**Annual full-day meeting on the rights of the child**

**Theme: The rights of the child and Sustainable Development Goals**

 **Securing a future for today’s children and generations to come: building back better with children’s rights upfront**

**Statement by Austria, Croatia, Slovenia**

Thank you Madame President.

I deliver this statement on behalf of Austria, Croatia and Slovenia.

We thank Madam High Commissioner and the panelists for their presentations that will help us better identify challenges and opportunities of a child rights perspective to the SDGs.

Let me start by acknowledging that all SDG’s are relevant for children and many of them correspond to the articles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Though some areas such as health, education, gender equality, poverty, clean water and sanitation, access to justice and healthy environment are more visible, our ability to reach the goals, will inevitably affect the lives of children, some of whom will be young adults in 2030.

Therefore, children must be given an opportunity to participate meaningfully during the process of development of policies and programmes that affect them and their voices should be heard and taken into account.

The challenges that lie on our path are many; environmental degradation, climate change and armed conflicts. Poverty and dropping out of schools exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic represent additional risk factors on top of those already faced by children in most vulnerable situations.

There are millions of children today who are at risk due to their disability, who are affected by HIV/AIDS or FGM and who are forced into an early marriage. The international community must do everything to prevent that hundreds of millions of children, especially girls, are left behind, before it’s too late.

As long as we live in a world where approximately one billion of its children experience some form of violence, we must do better.

Our countries are committed to strengthening the participation of children in decision-making processes, to fighting violence against children in all settings and to eradicating child poverty through various measures.

Mr. Dawit Mezmur,

How can States better apply a child rights perspective to the Decade of Action in order to strengthen strategies aimed at reaching the SDGs by 2030?