
**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR HARDEEP SINGH PURI,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE, DURING THE OPEN DEBATE OF
THE UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL ON THE AGENDA ITEM
"CHILDREN AND ARMED CONFLICT" ON 16 JUNE 2010, NEW
YORK**

Mr. President,

Let me begin by congratulating Mexico on its assumption of the Presidency of the Security Council for the month of June 2010.

Mr. President,

The use of children in situations of armed conflict is an abhorrent practice that militates against fundamental principles of humanity. There can be no excuse for subjecting children to the depravity and ravages of armed conflict.

I am participating in this debate today because the Secretary General's latest report on 'Children and armed conflict' mentions instances of recruitment and use of children and systematic attacks on schools by Maoist armed groups in some parts of central and eastern India.

At the outset I should make it clear that the violence being perpetrated by these groups, though completely abhorrent and

condemnable, certainly does not make this a zone of armed conflict as defined by international law. We, therefore, cannot accept reporting on these incidents as falling within the mandate of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict.

Having clarified this specific point, I would like to state that the Government of India is seized of such abhorrent acts targeting innocent children by these armed groups. We strongly condemn these despicable acts of Naxal violence and are fully committed to controlling such diabolical activities.

The Government of India, along with the concerned state governments, has developed a holistic strategy to address Naxal issues by focusing on security, development, administration and the public perception. We have initiated awareness raising programmes through media and mass contact, including by the police through their community policing programmes. The entire government machinery has been dutifully implementing the extant laws, including laws that prohibit child labour.

Mr. President,

India is a State Party to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocols. We are, of course, fully committed to meet our obligations under these instruments.

Thank you, Mr President.

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