

12. Mar 2018

The Group of Friends: Statement on children and armed conflict

Interactive dialogue with Ms. Victoria Gamba, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict. Statement, 6 March 2018.

As delivered by The Group of Friends (Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Chile, Croatia, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia , Germany, Guatemala, Hungary, Italy, Jordan, Liechtenstein, Luxemburg, Morocco, Netherlands, Norway, Slovenia, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland, France, United Kingdom, Uruguay).

Mr. President,

It is my pleasure to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of Friends on Children and Armed Conflict in Geneva comprised of 26 States and co-chaired by Uruguay and Belgium. We reiterate our strong support for the mandate of the SRSG for Children and Armed Conflict and we stand ready, Ms. Gamba, to continue supporting your efforts in Geneva and elsewhere in order to advance the CAAC agenda.

We also welcome your first report submitted to the Human Rights Council. We share your deep concern regarding the humanitarian access which continues to be regularly denied in numerous situations, even when it is intended for children who are particularly vulnerable to malnutrition and disease. We therefore urge all States as well as non-state actors concerned to ensure the rapid and unimpeded humanitarian access of both personnel and assistance to all children affected by armed conflicts.

We also share your assessment regarding the disproportionate impact of conflict on girls and the importance of taking into account their specific needs when

implementing separation and reintegration programs. A common estimate is that girls make up to 40% of all children associated with armed groups globally, yet it is now well established that girls face distinct forms of stigma and are often harder to reach, demobilize and support than boys.

Ms. Gamba,

In this context, how can we develop gender- and age-appropriate reintegration programs and what are the best practices in this regard?

I thank you.