

# working methods

## Strengthening the Impact of the Security Council

### Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict

-July 2012

In 2009, Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict published its policy paper *“UN Security Council Resolution 1612 and Beyond: Strengthening Protection for Children and Armed Conflict”*. In it, Watchlist evaluated the use of the Toolkit of the Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict, and the time it took the Working Group to negotiate country-specific conclusions.

This note provides an update on the Working Group’s toolkit usage and negotiation time, covering the period from 2006 to 2011.

## about watchlist

The Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict strives to end violations against children in armed conflicts and to guarantee their rights. As a global network, Watchlist builds partnerships among local, national and international nongovernmental organization, enhancing mutual capacities and strengths. Working together, we strategically collect and disseminate information on violations against children in conflicts to influence key decision-makers to create and implement programs and policies that effectively protect children.

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## Findings:

### Toolkit Usage:

Both the Mexican and the German Chairs of the Working Group showed innovation in terms of toolkit usage.

The conclusions on Afghanistan, DRC and CAR, issued in 2009, urged the Security Council to incorporate a CAC dimension in its upcoming field visits. In 2010, the Working Group made its own first field visit to Nepal. In 2011, the German Chair built on this experience and travelled to Afghanistan. In terms of accountability, the 2011 conclusions on DRC, Somalia, Afghanistan and Iraq all integrated references to the relevant existing Security Council sanctions committees.

Despite these innovations, the toolkit remains severely **underutilized**. Between 2006 and 2011, the Working Group used on average 7.9 tools in each set of conclusions, or ca. 30% of all available tools.

### Negotiation Time:

The average negotiation time has **increased significantly**, from 3.4 months in 2006 to 10 months in 2010. In 2011, under the German Chairmanship, the Working Group made a concerted effort to close the time gap between the publication of the reports and the adoption of the conclusions, bringing the average negotiation time back down to 3.9 months.

In all cases, the actual negotiation time remains well above the target negotiation time of two months.

## recommendations

### To the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict:

- Utilize the full range of actions available in the toolkit. In particular, employ underutilized but potentially very effective tools, including recommending that the Security Council take targeted measures, forward information to relevant international justice mechanisms, adopt strong Presidential Statements and/or Resolutions and carry out demarches.
- Respond in a timely manner to recommendations submitted to the Working Group to take strong actions.
  - Lack of consensus on substantive items:
    - Refer draft conclusions to Permanent Representatives for finalization if experts do not reach consensus within a two month time-frame. The Working Group can then start to negotiate its conclusions on the next situation.

### To the United Nations Secretariat:

- Time constraints / capacity:
  - Consider to remove the first part of each conclusion, i.e. the summary of the formal meeting.
  - Reserve a room and translation for weekly meetings of the Working Group.

# 1. use of the toolkit

When the Working Group first formed in 2005, it agreed on a Toolkit of potential actions it would take to respond to violations (S/2006/724). These actions would be set out through the Working Group's conclusions on each situation of concern. An analysis of the 37 sets of conclusions issued by the Working Group between 2006 and 2011 reveals that the Working Group has not used the full range of available tools that it set out for itself (see Figures 2-4).

## Figure 1. Tools Used (2006-2011)

Between 2006 and 2011, the Working Group used on average ca. eight tools in each set of conclusions, or ca. 30% of all available tools. As such, the Toolkit is severely **underutilized**.

