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**Statement**

by

**Lasana Andrews**

First Secretary

**Arria Formula on Protection of education in conflict**

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Thank you Chair,

We extend a special welcome to His Royal Highness Crown Prince Haakon and to Minister Huitfeldt. We also thank our distinguished briefers for their keen but sobering insights.

The unanimous adoption of Security Council resolution 2601 (2021) clearly signals our shared commitment to quality, consistent and safe access to education for all children affected by armed conflict. It signals our awareness that protection risks, related to sexual and gender-based violence and socio-economic precarity more generally, are compounded in conflict settings. It signals our commitment to the continuation of education for all children in conflict affected countries and regions, while centering the larger goal of lasting peace and sustainable development.

However, as captured by the Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attacks (GCPEA), the military use of schools and universities has occurred in at least 30 countries across the globe. Over the last two years, we have seen a rapid deterioration in access to quality education as the world confronts multiple and intersecting health, socio-economic and climate crises. There has never been a time more urgent than now to act in service of our children.

Recalling the principles and actions enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, its Optional Protocols on Children and Armed Conflict, The African Charter on the Rights of the Child, S/PRST/2020/8, UNSCR 2601, all other relevant Security Council resolutions, and the Safe Schools Declaration, we identify the following three urgent actions:

1. Member states and parties to conflict must adopt and honour formal commitments to end attacks against schools and other civilian objects to ensure that education, health and other facilities necessary to meet the protection needs of civilians, particularly children, are safeguarded. National ownership of the legal and policy frameworks, outlining such commitments, must be accompanied by nationally and locally derived actions that are supported by the international community.
2. Countries and regions affected by conflict require the support of the international community in resolving the digital divide, ending vaccine nationalism and hoarding, and in building and maintaining the critical physical, digital and overall ICT infrastructure necessary for the continuation and expansion of education. This is especially urgent in a world of increasing income inequality, deepening insecurity, and as the situation worsens for children in fragile contexts.
3. Finally, as outlined in resolution 2601 (2021), national interventions must reflect the gendered ways in which girls and boys are denied or access education, the situation for children with disabilities, and the role of ethnicity and geographic location. In this regard, we support a ground up approach, attentive to each national context, to ensure that the specific protection needs of all children are met. Global funds like “Education Can’t Wait” must expand their resourcing of local capacity building and government and civil society partnerships, to protect and promote education for all children.

I thank you.