



**PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF
BULGARIA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

11 East 84th Street, New York, NY 10028, Tel: (212) 737 4790, Fax: (212) 472 9865, e-mail: bulgaria@un.int

**71 UNGA
Third Committee**

Agenda Item 64 (a, b): Rights of Children

General Debate

**Ms. Asya Tsvetanova, First Secretary
Permanent Mission of Bulgaria to the UN**

New York, 14 October 2016

Madam Chair,

Bulgaria aligns itself with the statement made by the European Union. I would like to add some elements in my national capacity.

The protection of children and the promotion of children's rights is one of the main priorities of Bulgaria both domestically and internationally.

The Bulgarian Government has established a set of targeted measures for promoting the rights and well-being of all children, especially the most vulnerable and marginalized, and children with disabilities. All Government policies and programmes related to children follow a human rights-based approach taking into consideration the best interests of the child. Special attention is paid to early childhood development and the equal access to quality education for all, including children with disabilities, as well as refugee and migrant children. Bulgaria has achieved significant progress in the process of deinstitutionalization of child care which is further supported by the implementation of special measures for preventing child abandonment, encouraging good parenting, supporting families with children and providing foster care and integrated services in the community.

Ending violence against children is imperative for the realization of the human rights of children and remains a key priority on the children's agenda. The Bulgarian Government is taking concrete action to further strengthen child protection systems and raise awareness in the society about the scope of the problem through a number of public campaigns, such as "End Violence", "Making the Invisible Visible", "Imagine", etc. Children and young people are crucial partners in these efforts.

At global level Bulgaria remains fully committed, including as co-chair of the Group of Friends of Children and SDGs, to promoting the human rights of children in all international processes with the firm conviction that children should be at the heart of all global action. During the intergovernmental negotiations on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants Bulgaria was strongly advocating for integrating children's human rights in all development and humanitarian efforts and for recognizing children as the real agents of change. Children's rights remain central in achieving the commitments made at global level and should guide the implementation of all international agreements.

Bulgaria is actively participating also in UNICEF's global initiative the "World's Largest Lesson" aimed at teaching children about the SDGs. This initiative, which has already mobilized nearly 500 million girls and boys in over 100 countries, including more than 17 000 Bulgarian students, is gradually becoming a powerful movement to engage children in achieving the SDGs and shaping their own lives.

Bulgaria has made children's rights a strategic priority of the Council of Europe during our Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers and we are proud with the adoption in April 2016 of the Sofia Strategy for the Rights of the Child that will guide our efforts to further advance children's rights.

Madam Chair,

The world today confronts a humanitarian crisis of an unprecedented scale and nature which requires immediate action through a coherent and comprehensive international response. I would like to emphasize children's particular vulnerability in this situation.

It is a children's crisis and it is of utmost importance to adopt a child rights-based approach when addressing it. We should remember that a child is first a child and after that a refugee or migrant and that every child is entitled to the full set of rights as recognized in the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Being a transit and a host country of thousands of migrants and refugees Bulgaria is making every effort, in cooperation with the European Union, UNICEF and other partners, to protect the human rights of all those fleeing from the scourge of war and seeking refuge by paying particular attention to migrant and refugee children, especially unaccompanied children, including through providing safe accommodation, food, medical and psychological care, education, legal counseling, etc.

Madam Chair,

This year marks the 70th anniversary of the United Nations Children's Fund and I would like to commend UNICEF for its enormous contribution to protecting the rights of every child and advancing the children's agenda globally. UNICEF's dedicated work is instrumental in bringing a real change for children and improving children's quality of life in all parts of the world.

Thank you, Madam Chair!