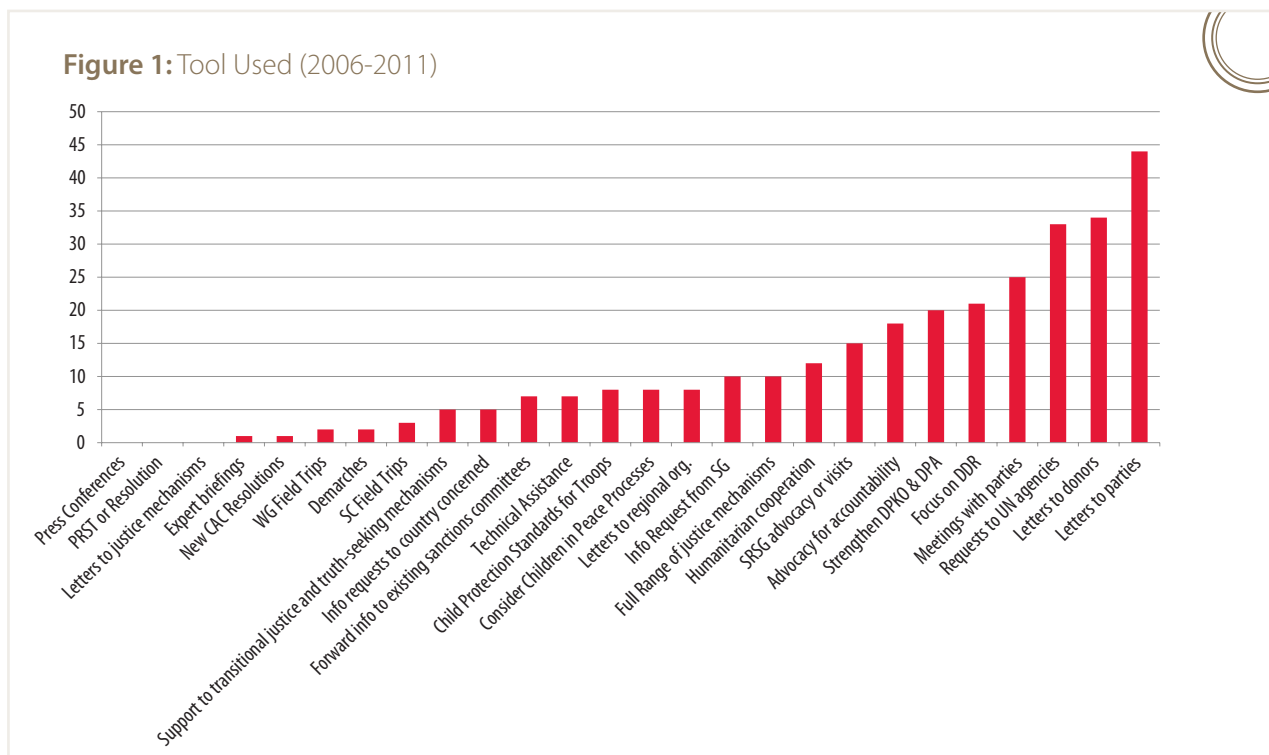
Actions **most often** (16<) used: letters or appeals to parties concerned (44); letters to donors (34); requests to UN bodies and agencies (33); open or closed meetings with parties concerned (25); invitation to stakeholders to pay attention to disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) of child soldiers (21); CAC issues in peacekeeping missions (20); advocacy for accountability (18).

Actions **sometimes** (6 – 15) used: requests for visits or advocacy by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) on CAC (15); recommendations for humanitarian cooperation (12); full range of justice mechanisms (10); requests for additional information from the Secretary-General (10); children's needs in peace processes (8); letters to regional organizations (8); stronger child protection standards for troops (8); submission of information to existing sanctions committees (7); technical assistance (7).

Actions **least often** (1 – 5) used: requests for additional information from the country concerned (5); support to transitional justice and truth-seeking mechanisms (5); UNSC field visits incorporate a CAC dimension (3); field visits by the Working Group (2); demarches to armed forces or groups (2); information briefings by experts, including NGOs (1); new areas of Security Council action, including Resolutions (1).

Actions **never** used: letters to relevant justice mechanisms with information on violations; specific Presidential Statements or Resolutions; press conferences.

Figure 1: Tool Used (2006-2011)



“ Due to the Working Group’s severe underutilization of its tools, the Security Council is in effect restricting its own capacity to create better protection for children. ”

– Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict, in its May 2009 publication “UN Security Council Resolution 1612 and beyond”

### Figure 2. Number of Tools Used (2006-2008)

During the French Chairmanship, the Working Group used an average of 8.2 tools per conclusion. A record number of 13 tools were used in the case of Somalia in December 2008.

Some of the early conclusions of the Working Group employed a number of underutilized but potentially very effective tools such as the submission of information to existing sanctions committees (DRC, 2006 and 2007).

### Figure 3. Number of Tools Used (2009-2010)

During the Mexican Chairmanship, the Working Group used an average of 7.8 tools per conclusion. A maximum of eleven tools were used in the case of the Central African Republic in July 2009.

Under the Mexican chairmanship, the Working Group ensured that three UNSC field trips (Afghanistan, DRC and CAR) incorporated a CAC dimension in their terms of reference, and, in 2010, the Working Group made its first field visit to Nepal.

The Working Group showed innovation when it introduced a regional monitoring and reporting mechanism to address cross-border violations perpetrated by the Lords’ Resistance Army in DRC, Central African Republic, Uganda and Sudan (Uganda, 2010). The Working Group referred to the regional initiative in a subsequent conclusion on DRC in March 2011.

