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Official Records

President: Mr. Muhammad-Bande (Nigeria)

The meeting resumed at 10 a.m. on Thursday, 21 November.

In the absence of the President, Mr. Shava (Zimbabwe), Vice-President, took the Chair.

High-level meeting on the occasion of the thirtieth anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child

Agenda item 66 (continued)

Promotion and protection of the rights of children

The Acting President: Before we begin with the list of speakers, I would like to address important organizational matters pertaining to the conduct of the plenary meetings. I will start with the length of statements.

As indicated in the letters of the President dated 7 November and 18 November, I would like to remind all speakers that statements should be limited to three minutes when speaking in their national capacity and to five minutes when speaking on behalf of a group.

As delegations will recall, in its resolution 72/313, of 17 September 2018, the General Assembly called for each speaker to strictly adhere to time limits in the Assembly, in particular during high-level meetings. To assist speakers in managing their time, a light system has been installed at the speaker's rostrum. Participants with longer statements are encouraged to read out a shorter version of their text and to submit their full-

length statements to the Secretariat for posting on the PaperSmart portal.

Also in accordance with resolution 72/313, observance of the "all protocols observed" principle, whereby participants are encouraged to refrain from the listing of standard protocol expressions during their statements, is recommended.

Bearing in mind the time limit, I would like to appeal to speakers to deliver their statements at a reasonable pace so that interpretation into the official United Nations languages may be provided properly. I ask all speakers to cooperate in observing the time limits for statements so that all those inscribed can be heard in a timely manner.

Ms. Quiel Murcia (Panama) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me to begin by welcoming the convening of this significant commemorative meeting, which, 30 years after the entry into force of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, calls upon us to renew global consensus and to redouble efforts consistent with the spirit of this instrument, which marked a momentous change in the promotion and protection of the rights of our children.

Panama today affirms its decisive commitment to continue working for the defence of the fundamental rights of children. The progress achieved over the past three decades has led my country to significant institutional changes and resulted in public policies aimed at strengthening the implementation of the Convention and ensuring the best interests of children. As a developing country, we are also aware

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of the challenges ahead. We are therefore undertaking concrete efforts to address historical gaps in populations affected by multidimensional poverty, especially in vulnerable areas.

We are living in a new global context. The leadership of children and young people has been witnessed in this very Hall, and their loud and clear voice has demanded that their rights be safeguarded. We are therefore obligated to meet their demands. Although technological advances have made significant progress in recent decades, children and young people continue to be vulnerable and their most basic rights continue to be violated by the prolonged effects of inequality, poverty, malnutrition and insecurity, among other threats against their security.

That is why we welcome the adoption of the UNICEF voluntary global pledge, which my country has signed, and which highlights the new challenges children are facing. Cognizant of our State responsibilities and aware that the healthy comprehensive growth of our children is an investment that translates into the development of social equity, my Government, led by President Laurentino Cortizo Cohen, has prioritized its early childhood programme aimed at ensuring the necessary coverage and care to ensure the comprehensive development of children from zero to eight years of age, stressing the first thousand days of life as a fundamental stage in their development and attainment of their maximum potential.

Childhood is our top priority. As such, we have established important alliances to that end. Panama is pleased to be a pioneer in the implementation of concrete actions for the deinstitutionalization of children without parental care.

In conclusion, I renew Panama's firm commitment to the global agenda for children and to celebrating the 30 years of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Only together will we be able to guarantee a world of opportunity, without discrimination, for all our children.

Ms. Vieira (Cabo Verde): As we celebrate the thirtieth anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, I would like to take this opportunity to wish a happy day to all children around the world. Indeed, we should celebrate World Children's Day every day with collective and individual acts and behaviours that make sense for children of what we call the rights of the child — promoting and protecting

those rights and projecting them into the future in a way that leaves no child behind. Further, if we believe that in every adult resides a transformed child from the past who has the possibility of engendering a new child, then our responsibility as adults in promoting the rights of the child is all the more important. In this regard, the Convention on the Rights of the Child is a landmark instrument, as it offers a global and universal legal framework to better implement policies and programmes that promote and protect the rights of the child at national, regional and international levels.

The Government of Cabo Verde is firmly committed to implementing the provisions of the Convention. In this endeavour, Cabo Verde has set legal and strategic frameworks for the promotion and protection of the rights of the child and for their well-being. Our Constitution and the Child and Adolescent Statute enshrine the rights of the child, which, in order to guarantee their social development, must be jointly promoted by family, public institutions and society in general. In addition, the Government has adopted bold national strategies aimed at reducing inequalities and promoting social inclusion through such instruments as the National Adolescent Health Strategy and the national plan to combat sexual violence against children and adolescents.

Amílcar Cabral, the founding father of Cabo Verde, said that children were the flowers of revolution. He meant that they had not received special care or benefit from policies directed at their needs and interests and that they needed peaceful societies where they could become agents of positive change, fostering stronger institutions and needed increased investment in their communities in such crucial areas as education, health and social protection. As flowers of revolution, children hold in their hands the ability to improve their own communities and countries. Indeed, with their rights recognized and protected, children can be the seeds for future generations to lead their countries towards sustainable development.

In conclusion, I have the honour to reiterate that the Government of Cabo Verde is pleased to endorse the global pledge "For every child, every right".

Mrs. Pobee (Ghana): It is with a great sense of pride that Ghana joins the world today to commemorate this distinctive milestone for the Convention on the Rights of the Child. As is widely known, Ghana made history by blazing the trail 30 years ago and ratifying

the Convention on 5 February 1990. Ghana has not been oblivious to the obligation that accompanies such an action, and, in that regard, successive Governments have shown a firm commitment and taken decisive steps towards the implementation of the Convention.

Thirty years after the adoption of the Convention, the enactment and implementation of several legal instruments in Ghana have contributed to the progressive realization of children's rights. Ghana has not only incorporated the Convention into its Constitution, but it has enacted other relevant laws to demonstrate further commitment to its implementation, including, *inter alia*, the Children's Act, the Criminal Offences (Amendment) Act, the Juvenile Justice Act, the Human Trafficking Act, the Domestic Violence Act and the Persons with Disability Act.

The inextricable link between the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is not hard to see. While the Convention on the Rights of the Child highlights international standards for ensuring the realization of the rights of every child, the SDGs articulate a contemporary vision of sustainable social, economic and environmental progress for a prosperous and secure future for all, with an emphasis on leaving no one behind. The Convention has become even more urgent today as the world strives towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which highlights the need for inclusion. In the face of these commitments, the international community cannot ignore the continued abuse, neglect exclusion and marginalization of children anywhere in the world. It is not a time for more promises, but rather one for seizing the opportunity to embark on bold actions to support every child to reach his or her full potential.

Over the years, Ghana has pursued several initiatives and programmes based on the four core principles of the Convention, the most recent of which is based on the principle of respect for the views of the child. As a core activity to commemorate the thirtieth anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Speaker of Parliament of Ghana yesterday launched the National Children's Parliament to provide a platform for children to express their views on issues pertaining to their development. The Children's Parliament is directly in line with the concluding observations made by the Committee on the Rights of the Child in response to Ghana's third to fifth periodic

reports, as well as the 2017 child policy framework of the Economic Community of West African States.

In conclusion, allow me to reaffirm the commitment of the Government of Ghana to upholding and protecting the rights and principles enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. My Government has also pledged to take concrete, actionable and time-bound steps towards its full implementation, in close collaboration with parents and legal guardians. In so doing, Ghana remains most attentive to the needs of children in deprived communities and in other vulnerable situations, especially those affected by extreme poverty, disability, natural disasters and conflicts. Our success will ultimately lie in our ability to secure better lives for our children today and for future generations.

Mr. Mlynár (Slovakia): My delegation fully aligns itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union (see A/74/PV.32).

At the outset, I would like to thank the President of the General Assembly for having taken the initiative to convene this important high-level meeting yesterday and today, with a view to reflecting and renewing commitments to implementing the Convention on the Rights of the Child at both national and international levels. We also welcome all the efforts of the Secretary-General in this important regard.

The rights of the child have always been a high priority on my country's human rights agenda. As the Assembly may know, our commitment to this agenda was underscored by our efforts aimed at championing the adoption of the third Optional Protocol to the Convention, on a communications procedure. The Protocol was approved by the General Assembly in December 2011, entered into force in April 2014, and, so far, has been ratified by 46 States. Honestly speaking, that is not a very impressive number. In this regard, I would like to take this opportunity to encourage all States that have not yet done so to ratify this Optional Protocol, which allows individual children to voice complaints with regard to specific violations of their rights under the Convention and its first two Optional Protocols. .

As a candidate for the Human Rights Council, we pledged to support the rights of the child, in accordance with the principle of the best interests of the child, and fulfil our national action plan for children. Now that we are a member of the Human Rights Council and as an

endorsed Vice-President of that body for the year 2020, we are doing our utmost to further promote this agenda on a daily basis, both in Geneva and in New York.

Two days ago, the Third Committee adopted a draft resolution on the rights of the child (A/C.3/74/L.21/Rev.1). As a member of the European Union, Slovakia is proud to be among the cross-regional group of main sponsors that submitted the resolution. I would also like to emphasize that the draft resolution was adopted by consensus and sponsored by 107 States Members of the United Nations, which clearly confirms the importance that the United Nations membership accords the agenda.

Protecting children is natural for humankind, and it is therefore natural that the topic appears in all three pillars of the work of the United Nations. In this regard, we welcome the children and armed conflict agenda, which has found its regular place in the programme of work of the Security Council. Slovakia has co-sponsored all the Security Council resolutions on the protection of children and endorsed numerous initiatives to tackle this issue, such as the Paris Principles, the Paris Commitments and the Vancouver Principles and such initiatives as the Children, Not Soldiers campaign and the Safe Schools Declaration.

As we celebrate the thirtieth anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, we should reflect on our successes and our work thus far. Thirty years is a relatively long period of time, but the question remains as to how effectively we have invested in our future by protecting and promoting the rights of children. Indeed, a lot has been done, but we can surely do even better. The return on this investment will certainly justify its cost.

In conclusion, as the father of two daughters, I would like to express my hope that by the time that they — and the other children of today — come to commemorate the fortieth or fiftieth anniversary of the Convention, we will have achieved even greater progress than we have today.

Mr. Rugeles (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): My statement today is not addressed to the ministers, ambassadors or delegations that are in this Hall today, but to the children for the welfare and protection of whom we are working every single day. In this context, we are accustomed to highlighting that the Convention on the Rights of the Child is the international instrument with the highest number of ratifications — but what does that mean for the children themselves? It means

that practically all States gathered at the General Assembly were able, despite their differences, to agree on the universal principle that children have specific rights and needs, and that our actions must be guided by the best interests of the child.

This year there have been multiple events commemorating this historic Convention at the international, regional and national level. However, the best way that we can celebrate this anniversary is to provide the children of the world with the concrete actions of States to guarantee their rights, in particular to promote their right to participate in the development and implementation of public policies. In this regard, Colombia greatly appreciates the inclusion of a specific Sustainable Development Goal consisting of ending all forms of violence against children in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

With that in mind, on 14 August the President of Colombia, Mr. Iván Duque Márquez, launched a national alliance targeting violence against children and adolescents, which highlights how public policy can be formulated in a participatory manner and how the mobilization of an entire society in such a cultural transformation led us to generate consensus on zero-tolerance for violence. Similarly, in September, Colombia joined the Global Partnership to End Violence against Children.

During this historic year for the Convention, Colombia hosted the Pan American Child Congress organized by the Organization of American States. The event was an opportunity to promote dialogue and exchange experiences from across the continent on the comprehensive promotion and protection of human rights. It was also a forum for dialogue with children, who shared their appreciation and recommendations with the States of the region. At the national level, the foundations for our national development plan for 2018-2022 indicate that challenges relating to the participation of children are tied to the specific circumstances in which they live. This is particularly visible in relation to children who live in rural areas, belong to ethnic groups or have a disability.

It is our priority to anticipate and resolve violence and violations against children and adolescents by strengthening the capacities of the family and promoting their shared responsibility in raising their own members. In this context, strategies for eradicating poverty, capacity-building for entering the labour

market and developing comprehensive protection programmes are extremely relevant.

In conclusion, I wish to reiterate to all those children listening to us that we are also listening to them. We are always there for them and they can count on us and our full support. They are our future and our hope, as they represent the most precious treasure we could ever have.

Mr. Ahmed (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, we are pleased to participate in this meeting of the General Assembly to commemorate the thirtieth anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. This landmark Convention established the concept of children having their own specific rights, which inspired many Governments to adopt laws and policies that promote such rights.

Egypt's commitment to implementing the Convention on the Rights of the Child can be seen in Article 80 of its Constitution, which provides for the protection and welfare of children, and in Article 140 of the statute of the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood, which ensures this body's necessary independence in the exercise of its role. In this context, I would like to highlight some aspects of our national efforts aimed at implementing the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

A strategy for motherhood and childhood for the period 2018-2030 was launched to end violence against children, and a hotline was set up to receive complaints and reports on incidents of violence or abuse against children. The hotline provides legal services for addressing such cases, as well as rehabilitation and consultation services, in collaboration with Government agencies and civil society organizations concerned with child protection.

Last year, in collaboration with UNICEF, the Ministry of Education launched a community campaign known as "I am against bullying", which used television campaigns and billboards in streets and plazas to raise awareness about the bullying phenomenon in Egyptian schools. In addition, the Ministry of Health launched a similar campaign on social-networking sites to protect children from bullying on the Internet.

In May, we established the National Committee on the Eradication of Female Genital Mutilation with a campaign launched in all governorates of the Republic under the slogan "Protecting against female genital

mutilation". The campaign targeted 4 million citizens and was followed by a number of local efforts, including radio, social-media and door-to-door campaigns.

A set of guidelines on basic actions to address the needs of child victims of human trafficking and illegal immigration, including the children of refugees, has been developed in cooperation with relevant Ministries. Egypt stresses the importance of providing education for refugee children and migrant children in Egyptian schools, guaranteeing them the same rights as Egyptian children in public and private education. Health services for this population are similarly guaranteed.

In conclusion, Egypt reiterates its commitment to implementing the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and all other ratified international instruments related to the rights and well-being of children. We believe that family is the proper context for protecting and caring for children, and that a child who grows up in an environment with parents is likely to become a physically and emotionally healthy adult.

Mr. Carazo (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): Thirty years ago, Costa Rica rejoiced in the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and immediately embarked on a process of rapid ratification, which took less than a year and was followed by the discussion and adoption of the Children's and Young People's Code in 1998. As befits our country, even before the enactment of the Code, the provisions of the Convention, especially those related to the best interests of the child, began to be implemented. The relevant institutions were new for our traditional society and their adoption by it was sensitive, but they enabled that principle to become a guiding principle of State action from that moment on.

Costa Rica has always reaffirmed its commitment to the protection, promotion and full realization of the rights of children and adolescents, including the rights to special protection, to participation in matters that concern them, to respect for and inclusion of diversity and to a healthy physical and mental environment, with a view to enabling their full personal development. Accordingly, Costa Rica had the honour of joining the global commitment entitled "For every child, every right" promoted by UNICEF, thereby renewing our obligations to fully implement the Convention by ensuring the exercise of the rights of the child in the twenty-first century.

Children and adolescents will take the reins of the world in the coming decades, and perhaps some of those

who joined us yesterday will grow up to be the next Secretary-General of the United Nations or the head of one of our States. For that reason, this commemoration also reminds us of the great challenges that lie ahead, so that they, as children and future adults, can enjoy the same happiness, sensitivity and innocence that we enjoyed. Access to a high-quality education, including training in science and new technologies, for children on an equal basis with others, access to comprehensive and universal health care, the right to a life free from violence and the right to parental care and the love of their families of any type are fundamental axes of Costa Rica's relevant policy.

However, there is no greater challenge for children and adolescents than the current climate crisis, which, as the Executive Director of UNICEF has said, is the greatest, growing threat to the children of the world and their children. It is they who are most vehemently holding us to account for what we have done and what we will do in the years to come. Let us heed their urgent call to save the planet and let us do the impossible so that they may live in a healthy, ecologically balanced environment like that which we inherited from our grandparents.

I conclude by paying tribute to the ability and power of children to marvel, that special quality that can turn life into a game every day. Let us celebrate the life of all children and redouble our efforts to ensure their complete happiness, today and tomorrow.

Mr. Margaryan (Armenia): Thirty years ago, Member States made a global commitment to upholding the rights of children by agreeing on a minimum set of rules and obligations to protect them from violence and abuse and to create an enabling environment for their harmonious development.

On the occasion of the thirtieth anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, Armenia presented to the Committee on the Rights of the Child its pledges, including a number of measurable actions, to address the most pressing issues for the comprehensive realization of the rights of all children. Armenia has also joined the voluntary global pledge "For every child, every right", which was launched by the Group of Friends of Children and the Sustainable Development Goals. The Republic of Armenia's strategic programme on the protection of the rights of the child is designed to address their needs by improving the protection system, guaranteeing inclusive and accessible education for

all children with disabilities and preventing violence against children. One of the important developments in terms of the social protection of children has been the Government's decision to provide free universal health coverage for everyone under the age of 18 and to allocate financial resources for that purpose.

As a traditional sponsor of the General Assembly resolution on the rights of the child, we are pleased that the issue of children without parental care has been a thematic focus of the resolution this year. One of the key priorities of the Government of Armenia in the area of children's rights is the deinstitutionalization of children and the introduction of comprehensive reforms to that end. The logic and philosophy behind the reform is the firm conviction that every child has the right to live with their family. The Government has launched programmes and strategies to prevent children from ending up in residential care facilities by supporting families and facilitating their access to social services. Law enforcement agencies have also recently taken decisive steps to address violations of domestic legislation in the child adoption process. We work closely with our international partners and civil society organizations to address remaining gaps in legislation and practice on a number of relevant issues, such as data collection on children outside school and the provision of education to juvenile offenders in penitentiary institutions.

Armenia attaches the utmost importance to the protection of children in conflict situations. Violations of international human rights and humanitarian law put children living in conflict areas at risk on multiple levels and impede their enjoyment of basic human rights, such as the rights to life and to education. Armenia is a strong advocate for the universal ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict. We also believe that multilateral instruments, such as the Principles and Guidelines on Children Associated with Armed Forces or Armed Groups, the Paris Commitments to protect children from unlawful recruitment or use by armed forces or armed groups, the Vancouver Principles on Peacekeeping and the Prevention of the Recruitment and Use of Child Soldiers and the Safe Schools Declaration, are the framework conducive to amplifying the efforts to protect children and advance their rights.

The thirtieth anniversary is a moment of conscious reflection on the actions we have taken over that period

to protect those who are often the most vulnerable segment of the population and to scale up actions to ensure a safe, secure and peaceful future for all children.

Mr. Braun (Luxembourg) (*spoke in French*): Luxembourg welcomes the holding of this commemoration of the thirtieth anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. It is an opportunity to take stock of the situation of children in the world and to learn from each other's experiences.

Today, many children are uprooted, owing in particular to persistent conflicts, extreme poverty and climate change. Some 265 million children do not have access to school, 250 million suffer daily the consequences of war and protracted conflict, and one in five children lives in a conflict zone.

Children's rights are now taking on a new dimension, as it is clear that without their full realization, the complete and effective achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals will not be possible either. In my capacity as co-Chair of the Group of Friends of Children and the Sustainable Development Goals, I can affirm my country's and my own absolute commitment to taking that work as far forward as possible as a matter of priority.

In 2002, my country established the Ombuds Committee for the Rights of the Child, an independent and neutral committee to support the implementation and promotion of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, ratified by Luxembourg in 1993. Since its establishment, the Committee has buttressed the legislative process, by giving its opinion and proposing amendments to draft laws or submitting recommendations on areas that require the Government's attention in order to improve the situation of children in my country.

I would also like to reiterate the decision taken by Luxembourg's Government to comprehensively reform our national legislation on the protection of young people by 2022. That legislative reform seeks to create a strict separation between protective measures and criminal law measures, introduce specific procedural guarantees for minors and establish a minimum age for the deprivation of liberty. The infrastructure will also be adapted to promote a juvenile justice system based on the rights of the child. That is one of the many measures that we have put in place, as mentioned today and as those present well know.

Lastly, my country, Luxembourg, will maintain its commitment to children's rights at the international level, in particular by supporting the work of United Nations agencies in that regard. In 2019, Luxembourg made voluntary and thematic contributions totalling €6.2 million to UNICEF, the work of which is key to translating into reality the rights enshrined in the Convention.

Mr. Lam Padilla (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): I am pleased to participate in this commemorative meeting of the General Assembly on the thirtieth anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The occasion is propitious to reflect on the progress of the Convention's provisions and to reinvigorate its implementation today.

Guatemala promotes the full development of children and adolescents. In that regard, we have added our voice to other States in promoting the best interests of childhood at the national and global levels. The Convention on the Rights of the Child, developed over more than a decade with the contributions of representatives of diverse societies, the establishment of which we are commemorating today, we, the States, recognize that children are individuals with the full right to their physical, mental and social development and the right to freely express their opinions.

Like other countries of the region, and due to our geographical position and the economic and institutional constraints that we face, Guatemala is highly vulnerable to trafficking in persons for perverse purposes. As a result, Guatemala recently established a cooperation mechanism to more precisely activate alerts to combat human trafficking through social networks, particularly Facebook. That will enable us to immediately assist victims of trafficking in order to rescue them and provide them with all the assistance necessary for their well-being. We are the first country in the region that has undertaken such an alliance with that platform.

My delegation would also like to highlight Guatemala's commitment to ensuring and protecting the rights of children in all situations. That is why Guatemala endorsed the Safe Schools Declarations in May. We believe that it is necessary to redouble our efforts to address the scourge in that area. We must strengthen the concept of sustainable peace by respecting the lives and human rights of the youngest and most vulnerable.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Sustainable Development Goals go hand in hand intrinsically. The Convention underscores the importance of international standards in guaranteeing the realization of the rights of every child, as well as of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Sustainable Development Goals envisage sustainable progress in the social, economic and environmental spheres — a challenge that can be met when everyone, including children, joins forces towards a peaceful, prosperous and secure future.

I stress the link between efforts to fight climate change and children's rights. If we do not take up action against climate change today, there will be no future for the children, and there will therefore be no rights that we must guarantee.

I conclude my statement with a few words written by Gabriela Mistral, a diplomatic poet who passed away more than 100 years ago here in New York,

“Many of the things we need can wait. The child cannot. Right now is the time his bones are being formed ... his senses are being developed. To him we cannot answer ‘Tomorrow’. His name is ‘Today’.”

Mrs. Vasquez Muñoz (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Thirty years ago, here in the General Assembly, we adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the most ratified human rights treaty in history. With that step, we recognized that children and adolescents have their own identities and that they are rights holders. On that basis, States have adopted a series of legislative measures and public policies to guarantee the protection of the human rights of children and adolescents.

However, rather than celebrate, we are here today to recognize the numerous challenges that we still face in complying with the Convention. As long as there are children in the world who are working or living in poverty or mistreatment and girls who are being sexually exploited, forced into marriage or out of classrooms or without access to health services, we have failed in our commitments. The transformations of our world in the past 30 years and the challenges that they have brought — demographic changes, the use of new technologies, climate change, human mobility, humanitarian crises and armed conflicts — have varied impacts on children and adolescents, who at their young age are exposed to extreme and dangerous situations, making a dead letter of the Convention.

Since the ratification of the Convention in 1990, Mexico has taken important initiatives to comply with it. As main examples, I would like to highlight the adoption of the General Law on the Rights of Children and Adolescents and the establishment of a national system for the comprehensive protection of children and adolescents, which represents a new institutional model for establishing cross-cutting and comprehensive policies on the rights of children and adolescents. That is one of the most important measures that Mexico has implemented in recent years in compliance with the Convention, in accordance with international standards.

Within that framework, the issue of eliminating violence against children has been a priority, and Mexico joined the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children as one of the four pathfinding countries in 2016. To date, we have prepared two action plans with concrete and multisectoral actions, which have made the impact of that scourge visible and contributed to a comprehensive approach to the issue.

For Mexico, violence, discrimination and xenophobia are never acceptable. Even less can they be tolerated when they target children or adolescents who, because of their migratory status, disability, ethnic origin or sexual orientation, already face daily and repeatedly multiple forms of exclusion. We call for an end to violence against migrant children. Separation from parents, stigmatization, unsanitary or overcrowded living conditions and the ill-treatment they receive in the custody of the immigration authorities are unacceptable. We recognize that Mexico must address the challenges it faces with respect to care for migrant children and adolescents and asylum-seekers. We are working to implement various initiatives to tackle this issue.

We welcome the format of yesterday's meeting, which allowed for the participation of children in this event. We encourage the inclusion of children in future activities that will enable us to truly hear their voices. If we want to ensure that no child is left behind, we must first listen to their anxieties, dreams, fears and concerns, which must serve as the compass that guides the policies we make for them. Achieving the targets set out in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals will require the full implementation of the Convention, as the substantive participation of children and adolescents in our societies is a crucial element of democracy, peacebuilding and sustainable development.

The children and young people of the world cannot wait another 11 years to exercise their rights. The time to make the Convention on the Rights of the Child a reality is now.

Mrs. Nyagura (Zimbabwe): Let me join previous speakers in congratulating the President of the General Assembly on the excellent work he is doing in leading the proceedings to commemorate the thirtieth anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. It is the most ratified Convention, and rightfully so because of its focus on the future of our nations and the world — our children.

Zimbabwe has prioritized children's rights, as enshrined in the Constitution, by crafting several pieces of legislation such as the Children's Act, the Education Act and the Domestic Violence Act. Non-governmental organizations in the country have acknowledged that Zimbabwe has an excellent legal framework for safeguarding the rights, care and protection of children. Zimbabwe has continued to prioritize education, as evidenced by its consistent ranking among the nations with the highest literacy rates in Africa. The Education Amendment Act of 2018 provides the right to basic State-funded primary and secondary education to enhance the right to education for every child, including special facilities for children with disabilities.

Zimbabwe has adopted multisectoral responses to eliminate all forms of violence, including by providing practical legal, health and psychosocial assistance to victims of violence. Many potentially silent victims now report abuse cases, including sexual abuse, to the authorities. It is also now illegal to marry a girl below the age of 18 in Zimbabwe. Girls who fall pregnant are now allowed to be re-enrolled in school after giving birth so that they can continue their education.

Zimbabwe's AIDS levy, a domestic resource mobilization vehicle for people living with HIV/AIDS, is now part of the best practices for other Member States. However, challenges such as limited resources and low institutional capacity remain.

In conclusion, it is our collective responsibility to deliver the promise of the Convention on the Rights of the Child to create a better future for the children.

Mr. Alrowaiei (Bahrain) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I wish to express my thanks to the President of the General Assembly, Mr. Tijjani Muhammad-Bande, for convening this important meeting to commemorate

the thirtieth anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. I also thank the Deputy Secretary-General and the Executive Director of UNICEF, Ms. Henrietta Fore, for their valuable statements (see A/74/PV.31).

I also wish to commend the crucial role played by UNICEF in relieving children in conflict situations around the world and in rehabilitating and protecting them and their rights. As UNICEF is the body that defends the most vulnerable members of our society who cannot defend themselves namely children, we fully support its efforts to create a better future for our children.

The year 2019 is of particular importance for the Convention on the Rights of the Child. We are commemorating the thirtieth anniversary of the adoption of the Convention, which took place in 1989. The Heads of State and Government pledged to support the rights of the child and give this issue the attention it deserves, as children are the most valuable resource the States have to ensure a better future for humankind. Our meeting today provides an opportunity for Member States to review and reflect on what has been achieved thus far and the challenges that must be overcome to guarantee a better world for the generations to come.

We are here today to reaffirm our commitment to realizing and protecting the rights of the child in accordance with the Convention and to renew our pledge to make every possible effort to incorporate the needs of children in national policies and protect their environments, given the political and environmental instabilities we are witnessing every day. The Kingdom of Bahrain has always been proactive in acceding to international treaties and conventions that promote efforts in the field of rights of the child as part of the reform approach adopted King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa.

We are strongly convinced of the importance of the proper and integrated upbringing of new generations. In that regard, Bahrain has acceded to the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1992. We have paid particular attention to this issue with the enactment of Child Law No. 37 of 2012, which guarantees children's rights in key areas, such as conditions conducive to their upbringing and proper health care, the right to food, education and adequate social welfare. Furthermore, in a joint effort between the National Commission for Childhood, the Ministry of Labour and Social Development and

UNICEF, we have adopted a national strategy for children that approves action plans to promote and develop programmes guaranteeing the rights of the child and proposing legislation and recommendations to the relevant official bodies. We have implemented 79 per cent of such initiatives to date. We have also created a national centre for child protection and a hotline to report physical or psychological abuse or neglect, as well as the Youth Court, in which the protection of the child's identity is also considered.

Statistics indicate that 100 per cent of our children are enrolled in primary and secondary education. Children with disabilities also receive special attention according to their needs, as well as the important support provided by the Royal Charity Organization for the Care and Protection of Orphans and Widows. More than 10,000 orphans and widows had received assistance from that organization by the end of 2018. We firmly believe that education for children is the building block for their futures.

The Kingdom of Bahrain is proud of its partnerships with the United Nations and its agencies. Our work on children's rights has been strengthened through our strategic partnership agreement with UNICEF for the period 2018-2022, which was the first of its kind in the region to support the action plan and priority efforts of the Government, with the assistance of experts of the United Nations Development Programme office in Bahrain. That enables us to follow up on the implementation of our national strategic plan for children, in accordance with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We are also keen to contribute to protecting the rights of the child through our expertise in the area. In that context, Ms. Amal Aldoseri was re-elected as a Vice-Chairperson of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, demonstrating the international community's trust in Bahrain's expertise with regard to human rights in general and the rights of the child in particular, something we are very proud of.

In conclusion, we reiterate our commitment to strengthening and protecting the rights of the child in every area to meet the Sustainable Development Goals, which aim to guarantee the rights of the members of every sector of society and to ensure that no one is left behind.

Mr. Ugarelli (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): Peru is a country deeply committed to the promotion and

protection of children's rights. That is why we are party to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocols on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography; the involvement of children in armed conflict; and a procedure for individual communications. We understand that the Convention and its Optional Protocols constitute the most widely accepted standard for the promotion and protection of the rights of children and adolescents. On the thirtieth anniversary of the adoption of the Convention, we are therefore celebrating the fact that it has the greatest number of ratifications of any international human rights instrument. That shows us how important the international community considers the protection and promotion of children's rights.

My country also reaffirms the fundamental role of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocols as tools for eliminating the obstacles that prevent children from benefiting without discrimination from various special protection and assistance measures; having access to services such as education and health care; being able to fully develop their personalities, abilities and talents; growing up in an environment of happiness, peace, love and understanding; and receiving information on how they can exercise their rights and fulfil their aspirations.

In complementarity with the Convention and its Optional Protocols, which we emphasize represent a major milestone in the promotion and protection of human rights, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development enables us to rethink the subject of children from a more dynamic and cross-cutting perspective, so that States can harmonize their laws, policies and practices with the norms of the Convention and its Protocols, in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and with a view to achieving the noble goal that we have set for ourselves of leaving no one behind and first helping those who are furthest behind.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child, its Optional Protocols and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development are fundamental tools for preparing all children for independent lives, full inclusion in our societies and education in the spirit of the ideals enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, in particular a spirit of peace, dignity, tolerance, freedom, equality and solidarity. Children and adolescents are entitled to rights, freedoms and special protections that must be based on the principles of equal opportunity,

non-discrimination and the best interests of the child, as recognized in the Convention.

At the national level, Peru has made significant progress in recognizing, protecting and promoting the rights of children and adolescents. The recent report on the *State of the World's Children 2019* highlights Peru's success in reducing chronic child malnutrition. In 2000, 33 per cent of our children under the age of five were affected by chronic malnutrition. We have now reduced that figure to 12 per cent, and our goal is to eradicate it. Peru's success in combating malnutrition reflects its national political commitment and effort, coordination among sectors and international organizations, effective budget allocation and an effective, results-based monitoring system. In Peru, corporal punishment of children is also banned, and to that end the Ministry of Education has developed a specialized system so that everyone, including children themselves, can report free of charge and confidentially incidents involving any form of violence in school.

Our national strategy for the prevention and eradication of child labour translates the State's commitment to the protection of children and adolescents into action, while ensuring a future for our country without child labour and a sustainable growth model with a rights-based and socially inclusive approach. Peru pays particular attention to the specific rights of girls and is working actively to ensure their development on an equal footing with boys.

It is the responsibility of Member States to protect rights and restore those that have been violated. That remains a work in progress that must continue, especially with regard to the children who are the most vulnerable of all, such as those living in poverty, with disabilities or as displaced persons or refugees. My country urges the international community to address the various challenges that children and adolescents face at every stage of their lives. That is the only way we will be able to achieve the sustainable development of our societies.

Mr. Gallegos Chiriboga (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): We thank the President of the General Assembly for convening this high-level meeting to commemorate the thirtieth anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

We are firmly committed to the promotion and protection of the rights of the child and to ensuring that no child is left behind. And we reaffirm the fact that

the Convention on the Rights of the Child is the gold standard for the promotion and protection of the rights of children. In that regard, Ecuador had the honour to be the first country in Latin America and the Caribbean to ratify the Convention. Ecuador is a country of young people. Those under the age of 18 account for 36 per cent of the population, which translates to almost 6 million children. In that regard, my country's Constitution recognizes children as a priority sector of the population and establishes the State's responsibility to protect and safeguard them from any form of violence, sexual exploitation or other violation, and to eradicate all forms of violence that children can be subjected to. We are working to achieve equality for children, and we have been working on the ground through various initiatives, such as *Misión Ternura*, a programme that promotes equality within a framework of shared responsibility, as part of our lifelong plan, *Plan Toda Una Vida*, which begins with early childhood.

Children must never be allowed to become victims of violence or threatened by violence, and we condemn any attempt that encourages children to participate in violent acts. Children are the present and the future of our peoples. It is therefore imperative that we spare no effort in providing them with better opportunities and healthy, stable and safe environments for their development as happy children, with the State's support. Ecuador firmly condemns all forms of violence against children, regardless of setting or circumstances, including cruel and inhumane treatment, armed violence and intimidation. We condemn in the strongest terms any form of abuse committed against children in conflict. We urge for respect for international law. We reject the victimization and the use of children as human shields, and we urgently call for all appropriate measures to be taken to protect children from all forms of physical and mental violence, including in their own homes. At the same time, we recognize that the best interests of children, who should grow up in an environment of happiness, love and understanding to ensure the full and harmonious development of their personality, must prevail. In that regard, on the thirtieth anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the nineteenth of its Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, we call for the Protocol's universal ratification and encourage those States that have not yet done so to ratify it without delay.

Ecuador reaffirms its commitment to strengthening and guaranteeing respect for those rights and for ensuring that they are enjoyed by all children, without discrimination. We reiterate that children must develop and be educated in the spirit of the ideals proclaimed in the Charter of the United Nations, particularly peace, dignity, liberty, tolerance, dialogue, equality and solidarity. We reaffirm our commitment to leaving no one behind on the path to sustainable development and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and we hope that on this significant date we can use this space to pool our efforts to engage in a productive and successful dialogue that prioritizes the promotion and protection of the rights of our children and adolescents.

Ms. Rosa Suazo (Honduras) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation is pleased to be celebrating the thirtieth anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the most widely ratified international human rights legal instrument in history, with 196 States parties, of which Honduras is one. The number of ratifications shows how important the world community considers its children and the four guiding principles of the Convention — non-discrimination, the best interests of the child, the right to life, survival and development and the right to participation.

Since Honduras ratified the Convention, in 1990, we have undertaken many efforts to implement it, specifically through reform of our codes for childhood and adolescence and the family, as well as our civil, penal and criminal procedure codes and our law against domestic violence. In 2014 we established a directorate for children, adolescents and the family under our Ministry of Development and Social Inclusion, which drafts policies and regulations for the comprehensive protection of the rights and welfare of children, adolescents and families in Honduras. At the multilateral and regional levels, Honduras is a signatory to the nine human rights treaties of the United Nations system, as well as of the American Convention on Human Rights. It was also the first country in Latin America to ratify the four Conventions on the protection of children of The Hague Conference on Private International Law.

With the goal of promoting respect for children's human rights and their protection and guarantee, especially for children in vulnerable situations, in July of this year Honduras approved a broad and comprehensive legal framework establishing our system guaranteeing the rights of children and adolescents. The system is

designed to involve all actors, including the State at the national, departmental and municipal levels, civil society, academia and specialized international bodies such as UNICEF.

Honduras is dealing with the major challenges of improving its education and health systems and protecting children in vulnerable situations, such as migrants, internally displaced persons and those exposed to violence and insecurity. However, we are working to fully uphold the commitments we have made, especially in the framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals. Children deserve the society that we have committed to achieving, a society that transforms the world into a place without poverty, with equity and justice and in which we all have the possibility of reaching our maximum potential.

Mr. De Souza Monteiro (Brazil): This year marks the thirtieth anniversary of the Convention of the Rights of the Child and the nineteenth anniversary of the adoption of its Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict. This celebration is a valuable opportunity to raise awareness and reflect on achievements and challenges with regard to the rights of the child.

Brazil is proud to have adopted all the international instruments related to the rights of the child. Even before we ratified the Convention, we were guided by its spirit in drafting our child and adolescent statute, Brazil's main instrument on the issue. Brazil has also endorsed the Safe Schools Declaration, which represents an important political commitment to ensuring children's education even during hostilities, reinforcing the idea that schools should be a safe haven and not a target for armed attacks or a place for military use.

While all persons are equal before the law and entitled to its equal protection without discrimination, we know that children are disproportionately affected by abuses and violations of their rights. Children, especially those in vulnerable situations, including girls, those with disabilities, those living with HIV and AIDS, the indigenous, those of African descent, from religious minorities, those without parental care and those living in remote areas, must all be heard and have their perspectives taken into consideration in the development of policies and programmes.

It is our responsibility to protect and promote children's rights and put the best interests of the child at

the heart of our national and international engagements. Accordingly, as a member of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States, Brazil has been part of core groups of resolutions on the rights of the child in the Human Rights Council and the Third Committee of the General Assembly.

At the national level, the rights of the child are a priority that we are implementing through measures such as our Happy Child programme, based on the integral development of children in early childhood; a national plan for family and community life; a national system to assist adolescents in conflict with the law; a policy for preventing and combating sexual abuse and exploitation; the establishment of a national week to prevent teen pregnancy; new legislation that prohibits the marriage of children under 16 years old; and a national policy for the prevention of self-harm and suicide, with the aim of promoting children and adolescents' mental health.

In conclusion, we understand that the development of our nation depends on our children's proper development, which is why we are committed to ensuring adequate access to health, education and basic public services for children and adolescents, as well as promoting a safe and harmonious family environment. Only by listening to children's voices and experiences and integrating their views into our discussions will we achieve a more equitable world for all.

Mr. Nenov (Bulgaria): At the outset, I would like to express our appreciation for the participation of children in this year's commemoration. As co-facilitators of the modalities process, Bulgaria and Pakistan held open and transparent consultations in which the importance of children's meaningful participation was emphasized.

In 1989 the General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child, a landmark achievement marking the first major international consensus on children's rights. Thirty years later, it has become the world's most widely ratified human rights treaty. Through it, Governments officially recognized for the first time that children have the same rights as adults. Member States therefore united around creating and ensuring an environment in which all children are able to thrive. Much progress has been achieved in those three decades, and children's rights have unquestionably been advanced. However, the fact remains that we are still failing to create a world where all children enjoy a healthy and safe childhood and

the opportunity to learn and reach their full potential. Member States must therefore continue to work to promote and ensure the welfare of children, including in cooperation with international organizations and non-governmental organizations.

In the light of this anniversary, Bulgaria, together with Jamaica and Luxembourg, has presented a voluntary global pledge "For every child, every right". The pledge provides all of us with an opportunity to demonstrate our commitment to children's rights and to pursue the Sustainable Development Goals in line with the principles enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. We greatly appreciate its endorsement by more than 100 Member States.

Bulgaria, as a member of the European Union (EU), was also among the main sponsors of this year's EU resolution on the rights of the child, which will be adopted by consensus on Tuesday. I would like to stress that this year's thematic focus on children without parental care was chosen to reflect another seminal anniversary, which marks a decade since the adoption of the Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children. It is an issue of crucial importance to my country, as Bulgaria has been working diligently to expand its legal and policy framework on deinstitutionalization, while promoting the concept abroad through its official development assistance.

I would like to share some other examples of how my country is implementing the Convention. Bulgaria has enacted a series of laws that reinforce an individual human rights-based approach to children. Children's rights are at the top of Bulgaria's human rights agenda, including with regard to our membership in the Human Rights Council, where we have made the topic of children with disabilities and their access to education a priority. Last year we proposed a joint statement in the Council that was supported by 102 States. This year we led a joint initiative with UNICEF in Geneva and successfully adopted resolution 40/14, on empowering children with disabilities to enjoy their human rights, including through inclusive education. Bulgaria is also actively involved in joint projects with UNICEF in the region, most notably in Georgia and Armenia.

Thirty years ago, Governments around the world made a historic commitment to the world's children by adopting the Convention. We made a promise, and we should keep that promise through its full implementation.

Mr. Ipo (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): My delegation warmly welcomes the holding of this event to commemorate the thirtieth anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

We also endorse the statement made yesterday by the representative of Tunisia on behalf of the Group of African Countries (see A/74/PV.32).

Côte d'Ivoire affirms its commitment to the protection and promotion of children's rights, which are a priority for our Government. Among other things, my country has enshrined in its Constitution compulsory education for all children aged 6 to 16, a ban on all forms of child labour, the prohibition of genital mutilation and a commitment by the State to preventing vulnerability, particularly among children and women. Our desire to ensure that all children's rights are realized has also resulted in two surveys on child labour that have mapped the issue and provided reliable data.

At the Government's behest, our authorities have also adopted a national child protection policy divided into four strategic areas. The first is prevention by strengthening social dialogue, community protection and support for adolescents who engage in risky behaviour. Assistance is provided to child victims of abuse, for which we have enabled the detection and reporting of cases, as well as care and protection, by establishing a toll-free hotline and through the remarkable work of child protection committees throughout the country. We are fighting impunity by bringing perpetrators to justice and providing children with protection during legal proceedings. We have set up several entities through our organizational strategies, including an interministerial committee on child labour and a national monitoring committee on child trafficking, exploitation and labour led by the First Lady of Côte d'Ivoire.

Those bold initiatives have produced good results. More than 3,000 complaints have been recorded and more than 8,000 children have been removed from plantations since 2012 and reunited with their families in order to attend school. The enrolment rate has now risen to an average of 91.3 per cent, or 91.7 per cent for boys and 90.8 per cent for girls. The rates of genital and infant mutilation have been reduced considerably. In order to sustain progress in those areas and to effectively combat poverty, which are aggravating factors in violations of children's rights, in June we adopted a new national action plan to combat child

labour for the period from 2019 to 2021, at a cost of \$131 million. The new plan is fully integrated into the Government's social agenda and among other things is intended to improve children's access to basic social services, reduce the socioeconomic vulnerability of families and communities and strengthen the legal and programmatic framework for combating child labour.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to take this opportunity to once again thank all our bilateral and multilateral partners for their ongoing and meaningful support for the various initiatives of the Government of Côte d'Ivoire aimed at significantly improving the lives of children.

Ms. Babedi (South Africa): Yesterday marked the thirtieth anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, adopted through General Assembly resolution 44/25 of 20 November 1989, to protect and promote, without discrimination of any kind, the rights of all children across the world as individual rights holders, rights without which they cannot live in dignity. South Africa ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child on 16 June 1995 and is also a State party to all the international instruments that promote the protection of the rights of the child. The Convention was the first human rights treaty signed by Nelson Mandela after he became President of South Africa. President Mandela referred to the Convention as

“that luminous, living document that enshrines the rights of every child without exception to a life of dignity and self-fulfilment”.

In celebration of the thirtieth anniversary of the Convention, on 20 November in the National Assembly in Cape Town, the South African Government, together with the relevant United Nations agencies, South African human rights institutions and civil-society organizations, hosted child ambassadors who addressed the relevant parliamentary portfolio committee on various issues pertaining to children's rights in our country. In addition, on 6 December the provincial legislative assembly in Pietermaritzburg, in KwaZulu-Natal Province, will host the Nelson Mandela Children's Parliament. The purpose of those events is to provide a platform every year for children to raise their issues and be heard. The child ambassadors will also present the children's manifesto to the National Assembly. The events will serve as an opportunity to review how over the past 25 years of democratic rule the country has implemented its obligations under the

Convention on the Rights of the Child, its Optional Protocols and other relevant international and regional children's human rights instruments.

While significant progress has been made on all rights indicators — survival, growth, development, protection and participation — there are key areas that South Africa still needs to focus on. As part of our journey to implement the Convention of the Rights of the Child, we have expanded access to free education for children from poor households, and more than 9 million children attend no-fee schools. Support for early-childhood education has significantly increased, and every South African child will be provided with digital workbooks and textbooks on a tablet device over the next six years. Within the context of the global commemoration of the thirtieth anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, South Africa has made a pledge that within the next decade, every 10-year-old will be able to read for meaning. That is essential in equipping children to succeed in education, in work and in life, and it is possibly the single most important factor in overcoming poverty, unemployment and inequality, since when we invest in the rights of children, we invest in a more equal, safe, healthy, prosperous and sustainable world.

In 2015, we approved a national integrated early-childhood development policy aimed at ensuring that every child can have the best start in their early learning, nurturing and development. This gives effect to South Africa's commitment to make early-childhood development a top priority among measures to improve the quality of education and long-term prospects of future generations. Our Government is therefore committed to providing skills and opportunities for young people, especially children with disabilities. Our history demands that we improve the education system and develop the skills that we require now and in the future.

I would like to conclude by saying that my country recognizes that all children and young people have rights, no matter who they are or where they live.

Mr. Aktaş (Turkey): My name is Muhammet Aktaş. I came here with my friend Beyza Küçük. We are the country coordinators of the Committees on the Rights of the Child in Turkey. We are honoured to be able to address the General Assembly on the occasion of the thirtieth anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The Child Rights Monitoring Committee under Turkey's Grand National Assembly plays an important role in the protection of children's rights. The Convention on the Rights of the Child gives the responsibility to the States parties to make adults and children alike aware of the principles and provisions of the Convention. A Committee on the Rights of the Child has been established in each province of our country under the coordination of the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Services with the purpose of implementing the Convention and realizing children's effective participation in all matters concerning them. The Committees on the Rights of the Child, one of the rare examples of such bodies anywhere in the world, have been active in our country since 2000. All children between 12 and 18 years of age, without discrimination, can become members of the Committees on a voluntary basis. Furthermore, we have established a child advisory board to ensure coordination among the Committees and to support children in forming their own vision and in planning activities at the national and international level. The National Children's Forum is held every year on 20 November, World Children's Day, under a theme determined by children. The twentieth such forum was organized this year.

In Turkey the Committees on the Rights of the Child carry out various social responsibility projects on issues related to our world and our country, as well as concerning children's rights. As an example, we are implementing a social cohesion programme to ensure the integration into Turkish society of Syrian children living outside refugee camps and to create a platform for mutual dialogue and information exchange among children.

Respect for children's rights is one of a society's basic criteria for development. It is the duty of all adults to meet the needs of all children around the world, from nutrition and shelter and from love and affection to health and education — in short, everything that applies to being human. We appreciate the efforts of UNICEF and other United Nations agencies to ensure that all children around the world fully enjoy their rights, and we are asking them to take a more active role in the efforts to that end. We want to see all children able to live their childhood in peace, happiness and health. We expect all countries around the world to show the same hospitality and compassion for our Syrian and other refugee brothers and sisters that we show in Turkey. In our culture, children are entrusted to society as well as

to their parents. We believe that it would be beneficial to children if that understanding could take root in our world.

Ms. Abuhaj (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to express my sincere thanks and appreciation for the valuable presentations of all who spoke in the opening segment of this event commemorating the thirtieth anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (see A/74/PV.31). It has given us the opportunity to review the achievements that have been made in order to build a bright future for children throughout the world and for me personally to participate in this important event.

My delegation associates itself with the statement delivered yesterday by the representative of Tunisia on behalf of the Group of African States (see A/74/PV.32).

My country prioritizes the provision of food, health care and education to children everywhere in the Sudan. We are also committed to the welfare of children and to improving their basic services, particularly for children with disabilities. The Sudan attaches great importance to education, and the statistics indicate a remarkable increase in enrolment rates, with 70.5 per cent enrolment at the primary stage by comparison with other stages.

Young people and children have been making valuable contributions to the positive changes that we are seeing in my country towards creating a better future for all. In that regard, Ms. Henrietta Fore, Executive Director of UNICEF, visited the Sudan in October 2018, one of the first United Nations officials to visit our country after the interim Government took power. The Sudan greatly appreciated her visit and attention at this critical time in our country's history. We will continue our close collaboration under the new interim Government with the United Nations and its agencies in order to protect and care for children, especially in conflict-affected areas.

In conclusion, I would like to thank Prime Minister Hamdok of our interim Government for his initiative in opening the door of his office to the children of the Sudan on this commemorative day. The Prime Minister is committed to listening to their needs first-hand. I reiterate the commitment of the Sudan to implementing all regional and international conventions and instruments relating to the promotion and protection of the rights of the child, particularly the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocols. The

Sudan was one of the first signatories to the Convention in 1990.

Mr. Moussa (Djibouti): At the outset, Djibouti aligns itself with the statement delivered yesterday by the representative of Tunisia on behalf of the Group of African States (see A/74/PV.32).

Today, as we mark the thirtieth anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, it is important that we reiterate our commitment. The international community has never been at such a critical juncture in its determination to set the direction that Member States should take in our respective roles under the Convention and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. I would like to take this opportunity to express the commitment of Djibouti to fulfilling its international obligations under the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocols.

Djibouti acknowledges that the promotion and protection of the rights of children are vital and play a crucial role in eradicating poverty and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals set out in the 2030 Agenda. In the past 30 years, the international community has done a great deal to save and help generations of children in order to enable them to have a better life. Yet millions of children around the world continue to be deprived of decent and safe living conditions. We often say that children are our future, but that future starts now. According to the latest updates, climate change, hunger and malnutrition crises are all having a negative impact on generations of children. We are deeply concerned about their long-term effects in the Horn of Africa, where children and young people constitute 40 per cent of the population. It is therefore important to ensure that the international community acknowledges that existential threat and provides greater support, with the ultimate objective of increasing opportunities for children not just to survive, but to thrive.

As a peaceful country, Djibouti has had a long-standing commitment to the protection and promotion of the rights of the child. If elected to the Security Council in June 2020, Djibouti will continue to tirelessly advocate for the need to empower children throughout the conflict cycle and incorporate child-related provisions into peace agreements. In conclusion, I want to assure the Assembly that Djibouti will continue to actively promote and protect the rights of the child and

to reaffirm its commitment to fulfilling its obligations under the Convention and its protocols.

Ms. Rodríguez Abascal (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation would like to thank the President for convening this meeting, and we commend the fact that yesterday and today there have been children present in the Hall.

Cuba's national hero José Martí once wrote that "[i]t is for the children that we work, because children know how to love and children are the hope of the world." And because protecting and empowering children and adolescents by ensuring their rights guarantees them a better future, 30 years ago, on November 20 1989, the Assembly adopted, through resolution 44/25, the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Convention has become the most widely ratified human rights instrument in history and has helped transform the lives of children around the world. Unfortunately, the only State that has not ratified it is the United States of America, in a demonstration of its lack of commitment to children and its resulting continued disregard for their best interests.

Implementing the Convention will not be enough if we continue to ignore the effects of climate change and do not change the unjust international economic order that makes the rich richer and the poor poorer, which will lead to 167 million children living in extreme poverty by 2030. Cuba ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child on 21 August 1991. We have designed national plans, policies and programmes into which we have incorporated the provisions of the Convention. At the end of 2018, Cuba's infant mortality rate was 4 deaths per 1,000 live births. All Cuban children are vaccinated at birth against 13 communicable diseases and priority is given to the early detection of congenital diseases. We are proud to have been the first country to receive validation from the World Health Organization that we have eliminated mother-to-child transmission of HIV/AIDS and syphilis.

The Cuban people have achieved all of that despite the serious consequences of the increasingly worsening genocidal economic, financial and commercial embargo imposed by the United States on Cuba. That hostile policy constitutes the main obstacle to Cuba's economic and social development, and has extremely negative effects on the availability of the resources, food and goods that are essential to ensuring better living conditions for our people. The embargo hinders

the provision of health, education and social assistance services, which especially affects children and adolescents. In spite of that, Cuba continues to be in the vanguard of developing countries and has attained a level comparable to that of developed countries in these areas. Cuba will pursue its commitment to fully realizing all human rights for all people, in particular children and adolescents, without discrimination on any grounds, and we have the political will to elevate our levels of social justice, inclusion and protection of human dignity even higher. Cuba will continue to improve its legislation, policies and programmes in order to realize the key principle that there is nothing in the world more important than a child.

Mr. Richardson (Saint Lucia): Saint Lucia welcomes the opportunity to participate in this commemorative event in celebration of our children.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered yesterday by the Permanent Representative of Grenada on behalf of the Caribbean Community (see A/74/PV.32). I would now like to add the following remarks in my national capacity.

Thirty years ago, our global community took a fundamental step by making a historic commitment to ensuring the protection and prosperity of our children. In commemorating the thirtieth anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the most widely ratified human rights treaty, this is a fitting moment to renew our commitment to our children as we also celebrate World Children's Day. Saint Lucia remains committed to the principles and objectives of the Convention, mindful that the best interests of the child must be the primary consideration in its implementation. Saint Lucia gives priority to guaranteeing the right to education, as enshrined in article 28 of the Convention. We are fully committed to that objective and share the view that providing for a quality education is the foundation for achieving sustainable development, as outlined in Sustainable Development Goal 4. If no one is to be left behind, we must ensure that our children have access to quality education that can enable them to be agents of change. Education is the vehicle that will unleash the potential of our children to contribute to building a better future.

Saint Lucia has made progress in its efforts to ensure the protection and well-being of its children, including ensuring access to universal secondary education; enacting legislation in 2018 to guarantee

the protection of children through our Child (Care, Protection and Adoption) Act and Juvenile Justice Act; providing special assistance to children with disabilities; and continually improving the capability and capacity of the Government agency responsible for the care and protection of children, particularly in the areas of child protection, foster care and adoption. That legislation forms part of a wider juvenile justice reform project through which additional legislation, including bills on the status of children, child maintenance and domestic violence, is expected to be enacted in 2020.

The provision of quality health care is another area that is critical to the sustainable development of our children. We are currently engaged at the national level in formulating a national health-care reform programme, whose aim is to ensure health care for all, including our children. My delegation welcomes the recent adoption of the political declaration on universal health coverage (resolution 74/2) and regards it as an impetus for accelerating our own efforts to provide the highest attainable standard of health care for our children so that they may live healthy and prosperous lives. Saint Lucia also salutes all the organizations working to ensure that children are not left behind. In particular, we recognize and applaud the work of UNICEF and its continued commitment to our children.

Leaving no one behind implies a world free of poverty, hunger, disease, want and environmental degradation. It is a world where all life can thrive, with universal literacy and equitable and universal access to quality education at all levels, as well as health care and social protection, and where physical, mental and social well-being is assured. Our children depend on us more than any other sector of our population, and we must not fail them. The Government of Saint Lucia will continue to ensure the protection and support the overall welfare of our treasured ones so that they can help to build a better Saint Lucia and a better world.

Ms. Khusanova (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The twentieth century was a turning point for childhood throughout the world. Children began to be perceived as people with their own ways of thinking, their own particular rights and their own specific interests and needs, while the family was recognized as the natural environment in which children could grow and prosper, since for children to fully and harmoniously develop their identity, they should grow up in a family environment and in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding. That is the underlying approach

of the fundamental international document for the protection of children, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, adopted exactly 30 years ago on 20 November by the States Members of the United Nations. During that time the Convention has become the primary guide for the entire international community in realizing the rights of the child. It has been and will continue to be the basis for the recommendations and resolutions both of multilateral international organizations and national programmes and strategies aimed at improving the situation of children. Today there are 196 States that are party to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, a unique testament to its authority and universal recognition among the global community.

Article 4 of the Convention states that

“States parties shall undertake all appropriate legislative, administrative and other measures for the implementation of the rights recognized in the present Convention.”

All the responsibility for fulfilling obligations under the Convention therefore falls to States. Since 1995 the Government has consistently pursued its policy on improving the situation of children in the Russian Federation through its implementation of strategic documents, each prepared based on results achieved in the changing circumstances both nationally and globally. Russia is currently implementing an initiative on the 2018-2027 Decade of Childhood by executive order of the President of the Russian Federation, and a specially created Government coordination council is responsible for its fulfilment.

Issues related to the promotion and protection of the rights and legal interests of children come under the purview of a wide range of Russian Government institutions and officials. Given the complex nature of the issue, the institutional mechanism for coordinating the actions of all branches of the authorities in this area is our governmental interdepartmental commission on the affairs of minors and protection of their rights, whose meetings around the country enable it to learn about various issues affecting the interests of children locally.

In the context of the new social challenges of the era of globalization we believe that issues regarding the protection of the children’s rights should to be considered as broadly as possible. Neglect, children’s drug use, juvenile crime and the trafficking and sexual exploitation of children are far from the only items on the tragic list of problems threatening children in

today's world and ultimately the whole of humankind. Combating these ills is a practical contribution to improving the lives of children, but we can accomplish that only by uniting to combine the efforts of all who care about the future of our planet.

Ms. Tshering (Bhutan): Yesterday, on World Children's Day, major monuments across our capital of Thimphu were awash in hues of blue. Bhutan is very pleased to join the international community in observing the thirtieth anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. We proudly align ourselves with the global pledge "For every child, every right", and renew our commitment that the guiding principles enshrined in the Convention will continue to steer Bhutan's actions concerning children.

This occasion celebrates a landmark achievement in our collective efforts to advance the promotion, protection and realization of children's rights around the world. Much progress has been achieved in the past three decades since the adoption of this milestone Convention. Yet for far too many, the challenges remain stark and sadly marked by persistent poverty, violence and deprivation. Most telling of all, in our own region of South Asia, 49.9 per cent of children under five suffer from the triple burden of malnutrition. Clearly, this important commemoration is not a time to rest on our laurels, but to accelerate the implementation of the Convention and its Optional Protocols in order to fully secure the rights that are so fundamental to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and other relevant international frameworks, particularly those where success is premised on intergenerational justice.

Bhutan is proud to have been one of the early ratifiers, on 23 May 1990, of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, without any reservation. In 2009 we acceded to the Optional Protocols on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography and on the involvement of children in armed conflict. Since then the Royal Government has submitted five national country reports to the Committee on the Rights of the Child. The Government has always valued these engagements. In many instances they have given us greater momentum in areas where further attention and strengthened action were required. Legal reform, strengthening child care and protection and national institutions, as well as advocacy, are some of the areas that have emerged stronger from the process.

Bhutan's commitment to the rights of children is reflected in the people-centred development approach adopted by our Government and translated into investments made through our national development plans. While the interests of the child are embedded across planned activities under our twelfth five-year plan, for the period from 2018 to 2023, several of the 17 national key results areas ensure that our strategies target the needs of children in an evolving society that is facing contemporary challenges. With an emphasis on investing in our human capital, designated national key results areas focus on promoting quality education and skills, as well as comprehensive and quality maternal and child health care. Together with the implementation of our national plan of action for child well-being and protection, these constitute significant, actionable measures that will help advance the full realization of the child in Bhutan.

Recognizing inadequate awareness and lack of capacity as two of our pressing challenges, the Government has aggressively stepped up its response. High-level advocacy, buttressed by the work of civil society, plays a critical role on this front, undertaking nationwide advocacy on HIV/AIDS, child rights and child protection issues. We have also conducted various child-rights and protection-related training sessions for child-protection focal points, law-enforcement agencies, legal professionals and social-service providers across the country.

On this thirtieth anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, Bhutan is proud to reaffirm that we will continue to take the necessary measures to create a safer and more secure world for our children in order to enable them to realize their full potential and to ensure that no child is left behind. Bhutan will continue to advocate for children who are not heard, for children who are in need of special care and protection and for children who need us every day in order to thrive.

