

**UNITED NATION PEACE FUND FOR NEPAL**

**ANNUAL programme -NARRATIVE progress report**

**REPORTING PERIOD: 1 january – 31 December 2010**

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| Programme Title & Number |  | Country, Locality(s), Thematic Area(s) |
| Programme Title: Monitoring, reporting and response to conflict related child rights violations.   * Programme Number:PBF/NPL/E-2 * MDTF Office Atlas Number:00074749 | **Nepal**  **UNPFN Priority area:** Cantonment and Reintegration  **UNPBF Nepal Priority Area:**Strengthening State Capacity for Sustaining Peace. |

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| Participating Organization(s) |  | Implementing Partners: |
| UNICEF and OHCHR | * National counterparts: Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction (MoPR), National and local international and national non-governmental organizations (I/NGOs). |

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| Programme/Project Cost (US$) | | |  | Programme Duration (months) | |
| MDTF Fund Contribution: US$ 415,147 *(expenditure)* |  | |  | Overall Duration: 24 month |  |
| Agency Contribution: |  | |  | Start Date: **01/01/10** |  |
| Government Contribution  *NA* |  | |  | End Date: **31/12/11**  *(if applicable)- NA* |  |
| Other Contribution (donor)  *French Government US$ 137,456*  *German Government US$ 635,967*  *(for Response to Conflict related Children only)* | |  |  | Operational Closure -Date |  |
| TOTAL:1,188,570 |  | |  | Expected Financial Closure Date |  |

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| Programme Assessments/Mid-Term Evaluation |  | Submitted By |
| Assessment Completed - if applicable  Yes No Date: \_*Response to Conflict related Children Prog Assessment planned in March/April 2011*  -Evaluation Report *– Yes*  Yes No Date: | * Name: Will Parks * Title: Deputy Representative * Participating Organization (Lead): UNICEF * Email address: wparks@unicef.org |

**BACKGROUND**

The Nepal Country Task Force (TF) on monitoring and reporting established in November 2005 operates with the participation of, and in cooperation with, relevant United Nations agencies and international and national NGOs.

UNICEF and OHCHR as co-chairs have the responsibility of overseeing the monitoring and reporting mechanism. UNICEF holds the secretariat, drafts all operational working documents, facilitates working sessions, and does the overall coordination and fund raising. OHCHR maintains the database and drafts reports in collaboration with UNICEF and the other members of the TF. United Nations Mission in Nepal (UNMIN - till Jan 2011) served as the formal link to the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict. UNMIN also supports the national and international level advocacy initiatives. However, after the exit of UNMIN the Resident Coordinator’s office has resumed the roles played by UNMIN.

Under the UN Security Council Resolution 1612/1882 framework, two monitoring mechanisms exist: one on the monitoring and reporting of the six grave violations and the other to monitor compliance with the Action Plan on the discharge of disqualified Maoist army personnel and related tasks signed on 16 December 2009 between the Government of Nepal, the Unified Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist (UCPN-M) and the United Nations. The monitoring and reporting mechanism covers 58 of the total 75 districts in Nepal.

UNICEF has been supporting a total of 7,500 self-released and informally released children associated with armed forces and armed groups (CAAFAG) and 3,000 other vulnerable or conflict affected children in 34 districts providing reintegration services including education, skills training, income generating activities and psychosocial support. Following the discharge of verified minors from the Maoist cantonments in January-February 2010, UNICEF, as part of the UN Country Team, is furthermore supporting the reintegration of verified minors and late recruits (VMLR), with focus on education support, psychosocial interventions and peace building activities.

UNICEF is implementing the programme through the Children Associated with Armed Forces and Armed Groups (CAAFAG) Working Group, a network of civil society organizations established in 2006 with the objective to provide a forum to analyze protection issues; establish and coordinate comprehensive and harmonized responses for the release, return and reintegration of CAAFAG; and design common advocacy strategies with relevant stakeholders. The CAAFAG Working Group is chaired by UNICEF and has participation from 18 different agencies which meet regularly to also assess the main achievements and obstacles in the implementation of the programme.

