



PERMANENT MISSION OF GREECE
TO THE UNITED NATIONS



**UNSC Meeting on Maintenance of International Peace and Security:
Children, Technology, and Education in Conflict
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Greece's Statement delivered
by H.E. Ambassador Aglaia Balta
Permanent Representative of Greece to the United Nations, New York

Thank you Madame President.

First Lady of the United States, Mrs. Melania Trump,

I would like to thank you for chairing this important meeting and for highlighting one of the most urgent challenges of our time; the growing intersection between children, technology and education in situations of armed conflict. I would also like to thank USG DiCarlo for her as always valuable insights.

Madame President,

Today, in armed conflicts millions of children are affected daily. Surrounded by violence and insecurity, children are also deprived of their right to education. i.e. of their own very future. When schools are attacked, used for military purposes or destroyed, children lose not only a safe place to learn, but also a sense of stability, protection and above all, a hope for a better tomorrow. Therefore, innovative solutions need to be found to mitigate the impact of safe education disruption, and restore education as a protective framework and a space of effective learning.

In an era increasingly shaped by cutting-edge technological progress, education, technology and innovation can form a powerful nexus to improve learning outcomes, foster peace, strengthen resilience of societies, and protect children.

Nevertheless, at the same time, technology can expose children to serious risks, especially in conflict situations, as children in armed conflicts face increasing risk of online harm, including online recruitment, exploitation, and sexual abuse.

The Security Council's Children and Armed Conflict framework has a duty to remain attentive to these evolving dynamics. Digital dimensions of recruitment, exploitation and incitement are directly relevant to the protection mandate of this Council. Monitoring and reporting mechanisms should, where appropriate, reflect these emerging risks.

In order to facilitate effective teaching and learning everywhere and under any circumstances, a strategic shift needs to take place that will allow for an integrated digital transformation of educational systems. This transformation entails action-oriented

national plans and policies, clearly articulated educational goals and sustained funding. Our guiding principle should always be to ensure the rights and best interests of the Child, as well as their protection from online harm.

Madame President,

Colleagues,

The risks entailed by the use of digital technology are universal, even in time of peace.

As recently stated recently in Geneva by the Greek Foreign Minister, Mr. George Gerapetritis, the need to safeguard children's role and action in the future, in view of technology's advancements, through the vital contribution of education, is of paramount importance. The digital environment as a public space must be safe, teaching children not just how to use technology, but crucially how to protect themselves from it.

In this endeavor, the potential of the private sector can also be utilized in collaboration with governments, civil society, and local communities, while adhering to relevant codes of conduct and human rights obligations. This partnership can contribute to the development of digital solutions of education that reflect local reality and needs, ensure effective and flexible implementation, protect online safety and help overcome barriers, including related to gender and disabilities.

Madame president,

The responsible use of technology and innovation can build bridges to safe education, dignity and hope for children in armed conflicts. It is our shared responsibility to ensure this access. Our ultimate objective is to cultivate a genuine, global "Human Rights Culture" by nurturing empathy in the next generation. If we can instill in a child the profound belief that human dignity is non negotiable, that child will inevitably become a leader who champions peace. Ultimately, this deeply rooted culture is our most powerful defense against turmoil and armed conflict.

Our engagement in the education of children is an investment in peace, and Greece, also through its work in the CAAC Working Group, will remain at the forefront of this discussion.

I thank you.