



# Asamblea General Consejo de Seguridad

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Promoción y protección de los derechos de la infancia

Consejo de Seguridad  
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## Cartas idénticas de fecha 30 de marzo de 2023 dirigidas al Secretario General y a la Presidencia del Consejo de Seguridad por la Representante Permanente de Malta ante las Naciones Unidas

Tengo el honor de presentarle el informe del taller anual de políticas sobre los niños y los conflictos armados organizado el día 26 de enero de 2023 por la organización no gubernamental Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict y el Instituto de Asuntos Humanitarios Internacionales de la Universidad de Fordham (véase el anexo)\*.

Le agradecería que tuviera a bien publicar la presente carta y su anexo como documento de la Asamblea General, en relación con el tema 64 del programa, y del Consejo de Seguridad.

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ante las Naciones Unidas

\* Se distribuye únicamente en el idioma en que fue presentado.



**Anexo de las cartas idénticas de fecha 30 de marzo de 2023  
dirigidas al Secretario General y a la Presidencia del Consejo  
de Seguridad por la Representante Permanente de Malta ante  
las Naciones Unidas**

**Report of the Annual Policy Workshop on Children and Armed  
Conflict 2023**

26 January 2023

## **I. Introduction**

1. The non-governmental organization (NGO) Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict (“Watchlist”) and Fordham University’s Institute of International Humanitarian Affairs (IIHA) convened a policy workshop on 26 January 2023. The workshop brought together representatives of United Nations Member States, including members of the Security Council, the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict (OSRSG-CAAC), the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), the Department of Peace Operations (DPO), the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the Office of the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, academia, and civil society to discuss priorities for the United Nations children and armed conflict (CAAC) agenda in 2023. This is the ninth such policy workshop organized by Watchlist since 2013, and the third co-organized with Fordham University. The workshop sought to engage participants in identifying priorities and developing recommendations for concrete, targeted actions to be taken in the coming year within the framework of the CAAC agenda.

2. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict opened the workshop with a keynote address reflecting on progress made in implementing the CAAC agenda in 2022, the challenges that remain, and upcoming priorities and opportunities for 2023. The Special Representative’s remarks highlighted the continued high level of grave violations against children in 2022 and emphasized the need to reiterate and defend the definition of a child as every person below the age of 18 years of age as well as the need to maintain dedicated child protection resources on the ground. Additional themes included prevention through operationalizing existing tools and strengthening partnerships with the aim of translating child protection commitments into policy and concrete actions.

3. In addition to the keynote address, the workshop consisted of four closed working sessions. The first session focused on supporting implementation of the CAAC agenda through the Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict (SCWG-CAAC) and the Group of Friends (GoF) of CAAC, featuring reflections by the Deputy Permanent Representatives of Norway, Malta, and Canada to the United Nations. The second session focused on good practices for the dissemination and implementation of CAAC conclusions at the country level following adoption by the Security Council Working Group, with representatives from the Permanent Mission of Belgium to the United Nations and UNICEF reflecting on examples from Colombia, Central African Republic (CAR), and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). The third session examined the maintenance and appropriate transfer of dedicated child protection capacities during the transition or drawdown of United Nations peace operations and special political missions, featuring reflections from DPO and UNICEF. The fourth session focused on ways to

more systematically address the rights and needs of children with disabilities within the existing CAAC framework, drawing on findings from recent research and featuring presentations by civil society, United Nations mandate holders, and academic experts.

4. This report summarizes the discussions in these sessions and provides recommendations for action by the Security Council, the United Nations, NGOs, and other stakeholders, to end and prevent grave violations against children in situations of armed conflict in 2023 and going forward.

