Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran
to the United Nations Office and
other International Organizations in Geneva

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

Statement

by

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before

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Follow-up to the Sixth Global Conference on the Elimination of Child Labour (Marrakech, 11–13 February 2026)

Geneva, 18 November 2026

Mr. Chairperson, Distinguished Delegates,

We convene here with a shared commitment to combating child labour and ensuring that every child has the opportunity to be in a classroom, rather than being compelled to work in a workshop or on a farm. Yet today, I invite you to pause and reflect on those children who were precisely where they were entitled to be, and where the world expects every child to be: sitting at their school desks, pursuing their right to education.

On 28 February 2026, in the city of Minab, a school was struck by missiles while classes were in session, claiming the lives of 168 innocent children. Some were as young as seven. At that tender age, a child is still drawing houses with the sun shining

above them, still holding on to the simple belief that the adults of this world will protect them.

This was not merely a tragic incident; it was a clear crime that demands accountability and cannot be allowed to go unanswered.

These children had been spared the ordeal of child labour. They were neither in the fields nor in workshops; they were in their classrooms, precisely where every child should be, and where the international conventions adopted in this very hall affirm their right to be. Yet it was there, in the very place meant to safeguard their future, that their lives were taken.

In the city of Lamerd, children also lost their lives when a sports hall was struck. According to official figures, nearly 400 children have been killed in the recent unlawful aggression against my country.

But the children of Minab and Lamerd are not alone. In Gaza, over the past three years alone, more than 20,000 children have reportedly been killed, according to figures from Gaza's health authorities and United Nations reporting.

These figures are not merely statistics. They represent thousands of young lives lost, futures cut short, and families left to endure unimaginable grief. They compel us to confront a fundamental question: how can the international community claim to uphold the rights of the child while so many children continue to pay the ultimate price for armed conflict?

The right to life is the most fundamental of all rights to which every child is entitled. Without it, all other rights become meaningless: the right to education, the right to play, the right to decent work, and the right to a future. We cannot commit ourselves to ending child labour while remaining silent in the face of the killing of children who will never have the opportunity to grow up, let alone exercise their right to decent work or fulfil their potential.

The Marrakech Framework itself recognizes that armed conflict and displacement perpetuate the conditions that deprive children of their childhood and undermine their fundamental rights. A commitment to protecting children must not end at the threshold of conflict zones.

The Islamic Republic of Iran therefore calls upon the Office, in its annual reporting on the implementation of the Framework, to devote specific attention to children affected by armed conflict, including those whose lives, rights and futures are threatened or lost as a result of hostilities.

Thank you.