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The European Union's Action Plan on Children's Rights in External Action {COM(2008) 55 final} {SEC(2008) 135}

COMMISSION STAFF WORKING PAPER

The European Union's Action Plan on Children's Rights in External Action

Introduction

This Staff Working Paper is a contribution to the development of the EU's strategy on the rights of the child. The Paper addresses three key issues on children's rights in the context of the European Union's external relations and development cooperation. First, it presents a set of guiding principles. Second, it identifies priorities for action including targets and indicators in the form of a logical framework and a timeline. Third, it defines a framework for monitoring, coordination and accountability.

The EU is called upon to address questions relating to children's needs and rights in a range of different circumstances. Each situation is unique and a careful analysis is therefore necessary in order to identify the most effective and appropriate set of instruments to be used at country, regional and global levels.

One of the main drivers of development policy and practice are the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Over ten million children under 5 die every year from diseases which are easy to prevent or treat. One billion children suffer impaired physical, intellectual and/or psychological development the effects of which are often irreversible. One sixth of all children are not enrolled in primary school and one in five primary school pupils do not reach the last grade[i] with a bias against girls in many countries. Many of the children failing completion and most of those out-of-school can be found at work[ii] (over 200 million children below the minimum age), many of them in hazardous situations or conditions.

The European Union is fully committed to reaching the targets set by the MDGs. Most of the MDGs are intimately related to the well-being and full development of children and adolescents [iii]. As not all countries are likely to reach the MDG targets in time, it is clear that unless we put children at the heart of the EU's development policies the likelihood of achieving the MDGs will be significantly reduced.

Promoting and protecting children's rights through the European Union's external policy should be seen in the broader context of the EU's commitments to promote human rights using all available instruments, and particularly in the framework of the implementation of the EU Guidelines on Children and Armed Conflict and the EU Guidelines on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of the Child and its Implementation Strategy; which sets for an initial period of two years as a first priority area the issue of "all forms of violence against children".

Guiding principles

The present Action Plan is underpinned by the following key principles:

1. the application of a holistic and coherent children's rights-based approach rooted in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC);
2. respect for the views of the child;
3. gender mainstreaming;
4. local ownership.

These guiding principles should be respected during the planning, implementation and evaluation of all EU relevant external actions. These can range from political dialogues with partner governments, actions in international fora, development programming and crisis management and will also include implementation methodologies and tools such as quality checklists or terms of reference for evaluations.

Given the wide variations in circumstances and contexts between different countries, sub-regions and regions, the effective application of these four guiding principles can only be achieved within the framework of a comprehensive analysis of the specific situations confronting children and adolescents. The following sections provide further details regarding these guiding principles and their practical application.

A holistic and coherent human rights-based approach

The core of this approach is the integration into all actions and practical measures of the four fundamental principles contained in the CRC, namely: non-discrimination, best interests of the child, survival and development, and respect for the views of the child. Commitments under the CRC and in particular these principles should guide the process of designing and implementing all measures aimed at improving the situation of children and adolescents.

The CRC, together with its Optional Protocols, also represents an effective conceptual resource for analysing actual national human rights situations. The first stage of such an analysis is identifying those stakeholders who are responsible for promoting and protecting children's rights, i.e. the duty-bearers. The second stage is analysing and determining those barriers which prevent the duty-bearers from duly implementing their obligations, as well as those barriers preventing rights-holders (specifically, children) from claiming their rights. The third stage involves strengthening the various capacities that are needed to overcome such barriers. Measures to achieve this can include strengthening national and international protection structures and mechanisms, raising awareness of children's rights and building support for their promotion.

Respect for the views of children and adolescents

Children are seldom given an opportunity to make their voices heard and to have their views taken into account, even on those matters that affect them directly. As already stated in the 2006 Communication "Towards an EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child", EU policies and programmes should contribute to giving children the possibility to express their views and getting these views heard by the relevant authorities.

Implementing this principle means that the EU should:

- Promote opportunities for children to acquire sufficient and adequate competencies and to strengthen their leadership and negotiation skills, including through communication for empowerment, particularly by developing child communication and media strategies aimed at empowering children to proactively defend their rights^[iv];
- Support networking between existing children's organisations, including between organisations in the North and the South. In this context, the EU could consider utilising/strengthen the links between the EU development programmes and other relevant EU initiatives - such as the Youth in Action 2007 – 2013 programme;
- Enhancing the capacity of authorities and planners to set up structures allowing for effective children's participation.

Gender mainstreaming

It is important to recognise the different needs of girls and boys. Girl children may be particularly vulnerable and face specific risks of abuse and violation of their rights. Due attention must thus be paid to the issue of gender equality, which the European Consensus defines as a cross-cutting issue to be mainstreamed across all EU-supported actions. Mainstreaming gender equality is particularly important in new aid delivery mechanisms such as general budget support. In order for gender mainstreaming to be efficient, it is important to develop and to use gender-specific indicators in the planning, implementation and evaluation of all actions.

In the wider perspective, promoting gender equality is recognised as having an immediate and positive impact on the situation of children. Promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women yields the double dividend of simultaneously advancing the rights of women and their children.

Local ownership

Ownership of development cooperation initiatives by partner countries is an essential element of the Paris Declaration. This principle underpins the EU's approach to external relations and development cooperation. It means that wherever possible, the EU should align with, and support, partner countries' capacity to protect children's rights including by strengthening institutional capacities and structures (such as Child Ombudsmen) and enhancing relevant strategies (such as those relating to child budgeting). In addition, effective coordination and complementarity between different donors based on the EU Code of Conduct on the Division of Labour should be better ensured.

Priority actions at national, regional and global levels

Any response on the part of the European Union must be calibrated so as to take account of: (i) the specific situation and needs of children in the country or region in question; (ii) the external relations instruments available; and (iii) the added value that can be achieved through EU action.

Political and policy dialogues

In its political and policy dialogue at different levels, the EU should systematically address issues related to the promotion and protection of children's rights, including the ratification or accession to relevant international and regional treaties, transposing them into national legislations and their implementation.

The promotion and protection of children's rights should be addressed in the context of the political and policy[v] dialogue with the governments of third countries as well as in the context of coordinated action in regional and international fora. In the UN, the EU should actively promote children's rights and support the implementation of the UN Plan of Action "A World Fit for Children" and the UN General Assembly Resolution on the Rights of the Child. It should also continue to support work on children's rights by UN bodies and the ILO's work on child labour.

The EU Guidelines on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of the Child advocate general actions to enhance ongoing efforts on children's rights in the EU's external human rights policy, in multilateral fora and in its relations with third countries. In so doing the EU will encourage States to: adhere to and implement international norms and standards and cooperate with international human rights mechanisms and procedures; reinforce capacity for promoting and protecting children's rights at national level; improve monitoring processes and structures; encourage the allocation of resources for promoting and protecting children's rights; advocate law reform for promoting and protecting children's rights; combat and discourage violations of children's rights; empower children to participate more effectively in decision making and implementation of policies affecting them, and facilitate their participation; enhance families' and other caregivers' capacities to fully carry out their roles with regard to the protection of children's rights; support the development of awareness-raising programmes on children's rights.

These Guidelines also provide for specific measures related to a thematic priority area: the first priority area selected for an initial period of two years is the issue of combating all forms of violence against children. The EU Guidelines on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of the Child provide for detailed elements on the objectives of political dialogues in the framework of the EU external human rights policy.

The possibility of EU démarches or declarations on specific children's rights issues should be regularly considered, particularly in the presence of recent authoritative research evidence or reports reinforcing the EU's message.

The EU trade policy is carried out in full awareness of the need to make it consistent with protection and promotion of children's rights[vi]. The promotion of children's rights in trade policy is part of the broader agenda of sustainable development. In bilateral agreements, the issue of children's rights is covered by the chapter of labour standards. In order to effectively link the trade dialogue with the children's rights and the needs of children and adolescents, consideration is given to further deepen the EU understanding of how trade agreements affect labour markets and the quality of jobs, including the issue of child labour. This requires reliable information and indicators to help poorer countries plan the right social and employment policies to maximise the benefits of trade opening.

The development and governance dialogue must include the issue of integrating children's rights issues with Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers, other country processes such as National Development Plans and aid modalities including budget support and MDG

contracting.. The EU should encourage partner governments to create National Action Plans for Children[vii], through a participatory process including children and, where available, independent Children's Ombudsmen. If possible, discussions should focus on the setting-up of clear benchmarks and measurable targets including details about timelines and review mechanisms for such commitments.

The EU should regularly liaise with children's representatives, children's Ombudsmen where present, relevant UN representatives, other international organisations dealing with children's rights, social partners, independent national institutions dealing with children's rights and NGO representatives (including child-protection networks). The European Forum on the Rights of the Child offers a valuable platform for facilitating such cooperation.

