



Convention on the Rights of the Child

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Committee on the Rights of the Child

Fifty-ninth session

16 January – 3 February 2012

Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 8, paragraph 1, of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict

Concluding observations: Democratic Republic of Congo

1. The Committee considered the initial report of the Democratic Republic of Congo (CRC/C/OPAC/COD/1) at its 1674th meeting (see CRC/C/SR.1674), held on 18 January 2012, and adopted at its 1697th meeting, held on 3 February 2012, the following concluding observations.

I. Introduction

2. The Committee welcomes the submission of the State party's initial report under the Optional Protocol (CRC/C/OPAC/COD/1) and the written replies to its list of issues (CRC/C/OPAC/COD/Q/1/Add.1).

3. The Committee reminds the State party that these concluding observations should be read in conjunction with its concluding observations adopted on the State party's second periodic report under the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC/C/COD/CO/2), adopted on 10 February 2009. The Committee appreciates the dialogue with the multisectoral State party's delegation.

II. Factors and difficulties affecting the implementation of the Optional Protocol

4. The Committee reiterates its concern expressed since 2001 (CRC/C/15/Add.153, para. 6) about the responsibilities of several other States and certain other actors, including non-State armed groups and private companies, for the negative impact of the armed conflict upon children and for violations of some provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, its Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict, as well as provisions of international humanitarian law, within areas of the State party. The

Committee reminds however that the State party is primarily responsible to ensure the protection of all children within its territory.

5. The Committee regrets that little observable progress has been made in implementing the recommendations made over the reporting period by United Nations human rights mechanisms concerning notably children involved in armed conflict, as highlighted by the United Nations Secretary General (S/2010/369, para. 78) and the High Commissioner for Human Rights (A/HRC/16/27, para. 71). The Committee considers that the State party should show greater commitment to abide by its obligations under the Optional Protocol and to this end, bring to justice, as a matter of priority, all commanders suspected of recruitment and use of children and of other war crimes, whose presence within the State party's armed forces gravely undermine the consolidation of peace and security.

III. Positive aspects

6. The Committee welcomes:

(a) The declaration made by the State party on the ratification of the Optional Protocol that the minimum age for voluntary enlistment in its national armed forces is 18 years;

(b) The ratification of the Central African Convention for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons, their Ammunition and all Parts and Components that can be used for their Manufacture, Repair and Assembly on 19 November 2010;

(c) The endorsement of the Paris Commitments to protect children from unlawful recruitment or use by armed forces or armed groups, and the Paris Principles and guidelines on children associated with armed forces or armed groups in 2007.

7. The Committee also welcomes:

(a) The adoption of the Child Protection Code which prohibits the recruitment or use of children below the age of 18 by armed forces and groups and the police and provides for the punishment of such actions with terms of imprisonment of between 10 and 20 years in January 2009;

(b) The Presidential Decree which ordered the demobilization of all children below the age of 18 from the armed forces in June 2000.

IV. General measures of implementation

Right to life, survival and development

8. The Committee, notes with deep concern that children continue to be the primary victims of the ongoing conflicts especially in the Eastern provinces of the State party. Referring to its previous concluding observations (CRC/C/COD/2, paras. 33 and 34), the Committee remains alarmed that all parties to the conflict continue to kill and to subject children to the worst forms of violence, including torture and mutilation. The Committee expresses its deepest concern about:

(a) The use of children as human shields, as bodyguards for army commanders, as sexual slaves and for committing the most serious human rights abuses, including massacres and mass rapes;

(b) The dramatic consequences on civilians, and particularly on children, of military operations launched by the State party such as Kimia II operation in February 2009;

(c) The alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity committed against Bambuti children and their families;

(d) The deliberate attacks of schools and hospitals which continue to be carried out by all parties to the conflict in breach of the Geneva Conventions.

9. **The Committee reminds the State party that it is primary responsible for the protection of its civilians, particularly children, which should be prioritized in all military operations and that the State party should prevent civilian casualties in accordance with the requirements of distinction, discrimination, proportionality, necessity and precaution. The Committee urges the State party to take concrete and firm measures to ensure that no further killings and maiming of civilians take place and ensure that all cases lead to prompt independent and impartial investigations and to the effective sanctioning with appropriate sanctions of those found responsible.**

Legislation

10. While noting as positive that the Optional Protocol takes precedence over domestic legislation and is directly applicable in domestic legal system, the Committee expresses its concern that limited measures have been taken to ensure its effective implementation and that the provisions of the Optional Protocol are rarely invoked and used by courts.