## **II. Keynote Address**

5. The Special Representative opened the workshop with reflections on the sustained high number of grave violations against children through much of 2022, the impact of new conflicts, coups, and takeovers on children, the widespread disregard for international humanitarian norms, and the addition of three new situations of concern to the CAAC agenda. In the face of these challenges, the Special Representative noted the need for continued resolve and reminded participants of tangible progress for children in armed conflict achieved since the mandate's inception, including more than 180,000 children separated from armed forces and armed groups and 12 parties to conflict delisted from the annexes of the Secretary-General's annual report on CAAC following implementation of their action plans. In the past year, the Houthis (who call themselves Ansar Allah) signed a new action plan to end and prevent grave violations against children in Yemen. Additionally, authorities in Burkina Faso and Nigeria adopted handover protocols for the swift transfer of children apprehended for alleged association with armed forces and armed groups to civilian child protection actors for reintegration.

6. The Special Representative highlighted three areas of strategic priority for protecting children affected by armed conflict in the coming year. First, the definition of a child must be reiterated and non-negotiable. Every person under 18 years of age must be recognized as a child entitled to special protections under international law. There must be no compromising on this definition for reasons of counterterrorism or national security. Second, Member States must support continued monitoring and reporting and child protection capacities on the ground. Well-trained, specialized, dedicated child protection officers are central to ensuring that the United Nations Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM) is effective. Prevention must remain a priority, including through operationalizing existing tools and resolutions and through working with regional organizations. Finally, partnerships between Member States and the SCWG-CAAC must be strengthened. Commitments made to protect children must be translated into policy and concrete actions in order to achieve behavior change by parties to conflict to end grave violations against children. The SCWG-CAAC conclusions remain fundamental for concrete action for children and exchanges between the SCWG-CAAC and the Country Task Forces on Monitoring and Reporting (CTFMRs) should be enhanced. All stakeholders must place children at the center of peacebuilding efforts.

## **III. A Review of the CAAC Agenda: Recent Trends and Priorities for 2023**

7. The first working session of the workshop featured remarks from leading policy makers on ongoing challenges to addressing CAAC concerns and how to leverage existing tools and mechanisms for doing so. The Deputy Permanent Representatives of Norway and Canada to the United Nations provided reflections in their respective

roles as the former chair of the SCWG-CAAC and chair of the GoF of CAAC. The Deputy Permanent Representative of Malta to the United Nations also spoke as a non-permanent elected member of the Security Council for whom the CAAC agenda will be a priority (after the date of the workshop, Malta was confirmed as the chair of the SCWG-CAAC). The panelists highlighted challenges to the effective implementation of the CAAC agenda over the past year and lessons learned for the future, as well as the role of stakeholders outside of the Security Council in supporting implementation of the CAAC agenda.

8. The panelists reflected on the obstacles to negotiating SCWG-CAAC conclusions in the current geopolitical dynamics among the Security Council members, particularly, following the outbreak of the war in Ukraine in February 2022. The SCWG-CAAC successfully negotiated eight conclusions during Norway's chairmanship, with an intention to sustain the quality of conclusions as fit for purpose, practical to implement, and instruments for concrete action. Among those conclusions that were adopted, the SCWG-CAAC strengthened language related to the best interests of the child, reintegration that takes into account the specific vulnerabilities of the child, mental health and psychosocial support, comprehensive support for child survivors of sexual violence, and education. Other tools utilized during the term included informal briefings, addressing situations of concern under "Any Other Business" (AOB) in Working Group meetings, and hosting virtual teleconferences with CTFMRs. During Norway's chairmanship and with Niger's co-sponsorship, the Security Council also adopted the latest thematic resolution on CAAC, Resolution [2601 \(2021\)](#), focused on protecting education in armed conflict.

9. Panelists drew out a number of lessons and opportunities from reflections on the challenges of the Security Council in 2022. First, the SCWG-CAAC remained active despite challenges in the Security Council dynamics, which at times made it more difficult to achieve consensus on conclusions. Second, panelists highlighted the continued importance of mainstreaming CAAC throughout all of the Security Council's work. This includes defending dedicated child protection mandates and capacity in United Nations missions. Finally, panelists emphasized that SCWG-CAAC conclusions are only as valuable as the extent to which they are implemented and stressed the need to maintain closeness with the field and become ambassadors for the conclusions in country.

