FUNDING PROPOSAL ON ADDRESSING GRAVE VIOLATIONS OF CHILDREN'S RIGHTS IN ARMED CONFLICT, INCLUDING SEXUAL VIOLENCE

2012-2013

CHILD PROTECTION SECTION, UNICEF NEW YORK HQ

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UNICEF/NYHQ2005-0416/LeMoyne: A baby sleeps in her mother's lap in a hospital in Bunia, Ituri DRC. Militia cut off her mother's hand during an attack on a nearby village of Tche.

1. INTRODUCTION

Armed conflicts have a devastating effect on children – physically, psychologically and emotionally. Both in the immediate and longer term, every conflict has a detrimental impact on children's ability to survive and develop. Conflict also exposes children to new protection risks and further exacerbates pre-existing vulnerabilities such as violence in schools and exploitative labour. Each year, significant numbers of children are killed and maimed in situations of armed conflict; others are abducted and or recruited and used by armed forces or groups; children are raped or otherwise sexually violated; schools and health facilities are targeted for attack; and essential humanitarian aid is denied to thousands of children. Millions of other children have experienced the scourge of conflict through family separation, the loss of loved ones or sudden, forced dislocation, affecting their psychological well-being.

Protecting children in situations of armed conflict is both a life-saving measure and a sound investment in reducing the life-long negative impact on children's well-being and future development. Such work necessitates an integrated multi-sectoral approach encompassing social welfare, education, health, law enforcement and justice-related interventions. It combines immediate humanitarian response with the need for a longer-term perspective, whereby families, communities and government are galvanised to build an enduring protective environment - one that is stronger than before the armed conflict.

UNICEF's comparative strength is its ability to harness the organization's full range of expertise and capacity at different levels and across different contexts, and to leverage partnerships to focus on the holistic well-being of children and their families, to protect and support them to recover and slowly rebuild their lives. This strength infuses each of UNICEF's roles in preventing, monitoring and addressing child protection concerns during situations of armed conflict; namely to provide leadership, facilitate coordination, promote technical excellence, and mobilise attention and support for the protection of children.

This funding proposal focuses on technical level support at the global and regional levels alongside field level implementation to holistically address grave violations of children's rights in armed conflict, including sexual violence against both children and women. It includes enhancing the overall protective environment for children in situations of armed conflict, through monitoring, reporting and enabling effective coordinated prevention activities and responses. It also includes strengthening child protection systems supported by results based programme monitoring and evaluation, to ensure that an equitable approach is applied so that the most vulnerable children are not left behind. The proposal covers efforts in countries that are part of the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism ('MRM') established by UN Security Council Resolution 1612 (2005), other country situations of concern where UNICEF is setting up prevention systems and responding to the needs of children affected by armed conflict, as well as countries identified for accelerated roll-out of the Monitoring Analysis and Reporting Arrangement (MARA) on sexual violence in conflict.

2. FRAMEWORK

The framework that UNICEF utilises to enhance the protective environment for children affected by armed conflict is three pronged - guided by UNICEF's internal strategic approach; the broader UN system wide engagement; and the international legal norms and standards for children[1].

UNICEF's internal strategic framework to address grave violations is guided by three core documents adopted by UNICEF's Executive Board, each of which reinforce the need to prioritise child protection in contexts of armed conflict: the Medium-Term Strategic Plan (2006-2013); the Child Protection Strategy (2008); and the updated Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action (CCCs) (2010), which include actions considered essential to ensuring children's rights to survival, development and well-being in emergency contexts. These core policies are informed by strategic imperatives to address social norms that are harmful to children and women and to reinforce systems, informal and formal, that protect children, including preventing protection violations against children and responding to those children who are victimized.

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[1] Of particular influence is International Human Rights Law (particularly the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocol on Children and Armed Conflict) , International Humanitarian Law, International Criminal Law and child protection norms and standards, such as the Paris Principles on Children Associated with Armed Forces or Groups.

Since Graca Machel's study on the effects of armed conflict on children in 1996, there has been a broader and more active engagement of the UN system as a whole on the issue of children and armed conflict. In particular, the Security Council has been actively seized to end grave violations of children's rights since 1999, as it considers the issue important to the maintenance of global peace and security. The Security Council has subsequently adopted eight Security Council resolutions on children and armed conflict[2], including the ground-breaking UN SCR 1612 (2005)[3] calling for an effective global UN led Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism in countries where these grave violations occur. It has also

16 MRM Country Task Forces operating as of September 2011

established a Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict to review reports generated by the mechanism and to take action to hold perpetrators to account. Initially, the MRM was implemented in seven pilot countries in 2006. As of September 2011, the MRM is being implemented in 16 countries, including the recent inclusion of Yemen and Cote d'Ivoire, where the MRM was re-activated in 2011. Additionally, UNICEF is setting up prevention systems and responding to the needs of children affected by armed conflict in other situations of concern[4], including through coordinating programmatic and advocacy efforts through working groups on children and armed conflict.

In the past two years, there have also been complementary advancements in the Security Council's Women, Peace and Security agenda, specifically addressing sexual violence in conflict situations (SVC). SCRs 1820 (2008), 1888 and 1889 (2009), and 1960 (2010), have introduced new elements into the UN's fight against conflict related sexual violence, including: the development of a monitoring, analysis and reporting system on SVC; the engagement of 'commitments' by parties to conflict to prevent and address SVC; and listing and de-listing of those parties to conflict credibly suspected of committing SVC against men, women, boys and girls. In December 2010, the Secretary General's Policy Committee on SVC requested the development of a Monitoring Analysis and Reporting Arrangement (MARA). UNICEF, through UN Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict (UN Action), has assisted in developing key documents, including a Guidance Note and a framework for the operationalization of 'Commitments', and listing and delisting. Central African Republic, Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo and South Sudan have been selected as 'accelerated roll-out countries' for the MARA.

UNICEF was actively engaged in the development of the MRM and the MARA from the outset, and has also played an active role in providing technical advice during the negotiations leading to the adoption of related Security Council resolutions. UNICEF is now utilizing its unique position and technical expertise at country, regional and headquarters levels to address operational issues and linkages to ensure ongoing coherence and coordination for effective implementation of these mechanisms.

3. ACTION

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[2] Including SCRs 1261 (1999), 1314 (2000), 1379 (2001), 1460 (2003), 1539 (2004), 1612 (2005), 1882 (2009) and 1998 (2011).

[3] SCR 1612 (2005) requested the Secretary General to establish Monitoring and Reporting Mechanisms (MRMs) to gather timely, accurate and objective information on grave child rights violations in situations of armed conflict and report to the Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict ('SCWG'). The six grave violations to be monitored and reported upon include: the abduction of children; attacks on schools and hospitals; denial of humanitarian access; killing and maiming of children; recruitment and use of children in armed forces and groups; and sexual violence perpetrated by parties to the conflict. Under SCR 1612, the implementation of the MRM was originally triggered only in situations where parties to conflict had recruited or used children. SCR 1882 (2009) and 1998 (2011) expanded the triggers to also include parties that are engaged in killing or maiming and rape or other sexual violence against children; and attacks on schools and hospitals respectively.

[4] For an indication of some of the other situations of concern, please see the Secretary General's 10th Annual report on children and armed conflict, A/65/820–S/2011/250, accessible at: http://www.un.org/children/conflict/_documents/S2011250.pdf

As the UN's mandated lead agency for children, UNICEF has been working to protect and support children affected by armed conflict since its establishment following World War II. UNICEF is present on the ground before conflicts erupt, during the height of conflict, and long after conflicts cease. This strong and sustained field presence places the organization in a unique position to monitor protection concerns for children and women, including grave violations. It also enables the organization to set up prevention systems and respond with well-designed programmes to help communities reduce children's exposure to protection concerns, end specific violations, and provide children and their families with access to essential support to ensure that families stay together and children are properly protected and cared for. The overall objective of UNICEF's engagement is to reduce, prevent and alleviate grave violations of children in armed conflict through a five-pronged approach:

a. Leadership and coordination (global, regional and country levels):
UNICEF is the designated lead agency for the global Child Protection Working Group, co-lead of the global Gender-Based Violence Area of Responsibility (with UNFPA), co-chair of the global Paris Principles Steering Group on Children Associated with Armed Forces/Groups (with Save the Children), and a leader of the cross-cutting Mental Health and Psychosocial Reference Group. In these capacities, UNICEF is instrumental in developing sectoral capacities, promoting coordination via a common strategic platform, and raising the profile of child protection concerns, including gender-based violence (GBV) against children and women, within the humanitarian and donor community. This includes ensuring that adequate surge capacity for coordination and technical support is made available to the field through arrangements with standby partners such as those contributing to the Child Protection Rapid Response Team.

