

**Security Council Open Debate on Children in Armed Conflict, June 17th 2013, Security Council Chamber**

*Statement by Mr. Sinhaseni, Permanent Mission of Thailand to the United Nations.*

Let me join others in congratulating the United Kingdom presidency of the Security Council for convening this significant debate. I also thank Ms. Leila Zerrougui, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict; Mr. Hervé Ladsous, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations; Ms. Yoka Brandt; and Mr. Gregory Ramm for their important statements. Allow me to recognize the efforts exerted by Luxembourg as Chair of the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict. The presence of the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Luxembourg underscores the importance that Luxembourg places on its chairmanship.

On the issue of child protection, Thailand is no less concerned than any other Government. Last September, Thailand was the first country to sign the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the communications procedure. Our current efforts to harmonize domestic laws and regulations and the relevant protective mechanisms in service to our children further underscores our commitments to enhancing child protection. Our cooperation with UNICEF and other relevant United Nations agencies has been fruitful, constructive and efficient for many decades, and it continues to be enhanced.

Although Thailand is neither in a situation of armed conflict nor on the Security Council's agenda, Thailand attaches great importance to the issue of children and armed conflict. We condemn all grave violations and crimes against children in situations of armed conflict, and we support the effective implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions on the issue.

During the open debate on children and armed conflict held last September (see S/PV.6838), Thailand offered our humble views on certain aspects of how the United Nations could better perform its tasks to address the issue of children based on the interest of the child and national specificities. Let me reiterate our views.

First, given the number of United Nations actors working on child-related issues, it is absolutely imperative that each and everyone has a clear mandate and that those mandates and responsibilities are respected. The United Nations is a principle- and rules-based Organization. Respective mandates cannot and must not be conducted, expanded or interpreted arbitrarily. The misinterpretation or stretching of such mandates will not lead us to our common goal of enhancing child protection, but can rather weaken the joint effort of the United Nations and inadvertently put children at higher risk. Mandates should be carefully drafted, endorsed, reviewed and adapted, not in competition with one other but in support of the comparative advantages and respective roles that each United Nations actor should play.

Secondly, situations on the ground in different countries are unique and require different approaches and expertise. Therefore, the United Nations absolutely needs to work in close cooperation with and with the consent of concerned Governments, particularly when it has a mandate to engage with non-State parties in order to avoid unintended negative consequences.

Thirdly, the Secretary-General's report on children and armed conflict (S/2013/245) and the appropriate approach to bring about successful solutions rely heavily on data collection and unbiased analysis. We value receiving important information from all stakeholders, including civil society as appropriate, but such information needs to be accurate, objective, reliable and verifiable. Thailand wants to emphasize strongly the importance of the involvement and consent of Member States in

preparing the report from the outset.

Fourthly, more new parties to the conflict continue to be listed in the annexes. In this connection, it is imperative, as well as a logical expectation, to see both listing and de-listing criteria clearly specified in the report after being discussed among the Council members and formally endorsed by the Council, as stipulated in operative paragraph 19 (d) of resolution 1882 (2009). Thailand encourages the Council to give equal importance to both listing and de-listing, as well as to carry out the necessary discussions on this issue in a transparent manner, in close consultation with affected Member States.

Thailand cannot stress strongly enough the importance we attach to the mandates of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict and the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict. We believe that children and women alike must stop bearing the brunt of war and conflicts. The Security Council has a clear role to play in their protection in situations of armed conflict or in situations threatening international peace and security, but this role has to be applied with precision and within the framework of a clearly-defined mandate.

For other situations outside the realm of armed conflict, in accordance with international humanitarian law, an inclusive and holistic remedy must be adopted to ensure the promotion and protection of basic human rights, sustainable development efforts and security considerations. Anything else could exacerbate the situation on the ground and become a self-serving prophecy when the wrong remedy is applied to the wrong situation. A case in a point is Thailand, which is neither in a situation of armed conflict nor on the Security Council agenda. The issue of independent monitoring and access should not be raised because it is simply not in the mandate and will not be granted. Moreover, the Thai Government and the United Nations country team have already put in place mutually agreed arrangements and continue to enjoy very close cooperation.

Finally, the diversity of views by Member States should not be misinterpreted as a sign of opposition to this important cause, as negligence or non-cooperation, but instead as critical input to strengthen and sustain the work of the United Nations in the protection of our children for the long term. I believe we all aim to strengthen Governments' capacity to protect our children, our future.