The CAAFAG programme is building on globally recognised good practices for reintegration of CAAFAG. Based on the Paris Principle Guidelines[[1]](#footnote-1), an inclusive programming approach has been adopted to support also other vulnerable young people in the communities in order to avoid further stigmatization of children formerly associated with armed forces and armed groups. It focuses its efforts on broader systems development rather than targeting single manifestations of child protection as global experience has shown that building systems, as opposed to trying to address symptoms of problems in isolation, is not only more effective, but it also tends to yield more sustainable results.

The CAAFAG reintegration support framework comprises several key components which function collaboratively, linking with key sectors to provide holistic reintegration and protection support for children:

***Identification and Assessment:*** Children in need of reintegration support are identified and their needs are assessed. Children’s interests, family views, availability of resources at community level and the best interest of child are determining factors for identification of the appropriate economic support package (education, vocational training, income-generating activities).

***Policies and Programming:*** This includes developing appropriate programme strategies, standards and guidelines for return and reintegration of CAAFAG.

***Capacity Building:*** Capacity building with implementing partners includes assessing needs among the implementing partners, providing required training, sharing broad experiences, research and training tools from other countries.

***Communication & Advocacy:*** The objectives of this component include: informing communities and stakeholders about the issues concerning children affected by armed conflict and CAAFAG, as well as the overall disassociation, return and reintegration process; to promote reconciliation; to ensure that children’s issues are a priority within the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement; and to prevent violence against children including recruitment, re-recruitment, stigmatization, manipulation, retaliation and abuse.

***Community Mobilization & Participation:*** Promoting the engagement of all community actors and structures for the prevention and protection from child rights violations is an integral support component for the reintegration of children affected by armed conflict. Strong participation from a diverse representation within the community will go far in contributing to the creation of a peaceful environment that provides positive development opportunities for all children. Participation is a key concept of Community Mobilization. A sense of ownership, on the part of the people themselves, helps to ensure that programmes reflect their culture and values as well as ensuring sustainability.

***Youth and Peace Building (including life skills):*** Looking at the longer-term aspects of successful community reintegration of children, much depends on the extent to which children have become positive agents for change in their societies. The programme aims to restore social cohesion between reunified children and other children from different division. Reconciliation amongst all these groups is perhaps the most fragile and also most important element of a national peace-building strategy. The programme, therefore, facilitates reconciliation amongst these different groups.

# A. PURPOSE

The overall purpose of the project is to ensure that child protection actors, including state entities, are taking decisive and appropriate actions to prevent and respond to violations of children’s rights. Activities to support the stabilization of the peace process by monitoring and responding to violations against children, strengthening child protection systems and by identifying and mitigating against factors that increase children’s vulnerability to engagement in activities that threaten the peace process.

The objective is to monitor and report on the discharge and rehabilitation process and ongoing violations of children’s rights, as mandated by Security Council 1612 and 1882, as well as provide appropriate services for informally or self-released children associated with armed forces and armed groups (CAAFAG) and other children affected by armed conflict (CAAC) to ensure their successful reintegration into their communities.

**B. OUTCOMES**

The Programme has two key outcomes:

1. Strengthened capacity of child protection actors, including state entities, to monitor, document, verify and respond to grave violations (monitoring component).
2. Children are effectively rehabilitated and reintegrated back into their communities (reintegration component).

And the following outputs:

**Monitoring component:**

* Strengthened the capacity of the 1612 Task Force to monitor, document, verify and report on the discharge and rehabilitation of disqualified Maoist Army personnel and, more generally, grave child rights violations;
* Monitoring of the Unified Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist’s (UCPN-M) compliance with the Action Plan on the discharge of disqualified Maoist army personnel and related tasks signed on 16 December 2009 between the Government of Nepal, the UN and the UCPN-M;
* Enhanced capacity of the government to respond to rights violations through monitoring, reporting and responding to the six core violations and;

**Reintegration component:**

* Enhanced capacity of the government to implement the National Plan of Action for the rehabilitation of children affected by the armed conflict;
* Informally or self-released CAAFAG and CAAC have gained knowledge and skills that will contribute to their socio-economic reintegration;
* Sustained and inter-agency advocacy against the recruitment and misuse of children by the political parties carried out by the CAAC Working Group;
* Child Clubs have been mobilized to develop understanding and awareness of children and young people to transitional justice and peace building;

The outcomes and outputs of the projects are coherent and have contributed to the Strategic (UN) Planning Framework guiding the operations of the Fund in following areas:

* Strengthen the monitoring, reporting and protection of children affected by the conflict, in line with UNSCR 1612 and 1882.
* Rehabilitation and reintegration of CAAFAG and CAAC.

