Transcript: Leila Zerrougui, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict

Leila Zerrougui discussed the root causes of why families flee conflict and violence and the role children play in the decision to leave. She says, “People first and foremost flee because they are afraid. They are afraid for themselves but they are also afraid for their children. Parents are more afraid for children than they are for themselves.” She noted that families who have children are the most vulnerable in conflict situations. When conflict takes over community coherence, families and children lose opportunities such as the ability to go school. This results in no economic reason for families to stay in a hostile environment and their decision to leave in linked to fear. She says, “…in the major crisis that we are seeing today in the Middle East, people are also fleeing because they don’t have the minimum basic service for their children. And school is one of the reason people move.” To combat this, Ms. Zerrougui stated that we must ensure refugees have hope for their children by addressing the root causes of the conflict so that when families return there will be peace and hope will be renewed. She also noted the influence that the Security Council, General Assembly, and Human Rights Council have to make a difference in bringing conflict to an end and restoring hope for refugees.