



Statement of Ireland

77th session of the United Nations General Assembly

Third Committee

General Discussion on the Rights of the Child

Chair,

Ireland aligns with the statement of the European Union.

We are pleased to speak today on the important topic of the rights of the child. This is a key priority for Ireland in all our bilateral and multilateral engagement across all UN fora and a crucial part of our work as a member of the UN Security Council. Ireland is deeply concerned that children across the world continue to face the gravest of human rights violations, particularly in situations of armed conflict.

This year marks the 25th anniversary of the Children in Armed Conflict mandate created by Resolution 51/77. The resolution showed commitment and unity from the international community to protect children from hostiles. For our part, Ireland has been immensely proud to serve on the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict during our term on the Security Council. To protect children impacted by conflict, sustainable peace is the key way forward.

Education is the right of every child. Yet attacks on schools continue to undermine children's access and right to education, endangering both children and those who dedicate their lives to teaching. Deliberate targeting, attacks on and use of schools and hospitals by armed groups can never be justified and must end. Ireland urges all states to sign on to and implement the Paris Principles and Safe Schools Declaration.

We are particularly appalled that girls in Afghanistan continue to be denied their right to education. It has been over a year since Afghanistan became the only country in the world to ban girls from accessing secondary education. We continue to call on the Taliban to reverse this decision. We also condemn the recent attack on the Kaaj tuition centre in Kabul, where students were practising for the entrance exam to university. Let us be clear. Every child has the right to learn and to do so in a safe and nurturing environment.

As well as a foreign policy priority, Ireland is very proud of our domestic record on the rights of children. In 2015, Ireland became the first country in the world to publish a National Strategy on the participation of children and young people in decision making. Our LGBTI+ National Youth Strategy

seeks to ensure a cross-governmental approach to enhance the lives of LGBTI+ young people and to address some of the key challenges LGBTI+ children and young people may face as part of their day-to-day lives. A new National Framework for Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-Making was launched in 2021. As part of the preparation for reporting to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Universal Periodic Review, the Government undertook consultation with children and young people in Ireland, providing an important insight into how they view the enjoyment of their rights. We have also established a Youth Advisory Panel, which has published a Children's Report to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child.

In line with our long standing commitment to the UN Human Rights Treaty bodies, Ireland is preparing for our forthcoming review under the Convention of the Rights of the Child. The Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocols serve as the main international standards for the defence and advancement of children's rights, and we strongly urge all states to actively engage with the Treaty Bodies in order to ensure best practice in domestic engagement on children's rights.

Thank you.