



**46<sup>th</sup> session of the Human Rights Council**

**Annual full-day meeting on the rights of the child  
The rights of the child and the Sustainable Development Goals**

Benelux intervention  
1 March 2021

Thank you, Madam President.

It is my pleasure to deliver this statement on behalf of the three Benelux countries, Belgium, the Netherlands and my own country Luxembourg.

For the past year, the world has faced an unprecedented challenge that is the Covid-19 pandemic. Many children have seen their human rights violated as a result. In fact, measures taken to prevent the spread of the pandemic have had a dampening effect on the full realization of the rights of children, particularly for the poorest and most vulnerable among them.

The realisation of children's rights and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development are intrinsically interconnected. One cannot be achieved without the other. Both are essential in order to combat the adverse impacts of the current pandemic. Adopting a child rights-based approach to the Decade of Action is therefore critical, especially if we want to accelerate the implementation of the SDGs and "build back better" and greener.

The meaningful participation of children and youth is key to that end. To be able to respond to the impact this crisis has had on children's rights efficiently, States need to listen to children's ideas and concerns. As such, we welcome the participation of children in today's panel discussion, but this is not enough. We need to meaningfully engage children and youth in decision-making processes at all levels, be it at the UN, national or local levels. The "Friday's For Future" movement has shown that children are not only eager to participate in global debates, but also act as positive agents of change. The meaningful participation of children in society and their full enjoyment of human rights ensures that discussions are in tune with the needs and desires of current and future generations, whose lives are most at stake in the achievement of the SDGs.

With the 2030 Agenda, we committed to "leave no child behind". The Decade of Action requires us to accelerate our efforts and the Benelux countries remain committed to realizing every right for every child so as to achieve the SDGs.

Thank you.