



Security Council

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Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict

Conclusions on children and armed conflict in South Sudan

1. During a closed videoconference meeting on 17 December 2020, the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict examined the third report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict in South Sudan (S/2020/1205), covering the period from 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2020, which was introduced by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict. The Permanent Representative of South Sudan also addressed the Working Group.
2. The members of the Working Group welcomed the report of the Secretary-General, in accordance with Security Council resolutions [1612 \(2005\)](#), [1882 \(2009\)](#), [1998 \(2011\)](#), [2068 \(2012\)](#), [2143 \(2014\)](#), [2225 \(2015\)](#) and [2427 \(2018\)](#), and took note of the analysis and recommendations contained therein.
3. The members of the Working Group expressed deep concern at the six grave violations, which continue to be committed by all parties against children affected by armed conflict in South Sudan. They expressed their particular concern at the continuing recruitment and use of children, which remains the most prevailing violation, as well as at the ongoing killing and maiming of children and the use of rape and other forms of sexual violence. While encouraged by the overall decrease in the overall number of incidents of the six grave violations against children in South Sudan, they also expressed their deep concern at the escalating intercommunal violence and its devastating impact on children. They urged all parties to conflict to end and prevent the six grave violations against children, uphold their obligations in accordance with international human rights law and international humanitarian law and take all actions necessary to better protect children and prevent such violations. They welcomed the inclusion of child protection provisions in the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan, also welcomed the signing and endorsement on 7 February 2020 by the parties to the Revitalized Agreement of a comprehensive action plan to end, halt and prevent the six grave violations against children in South Sudan, and called upon the parties to implement it fully.
4. Further to the meeting, and subject to and consistent with applicable international law and relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolutions [1612 \(2005\)](#), [1882 \(2009\)](#), [1998 \(2011\)](#), [2068 \(2012\)](#), [2143 \(2014\)](#), [2225 \(2015\)](#) and [2427 \(2018\)](#), the Working Group agreed to the direct action as set out below.



Public statement by the Chair of the Working Group

5. The Working Group agreed to address a message to all parties to armed conflict in South Sudan, in particular the South Sudan People's Defence Forces – including the Taban Deng-allied South Sudan People's Defence Forces – and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army-in-Opposition – pro-Machar, through a public statement by its Chair:

(a) Strongly condemning all violations and abuses that continue to be committed against children in South Sudan; expressing grave concern at the disproportionate negative impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic on children; urging all parties to the conflict immediately to end and prevent all abuses and violations of applicable international law involving the recruitment and use of children, abduction, killing and maiming, rape and other forms of sexual violence, attacks on schools and hospitals and denial of humanitarian access and to comply with their obligations under international law; while noting the decrease in the overall number of violations since the previous report;

(b) Calling upon all parties to further implement the previous conclusions of the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict in South Sudan ([S/AC.51/2018/3](#));

(c) Stressing that the best interests of the child should be a primary consideration, and that the specific needs and vulnerabilities of girls and boys should be duly considered when planning and carrying out actions concerning children in situations of armed conflict;

(d) Welcoming the inclusion of child protection provisions in the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan and stressing that the implementation of the peace agreement offers important opportunities to put the rights and needs of children at the centre of efforts aimed at achieving sustainable peace, justice and reconciliation in South Sudan; underlining the importance of taking child protection concerns into account in any future peace negotiations, and in that regard calling for the dissemination and application of the Practical Guidance for Mediators to Protect Children in Situations of Armed Conflict; urging all parties engaged in the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement to ensure that the protection, rights, well-being and empowerment of children affected by armed conflict are fully incorporated in all efforts on peacebuilding and sustaining peace, including efforts related to disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes and security sector reform, and to encourage and facilitate the consideration of the views of children in those processes, noting in this regard the Principles and Guidelines on Children Associated with Armed Forces or Armed Groups (the Paris Principles);

(e) Welcoming the signing and endorsement on 7 February 2020 by the parties to the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan of a comprehensive action plan to end and prevent the six grave violations against children in South Sudan and calling upon the parties to implement it fully, and underscoring in that regard the importance that the United Nations continue to support and monitor its implementation;

