

74th Session of the United Nations General Assembly

Third Committee

**Agenda Item 66 (a & b)
Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Children**

INDIA STATEMENT

By Ms. Paulomi Tripathi, First Secretary

10 October, 2019

Thank you Madam Chairperson.

We thank the Secretary General and his Special Representatives for various reports under this agenda item.

As we commemorate the 30th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, we note that significant progress has been made in areas of norm setting, public awareness and change in attitude towards children's rights.

Yet, our children remain the most vulnerable in a world riven by poverty, inequalities of opportunity, armed conflict, terrorism and humanitarian crises.

Exposure to the digital environment is reshaping childhood by creating both opportunities and risks, as it impacts cognition, behavior as well as physical and mental health of children.

We need measures such as strengthening digital literacy, including enhancing understanding by children of the digital environment and stronger framework to ensure that children enjoy the benefits of the digital technologies without compromising their well-being.

Climate change is a challenge that calls for urgent collective action to reduce children's vulnerability.

We believe that this Committee offers an inclusive forum to discuss these emerging and existing challenges.

However, one delegation has yet again chosen to distract the attention of the Committee with their deceitful political propaganda by weaving fake narratives, while making unwarranted references to internal matters of my country.

In a desperate attempt to seek justification, they have resorted to quoting a UN expert out of context.

This is a country with the dubious distinction of running a system of 'schooling' young children in violent extremist ideologies and recruiting them in terrorist groups, robbing not only these children of their future, but also jeopardizing the future of children across the borders.

If this is not deprivation of liberty and egregious violation of innocent children's rights, then what is?

The international community has not been beguiled by the baseless allegations of this delegation in the past and we are confident that this will again be brushed aside.

We do not wish to engage further on this issue.

Madam Chairperson,

The best interest of the child is at the forefront of India's development endeavours.

The Constitution of India guarantees fundamental rights to all children and empowers the State to make special provisions for children.

The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights in India is a statutory body that ensures that laws, policies, programmes and administrative mechanisms are in consonance with child rights perspectives enshrined in the Constitution of India and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Free elementary education is a fundamental right in India. Private schools also now reserve 25% of seats for children from economically weaker sections.

A National Plan of Action for Children addresses key priority areas of child rights - (i) survival, health and nutrition; (ii) education and development; (iii) protection and (iv) participation.

Integrated child protection services are in place for children below six years, and expectant and lactating mothers as well as adolescent girls, addressing their nutrition, healthcare and pre-school education needs, creating a protective environment around children.

Providing water, sanitation and hygiene facilities in schools as part of Clean India Mission as well as the Mid-Day Meal Scheme aim at improving school attendance.

‘Save the Girl Child, Educate the Girl Child’ programme seeks to comprehensively address imbalance in Child Sex Ratio.

The rights of children and juveniles alleged to be in conflict with law, as well as children in need of care and protection, are safeguarded, with government and civil society working together within a robust legal and administrative framework, under active involvement of the judiciary.

Measures are in place to prevent and protect children against cyberstalking and cyberbullying, child marriage, sexual harassment, pornography and trafficking in persons.

Madam Chairperson,

Let me reaffirm India's commitment to realization of the rights of our children to live life of dignity, safety and care, and to have equal opportunity to build a future they want.

I thank you.