# RESOURCES

*Financial Resources:*

* Provide information on other funding resources available to the project, if applicable.
* Provide information on good practices and constraints in the mechanics of the financial process, times to get transfers, identification of potential bottlenecks, need for better coordination, etc.

*Financial Resources:*

- During the reporting period, the monitoring component of the programme is supported by the UNPTF (US$ 415,147).

- The reintegration component (response to conflict related child rights violations) was partially supported by the UNPTF and other donor agencies (French Government US$ 137,456, German Government US$ 635,967). Total Programme cost for the reporting period was US$ 1,188,570.

*Human Resources:*

For the Monitoring component:

* National Staff: For UN Security Council Resolution 1612 monitoring and reporting mechanism - two child protection officers, one project assistance and eight consultants
* International Staff: four international UN Volunteers and one consultant

For the reintegration component:

* National Staff: Three regional monitors (consultants), one database associate, one project assistance

# IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS

***UN SC Resolution 1612 Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism***

Under the supervision of the National Monitoring Team, Regional Monitoring teams are deployed in four regions of the country (Far-Western, Mid-Western, Central/Western and Eastern regions) to undertake field monitoring. The Regional Monitoring Teams meet and interview relevant actors to verify compliance by the UCPN-M with the Action Plan. The verified minors and their immediate families are the most relevant sources, as well as interlocutors working on issues related to the rehabilitation of the verified minors.[[2]](#footnote-2) The information collected during interviews of verified minors is recorded and analyzed according to key indicator to assess compliance with the Action Plan.

A number of factors have affected the outcome of the monitoring. In certain areas, establishing the location of, or contact with, verified minors has proven difficult due to communication difficulties with remote areas. Furthermore, it is apparent that some verified minors have been unwilling to share information with the teams, possibly due to loyalty to the Maoist army or UCPN-M party, or fears of possible repercussions, and that this may have affected the analysis to some extent. However, overall the National Monitoring Team believe that the information obtained through monitoring provides a broadly accurate picture of the circumstances of the disqualified verified minors and overall level of compliance with the Action Plan by the UCPN-M.

As briefly mentioned above, the Programme is currently been implemented through the CAAFAG working group, a networking comprising of 18 different national and international civil society organizations with specialized experience in the implementation of support programmes for CAAC and CAAFAG. UNICEF national child protection officers are deployed in three regions to monitor and follow up on conducted activities in the CAAFAG programme as well as providing daily technical support to the implementing partners. Frequent monitoring visits by UNICEF field staff have been conducted to implementing partners. In some of the districts, monitoring and/or project advisory committees have been formed with members from governmental and non-governmental stakeholders such as Women and Children Offices (WCO), District Child Welfare Boards (DCWB), District Education Offices (DEO), District Development Committees (DDC), NGO federation and UNICEF which has enabled joint monitoring and follow up.

Additionally, follow up is being done through regular review meetings with all implementing partners of the CAAFAG programme where progress and challenges are shared and reviewed and plans for the following year are elaborated.

# RESULTS

Based on the identified outcomes the following achievements were delivered.

**Outcome 1:** **Strengthened capacity of child protection actors, including state entities, to monitor, document, verify and respond to grave child violations**

**Monitoring of the Action Plan**

Based on the Action Plan signed between the UCPN-M, the government and the United Nations, a UN monitoring mechanism is established to monitor the UCPN-M’s compliance with the Action Plan. The national monitoring team comprises of OHCHR and UNICEF. The 4 regional teams comprise of 1 international UN Volunteer and 2 national staff each from OHCHR and UNICEF.

