

PERMANENT MISSION OF INDIA TO THE UN, GENEVA

HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

18TH SESSION (12-30 Sept 2011)

**Interactive Dialogue with the Special Representative of the Secretary-
General for Children and Armed Conflict, Ms Radhika**

Coomaraswamy

(12 Sep 2011)

Statement by India

Madame President,

We thank the Special Representative, Ms Radhika Coomaraswamy, for her annual report and presentation that continue to provide us valuable and crucial updates on this important issue of great concern. India attaches considerable importance to the promotion and protection of the rights of the child, our deep commitment being reflected in the fundamental rights enshrined in the Constitution, relevant domestic legislations and our ratification of the Convention as well as its two Optional Protocols. India remains supportive of the Special Representative's useful work that has enhanced our collective understanding of this issue.

2. In her latest report, the Special Representative has elaborated the complex issue of accountability of children involved in armed conflicts and their "access to justice". In this regard, we have noted her recommendation that any sanction imposed on the child should be to promote the child's rehabilitation and reintegration into the community and not as punishment. We share her view that reintegration is a key post-conflict process and that "child disarmament, demobilization and reintegration should target the entire community rather than just the former combatants".

3. Madame President, We are delighted to take note of the release of 10,000 children associated with armed groups since the last report by the Special Representative. We appreciate the sustained engagement and pressure on parties to the conflict through her field visits. We also welcome the action taken and commitments made by Governments and other parties to the conflict during the Special Representative's visits to countries mentioned in her report. We encourage the parties to honour their commitments made to protect children and to strengthen adherence to international standards in this regard.

4. We share the Special Representative's concern on the growing trend of attacks on schools and hospitals during armed conflicts as well as the use of schools as recruiting grounds for children and military purposes. In this regard, her recommendation for concerted efforts through a global campaign or partnership is a noteworthy idea that could spur creative solutions to deal with these issues.

5. Madame President, the Special Representative has noted that processes of ratification and implementation of the Optional Protocols place resource burden on certain states willing to ratify the instrument. In this regard, her encouragement of leadership by one or more countries that have already ratified to provide guidance and other forms of assistance needs contemplation. In her recommendations, the Special Representative has pointed out the central role of the international community and the states in protecting children within their territories. We would also request the Special Representative to share her thoughts on measures that she thinks might be useful to induce meaningful action by persistent non-state violators and action against them when required.

Thank you, Madame President.