



Working together to protect the security and rights of children.

INTERNATIONAL
STEERING COMMITTEE

CARE International
7-9, Chemin de Balxert
1219 Chatelaine (Geneva)
Switzerland

Human Rights Watch
350 Fifth Avenue, 34th floor
New York, NY 10118-3299
United States

International Save the
Children Alliance
275-281 King Street
London, W6 9LZ
United Kingdom

Norwegian Refugee Council
P.O. Box 6758 St. Olavs plass
0130 Oslo
Norway

Women's Refugee
Commission
122 E. 42nd Street, 11th Floor
New York, NY 10168-1289
United States

International Rescue Committee
122 E. 42nd Street
New York, NY 10168-1289
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World Vision International
6, ch de la Tourelle
1209 Geneva
Switzerland

Additional support from
a network of NGOs

October 13, 2011

To all the country missions to the UN in New York

Your Excellency:

On behalf of the Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict, an international network of non-governmental human rights and humanitarian organizations, we would like to express our concerns regarding the proposed General Assembly resolution on the "Strengthening of the Coordination of the United Nations System on Child Protection", introduced by the Royal Thai Government's Permanent Mission to the United Nations.

While we fully support a strong and well-coordinated UN child protection system which places the best interest of the child at the core of its efforts, we have several concerns as to the proposed evaluation mechanism and the comprehensive annual report.

Firstly, the resolution bears the potential to undermine the independence of the UN Special Mandate-holders. Special Mandate-holders are highly respected experts who provide the global community with an impartial assessment of facts based on international human rights standards. In order to do so, they need to be free from any kind of interference, either direct or indirect, from governments, UN agencies or other pressure groups.

Secondly, the five Special Mandate-holders named in the resolution each fulfill distinct functions in human rights reporting and/or advocacy work; whereas UNICEF provides services to children in need. The development of common criteria for the evaluation of each of these mandates will be problematic. Furthermore, the Mandate-holders already report to the General Assembly and can be assessed against the benchmarks tailored to their distinct roles and mandates there. UNICEF reports to its Board of Directors.

Thirdly, we doubt the added value of the proposed comprehensive annual report on the coordination of child protection activities. The Mandate-holders already include information on coordination and efforts to mainstream child protection concerns in their annual reports. The creation of a new report will bring about burdensome, duplicative reporting, in an environment that is already struggling to find the financial and human resources necessary to cover existing reporting requirements.

For the reasons stated above, we ask for your support in urging the Royal Thai Government to withdraw the proposed resolution immediately.

Thank you for considering our request.
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul Mikov".

Paul Mikov, Chair, Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Greta Zeender".

Greta Zeender, Vice-Chair, Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict