BUREAU INTERNATIONAL DES DROITS DES ENFANTS
INTERNATIONAL BUREAU FOR CHILDREN'S RIGHTS **20**
OFICINA INTERNACIONAL DE LOS DERECHOS DE LOS NIÑOS
المكتب الدولي لحقوق الطفل

Save the Children

CHILD PROTECTION IN AFRICAN UNION PEACE SUPPORT OPERATIONS
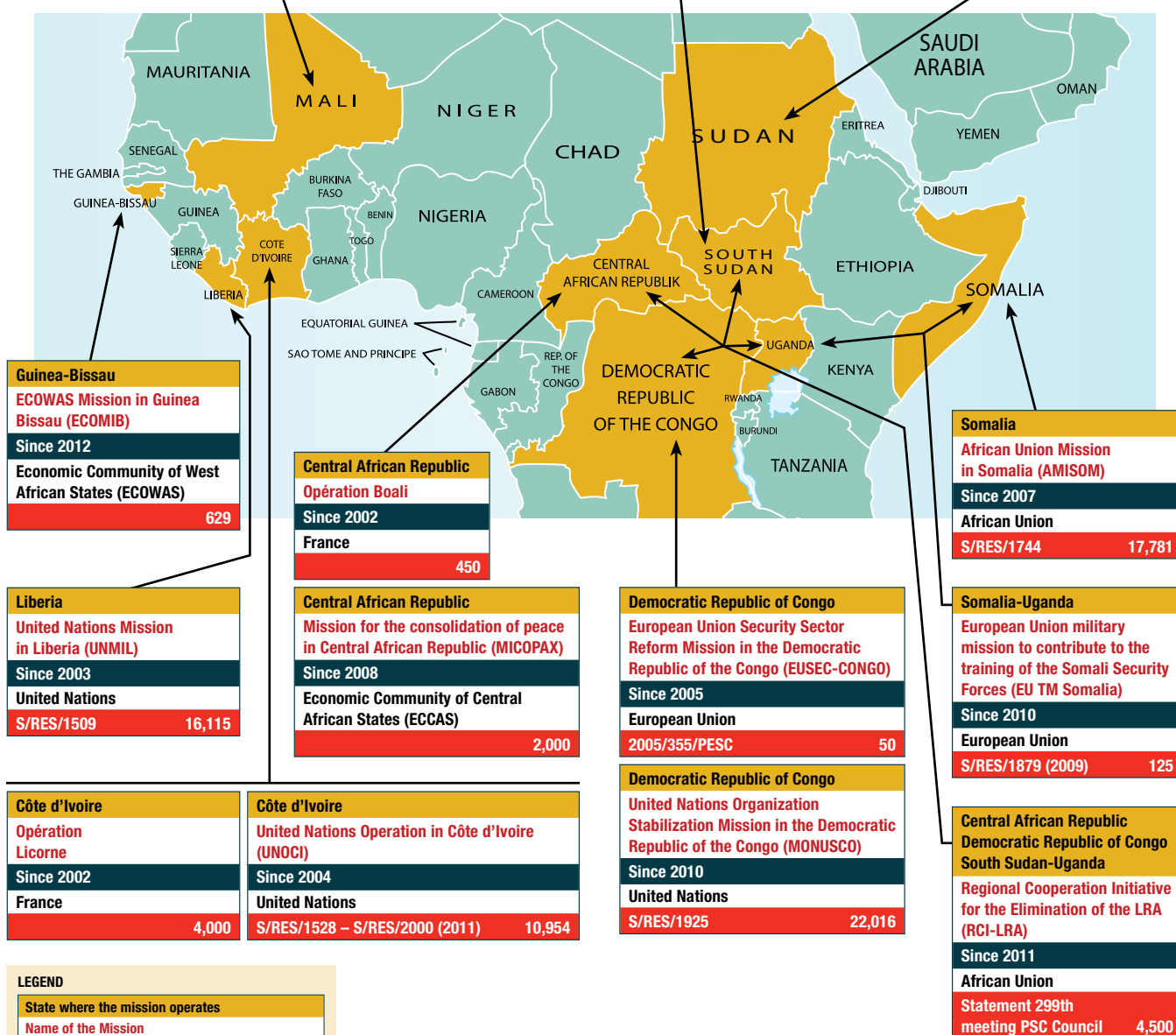
CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS

Report Summary

Mali	Mali
African-led International Support Mission to Mali (AFISMA)	Opération Serval
Since 2012	Since 2013
African Union	France
S/RES/2085 **9,620**	**4,000**

Mali	Mali
European Union Training Mission in Mali (EUTM Mali)	United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA)
Since 2013	Since 2013
European Union	United Nations
2013/34/PESC **450**	S/RES/2100 **12,600 (Authorised)**

Sudan
African Union-United Nations Mission in Darfur (UNAMID)
Since 2008
United Nations / African Union
S/RES/1769 **21,600**

Sudan
United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA)
Since 2011
United Nations
S/RES/1990 **4,250**

South Sudan
United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS)
Since 2011
United Nations
S/RES/1996 **7,900**

Guinea-Bissau
ECOWAS Mission in Guinea Bissau (ECOMIB)
Since 2012
Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)
629

Central African Republic
Opération Boali
Since 2002
France
450

Somalia
African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM)
Since 2007
African Union
S/RES/1744 **17,781**

Liberia
United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)
Since 2003
United Nations
S/RES/1509 **16,115**

Central African Republic
Mission for the consolidation of peace in Central African Republic (MICOPAX)
Since 2008
Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS)
2,000

Democratic Republic of Congo
European Union Security Sector Reform Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (EUSEC-CONGO)
Since 2005
European Union
2005/355/PESC **50**

Democratic Republic of Congo
United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO)
Since 2010
United Nations
S/RES/1925 **22,016**

Somalia-Uganda
European Union military mission to contribute to the training of the Somali Security Forces (EU TM Somalia)
Since 2010
European Union
S/RES/1879 (2009) **125**

Central African Republic Democratic Republic of Congo South Sudan-Uganda
Regional Cooperation Initiative for the Elimination of the LRA (RCI-LRA)
Since 2011
African Union
Statement 299th meeting PSC Council **4,500**

Côte d'Ivoire
Opération Licorne
Since 2002
France
4,000

Côte d'Ivoire
United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI)
Since 2004
United Nations
S/RES/1528 – S/RES/2000 (2011) **10,954**

LEGEND

State where the mission operates
Name of the Mission
Years of operation
Organisation under which the mission is deployed
Legal reference **Number of force**

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Cover Photos

Photo 1 ■ From (3rd right) Hussein Halane, Regional Director for the Save the Children in East Africa holding the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and looking on (2nd left) Mr. Benediste Hoareau, Head of Political Affairs East Africa Standby Force(EASF), backed by (2nd right) Farida Bascha, Regional Child Protection Manager, (right) Francis Onditi, Regional Child Protection Project Coordinator and (left) Mr. Getahun Seifu, the EASF Legal Advisor.

Photo 2 ■ From (right) Anne Musomba, Maj Modoi, Lt Col Bengue, Capt. Sakama, Mr. Emilio and Ugandan Peoples Defence Force (UPDF) Signal Officer on arrival in Obo, North-Eastern part of Central Africa Republic for the Child Protection Course, August 2013.

Photo 3 ■ The military officers taking notes during Child Protection Course in Obo, Central Africa Republic, August 2013.

Photo 4 ■ Save the Children International – East and West Africa regional staff with ECOWAS Standby Force staff led by Brigadier General Hassan Lai (standing on the right side – back row) during coordination meeting in Abuja, September 2013.