11. **The Committee urges the State party to take all the necessary measures for the full and effective application of the Optional Protocol.**

Coordination

12. While noting the role of the Inter Ministerial Human Rights Committee (CIDH)) with respect to some activities related to the Optional Protocol, the Committee is concerned that there is no specific body to coordinate the implementation of the Optional Protocol and that limited progress has been made to reform and enable the National Council for Children to fulfil this role.

13. **The Committee reiterates its recommendation (CRC/C/COD/CO/2, para. 13) that the State party ensure the provision of an adequate mandate, as well as human and financial resources to the National Council for Children to enable it to efficiently carry out its coordination work. The Committee also urges the State party to ensure that the National Council for Children has an adequate level of authority.**

Plan of action

14. The Committee expresses concern that the State party has still not adopted a time bound plan of action to halt the recruitment and use of children in armed conflict in spite of repeated calls by international human rights mechanisms over the past years and its commitment to the Representative of the Secretary General on Children and Armed conflict in 2009.

15. **The Committee urges the State party to adopt as a matter of priority a comprehensive time-bound plan of action to halt the recruitment and use of children in armed conflict in conformity with Security Council resolutions 1539 (2004), 1612**

(2005) and 1882 (2009) and 1998 (2011). The State party should consult with the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary General on Children and Armed Conflict as well as international and national child protection actors and ensure that the necessary human, technical and financial resources are allocated for a prompt and effective implementation of the plan.

Independent monitoring

16. While noting as positive the indication given during the interactive dialogue that a section of the future national human rights institution will be fully devoted to child rights, the Committee is concerned about the considerable delays in establishing such a monitoring mechanism. The Committee is particularly concerned that, three years after its adoption by the Senate (2008), the draft bill creating the national human rights institution has still not been scheduled for adoption by the National Assembly.

17. **In light of its previous recommendation (CRC/C/COD/CO/2, para.17), the Committee urges the State party to accelerate the adoption process of the bill creating a national human rights institution and to ensure that the institution complies with the Paris Principles (General Assembly resolution 48/134, annex) and is provided with the necessary human, financial and technical resources to fulfil its mandate. The Committee also reminds the State party that the national human rights institution should be able to receive and investigate complaints from, or on behalf of, children concerning violations of their rights under the Optional Protocol.**

Allocation of resources

18. The Committee is concerned about the very low level of State expenditures for social sectors and their continuous decrease over the past years while budgetary allocations to defence and public security have increased considerably to reach 30 per cent of State expenditures as already noted by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (E/C.12/COD/CO/4, para.16) in 2009. The Committee is also concerned that endemic corruption as well as mismanagement and illegal exploitation of the State party's natural wealth continue to divert resources available for the implementation of the Optional Protocol.

19. **The Committee urges the State party to significantly increase its budget expenditures for social sectors in order to ensure adequate funding for the implementation of all activities of the Optional Protocol. The Committee also urges the State party to take active and concrete measures against corruption, mismanagement and illegal exploitation of the State party's natural resources.**

Dissemination and awareness-raising

20. The Committee is concerned that awareness of the Optional Protocol among the general public is low and that efforts to disseminate its relevant provisions among children, families, teachers and local authorities have been insufficient, in particular in areas affected by the armed conflict. The Committee is also concerned that former child soldiers are generally not associated in the design of policies and programmes that concern them and have not been consulted during the elaboration of the State party's report.

21. **In light of article 6, paragraph 2, of the Optional Protocol, the Committee recommends that the State party launch a sustainable national programme including campaigns to disseminate to the general public and among children the principles and**

provisions of the Optional Protocol as well as the legal provisions of the Child Protection Code criminalizing the recruitment and use of children in armed conflict and the sanctions associated with these crimes. The Committee also urges the State party to ensure that child soldiers are fully involved in the elaboration of programmes and policies that concern them.

Training

22. The Committee expresses concern, that relevant professional categories, in particular the military, the police, the Republican Guard and those working with the administration of justice, receive insufficient and inadequate training on the provisions of the Optional Protocol. The Committee is also particularly concerned that in spite of the adoption of a code of conduct for members of the armed forces, the latter generally do not consider themselves accountable for violations of the Optional Protocol and domestic related laws.

23. **The Committee urges the State party to ensure that the reorganization of the army and security sector include the provision of systematic trainings for members of the FARDC and the Republican Guard on the provisions of the Optional Protocol and the Child protection Code related provisions. Furthermore, the Committee also recommends that the State party develop training programmes on the provisions of the Optional Protocol for relevant professional groups working with children, notably prosecutors, lawyers, judges, law enforcement officers, social workers, medical professionals, teachers, media professionals, local and district officials and ensure that the Code of Conduct, the military manuals and directives are in accordance with the provisions of the Optional Protocol.**

Data

24. While noting the efforts of the National Implementation Unit for the National Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Programme (UEPN - DDR) to collect data on children involved in armed conflict, the Committee is however concerned that the information collected remains partial and inaccurate and that State authorities rely almost exclusively on international partners' funding for data collection and analysis on all areas covered by the Optional Protocol.

25. **The Committee wishes to underline that the responsibility to collect data covering all areas of the Optional Protocol lies primarily with the State party. The Committee therefore urges the State party to:**

(a) **Establish a comprehensive data collection system in order to ensure that data, disaggregated inter alia by age, sex, geographical area and socio-economic background, and covering all areas of the Optional Protocol, are systematically collected and analysed;**

(b) **Use the data collected as a basis for designing policies to implement the Optional Protocol and assessing progress achieved towards this objective;**

(c) **Seek the assistance of relevant United Nations agencies and programmes, including the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), in this regard.**

V. Prevention

Age verification procedures

26. The Committee expresses concern that FARDC recruitment procedures are inconsistently applied and that recruitment into the State party's armed forces is mainly carried out at the discretion of regional military commands or individual unit commanders. The Committee is also concerned about the ineffectiveness of the mechanisms to verify the ages of incoming recruits and notes that this problem is exacerbated by the very low level of birth registration in the State party.

27. The Committee reiterates its recommendation (CRC/C/COD/CO2, para. 36) to continue and strengthen its efforts to encourage birth registration of all children. The Committee also urges the State party to standardize army recruitment procedures and train officers to ensure consistent and effective verification of the age of individual recruits to effectively prevent the recruitment of children into the armed forces. The Committee further recommends that the State party widely circulate guidelines on verifying age and instruct recruiters that in the case of doubt over an individual's age, he/she should not be recruited.

Peace education

28. While welcoming the State party's indication that peace education will be incorporated in school curricula at all levels of primary and secondary education in 2012, 2013, the Committee is however concerned that so far, access to human rights and peace education has been extremely limited.

29. **Considering that human rights and peace education are essential to enhance a culture of peace and promote harmonious relationships which guarantee the culture of non-violence and gender equality among children and the larger society, the Committee recommends that the State party take prompt and concrete measures to ensure the provision of human rights education and, in particular, peace education, for all children in school and train teachers and other professionals to help students to resolve conflict through conflict-resolution and peer-mediation training.**

VI. Prohibition and related matters

Recruitment and use of children in the FARDC

30. The Committee reiterates its deep concern that the State party, through its armed forces, continues to bear direct responsibility for the recruitment and use of hundreds of children in armed conflict (CRC/C/COD/CO2, para. 67). The Committee is particularly concerned that although FARDC accounted for the highest number of children recruited in 2010 as reported by the United Nations Secretary General (S/2010/369, para. 19) and continue to recruit and use children, the State party denies their presence within its armed forces. The Committee expresses serious concern about the presence of children within almost all brigades of the FARDC, as well as in the Republican Guard directly answerable to the President and in the national police, which constitutes a grave breach of the State party's obligations under the Optional Protocol.

31. The Committee urges the State party to show greater political commitment at the highest levels to stop the recruitment and use of children within the FARDC. In particular, the Committee urges the State party to:

(a) Urgently carry out a comprehensive screening process in collaboration with MONUSCO to ensure that no children remain within the FARDC and police units, as well as in the Republican Guard, starting with the units created during the “accelerated integration” process and paying special attention to the release of girls from armed groups;

(b) Send an unequivocal message to all FARDC units requesting them to release immediately all girls and boys from the army and reminding them of the legal prohibition of the recruitment and use of children and drawing attention to the provisions and penalties of the Child Protection Code;

(c) Remove individuals suspected of recruiting or using children in hostilities, or other serious human rights abuses pending completion of investigations against them.

Recruitment and use of children by non-State armed groups

32. The Committee expresses deep concern about the continuous recruitment and abduction of children, including girls by numerous non-State armed groups, and by community-based militias known as Local Defence Forces (LDF). The Committee is also concerned that in January 2009, hundreds of child soldiers were incorporated into the FARDC during the “accelerated integration” of members of the National Congress for the Defense of the People (CNDP). The Committee expresses further concern that the State party has not prioritized the release of children detained by non-State armed groups in its negotiations with these groups, as demonstrated in the negotiations with the Yakutumba Mai Mai in August 2010.

33. The Committee reminds the State party of its obligations under the Optional Protocol to take all the necessary measures to ensure that no children are recruited by non-State armed groups. The Committee urges the State party to ensure that the release, recovery and reintegration of children associated with non-State armed forces or armed groups becomes a priority and is addressed in all peace or ceasefire negotiations and agreements with armed groups, in line with the United Nations operational guidelines on addressing children’s issues in peace agreements. The Committee also urges the State party to ensure that:

(a) The release of all children from non-State armed groups is a precondition for any future integration into the army or police and any related training programmes;

(b) No military, financial or logistical support is provided to local militias suspected of recruiting or using children or committing other human rights abuses. Priority should be given to regulating the activities of local defence forces and to ensuring that children are not recruited or used by them;

(c) Cross borders frameworks of cooperation and exchange are established to repatriate children from neighbouring countries to their countries of origin as already recommended by the Special Representative of the Secretary General for Children and Armed conflict after her 2009 visit in the country.

Criminal legislation and regulations in force

34. The Committee is deeply concerned that there is still no legislation in force in the State party to criminalize the recruitment and use of child soldiers, the necessary decrees for the relevant provisions of the 2009 Child Protection Code to be fully applicable having not yet been adopted. The Committee also notes with concern that little priority has been given to the establishment of effective law enforcement mechanisms to investigate, convict or sanction those responsible for grave violations against children. The Committee is further concerned that the draft bill to create specialized chambers within the Congolese justice system with jurisdiction over grave violations of human rights was rejected by the Senate in August 2011.

35. The Committee reiterates its recommendation (CRC/C/COD/CO/2, para.11) that the State party take, as a matter of priority, all appropriate measures to expedite the effective implementation of the Child Protection Code. The Committee also urges the State party to:

(a) Establish a comprehensive child protection system including a systematic mechanism for investigating, convicting or sanctioning those responsible for violations against children;

(b) Promptly enact the draft bill adopted by the Council of Ministers on 25 February 2011 to create specialized chambers within the Congolese justice system with jurisdiction over grave violations of human rights and ensure that specific procedures for child victims and witnesses and are applied by the specialized chambers;

(c) Instruct all the prosecutors to begin investigations using the provisions of the Child Protection Code.

Jurisdiction

36. The Committee, while welcoming the efforts of the Congolese military courts in applying directly the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court in a number of precedent-setting cases, the Committee is concerned that the State party has not yet enacted a national legislation implementing the Rome Statute. The Committee is also concerned that domestic legislation does not effectively enable the State party to establish and exercise extraterritorial jurisdiction over war crimes related to conscription, enlistment and use of children in hostilities.

37. The Committee urges the State party to ensure that its domestic legislation effectively enables it to establish and exercise universal jurisdiction over war crimes related to conscription, enlistment and use of children in hostilities and to take the necessary steps to enact a national legislation implementing the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

Impunity

38. The Committee notes with deep concern that in spite of the zero tolerance policy for human rights violators declared by the President in 2009, none of the perpetrators of recruitment and use of children in armed conflict, although clearly identified, has been prosecuted and convicted. The Committee is particularly concerned that:

(a) The dysfunctioning of the justice system fosters impunity and interference within the military justice by military command and State authorities. The Committee is

also concerned about the numerous cases of obstruction of judicial investigations by FARDC commanders and about the persistent refusal of the State party to arrest and transfer General Bosco Ntaganda who is subject of an arrest warrant issued in 2006 by the International Criminal Court for the war crime of enlisting child soldiers and using them in hostilities;

(b) FARDC commanders listed in the Security Council Group of Experts final report (S/2009/603, annex 124) responsible for the recruitment and use of child soldiers and for massacres of civilians have been maintained and, in some cases, promoted within the FARDC;

