



**PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF
BULGARIA**

TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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**72 UNGA
Third Committee**

Agenda Item 68: Rights of Children

General Debate

**H.E. Mr. Georgi Panayotov, Ambassador,
Permanent Representative of Bulgaria to the UN**

General Debate

New York, Tuesday, 10 October 2017

Mr. Chair,

Bulgaria aligns itself with the statement made by the European Union.

The protection and promotion of the rights of children is a key priority of the Government of Bulgaria at national, regional and global levels.

All child policies in Bulgaria follow a human rights-based approach taking into consideration the best interest of the child principle as enshrined in the CRC Convention. In recent years Bulgaria has achieved significant progress in advancing child rights and improving child protection in a number of important areas, including childcare, early childhood development, inclusive education, juvenile justice, prevention and elimination of violence against children, etc. Special attention is paid to children with disabilities, as well as to children on the move. Following the principle that a child is first a child the Bulgarian Government grants refugee and migrant children the same rights as Bulgarian children.

Fruitful partnerships have been established with the civil society, social partners, the private sector and media in Bulgaria to advocate for child protection and raise awareness about child rights. Some strategic corporate partnerships have been recognized as best practices for integrated corporate engagement and corporate social responsibility, both in Bulgaria and worldwide.

The Government of Bulgaria attaches great importance to the views and opinion of children themselves and firmly believes that no decision or initiative should be taken or realized without the meaningful participation of children. A Council of Children has been established in Bulgaria which mirrors the agenda of the Council of Ministers thus ensuring children's effective involvement in all processes that affect childhood and define the future. A most recent example is the Pre-school and School Education Act in force since 2016 which was drafted in close consultation with children and made a crucial step forward also in the efforts of the Bulgarian Government to bring the Sustainable Development Goals closer to children by introducing SDGs learning as a topic in the curriculum.

Mr. Chair,

Bulgaria is strongly committed to advancing child rights and child participation and in recent years my country has been recognized as a leader in the region in childcare and child policies. UNICEF also plays a vital role in those efforts. The positive example of Bulgaria has been successfully shared with countries in our region and beyond. Bulgaria has also substantially increased its technical and financial assistance to countries in the region for advancing child rights and ensuring the well-being of children. Building on those achievements Bulgaria has the ambition to become a Center of Excellence for child rights and I would like to reconfirm Bulgaria's strong determination to realize this potential in the best interest of children in the years to come.

Mr. Chair,

Bulgaria is also a global champion for children and a co-founder and co-chair of the Group of Friends of Children and the SDGs at the UN strongly promoting child rights and child participation in intergovernmental processes and agreements with the firm conviction that children should be at the heart of global action. A tremendous step forward in this direction was made with the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development which for the first time recognized children as agents of change and Bulgaria is committed to making it a reality. As President of the Conference of States Parties to the CRPD Convention for 2017 – 2018 Bulgaria is making every effort to ensure also that the rights of children with disabilities are protected and upheld which is essential for building inclusive societies and achieving sustainable development for all.

Mr. Chair,

Child rights remain high on the agenda for the upcoming Bulgarian Presidency of the Council of the European Union in the first semester of 2018. Bulgaria has highlighted child rights as a main priority in its bid for a Human Rights Council seat for the period 2019 – 2021 and remains firmly committed to advancing the rights of children in all areas.

Thank you, Mr. Chair!