INTRODUCTION

Since the end of the Cold War, in the early 1990s, most contemporary conflicts and wars in Africa have been internal, resulting in the fact that civilians constitute the overwhelming majority of the victims. Such conflicts are not only theatres of massive killings; they are also often enablers of abuse and violations of human rights, particularly among vulnerable population groups, such as children and women. As a result, these vulnerable groups are denied optimal opportunities for development and the realisation of their full potential.[1]

The most shocking development in contemporary armed conflicts is the deliberate targeting of civilians, due in part to the strategic blurring of the lines between combatants and civilians. The former often live or find shelter in villages and refugee camps, sometimes using civilians as human shields. The targeting of civilians most often involves killing, maiming and sexual violence, with claims that these acts

The most shocking development in contemporary conflict is the deliberate targeting of civilians, due in part to the strategic blurring of the lines between combatants and civilians.

are in reprisal for suspected support of the opposition or for attacks by opposing forces. In other instances, combatants force civilians to help them. All of these phenomena result in the increased involvement of children as combatants, as well as the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. It is therefore not surprising that conflicts in most African countries have remained cyclical.

The asymmetrical and continuous conflicts in Africa have wide ramifications for socio-economic opportunities for children. Moreover, given the fact that combatants rarely have uniforms, rations or a standard kit, it is extremely difficult to identify who is

fighting for whom. This confusion is strategic, as it allows individuals and combatants leeway to operate more freely and with reduced risk of sanctions, since the command structures are harder to identify and 'prove'. Nevertheless, while there may be fewer military casualties, the number of civilian and children casualties is high. Furthermore, the destruction of infrastructure and denied access to basic social services impinge on the basic rights of children.

"For many sub-Saharan African countries, inadequate national defence capacity prompts them into developing an 'armchair attitude' towards securing their borders and citizens. As a result, they adopt covert defence and security policies that are incapable of averting any form of aggression. In Côte d'Ivoire and [the] Democratic Republic of Congo, for example, the loosely formed and barely accountable paramilitary squads and private companies often prove to be particularly brutal in their treatment of civilians."[2]

> The complexity of conflict in Africa calls for concerted efforts not only by the national armies, but more crucially, regional forces. The African Union has risen to this challenge by expanding its capacity and partnering with other organisations working to alleviate conflicts in Africa.

Moreover, the rise of 'auto-defence', or self-defence militias that emerge as a community-level response to actions of armed groups or State forces, is another dimension of today's conflicts. Significantly, these self-defence militias are often responsible for enlisting children. The on-going sectorial conflict in the Central African Republic and the recruitment of children by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in affected countries are typical examples where children are forcibly recruited and used as human shields in a conflict zone. In natural resource-endowed countries, foreign business interests, misconduct of inter-

national peacekeepers and resource trafficking among 'powerful' individuals perpetuates conflict. Again, children pay the highest price for this 'interested' violence. The cyclical case of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and the recent crisis in the new Republic of South Sudan attest to the fact that the original political objectives of such conflicts have been sidelined as warring parties fight to control the natural resources in territories they have conquered.

The complexity of conflict in Africa calls for concerted efforts not only by the national armies, but more crucially, by regional forces. The African Union (AU) has risen to this challenge by expanding its capacity and partnering with other organisations working to alleviate conflicts in Africa. In May 2013, the African Union's Peace and Security Council, in its regular reporting to the African Union's Assembly, stated that persistent conflict, insecurity and instability, and their humanitarian and socio-economic consequences, affect several regions of Africa. Meanwhile, the African Union is consolidating efforts through regional standby forces to build a multidimensional capacity to respond to conflicts across the continent by 2015.