With regards to the MRM and the MARA, UNICEF works closely with the Office of the SRSG for Children and Armed Conflict, the Office of the SRSG on Sexual Violence in Conflict, and the Department of Peace-Keeping Operations (DPKO), as well as with other key stakeholders including political actors and operational partners, to provide leadership and enhanced coordination related to children and women affected by armed conflict. At the global level, the OSRSG CAAC and UNICEF co-lead the MRM Technical Reference Group to provide key technical and policy guidance to the field. At the regional level, UNICEF provides additional support to field colleagues, including by facilitating regional inter-agency workshops and fostering cross-border regional exchanges on key conflict-related protection concerns for children. At country level, UNICEF plays a leading role in coordinating issues affecting children in situations of armed conflict, both through the Child Protection Working Group and GBV AoR as well as Co-Chair of all MRM Country Task Forces together with the relevant Department of Political Affairs (DPA)/ DPKO mission or UN Resident Coordinator's office as the case may be.

b. Monitoring and reporting of grave violations:
At the country level, UNICEF along with DPKO/DPA Child Protection Advisors or the UN Resident Coordinator's Office and other child protection partners, monitors and reports on grave violations of children's rights to enhance the evidence-base for accountability, prevention and programmatic response. At the regional level, UNICEF and partners support ways to strengthen country-level and regional-level monitoring and reporting, particularly in situations with a cross-border dimension such as addressing the consequences of grave violations perpetrated by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan and Uganda. UNICEF Headquarters is also involved in leading the development of tools and technical guidance, as well as capacity building of staff and partners for enhanced and standardised monitoring and reporting methodologies, including through a global MRM Technical Reference Group.

UNICEF/ HQ05-0432/Roger Lemoyne; DRC: A girl, 14, stands in the UNICEF-supported hospital in Goma, where she waits to be examined by doctors. To escape an abusive mother, she joined the Mai Mai militia where she worked as a commander & bodyguard. Like other children, she was forced to carry weapons and stay awake for days at a time. She was raped by a soldier, eventually becoming his wife. She is now receiving medical and psychosocial assistance at a UNICEF-supported reintegration centre.

c. Advocacy: UNICEF advocates at all levels for the fulfillment of children's rights even in the midst of armed conflict, often drawing upon information gathered through the MRM, and guided by international legal norms and standards. Advocacy with warring parties may lead, for example, to the establishment of days of tranquility or zones of peace for children, or the release of children from armed forces or groups. UNICEF also engages with parties to armed conflict

with a view to ending grave violations against children and women and strengthening related accountability, such as through the development and implementation of Action Plans where parties commit to end and prevent grave violations against children. UNICEF's advocacy efforts include ensuring that member states and key partners are knowledgeable about and use programming standards and guidelines related to the protection and well-being of children, such as those on gender-based violence, child recruitment and use, mental health and psychosocial support, alternative care, and family separation. UNICEF also encourages member states' support and adherence to international treaties and norms relevant to protecting children, such as the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, the AP Mine Ban[5] and the Cluster Munitions Conventions

d. Response: Monitoring and reporting of child protection concerns is not an end in itself; it must also systematically trigger appropriate, timely and holistic responses, to enhance the survival, security and rights of children. Information gathered through the MRM is used to respond in multiple ways. Responses can vary from local and high-level advocacy efforts, to programmes that care for child victims of violations and enable them to access support services. This support typically includes counseling and rehabilitation, life skills, health related support including integrated support for children with disabilities, interim care, family tracing and reunification, family mediation, peace building activities and community reintegration. It is facilitated through, for example, child friendly spaces, temporary care centres and community-based protection networks. UNICEF's frontline Child Protection programmes work with government and partners to ensure capacities and plans are in place to prepare for crises and that responses are well-designed to help communities reduce children's exposure to protection concerns. This work is complimented at the global level by excellence in technical expertise to support country level programming, and by leveraging UNICEF's role in inter-agency partnerships to lead the development and usage of common guidance, policies and tools, including innovative technologies that benefit all actors in the sector.

