

Message by Mr. Michael Møller
United Nations Under-Secretary-General
Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva

“Model United Nations of Children”

Friday, 20 May 2016 at 10:00 a.m.
Room XXIV, Palais des Nations

Delivered on the Director-General’s behalf by Ms. Lidiya Grigoreva,
Chief of the NGO Liaison Unit

Dear students,
Chairperson,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my privilege to represent the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva and to deliver his message as follows:

“A warm welcome to the Palais des Nations. I thank the Journalists and Writers Foundation for the invitation to address this session of the Model United Nations of Children. Geneva is a hub for action on many challenges the world is facing today. We often host events with young people at the Palais, and we appreciate efforts of many civil society actors to promote the ideals and principles of the United Nations, and to encourage the next generation’s leaders to shape their future.

Since the creation of the United Nations seventy years ago, the "Model United Nations" conferences continue to enable youth involvement in current issues and increase their understanding of the often complex ways in which the United Nations system operates. More than 400 MUNs are held worldwide each year, during which students discuss, debate, learn to compromise, draft resolutions, make new friends, and get to know different cultures. Model United Nations gives young people a framework and tools to experiment with multilateral diplomacy and negotiation processes.

During your day at the Palais des Nations, you have chosen to simulate a session of the UN Security Council and to develop a resolution on Children, Peace and Security.

The Security Council is one of the central organs in the United Nations architecture. With its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, the Security Council takes the lead in determining the existence of a threat to peace, and acts by calling upon the parties to a dispute to settle it by peaceful means. In some cases, the Security Council can impose sanctions or authorize the use of force to maintain or restore international peace and security. Its mandate makes the Council arguably the most powerful decision-making body of the

United Nations, and all Member States are obligated under the UN Charter to comply with the Council's decisions. With many challenges to international peace and security, the Council's agenda is extremely heavy. In 2015 alone, the Council held 245 meetings and adopted 64 resolutions and 26 presidential statements. The latest discussions at the Security Council included thematic issues, such as threats of terrorism; protection of civilians; women, peace and security; peacekeeping and peacebuilding. Among country-specific situations of concern the Council recently discussed Syria, South Sudan, Central African Republic, Somalia, Yemen, Afghanistan, to name but a few.

Children and armed conflict as a topic was discussed by the Security Council as a separate agenda item for the first time in 1998. Since, the issue has been integrated into the Council's thematic and country-specific work. Tens of millions of children nowadays grow up in situations affected by conflict. Children are killed, abducted and abused. They are forced to become soldiers and prevented from going to school. They have no access to food, water and healthcare. Many have to leave their homes. All of them are deprived of childhood. While the children and armed conflict agenda keeps its prominence at the Security Council and its Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict, governments and international community continue facing unprecedented challenges with regard to the protection of children in conflict situations. The most pressing, but very difficult issue is addressing the root causes of conflict to prevent them from happening. And of course there is a need to find ways of responding more quickly to new crises as well as to the deterioration of situations

In developing your resolution today, I encourage you to approach peace from a holistic point of view, and to look at peace and security, development and human rights – the three pillars of the United Nations – as one. These elements are like a puzzle. You cannot say that peace is more important than development or human rights. These elements are interconnected and interlinked, and if you take one piece away, the puzzle will not be complete. You might have heard about the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which was adopted by the United Nations last year. This Agenda brings all pieces of the puzzle together and provides a plan of action to transform our world through economic development, management and protection of natural resources, social equity and inclusion. Achieving the goals of this agenda will give us a much greater chance to also achieve peace. It envisages a world, in which every child grows up free from violence. We know that this is a challenge as we face old and new threats, which transcend national borders and continents. But this is also a strength of the new Agenda, which was adopted by the Heads of States and governments of all the 193 Member States of the United Nations on behalf of their peoples. It is entirely owned by governments, societies, people and communities. We have 15 years to implement it, and this process has already started. In order for us to succeed, we need young people like you to be on board. What is required from you is critical thinking, innovation and fresh ideas in looking at security, political, social, climate-related or development challenges. Young people like you should not wait to grow up in order to start thinking about the world they want to live in. You have to take part in building your future already today, not as passive bystanders, but as active participants. And by being here today and reflecting on how to achieve a peaceful future for children you are already making important

steps in the right direction. I commend you for that, and I look forward to receiving your resolution.

In conclusion, let me wish you a productive discussion, and I hope that the ideas that you generate at this session will inspire you to great achievements in the future.”

Thank you.