10. Panelists further discussed priorities and opportunities for Member States to take the CAAC agenda forward under the incoming Working Group chair (on the date of the workshop, the final subsidiary body chairs were not yet confirmed). Panelists once again emphasized mainstreaming CAAC throughout the work of the Security Council as a priority, alongside the need to pursue a gender-sensitive approach to the Security Council's work. Effective monitoring, reporting, and response to grave violations must continue, including engagement with armed parties to conflict to develop and sign action plans to end and prevent violations. The prevention lens should be strengthened, as well as actions to address persistent perpetrators of grave violations against children. Panelists also stressed the need to ensure sufficient child protection capacity on the ground, including addressing underfunding of child protection, and enhancing cooperation with other stakeholders such as the New York-based GoF of CAAC and the regional and country-specific Groups of Friends of CAAC, and civil society.

11. The session further examined the role of stakeholders outside of the Security Council both in contributing to the achievements of the CAAC agenda thus far, as well as in ensuring continued progress. Panelists reiterated the strength and uniqueness of the tools available to the CAAC agenda and lamented the difficulties of political disagreements that arise in the CAAC space. Panelists raised questions

regarding how to address delays and deadlocks on negotiations on conclusions, and on leveraging other approaches, tools, and actors in order to move forward.

12. In the ensuing discussion, participants raised the need to: (a) identify steps that Member States can take when negotiations on conclusions become deadlocked; (b) strengthen ties and coordination between the New York-based GoF of CAAC, regional and country-specific Groups of Friends of CAAC and the work of the Security Council; (c) use other tools available to the SCWG-CAAC more effectively, such as press releases, requests for additional information, or informal briefings, and debate the political cost of blocking action by the Working Group; (d) create opportunities for civil society to enhance engagement, training, and capacity-building for incoming members of the Security Council to better understand what commitments Member States have already made to protect children; (e) balance the wishes of some Member States for a more ambitious and progressive policy agenda against those who prefer a stricter interpretation of the CAAC agenda; and (f) create opportunities for integrating a CAAC lens into other multilateral fora, such as the Peacebuilding Commission and the Universal Periodic Reviews.

#### **IV. Implementing Security Council Working Group Conclusions on CAAC**

13. The second working session centered on the ways in which conclusions of the SCWG-CAAC are implemented in country after adoption. Participants discussed good practices for the dissemination and familiarization of CAAC conclusions by the United Nations Country Team, civil society, national governments, and diplomatic missions after adoption. Panelists from the Permanent Mission of Belgium and UNICEF reflected on how conclusions are used for advocacy, engagement with armed parties to conflict, and to promote accountability and prevention to better protect children. Concrete examples from Colombia, CAR, and DRC were discussed.

14. Panelists first shared good practices and lessons learned from efforts to promote the implementation of the fourth conclusions of the SCWG-CAAC on Colombia, following their adoption in 2020. Belgium organized three workshops for bringing CAAC conclusions to the relevant capitals during their term as chair of the SCWG-CAAC (2019-2020). The Belgian Embassy in Bogotá, together with the Canadian and Swedish Embassies as co-chairs of the regional GoF of CAAC, streamlined the conclusions into the workplan of the GoF of CAAC, condensing the key messages from the conclusions into specific, tangible objectives for their advocacy with government counterparts in Colombia – namely encouraging the endorsement of the Safe Schools Declaration by the Government of Colombia, which Colombia endorsed in November 2022. Panelists emphasized the need for Permanent Missions in New York to clearly and concisely communicate with their relevant embassies to convey the significance of the SCWG-CAAC conclusions and bring these messages into engagement at the country level. Additionally, cultivating commitment and buy-in from the relevant local government authorities is crucial for ensuring the implementation of conclusions.

