

H.E. Ambassador Cho Hyun

Permanent Representative

UNSC Arria-Formula Meeting on “Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on violations against children in situations of armed conflict”

7 May 2021

New York

Mr. Chair,

I would like to first thank you for convening today’s timely Arria-formula meeting. I also take this opportunity to reiterate my delegation’s full support for the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, and we welcome her new study on the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on children affected by armed conflict.

My delegation is deeply concerned over the multifaceted negative effects of the pandemic on the rights of children.

The pandemic has caused a major disruption in education, health, and the well-being of children, with disproportionately significant impacts on those in armed conflict situations. Schools are closed, and family income has decreased. Humanitarian assistance is

hindered and reintegration programs for former child soldiers have been interrupted. The UN's ability to monitor, prevent, and end violations against children are undermined. The most worrying of all is that these negative impacts are likely to have long-lasting consequences.

Mr. Chair,

Against this troubling backdrop, while aligning myself with the statement delivered by Canada on behalf of the Group of Friends on Children and Armed Conflict, I would like to raise the following points in my national capacity.

First, Security Council resolutions 2532 and 2565 must be fully implemented. We call on all parties to conflict to respond to the demand of the Council for a general and immediate cessation of hostilities, which is vital for a successful response to the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as for ensuring the safe and unhindered distribution of vaccines. We fully support the efforts of the Secretary-General in this regard, particularly his urgent appeal for an immediate global ceasefire.

As stipulated in the aforementioned resolutions, full, safe, and unhindered humanitarian access to children in armed conflict must be ensured to address the negative impacts of the ongoing

pandemic. As Co-Chair of the Group of Friends of Solidarity for Global Health Security, the Republic of Korea is working with the member countries to scale up efforts to ensure pandemic preparedness and response, drawing on humanitarian aspect. We also highlight that denial of humanitarian access is a grave violation against children, as defined in the relevant Security Council resolutions.

Second, we need to urgently strengthen our efforts to provide quality education to children in situations affected by conflict. Education is a right, and it is one of the surest ways to achieve sustainable peace and security.

In this regard, we need a coherent and coordinated approach that fully takes into account the triple nexus of peace, development, and humanitarian efforts. Education is inherently a long-term project that requires a cross-sectorial approach, and it is thus essential that various UN bodies across the three pillars work as one. As a member of the Steering Committee of the Global Coalition for Reintegration of Child Soldiers, we have consistently called for the need to ensure inclusive, equal access to education for all children affected by armed conflict, thereby helping them build resilience for breaking the cycle of violence.

Third, we strongly support the role of UN peacekeeping operations

in facilitating a protective environment for children affected by armed conflict. We emphasize the importance of its child protection mandates and the need to provide peacekeepers with adequate pre-deployment training on child protection issues.

Particularly, we highlight the crucial role of child protection advisers in peacekeeping missions and believe that they should be provided with adequate resources. We look forward to furthering our discussions on protection of civilians including children at the upcoming Peacekeeping Ministerial to be held in Seoul in December of this year.

Last but not least, we must ensure accountability for all violations against children. Indeed, strengthening accountability and ending impunity is the key to ending the six grave violations against children and preventing recurrence. We should also support and strengthen our tools to document and address violations, including the United Nations Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism, the Security Council Working Group, and the Secretary-General's Annual Report.

Mr. Chair,

The Republic of Korea reaffirms its driving commitment to working with the UN, as well as all Member States, with a view towards

**better protecting children in situations affected by armed conflict
from the devastating impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.**

Thank you. /END/