



GENEVA CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS
ADVANCEMENT AND GLOBAL DIALOGUE

UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

Interactive Dialogue with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children

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PRESENTATION OF THE 2024 ACTIVITIES

Ms. Najat MAALLA M'JID, Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) on Violence against Children

Through 2024, the SRSG led a year-long campaign which has generated an unprecedented multi-stakeholder mobilisation triggering strong global political commitment to end violence against children. This culminated in the first-ever Global Ministerial Conference on Ending Violence against Children in Bogotá on 7-8 November 2024, co-hosted by the governments of Colombia and Sweden alongside WHO, UNICEF and the SRSG's mandate.

Representatives from over 120 countries actively participated and hundreds of pledges were made outlining concrete and context-specific action that will be taken to accelerate efforts to end violence against children. The [Pathfinding Global Alliance on Ending Violence Against Children](#), launched at the conference, has united 42 Member States and continues to expand rapidly. It supports the sharing and acceleration of concrete action to end violence, including through the development of a marketplace for knowledge sharing.



During her country visits and engagement with Member States, she continues witnessing many good examples of how states are increasing investment to end violence against children, despite various challenges. To further support the investment case for ending violence against children, a toolkit will be available in the coming weeks to facilitate the assessment of the costs of violence against children, but also the returns on investing in violence prevention. During her 13 country visits across all regions and through her engagement with more than 31 Member States presenting their voluntary national reviews in 2024, the SRSG was encouraged by the action being taken to strengthen national and local child protection systems.

The SRSG has continued engaging closely with hundreds of civil society organisations, faith-based organisations and religious leaders, including through organising the sixth forum of the Global Networks of Religions for Children. **Catalysing private sector action** has been another priority for my mandate, particularly in connection with the tech industry and the travel and tourism sector. As chair of the Interagency Working Group on Violence Against Children, she has continued to support coordinated action by the UN system on tackling violence against children.

She cooperates closely with the SRSG for Children and Armed Conflicts, the CRC, Special Procedures and other UN bodies. As chair of the UN Task Force on Children Deprived of Liberty, she continues supporting states through documenting and sharing alternatives to deprivation of liberty. In 2024, the SRSG also engaged directly with over 2,730 children from various backgrounds and regions. Their views were key in defining her Office's new strategies.

PRESENTATION OF THE THEMATIC REPORT

The report presented today by the SRSG focusses on the **alarming increase in trafficking in children** and the urgent need to end this crime. According to the latest global report on trafficking in persons, children account for 38% of victims detected globally with a significant increase among girls. Trafficking in children intersects with other forms of violence and children often experience multiple forms of abuse and exploitation before, during and after being trafficked. The consequences of trafficking on children's family and entire communities are devastating and long-lasting, resulting in an intergenerational cycle of violence and social exclusion. This complex crime is driven by **three interrelated factors** that must be addressed simultaneously.

First, **children's vulnerability to trafficking** is worsening worldwide. Poverty, food insecurity, humanitarian crisis, conflict, forced displacement, violence along with social and gender inequality further drives the increase in this crime.

Second, **trafficking networks are growing alarmingly** and more and more organised. These crimes are also being facilitated by evolving digital technologies. Artificial intelligence is used by traffickers to enhance existing transnational criminal activity by reducing costs, increasing revenue and reducing the likelihood of detection.

Third, **demand for exploitative services of children is on the rise**, such as for sexual exploitation online and offline, domestic servitude, child marriage, recruitment into armed groups, forced begging and forced criminal activities. Conviction for trafficking in children remains low and perpetrators continue to enjoy impunity. Corruption, stigma, fear and the lack of protection limits children's ability to report and seek justice.



As a result, trafficking in children remains a low cost and low risk, yet high profit crime generating billions of dollars annually. As outlined in the SRSG's report, many actions are undertaken by states and other stakeholders at global, regional and local level. But despite these efforts, responses to trafficking in children are not evolving fast enough to keep pace with the evolution and scale of the crime.

But ending trafficking in children is urgent and possible if we **invest more in social and child protection systems**, including in humanitarian context, and if we strengthen accountability to end impunity of perpetrator. Evidence-based solutions exist and are outlined in the ICAT call for accelerated action to prevent and end child trafficking. The implementation of this comprehensive and coordinated action, which addresses the multifaceted nature of this crime, is key to ending child trafficking and violence against children by 2030.

Involving survivors and children at risk safely and ethically in the design of anti-trafficking response is also essential to effectively eradicate this crime. The SRSG concludes with the powerful words of a girl she met recently who was a victim of trafficking. She told - 'there is no justice. I am locked in a shelter while the abusers are not paying the price. It is unfair that there are no courts.' This call requires an urgent response. So we need to act better and faster to put an end to this crime.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The SRSG expresses her deepest gratitude for all the remarks and states' commitment to put an end, to prevent, to invest in child protection and well-being. The SRSG also appreciates the ongoing implementation of countries' pledges in Bogotá as well as countries' commitment as members of the Pathfinding Global Alliance on Ending Violence Against Children that is expanding and focussing on strengthening the country system, local system to make sure that this cross-sectoral child protection systems are easily accessible to all children and their caregivers independently of their status.

On **investing in child protection and well-being**, the SRSG recalls that violence intersects also with various crimes like trafficking. So, it is important to invest, as violence against children has a huge cost, human and economic cost that can reach up to 11% of national GDP. It is really important really to see it as an investment since the early childhood and to make sure that we are bringing all the sectors together. Social protection is important too. Education, health, justice, law enforcement, having community engagement, children involvement on board, religious leaders can bring an enabling, positive development.

Trafficking is on the rise, and even the number presented is not reflecting the truth because many, many cases are not reported, as it is not easy to report when you are victims of traffic. Why? Because you have fear, fear of reprisal, you are not free. But also because of currently the increase of national policies regarding security border, many victims of trafficking are seen as illegal migrants or irregular migrants and deported and not seen as really victims of trafficking. **Trafficking is a gendered crime** affecting girls more importantly, mainly in sexual exploitation, in child marriage, in forced labour. But we do not have to forget that boys can be also trafficked for sexual exploitation.



We know what needs to be done. We know that it is a crime based on **increased vulnerabilities**, some are due to social disparity, to poverty, to food insecurity, to forced displacement. So we need to make sure that we are addressing that in our responses, in our development plan, in our territorial plan. What really matters is how we embed our responses in already existing plans. **Social inequality and gender inequality** must also be addressed. Child protection also has to be embedded in humanitarian responses, what is currently missing. States need to make sure that a humanitarian response is not only about providing basic services, but also making sure to have child protection system in place where children can report.

On **de-institutionalisation programmes**, many children are in orphanage or in institutions, and there is also trafficking. Many children living in institutions are also victims of trafficking, and this phenomenon is on the rise due to the demand for child services, sexual exploitation, child marriage, forced begging, enrolment in criminal gangs, etc. This concerns many sectors such as mining, tourism, business, etc. Therefore, it is also equally important to **address the demand**. For example, the World Travel and Tourism Council just adopted strong child safeguarding and child protection measures. There is also the EU directive imposing due diligence in all the business and supply chain. Fighting trafficking also means protecting children online. Equally important is to tackle the lack of accountability, because access to justice is still too difficult.

Emphasizing its crucial importance, the SRSG explains that **child participation** is about ethical, meaningful participation with representativity of all children and based on the child safeguarding principle, based on the international standards and the principle of no harm. It is important to listen to all children, be they in refugee camps, in conflict zones, or from minority. The SRSG also explains her Office is working with **religious leaders and faith-based organisation**. Regarding the implementation of child safeguarding, not only with the Vatican, but also the World Council of Churches, her Office is working with a global religious network of religion for children on positive practises and in order to fight the harmful ones.

INTERACTIVE DIALOGUE

Views Expressed by State Delegations

Jordan jointly with the Arab group support the need to take accelerated and urgent actions in coordination that are in concert and in coordination with each other to address the increasing trafficking in children and abuse of children. The Arab group shares the same concern over the growing rate of using and abusing children despite the different actions to address this growing crime. It commends the SRSG's engagement in various Arab initiatives, including the Arab Conference on Children and Development. Respecting the rights of the child is a cornerstone for any effort to protect children from violence. The Arab countries are keen to address the risks and dangers against children because of the ongoing conflicts. A workshop on the modern technology challenges, including the sixth forum of the Telecommunications Society, has been also launched. The suffering of the Gazan children are indescribable due to the starvation and displacement that they are facing.

On behalf of the **Nordic-Baltic countries, Iceland** thanks the SRSG for her report and for her unwavering commitment to combat violence against children. The Nordic-Baltic countries are deeply concerned about the continuous rise in violence against children globally and remain alarmed by the increase in child trafficking, including trafficking for sexual exploitation, forced



labour, and criminality. Every child has the right to be protected from violence regardless of their circumstances. Millions of children of all ages, genders, nationalities, and backgrounds remain vulnerable to trafficking. Armed conflicts, climate change, gender inequality, and socioeconomic disparities are additional aggravating factors. These and others demand scaled-up efforts both nationally and internationally. Special Representative, traffickers often exploit gaps in legal frameworks and enforcement across borders.

On behalf of the **African group, Ghana** commends the SRSG for comprehensive reports and continued commitment to addressing violence against children worldwide. Violence against children remains a grave human rights concern. The devastating consequences for children, families, and society. The African group is saddened with the alarming increase in trafficking in children and emphasise the urgent need to scale up the effort to end this form of violence against children. At the regional level, the African Union (AU) African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of Children continue to play a crucial role in monitoring and addressing violence against children. The AU's agenda 2063 and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, which provide for protection of children from exploitation, have been instrumental in reinforcing regional commitments to ending all forms of violence, abuse, and exploitation of children. The African group emphasises the need to strengthen the implementation and enforcement of child protection laws. In conclusion, the group reaffirms its commitment to ending violence against children in Africa and beyond. No child should be in fear of violence, and we must collectively ensure that the rights, dignity, and well-being are fully protected.