Whilst the AU has been making efforts towards stabilising the continent through military and political interventions from various regional standby forces, the organisation still grapples with numerous challenges. Apart from the cyclical nature of conflict in Africa, funding gaps and lack of political support are identified as key hindrances. As well, the lack of coordination between peace support operations (PSO) actors remains a problem. This is particularly the case in the Eastern and Western African sub-regions, where the operationalisation of the standby forces has not yet led to a corresponding reduction in children exposed to abuse and rights violations. The question therefore is how should the PSO actors contribute towards the protection of children in armed conflicts across Sub-Saharan Africa?

The next section highlights key issues identified during this research as being critical in reshaping the architecture of PSO in the Eastern and Western African sub-regions.

DRIVERS OF CONFLICT AND THE AFRICAN UNION RESPONSE

Numerous drivers were identified during this research as influencing the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) in its efforts to respond to various conflicts across the continent. These include: the AU's structural capacity in response to armed conflict; children and armed conflict; and peacekeeping training.

African Union Structural Capacity in Response to Armed Conflict

Although progress has been made in the implementation of various road maps set up to establish and operationalise the African Standby Force (ASF)[3], this body has yet to achieve full operational capability throughout Africa. However, the transformation of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) into the AU is seen as a landmark event in the institutionalisation of intergovernmental political and collective security structures on the African continent. The adoptions of the Constitutive Act of the African Union in July 2000, and of the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union in July 2002, marked critical steps in building Africa's capacity to address the challenges of peace, security and stability on the continent.

In particular, the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council provided for the creation of the APSA, designed as a set of institutions and standards to facilitate conflict prevention, management and resolution. The APSA is underpinned by the principle of "non-indifference", which means that all situations that may threaten peace and security on the continent can be brought before the AU, including intervening in a member state in cases of war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide; or at the request of a member state, in order to restore peace and security. As the AU continues to intensify its inward-looking intervention policy, the risk is that this approach may minimise continuous engagement with international organisations. And, a challenge not to be underestimated, the capacity of the AU to deliver effective intervention remains hindered by inadequate resources.

The transformation of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) into the African Union is seen as a landmark event in the institutionalisation of intergovernmental political and collective security structures on the African continent.

Under the above-mentioned Protocol, the Peace and Security Council is the main decision-making body within the architecture, modelled on the UN Security Council. It is composed of 10 representatives of the AU member states and of five representatives from five Regional Economic Communities (RECs)[4]. Advised by a Military Staff Committee (MSC) if necessary, its principal task is to provide effective responses to crisis situations in Africa.

The Peace Support Operation Division (PSOD), responsible for overseeing peace operations across the continent, presents opportunities for humanitarian organisations such as Save the Children for planning and delivering projects tackling the problem of children in armed conflicts. The various units[5] within the Division present another platform for Save the Children to contribute to policy development on matters relating to children and armed conflict.

As one of the key components of the APSA, the ASF is meant to consist of standby multidisciplinary contingents stationed in their respective countries of origin and ready for rapid deployment as soon as required. However, this research demonstrated that the ASF faces several technical, funding, and logistical challenges. For example, though the EASF and the ECOWAS-Standby Force have a permanent Logistical Base, they do not have strategic airlift capabilities and lack many other essential transportation and intervention resources such as airplanes, armoured vehicles, helicopters, radios, and sometimes even weapons and ammunition.

AFRICAN UNION (AU)

ENVISIONED PEACE AND SECURITY ARCHITECTURE

As part of the efforts of the African Union (AU) to promote peace and security in Africa an African Peace and Security Architecture has been designed, consisting of several important elements for conflict prevention, management and post-conflict reconstruction support. This illustration (2012 edition), published by the Swedish Defence Research Agency (FOI) in an effort to promote knowledge about the AU, aims at presenting an overview of relevant facts and figures concerning AU peace and security efforts, and an outline of the current vision of the main building blocks in the African Peace and Security Architecture. The architecture is a continuously evolving project for peace and security, supported by a range of national and international partners. Hence, this illustration is based on currently available information about the envisioned structure, but it is intended to be frequently updated, in tune with revisions and progress made during the course of the build-up.

