

**Statement by Ambassador Asoke Kumar Mukerji,
Permanent Representative of India at the Debate of the United Nations
Security Council on the Agenda Item “Children and Armed Conflict” on
June 17, 2013 in New York**

At the outset, I thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this debate on the issue of Children and Armed Conflict.

I would like to thank Ms. Leila Zerrougui SRSG for Children and Armed Conflict and other briefers today for their statements.

Mr. President,

During the past twelve years, subsequent to the adoption of resolution 1379 in 2001, the issue of Children and Armed Conflict has been a regular item on the Security Council’s agenda. A great deal of progress has been made to implement the provisions of these resolutions. However, a lot more remains to be done, especially as the nature of armed conflict threatening the maintenance of international peace and security has metamorphosed significantly during the past decade. This is evident from the Secretary General’s reports on this subject, and the comments made by several delegations during our debate today.

Mr. President,

India has been a strong supporter of peacekeeping operations mandated by the Security Council. Over 160,000 Indian troops have served so far under the Blue Flag in all corners of the globe. The experience that we have acquired during the course of this service makes us acutely conscious that adequate resources are still not being made available to fulfil the mandate of UN Security Council Resolutions on this subject. Specifically, we call for more Child Protection Advisors to be deployed in peacekeeping operations.

During these operations, especially in recent times, UN peacekeepers from India have also come across the outrageous practice of children being used as combatants in armed conflicts, notably by so-called militia groups. There is need for the Security Council to examine the implications of this phenomenon on the Council’s mandates for peacekeeping operations.

Mr. President,

In the wider framework of the subject of our debate today, we would encourage the SRSG to continue to work with national authorities in developing capacities to deal with children in armed conflict. Support for efforts by national authorities to ensure accountability should be a key focus area. The monitoring and reporting mechanism of

the UN envisages involvement and close cooperation with the country concerned for its effective functioning, and can play a useful role in this regard.

It is also important that UN access to non-State armed groups is carried under the cooperation framework between the UN and the concerned government.

It is imperative in this regard that action-plans signed between the concerned governments and the United Nations are implemented rigorously.

The United Nations' Disarmament, Demobilization, and Rehabilitation (DDR) and the Security Sector Reform (SSR) programmes, *inter alia*, must focus on guaranteeing the safe return of these children and their reintegration into society.

We believe that the UN Peacekeeping Fund (PBF) can be used to formulate projects to focus on reintegration of children affected by armed conflict.

Mr. President,

There is one issue regarding the report of the Secretary General placed before us today on which my delegation would like to join others before me in expressing concern.

OP16 of resolution 1379 requested the Secretary General to report on situations that are on the Security Council's agenda or that may be brought to the attention of the Security Council by the Secretary General, in accordance with Article 99 of the Charter, which specifically limit such issues to those that, in his opinion, threaten the maintenance of international peace and security.

All subsequent resolutions, which draw upon OP16 of 1379, have reiterated this framework for the Secretary General's report. However, we note with concern that despite this clearly spelt out mandate, the report of the Secretary General has included issues which cannot be considered a threat to the maintenance of international peace and security as laid down in Article 99 of the Charter.

In our view, by going beyond the mandate, the Secretary General's report also contains the potential of diverting our already scarce resources in dealing with the issue of children and armed conflict to areas beyond the parameters of UN Security Council resolutions on the subject.

We request the Council to take note of this concern while considering the report.

In conclusion, Mr. President, let me reiterate India's strong support for the objectives set out in Security Council resolutions on the issue of children and armed conflict, and our continued commitment to help achieve these objectives.

I thank you.

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