Training to the 4 regional based UN monitors has been provided on the discharge and rehabilitation process including the 1612 monitoring and reporting mechanism; five UN monitoring team meetings (once in every 6 weeks) were conducted to update on the progress and challenges faced during the implementation of the Action Plan.

Six meetings were conducted between the national monitoring team and the UCPN-M at the central level to discuss and raise concerns with regard to the compliance of the Action Plan. The regional monitoring teams held meetings with the 7 division commanders (or acting division commanders) from each Maoist cantonment to raise issues of concern.

A database has been developed and regularly updated to capture the findings by the regional monitoring teams on the compliance with the Action Plan.

The regional monitoring teams provided daily and weekly monitoring reports which were compiled and analyzed by the national monitoring team.

Based on the findings of the regional monitoring teams, the national monitoring team has prepared and submitted 3 periodical reports to the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict (OSRSG-CAAC). An annual monitoring report is being drafted to be submitted to the aforementioned agency.

**Monitoring of the six core violations as mandated by the UN Security Resolution 1612**

Regular reports on grave child rights violations have been submitted to the Office of the Representative of the Secretary General – Children and Armed Conflict (OSRSG-CAAC). These reports are ultimately directed to the Security Council Working Group through the six global horizontal notes and monitoring reports. The 1612 National Task Force (TF) on monitoring and reporting mechanism (MRM) documented approximately 180 cases out of which cases requiring response have been referred to relevant service providers. This amounts to 20% of the total cases. Most of the cases are related to armed criminal groups, operating primarily in the southern Terai districts; which continue to have a serious impact on the overall security situation. A number of abductions and killings of members of the business community, local authorities and political parties were documented. However, most of the documented cases do not fall within the scope of UN resolution 1612. Monitoring and reporting has led to response on many levels. The mechanism has created awareness on grave violations against children at the community level. By negotiating with parties to the conflict, the MRM has created the space through which the TF can provide immediate direct response to the victims of the violations, including legal and medical aid. The TF also addresses children’s needs through coordination with the Children Associated with Armed Forces and Armed Groups (CAAFAG) Working Group and Mine Action Joint Working Group (MAJWG). A referral mechanism has been initiated for responding to reported violations and improving linkages of referrals for follow up support between the 1612TF, CAAFAG implementing partners and MAJWG agencies. The TF supported the development of transitional justice processes, including advocating for the structural and organizational framework of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to incorporate children and youth issues and reflect a comprehensive child rights agenda. The Truth and Reconciliation Bill has not yet been approved by the Cabinet.

Furthermore, community-based reconciliation initiatives were implemented, including public dialogues, mural paintings and exhibitions on children and armed conflict, developed by children to create genuine platforms for children to engage in dialogue and conflict transformation processes with communities and local government stakeholders. The MRM has strengthened human rights networks at national, regional, and district levels.

**Outcome 2: Children are effectively rehabilitated and reintegrated back into their communities (reintegration component).**

UNICEF has through its implementing partners continued providing reintegration support to a total of 5,776 informally and self released CAAFAG and other children affected by armed conflict (CAAC) in 34 districts: 64% children received education support, and 20% received support for vocational training. Furthermore, 16% children and their families have received support for income generating activities.

UNICEF, in its efforts to support the community-based reintegration of CAAFAG and other children affected by conflict, has established an extensive network of community based and child rights organizations at district and community levels. Leveraging the network’s strengths, UNICEF has been able to establish a referral mechanism at regional and district levels which links diverse service providers in the district with children who may need their services.