Costa Rica jointly with Kenya and 33 countries explain that the first ever global ministerial conference on violence against children held in Colombia generated unprecedented political commitment addressing the grim reality faced by the one billion children affected by violence each year. Children have the fundamental right to be protected from violence. Of all of the forms of violence against children, corporal punishment remains the most prevalent and socially accepted. Almost 20 years ago, the UN Secretary-General called for the universal provision of all corporal punishment. Multiple treaty bodies and regional mechanisms have also condemned it, recognising it as a clear violation of children's human rights. Yet in over 125 states, corporal punishment remains legally permissible, continuing to undermine the human rights, dignity, and well-being of children. The medical and public health implications of corporal punishment are well documented. Scientific research has established that corporal punishment not only inflicts direct physical harm, but also has long-standing developmental, mental, and cognitive impairment repercussions. In light of this overwhelming evidence, they wish to draw the attention to this human rights issue and encourage states to take appropriate legislative reforms accompanied by other measures such as awareness-raising and educational initiatives to prohibit and eliminate all corporal punishment of children in all settings. They also call upon states to also promote non-violent forms of discipline that will uphold children's dignity, physical integrity, and equal protection under the law.

Kuwait is keen on protecting and promoting the rights of the child and is committed to the international instruments to this respect. In this regard, the Centre for the Protection of Children was created in 2024 to combat domestic violence. A number of legislations and initiatives were launched to protect the well-being of the child. In terms of human trafficking, especially over the Internet, all potentials and capabilities of Kuwait have been harnessed to address this scourge.



Last October, electronic communications have started on the public prosecution site to address this crime. In conclusion, Kuwait calls upon all countries to rise up to their commitments in promoting this vulnerable group and to address all their needs. It reaffirms that a safe online environment must be created to promote and protect the rights of the children and to hold the perpetrators accountable.

Luxembourg hails the SRSG's continued commitment for effective participation and strengthened protection for children. Luxembourg has supported the SRSG's campaign, which resulted in the convening of the first Ministerial Conference on Ending Violence against Children. Luxembourg participated in this conference, and renewed its commitment to her mandate. Technological progress and the proliferation of conflicts across the world disproportionately affect children, and they call for particular attention from the international community. It is incumbent upon us all to find the way to better protect our children. Children are our future. Luxembourg remains concerned at the rise in child trafficking. Children account for 38% of victims across the world. Trafficking exposes children to other forms of violence, such as forced labour and sexual exploitation.

Germany reiterates its support for the mandate and the SRSG's work. Multiple crises around the world continue to threaten the rights of children across the globe and unfortunately we are still a long way from fulfilling the sustainable development goal 16.2, the promise of ending all forms of violence against children by 2030. We therefore welcome the Bogota call to action highlighting that we all need to do more for our children and our future. The alarming rise in child trafficking as highlighted in your report, Madam Special Representative, is particularly concerning. In an endeavour to counter this in Germany, the country has adopted a national action plan against human trafficking with a specific focus on vulnerable groups such as women in precarious circumstances, children, young people and affected persons in connection with flight and migration.

Saudi Arabia took note with great interest of the report and we are committed to protection of children against all forms of exploitation and violation, including human trafficking, which is a blatant violation of children's rights. Saudi Arabia is committed to enforcing human rights and attaches great importance to this issue, given its national and international commitment to provide the children with an environment to prosper and develop away from violence and harm. In this regard, Saudi Arabia has passed anti-human trafficking law and acceded to two protocols and conventions on combating human trafficking, including prevention of human trafficking protocol, particularly with regards to children and women. It has also set up a Committee against human trafficking as part of an institutional endeavour to protect all people without discrimination against human trafficking, while providing legal social support for them, providing redress to them. In closing, Saudi Arabia reiterates its commitment to further cooperation with the international community to eliminate all kinds of violence and trafficking and human trafficking against children. It further cooperates to provide prosperity for children all over the globe.

Costa Rica welcomes the report from the SRSG and is grateful for the country visit where the Government highlighted its commitment to the prevention of violence and the empowerment of the community and support for a culture of peace. Costa Rica is concerned at the huge increase in the number of trafficking victims, particularly girls. The increase in the situation of vulnerability



that are facing children, this is exacerbated by numerous and continued crises, particularly the use of new technology, just exacerbate the consequences and the effects of multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination. It is regrettable that due to the high level of impunity for traffickers, but this means that we need to strengthen legal frameworks, guarantee access to justice for victims and promote accountability for perpetrators. Costa Rica urges states to invest in systems to protect children. Similarly, it appeals to the private and business sector for appropriate oversight for supply chains in order to halt trafficking. It acknowledges transborder cooperation and the need for a human rights-based approach, especially the rights of the child. These are key. Through a recent approval of the national policy for children and adolescents 2024 to 2036, this is a pioneering moment and Costa Rica reaffirms its commitment to the protection and welfare of children.

Jordan thanks thank the SRSG for her report regarding her mandate activities, which covered participation in the conference that Jordan hosted in 2024 under the auspices of the Royal Highness. Jordan calls for ending violence against children and building on gains achieved in this regards with regards to policies, strategies and legislations on the protection of children. With regards to violence, this included an action plan on national priorities, which protects against violence based on gender and domestic violence. Jordan wishes to shine a light on the suffering of Palestinian children in occupied Palestine and calls upon the international community to take all measures to put an end to their suffering due to systematic violations by Israel and in order to defend the rights of Palestinian children, including the right to life.

Slovenia is fully engaged in the promotion and protection of children's rights, including as a co-chair of the Group of Friends on the Rights of the Child. Slovenia shares the SRSG's concern regarding its findings, particularly the alarming rise in child trafficking. Children are increasingly vulnerable to trafficking due to the ongoing crisis, the growing use of technology by traffickers, as well as an unprecedented surge in demand for their exploitation. Slovenia remains deeply committed to combating child trafficking, with efforts driven by a two-year action plan that ensures a strategic and sustainable approach. All victims of human trafficking are treated with equal care and support, regardless of their personal circumstances.

Morocco thanks the SRSG for the presentation of her report, which highlights the critical activities led by her office over 2024. Yet it paints an alarming picture of the efforts required to deal with this phenomenon. The SRSG considers that violence against children has reached unprecedented levels, and it is important for Morocco to highlight the consequences of this crisis. Although it is true that the general situation of children may be connected to difficult socioeconomic conditions in some countries, it still remains that there is a lack of legal corpus inspired by international conventions. Morocco took some commitments as part of the Bogotá Call to Action in November 2024. There are a number of recommendations. One, hosting in 2026 in connection with the ILO, the sixth Global Conference on Ending Child Labour. Two, organise alongside the OIF, France and the UN, the second Conference on Peacekeeping for Francophone Countries, including a session on children particularly vulnerable to violence and abuse in the context of war and conflict. Three, organise in 2025 workshops and sessions for training for African countries to share experience in elimination of violence against children.

Japan thanks the SRSG for her report and welcomes the progress achieved through her efforts, especially the launch of the Pathfinding Global Alliance on Ending Violence Against Children in



Bogotá last November. As a Pathfinding country, Japan will renew its efforts led by the Children and Families Agency, which was established in April 2023 to promote the rights and well-being of children. Last June, Japan enacted legislation to prevent sexual violence against children, obligating schools and child care providers to take measures to ensure that children are safe from sexual violence, including conducting sex offenders background checks for the protection of children. Japan has also enhanced the support system for the prevention of child abuse at the municipal level by promoting the establishment of child and family centres to provide early and comprehensive consultation and support to all expectant and nursing mothers, to households with children, as well as to children themselves. Violence against children should never be tolerated, and we must renew our efforts to achieve target 16.2 of the SDGs. Japan will continue our efforts to end violence against children.

Iraq attaches great importance to the rights of children. Its constitution protects the children by protecting their family and protecting its moral, national, and religious values. The constitution guarantees the right of a child to protection and care and provides measures to combat all forms against children. The Government of Iraq is keen to set up a legal framework to protect children and meet their needs in one law and in line with international standards. The Government adopted policies and strategies, including our national policy on the protection of children, which focusses on protecting children through prevention, protection, and rehabilitation. Iraq has also other national strategies to protect children against violence and exploitation, including strategies to protect children in line with armed conflicts. In closing, Iraq will keep improving the conditions of children, providing them with care and support and safety, and doing everything to combat violence against them.

Malawi welcomes the SRSG's report which provides an overview of the results achieved and an update on her work since her previous report. Violence against children can result in long-term physical and psychological problems, sexually transmitted diseases, early pregnancy, stigma, discrimination, physical trauma, and learning difficulties. Any form of violence also leaves severe and long-term scars on families, communities, and societies, and results in significant economic and social costs. Malawi has a strong legal and policy framework for the protection of children as securely founded in the Constitution and complemented by the Child Care Protection and Justice Act, the Orphans and Vulnerable Children Policy, and the Early Childhood Development Policy. In recognition of the need to invest in child protection, Malawi has also established the National Children's Commission, a body tasked with ensuring that the country adheres to its obligations under international treaties concerning children's rights. Malawi will continue taking progressive steps in enhancing child protection, implementation of various treaty body recommendations, and the pledges made at UDHR 75.

Zambia stresses the need for sustained investment in children to accelerate the achievement of SDG 16.2. We recall the visit by the special representative to Zambia and commend her for a positive engagement with various stakeholders. Zambia has prioritised efforts aimed at ending violence against children as a central outcome of its development process. To this end, Zambia has strengthened child protection through legal and policy reforms, which prohibit child marriage, child trafficking, and other forms of violence. The Government has also developed guidelines for schools to ensure that safe learning and guidelines for the media to ensure self-reporting as well as the media to promote child rights. Further, Zambia is championing the



campaign to end child marriages at the continental level. In conclusion, Zambia reaffirms its strong support for the mandate of the SRSG and urges all stakeholders to work towards a world where every child can live free from violence, fear, and harm.

The **United Arab Emirates** thanks the SRSG for the report and shares her concerns about the increase of violence against children globally. The UAE is deploying efforts to empower children and protect them, including response to violence online by improving also measures and national policies which support safety of children online and also ensuring their psychological safety through early intervention and providing training of parents and school teachers. The 2016 *Wadeema Law* protects children against neglect and exploitation and misuse or any psychological and physical harm. Internationally, as a leading country, as a member of international partnership against violence against children and as members of international violence, the UAE reinforces cooperation with developing countries and international organisations and civil society organisations in order to build capacities. In closing, the UAE calls upon the international community to use emerging technologies to secure the future and to be committed to ending violence of all types against children.

