



**Statement**

**By**

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**Before the Third Committee  
64<sup>th</sup> session of the General Assembly**

**Item 65 (a): Promotion and Protection of the Rights of children  
Item 65(b): Follow-up to the Outcome of the special session on children**

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***CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY***

***Permanent Mission of Lebanon to the United Nations  
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Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, I would like to congratulate you and the other members of the Bureau on your election to lead the work of this committee. I would like to assure you of the support of the delegation of Lebanon. I also wish to express the appreciation of the delegation of Lebanon to the Special Representatives of the Secretariat and the Chairperson of the Committee on the Rights of the Child for their valuable briefings delivered yesterday under this item. In this regard, Lebanon welcomes the recent appointment of the Special Representative on violence against children and the adoption of the Security Council resolution 1882 on children and armed conflicts. Lebanon also aligns itself with the statement made by Sudan on behalf of the Group of G-77 and China.

Mr. Chairman,

Lebanon is firmly committed to the promotion and protection of the rights of children. We are determined to secure the well-being of children and give every child a better future. The ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the subsequent initiatives for its implementation are the best affirmation of Lebanon's support for the cause of children. The existing Lebanese laws comply with most requirements of the convention, and the Lebanese parliament adopted a number of amendments in its attempt to comply fully with the remaining requirements.

In Lebanon, primary education is mandatory and free for all children up to age twelve, including those with disabilities. Lebanon strongly believes in the value of high quality education. An investment in education is an investment in human capital. Education creates a foundation for economic growth, higher standards of living, and a more informed citizenry. Given the synergies between education, health, and economic growth, tackling the crisis in education is a key to unlocking other development goals.

Lebanon is committed to improving basic health care and reducing infant and maternal mortality rates with special attention to social and regional disparities related to this indicator. The government has scaled up its already existing health program and has increased awareness for promoting the health and well-being of children and the pre- and post-natal health of women.

Mr. Chairman,

Chronic poverty remains the greatest challenge to a child's development. The global financial crisis has touched the lives of the world's most vulnerable people, pushing millions of children into deeper poverty. These children face many deprivations of their rights, including health, education, and protection from harm and discrimination. In its efforts to reduce poverty, improve social indicators, and achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the government of Lebanon developed a social action plan in January 2007. This plan is an integral part of Lebanon's economic and social reform program, not only because it aims to improve the living conditions of the most vulnerable and poor groups, but also because it is a critical element for a sustainable long-term economic growth. Among its goals, the social action plan targets poor households and large families who usually suffer from financial strains at the beginning of the school year. Their children are most at risk of dropping out of school and starting to work at an early age.

In order to follow up on its commitment to children's rights, the government established the Higher Council for Childhood under the Ministry of Social Affairs in 1994. The Council serves as an independent intermediary body between relevant government ministries and civil society, so as to initiate and coordinate programs and policies. In order to enforce children's rights and implement the articles of conventions related thereto, the Council prepared a legal comparative study of Lebanese legislation and of the convention, resulting in a series of proposals for legislative reform.

In the concluding observations on the third National Report on the status of children in Lebanon, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child welcomed Lebanese efforts to promote the rights of children to freely express their views. Special attention was given to the National Plan of Action formulated by the Higher Council of Motherhood and Childhood to promote children's participation.

In view of article 12 of the Convention on the rights of the child, which calls for the right of the child to be heard, Lebanon undertook several initiatives aimed at offering fora for children to express their views freely. Such initiatives have contributed to advocacy efforts by making children's participation a main issue on the public agenda. In this regard, it is very

crucial to increase awareness of the importance of participation as an empowering process, placing particular emphasis on children who are underprivileged.

In 2002, the Lebanese Parliament overhauled the juvenile justice system by enacting a self-contained law entitled "Protection of children in violation of the Law or Exposed to Danger". This law addresses the functions of juvenile courts with an emphasis on educational and rehabilitative measures, rather than on punishment.

Mr. Chairman,

Rich or poor, in Western or Eastern societies, children suffer violence at different moments of their lives. No violence against children can be justified; all violence against them can and must be prevented. Furthermore, wars and armed conflicts constitute the utmost threat to children's lives and their human security. Children must be protected from the horrors of armed conflict, including foreign occupation, in accordance with the provisions of international humanitarian law.

Finally, the greatest and most direct threat affecting Lebanese children, particularly in South Lebanon, stems from unexploded ordinances (UXOs), which will take years, to clear. Since the cessation of hostilities at the end of the 2006 war, hundreds of civilians, including children, have been killed, maimed, or wounded by unexploded bombs, mostly sub-munitions that were dropped indiscriminately by Israel in civilian areas.

Lebanon condemns the killing of all children – no matter what race, denomination, or nationality. We hope for the day when children in our region can live together in safety and peace.

I thank you Mr. Chairman