Mainstreaming children's rights

Children's rights in development cooperation should be promoted on the one hand by mainstreaming children's rights throughout all programmes and on the other hand through specific actions.

In order to achieve the overall goal of poverty reduction it is essential to address the root causes of child deprivation and abuse and to enhance families' capacities to assure the well-being of their children. The decline of traditional community support systems, conflict-born insecurity and abuses, migration and lack of healthcare, education and other services — all these dimensions increase the vulnerability of families and put increased strain on their coping mechanisms. Through its focus on poverty reduction, development cooperation seeks to address the root causes of child deprivation. Country and thematic programmes should include effectively mainstreaming children's rights and needs in order to include concrete actions benefiting children and promoting their well-being directly as well as to prevent children's rights violations.

Country programming

The EU should pay specific attention to children's rights in country programming under the different cooperation instruments available. Fulfilling this objective requires:

5. Taking account of children's rights in the country situational analysis, in the governance profile and other relevant documents; mainstreaming children's rights throughout the programming, identification and implementation of actions; supplementing geographic programmes with specific thematic actions;
6. Generating gender and age-disaggregated data and analysis in order to account for children in policy, legislative and budgetary provisions;
7. Carrying out child-sensitive impact assessments and evaluations, particularly in the context of reviews of country strategies. Impact assessments should be built on reports submitted by State parties to the CRC, the UN Treaty bodies' concluding observations, and other reliable sources. They should be carried out both as ex ante and ex post exercises as part of an information policy, including an analysis of the situation of children and as far as possible of the impact of EU programmes on children's rights. This information should be included in the relevant reporting, such as the joint annual, mid-term and end-of-term reviews. The Children's rights Toolkit will include guidance to facilitate this process.

Special attention should be paid to children's rights in joint EU actions at country level and in actions supported under the various EC cooperation instruments. These latter include the European Development Fund, the Development Cooperation Instrument, the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument and the Pre-Accession Instrument. This should be done within the relevant priority areas by strengthening the legal rights and the legal protection of children, promoting positive attitudes towards the realisation of children's rights and reinforcing national systems that provide basic social services to children and guarantee core labour standards, including the application of the relevant ILO Conventions.

The main sectors where the EU will be focusing on mainstreaming children's rights should be:

8. Social sectors. The access of children to basic services should include free, compulsory and universal primary education and universal and free access to basic health services. It should also support social protection schemes for children who experience particular difficulties in developing their potential, e.g. exploited or abused children, children with disabilities, children suffering dysfunctional family life and social exclusion, orphans and vulnerable children affected by HIV/AIDS.

9. Governance. In the context of the enhanced attention paid to governance in the present programming cycle, the EU should encourage ratification and implementation of the main international instruments on children's rights. In this respect, the CRC and its Optional Protocols, the commitments of the International Conference on Population and Development and the ILO Conventions related to Child Labour are already part of the EC's governance indicators. Two areas of special concern are those of birth registration and compliance with internationally agreed standards on juvenile justice. Support for civil society organisations advocating children's rights and acting as service providers is also important as a means of influencing national and local development agendas.

10. Food security, Health and Sanitation. The EU should ensure the effective mainstreaming of those rights and needs related to the main risks associated with ill health and impaired development, i.e. adequate nutrition, drinking water and sanitation and a healthy environment, including housing and environment factors.

Priority actions at regional and global levels

The EU should identify actions which deserve specific attention through regional and global initiatives and which complement the political and policy dialogue and the mainstreaming of children's rights at country level.

In this regard, the Commission will continue to prioritise the areas of children and youth for support under the thematic programme "Investing in People"[viii]. Children's rights will also be mainstreamed across the other sectors covered by the thematic programme (health, education, gender, employment, culture) as well as in the other DCI thematic programmes on Food Security, Non-State Actors, Migration and Asylum, and Sustainable Environment. The European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) may support projects on promoting and protecting children's rights particularly under its Objective 2 (strengthening the role of civil society in promoting human rights and democratic reform, in supporting peaceful conciliation of conflicting group interests, consolidating political participation and representation) and Objective 3 (supporting actions on human rights and democracy issues in

areas covered by EU Guidelines). Children's rights considerations should also be included in relevant instruments programmed by other DGs outside the RELEX family such as the actions managed by DG Education and Culture under the Youth in Action programme aimed at exchanging best practices between youth organisations from Europe and third countries.

