



**Permanent Mission of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
to the United Nations**

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Statement

by

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Permanent Representative of St. Vincent and the Grenadines to the United
Nations

**“Children and armed conflict: Integrating child protection into peace
processes”**

United Nations Security Council
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New York

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Thank you Mr. President

We join members in the thanking the King and Queen of Belgium for participating in this meeting. We also welcome the Foreign Ministers of Belgium and Indonesia, as well as the Deputy Foreign Minister of Estonia. We thank Secretary General Guterres, Commissioner Chergui and Ms Becker for their briefings.

Mr. President,

With children constituting approximately half of the population of countries ravished by war and conflict, and an estimated half of the world's refugee population, remediating the disproportionate impact of armed conflict on children, remains critical to the work of the Security Council. As signatories to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the Optional Protocol on Children in Armed Conflict, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines stands in solidarity with Members of the Security Council in endorsing the use of child-centred, gender-aware and responsive, comprehensive strategies in peace processes, and post-conflict settings. We welcome the production of this adaptable *Practical Guidance for Mediators to Protect Children in Situations of Armed Conflict*, as part of the essential child protection and child-empowerment peace and development work of the Council.

Mr. President,

We are well aware of the atrocities meted out to children as chronicled in various SG reports, since the emergence of the CAAC mandate in 1996 and the 12 subsequent resolutions adopted in this august Council between 1999 and 2018, on the six grave violations against children. It is however worth reminding Members that in spite of our work – and that of governments, civil society, communities and families – in 2019 the killing and maiming of children reached **record levels globally**, since 2005 when the monitoring system was created. Children also suffer the worst effects when schools and hospitals are attacked, and when humanitarian access is denied.

President

The rate at which children continue to be abducted, recruited and used in active hostilities, including as suicide bombers, has continued unabated in several conflict-ridden regions. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines remains particularly concerned about the recruitment and use of children. We are also deeply troubled by the high levels of reported cases of sexual violence

against children, girls in particular, even while sexual violence in conflict remains underreported mainly due to stigma, lack of services and concerns for the protection of victims and survivors. This problem is exacerbated by endemic impunity and lack of accountability of perpetrators at the level of the individual, community and state.

Mr. President

The Security Council has articulated frameworks across its various mandates to address accountability and reparation. We however regard mediation as a key mechanism in securing remediation and repair for survivors, as a strategy for sustainable healing, and a means through which to ensure violations against children are prevented from occurring in the first place. Mediation provides a space in which parties to the conflict assume ownership and responsibility for the final resolution, increasing the likelihood of a lasting peace. However, as noted in the guidance document presented here today, this can be compromised in the absence of child protection-focused analyses, the requisite resource persons with child-centred expertise, tailored psycho-social and reintegration strategies for children, and the right of children to be heard.

This *Practical Guidance for Mediators* is an important document that can assist with mainstreaming child protection-focused action in confidence-building measures, security arrangements, governance, and transitional justice systems in peace-building processes. We agree with Vietnam that this should be a living document, constantly updated with examples of good practice.

Excellencies,

Children represent more than 20% of our world population, but 100% of our future. We cannot sit idly by while future generations face such uncertain prospects for life and livelihood. There can be no greater purpose for which we can commit ourselves.

Thank you.