations system on issues related to children, including the Special Representative on Children and Armed Conflict, the Special Representative on violence against children, the Special Rapporteur on the right to education and the Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography. Rather than competing for work outside one's authorized mandate, coordination among those various mandate-holders is vital to the overall effective work of the Organization and to the rational use of its limited resources. In that regard, we are considering proposing an initiative to enhance coordination among the relevant United Nations actors on children.

We hope that such an initiative will strengthen and increase the overall effectiveness of all existing United Nations tools on the protection of children. Thirdly, it is imperative that information collected and communicated in the production of the reports on children and armed conflict be accurate, objective, reliable and verifiable by the United Nations system. That is the only kind of information that should be the basis for listing parties to armed conflict in the annex to the reports. In Thailand's case, the United Nations country team, including all United Nations agencies, has unrestricted access to all areas of the country and makes regular visits throughout the year.

Cooperation between the United Nations and concerned Governments is also indispensable. There should be no denying that the Government has primary responsibility and should play a central role in promoting and protecting children's rights, with the support of the United Nations. Opinion and information from the United Nations country teams on the ground, in close coordination with concerned Governments, should be given due recognition and form the basis for the annual report. Allegations unverified by the United Nations country team should be removed from the report so as not to affect its credibility.

Fourthly, we welcome the provision in resolution 1998 (2011), adopted today, requesting that Member States communicate relevant information to the Security Council on the implementation of its resolutions on children and armed conflict. Such engagement will further enhance coordination among the various stakeholders, align child-related priorities and ensure greater transparency and accountability in carrying out this mandate.

My fifth and final point is that there is no one-size-fits-all solution to addressing challenges relating to children and armed conflict. Each situation is fraught with political, socio-economic and cultural considerations that make it a unique challenge. We therefore urge the international community to invest more in areas that can make a real difference on the ground.

As was articulated in the statement, with which we fully associate ourselves, delivered by the representative of Switzerland this morning on behalf of the Human Security Network, a group to which Thailand belongs, we feel that demobilization, reintegration and rehabilitation efforts are also crucial to long-term impact. In this regard, investment in areas such as education, basic health care, poverty eradication, the rule of law, good governance and respect for human rights is also paramount to addressing violence against children more comprehensively and effectively. At the end of the day, we must take a more integrated, holistic approach to the issue. Cooperation between United Nations agencies and the Governments concerned should be based on mutual respect and sincere dialogue in order to facilitate the effective implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions.