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STATEMENT

by

**H. E. Mr. Miloš Koterec
Ambassador and Permanent Representative
of Slovakia**

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Third Committee**

Item 65: Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Children

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Mr. Chairperson,

Slovakia aligns itself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union and reiterates the strong belief shared by the international community in legal value and moral attractiveness of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Bearing in mind the importance of all facets of the agenda of the rights of the child, Slovakia finds it particularly relevant that this year's omnibus resolution focuses on the right of the child to express his or her views freely in all matters.

As the Secretary-General notes in his report on the girl child, there have been increased efforts to institutionalize and sustain the meaningful participation of children in policy and practice. The follow-up report to the Special Session of the General Assembly on children similarly reports on energized legislative reform and policy measures in many countries from all regions. All the reports nevertheless conclude by enumerating the persisting challenges, be it protection of children against all forms of violence, exploitation and abuse or access to health, education, basic needs etc.

The pertinence we see in the efforts spearheaded by the UN to give stronger voice to children themselves, when it comes to their rights, is the holistic character and the global impact of such efforts. To give voice to children does not mean to exempt the adult international community from particular policy area. On the contrary, giving voice to children equals having more responsibility to listen and, more importantly, to hear.

Mr. Chairperson,

In this context, I am pleased to recall that on June 17, 2009 the Human Rights Council adopted the resolution titled Open-ended Working Group on an optional protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child to provide a communications procedure mentioned already in the statement of the chairperson of the Committee on the Rights of the Child Ms. Lee on Wednesday. Slovakia had the honour to introduce this resolution on behalf of almost 50 countries from all regional groups who cosponsored the resolution, which we consider a clear proof of the cross-regional nature of this initiative with its ultimate target to listen to

children and respect them. Let me express my conviction that a means to this end will be elaboration of an optional protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child to provide a communications procedure, complementary to the reporting procedure under the Convention. In this regard I would like to remind that the Open-ended Working Group will meet in Geneva in December 2009 to explore the possibility of elaboration of the optional protocol, as mandated by the resolution of the Human Rights Council.

Thank you.