AU FACTS

▷ The African Union consists of 54 out of 55 states on the African continent. Morocco is not a member state.

▷ The decision to establish an African Union was taken by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) Assembly of Heads of State and Government in 1999. The inauguration of the AU took place in July 2002.

▷ The African Peace and Security Architecture is underpinned by two pillars: the PSC Protocol (2002) establishing the Peace and Security Council, and the Common African Defence and Security Policy (CADSP) (2004), which provides a framework for all instruments relevant to promote peace and security.

▷ The Assembly of Heads of State and Government is the Supreme Organ of the AU.

ASF SCENARIOS

The AU seeks to develop an African Standby Force (ASF) constituted of brigade-sized contingents from Africa's five sub-regions. The ASF is composed of both military and civilian capabilities ready to deploy rapidly in case of grave circumstances. The operationalisation of the standby force is now scheduled for 2015. The scenarios for which the ASF is to be deployed are outlined below.

Scenario	Description	Deployment requirement
1	AU/Regional military advice to a political mission.	30 days
2	AU/Regional observer mission co-deployed with a UN mission	30 days
3	Stand-alone AU/Regional observer mission.	30 days
4	AU/Regional peacekeeping force for Chapter VI and preventive deployment missions (and peace building).	30 days
5	AU/Regional peacekeeping force for complex multidimensional peacekeeping missions, including those involving low-level spoilers.	90 days with the military component being able to deploy in 30 days.
6	AU intervention, e.g. in genocide situations where the international community does not act promptly.	14 days with robust military force.

AU MISSIONS 2003 – 2012

The graph demonstrates the authorised strength, as well as actual number of troops deployed, of all AU missions between 2003 and 2012.

PEACE AND SECURITY ARCHITECTURE

These are the main elements of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). The focal point is the AU Peace and Security Council located in Addis Ababa. The Council is modelled on the UN Security Council and consists of 15 member states, rotating on a regional basis. There are no permanent members and no veto. The Council has appointed a Commissioner of Peace and Security who leads the Department of Peace and Security, which runs the everyday business of APSA.

Panel of the Wise

The Panel is composed of five highly respected African persons who have contributed to peace, security and development. Its role is to advise the PSC on such matters, and to serve as a mediation instrument.

Peace Fund

The Peace Fund is one of the operational tools to finance peace and security activities of the AU. It is made up of financial appropriations from the regular AU budget as well as from voluntary contributions from other sources within Africa.

Continental Early Warning System

The CEWS collects, analyses and reports on conflict-related indicators in support of early response capabilities. The central situation room in Addis Ababa connects with early warning systems in the regions.

African Standby Force

The ASF is composed of five regional, multinational stand-by brigades, civilian and police capabilities.

Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms

AU Peace & Security Council

Department of Peace and Security

Conflict Prevention and Early Warning Division	Conflict Management and Post Conflict Reconstruction Division	Peace Support Operations Division	Defence and Security Division	PSC Secretariat
• Continental Early Warning System • Panel of the Wise • AU Border Program	• Conflict Resolution & Management • Peace-building Reconstruction and Develop. • AU Liaison Offices	• Policy • Support and management of AU PSOs • ASF	• Counter terrorism • Disarmament & Non-proliferation • Security Sector Reform	• Operational and administrative support to the PSC

Regional Cooperation

The Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and Regional mechanisms for Conflict Prevention Management and Resolution (RMs) are a key component of the operationalization and effective functioning of APSA. The PSC and the Chairperson of the AU Commission are responsible for harmonizing and coordinating the activities of Regional Mechanisms in the field of peace, security and stability, and to ensure that these activities are consistent with the objectives and principles of the Union.

Seven RECs and two RMs have signed an MoU with the AU on Cooperation in the area of Peace and Security. These are:

- CEN-SAD
- COMESA
- EAC
- EASFCOM
- ECCAS
- ECOWAS
- IGAD
- NARC
- SADC

The Arab Maghreb Union (UMA), which is one of the RECs recognized by the AU, has not yet signed the MoU.

