

Provisional programme

Protecting children affected by armed conflict: advancing the agenda of the last 10 years

Wednesday 21 – Friday 23 March 2012 | WP1151

Humanitarian crises continue to compromise children's rights to care and protection and, in the face of increased and more protracted conflicts, will continue to do so. About 50% of the estimated 26 million people currently displaced by armed conflict and violence are children, and children and young people constitute the majority demographic in conflict-affected fragile states. Children and young people continue to be targeted by armed forces/groups and victimised by small arms violence. The far reaching consequences of armed conflict for children, including forced displacement, sexual exploitation and abuse, and the weakening of formal and informal protection systems, continue long after conflicts end.

The commitment of the international community to protection of children affected by armed conflict is clearly identified within the framework of binding conventions, United Nations (UN) Security Council resolutions and internationally agreed principles and guidelines. 2012 will see significant milestones in implementing these and addressing the needs of children impacted by armed conflict - with the 15th anniversary of the appointment of the first UN Secretary General's Special Representative on Children and Armed Conflict (SRSG-CAAC), the 10th anniversary of the entry into force of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict and the 5th anniversary of the Paris Principles and Guidelines on Children Associated with Armed Groups or Armed Forces.

Goal and objectives

This conference, which will include the participation of the SRSG-CAAC and other high level experts, will mark these events by reviewing developments in children protection to-date, and look forward to what needs to be done in the coming decade. In the light of the challenges of contemporary conflict, in particular the proliferation of armed groups, the emergence of resource wars, the internationalisation of terrorism and the use of rape as a weapon of war, the conference will seek to:

1. Create better understanding and knowledge of the evolving response to children's care and protection during and following armed conflict; and
2. Explore innovative strategies for enhancing the protection of children impacted by armed conflict.

In partnership with World Vision (UK)

(Speakers invited and themes proposed *denotes to be confirmed)

Wednesday 21 March

1300-1445 Participants arrive and buffet lunch available

1500-1515 **Welcome**

Wilton Park
World Vision UK

1515-1545 **1. Introduction and context**

Setting the conference in context: aims and objectives, including the necessity to address holistically the needs of all children who are living in conflict-affected countries – and that the impacts and needs extend long beyond the end of the conflict.

Justin Byworth
Chief Executive Officer, World Vision UK

1545-1645 **2. Progress and challenges in the protection of children affected by armed conflict**

Reviewing the impacts of armed conflict on children, discussion should focus on the challenges identified over the past 15 years and what progress has been made to date – highlighting main issues identified in the 1996 UN Study on the Impacts of Armed Conflict on Children and its subsequent 10-year review.

1645-1730 Photograph and tea

1730-1830 **3. Perspectives from the UN Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict**

The UN Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict was established in July 2005 to review the progress of countries in addressing the six grave violations against children in armed conflict: killing or maiming of children, recruiting or using child soldiers, attacks against schools or hospitals, rape and other grave sexual violence against children, abduction of children and denial of humanitarian access for children. A member of the Working Group will discuss the progress they have seen and challenges faced in addressing these grave violations against children.

***Peter Wittig**
Permanent Representative of Germany to the United Nations; Chair, UN Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict, New York

1830-1915 **4. Living with the impacts of conflict: a personal perspective**

Addressing the needs of children affected by conflict must not be viewed only from a distance. This session will focus on the personal experience of conflict and how its impacts are felt long after the conflict ends.

***Grace Akallo**
Co-founder, Network of Young People Affected by War (NYPAW); co-author, *Girl Soldier: A Story of Hope for Northern Uganda's Children*

***Zlata Filipović**
Co-founder, Network of Young People Affected by War (NYPAW); author, *Zlata's Diary: A Child's Life in Wartime Sarajevo*

1930 **Reception followed by dinner**

Thursday 22 March

0800-0900

Breakfast

0900-1030

5. Protecting children affected by conflict: the international framework for response

The session will discuss the current framework and responses by the international community, including the mandates of UN agencies, international tribunals and national mechanisms to promote stability and prevent conflict, promote justice and accountability and support children directly and indirectly impacted by conflict to live happy, healthy and productive lives.

Chair: Jenny Kuper

Visiting Fellow, London School of Economics

Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Geneva

Speaker to be confirmed

***Pernille Ironside**

Senior Advisor, Child Protection in Emergencies, Programme Division, UNICEF, New York

Nicola Samson

Senior Trial Lawyer, Office of the Prosecutor, International Criminal Court (ICC), The Hague

1030-1100

Tea/coffee

1100- 1230

6. Addressing the needs of children affected by armed conflict in practice

This second panel, building on the previous session, will look at current global efforts, aimed at identifying both good practice and the ongoing and emerging challenges of protecting children affected directly and indirectly by conflict.

