Mr. Chairman,

My delegation aligns itself with the statement made by Malaysia on behalf of ASEAN.

We thank the Secretary-General for the comprehensive reports on the promotion and protection of the rights of children, as well as the informative presentations and reports delivered by the special mandate holders under this agenda item.

Mr. Chairman,

More than a decade ago, governments made a commitment to a time-bound set of goals for children and young people, with a particular focus on promoting healthy lives; providing quality education; protecting children against abuse, exploitation and violence; and combating HIV/AIDS. The Secretary-General's report tells us that those commitments and the efforts supported by Member States are showing real results, yet progress is uneven and much work remains to be done.

Chronic poverty appears to pose the single biggest obstacle to realizing these commitments and promoting and protecting the rights of children. Poverty acutely affects the lives of children, threatening their survival, their development, and their rights to health, adequate food and nutrition, and education. Poor children in developing countries, in particular, face a greater risk. A study shows that poverty associated with health, nutrition, and social risk factors prevents at least 200 million children in developing countries from attaining their full developmental potential. Poverty also has a
negative impact on the rights of children to participation and to protection from violence, harm and exploitation.

**Mr. Chairman,**

Poverty hampers the realization of the rights of children. We know from studies conducted that poverty has a tendency to perpetuate itself and is transmitted from one generation to the next. We therefore need to redouble our efforts if we are to break the cycle of poverty that threatens the achievement of children's rights. We need to further enhance investments in delivering more inclusive social services and strengthen efforts to ensure access by vulnerable groups, such as children, to the full range of public services and opportunities.

In this regard, the Philippines implements national initiatives and programmes geared towards delivery of more inclusive social services relevant to the protection of child welfare. These include, among others, the Department of Health’s expanded program on immunization, which provides free vaccines that protect infants and children from common preventable diseases; the “Pantawid Pamilya,” a conditional cash transfer program managed by the Department of Social Welfare and Development for poor households to keep children in school; and the Department of Labor and Employment’s Special Program for the Employment of Students, a school-to-work bridging program that helps poor but deserving young people earn an income while studying.

Policy coherence at the national, regional, and global levels, however, is crucial to ensure sustained and timely investments in children. Hence, special attention must continue to be given to the promotion and protection of the rights of children not only in the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, but in the post-2015 development framework as it focuses on sustainable development, including the eradication of poverty in all its forms.

We need to address, first and foremost, poverty and provision for the basic needs of children, such as nutrition, health, and education to enable them to have a meaningful participation in society and be protected from exploitation and all forms of violence.

**Mr. Chairman,**

My delegation is committed to the promotion and protection of the rights of the child. The Philippine Constitution makes the child the core of the Filipino family and directs the State to promote and protect their physical, moral, spiritual, intellectual, and social well-being; defend their right to assistance; and provide them special protection from all forms of neglect, abuse, cruelty, exploitation, and other conditions prejudicial to their development.
We have a comprehensive set of statutes on children’s rights that include the Family Code, the Child and Youth Welfare Code, and the Juvenile Justice and Welfare Act of 2006 (JJWA) which raised the minimum age of criminal responsibility in the country from nine (9) to fifteen (15) years. Other important laws include the Newborn Screening Act, which ensures protection of children from preventable causes of disability and death; the expanded Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act, which instituted policies to eliminate trafficking in persons especially women and children; the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour Act, which provides for stronger measures to protect working children, taking into consideration the provisions and standards of ILO Convention No. 182; and the Special Protection of Children against Child Abuse, Exploitation and Discrimination Act, which contains specific provisions that penalize perpetrators who use children in prostitution and other sexual abuses. The scope of this particular law on the protection of children also covers the prohibition on the use of children in armed combat; the establishment of children as Zones of Peace; and protection and evacuation of children during armed conflict.

Our domestic legal instruments and policies complement existing international conventions relating to the rights of the child to which the Philippines is a State Party to, such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography; and the Involvement of Children and Armed Conflict.

At this juncture, Mr. Chairman, allow me to speak on the issue concerning children and armed conflict, an issue that is of high importance to us. The issue of children and armed conflict is multi-dimensional and requires concerted, coherent and coordinated decisions and actions by all stakeholders. While Governments are rightly held accountable for their duty to protect children and their rights, it must be underscored that the issue of accountability likewise lies with all parties concerned. Therefore, the political will of all stakeholders and parties — particularly persistent perpetrators — will be key if we are to make more concrete and visible headway on this issue and advance further.

The Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict plays an important role in putting forward positive, transparent, and balanced actions that will help secure the promotion and protection of the rights of children. We continue to look forward to a genuinely objective, transparent, and sincere engagement by the Special Representative with stakeholders to move relevant processes forward and identify possible solutions to standing issues. In this regard, my delegation wishes to reiterate its longstanding position that engaging non-state armed groups, including for the purpose of securing the protection of children, should be approached in a most careful manner. Since the situation of children occurs against a complex background, any strategy to protect children in this case should be in harmony with larger peace processes in the country. This was our position as a member of the Security Council in 2005 when the reporting and monitoring mechanism was being carefully deliberated and it continues to be my delegation’s position.
The Philippines will continue to work with all stakeholders on its commitment to promote and protect the rights of children, especially in the context of armed conflict, and is determined to take steps for its de-listing from Annex 2 of Security Council Resolution 1612.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman, for your kind attention.