Education support

Education support to children includes payment of school admission and exam fees and provision of school materials and uniform. Before children are enrolled into schools, the implementing partner negotiates with the School Management Committees (SMC) and teachers to ensure that after the initial year of support, the school and parents of the children take responsibility for educating the child. This effort is made to ensure long term support for reintegration of children without creating dependence on external funding. Based on the Paris Principles for reintegration of CAAFAG, the support to individual CAAFAG is always coupled with support to the community structure in order to create a sense of community involvement and participation towards the reintegration of CAAFAG. Schools have been and continue to be a key community structure for children’s successful reintegration, but many of them have insufficient class rooms, teachers and materials. Individual support to CAAFAG is therefore complemented by support for strengthening the infrastructure of the school. Educational support has been provided 64% CAAFAG and vulnerable children

Vocational skills training

Approximately 20 per cent of the CAAFAG are offered different vocational trainings and/or support to income-generating activities (IGA) because of their age and the pressure to contribute to family earning. The objective of the vocational training is to provide the adolescents with sufficient skills to earn an income in their locality, ideally in a transferable skill that would allow them to find work and earn money in different settings in Nepal and even abroad. In each case the implementing partners undertake rigorous assessments of individual beneficiaries. The types of vocational training vary by district and depend on available resources and the interest of the child. As male youth enjoy more cultural freedom than female youth, including the ability to travel more freely, they have been able to partake in a wide selection of skills trainings. Despite much effort by CAAFAG programme partners to assess and reassess the vocational choices made by many females, tailoring still proves to be the most dominant choice while electronic repairing is the most popular choice for males. To date, a total of 20% adolescents were provided with vocational skills training in 34districts.

Support to income generating activities

Income generating activities (IGA) support include support for the establishment of small shops, animal husbandry and agricultural support, as well as support to carpentry, electronic repairing tools, and sewing accessories. Youth receive continuous support from social workers while establishing their income generating enterprise. IGA support is also provided to the poorest and most marginalized families of school support beneficiaries to help them to generate sufficient income to be able to keep their children enrolled in school. IGA support has in the reporting period been provided to a total of 16% youth and their families in 34 districts.

Psychosocial support

CAAFAG children consistently show worse psychosocial wellbeing than other children in their communities who have never been associated with armed groups. Somewhat surprisingly, their experience of trying to reintegrate back into society has proven to be a stronger contributor to psychosocial problems than the traumatic events they experienced during their associations with armed groups. Girl CAAFAG have more psychosocial difficulties compared with boys and married girls are at the greatest risk of severe psychosocial problems. Based on the IASC Guidelines on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergency Settings[[3]](#footnote-3), most young people are resilient and normalizing activities such as entering school, skills training or a child club is sufficient to ensure psychosocial well-being. However, a small percentage, usually up to 5%, need individual counseling support from a certified counselor. In the CAAFAG programme, more than 600 children have received psychosocial counseling in all the 34 current programme districts. The type and duration of support varies depending on the individual needs of the child.

On average, children received 8 visits from the community social worker. The psychosocial counseling support has helped children to adjust in their families, schools, peer groups and communities, and they have gained skills to better identify and cope with their psychosocial problems. It has helped them to slowly regain memory of their past experiences, focus on their future and to become more positive about their prospects and opportunities in general. The counseling has furthermore had a positive effect on school attendance and enrolment rates and has reduced the drop out ratio. As part of the capacity building support at district and community level, more than 6,000 community psychosocial workers, teachers and health workers in 34 districts have been provided with psychosocial training and orientations on child rights, thereby enabling them to identify CAAFAG in need of specialized protection services and provide basic counseling services or make referrals when needed. Furthermore, eight districts have a district psychosocial counselor who has completed six months of intensive training in psychosocial care. UNICEF’s partner organization Trans-cultural Psychosocial Organization (TPO) has in the project period continued the capacity building of CAAFAG implementing partners in eight districts.

The focus in the phase covered by the report has been on developing a common approach to and standards for psychosocial services to conflict affected children among the CAAFAG Working Group members as well as to further institutionalize psychosocial care and support in the eight districts and expand its capacity building initiatives in four additional districts. In the project period, TPO has been supervising and monitoring the district based counselors and provided assistance to the counselors in case of difficult cases. A five days training of trainers (ToT) was conducted for 7 psychosocial counselors in order to provide them with training and orientation skills to effectively conduct orientation and short term training programmes in the communities in their districts. Subsequently, such orientation programmes have been conducted in all districts. Furthermore, a 28 days community psychosocial workers training on basic psychosocial care were conducted for 74 social mobilizers from UNICEF’s implementing NGO partners, covering ten districts. The training has enabled the community workers to provide basic psychosocial support to children or refer more complicated cases to a certified counselor. 3 days refresher trainings for child protection social workers, health workers and mother’s groups were also conducted. Community-based psychosocial workers were furthermore provided additional training on gender-based violence and substance abuse.