(c) A large number of FARDC soldiers have still not been provided with uniforms identifying their name and rank and a comprehensive and adequately resourced screening mechanism where each officer is vetted for his or her past human rights record has still not been established as recommended by the seven United Nations experts (A/HRC/13/63, para. 4);

(d) The Law promulgated on 7 May 2009 granting amnesty to militias in the East which excludes genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity has already led to the release of a perpetrator of recruitment and use of child soldiers, as recognized by the State party in its written replies (CRC/C/OPAC/COD/Q/1/Add.1, para.31);

(e) In spite of the sentencing of numerous perpetrators of sexual abuse, impunity remains pervasive for the rape and the most horrific forms of sexual violence and abuses of women and children which continue to be used as a weapon of war in conflict zones;

39. The Committee urges the State party to show stronger political will and demonstrable tangible efforts to apply its zero tolerance policy with a view to promoting accountability in the State party. The Committee strongly urges the State party to put an end to the impunity that perpetrators of recruitment and use of children continue to enjoy and ensure the prompt and impartial investigation of all allegations against all suspected FARDC officers and personnel, including those listed in the final report of the Security Council Group of experts (S/2009/603, annex 124). The Committee also urges the State party to:

(a) Accelerate the implementation of the Action Plan for the Reform of the Justice system and ensure that this plan contains specific and time-bound measures for the protection of child victims and children in conflict with the law;

(b) Fully collaborate with the International Criminal Court by arresting and surrendering Bosco Ntaganda whose presence within the FARDC is incompatible with the obligations of the State party under the Optional Protocol;

(c) Provide adequate resources for investigations and prosecutions and publish information on the number of prosecutions and convictions for recruitment and use of children in armed conflict;

(d) Engage more actively in the reform of the army and the security sector and take as a matter of priority all the necessary measures to ensure that in all provinces of the State party, FARDC members are provided with a uniform which identify them and to establish a vetting mechanism to exclude perpetrators of human rights violations from the army;

(e) Ensure that no person responsible for the recruitment and use of child soldiers which constitute a war crime under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court is released on the basis of the 2009 Amnesty Law;

(f) **Take prompt and active measures to bring perpetrators of sexual crimes to justice and to make the implementation of the Comprehensive Strategy on Combating Sexual Violence a reality.**

Human rights defenders

40. The Committee expresses concern that human rights defenders, notably those who support victims of sexual violence and the work of the International Criminal Court (ICC), are subjected to threats and attacks by State and non-State agents. The Committee is also particularly concerned about reported cases of Congolese child rights activists being threatened by State military and intelligence officials when carrying out awareness-raising activities about the Optional Protocol with non-State armed groups or when assisting victims of rape carried out by elements of armed forces.

41. **The Committee urges the State party to enact the bill on the promotion and protection of human rights defenders adopted by the Council of Ministers on 20 May 2011 and to take effective preventive measures to protect human rights defenders and to ensure prompt investigations into attacks against them. The Committee further recommends that the State party implement the recommendations of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders following her 2009 mission in the State party (A/HRC/13/22/Add.2).**

VII. Protection, recovery and reintegration

Obstacles to the demobilization of children

42. The Committee expresses concern about FARDC commanders' frequent refusal to grant child protection actors access to military sites where children are believed to be present and about reported cases of Congolese child protection activists receiving threats from some FARDC officers because of their efforts to identify and release children. The Committee is particularly concerned that only a third of FARDC units have been effectively screened and that no demobilization process took place in 2010. The Committee is also concerned about the information provided by the delegation during the interactive dialogue that the National Implementation Unit for the National Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Programme (UEPN-DDR) has not been allowed to check the presence of children within the Presidential Guard.

43. **The Committee urges the State party to grant immediate and unimpeded access to accredited independent child protection actors to all military sites and police units, including the Presidential Guard, for verification, paying particular attention to girl soldiers.**

Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration

44. The Committee welcomes the release of tens of thousands of children from the ranks of armed forces and groups in the last eight years as well as the existence of the Operational Framework for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) which was revised in 2008. However, the Committee notes with concern the lack of human and financial resources allocated to the State agencies involved in the demobilization and reintegration of children as well as the allegations of corruption and mismanagement of DDR funds by the State party.