(f) Reaffirming the importance of accountability for all violations and abuses committed against children in armed conflict; stressing that all perpetrators of such acts must be brought swiftly to justice and held accountable without undue delay, including through timely and systematic investigation and, as appropriate, prosecution and conviction; stressing the need to address the prevalence of impunity for violations against children; urging the Government of South Sudan to put an end

to impunity by ensuring that all perpetrators of violations and abuses are brought swiftly to justice and held accountable, including by signing without further delay the memorandum of understanding with the African Union to establish the Hybrid Court for South Sudan and through rigorous, timely, independent and impartial investigations and prosecutions; noting that, in the comprehensive action plan concluded on 7 February 2020 to end and prevent all grave violations against children, the parties gave their commitment to investigating the six grave violations, criminalizing the violations where appropriate and strengthening specialized units within the judiciary to investigate, prosecute and adjudicate violations; stressing the need to ensure that all victims and survivors have access to justice, as well as access to non-discriminatory and comprehensive specialized services, including psychosocial, health – including sexual and reproductive health services, and legal and livelihood support and services to survivors; and encouraging engagement between the Government and the United Nations to strengthen their overall legal framework to safeguard children's rights;

(g) Condemning the recruitment and use of children by government security forces and armed groups to fulfil various roles, including as combatants, cooks, porters, spies and bodyguards; noting that recruitment and use remained the most prevalent of the six grave violations affecting children and that cases of recruitment and use are often connected to the other five grave violations; underscoring that the intensification of conflict, the emergence of new armed groups, insecurity, poverty and the lack of opportunities were reported to be potential drivers of child recruitment and use; and strongly urging all parties to armed conflict in South Sudan to immediately cease the recruitment and use of children, to immediately and without precondition release and hand over to child protection actors all children associated with them, in accordance with established protocols, ensuring that such children be treated primarily as victims, to enable their full reintegration into their communities and to prevent further recruitment and use of children in line with their obligations as set out in the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict;

(h) Encouraging the Government to focus on long-term and sustainable reintegration and rehabilitation opportunities for children affected by armed conflict that are gender- and age-sensitive, including equal access to health care, psychosocial support and education programmes, as well as raising awareness and working with communities to avoid stigmatization of these children, to facilitate their return and minimize the risk of re-recruitment, while taking into account the specific needs of girls and boys, in order to contribute to the well-being of children and to sustainable peace and security;

(i) Expressing concern at the ongoing killing and maiming of children by government security forces and armed groups, including as a result of crossfire between the South Sudan People's Defence Forces and armed groups, intercommunal and subnational violence, military operations carried out by the South Sudan People's Defence Forces and raids carried out by armed groups of villages, and explosive remnants of war; urging all parties to take all action necessary to better protect children and prevent such violations; and further calling upon the Government to invest in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration processes, security sector reform and demining efforts, especially with a view to ensuring that children are protected from explosive remnants of war;

(j) Expressing grave concern at the perpetration of rape and other forms of sexual violence, including gang rape, against children, in particular girls, perpetrated by government security forces and armed groups; strongly urging all parties to take immediate and specific measures to put an end to and prevent the perpetration of rape and other forms of sexual violence against children by members of their respective

forces or groups; stressing the importance of accountability for those who commit sexual or gender-based violence against children and of providing survivors of such acts with adequate protection, appropriate assistance and reliable recourse to justice; further encouraging the parties to the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan to accelerate the implementation of their respective action plans on addressing conflict-related sexual violence; noting that a lack of proper command and control of armed forces and armed groups, as well as recent defections, which have resulted in violence and civilian casualties, increased the vulnerability of children to sexual violence during the reporting period; noting with concern that the full scale of sexual violence affecting children in South Sudan is underreported owing to fear of stigmatization, cultural norms, lack of awareness, fear of reprisals and lack of adequate support services and avenues for accountability; and stressing the importance of providing non-discriminatory and comprehensive specialized services to survivors of sexual violence, including psychosocial, health – including sexual and reproductive health services, and legal and livelihood support and services;

(k) Condemning the continuation of attacks on schools and hospitals by armed groups and government security forces, including looting, vandalism and the destruction of facilities and threats to protected personnel, which during the reporting period affected the access to education of an estimated 6,741 children; expressing concern at the military use of schools and hospitals by armed forces and armed groups, noting in particular that, during the reporting period, the military use of schools affected the access to education of an estimated 8,000 children; and calling upon all parties to armed conflict to comply with applicable international law and to respect the civilian character of schools and hospitals, including their personnel, as such, and to end and prevent attacks or threats of attacks against those institutions and their personnel, as well as the military use of schools and hospitals;

(l) Recalling the endorsement of, and the need to implement, the Safe Schools Declaration by the Government of South Sudan; and encouraging the Government to ensure that attacks on schools are investigated and that those responsible for violating international humanitarian law are held accountable;

