

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

Statement by Mr. Shin Dong Ik, Representative of Republic of Korea

At the outset, I would like express my appreciation to you, Sir, for organizing this meaningful open debate on children and armed conflict. I would also like to commend the work of the Security Council and its Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict to end violations against children and to protect their rights. My delegation would also like to applaud Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and Special Representative Radhika Coomaraswamy for working tirelessly to lessen the plight of children in armed conflict around the world. In this regard, we welcome the most recent comprehensive report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict (S/2011/250).

Taking this opportunity, my delegation would like to note the positive developments on this issue since the historic adoption of resolution 1882 (2009) and the expansion of the triggers. Specific achievements have been realized in the key areas of recruitment, and an expansion of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes has been seen. The Republic of Korea also welcomes the efforts of the Working Group thus far in 2011, including its adoption of four sets of conclusions on Afghanistan, Chad, Somalia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In this connection, we urge the relevant Governments to establish action plans to ban the recruitment of child soldiers.

We are particularly pleased to note the increase in country-specific reports of the Secretary-General in 2010 that contain information on the protection of children, as recommended in resolution 1460 (2003). This is a helpful step in the right direction but should be scaled up even further, if possible, to include more references to the protection of children in country-specific reports with a view towards full compliance with resolution 1460 (2003).

However, despite the aforementioned progress, my delegation remains concerned by the perpetual plight of children affected by armed conflict around the world. There is still widespread impunity for grave crimes perpetrated against children in many countries. While we note some of the steps in the right direction — including investigations, arrests, trials and prosecutions that Governments have committed to address — the issue of impunity continues to prevail in too many conflict areas.

Indeed, the Council must stand resolute and apply robust, targeted measures to confront these persistent perpetrators. In this connection, my delegation continues to support the Secretary-General's recommendations that the Council consider including child recruitment and use in the mandate of all of its sanctions committees, including those that deal with counter-terrorism. Incorporating more expertise in the field of child protection on the Council's sanction committee expert groups, as well as scaling up reporting on violations against children, would be steps in the right direction.

Many persistent violators, in addition to child recruitment, have been responsible for committing other grave violations against children, such as rape and sexual violence. In this connection, we continue to support the annex listing of parties accused of rape and sexual violence against children in the report of the Secretary-General, pursuant to resolution 1882 (2009), as well as the adoption of resolution 1960 (2010), which specifically established a mechanism for monitoring and reporting sexual violence in conflict areas on the Council's agenda. My delegation encourages close consultations between the Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict and the Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict in this regard.

My delegation believes that the adoption of resolution 1998 (2011) today is yet another milestone in the Council's work on the issue of children and armed conflict, and we are confident that it will go a long way towards further protecting children around the world and send a strong message that such crimes will not be tolerated.

We hope that today's open discussion will continue to increase the Council's consequential deliberation on this critical issue. The Republic of Korea will continue to stand with the international community on this issue to ensure the protection of children around the world.