45. The Committee urges the State party to provide the National Implementation Unit for the National Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Programme (UEPN - DDR) and all involved State agencies with the necessary human, financial and technical resources for them to identify and provide assistance to all former child soldiers, including self-demobilized children and child soldiers abandoned by armed groups en route to army integration sites. As a matter of priority, the State party should ensure the adoption of an efficient simplified procedure for the prompt issue of release certificates to all former child soldiers. The Committee also urges the State party to investigate all allegations of corruption and mismanagement of DDR funds and bring those responsible to justice.

Treatment of children associated with armed groups

46. While welcoming the State party's information that all the children condemned before 2002 for military offences have been pardoned by Presidential Decree, the Committee expresses deep concern that children captured by the FARDC have been treated primarily as perpetrators rather than victims and have been unlawfully detained and in some cases ill-treated or tortured. The Committee is further concerned that a number of former child soldiers were judged by military courts and in some cases sentenced to death or to life imprisonment.

47. The Committee urges the State party to ensure that:

(a) Children are not arbitrarily arrested, detained and prosecuted by military courts for their membership in armed groups or for military offences such as desertion;

(b) Captured child soldiers are always treated in accordance with international human rights and humanitarian law and promptly handed over to child protection actors;

(c) Detention of children is only used as a measure of last resort and for the shortest possible period of time;

(d) Children deprived of their liberty as a consequence of their involvement in hostilities are treated with humanity and with respect for their inherent dignity;

(e) If criminal charges are brought against children, trials must be held before civilian courts and in compliance with international standards on juvenile justice, including the standards enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child and illustrated in the Committee's general comment No. 10 (2007) on the rights of the child in juvenile justice;

(f) No child should be sentenced to death or to life imprisonment.

Assistance for physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration

48. The Committee notes with concern that less than half of returning child soldiers have had access to reintegration support and that when such programmes exist, they often fail to address the medical, psychological or socio-economic needs of former child soldiers. As a result, a significant proportion of demobilized children are re-recruited. The Committee is also particularly concerned that:

(a) Girl soldiers, although comprising up to thirty per cent of children involved in armed forces and groups, have been and are still underrepresented in release and

reintegration programmes and have often no alternative but to return to their former commanders or drift into other marginal activities such as prostitution;

(b) Children surviving sexual violence still have little chance to obtain access to health care, psychological support and compensation;

(c) The stabilization and reconstruction program (STAREC) for the five conflict-affected eastern provinces fails to include education and employment programmes.

49. **The Committee urges the State party to rebuild an effective and adequately funded national reintegration strategy for child soldiers which should be fully integrated into STAREC. In particular, the Committee urges the State party to:**

(a) **Conduct a mapping of existing initiatives and available funding; an evaluation of current and past initiatives and a full needs assessment of the nature, scope, duration, funding and expertise needed for the provision of “appropriate assistance” to former child soldiers;**

(b) **As a matter of priority, develop and implement in collaboration with the United Nations and child protection actors a strategy to identify and provide effective reintegration assistance to current and former girl soldiers and their children, which meet their complex medical, economic and psychosocial needs; Every effort should be made to ensure these initiatives, and any resulting programmes, do not increase the stigma and exclusion faced by former girl soldiers;**

(c) **Ensure without any further delay that consistent and sustainable budget allocations are made to provide child survivors of sexual violence with immediate compensation, psychological support and health care;**

(d) **Ensure that school reintegration; access to vocational training and the development of youth employment opportunities for demobilized children are incorporated into STAREC;**

(e) **Significantly increase support for reintegration and recovery measures, ensure they are accessible in affected regions and develop multi-disciplinary assistance programs;**

(f) **Ensure that child soldiers, parents and communities are involved in the design and evaluation of reintegration projects;**

VIII. Follow-up and dissemination

50. **The Committee recommends that the State party take all appropriate measures to ensure full implementation of the present recommendations by, inter alia, transmitting them to the Ministry of Defence, the Presidency, the Council of Ministers, the National Assembly and all relevant ministries, national and local authorities for appropriate consideration and further action.**

51. **The Committee further recommends that the initial report submitted by the State party and the Committee’s concluding observations be made widely available to the public at large, the media and children in particular, in order to generate debate and awareness of the Optional Protocol, its implementation and monitoring.**

Next report

52. **In accordance with article 8, paragraph 2, the Committee requests the State party to include further information on the implementation of the Optional Protocol**

and the present concluding observations in its next periodic report under the Convention on the Rights of the Child, due on 26 October 2012. The Committee also invites the State party to submit its initial reports under the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, due on 18 January 2004, as soon as possible.
