



Permanent Mission of Italy
UN - Geneva

55th session of the Human Rights Council
Interactive Dialogue with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General
for Children and Armed Conflict
13 March 2024

Statement delivered by Ambassador Vincenzo Grassi,
Permanent Representative of Italy to the United Nations in Geneva

Mr. President,

Italy aligns itself with the EU statement and thanks the Special Representative for her presentation.

Millions of children are affected by conflicts around the world and suffer violations and abuses of their human rights. Attacks on educational facilities, denial of humanitarian access, abductions and forced recruitment deprive children of their right to childhood, impact their dignity and reduce the availability of safe, child-friendly spaces.

Italy is particularly concerned about the situation of young women and girls in conflict areas, who are exposed to heightened risks of discrimination based on harmful gender norms and stereotypes. In this regard, States must implement special measures to ensure that all girls have continued and safe access to education. An effective reintegration of children recruited by armed groups is highly crucial.

We therefore urge States to: 1) ratify the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child on the protection of children in armed conflict; 2) endorse the “*Safe Schools Declaration*”; 3) criminalize child recruitment and use.

Italy will continue to support the efforts of the Special Representative, the OHCHR and UNICEF to build global partnerships aimed at addressing and preventing any violation and abuse of child rights, and investing in their future.

I thank you