**Community sensitizations and advocacy**

Sensitization sessions have been held in all districts. The focus of the community sensitization program is to create awareness in the communities about the situation and status of children. Community members such as teachers, School Management Committee (SMC) members, health workers and members of community based organizations and child and youth clubs are sensitized about the CAAFAG programme as well as different legal provisions on child rights and child protection. The community sensitizations have played a vital role in understanding the importance of child protection and misuse of children for political purposes.

In order to promote children’s rights, interaction programmes have been held with political parties. The purpose of the programmes was to make political parties aware of child rights issues and obtain their commitment for overall child protection and support against misuse of children for political purposes. The meetings have been successful in achieving written commitments for child protection by key political stakeholders, including commitments not to use children in political activities.

**Support to peace building activities through child clubs**

In the absence of formally established peace structures at the local level, UNICEF has supported community-based peace building and reconciliation initiatives focusing on CAAFAG as well as other children affected by conflict. Initiatives highlight the importance of family, extended family and community involvement and participation in the protection of children affected by conflict, including the empowerment and participation of children and young people in the peace process. In all 34 UNICEF supported districts, children and youth clubs have been trained on child rights issues and issues related to peace and reconciliation.

Youth leaders from nine districts were trained on youth leadership for peace building by Search for Common Ground (SFCG) and I/NGO staff were trained on how to support youth for facilitating peace building processes. Small grants were given to 60 child and youth clubs in order to undertake child rights awareness campaigns for peace building, using a youth led approach and focusing on issues of social conflict and reconciliation. Peace building activities included awareness raising activities such as street dramas, folk song competitions on child rights and peace building, quiz, poem and speech contests.

The peace building activities have been successful in raising the awareness on child rights and peace building, in particular with regards to the positive role that children and youth can play as agents of peace in their communities.

**Coordination and referral**

At the national level, coordination is done through the CAAC Working Group with members from the CAAFAG Working Group and the 1612 Task Force for the implementation of the reintegration support. The CAAFAG Working Group meets regularly at national, regional and district levels to discuss programme activities, case management and referrals. UNICEF supported the development and establishment of guidelines and standards to ensure that the reintegration services provided by members of the CAAFAG Working Group meet international standards and are delivered in a consistent manner. A database on CAAFAG brings together inputs from the lead organizations (UNICEF, Save the Children and World Education) and their community based partners. The database is reviewed regularly, and analysis of data is shared within the CAAFAG Working Group to inform programming and policy development.

At the district level, UNICEF increased interaction with concerned government agencies, including District Child Welfare Boards, District Women and Children’s Offices and District Education Offices, to orient and involve them in the reintegration programme, and to explore areas for joint intervention with shared responsibilities. The implementing partners are coordinating with both government line agencies and local NGOs as well as with political parties and other organizations and community based groups such as School Management Committees (SMCs), parents-teachers associations (PTA), child and youth clubs, mother’s and women’s groups and cooperatives through regular meetings and workshops. UNICEF has been supporting government stakeholders to enhance their capacity to protect the rights of children in the districts. DCWB and WCO are being supported for implementation of a functional referral mechanism through which child rights violations are reported and referred for appropriate support. UNICEF’s support can be said to have laid the foundation for the establishment of a child protection system at district and community levels, which will have a positive and long-term impact on ensuring and protecting the rights of children. As a result of capacity building efforts, most implementing partners have started working on broader child protection issues and have started engaging with other stakeholders in the district to protect and ensure rights of children.

Closure of successful reintegration cases

It is estimated that three to five years of programming are needed in order to ensure long-term reintegration of young people into civilian life and to significantly reduce the chances of their re-recruitment into armed forces and groups. UNICEF has been focusing on following up and closing successful cases of reintegration while strengthening existing government and community systems and referral mechanisms for durable reintegration, long term child and youth protection and prevention of recruitment.