Chair: Theresa Betancourt

Assistant Professor of Child Health and Human Rights, Harvard School of Public Health, Boston

***Wout Visser**

Global Advocacy Coordinator, War Child (Holland), Amsterdam

***Christine McCormick**

Child Protection Adviser, Save the Children UK, London

International Center for Transitional Justice, New York

Speaker to be confirmed

1245-1415

Lunch

1415-1515

7. The changing nature of conflict: emerging issues impacting children

In this session, discussion will focus on some of the emerging conflict issues that are impacting children, including the shifting landscape of conflict, the deadly and destabilising effects of small arms, the proliferation of armed groups, the emergence of resource wars and the internationalisation of terrorism

Radhika Coomaraswamy

Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, United Nations, New York

1515-1600

8. Views from the field: Country case studies

This session will take a closer look at child protection practice in conflict-affected countries, comparing case studies to consider common experiences as well as the need to contextualise responses.

Speakers to be announced

1600-1630

Tea/coffee

1630-1800

9. Parallel working groups: meeting the challenges – protecting children from the impacts of armed conflict

Working Group 1: Prevention and building resilience

This Working Group will look at the following question: how can we build children's resilience and national/community systems to prevent conflict and protect children from the negative impacts of fragility and conflict?

Moderator: to be announced

Working Group 2: Monitoring, reporting and accountability

This Working Group will focus on accountability under the UN Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict, considering the progress made to date and what more can be done.

Moderator: Jo Becker, Advocacy Director, Children's Rights Division, Human Rights Watch, New York

Working Group 3: Rebuilding the lives of children who have been impacted by armed conflict

This Working Group will consider the following question: what support and initiatives are necessary to encourage children's holistic restoration in society following conflict and what more needs to be done nationally and internationally to address these?

Moderator: to be announced

1930

Reception followed by dinner

Friday 23 March

0800-0900

Breakfast

0900-1030

10 Feedback from Working Groups

Rapporteurs from each of the Working Groups will present the key discussion points and findings from the previous session. Time will also be available for further roundtable debate.

1030-1100

Tea/coffee

1100-1215

11. Role of the international community, including civil society, in protecting children from armed conflict

In this session, a panel will consider the inter-dependent roles of governments and civil society and highlight means of collaboration to maximise the positive impact that prevention, accountability and restorative programmes have on children and young people.

Chair: Carolyn Hamilton, Director, Coram Children's Legal Centre

James Odong

Associate Director of Peacebuilding, World Vision International

***Edmond Mulet**

Assistant-Secretary General for Peacekeeping Operations, United Nations, New York

1215-1315

12. Child protection as conflict prevention

The long-term impacts of conflict on children can in turn impact the stability of a country. If these impacts are not addressed, the potential for instability and conflict may increase. The session will look at the links between children and conflict and consider the role young people can play in peacebuilding.

Foreign and Commonwealth Office, London

Speaker to be confirmed

***Jan K. F. Grauls**

Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Belgium to the United Nations; Chair, Peacebuilding Commission, Central African Republic configuration, New York

1330-1500

Lunch

1500-1630

13. Perspectives from concluding panel: what is the way forward

The Concluding Panel will address the question: what are the key themes emerging from discussion and what steps may be needed to implement the changes required? Through the panel contributions and discussion, the aim is to identify specific measures and outcomes from the conference.

Jean-Marc de la Sablière

Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations (2002 to 2007)

Eva Smets

Director, Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict, New York

***Johanna Brandt**

Deputy Executive Director, UNICEF, New York

1630-1700

Tea/coffee

1700-1830

14. Concluding remarks: how to implement the next steps?

Building on the discussions of the previous session, the focus of the concluding session will be to identify how to implement future action.

Radhika Coomaraswamy

Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict

Justin Byworth

Chief Executive Officer, World Vision UK

1845

Optional departure

1900

Reception followed by dinner

Saturday 24 March

0800-0900

Breakfast

0915

Participants depart

Additional support for this meeting has been generously provided by

This is a preview programme and as such may be subject to change.

This conference is open to those with expertise to share or an interest in the theme; our aim is to have a broad spread of nationalities and institutions represented. The full cost of participation is £1350. This covers 3 nights' accommodation, all meals during the conference and attendance at all sessions. Special rates may be available for those from non-OECD countries and also academics and NGO representatives.

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