Finally, the Working Group urged the Secretary-General to continue communications with the Government of Colombia regarding dialogue for child protection purposes with listed parties to armed conflict, with a view to facilitating the establishment of action plans by these parties (Colombia, 2010).

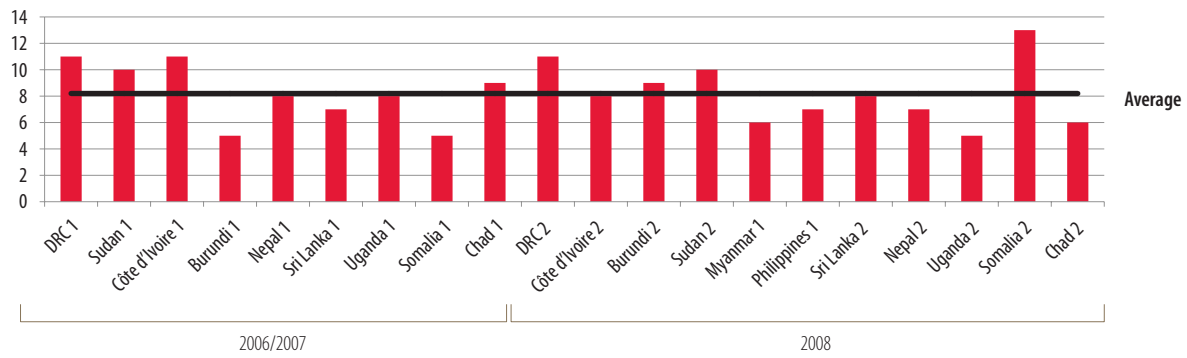
### Figure 4. Number of Tools Used (2011)

During the first year of the German Chairmanship, the Working Group used an average of 6.8 tools per conclusion. A maximum of ten tools were used in the case of Somalia in March 2011.

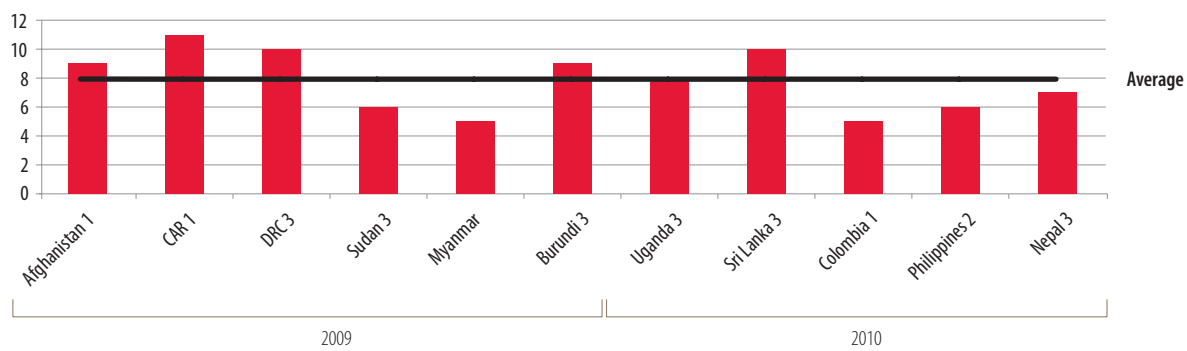
In 2011, the Working Group made a systematic effort to include references to existing sanctions committees in relevant conclusions. The conclusions on DRC and Somalia made reference to the DRC (SCR 1533, 2004) and Somalia (SCR 751, 1992 and SCR 1907, 2009) sanctions committees; while the conclusions on Afghanistan and Iraq each referred to the Al-Qaida and Taliban sanctions committee (SCR 1267, 1999 and SCR 1989, 2011).

The Working Group conducted its second field visit to Afghanistan in June 2011, though only Germany sent representatives from New York. Afghanistan-based representatives from the US, UK, France, China and Russian missions joined the delegation in Kabul.

