

General Assembly First Committee

Topic A: Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration of Child Soldiers

“UN DDR [Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration] programmes have increasingly been carried out in environments where the majority of former combatants are youth.”¹ DDR is the process of addressing the socioeconomic problems faced by ex-combatants that find themselves lost in a post-conflict society and empowering them to resume normal life.² On February 12th, 2020 Secretary-General António Guterres addressed the Security Council, reminding them of the precautions that need be taken to protect children exposed to war including those used as soldiers.³ The United Nations Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Resource Center created the *Operation Guide to Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Standards*, which was recently revised and updated in 2019 and provides Member States guidance on how to implement DDR throughout a conflict.⁴ While children are sometimes used in conflict for their specific advantages as recruits, *S/RES/2225* clearly indicates this practice violates international law, including the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* and its *Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict*.⁵

Topic B: Confidence Building Measures

Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) are procedures created and intended to prevent hostilities, reduce tensions, and create a trust at international, regional, sub-regional, and bilateral levels.⁶ The United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) works closely with the General Assembly First Committee to provide organizational support of decisions of the committee and other relevant disarmament bodies and plays a large role in CBMs.⁷ CBMs encompass transparency in armaments, such as use of and reporting to the UN Register of Conventional Arms, the establishment of demilitarized zones, peacekeeping operations staffed by international forces, and open dialogue about military topics.⁸ *A/RES/74/39*, passed in December of 2019, provided general support for the continued use of CBMs, but many implementation specifics are left out.⁹ This is to say that, while Member States continue to agree that CBMs are vital, defense and security remain personal obligations of Member States and building trust remains a difficult topic for balancing sovereignty and good guidance.

¹ <https://www.unddr.org/uploads/documents/Operational%20Guide.pdf>

² https://www.unddr.org/what-is-ddr/introduction_1.aspx

³ <https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/speeches/2020-02-12/remarks-security-council-briefing-children-armed-conflict>

⁴ <https://www.unddr.org/uploads/documents/Operational%20Guide.pdf>

⁵ <http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/doc/2225>

⁶ <https://www.un.org/disarmament/cbms/>

⁷ <https://www.un.org/disarmament/about>

⁸ <https://www.un.org/disarmament/cbms/>

⁹ <https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/74/39>