These priorities for regional and global EU action are selected on the basis of their regional and global implications and the link to already existing partnerships with e.g. UN agencies and regional organisations, especially the Council of Europe and the OSCE.

The selected priority areas are:

Preventing all forms of child labour

Many children are involved in work that deprives them of their childhood, their potential and their dignity and that is harmful to physical and mental development. Their rehabilitation will be achieved through a mix of formal basic education and vocational training aimed at providing life skills. One vehicle for activities of this kind is the Commission-supported ILO International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC). This initiative should be scaled up and linked with support to education sectors, including lower secondary education, to provide quality schooling at least up to children's minimum working age. The EU should also support global activities aimed at strengthening political dialogue and at promoting the sharing of best practices regarding the effective implementation of the relevant ILO Conventions and the CRC.

These initiatives need to take into account the views of affected children by involving children's groups such as the African Movement for Working Children and Youth, a network representing over 30 000 working children and youths where the children themselves have developed a set of objectives to improve working conditions and to create alternatives to child labour^[ix]. The European Union will support the networking, organisation and empowerment of such representative organisations.

Prevention of and fight against child trafficking

The root causes of trafficking, exploitation and abuse of children are to be found in the socio-cultural, political and economic domains. In addition, the lack of proper legislation or the lack of enforcement, inadequate specialised infrastructures for promoting children's rights, corruption and chronic poverty all play a role. Any strategy on the prevention of trafficking should be based on a concrete local analysis of causes, identify specific child vulnerability profiles, and promote the empowerment of children. Effective action against child trafficking should be based on a holistic approach and the promotion of children's rights. Anti-trafficking policy should include prevention, prosecution, and protection of child victims. In particular, assistance measures must aim at full recovery and long-term social inclusion of child victims. For example, the Commission has supported several initiatives in West Africa for the implementation of the Declaration of Libreville and is currently supporting the implementation of a regional high-level declaration of commitment linked to a costed action plan in Southern Africa. This plan will include specific actions involving regional structures and national governments. It will aim to strengthen their capacities in the areas of birth registration, the monitoring of the needs of children at greatest risk, the development and enforcement of legislation to prevent and prosecute child trafficking, and the protection and rehabilitation of victims.

Children affected by armed conflict

A number of existing EU policy documents and statements provide a solid framework for joint EU action to prevent the abuse of children's rights in the context of armed conflict and post-conflict situations. The most significant are: the EU Guidelines on Children and Armed Conflict (2003), the EU Checklist for the Integration of the Protection of Children Affected by Armed Conflict into ESDP Operations (2006) and the Commission/Council Joint Concept for Support to Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR). This framework also provides for measures to ensure the rehabilitation and reintegration into society of child victims.

The Cape Town Principles, Security Council Resolution 1612 of 26 July 2005, the mandate of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, established in 1996, and the Ten Year Strategic Review of the United Nations Report "Impact of armed conflict on children" constitute a significant set of international initiatives focusing on children affected by armed conflict. The development of international legal instruments and quasi-jurisprudence in this area has prompted recognition of the need to update and expand the Cape Town Principles and mobilise political support beyond support for stakeholders that are specialised in children's rights. An extensive review process was undertaken by Unicef, with support from the Commission. This has resulted in the Paris Principles (Principles and Guidelines on Children Associated with Armed Forces or Armed Groups), adopted in February 2007. The related political declaration referred to as the "Paris Commitments" was adopted by representatives of 58 governments, including almost all EU Member States. The Commission has officially endorsed these reference documents.

The Paris Principles require that efforts should be made to prevent the recruitment of children into armed groups or forces. Children should be separated from armed groups or forces as early as possible, without waiting for a formal declaration of peace, and particularly so as to avoid them becoming a bargaining tool in any peace negotiations. The approach adopted must be to ensure that the particular needs of children associated with fighting forces are taken into account in the design of a child-focused release process, with special attention being paid to the specific needs of girls. Family tracing and reunification programmes should be established, and education and trauma-healing offered.

Reintegration and rehabilitation of former child combatants are crucial. Where possible they should be re-united with their families, and be given access to the kinds of education and vocational training that moves them towards social reintegration and away from returning to combat. Support programmes should adopt a community-based approach, in order to facilitate integration and avoid any further stigmatisation of ex-child combatants. Providing employment and economic opportunities is also vital.