15. Panelists also examined the ways in which child protection actors at the country level use SCWG-CAAC conclusions as a tool for their own advocacy with governments and armed groups for the protection of children. Panelists raised four specific examples from CAR and DRC: first, conclusions influenced the work of the technical working group on CAAC in the DRC, which was established in accordance with the Government of DRC's 2012 action plan on ending and preventing recruitment and use, and on sexual violence – and its subsequent roadmap – for implementation. Each year, the key activities in the roadmap are inspired by the

conclusions. For example, specific recommendations in the 2020 SCWG-CAAC conclusions regarding attacks on schools and hospitals and rape and sexual violence allowed the technical working group to take action on these grave violations, where previously efforts had focused exclusively on recruitment and use. Second, where the CTFMR had previously faced resistance and barriers to their engagement with armed groups, a specific recommendation in the DRC conclusions for the Government to support such engagement opened the doors for the CTFMR to make contact with 62 armed groups and develop unilateral declarations and roadmaps with 40 commanders of these armed groups. Third, the 2020 SCWG-CAAC conclusions on CAR asked the Government of CAR to engage with the CTFMR to develop a national prevention strategy. This strategy to prevent children from becoming victims of armed conflict has now been drafted with support from the United Nations and is waiting for approval. Fourth, following the adoption of the 2020 SCWG-CAAC conclusions on DRC under the leadership of the Government of Belgium, the GoF of CAAC in Kinshasa organized a high-level event with the CTFMR, co-chaired by MONUSCO and UNICEF. This high-level event, which was supported by the Governments of Canada and Norway as the co-chairs of the GoF, aimed to present the conclusions, to share understanding of challenges to ending and preventing grave violations against children, and to act as a forum to raise specific concerns by child protection actors.

16. Panelists further highlighted a gap in the implementation of SCWG-CAAC conclusions regarding recommendations on funding for reintegration. Despite various recommendations to the donor community, funding is still decreasing. Recommendations related to reintegration funding could be more action-oriented to address this gap.

17. Following the panelists' presentations, participants discussed: (a) how to ensure that engagement at the country level is sustained, particularly where in-country diplomatic teams are small; (b) balancing the need for longer, more detailed conclusions for child protection colleagues on the ground, and shorter, more streamlined language for political colleagues; (c) opportunities for more frequent exchanges between Member States in New York and United Nations child protection advisers to understand how conclusions are being used and where elements might be missing; (d) roles for Member States which are not the SCWG-Chair to convene stakeholders to disseminate conclusions in country; and (e) ensuring CAAC is a priority for embassy colleagues and that the practice of convening of high-level, multi-stakeholder events in country is repeated, possibly leveraging existing regional and country-specific Groups of Friends of CAAC.

## **V. Maintaining Child Protection Capacity in United Nations Mission Transitions**

18. The third session of the workshop examined the crucial role of dedicated child protection staff in United Nations peace operations and special political missions, and how to ensure these capacities are maintained and appropriately transferred during mission transitions or drawdown. Panelists from DPO and UNICEF reflected on the distinct roles, functions, and resources of child protection staff, including where capacities, personnel, or funding are or are not transferable during mission transition or exit, as well as ways to ensure the appropriate child protection expertise and capabilities are preserved in these contexts.

19. The session reflected on recent experiences maintaining and transferring child protection capacity within the context of MONUSCO's exit strategy. Panelists emphasized that the conflict will not end simply because the mission transitions and

added that child protection needs and grave violations are likely to persist beyond the mission's exit. According to DPO's 2017 Child Protection Policy, missions shall implement a phased handover of child protection responsibilities to UNICEF. This requires working together with DPO and the Security Council to address the budgetary needs to maintain child protection capacity on the ground. With diminished child protection capacity, MRM-verified numbers of grave violations may decrease simply due to less monitoring capacity, rather than reflecting the reality for children. Panelists also raised considerations related to information-sharing, MRM database management, and engagement with armed groups, which must all be addressed in a transition context. Security or resource challenges (such as the loss of access to helicopters to reach armed groups in remote locations) could hinder UNICEF's ability to easily take over all functions of the child protection teams in the exiting mission. Without proper planning and handover, mission transition and drawdown can threaten the loss of years of progress on child protection. Transition should happen gradually and in stages.