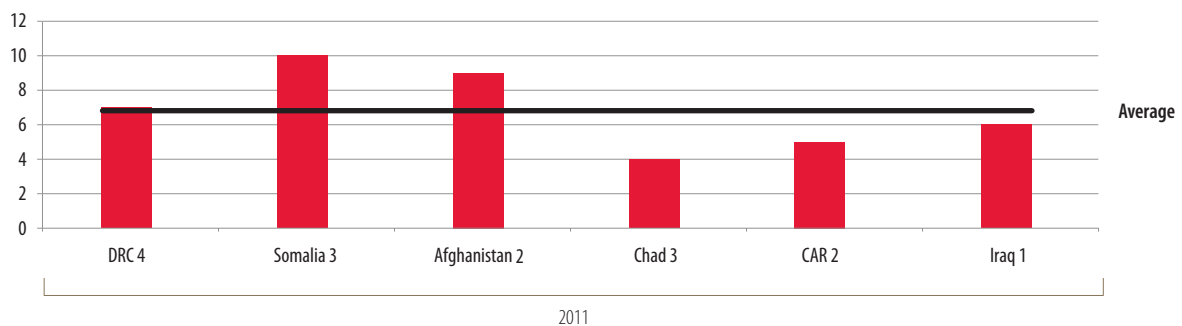
**Figure 2: Number of Tools Used (2006-2008)**



**Figure 3: Number of Tools Used (2009-2010)**



**Figure 4: Number of Tools Used (2011)**



## 2. negotiation time

### How does Watchlist calculate the Working Group's 'negotiation time'?

- At the time of its establishment, the Working Group agreed to meet in formal sessions **at least every two months**, and that the conclusions on the situations reviewed at the previous session would be adopted in the subsequent session (S/2006/275). This indicates that the Working Group's original intention was to complete negotiations on its conclusions within a two-month time-frame. The dotted line in each table therefore indicates the target negotiation time of 2 months.
- Watchlist computes 'negotiation time' as the time that passed between a) the publication date of the SG report on the situation of Children and Armed Conflict in a given country and b) the publication date of the Working Group conclusions.
- Watchlist calculates negotiation time in days (including weekends and holidays), rather than five-day work weeks.

### Figure 5. Negotiation Time Taken on Conclusions (2006-2008)

During the French Chairmanship, the Working Group issued 2 conclusions in 2006 (average negotiation time of 3.4 months), 8 conclusions in 2007 (average negotiation time of 3.8 months) and 10 conclusions in 2008 (average negotiation time of 5.9 months).

### Figure 6. Negotiation Time Taken on Conclusions (2009-2010)

During the Mexican Chairmanship, the Working Group issued 6 conclusions in 2009 (average negotiation time of 6.6 months) and 5 conclusions in 2010 (average negotiation time of 10 months).

### Figure 7. Negotiation Time Taken on Conclusions (2011)

During the first year of the German Chairmanship, the Working Group issued 6 conclusions, at an average negotiation time of 3.9 months.

Since 2006, the average negotiation time has increased significantly, from 3.4 months in 2006 to 10 months in 2010. In 2011, under the German Chairmanship, the Working Group has made a concerted effort to close the time gap between the publication of the reports and the adoption of the conclusions, bringing down the average negotiation time from 10 months in 2010 to 3.9 months in 2011. In all cases, the actual negotiation time remains well above the target negotiation time of two months.

Several factors influence the negotiation time, from political factors in terms of the substance of the conclusions, to delegates' time constraints and lack of capacity. For example, the negotiations on the presidential statement, adopted in June 2010, and SCR 1998, adopted in July 2011, affected the Working Group's ability to focus on country-specific conclusions. Additionally, many experts who participate in the Working Group are also active on the Third Committee of the UN General Assembly, which meets intensively each year in fall, thus limiting the Working Group's ability to schedule meetings.

When conclusions are delayed, the Working Group's requests become outdated, thereby limiting the potential impact they can have at the field level. In addition, the delays risk sending a signal to the perpetrators that the Security Council is not serious about addressing impunity for child rights' violations or about ensuring that conclusions are effectively implemented.

“ One weakness that constantly weighs down the system is the delays in adopting conclusions in the Working Group. ”

– Ambassador Jean-Marc de La Sablière, former Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations, in his June 2012 report on the Security Council’s engagement on the Protection of Children in Armed Conflict

Figure 5: Negotiation Time Taken on Conclusions (2006-2008)