UNICEF/NYHQ2005-0415/LeMoyne: 10 year old boy recovers from a machete wound to his neck in a hospital in Bunia, Ituri DRC. He was slashed by militia.

e. Prevention: UNICEF's long experience in the sector has shown that child protection concerns are multi-dimensional and call for multifaceted prevention and response strategies. Addressing child protection violations on an issue-by-issue basis is neither sustainable nor effective. A systems approach examines the comprehensive set of laws, policies, regulations and services needed across all social sectors – especially social welfare, education, health, security and justice – to support both prevention and response to all protection related risks. A systemic approach that emphasizes prevention, including through awareness raising such as Mine Risk Education and other initiatives to address the weapons that devastate communities, is vital to mitigate the impact of a crisis on children. In every context, making sure that vulnerable, socially excluded or 'invisible' groups are included within the reach of child protection systems and programmes requires special emphasis. The preceding core activities (leadership and coordination, monitoring and reporting, advocacy and response) contribute to an enhanced protective environment for children that ultimately serve to prevent further grave violations against them. For example, real-time monitoring and reporting of violations can be used for in-depth analysis of scale, nature, patterns and trends of grave violations, such as highlighting particularly vulnerable children in certain geographic areas, which subsequently better informs targeted prevention and response strategies. In addition, solid programming at the country level can also prevent violations. Inclusive and sustained community-based reintegration of children associated with armed forces and groups along with other highly vulnerable children affected by conflict help to ensure that (re-)recruitment is less likely; similarly, the development of a community-based protection and prevention framework for GBV against both children and women in collaboration with UN peacekeeping missions can lead to real-time solutions to prevent sexual violence and reduce vulnerability. UNICEF and OCHA are also working together to improve efforts to prevent sexual violence that is perpetrated by state and non-state armed groups.

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[5] "The Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction" 1997.

a. Partnership

As appealed by Graca Machel in her study, *"The impact of armed conflict on children must be everyone's concern and is everyone's responsibility; Governments, international organizations and every element of civil society. Each one of us, each individual, each institution, each country, must initiate and support global action to protect children. Local and national strategies must strengthen and be strengthened through international mobilization."[6]*

The operationalization of child protection work in emergencies, particularly in situations of armed conflict, has required UNICEF to foster and leverage a diverse array of partnerships at the global, regional and country levels, including Member States (as Security Council members or other influential actors, donors, or parties to armed conflict); UN offices, agencies, funds and programmes[7]; international and local non-governmental organisations (NGOs); community based, religious and other civil society organisations; inter-agency child-protection, GBV and mine action sub-clusters, inter-agency protection and education clusters; and leading research and academic institutions.

© UNICEF/NYHQ2008-1359/Pietrasik: Girls play in a circle at recently rebuilt Thruppathi Vidhyalaya School, in Ampara District, Sri Lanka.

b. Robust evidence base, fuelled by results based programme monitoring and evaluation

Protection of children from grave violations is also grounded in robust evidence that informs programmes, policies, laws and their implementation. Child protection monitoring, evaluation and research require investment to increase the evidence base of the sector by strengthening capacities to generate, share and utilize high quality knowledge, data and analysis; work on indicator development and data collection methodologies; improve evaluation practices to measure the effectiveness and impact of interventions; and develop a body of good practices and lessons learned to inform on-going and subsequent interventions. Child protection monitoring and evaluation is critical for assessing the scale of child protection violations, identifying vulnerable sub-groups and factors of vulnerability, and informing policy and programming at all levels. This is critical to ensure that interventions are meeting their objectives to meet the needs of children and women. It is also essential for ensuring the accountability of governments, international agencies, NGOs, donors and the private sector; as well as the accountability of duty-bearers to rights-holders, in line with UNICEF's Human Rights-based Approach.