20. Panelists further examined broader regional contexts in West and Central Africa. Conflict contexts evolve and should be considered in transition planning – there is no one-size-fits-all approach. Different missions are organized in multiple ways, have various relationships with United Nations Country Teams, and are perceived differently in the region. Thus, the same approach will not be appropriate for all contexts. Child protection teams in United Nations missions play a key role within the CTFMRs, supporting a network of child protection actors, verifying grave violations, and also positioning child protection politically within the mission and United Nations Country Team, thereby familiarizing other actors with child protection. UNICEF typically takes more of a leadership role in terms of programming and service provision.

21. Panelists highlighted three key challenges and recommendations for transition and exit contexts: (a) maintain technical expertise and presence – including through funding and personnel resources – and address this as early as possible in the planning process; (b) careful planning for the transfer of the MRM database which is managed by the mission and contains sensitive information; and (c) support for UNICEF in engaging parties to conflict in a systematic way and with understanding of the political context.

22. In the ensuing discussion, participants considered: (a) different funding mechanisms and recognition that there is no automatic transfer of resources from the mission to the entity that replaces it; (b) additional lessons learned from previous transitions, including UNAMID to UNITAMS; (c) the role of the United Nations Secretariat in ensuring that capacities are appropriately maintained, particularly in the context of the New Agenda for Peace; (d) the role of unarmed civilian protectors and local civil society in protection during and following a mission transition or exit; (e) the need to understand protection as a continuous process that does not end with the end of the mission; and (f) managing expectations of and communication with local communities.

## **VI. Children with Disabilities in Armed Conflict**

23. The final working session of the workshop examined the distinct ways in which armed conflicts impact children with disabilities. Panelists shared findings from recent research examining the experiences of children with disabilities in armed conflict and where there may be gaps in addressing the specific needs of these children in humanitarian programming and response. Participants discussed ways to

more systematically address the needs of children with disabilities within existing CAAC frameworks.

24. In the 25th anniversary study on the CAAC mandate, the OSRSG-CAAC identified the impact of armed conflict on children with disabilities as an underreported issue. Panelists examined the preliminary findings from a forthcoming OSRSG-CAAC study examining whether children with disabilities face a higher risk of the six grave violations in armed conflict and whether the six grave violations impact children with disabilities differently. The preliminary findings of the study suggest that children with disabilities are at a higher risk for grave violations. For example, children with intellectual disabilities may be recruited to transport weapons and munitions or to be used as suicide bombers; early warning systems are not adapted for children with disabilities, leaving them more vulnerable to killing and injury; children with disabilities may not be able to report rape or sexual violence and those who do report this violation are often not believed; children with disabilities are at heightened risk of being left without assistive devices when humanitarian access is denied. Underreporting and lack of information and understanding of these heightened risks lead to humanitarian assistance programs that frequently are not inclusive of children with disabilities.

25. Panelists also discussed the rights of children with disabilities within international humanitarian law (IHL), as they are entitled to both specific protections afforded to children, as well as the protections afforded to persons with disabilities. However, there is a lack of sensitization and recognition of the compounded vulnerabilities for children with disabilities given the intersecting challenges of disability and age. Frequently, training modules for United Nations troops, national armed forces, or coalition personnel make no mention of children with disabilities, thus they are left out of the protection frameworks. Furthermore, crimes that would constitute crimes against humanity or war crimes are not treated as such when the victims are persons with disabilities. Rather, such crimes are treated as abuse or abandonment and not investigated in the same manner as if the victim had not had a disability. International criminal law should also recognize the specific vulnerabilities of persons with disabilities in armed conflicts.

