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Rights of Children General Discussion  
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Thank you, Mr Chair,

Slovakia aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of the European Union and wishes to add some additional remarks in its national capacity.

This year, we stand at a turning point of the 2030 agenda. The SDGs summit was a wake-up call to do our utmost to achieve our goal – also for all children who are innocent victims of our irresponsible action. Data concerning children's well-being and their rights are daunting. The reason is obvious - multiple crisis we are facing such as protracted conflicts, inequalities, and climate change. This particularly concerns children belonging to disadvantaged or marginalized group, including girls and children with disabilities. As the achievement of the SDGs is woefully off track, we seize this opportunity to call on all states to speed up their efforts to avert this adverse practice.

Slovakia expresses its full support to international mechanisms and human rights bodies in their action to advance children's rights. In this regard, we welcome a recently released guidance of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child according to which children have the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment, and governments must urgently act to ensure this, and we seize this opportunity to urge states to do so. This is crucial for the reason that the climate crisis is clear and tragic. Also in this respect, figures are very clear: about 4.2 billion children are expected to be born over the next 30 years and the consequences of the climate change will be their daily reality.

Mr Chair,

Children's rights are a long-standing priority of Slovakia. We are fully aware of the convoluted situation of the most vulnerable children due to poverty, social exclusion, and socio-economic deprivation in the areas of housing, healthy nutrition, access to education and access to health care. The socio-economic situation has been deteriorated over the last two years mainly due

to the COVID-19 pandemic followed by a high inflation and other consequences. These circumstances have a direct impact on the quality of life of children. For this reason, the Government of the Slovak Republic adopted in April this year the National Action Plan of the European Child Guarantee in the Slovak Republic with a view to 2030. The aim of the action plan is to improve living conditions for all children in Slovakia facing difficult life situations.

Mr Chair,

Slovakia is particularly concerned about the situation of children in Ukraine due to the unjustified and unprovoked aggression of Russia against Ukraine in blatant violation of international law and the UN Charter. We strongly deplore Russian ongoing deportation of children to the Russia and to the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine. It should be also reminded that Russian armed forces and affiliated armed groups were listed in the list of shame of this year's Secretary General annual report on children and armed conflict for carrying out grave violations against children.

Thank you.