UNICEF country offices have established systems for results-based programme monitoring and evaluation of the work on children affected by armed conflict, for example, under the humanitarian cluster systemA global MRM "Good Practices" exercise is being conducted in 2011-12, in coordination with UNICEF's Evaluation Office, OSRSG CAAC, DPKO and relevant external partners. In addition, as a critical part of results based management, UNICEF programme evaluations regularly take place, which provide a valuable source of learning for programme strengthening.

c. Integrated cross-sectoral approaches

The protection of children's rights is often mistakenly equated to be purely a child protection sector issue. Children's rights expand across a range of sectors; hence an integrated cross-sectoral approach is essential to enhance the overall protective environment for children. For example, safe access to and attendance at schools plays a vital preventative component in enhancing the overall protective environment for children and also contributes to their psychosocial well-being, especially in times of armed conflict. Education provides opportunities to learn and, when effective, gives children the skills and competence to meet their needs, protect themselves and build hope for a peaceful future. As such, it is extremely important to ensure that schools are inclusive, safe and participatory environments, which are accessible to all

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[6] See paragraph 317, "Impact of Armed Conflict on Children," Graca Machel, 1996, accessible at http://www.unicef.org/graca/a51-306_en.pdf

[7] Particularly the Offices of the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict and Sexual Violence in Conflict, DPKO and DPA, Office of the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), World Health Organisation (WHO), International Labour Organisation (ILO).

children affected by conflict. Measures such as promoting the re-integration of children formerly associated with armed forces or armed groups and other children affected by the conflict, into formal / non-formal primary and secondary

UNICEF/ HQ05-1304/Giacomo Pirozzi; RUSSIAN FEDERATION: 16 year old boy photographs a hole made by a bomb blast at School No. 1 in Beslan. Many children fled through this opening on the final day of the siege.

education is extremely important. Increased security and protection of schools, including personnel and students, can also be enhanced by the effective monitoring, reporting and response to attacks on schools. Investment in these efforts is much needed.

Efforts are also underway to engage the health sector, particularly in relation to the grave violations of attacks on hospitals and denial of humanitarian access, which affect thousands of children. It is important that the health sector ensures implementation of the Minimum Initial Services Package (MISP) for meeting the reproductive health needs of the affected population, including providing confidential care for survivors of sexual violence (provision of post exposure prophylaxis to prevent the transmission of HIV and presumptive treatment of STIs as well as emergency contraception). Medical practitioners (medical doctor, midwife, nurse) also need to be trained on the survivor-centred based approach and on clinical management of rape, including on the specific skills set required to interact with child survivors. Mother groups developed in the context of nutrition programmes also have a strong impact by providing non-stigmatising support groups in which sensitive topics such as gender-based violence can be discussed (no mother feels labelled by attending a group whose primary purpose is child rearing). This helps to break down social isolation often caused by forced displacement and to create a growing network of social support. Mother groups also provide an ideal forum for older mothers to educate younger ones, thus helping to address issues related to teenage mothers and children born out of sexual violence.

d. Building back better

Even in the midst of an emergency and while responding to immediate humanitarian needs, UNICEF also takes steps towards building capacities and strengthening child protection systems such that they are better than before the emergency begun. This also applies to situations of armed conflict, where for example, the continuum and process of care of children, and the type of services that are offered at national, local and community levels are weak, destroyed or non-existent. Equally, UNICEF strives to promote attitudes, behaviours and practices that are gender-sensitive, respectful and inclusive of girls, boys and women, particularly those who are most marginalised. These are longer term measures with the potential to yield considerable impact that can be set in motion through foresight and integration into emergency programme interventions.

e. Innovation and technology

Developing innovative technologies to support the work of children affected by armed conflict is an important part of UNICEF's strategic approach to programming. UNICEF provides Information Management Systems for country use in case and incident management. Software along with global best practices is available for country deployment and localization in emergencies. Current applications include the Child Protection Information Management System (CPIMS) and Gender-based Violence Information Management System (GBVIMS). A need exists to enhance the software suite provided by UNICEF to monitor grave violations against children and to centrally develop a standardized, comprehensive and robust MRM information management system, including database that is harmonised with other systems where possible.[8] Work is underway to develop this much needed electronic database and accompanying tools such as reporting format templates, information sharing protocols, information handling and security protocols, reporting and analysis templates, etc. It will be both a manual and electronic information management system – also providing solutions for countries with weak IT capacities particularly at field level.