26. The session further examined the ways in which armed conflict compounds existing challenges for children with disabilities. War affects all children in complex ways. They face constant fear, displacement, loss of access to education and health care and long-lasting psychosocial impacts. These impacts are multiplied for children with disabilities who may be at a higher risk of death and injury, because they may be less able to flee attacks, especially when they have limited or no access to assistive devices or there is no one to help them, or when they are unable to respond quickly to advance warning in cases when advanced warning is provided. When families are forced to make a difficult decision to escape with those who can do so easily, children with disabilities may be left behind. They often struggle to access basic social services or vital specialized services such as therapies or assistive devices and are often overlooked in humanitarian programming. In situations of armed conflict, schools are destroyed, and teachers are provided with very limited support – thus, children with disabilities may wait years to access education. The longer they remain out of school, the less likely they are to finish school with long-lasting impacts. Regarding mental health, all children in armed conflict are at high risk for anxiety and depression, and for children with disabilities, these risks are compounded. Security Council Resolution [2475 \(2019\)](#) recognizes the disproportionate impact of conflict on persons with disabilities. Unfortunately, children with disabilities are rarely ever mentioned, including in the Secretary-General's thematic and country reports. Furthermore, the “maiming” terminology in the CAAC framework is not compliant with the



Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), because it reinforces a medical understanding of disability by focusing on physical disabilities.

27. Conflict creates additional barriers preventing children with disabilities from having the same access to services as other children, leading to a reversal of progress for equity. To address these challenges, panelists emphasized the need to include meaningful, equity-based data collection in humanitarian situation reports and in the MRM. Collecting data in these contexts is complex and difficult, and there is a lack of capacity, tools, understanding, and personnel to collect and disaggregate data on disabilities. There is also a lack of requirement to do so. Efforts are needed to mainstream good practices and lessons learned on data collection, such as the use of the Washington Group Questions. Furthermore, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Bank have estimated that 15 percent of the world's population, which is now over 1 billion people, lives with some form of disability, and this percentage is even higher in war-affected countries, i.e. 54 percent in Afghanistan and approximately 28 percent in Syria. Humanitarian responses should therefore plan for at least the 15 percent proportion but assume higher.

28. Following the panelists' presentations, participants considered: (a) mainstreaming children with disabilities into reports and all the outcomes on CAAC; (b) how to collect and disaggregate data on non-physical disabilities, such as psychosocial disabilities, using the existing MRM methodology; (c) understanding disability as an evolving concept with terminology that also evolves and changes, and therefore the importance of addressing these challenges in stages; and (d) the crucial importance of ensuring that children and adults with disabilities and their organizations are regularly and meaningfully consulted and included in these discussions.

## VII. Recommendations

29. Throughout the workshop discussions, the following recommendations were proposed to strengthen the implementation of the CAAC agenda and the United Nations response to grave violations against children in situations of armed conflict.

### *Upholding and Implementing the CAAC Agenda*

(a) United Nations Member States must treat all persons under 18 years of age as children entitled to special protections under international law. Domestic legislation and policies must not compromise on the definition of a child in the context of counterterrorism or national security. All parties to conflict must also respect the definition of a child as any person under 18 years of age.

(b) United Nations Member States and the United Nations Secretariat should ensure the continued provision of well-trained, specialized child protection officers in United Nations peace operations, special political missions, and United Nations Country Teams, with the financial and personnel resources to fully deliver on child protection mandates and effectively monitor, report, and respond to grave violations against children.

(c) Child protection stakeholders should prioritize prevention of grave violations against children, including through operationalizing existing tools and resolutions. Member States, the SCWG-CAAC, regional organizations, New York-based, regional, and country-specific Groups of Friends of CAAC, and civil society should strengthen partnerships to translate commitments into policy and action and achieve behavior change by parties to conflict to end grave violations against children. All stakeholders should place children at the center of peacebuilding efforts.