Ms. Bavdaž Kuret (Slovenia): Thirty years ago we adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child and recognized children as rights-holders. The implementation of the Convention and its principles has fundamentally changed the treatment of children worldwide. Furthermore, the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development strengthened our commitment through its promise to leave no one behind. It is therefore heartbreaking that children around the world continue to suffer from hunger, preventable

diseases, trafficking and abuse, as well as natural and human-made disasters, including armed conflict.

The rights and well-being of children are among the highest priorities of Slovenia's national and foreign policies. We reaffirmed that commitment by joining the global pledge "For every child, every right", which Slovenia's Prime Minister signed last week. Slovenia has also ratified the third Optional Protocol to the Convention and calls on other States Members of the United Nations to do the same. In Slovenia, the rights of the child are protected by our Constitution. In 2017, child advocacy became part of the Ombudsman's permanent activities and a council for children and family was established as a monitoring body.

In the current school year, Slovenian primary schools have begun the thirtieth annual Children's Parliament, a programme that aims to educate children about democracy and active citizenship. Three thousand pupils from more than 200 primary schools in Slovenia, almost one third of the country's primary schools, are participating in the programme, which this year focuses on the question of choosing a career path. We have consulted children from different environments and backgrounds in Slovenia who have provided views on their most pertinent challenges and proposed solutions. In the view of the children themselves, their most pressing issues are those related to the digital environment and the need to apply child-friendly procedures in which their voices will be heard. Particular attention was given to the protection of the environment and the mitigation of climate change, as well as the importance of guaranteeing equal opportunities for all children.

As a member of the international community, Slovenia has been supporting efforts to strengthen the protection of the rights and well-being of children worldwide. We continue to support the Our Rights project on human rights education for children, which is currently being conducted in Morocco, Egypt and Kosovo and has reached more than 200,000 children around the world in the past 13 years. We are also conducting a peer mediation project in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Our development cooperation and humanitarian assistance efforts include supporting UNICEF in providing humanitarian aid to Yemeni children and the activities of the International Committee of the Red Cross addressing sexual violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Thirty years ago we started a process to improve the lives of all children around the world. Slovenia remains committed to continuing that work in fulfilling our promise that all children everywhere in the world should enjoy their rights and that no child should be left behind.

Mr. Kpayedo (Togo) (*spoke in French*): Togo subscribes to the statement made yesterday by the representative of Tunisia on behalf of the Group of African States (see A/74/PV.32).

We welcome the convening of this meeting of the General Assembly, which provides an opportunity for the States Members of the United Nations to solemnly celebrate the thirtieth anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which so far has been ratified by almost all Member States in a strong indication of the well-established universal consensus on the importance of recognizing and protecting the specific and fundamental rights of children all over the world. My delegation believes that this thirtieth anniversary is an essential milestone that should allow us to take stock and learn lessons to help us better protect children and promote their rights to live, develop, learn, prosper, have their voices heard and reach their full potential.

While we have much reason to celebrate the many gains that have been recorded in numerous countries since the adoption of this international instrument, including a significant drop in infant mortality and the ever-growing number of children in school, to name but two, challenges still remain. As shown in the report on *The State of the World's Children 2019*, more than 149 million children under the age of five continue to suffer from malnutrition, while many others are exposed to all sorts of continuing dangers in a world of conflicts of many kinds. That contrasting picture should challenge us to kick-start our action in implementing the Convention, and today's commemoration provides us with that opportunity.

For its part, Togo was one of the very first countries to ratify the Convention, on 1 August 1990, and today would like to solemnly reaffirm its resolute commitment to its full and complete implementation. That is why, along with more than 90 other countries, we have joined the global pledge "For every child, every right", launched by UNICEF as part of the thirtieth anniversary commemoration. Following its ratification of the Convention, the Government of Togo undertook a

major reform of the country's national legal framework on the rights and protection of the child. We have also signed and ratified almost all the instruments related to child protection at the international, continental and subregional levels. In recent years Togo's commitment has led to our adoption of flagship measures, the most symbolic of which was the enactment on 6 July 2007 of a children's code. Other measures, such as the creation of a directorate general for child protection, the establishment of a national committee on the rights of the child, the implementation of a helpline called "Allo 1011" for the protection of children at risk, financial support for non-State protection of children, the establishment of consultation frameworks for child-protection actors, the creation of a national council for children, and so forth, are attributable to the proactive policy initiated in this field by President Faure Essozimna Gnassingbé of Togo.

The rights of the child take on special importance in Togo within the context of the Sustainable Development Goals, whereby the Government prioritizes children's rights as an essential component of Togolese society through its national development plan. As a result, Togo is proud to have one of the most successful child-protection systems in Africa. This qualitative progress, a product of the resolute commitments made by the highest Togolese authorities on the rights and well-being of the child, was welcomed by the Committee on the Rights of the Child in Geneva in 2011 and twice by the African Union, in 2011 and 2013. However, those efforts cannot hide the persistent challenges that remain at the heart of the Togolese Government's concerns. Among other things, they are linked to the problems of street children, trafficking in children and the establishment of a national protocol for the holistic management of violence against children. We take this opportunity to thank UNICEF and the non-governmental organizations Plan International and SOS Children's Villages, as well as civil society and all the other international institutions concerned, for the sustained and multifaceted support they give to the Togolese Government on the ground.

In conclusion, we must bear in mind that our future world will reflect the way that we treat our children today. It is incumbent on us to continue working together to fully realize the fundamental rights of children for a better future.

Ms. Corina (Malaysia): Malaysia aligns itself with the statement delivered yesterday by the representative

of Viet Nam on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (see A/74/PV.32).

Malaysia ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child on 17 February 1995. We view our obligations under the Convention seriously and remain committed to continuously reviewing our reservations to the Convention with UNICEF's close collaboration and technical support. To date, we have reduced our number of reservations from 12 to five articles.

In ensuring full respect for the rights and interests of the child, our Child Act, enacted in 2001, was amended in 2016 with extensive positive developments, including the introduction of the concept of family-based care with institutional placement as a last resort; the inclusion of children in the process of policy formulation through the appointment of two child representatives on the National Council for Children; and the abolition of whipping for child offenders, in line with article 37 of the Convention. In 2017 we enacted a law on sexual offences against children to address the issue of sexual crimes against children, and the Malaysian Government subsequently established a special court for sexual crimes against children, the first of its kind in South-East Asia. We also noted with appreciation the recommendations made by the Special Rapporteur on the sale and sexual exploitation of children during her visit to Malaysia in September 2018.

Looking beyond legislation, the Government of Malaysia is redoubling its efforts to enhance the necessary protection of children with initiatives such as the appointment of assistant protectors under the 2001 Child Act to empower communities in improving care and protection for children; the establishment of a child interview centre under the Royal Malaysian Police to ensure the specialized handling of child victims and witnesses; increased emphasis on the mental health of adolescents, including specific training programmes for teachers and school counsellors; the establishment of immunization programmes and mobile health teams aimed at reducing neonatal and infant mortality; the introduction this year of a "zero reject policy" in special education to ensure that no children with disabilities are turned away from national schools; intensified efforts to raise awareness of greater involvement and collaboration with the corporate sector; and continued capacity-building among duty bearers in collaboration with United Nations bodies and other international organizations.

In addition, Malaysia continues to expand its child protection services and child justice with new pilot projects such as a probation services pilot for further enhancing the management and monitoring of child offenders; a diversion programme for children in conflict with the law to divert them away from the existing criminal justice system; a family-based care pilot to review the placement of children in institutions; and a child-friendly city initiative to create safe and inclusive cities for children. This year the Government of Malaysia also appointed a children's commissioner under our national human rights commission to ensure that sufficient attention is given to specific issues of child rights.

In conclusion, Malaysia would like to reaffirm its commitment to making consistent and constructive efforts to ensure the effective implementation of the Convention. We will continue engaging non-State actors, United Nations agencies and civil-society organizations in further safeguarding the rights and well-being of the children of our country.

Mr. Al Busaidi (Oman) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, my delegation would like to welcome the convening of this high-level meeting to commemorate the thirtieth anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

I want to take this opportunity to highlight that my country, Oman, acceded to the Convention on 9 December 1996, and ratified its Optional Protocols on 17 December 2004. A national committee was also established to follow up on the implementation of the Convention and its Optional Protocols, composed of 26 members from various Government agencies and civil-society institutions related to children and childhood. Furthermore, we have worked closely with UNICEF to develop a national strategy for childhood for the period from 2016 to 2026. This has become an essential and practical element in Oman's sustainable development plans.

The fourth periodic report submitted by the Sultanate of Oman to the Committee on the Rights of the Child at its seventy-first session, held in Geneva in January 2016, listed the steps my country has taken to promote the rights of the child. First, under our royal decree 22/2014, on 19 May 2014 we enacted the Omani Child Act, whose 13 chapters and 79 articles are devoted to guaranteeing all the rights of the child, including the right of children with disabilities to

protection, care and rehabilitation. Secondly, we have established various mechanisms to protect children from violence, exploitation and abuse, most notably our child protection committees, which are mandated to address complaints and reports of any violations of the rights of children. Temporary-care homes have been put in place for children at risk of abuse and violence and Oman has also appointed a number of officers charged with the protection and follow-up of such cases. Finally, we have created a digital platform for caring for children and eliminating violence against them. This multisectoral digital information management system facilitates the collection and analysis of data, the identification and assessment of cases and the referral of children and families to the necessary services. The follow-up system will also address such cases promptly and thoroughly.

In September Oman hosted the Sixth International Arab Conference on the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect under the theme "Towards a better future for children". The conference focused on plans and programmes to protect children in various contexts, including bullying, social media, the Internet, abuse and exploitation in all its forms, as well as ways to address challenging behaviours of children.

In conclusion, I reaffirm that the Sultanate of Oman will continue to protect and promote the rights of the child to the best of its ability, in order to provide children with an environment conducive to developing their skills and realizing their talents in all areas.

Ms. Jatta (Gambia): My name is Lamin Jatta, and I am a young deputy parliamentarian from the Gambia. I am delighted to be here and commemorate the thirtieth anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Permit me to read out a declaration by the Children's National Assembly of the Gambia.

"We, the 105 elected members of the Children National Assembly of the Gambia, representing children from all the regions of the Gambia, hereby urge world leaders to fulfil their commitments and take action for child rights now, once and for all;

"Noting the fact that the Children National Assembly of the Gambia is a child-led, non-statutory body established by the Government of the Gambia through the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare in collaboration with UNICEF-the

Gambia, the Gambia National Youth Council, the Child Protection Alliance, ChildFund the Gambia, the National Youth Parliament and the National Assembly, with the ultimate aim of promoting and advocating for the rights of all children as enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and all other instruments pertaining to the promotion, protection and development of the child in the Gambia;

“Appreciating the enactment of the Children’s Act 2005, the Women’s Act 2010, the Tourism Offences Act 2003 and other relevant laws to secure our rights, protect us from all forms of abuse, exploitation and violence and build for us children an environment which is enabling, loving and protecting;

“Appreciating further the provision of free education for all at the basic and secondary levels, the legal prohibition of female genital mutilation and child marriage, the establishment of the Children National Assembly of the Gambia, as well as the establishment of the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare, among many other efforts;

“Recalling existing regional and international legal instruments, in particular the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, which provide for the respect, protection and fulfilment of the rights of all children without discrimination or distinction;

“Recalling further the obligation of the State as the primary duty-bearer for the protection and fulfilment of our rights;

“Conscious of the fact that the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child entered into force on 1 September 1990 and that this year, 2019, marks its 30 years of existence;

“Recognizing the fact that despite the progress made, there are still challenges the country is grappling with that call for collective action by the Government and other relevant stakeholders to address them;

“In view of these, and for the adequate protection and development of children in the Gambia, we request the Government of the Gambia to commit to the following:

“First, respect, protect and fulfil the rights of every child in the Gambia, irrespective of background, religion, ethnicity, disability or any other consideration or status;

“Second, make basic and secondary education totally free, compulsory, qualitative, accessible and available to all children;

“Third, adequately and effectively enforce and implement all the laws which protect children from all forms of abuse, violence, exploitation, hazardous labour and trafficking;

“Fourth, adequately and effectively implement and enforce the Children’s (Amendment) Act 2016, which prohibits child marriage and the Women (Amendment) Act 2015, which prohibits female genital mutilation or cutting and other harmful cultural and traditional practices, and diligently prosecute violators of these laws;

“Fifth, break the culture of silence surrounding child sexual abuse and exploitation through open national and community dialogue using all available channels;

“Sixth, promote and fulfil the rights of children with disabilities, fight discrimination and stigmatization against them and ensure they have access to all forms of services and all buildings;

“Seventh, ensure that children have access to sexual and reproductive health information and services which are friendly and non-stigmatizing;

“Eighth, establish recreational facilities and spaces for children in all the regions of the country, in fulfilment of their rights to play and development;

“Ninth, put in place effective mechanisms to reduce road accidents and casualties of children as a result of road accidents;

“Tenth, effectively enforce and implement the Tobacco Control Act by ensuring that no child is involved in the buying of tobacco or of any other harmful and illegal substance or drug;

“Eleventh, ensure the full enforcement of the law if any of the rights of children of the Gambia is violated.