UNICEF is also developing a new open source mobile application and data storage system called "RapidFTR" (rapid family tracing and reunification) to help aid workers collect, sort and share information about unaccompanied and separated children in emergency situations so they can be registered for care services and reunited with their families. RapidFTR is specifically designed to streamline and speed up Family Tracing and Reunification (FTR) efforts both in the immediate

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[8] This initiative emerged following a study released in May 2010 assessing existing efforts to manage MRM information; its recommendation was to centrally develop a standardized, comprehensive and robust MRM information management system, including database, which was endorsed by inter-agency partners.

aftermath of a crisis and during on-going recovery efforts. UNICEF's vision is that RapidFTR becomes the standard tool used by all child protection and humanitarian organizations to document unaccompanied and separated children in an emergency. As the agency charged with leading child protection in emergencies globally, UNICEF intends to make RapidFTR available to other humanitarian organizations working in this field once it is finalised, as a contribution to advancing and facilitating collective work. While the focus of RapidFTR is on documenting children who are separated from their families and caregivers in an emergency, the technology has the potential to be applied much more broadly to document vulnerable children in a variety of contexts and for a variety of purposes.

5. RESULTS FOR CHILDREN

UNICEF's work in situations of armed conflict, together with our partners, is having a direct and important impact on improving the lives of children and women, including those who have been gravely violated. While results for programmes for protecting children affected by armed conflict are unpredictable due to the volatility of the situations and achievements are difficult to measure, progress has been made on several fronts.

Currently, MRM Task Forces have been established in 16 countries and some other situations of concern are starting to similarly establish children and armed conflict working groups to address critical issues affecting children. Many UNICEF country offices have already started to make use of the information gleaned through the mechanism by developing and implementing concrete measures to prevent violations and to enhance availability of protection and other services for children and women. Awareness campaigns to ensure prevention of violations and to educate parties to the conflict on the rights of children are also being conducted.

Advocacy efforts to end and prevent violations have been conducted at global, regional, country and local levels. At the global level, 38 Secretary-General's country specific reports on children and armed conflict have been considered by the Security Council Working Group as of September 2011, which has led to the issuance of 35 sets of concrete conclusions to date[9] with specific recommendations for action. Effective advocacy to promote and ensure that findings and conclusions of the Security Council Working Group influence national policy development is also on-going at the country level.

Over the past several years, UNICEF has also gained experience in engaging with parties to conflict in developing specific Action Plans for the release and reintegration of children associated with armed forces or armed groups. As of September 2011, 12 action plans have been signed with 15 parties to the conflict; and negotiations are underway with a further six parties. Between 2008 and 2010, UNICEF supported the release of approximately 20,000 boys and girls from armed forces and armed groups. The vast majority of these children have been provided with reintegration support tailored to meet their individual requirements. In 2010 alone, 11,393 children formerly recruited or used (8,624 boys and 2,769 girls) benefitted from reintegration support across fourteen countries.

At the global level, UNICEF has also continued to be at the forefront of developing common tools, guidelines and capacity building materials on addressing grave violations against children and women. MRM guidelines, a field manual and related training toolkit were finalized in 2010, in close collaboration with DPKO and the OSRSG-CAAC. They have been rolled out thus far in three regional inter-agency MRM "Training of Trainers", reaching over 90 UN personnel from 21 countries, and in two country-specific trainings in Afghanistan and Sudan. In 2010, UNICEF led the inter-agency development of a Child Protection rapid assessment tool for immediate onset emergencies, and the implementation of training in child protection coordination for over 100 field based or deployable child protection cluster coordinators or members as part of the global Child Protection Working Group.