Malta is gravely concerned with the persistent and widespread violence against children as highlighted in the latest report. Despite international commitments and national efforts, children worldwide continue to face various forms of violence. The report highlights the alarming prevalence of child trafficking. Children are trafficked for forced labour trafficking. Children are trafficked for forced labour, sexual exploitation and other forms of violence, often with little chance of rescue or redress. The rapid expansion of digital technologies has also created new avenues for traffickers to target and exploit vulnerable children. Malta thanks the SRSG for her visit to Malta last year. Malta recognises the urgency of addressing this crisis and reaffirms its commitment to strengthening relevant frameworks and ensuring that child victims receive comprehensive protection and support. We all need to do more to reinforce our efforts to combat violence against children in line with our shared international commitments.

Thanking the SRSG for her report and expressing its full support to her mandate, **Bulgaria** gladly contributed to the report by submitting information on its actions to protect children against trafficking. It considers that the exchange of knowledge and good practises helps Bulgaria align its efforts in the fight against violence. Bulgaria believes that international cooperation is key for combating violence against children, including online and underscores the necessity of keeping up with the pace of evolving technologies in order to effectively counter threats to children's physical and mental health and well-being. Last November, Bulgaria attended the first-ever global ministerial conference on ending violence against children held in Bogotá. Bulgaria joined the Bogotá Code to Action, which sends a powerful message of unity between states against all forms of violence and abuse against children. Bulgaria is currently drafting its action plan on prevention of violence and abuse against children for 2025-2026, which contains special measures aimed at addressing the rights and needs of children victims of trafficking. Working together and implementing targeted legislation and measures will help us achieve the goal of living in a world free of violence against children by 2030.



Indonesia reaffirms its strong commitment to the protection and advancement of children's rights as a key priority under its new Government. Through its President's eight-priority vision, Indonesia places children's well-being at the centre of human capital development, ensuring access to education, health care, nutrition, and protection from violence. The Free Nutritious Meals Programme and the expansion of mandatory learning to 13 years are examples of our key initiatives aimed to address child malnutrition and strengthen early childhood education. In response to cases of child trafficking, Indonesia has strengthened its legal and institutional frameworks, including the establishment of a Directorate of Child and Women Protection and Trafficking in Persons within the national policy. Additionally, efforts have been made to enhance national reporting and case handling mechanisms, including through a dedicated helpline call centre and online application system. These efforts align with the urgent call in the SRSG's report for scaling up coordinated cross-border actions to combat trafficking.

Peru thanks the SRSG for her report which provides a detailed view of the progress achieved in terms of consolidating strategic alliances for ending violence against children. However, it also warns about the persistent challenges to which we must pay urgent and coordinated attention. Peru is deeply concerned by the alarming increase in the trafficking of minors, which is one of the worst and most cruel forms of violence against children. This is exacerbated by the high vulnerability of children, the use of technology and impunity that prevails in many contexts. Peru would like to reaffirm its unwavering commitment to the fight against the trafficking of girls, boys and adolescents and the protection of their fundamental rights. As a State Party to various international instruments in this field, Peru has aligned its actions under its national policy on combating human trafficking and the forms of exploitation with a view to 2030. Peru also promotes initiatives such as the Blue Heart Initiative, which joins efforts with civil society and partners in order to try and address this scourge.

Burkina Faso commends the SRSG for her efforts to mobilise at the global level, which has led to the establishment of the Global Pathfinding Alliance to put an end to violence against children. In order to ensure protection and care for children, especially when it comes to child trafficking, the Burkina Faso's Government has strengthened the protection system for children through the implementation of the establishment of six regional brigades for child protection 2023, 45 provincial networks for child protection, and over 600 local units for the protection of children. It also has a national plan of action for combating human trafficking for 2023-2025. Burkina Faso has also signed cooperation agreements on combating cross-border trafficking with Côte d'Ivoire, Togo, and Benin. These measures have enabled Burkina Faso to intercept and also care for over 7,300 children who are victims of human trafficking. Finally, Burkina Faso calls on all stakeholders to step up their efforts to prevent and eliminate all forms of violence against children.

For **Togo**, it is regrettable to note that throughout the world we are seeing violence and abuse against children, and this is multifaceted despite their vulnerabilities. Children are the first victims of the frenzied use of new technologies and exponential production of goods and services. This is both in terms of their access to these technologies as well as their involvement in the production processes. As a result, urgent, coordinated, and strengthened actions are needed at the global level in order to ensure the best possible conditions of life for each child. In Togo, the Children's Code adopted in 2007 enshrines in Article 353 the protection of children



against all forms of violence, including sexual trade, attacks, as well as physical and mental brutality, abandonment or negligence, mistreatment by parents or by any other person who has authority over these children or is a caretaker of them. A new law, number 2022-020, was adopted in November 2022, which aims to criminalise all acts of intimacy, molestation, sexual harassment, paedophilia or rape. The goal of this is to ensure a safe environment for little girls and boys in schools, training centres or vocational training centres.

Egypt welcomes the SRSR and thanks her for her report, which shined a light on forms of violence against children, a violence which is complicated by the use of technology and the exploitation of children on light, as well as trafficking of children and forced labour and other criteria and measures that do not respect protection. The report emphasised the protection nationally and internationally to protect children against these new technologies. Egypt doubled its effort to protect children through integrated legislative and institutional measures, including laws which protect children against digital threats through its law criminalising the exploitation of children online. Its Motherhood and Childhood Council provides a hotline which receives reports and complaints and provides psychosocial support. Egypt has also conducted awareness campaigns regarding exploitation in the digital space.

Albania thanks the SRSR for her remarkable efforts to protect children from violent exploitation and her advocacy to end violence against children in all its forms. As the report highlights, child trafficking remains one of the most heinous forms of exploitation and abuse. It is a serious violation of the rights and an alarming global problem that requires accelerated joint efforts to eliminate it. It is important to address the root causes of this violence and exploitation and provide children with a safe environment. In this regard, it is essential to strengthen cooperation between government institutions, civil society, and international organisations to combat trafficking. Albania recognises that much more needs to be done to create a world in which children grow up free from exploitation and violence and where their rights are fully protected. We must accelerate our efforts to prevent trafficking, protect victims, and bring perpetrators to justice. The promotion and protection of children's rights and the fight against child trafficking remains a priority for Albania. The Government has developed laws, policy, and programmes to ensure the appropriate development, protection, and care of children. Albania will continue to work closely with international organisations to strengthen its child protection efforts.

Belgium appreciates the focus in the SRSR's report on the role of digital technology in trafficking. Digital technology can be both a challenge and part of the solution. The lack of understanding of children's digital livelihoods as an extension of their physical lives is an important concern. The Belgian Youth Council has tried to raise awareness about this. Belgium sees opportunities to improve children's well-being through better understanding their full livelihood context, both offline and online. Digital youth work is useful for prevention and intervention strategies against violence and trafficking, such as grooming and sextortion. It combines the offline and online spheres, making it more accessible and protective for children. Belgium would be very interested in practises for aftercare that address both the physical and digital realities of children affected by violence online.

Malaysia remains firmly committed to protecting children from all forms of violence, particularly the alarming rise in child trafficking. Malaysia has implemented comprehensive national policies to combat trafficking through prevention, protection, and prosecution. Its national action plan



against trafficking in persons provides a coordinated framework to enhance early detection, victim identification, and intervention. Trafficked children are granted protection orders, immunity from prosecution, and access to shelters, healthcare, and rehabilitation services. Recognising trafficking as a transnational challenge, Malaysia prioritises regional and international cooperation. At the international level, Malaysia acceded to the UN protocol to prevent, suppress, and punish trafficking in persons, especially women and children in 2009. Malaysia has also ratified the ASEAN Convention against Trafficking in Persons and established bilateral agreements with key partners to disrupt trafficking networks. As ASEAN chair this year, Malaysia will continue to lead collective efforts to safeguard children across our region.

As rightly noted by the SRSG, **Nigeria** believes it is unfortunate that ongoing global crises have heightened the vulnerability of children, making them prime targets for trafficking. In this regard, ensuring their protection and safety is not only a moral imperative but also a legal obligation under international human rights law. In line with its firm commitment to protecting children from all forms of abuse, trafficking, and violence, Nigeria has recently launched several initiatives to combat child trafficking. This includes the school anti-trafficking education advocacy programme, launched in February 2024, and the adoption of the national action plan on human rights trafficking. Furthermore, Nigeria has threatened interagency coordination against child trafficking. This effort, led by the National Agency for Prohibition of Trafficking Persons, focusses on prevention, protection, and rehabilitation, in line with the Trafficking in Persons Enforcement and Administration Act of 2015.

Algeria expresses its gratitude for the SRSG's report, which shines a light on the increase of violence against children and trafficking in children, which requires coordinated efforts. Algeria is committed to combating trafficking in children through our law 2304, which protects the rights of children and which is a pillar in our national strategy for the protection of children against all forms of violence. Its National Childhood Protection Agency coordinates with other parties to protect children against abuse. Its national protection system has been consolidated through coordination between government agencies in order to reinforce preventive awareness with the participation with religious leaders and civil society organisations. Algeria participated in the International Ministerial Conference in Bogotá in 2020-2024. 119 countries committed to put an end violence against children by 2030. Algeria supports this endeavour and cooperates with UNICEF and the ILO in order to enforce the protection of children globally. Lastly, Algeria is committed to continue this approach, convinced that a comprehensive approach will ensure the existence of a future free of childhood exploitation.

The **Maldives** has taken multiple steps to address trafficking of persons, including children. In this regard, the Maldives has established a specialised police unit to ensure thorough investigation and prosecution of trafficking cases. The Government has submitted prohibition of serious and organised crimes and gang violence, which has a special focus on protecting children and youth from environments where crime occurs to ensure their safety. Furthermore, the Child Rights Protection Act is a comprehensive legal framework that, in Article 36 of the CRC, ensures that children are protected from exploitation. That also criminalises any action of exploitation of children and negligence of reporting such cases. The Maldives reiterates the SRSG's call for accelerated and collective action from all relevant stakeholders. Furthermore, UNICEF has stated that only with safe, unrestricted access throughout Gaza can humanitarians get relief into



children's hands. Hence, the Maldives calls for an urgent cessation of illegal Israeli aggression in Palestine and to prioritise urgent action to prevent all forms of violence against children.

