



Regional Conference  
**Ending Recruitment and Use of Children by Armed Forces and Groups  
Contributing to Peace, Justice and Development**

Cameroon –Central African Republic - Chad - Nigeria – Niger - Sudan  
N'Djamena, 7–9 June 2010

N'DJAMENA DECLARATION

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We,

Ministers and Representatives of States, participating in the Regional Conference on “**Ending Recruitment and Use of Children by Armed Forces and Groups: Contributing to Peace, Justice and Development**, held in N'Djamena, the Republic of Chad from 7 to 9 June, 2010,

*Reiterating* our concern regarding the precarious situation of children affected by conflict and the consistent presence of children within armed forces and groups in our region;

*Acknowledging* that poverty, lack of opportunities, economic disparities, cultural and traditional factors, as well as natural disasters and environmental degradation, contribute to frequent forced displacement of children during after armed conflicts;

*Recalling* the **Additional Protocols to the four Geneva Conventions of 1949** prohibiting the recruitment and direct participation of children who have not attained the age of 15 years in armed conflicts;

*Recalling* the Convention on the Rights of the Child of 1989 prohibiting recruitment and active participation of children under 15 in hostilities, its Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict, establishing the legal age of recruitment and direct participation of children in hostilities at 18, and the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography;



Considering that the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child guarantees all children the inherent right to life, education, leisure and culture, health, protection from exploitation and abuse, and the prohibition of their recruitment by armed forces and armed groups and of their direct participation in hostilities (Article 22); and their protection, if refugees;

*Recalling* the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime of 2000;

*Recalling* the Multilateral Cooperation Agreement to Combat Trafficking in Persons specially Women and Children in West and Central Africa of 2006;

*Recalling* UN Security Council resolutions 1261 (1999), 1314 (2000), 1379 (2001), 1460 (2003), 1539 (2004), 1612 (2005), 1820 (2008) and 1882 (2009) and those of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union that condemned the recruitment and use of children in armed conflict, and called to end it, including by establishing a Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism, as well as by establishing working groups on the violations of children's rights in conflict situations ;

*Recalling* Security Council resolution 1888 (2009) on sexual violence in situations of armed conflict;

*Recalling* the 1997 Cape Town Principles and Best Practices on the Recruitment of Children into Armed Forces and on Demobilization and Social Reintegration of Children in Africa;

*Recalling* the 2007 Paris Commitments to Protect Children Unlawfully Recruited or Used by Armed Forces or Armed Groups and the Paris Principles and Guidelines on Children associated with Armed Forces or Armed Groups; and subsequent annual forums to assess the implementation of the Paris Commitments and Paris Principles and exchange information on lessons learnt and next steps;

*Recalling* the commitments of the African states to proactively participate in the overall efforts aimed at promoting peace, security and stability in Africa, and in mitigating the vulnerability of children in armed conflict and recalling the Press Release of the 223<sup>rd</sup> African Council Peace and Security meeting of



March 30, 2010 held in Addis Ababa (Ethiopia) on Women and Children in situations of armed conflict in Africa;

*Deeply Concerned* by the situation of young girls associated with armed forces and groups, subject to sexual violence and abuse during armed conflict, and excluded from the release, withdrawal, psychosocial rehabilitation and socio-economic reintegration programs often by socio-cultural barriers;

*Recognizing* that States have the primary responsibility of ensuring, without discrimination, the security and protection of all children living on their national territory, and that no territory should be used in any form for recruitment of children by armed forces or groups;

**We pledge:**

1. To put an end to all forms of recruitment and involvement of children by armed forces and armed groups and ensure that no child under the age of 18 takes direct or indirect part in hostilities, and prevent all kinds of recruitment and use of children in all situations;
  - a) To take all possible measures for effective implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, its Optional Protocols, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, and other relevant regional and international instruments;
  - b) To ratify the two Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, and other signed regional, international instruments, and to implement them in an effective manner;
  - c) To sign and ratify the two Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and other relevant regional and international Instruments, if not already done;
  - d) To adhere to the Paris Commitments to Protect Children Unlawfully Recruited or Used by Armed Forces or Armed Groups;



2. To harmonize national legislations with regional and international instruments in order to prohibit the recruitment and use of children by armed forces and armed groups, and prosecute perpetrators before competent courts;
3. To ensure that children formerly associated with armed forces and groups are treated as victims not as perpetrators, and are supported with appropriate rehabilitation and reintegration packages;
4. To ensure the crime of recruitment and use of children by armed forces and groups does not form part of any amnesty law and is treated as a war crime;
5. To facilitate access of international humanitarian organizations protecting children to locations where children involved in armed conflict are gathered, as well as their work in the identification, release and unconditional withdrawal of girls and boys associated with armed forces and groups consistent with national, regional and international instruments;
6. To establish programs of psychosocial rehabilitation, socio-educational and economic reintegration consistent with international standards, and promote the culture of peace, tolerance, dialogue and national unity;
7. To facilitate the reunification of families, within and across borders, whenever it is in the best interest of the child;
8. To integrate and provide response to all fundamental and specific needs of children within national poverty reduction strategies, social protection and Security Sector Reform (SSR);
9. To establish a strategy at the community, national and cross-border level to fight against the proliferation and the possession of small arms and light weapons by unauthorized persons, especially children;



10. To strengthen the cross-border dimensions of the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism on grave child rights violations, on the recruitment and use of children by armed forces and armed groups and establish an appropriate information sharing mechanism in the region, including on child trafficking and proliferation of small arms and light weapons;
11. To protect children from all forms of exploitation and violence, by criminalizing all acts of sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography and ensuring the rights of child victims and witnesses;
12. To establish a Follow-up Committee for the Declaration of N'Djamena. The members of the committee are representatives of the states of Chad, Sudan, Central African Republic, Nigeria, Niger and Cameroon. The committee will be open to contributions from Liberia and the Democratic Republic of Congo as well. UNICEF will ensure the secretariat of the committee;
13. To delegate the Government of the Republic of Chad to transmit the present declaration to the African Union Commission, in order to include the conclusions of the Conference in a report that would be submitted to the Head of States and Governments Summit, to take place in July 2010, as a contribution to the implementation of the 2010 Action Plan, declared the Year of Peace and Security.

Declaration signed in N'Djamena, Chad, the 9<sup>th</sup> day of June 2010, in three original languages of Arabic, English and French.

For:

Cameroon

Central African Republic

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H. E Mrs Catherine Bakang Mbock  
Minister of Social Affairs

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H. E Mr Lazare Yagao-Ngama  
Ambassador of CAR to Chad



Chad

Niger

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H. E Mrs Ngarmbatina Odjimbeye  
Soukate  
Minister of Social Action,  
National Solidarity and Family

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H.E. Mrs Sanady Tchimaden  
Hadattan  
Minister of Population,  
Women Promotion and  
Child Protection

Nigeria

Sudan

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Dr Mac John Nwaobiala  
Director Child Development  
Federal Ministry of Women Affairs  
and Social Development

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H.E Mrs Gamer Habbani  
Secretary General  
National Council for Child Welfare