(d) United Nations Member States and relevant child protection stakeholders should ensure that effective monitoring, reporting, and response to grave violations continues, including engagement with armed groups to develop and sign action plans to end and prevent violations and taking action to address persistent perpetrators of grave violations against children.

*Strengthening the SCWG-CAAC and Implementing Conclusions*

(a) All members of the SCWG-CAAC should mainstream child protection throughout the work of the Security Council, including by introducing relevant language in pertinent Security Council products, in discussions on mission mandates and transitions, and in the creation and deployment of new child protection posts.

(b) The SCWG-CAAC should maintain a consistent connection to the field, including through regular communication with CTFMRs and follow-up on the implementation of conclusions.

(c) Colleagues in the Permanent Missions in New York should clearly and concisely communicate with embassy counterparts regarding the importance of SCWG-CAAC conclusions and key messages for advocacy.

(d) Diplomatic staff in country should work to cultivate buy-in and commitment from relevant local government authorities on SCWG-CAAC conclusions to ensure their implementation.

(e) Following the adoption of conclusions, Member States should convene high-level, multi-stakeholder events to familiarize relevant government, military, and child protection actors with the findings and recommendations. These events can also serve as a forum for child protection actors to raise specific concerns. Regional and country-specific Groups of Friends of CAAC can be leveraged to convene these events.

(f) SCWG-CAAC members should ensure that conclusions are worded in ways that give actors on the ground the ability to advocate.

(g) SCWG-CAAC members should develop and adopt specific, action-oriented recommendations to donors to address the funding gap for reintegration of children formerly associated with armed forces and armed groups.

*Maintaining Child Protection Capacity in Mission Transitions*

(a) United Nations Member States and the United Nations Secretariat should ensure that child protection technical expertise and presence are maintained in the context of mission transition and drawdown, including through financial and personnel resources. Preparation for maintaining this capacity should begin as early as possible in the exit planning process.

(b) The exiting mission and UNICEF should ensure the protection of all sensitive information related to children during the transfer of management of the MRM database.

(c) Exit plans should take into consideration that not all child protection functions carried out by the mission can be easily transferred to UNICEF, including resources that allow engagement with armed groups in remote locations which will exit with the mission.

(d) Exiting mission staff should communicate with local partners and communities to set realistic expectations of United Nations capacity following mission drawdown.

(e) United Nations Member States and the United Nations Secretariat should ensure UNICEF colleagues are systematically supported to continue engagement with parties to conflict with a political understanding of the situation.

*On Children with Disabilities*

(a) United Nations agencies, NGOs, and other stakeholders implementing the MRM should disaggregate data to include disabilities in order to build the evidence base and better understand the impact of armed conflict on children with disabilities. Tools such as the 2016 Child Functioning Module of the Washington Group Questions can be used for this purpose by being incorporated into existing data collection methodologies, including the MRM.

(b) The CAAC community should explore alternatives to the use of the term “maiming” that are less stigmatizing and more in line with the CRPD. Persons with disabilities and their organizations should be regularly and meaningfully consulted and included in these discussions.

(c) Humanitarian and child protection colleagues should receive additional training on disability-inclusive humanitarian action in line with the United Nations disability inclusion strategy, the CRPD, and Security Council Resolution 2475.

(d) United Nations agencies, NGOs, and others carrying out humanitarian programming should assume that at least 15 percent of a country’s population has some form of disability, in line with estimates provided by WHO and the World Bank, recognizing that in conflict-affected situations, this proportion is likely to be higher, and plan programming and response accordingly.

(e) United Nations agencies, NGOs, and others carrying out humanitarian programming should ensure that children with disabilities, including pre-existing disabilities, have equal access to all humanitarian assistance that is available to other children.

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