Brazil thanks the SRSB for her report on the alarming rise in child trafficking and for her visit to Brazil in June 2024, when she could engage in productive dialogues at all levels of government to help strengthen our efforts against violence towards children. Brazil appreciates her recognition of the inclusion of a cross-cutting agenda on children and adolescents in Brazil's multi-year development plan 2024-2027 and our commitment to tracking progress on this front. As a pacified country since 2018, Brazil remains dedicated to the Pathfinding 2.0 initiative launched at the first global ministerial conference on ending violence against children in Bogotá last November. Brazil fully supports the Bogotá Call to Action as a commitment to addressing the root causes of violence against children, including trafficking, through sustained investment in children's rights and integrated protection systems, and invites other countries to do the same. With only 60% of the sustainable development goals on track, including SDG 16.2, Brazil reaffirms its unwavering commitment to reversing this trend and ensuring a safer future for all children.

Colombia joins the call for ending all forms of violence against children, especially corporal punishment. This terrible practise, in addition to being a violation of children's human rights, has serious repercussions on the mental and physical health and the well-being of millions of boys and girls around the world. Colombia is committed to eliminating this practise, both in legal terms and within society. In 2021, Colombia approved the prohibition of corporal punishment against children. In November 2024, Bogotá hosted the first Ministerial Conference on Ending Violence against Children, a conference at which various countries made commitments for combating child marriage and investing more in education for parents and carers and amending their legislation in order to prohibit all forms of corporal punishment. Colombia calls on all states to join the Bogotá call for action in favour of ending violence against children. Colombia reiterates its commitment to the defence, promotion and respect for human rights of children. It supports this call to raise awareness about the need to eliminate all forms of violence against children and achieve a total prohibition of corporal punishment.

Iran takes note of the report of the SR, considering children as one of the most vulnerable members of the society that need protection for all forms of violence. Iran is responsibly upholding the principle enshrined in the CRC regarding prevention of violence against children. In this regard, Iran is determined to and implement a national document on protection of children against violence by 2027. This document includes the comprehensive system of supervision and monitoring and realisation of the children's rights and performance aspires. Regarding the sale and smuggling of children, Iran is actively cooperating with Interpol for identification of children trafficking gangs in our border in both metal and cyberspace. Furthermore, benefiting from global experience, Iran's implementation of the cash plus scheme in cooperation with UNICEF in some provinces to ensure all children, including the migrant, have easy access to their essential needs to prevent their plunge into poverty and help students in risk of school dropout. We must not forget that our collective responsibility to protect children against violence goes far beyond our borders, especially on the alarming situation of children in Gaza facing war, crime, and violence by the Zionist regime, something that deserves more attention and action by UN-related mandates and special monitoring mechanism within the UNHRC.



Thanking the SRSG for the thorough presentation, **Russia** agrees with many of the evaluations within, including those that have to do with the root causes of child trafficking and the particular vulnerability of representatives of certain categories and their impact of new technologies. The statistics in the document clearly demonstrate that a country's prosperity does not guarantee freedom from such horrific crimes. Russia took note of the active involvement of the SRSG in interactions with children. Often, these interactions were direct. In this regard, Russia would like to know more about the selection process for interlocutors and discussion topics. In this context, children are susceptible to external influences and they require particular protection as their potential is still growing. This is enshrined in Article 5 of the UNCRC. Russia sees a certain risk in such dialogue, especially when it comes to ensuring the best interests of the child. Moreover, Russia would like to hear more detailed information on the contribution of the SR to the creation and the immediate activities of the Pathfinding Global Alliance to End Violence Against Children.

China has taken note of the attention given by the SRSG to the issue of trafficking of children in the report. Children are the future of the country and hope of a nation. China has always followed the strategy that prioritises the development of children and continues to improve the policies and legal system for the protection of the children's rights. In 2024, China amended the law on the protection of minors, improved the protection of children in the family, at school and the judicial system, and added norms concerning the protection of the children in cyberspace and by the government. China takes trafficking of children as a serious crime, has a zero tolerance policy and is determined combat it. Through improving the laws and regulations and other measures, the cases of trafficking of children have significantly decreased. Now, with the volatile world situation and the proliferation of hotspot issues, the risk of violence against children continues to rise. China calls on the international community to strengthen cooperation and take the 15th anniversary of the establishment of the Office of the SRSG as an opportunity to make more efforts for the elimination of violence against children.

Côte d'Ivoire is particularly concerned by the increase in cases of child trafficking throughout the world, especially in sub-Saharan Africa. In the framework of combating this phenomenon, the Government has made legal provisions through the adoption of the law of 8 December 2016 on combating human trafficking. There is also a law of 13 June 2018 on illicit trafficking of migrants. Moreover, the Côte d'Ivoire Government has set up a series of measures which have enabled us to rescue over 200,000 vulnerable children who were victims of trafficking exploitation. It has arrested and tried over 1,000 traffickers. The rise in child trafficking throughout the world also makes us question the efficiency of the international response and previous predictions. In 2025, we will have an opportunity to reverse this trend through the vigorous implementation of the UN Plan of Action on Combating Human Trafficking.

Bangladesh welcomes the annual report, recognising the pressing need to intensify coordinated efforts to combat and eliminate trafficking in children. Children are agents of change, architects of future. It is our collective responsibility to ensure their full potential is realised. Bangladesh adheres to a zero tolerance policy against human trafficking, with a special attention to trafficking in women and children. It has progressively strengthened legal frameworks and institutional mechanism in this area to meet international standards. Following the enactment of the Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking Act and its rules, Bangladesh has established seven special tribunal to reinforce criminal justice response to human trafficking. It also



established a national authority and a victim compensation fund for trafficking victims. It launched the guideline for national referral mechanism to protect and assist victims of human trafficking, fostering their social and economic reintegration. Harmonised with SDG indicators, the updated national plan of action for prevention and suppression of human trafficking is being implemented in five key areas, namely prevention, protection, prosecution, partnership, and monitoring and evaluation. All these have dedicated provisions to curb child trafficking. Trafficking in children is a global and transnational phenomenon. To find solutions, the root causes of child trafficking, a coordinated and enhanced global action is imperative.

Cuba defends the principle that nothing is more important than a child. The Cuban constitution supports the best interest of the child. The family code includes a broad catalogue of rights for children and adolescents. To bolster comprehensive protection of the rights of minors, Cuba has held consultations with around 20,000 girls, boys, and adolescents across the country on the new draft code on children and adolescents. Cuba has included recommendations from the OHCHR, the Committee on the Rights of the Child, and UNICEF in this process. Cuba guarantees protection for children from trafficking, and our country has a zero tolerance policy on this scourge. All Cuban children suffer from the consequences of the economic embargo imposed by the USA, and Cuba has documented the effect on the health of our children with chronic and terminal illnesses. The money that is deprived from Cuba for 20 days of the embargo would be enough to provide for the medicine and the care that is required for all of our children who are suffering from illnesses. Without this embargo, Cuba would have been able to have the money needed for wheelchairs, for example, for Cuban children.

Panama is concerned to see the increase in child trafficking, which has been facilitated by technology. It is urgent to adopt robust, coordinated measures swiftly and on a large scale, both within and outside of our borders and in the digital arena, in order to halt this scourge and address the factors that lead to it and step with Goal 16.2 of the 2030 Agenda and the Future. Furthermore, Panama welcomes the holding of the first ministerial conference to end violence against children. As part of this event, Panama committed to transform the alternative care system for children to prioritise the family environment, prohibit corporal punishment for children in all environments, to develop a multi-sectoral, inter-institutional strategy to support parents throughout that life cycle and to strengthen administrative registries and implement enquiries in order to monitor all forms of violence against children and adolescents. To conclude, Panama encourages the SRSG to examine in her future reports how violence against children is affected by the proliferation of arms and munitions and organised crime.

Romania congratulates the SRSG on the results achieved in 2024 and reassure her of our full support for the mandate. The Global Ministerial Conference on Ending Violence Against Children in November last year and the launch of the pioneering global alliance in the Bogotá call of action has been a landmark moment. Romania takes pride in having contributed to these results and remain committed to further engage in enhanced actions to end violence against children by 2030. We face an unprecedented degree of violence in our societies that takes multiple forms. One of the most horrendous being the trafficking in peasants, a severe violation of human rights and a serious crime. The most vulnerable and the first victims of it are children. The findings in the report are hard to bear. Romania is convinced that investing more in protection systems, well-being, care and education is invaluable. That must be at the top of political agendas in all



countries. 2025 is the year of the child in Romania, an expression of our resolve to step up efforts to advance towards a life free from violence, fear and poverty for our children. The fight against human trafficking has been and remains a top priority for Romania, which welcomes the positive reference in the report about the SRSG's recent visit to Romania.

Poland thanks the SRSG for her visit in January and believes that the Polish administration, with great support of NGOs, is capable in this context. As we mark the 15th anniversary of the SRSG's Office, Poland expresses its deep gratitude for her tireless efforts to protect children's rights worldwide. Poland sees the SRSG's mandate more vital than ever, as children continue to face unprecedented threats. Poland reaffirms its support for the important work the SRSG is doing. Poland is strongly committed to the promotion and protection of the rights of the child worldwide, also within the UN system, and including aiming at eliminating violence against children. Poland is improving its legal framework concerning children in migrant situation, including unaccompanied minor asylum seekers, by implementing dedicated laws and solutions specific to safeguarding their well-being. The most significant group benefiting from those changes are Ukrainian refugee children who fled to Poland as a consequence of Russian aggression against Ukraine. As underlined during the SRSG's visit to Poland, Poland is ready to assist other countries in post-Soviet area to build their possibilities to protect children from any form of violence.

Paraguay appreciates the focus of the SRSG's work, namely to promote advocacy and strengthen ties between states, the United Nations, regional organisations, the private sector, civil society, religious organisations, and the academic world, as well as children and survivors to work together. Given the violence against children is a scourge against which we all must work, Paraguay is convinced that an intersecting strategy is the right choice to step up efforts and move towards its eradication. Paraguay hails the widespread rallying around this issue by a number of stakeholders last year, and in particular, it supported the first Ministerial Conference held in Colombia. In addition to joining the call to action, Paraguay renewed its commitment to key areas such as comprehensive care for early childhood, prevention of child sexual abuse, trafficking, and gathering data. Finally, Paraguay expresses its commitment to the mandate and urges states to take decisive action to combat this scourge, to ensure that all children have a life free of violence in all forms and manifestations.