Under the aegis of the Paris Principles Steering Group, UNICEF together with ILO and Save the Children has spearheaded the development of a Technical Note on economic reintegration of children associated with armed forces or armed groups. A field handbook on child recruitment, release and reintegration with a companion training package is planned for 2012. UNICEF has also led the development and roll-out of inter-agency guidelines on 'Caring for Survivors' of GBV, and a related GBV coordination manual[10] under the mantle of the GBV AoR, and is now actively involved in developing new guidance and training resources on improving care for child survivors through enhanced case management, mental health and psychosocial interventions, and clinical care, and GBV-related coordination that will build stronger linkages

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[9] It is expected that the Security Council Working Group will adopt the remaining conclusions in the near future.
[10] "Handbook for Coordinating Gender-based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Settings."

between GBV and child protection working groups to meet the needs of child survivors together with IRC. UNICEF is also building capacities of a wide range of governmental and non-governmental actors in nine target countries[11] to promote enhanced multi-sectoral support for GBV-related interventions. UNICEF also coordinated the re-drafting of the International Mine Action Standard on mine risk education in 2010, and developed an emergency toolkit for mine risk education that has been the basis for new initiatives in several recent conflicts where landmines and unexploded ordnance threaten children and communities.

6. INVESTMENT IN CHILDREN AFFECTED BY ARMED CONFLICT

Issues related to 'grave violations', 'children and armed conflict' (CAAC) and 'sexual violence in conflict' (SVC) are now high on the political agenda of the Security Council and the General Assembly. The MRM framework and the emerging MARA framework open the door to constructive dialogue with governments and other parties to conflict on protecting children and women, and provide an opportunity to hold warring parties to account for grave violations. UNICEF's technical leadership and strong field presence provide for a comprehensive approach to monitoring and reporting on grave violations of children's rights, advocacy and related programmatic response, which also extended to women survivors of sexual violence in armed conflict. UNICEF is uniquely placed amongst protection actors in this work, and in ensuring that appropriate linkages are made with other types of interventions with a view to simultaneously strengthening systems and social norms for the long-term benefit of children and women beyond their immediate needs.

Donor investment in addressing grave violations against children and women is having a positive impact on the safety and well-being of children through support to programmes at the country, regional and headquarters levels, as noted above. This support needs to be deepened in existing partnerships around child protection, and extended to new ones for UNICEF and its' partners to be able to scale up and continue delivering multiple returns for children, their families and communities, and entire nations – now and in the future. This cannot be undertaken within existing resources, especially in countries already overstretched by the demands of responding to complex emergencies. The implementation of programmes for children affected by armed conflict is extremely labour intensive and requires specialised and dedicated personnel at all levels. Accelerated roll out of the MARA will also require additional resources for UNICEF to assist field structures to ensure safe and ethical processes on the ground, and document lessons learned and best practices in relation to operational linkages between the MRM and the MARA.

The MRM, sexual violence and broader CAAC issues present a unique opportunity for broad inter-agency partnership and coordination with key partners such as the OSRSG-CAAC, OSRSG- SVC, DPKO, other UN agencies, and NGOs. Partner capacities vary from country to country, but in all instances UNICEF values a collaborative approach to child protection work; UNICEF cannot do it alone. UNICEF also seeks to help build the capacity of partners, continues to strengthen and foster participation by partners in child protection and GBV coordination, technical skills relevant to child protection

UNICEF/ HQ08-0255/Susan Markisz: Boys walk near a peace mural

programming including GBV and psychosocial support, and harness the specific expertise that each actor holds. The implementation of child protection work in emergencies also assumes government cooperation in the process. UNICEF seeks to support governmental engagement where appropriate and to build national and local capacities to respond to grave violations of children's rights in situations of armed conflict.

The effective roll-out of the MRM and MARA requires strategic vision and courage by all actors, including donors, to take programming on behalf of conflict-affected children to scale, including monitoring and reporting of protection concerns, and to utilize these mechanisms as a trigger for the necessary responses and prevention programmes to truly enhance the protective environment for children.

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[11] Afghanistan, Central African Republic, Chad, Iraq, Ivory Coast, Nepal, Pakistan, OPT, and Sudan.

8. BUDGET

On the issue of Children in armed conflicts, UNICEF is constantly seeking to secure additional funds to cover the needs at the country level, at the regional level, and at the global level. UNICEF would be pleased to discuss current programme priorities and funding gaps with interested government and private sector donors.