

73rd UNGA
Third Committee
Agenda Item 70
Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Children

INDIA STATEMENT
By
Shri Sharad Tripathi, Hon'ble Member of the Parliament

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Mr. Chairman,

Children are the future of our societies.

Keeping 'the best interest of the child' at the forefront of all our development endeavors is not just a legal obligation but a moral responsibility.

With 472 million population below the age of 18 years, India is home of nearly one in every five child in the world. Nearly one-third of these are below five years of age.

As a signatory to the UN Convention and its Optional Protocols, India is encouraged by the progress in its implementation, during the last three decades.

However, millions of children worldwide continue to live in extreme poverty and remain vulnerable in situations of armed conflicts, refugee movements and natural disasters and continue to face multiple forms of exploitation and abuse.

Cyberspace, which opens up huge opportunities for children to learn and connect to the world, regrettably also brings serious challenges and abuses of children including cyber bullying.

Strengthening international cooperation is necessary to tackle emerging challenges to effective realization of rights of the child.

Mr. Chairman,

The Constitution of India has extensive provisions for promoting the rights of the child and for enabling their development and welfare.

India's National Policy for Children envisages a rights-based approach in four priority areas - survival, health and nutrition; education and development; protection and participation.

Periodic review of all laws and policies on children's rights is undertaken by the National Commission for Protection of Child.

Mr. Chairman,

The Integrated Child Development Services now serves more than 80 million children and over 19 million women through 1.3 million centres.

The Universal Immunization Programme in India has been accelerated through Mission Indradhanush. Modern technology is being used to improve the efficiency and scope of these interventions.

A range of programmes focus on physical and psychological health of adolescents, with special provision for girls.

The Indian Constitution provides for free and compulsory education for children up to the age of 14 years. Mid-day Meal Scheme in schools aims at universal enrolment and retention of children. Private schools now reserve 25% of seats for children from economically weaker sections.

India's flagship programmes on livelihood security, financial inclusion, sanitation and maternity benefit have positive impacts on health and well-being of children.

Beti Bachao Beti Padhao programme aims to comprehensively address imbalance in Child Sex Ratio (CSR) by increasing awareness, close monitoring of sex-selective abortions and encouraging education of girls.

Mr. Chairman,

India has a robust legal framework for the protection of children from sexual assault, sexual harassment and pornography and trafficking in person.

The rights of children and juveniles alleged to be in conflict with law, as well as children in need of care and protection are safeguarded with government agencies and civil society working together in implementing relevant legal provisions.

The eradication of child labour is a priority with strict enforcement of ban on the employment of children under 14 years.

Mr. Chairman,

Mahatma Gandhi had said, I quote "The earth, the air, the land and the water are not an inheritance from our fore fathers but on loan from our children. So we have to hand-over to them at least as it was handed over to us."

Our responsibility towards a prosperous and secure future for our children is at the heart of our endeavours to implement the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development.

India remains committed to work with the Member States and UN agencies to achieving this collective goal.

I thank you.