Ethiopia welcomes the report and fully support the SRSG's call for an immediate and coordinated action to combat the alarming rise in child trafficking. The Government of Ethiopia is committed to the protection of child rights and the prevention of child trafficking. It is implementing comprehensive policy and legal frameworks, including criminal laws that target traffickers and strengthen penalties for child trafficking, with a particular focus on domestic servitude and commercial sexual exploitation. Furthermore, Ethiopia has established a national anti-trafficking and smuggling task force, working to prevent trafficking, dismantle criminal networks, and ensure cross-border cooperation. Besides the legislative measures, the Government of Ethiopia is also addressing the root causes of the child trafficking through socio-economic initiatives, such as free education, school feeding programmes, improving access to health care, enhancing social protection and productive safety nets. Its government is also working to enhance employment opportunities, social insurance, and equitable access to basic services, while conducting awareness campaigns to reduce the driving factors of trafficking. Ethiopia reaffirms its commitment to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Target to end abuse, exploitation, and trafficking, and all forms of violence against children, and calls for a global, collective action to combat child trafficking.

The **United Kingdom** welcomes the SRSG's report with its focus on trafficking. As noted in the report, children are increasingly in vulnerable situations, with growing conflict, displacement, and the misuse of digital technologies, regularly exposing them to trafficking and violence. Recently, the UK launched a global campaign to advocate for family care for children around the world and progressively end institutionalisation. The UK welcomes its partnership with the Office of the SRSG on this issue. Together, we will build a global alliance to achieve sustainable reform of children's care. The UK remains steadfast in our commitment to addressing the cycles of violence, abuse, and exploitation faced by children, including trafficking in line with achieving SDG 16.2. This year, the UK has supported programmes in India, Philippines, Bangladesh, and the DRC to raise awareness of the risks of child trafficking and delivering support to survivors.

Cambodia takes note of the report of the SRSG on Violence against Children. Protection of children and adolescents from violence is necessary not only for their well-being and long-term development, but also for national development. Cambodia attaches great importance to the child protection and their well-being in line with CRC and its optional protocol that Cambodia ratified without reservation. Since 2006, Cambodia has put several mechanisms into place to protect children against violence. Among them are National Social Protection Framework 2016-2025, Law on Juvenile Justice, Law on Inter-County Adoption and Drug Child Protection Law, which includes the Implementation Plan for National Policy 2019-2029 on the Child Protection System. To promote child rights and protect children, a strong family communication campaign and a project ending violence against children in and around schools in Cambodia has been launched. Cambodia is committed to reaching the UN Sustainable Development Goals of eliminating violence against children globally by 2030.

Belarus shares the SRSG's concerns regarding the rise in child trafficking, which is the result of innumerable conflicts and other factors, including the blocking of cross-border cooperation by professionals for political reasons. Belarus commends her active participation in the work of alliances that reinforce measures to prevent violence against children. It especially values her contribution to the work of the Interagency Coordination Group Against Trafficking in Persons, which she is co-chairing together with the IOM. Belarus expects the next appraisal of the implementation of the Global Plan for Combating Human Trafficking, which the UNGA will hold this year, in order to strengthen coordination and enhance international efforts in this area. At the national level, Belarus is sparing no effort to combat human trafficking while paying particular attention to the issue of children. Belarus is concerned by the rise in crimes related to human trafficking, especially with incitement to prostitution and the distribution of child pornography. Last year, Belarus identified 197 victims of human trafficking, including 142 minors. It has punished the perpetrators and provided support to the victims. In order to prevent crimes against children, together with the IOM, Belarus is carrying out an information campaign, which is called Teach Children to See Lies. Belarus expects to receive soon a visit by the SRSG in order to discuss this issue and improve its approaches to resolving the issue of violence against children.

Gabon states that, in spite of the progress made, violence against children, particularly child trafficking, is on the rise, exacerbated by a certain number of multifarious and interconnected factors such as poverty, armed conflict and climate change. Children, in particular girls,



belonging to vulnerable or disenfranchised groups, remain the most exposed to all forms of abuse and exploitation. To tackle this, Gabon acceded to the CRC and its Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography. It has also bolstered its legal framework, criminalising human trafficking, including that of children, by revising the Criminal Code in 2019. On an institutional level, Gabon has set up a National Commission for Prevention and Combating Human Trafficking in 2024. Similarly, there is a free Helpline 1412 that was created in November 2020 to help to safeguard the dignity and integrity of child victims of various forms of violence. This was reinvigorated in 2024. Furthermore, these children are cared for by a network of action through those working in the field of protection for children, including social workers and court workers. Gabon thanks its partners, in particular UNICEF, for its support to try to fight this scourge.

Mauritania thanks the SRSG for her important report, which sheds light on the increasing challenges that are faced by children, particularly the increasing scourge of child trafficking. Trafficking in children is a flagrant violation of the basic rights of children and requires a swift and comprehensive response. Eliminating this crime requires collective efforts to deal with the root causes, including the increasing vulnerability of children and the increasing demand for exploitative services and increased impunity. Mauritania commends the international community's commitment to combating violence against children, with particular mention of the Bogotá Call to Action to improve the response mechanisms and prevention measures. At the national level, it stresses the importance of its national strategies to protect children, including the national strategy to improve protection for children, especially children at risk, and finding the adequate solutions and adopting the effective mechanisms for follow-up and evaluation. The same strategy aims to improve protection and awareness through training and orienting parents and regular schools, Quranic schools, imams, and health centres as to the importance of elevating children's rights. The same strategy aims to improve protection and awareness through training and orienting parents and regular schools, Quranic schools, imams, and health centres as to the importance of elevating children's rights and combating violence and begging. The strategy includes a number of administrative instructions that align with international standards.

Georgia remains committed to protecting children from all forms of violence, including human trafficking. Its four-tier approach, the prevention, protection, prosecution, and partnership, ensures a strong and coordinated response. The Interagency Coordinating Council on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, chaired by the Ministry of Justice, leads national efforts in this area. Georgia continues to strengthen its national referral mechanism to identify victims, provide assistance, and detect cases of labour exploitation. Moreover, the Government of Georgia has drafted this strategy on protection of homeless children from violence, which is aimed to prevent homelessness, strengthen support services, and reduce the risks of trafficking. Given the transitional nature of trafficking, Georgia is expanding international cooperation to combat cross-border trafficking. As we speak, hundreds of thousands of internally displaced persons, including children expelled from the Russia-occupied Abkhazia and Tskhinvali regions, remain unable to return to their homes. In blatant disregard of children's rights, the Occupying Power continues to deny the children living in the occupied regions their fundamental rights, including access to education in their native Georgian language, health care, and other essential services. Georgia is committed to contribute to joint efforts of the international community to ensure a safer future for children.



Afghanistan thanks the SRSG for her report. Since the Taliban's military takeover, children in Afghanistan have been living in danger every day. Violence, exploitation, and suffering have become their reality. The dire economic situation in Afghanistan has left children vulnerable to sexual and economic exploitation and abuse, robbing them of their freedom, safety, and childhoods. As aid continues to fail to reach those in need, the devastating impacts of the humanitarian crisis have led families to resort to selling their children to pay for food. Girls still unable to attend school are sold into marriage, while girls with disabilities remain at high risk. Incidents of rap and other forms of sexual violence highlighted in the reports of the special rapporteur on Afghanistan and end use are deeply troubling. Afghanistan remains one of the worst-framed countries for human trafficking, with no real efforts to stop it.

Tunisia shares the SRSG's concern regarding the increasing rates of violence against children globally and the resulting social, psychological, and physical impact on the victims. Tunisia calls for integrated national, regional, and international efforts to alleviate the suffering of those children, to protect them, and to ensure that they recover in line with the dedicated goal of 2030 that should lead to an end to violence against children. The ever-increasing indicators of child trafficking should require us to take every measure to put an end to this phenomenon. As part of Tunisia's national legislation and international commitments, has put in place an integrated set of laws and mechanisms in order to combat all forms of degradation, exploitation, and trafficking in children, while ensuring the protection of children, taking them into account, and ensuring their reintegration. These measures require a national and international mechanism of coordination. The increase of networks of trafficking are continuing to exploit the vulnerable situation, both economically and socially, among the migrants, and we need to find solutions to the root causes of this scourge and make sure that we dismantle the human trafficking networks.

Venezuela observes with concern the rise in violence against children, which undoubtedly is a danger for the future of humanity. In Venezuela, children and adolescents are fully-fledged rights holders and are protected by acts and specialised bodies and courts in step with the national constitution, the CRC, and other international treaties that have been adhered to by Venezuela. To this end, the Venezuelan State has bolstered mechanisms to implement public policies that are geared at comprehensive protection for children and adolescents, with a view to guaranteeing their fundamental rights. The unilateral coercive measures (UCMs) negatively affect the human rights of people who are suffering from this illegal imposition. In Venezuela, these criminal measures have led to the migration of Venezuelans, including children, and they are exposed to greater risks of violence. To this end, it invites the SRSG to consider analysing the impact of these UCMs on the enjoyment of human rights for children.

Lesotho thanks the SRSG for her insightful report on combating violence against children. The CRC obligates states to protect the well-being of the child as well as to prevent child trafficking. Despite the ongoing challenges identified in the report, Lesotho applauds the proactive measures undertaken by some governments to end violence against children. Similarly, Lesotho is committed to undertaking measures to prevent and eliminate all forms of violence against children. It was pleased to receive the SRSG on her visit to Lesotho in April 2024. It welcomes her recognition of its initiative to increase access to integrated services for the most vulnerable children. As indicated in her report, this initiative is supported by a five-year commitment to reducing child violence by 75% as per our national prevention and response plan on violence



against children. In conclusion, Lesotho reiterates the SRSG's call for urgent action to counter the alarming increase in child trafficking. The growing vulnerability of children due to the interlinked crisis of food insecurity, economic inequality, forced displacement and many others, all of which are root causes of trafficking, make it more imperative than ever for states to engage in multilateral solutions, which demand a thoughtful and coordinated response. Lesotho remains committed to contributing to these solutions.