Together with the CAAFAG Working Group, UNICEF has developed a guideline to ensure systematic assessment and closure of cases. After assessment of individual cases during the project period, a total of 200 cases have been closed in the districts.

**Support to the Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction**

UNICEF has been providing technical support to the Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction (MoPR) to draft a National Plan of Action (NPA) for the Reintegration of Children Affected by Armed Conflict. The NPA was approved by the Cabinet in December 2010 and it will be officially launched in March 2011. The Government has also facilitated the establishment of a task force to define the strategies and mechanisms for the implementation of the NAP, scheduled to commence in June 2011.

**Support to Verified Minors and Late Recruits discharged from the Maoist cantonments**

UNICEF, as part of the UNCT, has been supporting the discharge and reintegration of 4,008 former combatants who in 2007 were verified as minors (2,973) and late-recruits (1,035). After the completion of the discharge process in January-February 2010, the UNCT has been providing rehabilitation support to the discharges. A set of four packages which include options for vocational training, micro-enterprise, education and health related trainings are being offered to the discharged minors and late recruits through UNDP (vocational training and micro-enterprise), UNICEF (education) and UNFPA (health-related trainings), while ILO will complement efforts by enhancing the capacity of training providers.

As of end of November 2010, 406 verified minors and late recruits have been referred to UNICEF for education support out of which 253 (108 females, 145 males) are already enrolled in schools all across the country. The remaining 153 verified minors and late recruits are in the process of being enrolled. UNICEF has made provisions to provide psychosocial support to the discharged verified minors and late recruits in 62 districts, mobilising the existing CAAFAG Working Group network. In the districts supported by the French Committee, a total of 60 have been referred for education support of which 45 (16 females and 29 males) have been supported so far.

**OVERALL PROBLEMS/CHALLENGES**

**Operational:** nothing to report.

**Programmatic:**

1. **Monitoring Component:**

**UNSC Resolution 1612 Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism**

Though there has been a significant decrease in grave violations committed against children, new protection challenges are emerging in the current transitional context. The emergence of groups using force for political and often for criminal motives and the growing ‘culture’ of strikes and disturbances as a method of protest have increased children’s vulnerability to violations. Children are being used by Terai and Eastern Hills groups that have unclear agendas, but which appear to include a mix of political and criminal objectives. Anecdotal evidence and information on patterns and trends indicate, however, that most of the allegations in the Terai and the Eastern Hills are criminal in nature which does not fall within the scope of 1612 MRM. 1612 Monitors expressed concern over the increased risk monitors could face in monitoring and verifying cases in the Terai and the Eastern Hills districts.

1. **Reintegration component:**

The programme has faced a variety of operational challenges that made implementation difficult in several areas. Challenges included restricted access to project areas, demands from political groups for ‘donations’, interference in hiring and tendering processes, and strikes or *bandha*.

**Gender specific reintegration issues**

Of the total children and young people receiving support from UNICEF’s reintegration programme, 61 per cent are boys and 39 per cent are girls. Girls in particular are seen to face various problems which hinder successful reintegration. Some examples of gender issues include family and social pressure to marry girls at early age and availability of limited and stereotype skills training and livelihood options for girls. It is also seen that girls, after moving to their in-law house after their marriage, are forced to discontinue their education or livelihood options, as they are expected to support the household work. UNICEF will has provided gender training to the implementing partners and technical assistance to carry out gender assessments in order to identify specific needs and design appropriate responses to address them.

**Coverage and accessibility of CAAFAG**

Monitoring of the programmes and follow up of each individual beneficiary remains a challenge because of the wide coverage area and the difficulty of access to most areas. This is coupled with the limited time within which programme implementation is expected to occur. There is a critical need to allow for longer support with greater benefits to children. Some partners have registered more children than can be supported through the programme, in particular children at risk of joining armed forces and armed groups due to different reasons such as poverty, domestic violence, abuse and child labour. The programme has not been able to cater to all those children’s needs. High demands from the community for support to other vulnerable children than CAAFAG have in some cases not been conducive to getting cooperation from the community for reintegration efforts.