All forms of violence against children including sexual exploitation and harmful traditional practices

The European Union has clearly expressed its rejection of all forms of violence against children.

The Implementation Strategy attached to the EU Guidelines on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of the Child provides that, in order to advance the protection of children from all forms of violence, the EU will undertake specific measures based on a two-track approach.

On the one hand the EU is to stress the global character of the issue of violence against children, affecting all parts of the world, and to promote worldwide support for the recommendations of the UN Secretary-General's global Study on Violence against Children, where suitable, in particular in UN fora. On the other hand the EU is to support country-specific action to prevent and combat all forms of violence against children, taking into account the different forms of violence against children in the various countries/regions of the world

The Implementation Strategy of the new Guidelines also states that to speed up concrete EU action on violence against children in different parts of the world, a Pilot Programme will be set up during the initial stage of implementation of the Guidelines. It will focus EU action on a maximum of ten countries from different regions and in the light of the various settings identified by the UN Secretary-General's Study on Violence against Children.

The European Union supports the promotion of sexual and reproductive health and rights and, within thematic budgets, maintains a focus on youth as a priority target group. For example, the Commission has provided funding to support initiatives designed to prevent female genital mutilation. The EC policy framework on gender and on communicable diseases (especially related to HIV/AIDS) reflects the Commission's commitment to implement the recommendations of the International Conference on Population and Development. Actions to be supported should address all forms of sexual violence, include such issues in ongoing political and policy dialogues and identify national, regional and global initiatives and programmes, inter alia in the fields of governance and institutional capacity building. Of paramount importance is also the need to support projects on sex education for both children and parents. The EU actions should have a specific focus on promoting sexual and reproductive health and rights for girls and preventing early and/or forced marriages and female genital mutilation/cutting.

MONITORING, COORDINATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY

A children's rights-based approach in external relations must be supported by appropriate feedback and monitoring. Monitoring should be undertaken jointly by both the EU and the beneficiary government. This will involve regular reporting which should build upon the framework of the reporting commitments linked to the CRC and its Optional Protocols..

An informal EU Member State experts working group on children's rights in external relations, chaired by the Commission, should meet at least annually . This group should act as an Advisory Group regarding the implementation of this Action Plan at EU level. In this context, the Commission will seek to ensure appropriate child participation as well as that of other stakeholders, including civil society organisations, depending on the items to be discussed. The Member States' group should provide relevant inputs to the European Forum on the Rights of the Child so as to include issues related to the EU's role and challenges on children rights in external action.

At EC level, implementation of the present Action Plan will be led and monitored by the sub-group on external relations of the Commission Inter-Service Group on Children's Rights set up under the Communication "Towards an EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child" . This sub-Group will be co-Chaired by Directorate-Generals DEV and RELEX and will bring together focal points for children's rights identified and appointed in geographic directorates and thematic/sector policy units in Directorates-General JLS, DEV, RELEX, ELARG, AIDCO,

ECHO and TRADE, as well as, where possible, in the EC Delegations. The sub-Group will report back to the Commission Inter-Service Group on Children's rights to ensure coordination and coherence with EU internal policies and actions. The EC will also encourage the establishment of similar coordination structures in national administrations of Member States.

In order to reinforce the capacity of the European Union to effectively integrate children's rights in its external action, the European Commission will work with Unicef to develop a "Children's Rights Toolkit". This Toolkit will provide a variety of important actors – the EC, EU Member States, other donors, governments, civil society and international organisations - with instruments to help them integrate children's rights into a whole range of political, legal, budgetary and programmatic actions. The toolkit will draw on the model of the Toolkit on Mainstreaming Gender Equality in Community Development Cooperation[x]..

The actions programmed under the EC's thematic budget line "Investing in People" will act as a catalyst: complementing and supporting other actions on children's rights implemented through geographic and thematic instruments.

While working towards a joint strategy, coordinated and joint EU actions to promote children's rights are of paramount importance. The coordination should include sharing of information (e.g. mapping) on policies and programmes and identification of areas for common action such as assessments, strategies, tools, evaluations and reporting.

It is also fundamental to ensure cooperation with global and regional inter-governmental partners with responsibilities for children[xi] as well as with civil society organisations, academia, national institutions for human rights and children's ombudspersons and child protection networks. In particular, the EU will develop its cooperation and policy dialogue with the UN bodies most concerned. It will also improve complementarity and division of labour in responding to partner countries' priorities and support broad donor-wide engagement in national harmonisation agendas. This Action Plan fully welcomes the strategic opportunity to develop partnership and intensify coordination with national and international stakeholders, as reflected in the EU Guidelines on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of the Child and its Implementation Strategy.

