



Statement

by

**Ms. Caroline Ziade
Deputy Permanent Representative of
Lebanon
to the United Nations**

**at the
Security Council**

**“The role of youth in countering
violent extremism and promoting
peace”**

New York, April 23, 2015

Mr. President,

Allow me to start by thanking you for organizing this important debate and for circulating the concept note on the “role of youth in countering violent extremism and promoting peace” to guide the discussion, and commend His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hussein bin Abdullah II for chairing this meeting and for his commitment to youth issues. I would also like to express our deep appreciation for the Secretary-General and the briefers.

Mr. President,

Today there are over 1 billion youth around the world. A young population characterized by unprecedented accessibility to information technology. At the same time this population faces many challenges, which exacerbate its vulnerability with more than 6 million youth living in fragile or conflict regions, and about 75 million unemployed.

Youth are to be found on both sides of terrorist activities. They are targeted in their schools, universities, and homes, in Palestine, Libya, Yemen, Pakistan, Central Africa, Kenya ... and youth are targeting journalists and tourists in Paris, Tunisia, Sweden and Brussels among other places... This alarming phenomenon emphasizes that terrorist attacks transcend borders and are not limited to one country, religion or ethnicity and represent a serious threat to international peace and security around the world.

Mr. President,

Prevention starts on the benches of school and continues throughout the social mobility chain. Education is pivotal in building up the resilience of future generations. It should engrave in them knowledge, human rights, understanding of the other, openness, dialogue, tolerance, and the rule of law. It should promote critical thinking that would help fight bigotry, stereotyping and essentialism. Education should also be oriented to the need of the labor market and ensure a dignified livelihood, social inclusion and wider participation in the public political sphere.

The fight for the youth mind should continue by standing up to the attractiveness of extremist and intolerant religious figures. Modern and attractive social organizations for the youth should constitute a better alternative to educate and prepare those youth for leadership posts and positive role models.

The United Nations in all its organs and specialized agencies should continue to work relentlessly to address the root causes of terrorism, to fully implement strategies highlighting the interlinkages between peace and development with a strong emphasis on youth needs and most importantly putting an end to impunity and double standards in the implementation of law and insuring justice.

Mr. President,

The Middle East and the Arab world are informed by Israeli occupation, protracted conflicts, violation of Human Rights, shattered dreams, unprecedented surge in terrorism, and radicalization with its main focus on the youth, who represent one-third of our Arab population.

Aware that the youth are our ray of hope in the midst of all these challenges, my Government adopted in 2012 the youth policy in Lebanon, drafted by them and capturing their priorities in five areas namely: demography and economic participation, education and culture, health, social integration and political participation. Moreover, the vibrant civil society in Lebanon always offered platforms for inclusive dialogue between its youth with full respect of their intellectual diversity. Suffice to mention the “Common Space Initiative” whose objective is to build youth capacity in debate and solution formulation to national and regional programs; and ADYAN workshops during which young people like Sara, a Lebanese young woman are determined “to break stereotypes and draw a different picture about Islam than the one promoted by terrorism and extremism”.

Mr. President,

This journey, at the national, regional and international level, will not be successful if our youth are not our partners in elaborating a plan of action to fight terrorism. They are not only “the future generation”; we need to involve them now in today’s affairs to secure a better future for all of us.