“Finally, we commit ourselves to advocating for every child to have every right”.

Mr. Ishikane (Japan): I would like to join our other colleagues in celebrating the thirtieth anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. I also wish to take this opportunity to express our renewed, unwavering commitment to the promotion and protection of the rights of children. Japan will continue to take the necessary measures to create a better and safer society for children.

For Japan, the year 2019 bears additional significance: it marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of Japan's ratification of the Convention and the seventieth anniversary of Japan's partnership with UNICEF. On that momentous occasion, Japan announced a pledge to fulfil the obligations stipulated in the Convention, as invited by the Committee on the Rights of the Child. We also joined the global pledge "For every child, every right", in alignment with UNICEF's global campaign. We encourage other Member States to join these initiatives so as to reaffirm their commitments to promoting and protecting children's rights.

Allow me briefly to touch upon our commitments to the Global Partnership to End Violence against Children, initially declared at the Stockholm Solutions Summit, in 2018.

Since joining the partnership, Japan, together with civil-society partners, has taken concrete steps towards formulating a national action plan to end violence against children. As Japan highly values the meaningful participation of children, we invited children in Japan to express their opinions online as part of its formulation. As a result, a number of children responded to questions concerning abuse, sexual exploitation, bullying and corporal punishment. Their candid opinions will be duly considered during the drafting process of the action plan.

Japan has been leading the promotion of the Sustainable Development Goals, which aim to leave no one behind, especially children. We believe that children and youth play an important role in further advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In Japan, a series of commemorative events on the thirtieth anniversary of the Convention were held in cooperation with UNICEF, at which junior-high-school students had the opportunity to discuss the better implementation of SDGs with parliamentarians, Government officials and entrepreneurs. Japan reaffirms its commitment to creating an inclusive and participatory society in which everyone can reach their full potential.

Japan is determined to make every effort to help achieve SDG target 16.2 in order to build a better world where every child can grow up in a violence-free environment and have hopes and dreams for the future. We would like to do so by working closely with civil society and in close collaboration with the international community, including the United Nations and other Member States.

Mrs. González López (El Salvador) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Convention on the Rights of the Child is the most ratified international treaty in the world, which demonstrates the universal commitment to protecting children's rights. Accordingly, the international community has made significant progress in promoting and protecting the rights of children and adolescents in accordance with the provisions of the Convention. In addition to efforts to effectively implement the Convention, we must ensure that our children and adolescents know and are aware of their rights from an early age, thereby putting them on guard should their rights be violated in any given situation and helping them become responsible, empathetic and tolerant adults.

Thirty years after the adoption of the Convention by the General Assembly, our countries must not only reaffirm our commitment to the implementation of that international instrument, but we must also reflect on the new challenges that we face in protecting the rights of children, such as cyberbullying, to which many children and adolescents are exposed, and the worrisome proliferation of hate messages aimed at specific segments of the population, in which children and adolescents can suffer harm as members of such groups.

For the Government of El Salvador, the promotion and protection of the rights of children and adolescents are a priority. We ratified the Convention in July 1990, and since then we have adopted reforms to our national legislation to comply with the relevant international commitments ensuring the welfare of children and adolescents. We have made important progress in the promotion and fulfilment of children's rights, but on this occasion I would like to speak about a project focused on early childhood.

El Salvador's population is made up of 6.5 million people, of whom 2 million — 31.6 per cent — are children and adolescents. Those in early childhood represent 47.6 per cent of the total number of children

in the country, which is why the Government of El Salvador is striving, through the *Nacer-Crecer* programme, to promote the integral development of young children. We believe that providing the attention that children require from pregnancy through their early years is crucial to encouraging future productivity and building more peaceful and equitable societies. The project will also contribute to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 4.2 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

El Salvador was shocked by the recent acts of sexual violence committed against a girl, who is only 10-years-old, by a judge on the Supreme Court of Justice of El Salvador. A decision by the First Criminal Chamber classified the act as a misdemeanour, not as a crime of sexual assault, based on the reasoning that the indicated actions took place briefly, in a public setting, without violence and without confirmation as to whether the victim — I repeat, who is only 10-years-old — was affected by those actions. That decision all but ignored the rights of the girl, particularly the duty to protect the life and integrity of children. Consequently, the Legislative Assembly of El Salvador amended the criminal code to recognize indecent touching as a sexual assault crime punishable by a maximum 12-year prison sentence.

We therefore take this opportunity to ask all Member States to ensure that any situation involving violence against girls, boys or adolescents be reviewed, addressed and resolved in full accordance with the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. It is imperative that our countries review their existing penal code and make the reforms necessary to ensure that such crimes do not go unpunished.

Although notable progress has been made since the entry into force of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, we believe that it is necessary to continue working in coordination with all relevant entities to promote and protect all the rights of children and adolescents at the national, regional and international levels. I am grateful for the support of UNICEF and other non-governmental organizations based in El Salvador, with which we have collaborated to effectively comply with the provisions of the Convention.

Lastly, El Salvador reaffirms its firm commitment to working for the welfare of all children and adolescents, particularly those in vulnerable situations, such as migrant children, children with disabilities, internally

displaced children and indigenous children. We do not want any child or adolescent to be left behind.

Mr. Al-Saadi (Yemen) (*spoke in Arabic*): As we commemorate the thirtieth anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which enshrines national and international responsibility for protecting and promoting the rights of the Child, the Government of my country is pursuing its tireless efforts to ensure that our national laws conform to the Convention.

The coup d'état undertaken by the armed Houthi militias, however, has undermined our people's aspiration to build a modern civilian State in which justice, equality, the rule of law and good governance prevail. As a result of this conflict, children have become the most vulnerable segment in society. Twelve million children are subjected to the effects of the war waged by those militias. Two million are also suffering from malnutrition, while another 4.5 million are not enrolled in primary school. The Houthi armed militias have in fact converted their schools into military barracks and forced Yemeni families to enlist their children in the fighting by exploiting their difficult living conditions. Consequently, the militias have recruited more than 30,000 children to fight their battles.

The militias are changing school curricula, imposing sectarian ideas and brainwashing children in the areas under their control to inculcate extremist attitudes that will jeopardize their futures. The militias are also flouting the principles of international humanitarian law, international human rights law and the rights of the child. Furthermore, children are falling victim to mines laid arbitrarily by the militia, killing or injuring some 800 children and causing hundreds to suffer permanent disabilities.

The Government of Yemen is doing its utmost to promote and protect human rights through a series of measures to improve the situation of children and alleviate their suffering, despite the many difficulties facing the country. In 2014, the Government signed an action plan with the United Nations to prevent the recruitment and use of children in armed conflict and developed a road map to implement the plan of action in coordination with the United Nations. Moreover, the Government endorsed the Safe Schools Declaration in 2007. My Government, with the assistance provided by the King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Centre, is taking all measures necessary for the rehabilitation and reintegration of conflict-affected children and reuniting

them with their families. While the International Committee of the Red Cross is working to reunite children with their families, these ongoing efforts still need support from the international community to put an end to the effects of conflicts on children.

Furthermore, my Government has established, in coordination with international partners, an action plan to mitigate the phenomenon of child labour through the taking of such necessary measures as amending general labour legislation, expanding education and programmes that aim to remove children from the labour market, providing child-protection and care services, and promoting rehabilitation programmes for children soldiers with a view to getting them back to school.

The Government of Yemen stresses its full commitment to international agreements and protocols on children that protect them against exacerbation of their vulnerabilities. We are working with our partners to address the psychological and social wounds that children have suffered as a result of Houthi militia recruitment and abuse, through the implementation and promotion of necessary programmes designed to rehabilitate them and mitigate their suffering.

Lastly, the Government of Yemen reiterates its commitment to continuing to strive to protect the rights of children, ensuring an environment conducive to their full preparation for adulthood, with an upbringing consistent with the noble principles of peace, dignity, tolerance, freedom, equality and brotherhood, and creating an overall better environment for children.

Mr. Balé (Congo) (*spoke in French*): On this commemorative day of the thirtieth anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, I am thinking first and foremost of all those millions of children who are victims of practices that are detrimental to their well-being, dignity, growth and normal development, in particular, customs and practices that harm their well-being, health and even their lives. In short, I am thinking of all those children whose childhoods have been stolen.

Thirty years after the historic adoption of the Convention that provides the basis for international legal standards that guarantee the well-being of children, we have the opportunity to assess the progress that has been made in the promotion and protection of children's rights, and more, we have the opportunity to carry out a thorough examination of the remaining obstacles to

the implementation of the Convention, which often arise due to the various persisting political, economic and sociocultural challenges that prevent children from fully enjoying of all their rights.

The Republic of the Congo, which on 14 October 1993 acceded to the Convention and to its protocols on the involvement of children in armed conflict and on the sale of children, has made the rights and protection of the child a very important part of its social policy. It was in this regard that we developed an impressive body of laws on the protection and promotion of the rights of the child, including the provision in our labour code that outlines the minimum age for child employment, our child-protection act and our act establishing the family and special-education system. We have also established a child-protection coordination mechanism and a strategic framework to strengthen the national child-protection system. In this vein, the Government is also working to improve social action services for the protection of children within the framework of our national policy on social action 2017-2021.

We are commemorating the thirtieth anniversary of the Convention in the context of the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and, more specifically, SDG 6, the goal of the month for November 2019, which is to ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all. Unfortunately, it must be acknowledged that every day a thousand children die from easily preventable diseases as a result of poor sanitation and hygiene conditions. We should therefore individually and collectively make greater efforts towards achieving the SDGs and renew our commitment to the promotion and protection of children's rights.

To that end, my Government calls for a more effective and coordinated partnership towards fully implementing the provisions of the Convention and improving the well-being of the child. This endeavour of course requires the commitment of the responsibilities of international community, our States and families themselves, as they are rightfully seen as the natural basis of society. However, children also share in the responsibility, as they are not isolated individuals, but community members with obligations to their families and society. My Government's action for the benefit of children is based on this perspective, which is also reflected in the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, to which the Republic of the Congo remains committed.

Mrs. Vives Balmaña (Andorra) (*spoke in French*): Allow me to thank the President for giving us all the opportunity to express our views on a very important subject — the celebration of the thirtieth anniversary of the adoption, in 1989, of the International Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Andorra aligns itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union (see A/74/PV.32) and is honoured to make this statement in its national capacity.

We would like to acknowledge the vision that led to the drafting of the text of the Convention which, 30 years later, remains an essential tool for the protection of children's rights. It addresses new challenges and guides us forward, but also gives us hope that children will be protected under safe and sound conditions. We want to imagine a future in which the rights of all children are respected.

Yesterday, on 20 November, as everywhere else in the world, the people of Andorra dressed in blue — a gesture that indicates our commitment to implementing the articles of the Convention and the commitment by institutions and civil society, which is particularly active, to creating a dynamic normative and legislative framework that has led to the adoption in 2019 of the Law on the Rights of the Child and the Adolescent in my country. This law ensures the principle of coordinating public administrations, citizen entities and families in protecting children, with the participation of children and adolescents, in accordance with the International Convention on the Rights of the Child. In this regard, the law provides for the establishment of a national commission for children and adolescents, a body that will ensure active social participation and provide a real, representative and democratic framework for their greater and more direct participation in public life in the decisions made at the national and regional levels that affect them.

Children are also actors in this endeavour. The Convention very specifically states that children have rights, among which include the right to express themselves and to be heard. Formal education clearly has a role to play in this regard, but institutions have also created spaces for children's participation — local councils, parliamentary councils and national commissions. In Andorra, we will soon hold a Government session that will involve the participation of children.

