

## HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL – 40<sup>th</sup> Session

### INTERACTIVE DIALOGUE with Ms. Virginia Gamba, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict

Geneva, 5<sup>th</sup> March 2019

#### Statement of the Group of Friends on CAAC

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 25 States<sup>1</sup> and co-chaired by Belgium and Uruguay. We reiterate our strong support for the mandate of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict and for the advancement of the CAAC agenda.

We welcome the work of the Special Representative and share her deep concern regarding the scale and severity of the grave violations that are increasingly being committed against children in armed conflicts, in particular child abduction by parties to conflict, including across borders, and children who accompanied or were recruited and used as foreign fighters. These children are not only victims of use, killing, maiming, enslavement, sexual exploitation, constant fear, indoctrination and psychological pressure, but may also be witnesses and/or alleged perpetrators of violations of human rights.

We therefore call on States to increase accountability for perpetrators of all six grave violations including child abduction. We also urge States to focus on rehabilitation and reintegration of children associated with armed forces and armed groups, to ensure international juvenile justice standards and due process are applied to any criminal proceedings involving a child perpetrator as well as to prevent secondary victimization. Children successfully reintegrated into their families and communities can also be an important source of resilience.

We commend the efforts of the Special Representative to address these issues, in particular the work on developing guidance for practitioners in the field on monitoring, ending, preventing and responding to child abduction and the recent launch of the Global Coalition for reintegration.

Ms. Special Representative,

Can you share some examples of best practices of effective reintegration and rehabilitation programmes for child victims of armed conflict situations?

In light of the recent UNODC report on trafficking in armed conflict, what efforts are being made to join up the work being done in Vienna at the UNODC with the work of your office?

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<sup>1</sup>The Group of Friends on Children and Armed Conflict includes the following States: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Chile, Croatia, Czechia, Estonia, Germany, Guatemala, Hungary, Italy, Jordan, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Morocco, Netherlands, Norway, Slovenia, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland, France, United Kingdom, Uruguay.

I thank you.