(m) Condemning the abductions of children, the majority of which were attributed to the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army in Opposition, including for the purposes of recruitment and use, rape and other forms of sexual violence, including forced marriage; and urging all parties immediately to release without precondition all abducted children in their captivity to the relevant civilian child protection actors;

(n) Expressing grave concern at incidents of denial of humanitarian access, including the killing of and attacks on humanitarian personnel and restrictions on the delivery of humanitarian aid to children in areas under opposition control; and calling upon all parties to the conflict to allow and facilitate, in accordance with international law, including international humanitarian law, safe, timely and unhindered humanitarian access, consistent with United Nations guiding principles of humanitarian assistance as well as the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence, to respect the exclusively humanitarian nature and impartiality of humanitarian aid and to respect the work of all United Nations agencies and their humanitarian partners without adverse distinction;

(o) Expressing deep concern about the escalating intercommunal and subnational violence throughout South Sudan and its devastating impact on children, noting that children were recruited to boost the numbers of armed groups in anticipation of the reintegration process, and about the emergence of new armed groups and the disintegration or splintering of existing ones;

(p) Recalling that the Security Council, by its resolutions including 2206 (2015) and 2521 (2020), decided to apply financial and travel measures to individuals and entities as designated for such measures by the Committee established pursuant to paragraph 16 of resolution 2206 (2015) for actions that may include but are not limited to:

- (i) Planning, directing or committing acts that violate applicable international human rights law or international humanitarian law, or acts that constitute human rights abuses, in South Sudan;
- (ii) The use or recruitment of children by armed groups or armed forces in the context of the armed conflict in South Sudan;
- (iii) Planning, directing or committing acts involving sexual and gender-based violence in South Sudan;
- (iv) The targeting of civilians, including women and children, through the planning, directing or commission of acts of violence (including killing, maiming, torture, or rape), abduction, enforced disappearance, forced displacement, or attacks on schools, hospitals, religious sites, or locations where civilians are seeking refuge, or through other conduct that would constitute a serious abuse of human rights, a violation of international human rights law or a violation of international humanitarian law;
- (v) The obstruction of the activities of international peacekeeping, diplomatic, or humanitarian missions in South Sudan, including the Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring and Verification Mechanism, or of the delivery or distribution of, or access to, humanitarian assistance;
- (vi) Attacks against United Nations missions, international security presences or other peacekeeping operations or humanitarian personnel;
- (q) Expressing its readiness to communicate to the Security Council pertinent information with a view to assisting the Council in the imposition of targeted measures on perpetrators.

6. The Working Group agreed to address a message, through a public statement by the Chair of the Working Group, to community and religious leaders:

- (a) Emphasizing the important role of community and religious leaders in strengthening the protection of children affected by armed conflict;
- (b) Urging them to publicly condemn and continue to advocate ending and preventing violations and abuses against children, in particular those involving the recruitment and use of children, rape and other forms of sexual violence against children, killing and maiming, abductions, attacks and threats of attacks against schools and hospitals, and denial of humanitarian access, and to engage with the Government, the United Nations and other relevant stakeholders to support reintegration and rehabilitation of children affected by armed conflict in their communities, including by raising awareness to avoid stigmatization of these children.

Recommendations to the Security Council

7. The Working Group agreed to recommend that the President of the Security Council transmit a letter addressed to the Government of South Sudan:

- (a) Expressing grave concern at the violations and abuses committed against children in armed conflict during the reporting period, including those involving the recruitment and use of children, killing and maiming, rape and other forms of sexual

violence, abduction, attacks on schools and hospitals and denial of humanitarian access; also expressing grave concern at the disproportionate negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on children; further expressing concern at the continued military use of schools in violation of applicable international law; calling for an immediate halt to such violations and abuses; recalling that the primary responsibility for the protection of children in South Sudan lies with the Government of South Sudan; and urging the Government to take immediate steps in that regard, while noting the decrease in the overall number of violations since the previous report;

(b) Welcoming the signing and endorsement on 7 February 2020 by the parties to the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan of a comprehensive action plan to end and prevent all grave violations against children in South Sudan, calling upon the Government to implement it fully; and encouraging the Government to seek the continued support of the United Nations for its implementation and monitoring;