As we saw yesterday, when we listen to our children, our world gets richer. Key elements that we must teach include integration, speaking, dialogue and mediation.

The words “leave no one behind” indicate very clearly what must be done. The outcome of the Convention has given rise to a world that is much more aware of the needs of children and their rights. Proof of that is the legislative progress in terms of improving access to health, food and education services. But in addition to achieving those universal objectives, there are other challenges to be addressed, in particular the gaps that have been created by communication technologies, climate change and marginalization in migration situations. Together we must take efforts and assume our responsibilities in that regard in order to protect children from abuse.

Andorra would like to commend the work of the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict — an office to which Andorra regularly contributes — in reintegrating these children. We also wish to acknowledge the work of the Special Representative on Violence against Children, who convinces us of the benefits of educating children in a non-violent, engaging and open environment.

As a United Nations agency, we also express our appreciation of UNICEF's guidance and ability to act on the ground as well as its advocacy capacity to make us aware that we have many responsibilities. Andorra works closely with UNICEF for the development of children to promote the shared values of our institutions. I would like to highlight the right to leisure as a fundamental right and an integral part of the proper development of the child, a right that has been stolen from children who are victims of armed conflict.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development must guarantee a future for children, and it is our responsibility to ensure that is the case.

In conclusion, I therefore echo the message of the President of the Assembly for universal education. Providing children and young people with a formative space for their development is without doubt one of our country's priorities. We therefore support all General Assembly initiatives that place education at the centre of international debate and action, as set out in Sustainable Development Goal 4.

Mr. Flynn (Ireland): As we gather to mark the thirtieth anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the words of former Secretary-General Kofi Annan come to mind when he said:

“There is no trust more sacred than the one the world holds with children. There is no duty more important than ensuring that their rights are respected, that their welfare is protected, that their lives are free from fear and want and that they can grow up in peace.”

Today, we reaffirm our collective commitment to that solemn duty as we celebrate the most widely ratified human rights treaty in history.

Ireland, along with more than 80 United Nations Member States, recently renewed its commitment to the full implementation of the Convention by signing the global pledge “For every child, every right”. Ireland, together with the Marshall Islands, was also proud to put forward the Kwon Gesh Youth Pledge, or Youth and Public Climate Pledge, at the Youth Climate Summit in September, calling on Governments to include young people in climate policy creation. The Kwon Gesh Pledge has now been signed by more than 50 Member States and symbolizes the spirit of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in acknowledging the duty that this generation owes to the next, as well as the need to empower and listen to the voices of children — the voices of conscience.

Ireland is a world leader in the participation of children and young people in Government decision-making. Last week, Ireland organized a Youth Assembly on climate action in our national Parliament and this week the youth parliament will vote on climate action, leading to a sustainable work programme between young people and the Government. The Irish Government is also establishing a dedicated national youth council for climate action and climate justice.

While we rightly celebrate the meaningful advances achieved through the Convention in transforming the lives of children over the past 30 years, today is also a moment to take stock and to consider how the world has changed and how differently children experience the world compared with 30 years ago. The consequences of the climate crisis threaten to endanger the most fundamental rights envisaged by the Convention on the Rights of the Child, including the right to life and the right to a healthy environment. Emerging digital

technologies pose new risks to the rights of children that were not foreseen in 1989.

While the implementation of the Convention therefore remains fundamental, we must ensure that the international framework for the protection and promotion of children’s rights continues to evolve to keep pace with a constantly changing world.

As an Irish student wrote in the award-winning poem “Safe in our hands”,

“But I’m just a kid,
Who waits to see what the future holds.
Like plasticine, it changes.
Only we control how it moulds.”

Mrs. Tripathi (India): Thirty years ago, we made a promise to the children of the world. The Convention on the Rights of the Child was a landmark development in many ways. For the first time, it was recognized that children have the same human rights as adults, as well as specific rights that give them a special status as dependents. Childhood is a special time. Children must be nurtured so that they flourish with dignity. The Convention recognizes a child’s right to education, health, nutrition, clean water, sanitation and safety in their homes and beyond.

The near universal ratification of the Convention has created unprecedented momentum. The guiding principles of the Convention, such as non-discrimination, the right to protection and acting in the best interests of the child, have been incorporated in laws and policies in many countries. We are encouraged by the significant gains in the area of the rights of the child seen over the past three decades. The global under-five mortality rate and the proportion of undernourished children have reduced significantly. More children now go to school and have access to health care, medicines and vaccines.

However, significant challenges remain. More than half the world’s poorest people are children. The devastating impacts of climate change threaten their future prospects. Children are disproportionately affected by terrorism and armed conflicts. The number of child victims of human trafficking has doubled over a decade. They are trafficked for sexual exploitation and forced labour or for recruitment as child soldiers.

Rights can be proclaimed and policies can be formulated. However, unless the living conditions of the child are improved, along with those of the family and community they belong to, our efforts are meaningless.

The full and effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has a critical role in realizing every child's right to the safe and dignified life promised by the Convention.

Going forward, one challenge to the implementation of the Convention arises in the context of child rights in cyberspace. Exposure to the digital environment is reshaping childhood by creating both opportunities and unprecedented risks. Exposure to cyberspace is impacting the cognition and behaviour as well as the physical and mental health of children. We need to protect children from exposure to inappropriate content and bullying and to preserve their privacy in cyberspace. We need measures such as strengthening digital literacy, including enhancing the understanding of the digital environment by children and their caregivers, and stronger frameworks to moderate content.

Consulting with children and taking into account their unique experiences are important in developing effective measures in that context. The rapidly evolving, transnational nature of such socio-technological challenges also calls for galvanized international cooperation. The norms and standards set by the Convention on the Rights of the Child remain the foundation for deliberations and actions in that context.

India is an early signatory to the Convention and two of its Optional Protocols. As we celebrate 30 years since the adoption of the Convention, as the home to nearly 472 million children, India remains firmly committed to every child's right to live a life of dignity, safety and care, the right to protection against discrimination and exploitation, as well as moral and material abandonment, and the right to equal opportunities in order to build a future that every child deserves.

Mr. Rattray (Jamaica): In 1989, the global community committed to an international standard for the treatment of children with a view to protecting their fundamental rights and freedoms by agreeing to the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Three decades later, Jamaica is pleased to join the international community in celebrating this achievement, which transformed the approach to the protection of children's rights. The Convention remains an essential and welcome addition to the corpus of international human rights instruments. Among other things, the Convention made the principle of the best interest of the child an indispensable concept that is now the overarching consideration when treating matters related to children.

Jamaica ratified the Convention in 1991 and has since put measures in place to meet our international obligations to adequately provide for and protect and promote the well-being of our children. We recognize that children are our nation's future and that each experience a child has during his or her development affects the future of our country. Simply put, the future of Jamaica belongs to the children of today. The charge to us as a nation is therefore to invest in the care and protection of our children now.

Jamaica's National Development Plan, Vision 2030, represents a promise to our children. It is a promise that we all must keep, as we all share a responsibility to ensure their growth and development. With a full appreciation of the importance of the care and protection of our children, Jamaica continues to strengthen its domestic programmes, policies and laws, as well as its efforts to improve multilateral and bilateral partnerships geared towards implementing the provisions of the Convention.

Jamaica became a party to the Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction on 1 May 2017. The Hague Convention focuses on protecting children from the harmful effects of their wrongful removal or retention from their habitual residence. My country's Children (Guardianship and Custody) Act was amended to implement the provisions of the Hague Convention. We are currently partnering with eight other countries under the Hague Convention to promote the protection of our children, and work is under way to increase this number so as to broaden the range of our cooperation.

In January 2018, our Child Care and Protection Act was amended to increase the prison time from 10 to 20 years for individuals who participate in child trafficking. Jamaica also enacted the Child Diversion Act of 2018 to deal with children and young persons who come into conflict with the law. This will assist in treating these individuals with dignity and fairness, while imparting positive values.

Mr. Ten-Pow (Guyana): Guyana aligns itself with the statement made on behalf of the Caribbean Community (see A/74/PV.32). We wish to make the following statement in our national capacity.

We join the international community in celebrating the thirtieth anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Convention, which is the most universally accepted human rights treaty, reflects the aspirations of the international community for the well-

being of children and has changed the way children are viewed and treated. It accords them distinct legal rights, and its unprecedented acceptance is evidence of a wide global commitment to advancing the rights of children. The Convention also reflects a global consensus on the role of families, communities and the State in protecting and nurturing children.

Guyana's ratification of the Convention and its Optional Protocols on the involvement of children in armed conflict and on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography reflects our strong commitment to protecting our children from economic and sexual exploitation, violence and other forms of abuse and to advancing their rights to education, health care and a decent standard of living, as well as their rights to a name and nationality, to be heard and to be fairly treated in all circumstances. In addition to the Convention being enshrined in our Constitution, numerous child-related laws have been adopted in Guyana, including the Child Care and Protection Agency Act, the Protection of Children Act and the Juvenile Justice Act.

Under my country's Constitution, the best interest of the child is the primary consideration in all matters concerning children. Recognizing that a healthy family life provides the best environment for a child's development, the Child Care and Protection Agency of Guyana has been conducting capacity-building sessions with parents while engaging important community partners. Guyana has also developed a national alternative-care policy for children that is focused on the deinstitutionalization of children through the promotion of family-based care. The goal is to minimize the need for children to have out-of-home care by providing necessary support to parents. A children and family care centre for vulnerable families was recently commissioned in order to prevent the unnecessary separation of families.

Despite the foregoing impressive gains we have made in protecting the rights of children in Guyana, challenges remain. There are still too many cases of child abuse and child neglect, the agencies created to protect the rights of children are underresourced, and children today face such new threats as cyberbullying.

The commemoration of the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child gives us an opportunity to renew our commitment to ensuring the full protection of the rights of children everywhere.

Mrs. Abraham (Trinidad and Tobago): At the outset, Trinidad and Tobago wishes to align itself with the statement delivered by the Permanent Representative of Grenada on behalf of the Caribbean Community (see A/74/PV.32).

We are very honoured to participate in this momentous high-level meeting in commemoration of the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child 30 years ago and to celebrate the progress made to date in the advancement of children's rights.

Trinidad and Tobago wishes to reiterate its commitment to the full implementation and protection of the rights of children, including all aspects of their health, well-being, educational development and security under the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Convention provides the overarching strategic framework for the Government of Trinidad and Tobago's efforts aimed at protecting and ensuring the rights of children, and several of its articles have been incorporated into our domestic legislation.

The Convention and the supporting domestic legislation also informs the policy and programmatic measures taken in Trinidad and Tobago. In this regard, a draft national child policy — the first of its kind in Trinidad and Tobago — has been developed. It provides an overall framework for the care, protection and development of children in Trinidad and Tobago and offers long-term guidance to support suitable legislation, interventions and infrastructure that would further protect the rights of each child.

Children's status and well-being speak volumes about the values and quality of life in any society. Focus on the specific interests of children as a distinct social group is therefore needed, with the recognition of their innate capacities, interdependency, developmental needs and current and future roles as active social agents. The importance of the rights of children and their well-being at the national level is not only embedded in our Republic's Constitution but also present in our national Vision 2030, which is based on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

In 2018, in collaboration with UNICEF, Trinidad and Tobago implemented the second Child Rights Ambassadors Programme. The Programme sought to provide a platform from which children were given the opportunity to be ambassadors for their rights and responsibilities and to speak out on issues that affect

them. These ambassadors were also empowered to educate their peers on the rights of the child.

Trinidad and Tobago has also embarked on initiatives designed to raise awareness about child abuse in order to sensitize the public on strategies to prevent and reduce this phenomenon in Trinidad and Tobago. These initiatives, which also seek to educate adults and children on the Convention on the Rights of the Child, are conducted in collaboration with UNICEF, the Children's Authority of Trinidad and Tobago, non-governmental organizations, faith-based organizations and other stakeholders.

In conclusion, Trinidad and Tobago wishes to renew its commitment to children in agreeing to a future where no child is left behind, and it looks forward to continued collaboration with the various United Nations agencies, with the intention of further strengthening our national policies and legislation on the rights of the child.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker for this meeting. We shall continue the plenary segment this afternoon at 3 p.m. in the Trusteeship Chamber to hear the remaining speakers.

The meeting was suspended at 1.10 p.m.