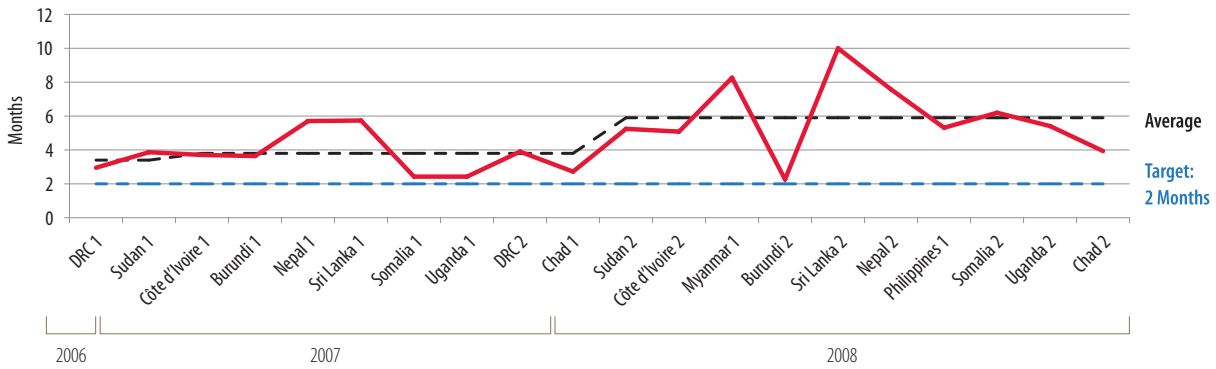


Figure 6: Negotiation Time Taken on Conclusions (2009-2010)

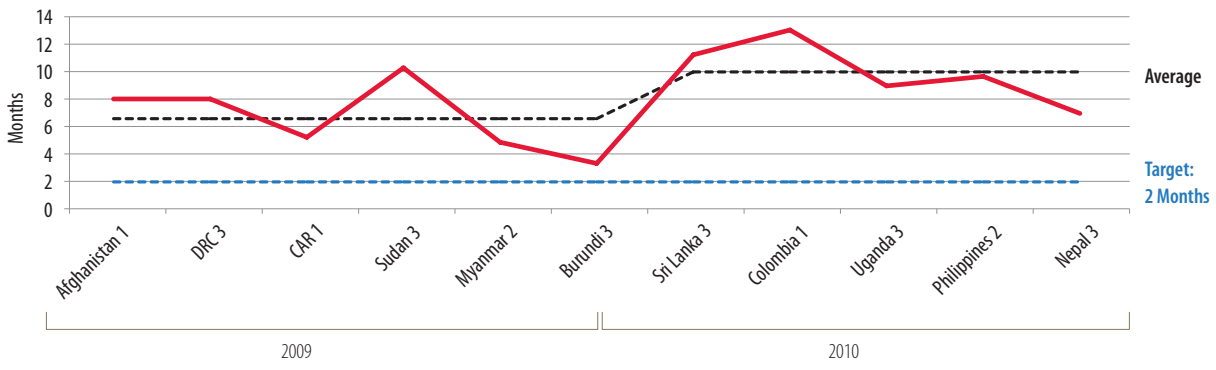
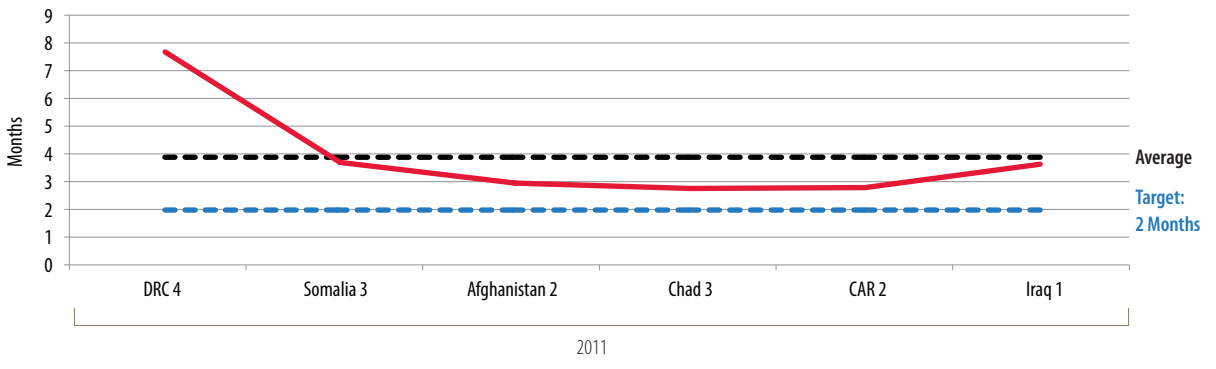


Figure 7: Negotiation Time Taken on Conclusions (2011)



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