Mr. Chairman,

In every society, children are the hope for the future. The Jewish Talmud teaches that for a “Parent who teaches his son, it is as if he has taught his son, his son’s son, and so on to the end of generations.” The lessons we teach our children and the opportunities we provide endure for generations.

Right now, in cities and villages throughout the world, there are mothers and fathers wondering if they can afford to feed their children tomorrow.

Right now, there are parents forced to send their children to work rather than school - education is secondary to survival.

Right now, there are children walking alone for miles on deserted roads and desert paths – just to find a clean source of water.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child was a promise to give special attention and protection to children. As a family of nations we are all responsible for ensuring that children across the globe are given the opportunities to fulfill their full potential.

Mr. Chairman,

For too many children, these opportunities are scarce. To quote the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children, Ms. Marta Santos Pais, "for countless children, life is defined by one word: fear." In her report, the Special Representative emphasizes the urgent need to explicitly ban all forms of violence against children, develop comprehensive national strategies and collect data. In the year 2000, Israel's Supreme Court was among the first to ban any form of corporal punishment. Even today, Israel is among a mere 34 countries with a ban on corporal punishment of children.

In Israel, both the government and civil society are engaged in efforts for the protection of children. The government works diligently to ensure the provision of services for children at risk, funding and working closely with NGOs that operate in these fields. For example, the government works closely with the National Council for the Child, a prominent NGO that advocates for children's rights and assists victims of abuse. WIZO, Naamat and Emuna are women's organizations that operate day care centers, including centers for single-parent families. ELEM, Ashalim and ELI improve and expand the available services, including counseling, protection centers and training. Together with civil society, Israel provides robust support for children.

Mr. Chairman,

Israel is proud to conclude a year on the Board of UNICEF, where we played a meaningful role in promoting the organization's crucial efforts for children to ensure a better future for generations to come.
We welcome the particular attention of the Special Representative and UNICEF to the elimination of violence in early childhood, and to children with disabilities.

For children in every corner of the earth, the collaborative efforts within the United Nations are critical to their protection. Israel thanks UNICEF, Special Representative on Children in Armed Conflict Zerrougui, Special Representative on Violence against Children Santos Pais as well as other actors helping children, such as the World Health Organization and the International Labour Organization. Their initiatives offer children a lifeline in the midst of domestic abuse, harmful social norms, denial of education, disease and much more. In May this year, the high level meeting on human trafficking underscored one of the worst crises imaginable, to which children are the most vulnerable. We must redouble our efforts to combat the increase of child trafficking. We thank the Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, Ms. Majat Maalla M’jid, for putting a spotlight on some of the most atrocious crimes against children.

We must continue to give a voice to the most vulnerable children, in particular girls. In this regard, we wish to commend SADC and Canada for their remarkable initiatives, which raise global awareness of their plight and aim to safeguard their rights. A year ago, on the first International Day of the Girl Child, we jointly called for an end child marriage.

Mr. Chairman,

In the next two years Member States will be formulating the post-2015 development agenda. Children must be at its core. MASHAV – Israel’s Agency for International Development Cooperation, conducts several programs around the world contributing to the health of children, their nutrition and education. In March 2014, MASHAV will host an international workshop on Early Childhood Education for Children with Special Needs. This workshop will focus on the awareness, education, and integration of children with special needs under the age of six.

Another MASHAV program is designed to improve the maternal and child health services in Kumasi, Ghana. Working in tandem with the medical staff from Soroka hospital in Beer Sheva, MASHAV has achieved great results. The people of Kumasi now enjoy increased access to antenatal and post-partum care; there has been a reduction in the rate of infant mortality, and maternal morbidity and mortality; immunization coverage has been provided; and this program has formed an effective outlet for mothers to receive health education.

Mr. Chairman,

Just as a family looks after its own, our family of nations must continue striving together to give children a better future. This must be driven by our understanding that every child deserves to fulfill his potential.

This takes determination. Determination to speak out for what’s right and denounce what is wrong. Determination to put these words into action. And determination to build a better tomorrow for all our children and grandchildren.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.