Statement
by
Ambassador Masood Khan
Permanent Representative of Pakistan to
the United Nations
at the
68th Session of United Nations General Assembly
Third Committee
on
Agenda Item 65: Promotion and protection of the rights of children

New York
17 October 2013
Mr. Chairman,

I congratulate you on assuming the Chairmanship of this Committee. We look forward to working under your able leadership.

I thank the Secretary General for his comprehensive reports, which shall enrich our deliberations and guide our efforts for the promotion and protection of the rights of children worldwide.

My delegation associates itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Fiji on behalf of G-77 and China.

Mr. Chairman,

The best and most rewarding investment for a family, or a nation, is to invest in future of its children. This brings material and spiritual dividends instantly and has a constant multiplying effect. Investing in children means investment in education, investment in safe and healthy environment, investment in sustainable development, and investment in peace, security and prosperity of the humankind.

Mr. Chairman,

Over the decades, the United Nations has made a standard bearer for the promotion and protection of children’s, rights through concluding effective multilateral agreements and setting up monitoring and implementation mechanisms. The 1989 ‘Convention on the Rights of the Child’ and its two protocols have been almost universally ratified. Globally, there is now increased consciousness and a sense of moral and legal obligation to protect of rights of the children.

This job is, however, not done fully yet. Despite progress in advancing the rights of children, serious challenges persist as highlighted in the Secretary General’s report including poverty, malnutrition and illiteracy. Young children being the weakest segment of society, their rights are often ignored. Children in all parts of the world face various forms of abuse, violence and exploitation. Their misery and vulnerability become especially acute in situations of extreme poverty, armed conflicts and foreign occupation. Slow progress on children-related MDGs, with regard to eradicating poverty, malnutrition and illiteracy, is also affects the rights of children.

Mr. Chairman,

The Secretary General has reported that in the past decade child casualties have multiplied in the course of military operations by the use of armed drones. He has also underlined that drone strikes directly affect the psychological well being of children and their families, as well as their economic situations and educational opportunities.

The use of armed drones in the border areas of Pakistan is a continued violation of our sovereignty. It alienates affected population, fuels disaffection and spurs reprisals against civilians. Addressing the General Assembly last month, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif has cessation of these drone strikes so that further casualties could be averted.
Mr. Chairman,

Pakistan was one of the six co-initiators of the 1990 World Summit for Children, which accelerated ratification of the Convention. Pakistan was one of its earliest signatories. We have also ratified the first Optional Protocol on Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Pornography. Pakistan has signed the Second Optional Protocol on Children in Armed Conflict and its ratification is under process. In addition to the Convention on Rights of the Child, Pakistan is a state party to all ILO core conventions and the SAARC Convention on Prevention and Combating Trafficking in Women and Children for Prostitution.

Mr. Chairman,

Pakistan attaches highest importance to the rights of children. To enhance children’s access to education and health facilities and to protect them from abuse, neglect, discrimination, violence and exploitation, we have taken a number of legislative and administrative measures. We are making progress towards MDGs relating to infant mortality rate and gross enrolment rate. Comprehensive efforts are being made to eliminate child labour.

Our Comprehensive National Plan of Action for Children include political commitment, capacity building, awareness raising, advocacy and social mobilization.

The National Commission for Child Welfare and Development assesses the impact of the constitutional, legal and administrative provisions on welfare and development of children. Commissions for Child Welfare and Development are also working at the provincial and district levels.

Mr. Chairman,

Besides establishing Children Complaint Desks in offices of the Federal and Provincial Ombudsmen, a Child Protection Management Information System has been set up in collaboration with UNICEF. The Government has also introduced social protection schemes for children with disabilities as well as provision of formal and informal education, pre-vocational training and skill development programmes. Many of these projects have been pursued and accomplished in partnership with UN Agencies (UNICEF and ILO) and the civil society.

Our Government is harnessing all social, financial and technical means to eradicate polio. We are determined to make Pakistan a polio-free country.

Mr. Chairman,

There is an urgent need to enhance efforts at the national and international levels to implement commitments made during the Special Session of the General Assembly on Children. As the deadline for MDGs approaches within less than two years, we must all intensify efforts to ensure achievement of the children related aspects of the MDGs.

Let us leave to our children a world which is safer, peaceful and prosperous.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.