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STATEMENT

BY

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Ambassador

Permanent Representative of the Republic of Slovenia

ON BEHALF OF THE HUMAN SECURITY NETWORK

Third Committee

Item: 62 (a) and (b): Rights of Children

61th Session of the General Assembly

AT THE OCCASION

**OF THE LAUNCH OF THE UN SECRETARY-GENERAL'S STUDY ON
VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN**

New York, 11 OCTOBER 2006

Mr Chairman,

It is my honour to take the floor on behalf of the Human Security Network member states: Austria, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Greece, Ireland, Jordan, Mali, the Netherlands, Norway, Slovenia, Switzerland, Thailand and South Africa as an observer.

Due to the widespread and devastating impact of violence against children, three years ago, the UN decided to bring this issue closer to the attention of the member states. The Human Security Network welcomes and supports the launching of the UN Study on Violence against Children as the first consolidated UN endeavour in this field to shed light on the extent of violence against children worldwide and their acute vulnerability.

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to Prof. Pinheiro for his leading role and outstanding work carried out in preparing this important Study. We wish in particular to commend you, Professor, for all your efforts aimed at ensuring comprehensive participation and cooperation of all relevant actors in the preparation of the Study, including member countries, relevant UN agencies, regional organizations, civil society and, last but not least, children. We believe that an important part of the value added of this Study is that it is the first at the global level engaging with children directly and consistently. They played an important role in all regional consultations.

Mr Chairman,

The 2005 World Summit Outcome Document recognizes the right of *all* individuals, particularly vulnerable people, to freedom from fear and want with an equal opportunity to enjoy all their rights and fully develop their human potential. That of course includes children. Our experience indicates that combating a multidimensional phenomenon such as violence against children, with a particular attention to addressing its root causes, calls for a systematic, coordinated and inclusive approach in all settings where it appears (homes, communities, schools, workplaces and institutions). Violence against children often remains hidden, which is mainly due to children's vulnerability and their lack of power and voice. The establishment of adequate child-friendly and gender sensitive reporting mechanisms is crucial.

Regardless of how and where it happens - whether at home or in the community, in urban or rural areas - violence has long-term consequences for the child's health, emotional condition and development and therefore prevents children from leading a normal social life. Furthermore, violence and abuse may even result in the death of a child. Moreover when children who experience violence become adults, they are more likely to close the vicious circle of violence by embracing violent behaviours with children.

Mr. Chairman,

We would like to emphasise that it is crucial that the efforts leading to the preparation of the Study are not wasted. In this regard, the follow-up process to Ms Graça Machel's Study on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Children has been extremely effective.

The study we are discussing today is based on the right of each and every child to protection from all forms of violence. It has revealed that violence against children exists in *all* parts of the world in *all* settings and that an effective multisectoral response to protect the future of our societies is crucial. By the same token, there is a need to ensure strong and coordinated leadership in the effective implementation of the Study's recommendations. This responsibility lies first and foremost with Governments. It is important to ensure that the issues addressed by the UN Study are kept high on the international human rights agenda. We need to discuss openly and constructively *all* possible venues for the effective follow-up, including the proposal for the establishment of a Special Representative.

Mr Chairman,

Let me conclude by saying that we must continue to bear in mind that the development of our society is threatened with each and every suffering child. It is our responsibility to act in the best interest of children.

Children are our wealth and investing in the promotion and protection of their rights is investing in the future of our societies. Let me repeat the words of Prof Pinheiro: '*No violence against children is justifiable. All violence against children is preventable.*'

Thank you.