EC PRIORITY ACTIONS BY YEAR

(plus indicative budget under the DCI Investing In People, Children and Youth section)

The following table gives the indicative timing of the priority areas for regional/global action, based on the development of the toolkit with UNICEF and the evaluations conducted under the EC thematic programmes. Final decisions will be taken in each annual work programme and will respond to the analysis of priorities according to lessons learnt from previous/ongoing programmes and to evolving situations.

Instruments | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 |

DCI Investing in People Children and Youth section | Actions to prevent child trafficking and promote the rights of children affected by armed conflict: | Priorities to be programmed taking into account the evaluation's recommendations |

Actions to prevent child labour and violence against children: |

Strengthen capacities with partner countries, donors and stakeholders through development of Children's Rights Toolkit (with Unicef and Member States) Involving children and youth in the development process | Mid-term evaluation: | Strengthen capacities with partner countries, donors and stakeholders - 2nd phase: Involving children and youth in the development process - 2nd phase: |

Children's rights and needs as cross-cutting themes; mainstreamed through other EC instruments | Thematic: health, education, gender, employment and culture sections of Investing in People; other chapters of DCI thematic programme: environment, food security, migration, non-state actors; EIDHR; Stability Instrument; other thematic programmes with global dimensions such as of the Youth in Action programme 2007 – 2013 and international cooperation strategies related to children under the 7thth Research Framework Programme |

Country and regional: DCI, EDF, PAI, ENPI, Humanitarian aid |

LOGICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE ACTION PLAN ON CHILDREN IN EXTERNAL RELATIONS, 2007-2013

OBJECTIVES | MEASURABLE INDICATORS | MEANS OF VERIFICATION | IMPORTANT ASSUMPTIONS | MONITORING |

GOAL To progress on the protection and promotion of children's rights globally | Under-five mortality Net enrolment rates in prim. education Teen-pregnancy rates OVC coverage of basic social protection | Global UN statistics, Unicef annual report The State of the World's Children CRC concluding observations comments on countries' progress reports Relevant UN sources and other reliable information | Sustained commitment to CRC globally and by partner countries Increasing levels of EU ODA (Barcelona commitments) The partner governments provide an analysis of the situation of children in the relevant reporting, such as the joint annual, mid-term and end-of-term reports | Partner governments Donor community, DGs for development in the EC and EU |

Note : The above objectives relate to the situation in third countries outside the EU, using data from relevant UN sources and other reliable information. This will form the basis for the EU analysis of progress and challenges faced by the countries themselves, the international community and the EU itself. Purpose: |

To systematically take on board CRC commitments in policy and other dialogues with partner countries and in the international fora | In at least 50% of high-level dialogues (Minister and above) children's rights' issues are discussed | Annual reports by Delegations, DG DEV and RELEX | HoD and DGs and Directors in Brussels commit to prioritise attention to children's rights and needs in their political dialogue | DG DEV and DG RELEX |

To promote children's rights and needs in development and security- related cooperation | In 80% of partner countries there is progress on CRC commitments | Annual reviews of country strategies (DCI, EDF, PAI, ENPI) and thematic programmes (DCI, EIDHR) | Countries actually pledge themselves to the Commitments of the CRC The inter-service sub-group on children's rights in external relations meets regularly and its members are given responsibility, time and means to respond to their mandate | EU Heads of Delegation |

Outputs: |

Dialogue with partners and in the international fora |

1 Ratification of compliance with CRC and ILO 138 & 182 | At least 50% of countries yet to ratify ILO 138 and 182 do so | ILO reporting on ratification Annual reviews of country strategies (DCI, EDF, PAI, ENPI) and thematic programmes (DCI, EIDHR, SI) | EU continues to commit to ILO Conventions 138 and 182, including ratification by all EU MSs | Heads of Delegation and officials dealing with human rights issues |

2 Partner countries progress on identified governance indicators related to children's rights. 2 Partner countries progress on identified governance indicators related to children's rights. | Children Action Plans in at least 50% of partner countries | Governance profiles are adapted, including enhanced attention to children's rights, and are linked to government's revised commitments at MTR | Heads of Delegation and officials dealing with governance issues |

