

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

Statement by Mr. Aisi, Permanent Representative to Papua New Guinea

Mr. Aisi (Papua New Guinea): I take this opportunity to congratulate the German delegation on its assumption of the presidency of the Council for the month of July, as well as to thank the delegation of Gabon for its leadership of the Council during the month of June.

We thank you, Mr. President, and your delegation for convening this important thematic debate and for your effective leadership on this issue. We also acknowledge the fact that the Council has remained seized of this important matter, especially through the continued oversight and consistent support of its Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict. We strongly believe that it is important that the Council remain seized of the matter.

Papua New Guinea, having ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child, continues to support its implementation, more specifically as it relates to children in situations of armed conflict. We also continue to support the four core principles of the Convention, which are, first, non-discrimination; secondly, devotion to the best interests of the child; thirdly, the right to life, survival and development; and, lastly, respect for the views of the child.

While the organization Security Council Report's recent fourth Cross-Cutting Report on Children and Armed Conflict, dated 6 July, notes that much has been achieved, much more remains to be done.

In that respect, we observe and express our deep concern for the continued numerous violations perpetrated against children around the world. Furthermore, we would note the following six specific grave violations against children of which, we believe, the Council is aware and must continue to examine: the killing and maiming of children; sexual violence against children; the recruitment and use of children as child soldiers; attacks on schools and hospitals; the denial of humanitarian access to children; and abductions of children. My country therefore supports the Council's resolutions that seek to protect children, especially resolutions 1612 (2005) and 1882 (2009).

The present debate is also about attacks on schools and hospitals. My delegation underlines the importance of schools and the right of children to education. We therefore call for the creation of zones of peace for schools and urge the Council to support actions towards securing schools around the world.

In conclusion, my country reiterates its support to, and commends the work of, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict, Ms. Radhika Coomaraswamy. We also commend the relevant United Nations agencies, including UNICEF and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, for their commitment to addressing this area of critical concern to the international community. We pledge our support for their work. Finally, if the children of the world are to become our future then surely we, the international community, have an obligation to ensure a better future for them.