Montenegro thanks to SRSG for the report and her unwavering commitment to the prevention and elimination of all forms of violence against children. Montenegro shares deep concern about alarming rise in child trafficking as one of the fastest growing forms of violence against children, especially among girls. Child trafficking is a grave violation of human rights and a serious crime that continues to surge and evolve within and across the borders. Montenegro echoes the SRSG's call to build on the momentum generated by the first ever global ministerial conference on violence against children held in Bogotá and to translate renewed international commitments and specific pledges into concrete actions to end violence against children by 2030. In this regard, Montenegro will also welcome the revitalisation of the global partnership through the establishment of the Pathfinding Global Alliance on Ending Violence Against Children, of which Montenegro is a member. Yet, as many others, Montenegro is not immune to various forms of violence against children, especially among peers. To address the issue, Montenegro will continue to pursue a zero-tolerance policy towards all forms of violence against minors. Ending violence against children is not only our legal obligation, but also an ethical imperative. It is the essence of human rights and our humanity, and it is up to us to ensure the safety of every girl and boy.

Croatia thanks the SRSG for her report that shows the worrisome increase in violence against, as well as in trafficking in children. Croatia has a zero-tolerance policy for any kind of violence against children, including corporal punishment, which is legally banned. Croatia strengthened its data collection and national legislation to further protect children from criminal offences and domestic violence. The rights of children in vulnerable situations are implemented through a series of measures, offering a systematic approach aimed at reducing child poverty, providing social policy services, and involving parents in psychosocial programmes to improve parenting skills. Croatia takes special care for the promotion and protection of children belonging to national minorities, including Roma. It has also good experience in implementing the guarantee for every child pilot programme aimed at combating inequalities among children in the EU. Empowering children's participation at all levels is one of the objectives of the National Plan for the Rights of the Child, as children should be included in decisions important for them, making them active participants in social processes.

Thailand thanks the SRSG for her report and her constructive engagement with states throughout the year. It also welcomes her engagement with ASEAN on the implementation of the Regional Plan of Action on the Elimination of Violence against Children, as well as the development of its new plan. Thailand appreciates the focus on child trafficking, which is highlighted in the report as a low-cost, low-risk, yet highly profitable crime. The growing demand for child labour and sexual exploitation is alarming, and the use of the Internet to facilitate these crimes is deeply concerning. Under the Royal Thai Police, the Internet Crimes Against Children Unit works closely with all stakeholders to identify and investigate cases of online child sexual abuse, as well as



child trafficking. The Government also collaborates with private sector and civil society organisations on case reporting, protection of victims, capacity building in electronic evidence collection to enhance victim-centred prosecution, and the implementation of the National Referral Mechanism to better protect and respect human rights of victims of human trafficking.

Bolivia welcomes and thanks the SRSG for the presentation of her report. Bolivia has a comprehensive law against trafficking in persons which aims to combat human trafficking and connected crimes, guarantee the fundamental rights of victims with the consolidation of measures and mechanisms for prevention, protection, care, prosecution, and criminal prosecution of these crimes. Bolivia has the Plurinational Council Against Trafficking in Persons, which under its responsibility is drafting of the national policy against trafficking in persons, migrants and connected crimes. The actions of the Plurinational policy is guided by human rights, generations, gender, interculturality and intersectionality. In 2024, Bolivia took up the pro-temporary presidency of the Regional Platform Against Trafficking in Persons and Illicit Trafficking in Migrants.

Tanzania welcomes the report of the SRSG and thanks her for the insight provided on the work done by the mandate. To ensure the promotion and protection of the rights of the children, particularly the protection against violence, the Government has ratified a number of international instruments, including CRC and African shelter on the rights and welfare of the child. Relevant provisions of this convention are made applicable in Tanzania through the Child Act. The government has also been implementing the national plan of action to end violence against children that aims to provide a coordinated, organised approach to address the major concerns and obstacles faced by children as victims, survivors, and witnesses of violence and abuse. Furthermore, the Government also established a human trafficking child protection task force for the purpose of handling children cases, particularly related to sexual exploitation and sexual abuse. Tanzania will continue to cooperate with the international community, other stakeholders, and your mandate to accelerate action to end violence against children.

North Macedonia expresses its gratitude to the special representative of the Secretary General on violence against children for her comprehensive report and unwavering dedication to addressing this critical issue. The latest findings highlight a deeply troubling trend, an alarming rise in child trafficking that demands urgent, coordinated, and sustained actions from all stakeholders. Despite existing commitments, children remain vulnerable to exploitation exacerbated by global crisis, digital threats, and an increasing demand for abuse-related content. To counter this, we must strengthen national strategies, enhance child protection systems, and reinforce cross-border cooperation. Greater accountability is also needed in the private sector, particularly in technology and finance, to prevent misuse of digital platforms for trafficking. The 15th anniversary of the SRSG's mandate marks a pivotal moment to renew and accelerate our commitments. The time to act is now. By investing in child protection and implementing concrete measures, we can work together to eradicate child trafficking and uphold the fundamental rights of every child.

The **Dominican Republic** thanks the special representative for the report. Looking at the concerns in violence against children, our country reiterates its firm commitment to strengthening policies and actions geared at ending child violence and exploitation. The Dominican State has been unwavering in its efforts to eradicate violence against children,



implementing programmes and actions to try to uphold their rights. It has a legal framework for the eradication of child work. However, it has a number of challenges in trying to combat child trafficking, and it is urgent to tackle the root causes. As a consequence, the Dominican Republic has bolstered its efforts in human trafficking by amendments to law 11703 on the illicit trade of migrants and persons with serious consequences as a penalty. It also has an education programme to try to prevent violence, offering tools and support to minors and their families and communities. The Dominican Republic reaffirms its commitment to the protection of childhood, and it encourages states to continue working in combating this serious scourge with a view to guaranteeing full enjoyment of their human rights to all children the opportunity to live in a safe world.

Armenia welcomes the special representative and thanks for her comprehensive annual report. As the pathfinding country of the global partnership to end violence against children, Armenia remains steadfast in its commitment to safeguarding children's rights. It has implemented national strategies focussing on prevention, protection and rehabilitation to combat all forms of violence against children. It acknowledges the importance of adapting these strategies to address new challenges highlighted in the report, including those exacerbated by digital advancements and global crises. Armenia is deeply concerned about the increasing vulnerabilities faced by children in conflict zones. Armenia calls for enhanced international cooperation to hold perpetrators accountable for grave violations of the rights of children to ensure a safe and prosperous future for all kids.

Benin thanks the SRSG for her report and commend her for the action taken in 2024 in the framework of her mandate. Benin shares the concerns expressed in the report with regard to the persistent nature of violence against children throughout the world and, in particular, the scourge of child trafficking. Facing this pressing challenge, Benin has adopted over recent years strong measures to protect the rights of children to prohibit and punish the sale, exploitation and trafficking of children. In addition to the law of 8 December 2015 in the Children's Code, Benin has ratified international and regional treaties on the protection of children and signed with its neighbouring countries bilateral and tripartite agreements in the framework of combating cross-border trafficking in children. While implementing the second plan of action for 2021-2025 under the national policy for protection of children, Benin has taken significant new measures, especially the prohibition of corporal punishment in schools and providing foreign support and care for children that are at risk or victims of violence, the implementation of a no children in prison campaign as well as a zero tolerance campaign for child marriage and other initiatives aiming to eliminate the worst forms of child labour.

Ukraine thanks the SRSG for her unwavering dedication and for her recent visit to Ukraine that allowed to witness firsthand the suffering injured by Ukrainian children as a result of Russia's ongoing war. For more than three years, Russia's full-scale invasion has stolen the safety and future of millions of Ukrainian children. Since February 2022, at least 667 children have been killed, 1,805 wounded, millions deprived of education, health care and basic necessities. Schools and hospitals lie in ruins, while thousands of children live under constant shelling. In addition to physical harm, over 19,000 children have been abducted by Russia and are being subjected to attempts to erase their Ukrainian identity. This forced displacement is a clear violation of international law and increases the risk of trafficking, as noted in the SRSG's report.

Despite international condemnation, Russia continues to obstruct efforts to return their children. Urgent action is needed to secure their safe return and prevent further abductions. Ukraine remains committed to protecting its children, but cannot do this alone. Ukraine calls on the global community to ensure accountability, facilitate the return of displaced children and strengthen protection mechanisms in conflict zones all over the world. Children's safety must be a priority. We must act now to prevent further suffering and safeguard their future.

Guinea is committed to promoting and guaranteeing access of children to and ensuring the enjoyment of their rights in accordance with our constitution, the CRC, and other legal instruments at the national and international level for the protection of children's rights. Guinea has undertaken several reforms in order to strengthen its legislative and institutional framework for the protection of children and response efficiency to violence and vulnerabilities of children. Guinea has adopted laws prohibiting corporal punishment, child marriage, as well as FGM and child labour. The implementation of its children's code and operationalisation of the national protection plan for children also show our commitment. It has engaged in several programmes in order to raise awareness amongst the population of the dangers of violence against children. The creation of platforms for reporting and support for victims and psychosocial and legal support systems have enabled us to strengthen the protection for vulnerable children. Guinea has also expanded our efforts to combat child trafficking and exploitation. The Government has adopted a specific law on human trafficking and strengthened our prevention, protection and mechanisms. Guinea reiterates its commitment to implementing the recommendations of UN mechanisms and working with the SRSG on combating violence against children.

Ending violence against children remains a high priority for **India**. India has transitioned from child welfare policies to a rights-based approach for a holistic child protection system. In the fight against child trafficking, India has made significant progress through legal reforms, increased awareness, rescue operations and international collaboration. Several legislative measures such as the Juvenile Justice Act and the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act address these issues. Its comprehensive interventions include public awareness campaigns through various community engagement programmes, especially in rural areas, leveraging technology tools such as missing children tracking system in search and rescue operations, cooperating bilaterally with countries in the region to address cross-border trafficking. Operation Muskan is a flagship initiative by the Ministry of Home Affairs aimed at rescuing children from trafficking. Efforts have also been made to ensure that trafficked children are rehabilitated through various programmes, including educational and psychosocial support. While significant progress has been made, particularly in the areas of awareness generation, legislative reforms and rescue operations, there is still much work to be done.