3 Trade agreements, including EPAs, take into account children's rights issues, especially agreements and provisions to prevent child labour | Trade agreements and GSP + include provisions on labour, including to prevent child labour | Report by DG TRADE | EU's FTAs (including EPAs) and GSP+ consider development principles and labour standards, decent work, including children's rights | DG TRADE (C1 and D.1.) |

Support for partners |

1 Country programming: specific attention to children in priority areas, through cross-cutting and specific actions in focal and non-focal sectors in the CSPs of EDF, DCI, PAI, ENPI | 20% of focal sectors effectively programme and commit cross-cutting actions targeting children's rights and needs | Annual reviews of country strategies (DCI, EDF, PAI, ENPI) | Compliance with the priority to children's rights mainstreaming, as in the Development Consensus, by EC Delegations | Heads of Delegation and Heads of Office in EC Delegations |

2 Thematic programming: children's rights and needs addressed by the six thematic instruments in external relations (EDF, DCI, PAI, ENPI, SI, Humanitarian Aid and Macro Financial Assistance) as well as in the EIDHR Specific actions on child trafficking, children affected by armed conflicts, child labour and violence against children contribute to preventing these forms of abuse of children's rights | 20% of thematic annual programmes include cross-cutting and specific actions targeting children's rights and needs EC thematic programmes contribute to preventing child trafficking, recruitment and use of children affected by armed conflicts, child labour, violence against children and the lessons learnt are scaled up in the dialogue and programming decisions at country and global levels | Two-yearly reviews of thematic programmes (DCI, EIDHR) | Compliance with the priority to children's rights mainstreaming, as in the Development Consensus, in programming by DG DEV and identification by DG AIDCO Political commitments on regional actions on child trafficking (SADC), on the Paris Principles on children affected by armed conflicts, on the recommendations of the UN Study on Violence against Children and on ILO Conventions 138 and 182 are maintained | DG DEV (B2, B3 and A2), DG RELEX B1, A2, A3 and AIDCO 04 |

Activities: Appointment of focal points for children in DG DEV, DG RELEX, DG AIDCO, DG ECHO, DG ELARG and DG TRADE, geographic directorates, thematic/sector policy

units in DG DEV and DG RELEX and, where possible, in EC Delegation Meetings of the sub-group on children rights in external relations Promote the participation of children, families and caregivers in the identification, implementation and evaluation of the programmed support to focal sectors Develop a “Children’s Rights Toolkit”, in partnership with Unicef, including guidelines, materials, awareness-raising and training activities in the areas of political and policy dialogue, programming and mainstreaming, impact assessment, monitoring and indicators and child participation Inputs: Indicative “catalytic” budget of €90m under DCI Investing in People, Children and Youth section | Adoption of the Action Plan by Secretariat-General Reference made by Council and European Parliament to need for further attention to joint EU actions on children’s rights and needs globally |

[i] Education For All Global Monitoring Report 2006

[ii] International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) "Every Child Counts" New Global Estimates on Child Labour, International Labour Office 2002

[iii] The MDGs on poverty and hunger (MDG1), education (MDG2), gender equality (MDG3), child survival (MDG4) as well as those on maternal health (MDG5), poverty diseases (MDG6) and water and sanitation (MDG7).

[iv] This essential link is already reflected in the EUEU Youth Pact, which is an integral part of the Lisbon Strategy and within which the Commission works actively with youth in relation to many specific areas such as employment, health, education, and social inclusion, as well as in the UN World Program of Action for Youth.

[v] Guidance note to EC Delegations “Guidance Note on Children’s Rights”, on covering political dialogue on children’s rights.

[vi] The EC examines the link between international trade and trade agreements, and decent work and core labour standards, including the abolition of child labour (this is done in collaboration with the ILO), as well as trade-related aspects of the access to essential paediatric medicines.

[vii] Such as those called for under the UN General Assembly “World Fit for Children” document: <http://www.unicef.org/specialsession/press/outcomedocument.htm>.

[viii] “Investing in People. Communication on the thematic programme for human and social development and the financial perspectives for 2007-2013”, COM(2006) 18.

[ix] For more information please see <http://eja.enda.sn/index.html>.

[x] http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/projects/gender/toolkit_en.htm.

[xi] Including Unicef, the ILO, the UNDP, Unifem, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, the Special Representatives of the UN Secretary-General on all forms of violence against children and on children affected by armed conflict, other agencies and bodies of the UN family, the Council of Europe and the OSCE.