(c) Reaffirming the importance of accountability for all violations and abuses committed against children in armed conflict; urging the Government of South Sudan to put an end to impunity by ensuring that all perpetrators of violations and abuses are brought swiftly to justice and held accountable, including by signing without further delay the memorandum of understanding with the African Union to establish the Hybrid Court for South Sudan, and through timely, independent and systematic investigations and prosecutions; noting that, in the comprehensive action plan concluded on 7 February 2020 to end and prevent all grave violations against children, the parties gave their commitment to investigating the six grave violations, criminalizing the violations where applicable and strengthening specialized units within the judiciary to investigate, prosecute and adjudicate violations; stressing the need to ensure that all victims and survivors have access to justice, as well as access to gender- and age-sensitive comprehensive specialized services, including medical, psychosocial and health services, including sexual and reproductive health services, as well as legal and livelihood support and services to survivors; and encouraging the Government to engage with the United Nations to strengthen its overall legal framework to safeguard children's rights;

(d) Condemning the recruitment and use of children by government security forces; and strongly urging the Government immediately to cease such recruitment and use, and immediately and without precondition to release and hand over all children associated with them to civilian child protection actors, in accordance with established protocols, to enable their full reintegration into their communities and to prevent further recruitment and use of children in line with its obligations as set out in the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, to which it has acceded;

(e) Encouraging the Government to focus on comprehensive and sustainable reintegration and rehabilitation opportunities for children affected by armed conflict that are gender- and age-sensitive, including equal access to health care, psychosocial support and education programmes, as well as raising awareness and working with communities to avoid stigmatization of these children, to facilitate their return and minimize the risk of re-recruitment, while taking into account the specific needs of girls and boys, in order to contribute to the well-being of children and to sustainable peace and security;

(f) Calling upon the Government to prioritize the release and reintegration of children associated with armed forces and armed groups as part of the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan and to ensure that disarmament, demobilization and reintegration processes and the security sector reform take fully into account at all stages the

specific needs of girls and boys and the protection of their rights and are gender- and age-sensitive, and to allocate sufficient resources to that end;

(g) Expressing concern at incidents of killing and maiming of children by government security forces during the reporting period, including as a result of crossfire between the South Sudan People's Defence Forces and armed groups, military operations carried out by the South Sudan People's Defence Forces and explosive remnants of war; urging the Government to take all action necessary to better protect children and prevent such violations; further calling upon the Government to invest in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration processes, security sector reform, demining efforts and explosive ordnance risk education, especially with a view to ensuring that children are protected from explosive remnants of war;

(h) Expressing grave concern about the perpetration of rape and other forms of sexual violence, including gang rape, against children perpetrated by government security forces and armed groups; strongly urging the Government to take immediate and specific measures to put an end to and prevent the perpetration of rape and other forms of sexual violence against children by members of their respective forces or groups; stressing the importance of accountability for those who commit sexual or gender-based violence against children; further encouraging the Government, as a party to the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan, to accelerate the implementation of its action plans on addressing conflict-related sexual violence; and noting that a lack of proper command and control of armed forces and armed groups increased the vulnerability of children to sexual violence during the reporting period;

(i) Calling upon the Government to enforce existing national legislation and establish specialized national capacity within key civilian and military justice authorities to investigate and prosecute serious conflict-related cases, including violations and abuses against children;

(j) Condemning the continuation of attacks on schools and hospitals, including by government security forces, which during the reporting period affected the access to education of an estimated 6,741 children; expressing concern at the military use of schools and hospitals by armed forces and armed groups; calling upon the Government to comply with applicable international law and to respect the civilian character of schools and hospitals, including their personnel, as such, and to end and prevent attacks or threats of attacks against those institutions and their personnel, as well as the military use of schools and hospitals;

(k) Recalling the endorsement of, and the need to implement, the Safe Schools Declaration by the Government of South Sudan ; and encouraging the Government to ensure that attacks on schools are investigated and that those responsible for violating international humanitarian law are duly prosecuted;

(l) Expressing concern at incidents of denial of humanitarian access, including restrictions on the delivery of humanitarian aid; and calling upon all parties to armed conflict to allow and facilitate, in accordance with international law, including international humanitarian law, safe, timely and unhindered humanitarian access, consistent with United Nations guiding principles of humanitarian assistance as well as the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence, to respect the exclusively humanitarian nature and impartiality of humanitarian aid and to respect the work of all United Nations agencies and their humanitarian partners without adverse distinction;

(m) Calling upon the Government of South Sudan to ensure the enforcement of military command orders and punitive directives, in particular those prohibiting

the recruitment and use of children, to create child protection units within all divisions of the armed forces, to continue to ensure the United Nations is given unhindered access for the verification and release of those children associated with the South Sudan People's Defence Forces, and to conduct in full the joint monitoring, verification and awareness-raising activities of the Joint Verification Committee; and ordering the vacation of all schools used by government security forces;

(n) Further urging the Government of South Sudan to establish an effective vetting mechanism to ensure that no perpetrators of violations or abuses against children are integrated or recruited into government security forces, and to systematically dismiss all perpetrators of violations or abuses committed against children from its forces, irrespective of their ranks, and hold them accountable;

(o) Inviting the Government of South Sudan to keep the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict informed of its efforts to implement the recommendations of the Working Group and the Secretary-General, as appropriate.

8. The Working Group agreed to recommend that the President of the Security Council transmit a letter to the Secretary-General:

(a) Encouraging the Secretary-General to continue to call upon all parties engaged in armed conflict in South Sudan to respect fully international humanitarian law and immediately end and prevent grave violations against children in South Sudan and ensure that the protection, rights, well-being and empowerment of children affected by armed conflict are taken into consideration; and noting the Secretary-General's global call for an immediate cessation of hostilities, as supported in Security Council resolution [2532 \(2020\)](#);

(b) Requesting the Secretary-General to ensure that the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), as well as other relevant United Nations agencies, in line with their respective mandates continue and strengthen their efforts to support the South Sudanese authorities in developing and strengthening the capacity of their national institutions, to better protect children affected by armed conflict, including through the implementation of the provisions of the comprehensive action plan; in fighting impunity, including by strengthening the criminal justice system and facilitating the deployment of mobile courts; in implementing procedures to screen, divert and prevent children from recruitment and use by the national armed and security forces in South Sudan; in mainstreaming the specific needs of children affected by armed conflict and the protection of their rights in all disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes, including through the development of a gender- and age-sensitive disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process and through security sector reform; in providing comprehensive rehabilitation and reintegration programmes and opportunities, including access to educational opportunities, to children formerly associated with national armed forces and non-State armed groups, and training to the national armed and security forces on the protection of children; in bolstering the education and health systems; and in establishing standard operating procedures for the handover of children formerly associated with national armed forces and groups and for the protection of children in the course of military operations; and also requesting the Secretary-General to give full attention to violations against children in the application of the human rights due diligence policy on United Nations support to non-United Nations security forces, and to work to ensure all United Nations entities in the field, including peacekeeping, humanitarian and development operations, implement uniform policies to uphold standards of conduct and ensure adequate services and protection for survivors of sexual exploitation and abuse;

(c) Further requesting the Secretary-General to ensure that the country task force on monitoring and reporting in South Sudan continues its engagement with the Government of South Sudan to implement swiftly and fully all provisions of the comprehensive action plan; and in that regard underscoring the importance that the United Nations continue to support and monitor the implementation of the action plan;

(d) Requesting the Secretary-General to continue to ensure the effectiveness of the monitoring and reporting mechanism on children and armed conflict in accordance with relevant Security Council resolutions and to strengthen its monitoring and reporting activities regarding all violations and abuses committed against children affected by armed conflict in South Sudan and of the child protection component of UNMISS;

(e) Noting the various measures taken by UNMISS and troop- and police-contributing countries to combat sexual exploitation and abuse; while expressing grave concern that sexual exploitation and abuse of children by peacekeepers continued to be a serious protection concern; calling for United Nations peacekeeping operations to continue to implement the Secretary-General's zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse and to ensure the full compliance of their personnel with the United Nations code of conduct; and reiterating its request to the Secretary-General to continue to take all measures necessary in that regard and to keep the Security Council informed.

9. The Working Group agreed to recommend that the President of the Security Council transmit a letter to the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, urging all parties engaged in the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan to ensure that the protection, rights, well-being and empowerment of children affected by armed conflict are fully incorporated into all reconstruction planning, programmes and strategies as well as in efforts towards peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

10. The Working Group agreed to recommend that the President of the Security Council transmit a letter to the Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution [2206 \(2015\)](#) concerning South Sudan:

(a) Recalling paragraph 9 (c) of Council resolution [1998 \(2011\)](#), in which the Council requested enhanced communication between the Working Group and the relevant Security Council sanctions committees, including through the exchange of pertinent information on violation and abuses committed against children in armed conflict, and paragraph 21 of resolution [2521 \(2020\)](#), in which the Council requested the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict to share relevant information with the Committee in accordance with paragraph 7 of resolution [1960 \(2010\)](#) and paragraph 9 of resolution [1998 \(2011\)](#);

(b) Encouraging the Committee to consider the designation for sanctions of individuals and entities, in accordance with the rules and guidelines of the Committee, and in that regard also encouraging the exchange of pertinent information between the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and the Committee.