**Linkage with employment**

Nepal has a high unemployment rate, and it has remained a challenge throughout the project to link all vocational trainees with the job market. Around one third have obtained employment upon completion of their vocational training programme. Especially in suburban and rural areas, it has been difficult to find employment options. UNICEF’s implementing partners have received training on economic reintegration to help them assess the labour market and develop strategies for linking vocational trainees with employment opportunities.

**LESSONS LEARNED**

* Operating the 1612 monitoring and reporting mechanism in the post-conflict situation is extremely challenging due to the frequent changes in the political scenarios.
* There are very limited numbers of reported grave violations falling within the scope of the MRM. Given this reality, continuing the Monitoring and Reporting of the six grave violations is not cost-effective. A sustained monitoring focus could remain vis-à-vis the Action Plan for the discharge of disqualified Maoist army personnel till the UCPN-M is delisted from the Secretary General’s annual report. This would require a restructuring of the composition of the team;
* The strong coordination and collaboration between the UN rehabilitation and monitoring teams at the national and field level facilitated to carry out the monitoring activities effectively and efficiently.

# FUTURE WORK PLAN

Continue monitoring compliance with the terms, conditions and commitments laid out in the Action Plan between the Government, the UCPN-M, and the UN regarding the discharge of the disqualified army personnel, including the verified minors.

Sustain child rights monitoring, reporting and response mechanism for conflict-related violations specified in Security Council Resolutions 1612 and 1882, in the context of the post-conflict situation; capacity building of the Monitoring and Reporting Task Force members in monitoring and case management. However, sustaining the 1612 monitoring and reporting mechanism will largely depend on the decision to be made by the Security Council Working Group on May/June 2011 on listing or delisting of the UCPN-M.

UNICEF, through the implementing partners it has been coordinating with, will continue to support government and non-governmental stakeholders including community-based organizations for the effective implementation of reintegration services to CAAFAG and CAAC. The input, targeted towards enhancing coordination and building capacity of child rights organizations, has resulted in the establishment of a stronger network at district and community levels. This can be further strengthened to establish a functional child protection system that will not only prevent the recruitment of children by armed forces and armed groups but also monitor and prevent other forms of child rights violations.

UNICEF will in the coming months provide additional tools and technical support to implementing partners to capacitate them to conduct gender assessments with the aim of scaling up efforts to address gender specific issues.

Furthermore, based on individual case assessments, UNICEF will continue the focus on closing successfully reintegrated cases and linking the most vulnerable adolescents, e.g. adolescents from very poor families, married and single girls, to long term development programmes and transfer cases to government supported programmes for CAAC once the implementation of the NPA on reintegration of CAAC starts. UNICEF is advocating for the government to implement the NPA as soon as possible and take ownership and responsibility for further support to CAAFAG.

UNICEF will work at district and community level with relevant stakeholders (including child and youth clubs, and child protection agencies) to advocate against misuse of children. At the national level, UNICEF will advocate for the criminalization of recruitment of children and declare schools and children as zones of peace.

In the area of transitional justice, UNICEF will advocate for the inclusion of children in the envisaged Truth and Reconciliation Commission and other transitional justice processes as they develop, including ensuring justice to victims of sexual abuse and torture. Advocacy will focus on ensuring safe and meaningful participation of children in line with international standards and best practices from recent experiences in other countries.

Furthermore, UNICEF will closely monitor of the situation for the newly discharged verified minors and late recruits from the cantonments and continue supporting the provision of reintegration packages, in particular, the education and psychosocial components.

* **Major adjustments in strategies, targets or key outcomes and outputs planned**

**Documentation the cases out of conflict period:** not relevant.

1. Complementary to the Paris Commitments to Protect Children Unlawfully Recruited or Used by Armed Forces of Armed Groups (The Paris Commitments), the Principles and Guidelines on Children Associated with Armed Forces or Armed Groups (the Paris Principles) provide operational guidelines on the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of all categories of children associated with armed groups for those who are implementing programmes on the ground. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. This included UN rehabilitation counselors, rehabilitation process service providers and the CAFAAG group. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. IASC Guidelines on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergency Settings, <http://www.humanitarianinfo.org/iasc/content/products/default.asp> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)