Sudan agrees with the observations regarding dangers facing children in situations of displacement, conflict and migration, together with challenges related to poverty and food insecurity and the use of the Internet in activities harmful to children. Sudan welcomes lessons learned, which were highlighted by the report. Sudan undergoes a war launched by the Rapid Support Forces, which is supported and backed by regional powers. This militia committed various violations against children that are documented in UN reports and by relevant technical support groups. This involved enforced recruitment of children in military activities, control of schools and documented sexual violations of children. Sudan's judiciary receives complaints by

victims and their families and undertakes measures to ensure redress to them and to hold the perpetrators to account. Sudan reiterates its calls to condemn these violations.

The **Gambia** aligns itself with the statement delivered by Ghana on behalf of the African group and expresses sincere appreciation to the SR for her dedicated efforts and comprehensive report. It acknowledges the significant strides made in mobilising global action against violence against children, particularly through the first Global Ministerial Conference on Ending Violence Against Children and the launch of the Pathfinding Alliance in 2024. The Gambia was pleased to participate in this landmark event and to pledge the amendment of section 46 of our national law to prohibit corporal punishment in schools by December 2026, reaffirming its commitment to child protection and ensuring a safe learning environment for all children. As an LDC, the Gambia recognises that poverty, displacement and weak child protection systems create conditions that traffickers exploit, further endangering the most vulnerable. It therefore commends the report's emphasis on prevention and multi-stakeholder collaboration and stress the importance of sustained investment in child protection systems, cross-border cooperation and survivor-centred rehabilitation programmes. The Gambia urges the international community to reinforce technical and financial support for LDCs, ensuring that responses are not just reactive but preventative, inclusive and sustainable.

Azerbaijan has made significant progress in combating human trafficking through the ratification of various international agreements, the approval of four national action plans and the establishment of a special unit within the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Additionally, the creation of national coordinating institutions, migration assistance centres, shelters, support funds, a hotline service and the introduction of a dedicated website, as well as the establishment of a coalition of NGOs against human trafficking have all been vital instruments to strengthen victim protection. As a country that has faced both internal and cross-border displacement, Azerbaijan understands first-hand the risks faced by children in crisis situations. Displacement, exacerbated vulnerabilities, limited access to education, healthcare and social protection. Azerbaijan fully supports efforts to ensure early intervention, effective protection and comprehensive rehabilitation programme for child victims. Azerbaijan is a member and champion country on the global compact for safety, orderly and regular migration and is making an effort to introduce positive practises to support regular migration. In conclusion, Azerbaijan reaffirms its steadfast commitment to ensuring the safety and well-being of children worldwide. It stands ready to collaborate with international community to achieve meaningful progress in protecting children from all forms of violence and exploitation.

Namibia welcomes the report of the special representative and express our deep concern over rising cases of child trafficking worldwide. Namibia continues to take measures to counter the scourge of child trafficking by implementing the Combating of Trafficking in Persons Act of 2018. Furthermore, Namibia is committed to the promotion and protection of the rights of the children in line with the Convention on the Right of the Child, the African Charter on the Right and Welfare of the Child and other international human rights instruments. Regrettably and despite robust legislative framework, Namibia still experiences challenges relating to violence against children, including online exploitation. To combat violence against children, the Namibian government through the Child Care and Protection Act of 2015 has developed a national plan of action and established an advocate for children who plays a vital role in advocating for the rights of children,



including children in conflict with the law. Moreover, numerous measures have been adopted to protect children from harmful cultural and religious practises, including child marriage.

The protection and promotion of children rights remain a long-standing priority for **Italy**. Italy is deeply concerned by the alarming increase in violence against children in recent years. Such a trend is exacerbated by conflict and crisis. As highlighted in the report, one of the most impressive challenges is the rising rate of child trafficking for various forms of exploitation. Italy is appealed over this phenomenon and we deplore the fact that young women and girls are being disproportionately affected, including through sexual exploitation, slavery, and child early and forced marriage. Italy is dedicated to ensuring that children and adolescents have access to dignified living conditions and committed to building a world where every child can grow up in safety, security, and with ample opportunities to thrive. Combating violence against children, including child trafficking, and holding human traffickers accountable can only be achieved through strong international cooperation and collective commitments toward the brighter future for children and youth worldwide.

Honduras reiterates its commitment on the part of the Honduran government to eradicating child trafficking. This is a crime against the fundamental rights of children and requires a coordinated response. Honduras has adopted specific measures in order to strengthen the protection of children and combat this crime, including by increasing our budget for the institutional activities to combat human trafficking. Honduras has created a division to combat trafficking and sexual exploitation of children in cross-border areas. It has also opened a Regional Office in order to improve our national response in this area. Honduras has also established a foundation to provide support to victims of human trafficking and we also reiterate our commitment to the implementation of our responsibilities and human rights while emphasising protection of children.

Pakistan shares the SRSG's concerns that trafficking in vulnerable children persists as a high-profit illicit trade and organised criminal groups continue trafficking of victims and make huge profits. Due to weak governance structures, lack of regional coordination and other factors, trafficking in children also continues to be facilitated by the high levels of impunity enjoyed by the traffickers. Pakistan is alarmed by the SRSG's findings that trafficking is increasingly being facilitated by digital technologies, including AI, and that traffickers misuse these technologies at all stages. It stresses the need for enhanced efforts and international cooperation to combat this menace. Pakistan is dismayed that the report does not take into account the brutalities committed against the children in occupied Palestine. Last year, UNICEF termed Gaza as the most dangerous place for a child to be in and various special procedures have publicly commented on the pain, hunger, fear and torment endured by the children in Gaza. No words can aptly capture the trauma that these children have been put through and the long-term negative impacts on their mental, physical and emotional health, as well as their educational and professional potential. Pakistan would request the SRSG to pay due attention to the plight of children in Gaza and other situations of foreign occupation in her future reports.

Views Expressed by intergovernmental Organizations

The **European Union** expresses its gratitude for the SRSG's report and awareness-raising efforts, congratulates her on the first Ministerial Conference held in Bogotá in November 2024, and



reiterates its full support for your mandate. The EU is deeply concerned about the unprecedented levels of violence against children, noting in particular the alarming rise in child trafficking with a significant increase among girls. Indeed, gender is an important factor in the crime of trafficking and affects children differently. Girls are primarily trafficked for sexual exploitation, forced labour, and forced marriage, while boys are more frequently exploited for forced labour and criminal activities, including drug trafficking. The EU remains strongly committed to combating human trafficking through a human rights-based, victim-centred, and gender- and age-responsive approach. The adoption of the revised EU anti-trafficking directive strengthens child protection through early victim identification and cross-border cooperation. Additionally, the newly adopted EU regulation prohibiting products made with forced labour and the corporate sustainability due diligence directive reinforce accountability within global supply chains.

UNICEF welcomes the report of the SRSG and thanks her for continuing close collaboration. UNICEF echoes the her concerns that the world faces an unprecedented child rights crisis. Multiple threats from armed conflict to natural disasters, public health emergencies, food insecurity and climate change are putting more children at risk of trafficking than ever before. These challenges, combined with growing demands for child exploitation and the use of technologies to facilitate harm, heighten the urgency for intensified and coordinated action by government and partners worldwide. UNICEF is encouraged by the momentum created with the first Global Ministerial Conference on Ending Violence against Children last year and the SRSG's leadership in spearheading the Pathfinding Global Alliance on Ending Violence against Children. UNICEF supports the SRSG's appeal for sustained investments in child rights and well-being, child protection systems and evidence-based solutions. These are necessary to prevent and respond to all forms of violence against children, including trafficking in children. UNICEF remains fully committed to supporting states in these efforts in line with their obligations under the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its optional protocols in support of the SDGs and to continue working closely with the SRSG.

The **Sovereign Order of Malta** expresses its concern about the alarming increase in violence against children. Following a long tradition of humanitarian service, the Order of Malta continues to help those in need, especially children. Malteser International, the International Relief Agency, is involved in numerous projects aimed at addressing the root causes of child trafficking. The Order of Malta supports the following recommendations of the SRSG. First, address the root causes of child trafficking. Second, provide resources to strengthen child protection systems and the capacity to identify victims. Third, strengthen international, regional and bilateral cooperation. Fourth, improve criminal investigation and mutual legal assistance capacities. And fifth, engage dialogue with faith-based organisations and religious leaders. The Sovereign Order of Malta would welcome an increased collaboration with the SRSG.

Views Expressed by Non-Governmental Organizations

The **Defensoría del Pueblo of Colombia**, thanks the SRSG for the report and the concern expressed at the rise in vulnerability of children and adolescents and their exposure to different kinds of violence, including in the family environment, in schools and in the digital arena. In 2024 in Colombia, 54,950 children and adolescents were connected to administrative processes for recovery of rights. Furthermore, 1,873 reported having been victims of commercial sexual exploitation and 463 cases of forced recruitment. These cases are not isolated. This is a



demonstration of a structural system of inequality, vulnerability and absence of measures for protection. The social networks make it easier to have access to information and benefit communication participation. However, it has also opened new doors to violence against children and adolescents. We have seen how the digital environment exposes them to violent content, exploitation networks, trafficking, sexual violence and even recruitment and use. Furthermore, we are concerned about the rate of suicide amongst children.

Thanking the SRSB for her report, the **National Human Rights Council (CNDH) of Morocco** shares her concerns about the alarming increase in child trafficking. When children fall victim to trafficking, they also endure a range of other complex and interconnected violations of their rights, including social and economic rights. The situation is further intensified, particularly at migration pathways and where they are present in the digital space or recruited into armed conflicts. The CNDH acknowledges the progress made by Morocco in combating trafficking, including child trafficking, at the legislative, institutional and policy levels. Key achievements include the adoption of a stand-alone law to which the CNDH contributed, the establishment of an anti-trafficking commission of which the CNDH is a member, and the establishment of a child redress mechanism hosted by the CNDH. Additionally, a national action plan for the period 2023-2030 has been adopted. As part of the African Network of Innate Rights, a Working Group on the Rights of Children was established at the proposal of the CNDH of Morocco. It should address violations against children in Africa, including trafficking. The CNDH wishes to reiterate its recommendations aimed at abolishing the various forms of violations of children's rights that are likely to lead to child trafficking. These include the need to prohibit the online and offline sexual exploitation of children and to eliminate provision authorising child marriage. Finally, the CNDH highlights the importance of strengthening international cooperation to combat cross-border violations of the rights of the child, including trafficking in children, especially by non-state armed groups during crises or armed conflicts.

