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37th session of the Human Rights Council
Annual full-day meeting on the rights of the child
Theme: Protecting the rights of the child in humanitarian situations
5 March 2018

Intervention by H.E. Mr. Peter Matt
Ambassador, Permanent Representative of the Principality of Liechtenstein

We are delighted to participate in today's annual day meeting on the rights of the child. We welcome the report of the High Commissioner on protecting the rights of the child in humanitarian situations. The report offers a good basis for our discussions today, since it puts children at the centre of all our humanitarian responses.

We are concerned about the humanitarian situation worldwide. The disproportionate effect these situations have on children is chilling. Even worse, children in armed conflict are exposed to even greater risks. Through the adoption of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development we have resolved to take actions, in conformity with international law, to give special priority to the most vulnerable in society. Reality looks quite different and we are regularly confronted with an ever increasing number of attacks on children living in conflict zones and other grave violations of their rights. We strongly condemn all attacks against schools and hospitals as well as their use for military purposes and thus fully endorse the Safe Schools Declaration. Where these principles are violated, accountability for perpetrators must be ensured.

Another important issue which is of grave concern to us are sexual abuse and exploitation of children in humanitarian situations. In his report, the High Commissioner recognizes that armed conflict puts women and children at a heightened risk of sexual violence and exploitation either as the result of social or legal breakdown or as a weapon of war. But let us not forget that the problem is much bigger. Men and boys often represent the majority of detainees during armed conflict and they are highly vulnerable to sexual violence. How do the panelists suggest strengthening efforts to put an end to the impunity for perpetrators of such crimes?