11. The Working Group agreed to recommend that the Security Council:

(a) Ensure that the situation of children affected by armed conflict in South Sudan continues to be taken into consideration by the Council when reviewing the mandate and activities of UNMISS;

(b) Ensure the continuation of a child protection mandate for UNMISS, especially with regard to monitoring, reporting, training, capacity-building and mainstreaming, as well as dialogue with the parties to conflict on action plans and

support in their implementation, and stressing the need for adequate capacities in that regard;

(c) Communicate the present document to the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution [2206 \(2015\)](#) concerning South Sudan.

Direct action by the Working Group

12. The Working Group agreed to send letters from the Chair of the Working Group addressed to the World Bank and other donors:

(a) Calling upon donors to support, with funding and technical assistance, the efforts of the Government of South Sudan and relevant humanitarian and development agencies in the following:

(i) Establishing effective recruitment procedures and age assessment mechanisms in the national security forces to prevent the recruitment and use of children, consistent with its comprehensive action plan;

(ii) The development and implementation of comprehensive sustainable reintegration programmes that are gender- and age-sensitive to children formerly associated with national armed and security forces or non-State armed groups;

(iii) Timely and appropriate care for child survivors of sexual and gender-based violence by facilitating the provision of services, reparations and redress for survivors;

(iv) Long-term and sustainable funding for mental health and psychosocial programming in humanitarian contexts and ensuring that all affected children receive timely and sufficient support, and encouraging donors to integrate mental health and psychosocial services in all humanitarian responses;

(v) Bolstering the education and health system;

(vi) Strengthening the domestic criminal and military justice system to address impunity for violations and abuses committed against children in the armed conflict;

(vii) Supporting the implementation of the Civil Registry Law as a means to protect the rights of children and prevent underage recruitment and to guarantee the comprehensive disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of children associated with armed forces and armed groups;

(b) Inviting the donors to keep the Working Group informed of their funding and assistance efforts, as appropriate.

Annex**Statement by the Permanent Representative of South Sudan to the United Nations to the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict**

Mr. President,

Thank you for inviting us to make a short statement at this meeting of the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict, the report on South Sudan. I would like to acknowledge the members of the Working Group. I would also like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and greet Madam Gamba, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict.

To begin with, I would like to reassure you and the international community that the Republic of South Sudan is committed to working with the international community and various organizations. The people and the Government of South Sudan are appreciative of all that the international community is doing and has been doing in before and during our various crises in South Sudan. The last few years have been difficult years for the people of South Sudan and the international community has steadfastly stood with the people of South Sudan.

Regarding the Secretary-General's report on the status of children in armed conflict in South Sudan, South Sudan delegations welcomes the report. We would like to take this opportunity to thank Madam Gamba and her staff for their support and commitment to the children of South Sudan. The people and Government of South Sudan appreciate Madam Gamba's support, encouragements and ideas. She always shares with the leadership of South Sudan her experience and on how to improve the wellbeing of the children in South Sudan. That is why she and her staff are always welcome to visit South Sudan.

Our delegation welcomes the improvements indicated in the report, and we look forward to working closely with the offices of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict on further improvements in the future. We also share Madam Gamba's concerns that a lot remains and needs to be done. But, Mr. President, South Sudan needs international support for things to start improving on a faster pace than now. That is why we wholeheartedly agree with the recent statement of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for South Sudan, Mr. David Shearer when he appealed at the Security Council briefing for more and better international support to push the pace of peace implementation in South Sudan. As we all know, with sustained peace and improve economy, the status of children improves drastically, as a result.

The report also talks, sadly and unfortunately, about serious violation still happening to children in South Sudan. If we look at the areas these violations are happening, we find that they are happening in areas where there is no government authority. However, with the recent agreement between the peace partners to finally form States Governments, we hope that there will be law and order in those regions and the plight of the children will improve. Moreover, after the expected formation of these local governments, we would like to invite Madam Gamba and her staff to set up a programme of workshops, akin to the ones they have done with certain government sectors in Juba in the past, for the purpose of bringing awareness to the would be new officials in these regional governments.

In conclusion, Mr. President, I would like to reaffirm the Government of the Republic of South Sudan's full commitment to working and cooperating with the international community. Our Government welcomes the report of the Secretary-General and look forward to further cooperation in the joint efforts to improve the plight of the children in armed conflict in South Sudan.