Views Expressed by Non-Governmental Organizations

Human Rights Advocates explains that extensive research on early childhood shows that a child's early experiences determine the foundation for their health, emotional security and developing competencies. Positive experiences build a sturdy foundation. Children with sturdy foundations become productive citizens who can achieve their full potential and contribute to society. On the other hand, violence against young children causes stress that is toxic to their brain. Abuse, chronic neglect and a lack of caregiver support can be toxic to a young child and lead to a fragile foundation. Childhood violence impacts their long-term well-being, affecting cognitive development and resulting in higher rates of anxiety, depression and suicide. Migrant children in immigration detention experience violence every day. They suffer from unsanitary conditions, medical neglect and abusive treatment. They also lack the caregiver support they need to cope with this stress. Human Rights Advocates urges the Human Rights Council and states to abolish immigration detention of children, abolish private, profit-driven immigration detention facilities, provide opportunities for migrant children to articulate their needs and advocate for themselves on the international human rights stage and adopt laws that ensure migrant children receive the protections afforded by international human rights instruments.

Plan International delivers this statement on behalf of Aya, a girl from Lebanon that took part of the first Global Ministerial Conference. Aya says 'in this critical moment we must stand united. I



urge all members of the Human Rights Council to prioritise the protection of children and take bold, decisive steps to eliminate all forms of violence against us. Behind every statistic is a child suffering in silence.’ It is our duty to break that silence and eradicate violence once and for all. Children are not the world’s victims, they are its promise. We must act now to protect them from the horrors that rob them of their rights, freedom and potential to ensure their safety. We need stronger international cooperation, community engagement, education and awareness and reinforce legal frameworks. We must stand firm not just in condemnation but in relentless action to end violence everywhere. Our goal is clear to build a comprehensive and effective child protection system that safeguards every child everywhere regardless of nationality, religion, gender or identity. Now it is the time to act.

China Foundation for Human Rights Development believes that violence against children is a pressing global human rights issue endangering children's physical and mental health and overall development. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development established goal 16. Yet nearly a decade later, violence including war, sexual abuse and domestic violence remains widespread. Urgent and more effective global action is needed. Firstly, countries should actively implement SDG, particularly those related to child protection and increase investment. Many countries have policies but need more funds for family care, violence prevention and essential services such as housing, education and healthcare to address root causes like poverty and cut down violence prevalence. Secondly, achieving SDG 16 requires a systemic challenge. China has built a safety net with reporting and monitoring system and model sector collaboration for legal, medical and psychological support. Finally, leveraging relevant framework, international monitoring and collaborative action must be stressed. Sharing successful experience can help promote solution and advance the SDGs.

Defence for Children International (DCI) thanks the SRSG for her report and for highlighting that detaining child victims of trafficking is in capital with their victim status and the principle of non-punishment of victims of trafficking. Indeed, the detention of child victims of trafficking is a harmful practise that exacerbates their trauma and violates their rights. It is imperative to adopt alternative solutions that focus on their protection, rehabilitation and reintegration. Instead of being treated as victims in need of protection, they are often treated as criminals, which further stigmatises and alienates them. In addition to psychological harm and rights violations, detention disrupts the critical development processes of these children. Recognising the detrimental impact of detention of children, it becomes imperative to explore and implement alternative solutions that uphold children’s rights according to the UN Global Study on Children Deprived of Liberty. Preparing the new roadmap for action 2025-2030, DCI emphasise that alternatives to detention not only mitigate the harm inflicted on children, but also demonstrate cost-effectiveness and efficacy. DCI calls on Member States to strengthen training and capacity building, to inform all maritime and law enforcement actors about standard operating procedures on the protection of victims of trafficking, implement clear legal measures to prohibit deprivation of liberty of children due to their legal or migratory status, as well as that of their families, ensure effective coordination with social and child protection systems, and to ensure the implementation of the recommendations of the UN Global Study on Children Deprived of Liberty.

Franciscans International commends the SRSG’s engagement with African regional mechanisms and her mandated focus on addressing trafficking in children. Franciscans



International is particularly concerned by the persistence of violence against children in Uganda who are subjected to trafficking, early marriages, teenage pregnancies, and female genital mutilation. As reported, children in South-Saharan Africa are more likely to be trafficked than elsewhere in the world. High poverty rates in regions such as Karamoja resulted in children being trafficked into urban centres for labour, street begging, and exploitation. Young girls and women are also vulnerable to domestic sex trafficking. Inadequate policy and institutional frameworks impede implementation of existing prohibitive legislation. Persistence of patriarchal social structures deprive girls of opportunity education and often lead to child marriages. They increase the risk of early pregnancies, which have devastating consequences on girls' health, education, and economic opportunities. Female genital mutilation continues to be practised among girls as young as 15 years old at the expense of their health. In this context, Franciscans International calls upon the SRSG to dedicate part of her mandate on tackling the interconnected nature of these issues in the South-Saharan region, engage with national authorities to exhort them to implement existing legal frameworks and allocating adequate funding to address violence against children in a holistic manner.

International Volunteerism Organization for Women, Education and Development (VIDES) appreciates the SR's support and engagement with religious and local communities in their role to prevent and safeguard children from all forms of violence. However, VIDES is deeply concerned about the increasing vulnerability of children as victims of human trafficking in several countries. In Nigeria, girls who report incidents of human trafficking have no protection and face potential retaliation. Elements of such atrocities are also seen brewing in other countries. In India, children face serious forms of exploitation, including forced labour, early marriage, and sexual exploitation. In line with the report of the special representative, VIDES offers some recommendations to states. One, enhance measures to eliminate child exploitation and to identify technological solutions that will prevent and tackle the root causes of trafficking. Two, ensure participation of children, especially the girl, and youth victims in decision-making and policy design processes aimed to ensure compensation, rehabilitation, and family reintegration of victims. Three, strengthen the connection between anti-trafficking measures, border and asylum procedures, and national child protection, law enforcement, and justice systems as a means to ensuring the swift identification and referral of children at risk of trafficking, as well as those who have already fallen victim to it.

International Dalit Solidarity Network gives the floor to Aran Nadeen, a 21-year-old girl coming from a Christian Dalit community in Lahore, Pakistan, where her father works as a sanitation worker. For generations, families like mine have been trapped in discrimination and poverty, unable to dream of a better future. Society expects sweeper's son to remain a sweeper and cleaner's daughter to follow the same path. This unfair label forces us into low-paid, unsafe sanitation and domestic labour, where we face constant disrespect and exploitation. Many of us endure modern slavery, burdened by debt for life. Dalit girls suffer the most. Instead of going to school, they become domestic labourers, vulnerable to abuse, sexual exploitation, and even trafficking. This must stop. She urges the UN and world leaders to enforce laws that end caste-based discrimination and forced labour. Protect sanitation and domestic workers so they are treated with dignity. Ensure Dalit children, especially girls, have dignity, education, safety, and freedom to dream. No child should suffer because of their birth. Break the cycle and give us a future.



Women Deliver states that violence against children remains an everyday crisis, disproportionately affecting adolescent girls. Across the world, every three seconds, a girl under the age of 18 is forced into a marriage, while close to 19 million experience physical or sexual violence, stripping them of their rights and futures. Yet, they are still not meaningfully recognised as a distinct constituency in policies and interventions meant to protect them. We cannot address violence against children without prioritising the voices and leadership of young people. Meaningful youth engagement is not an option. It is a necessity. Youth participation in decision-making must go beyond tokenism and be embedded in policies, funding, and accountability structures. Child early and forced marriage and unions is not culture. It is a form of violence and a violation of our fundamental rights. We must stop legitimising harm under the guise of tradition. It is time for states to fully align their laws and policies with international human rights frameworks and commit to ending these harmful practises. Women Deliver calls on all states to uphold their commitments to children's rights and recognise adolescent girls as a unique and distinct group within human rights frameworks. The fight for gender equality is far from over and will not stop until every girl's future is hers to decide.

Humanists International thanks the SRSB for her report in which she highlights some commendable initiatives by traditional and religious leaders in the fight to end violence against children, including child marriage and female genital mutilation. Relatedly, Humanists International wondered whether the meeting mentioned with another religious leader, Pope Francis, revealed similarly positive initiatives. It is essential that the Holy See, particularly as a UN Observer State, is fully accountable when it comes to human rights obligations, including the rights of the child. In its last report, the Committee on the Rights of the Child found grave failings by the Holy See in terms of violence against the child, including torture and other cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment, corporal punishment, and sexual abuse by its clergy. At the same time, the UN Committee against Torture established that the Holy See had overseen violence against children, including through their sale and abduction by its clergy. The CAT and CRC Committees are both still awaiting overdue follow-up reports from the Holy See and evidence that any remedial action has taken place. In 2021, a group of UN experts expressed their utmost concern about the numerous allegations around the world of sexual abuse and violence committed by members of the Catholic Church against children and urged the Holy See to take all necessary measures to stop and prevent the reoccurrence of violence and sexual abuse against children in Catholic institutions and to ensure those responsible are held to account and reparations are paid to victims. Again, this is yet to happen.

Centre d'Encadrement et Développement des Anciens Combattants (CEDAC) expresses its deep concern at the enlistment of children in armed conflicts in Africa. This is a flagrant violation of international law that deprives thousands of children of their dignity. In the most alarming cases, we have seen the forced recruitment of children by armed groups who were perpetuating violence in the east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Concerned by the serious situation and the criticism during the special session on 7 February 2025 on the DRC, CEDAC supports the Burundi Declaration and we have presented a five-point plan and we also support the five-point peace plan, which involves the following recommendations. One, international mobilisation to avoid an escalation of the conflict. Two, withdrawal of foreign forces and dismantling of armed groups. Three, the inclusion of the M23 in the inter-Congolese peace process. Four, an immediate and unconditional ceasefire. Five, strengthening regional international mechanisms, including the



Peace and Security Council of the African Union and the operationalisation of an African force to efficiently respond to its own crises and thus halt the recruitment of child soldiers in armed conflicts at all times.

FACTS & FIGURES ON ID PARTICIPATION

72 State Delegations

3 Inter-Governmental Organizations

2 National Human Rights Institutions

10 Non-Governmental Organizations