NARC

North African Regional Capability
Members: Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Mauritania, Tunisia

Planning element: Libya

NASBRIG
- 1 brigade at high level readiness
- Police component
- Civilian component

NARC is a special mechanism that has been developed for the purpose of the ASF build-up only.

ECOWAS

Economic Community of West African States
Members: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo

Planning element: Abuja (Nigeria)

ESF
- 1 large brigade at medium level readiness
- 1 smaller brigade at high level readiness
- Police component
- Civilian component

ECCAS

Economic Community of Central African States
Members: Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo (Brazzaville), Democratic Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, São Tomé et Príncipe.

Planning element: Libreville (Gabon)

FOMAC
- 1 brigade at high level readiness
- Police component
- Civilian component

EASFCOM

East African Standby Brigade Coordination Mechanism
Members: Burundi, Comoros, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Seychelles, Somalia, Sudan, Uganda

Planning element: Karen/Nairobi (Kenya)

EASF
- 1 brigade at high level readiness
- Police component
- Civilian component

EASFCOM is a special mechanism that has been developed for the purpose of the ASF build-up only.

SADC

Southern Africa Development Community
Members: Angola, Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Planning element: Gaborone (Botswana)

SSF
- 1 brigade at high level readiness
- Police component
- Civilian component

FOI Swedish Defence Research Agency
Studies in African Security
www.foi.se/africa

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Source: African Union

Policy analysts have identified a number of other technical and political challenges. On the technical side, these include the failure of a multinational endeavour to develop common doctrine, system, tactics, techniques and procedures, and the lack of an intermediary command and control structure between the AU's Peace and Security Department and ASF brigades. Politically, a crucial missing ingredient has been an adequate level of interstate and inter-REC cooperation. Lastly, African financial support has been largely insufficient.[6]

At the RECs level, a 2010 assessment of the institutions' strengths and weaknesses concluded that, in relation to the EASF, there were internal tensions and conflicts within members' states, shortfalls in committed troops from member states, and a general lack of political, diplomatic and military cohesion in the region. This implies that the concept of optimal integrated planning and collective regional security systems remains elusive.

The varied geopolitical and socio-cultural histories of the EASF members and dual membership of some countries in the region discourages progress. The previously mentioned study pointed to greater "solidarity" among members of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and high levels of commitment to funding the regional security effort. Another study suggested that certain ECOWAS member states are less enthusiastic and are suspicious of Nigerian ambitions to be the regional hegemon.

These political challenges and capacity gaps facing PSO actors in both Eastern and Western Africa result in disturbing implications for the rights of children, which shall be explored in the following section.

The Impact of Armed Conflict on Children[7]

The major drivers of conflict, particularly in resource-rich countries such as the DRC and the Republic of South Sudan, are the control and exploitation of natural resources including diamonds, coltan, gold and oil. Politically instigated conflicts are also the scourge of the African continent. For example, the recent crisis in the Republic of South Sudan has been attributed to the mobilisation of political support based on identity politics and state weaknesses. Causes and drivers of conflicts are as diverse as their consequences. However, in Sub-Saharan Africa where the majority of the population is constituted of young people, domestic unemployment and declining economic opportunities create the perfect conditions for mobilising groups of individuals to violence.[8]

> The conflict dynamic across Africa wields a devastating impact on children's development and survival. In recent years, United Nations child protection actors have noted with concern that the evolving character and tactics of armed conflict are creating unprecedented threats to children.

The conflict dynamic across Africa produces devastating impacts on children's development and survival. "In recent years, United Nations child protection actors have noted with concern that the evolving character and tactics of armed conflicts are creating unprecedented threats to children. The absence of clear front lines and identifiable opponents, the increasing use of terror tactics by some armed groups and certain methods used by security forces have made children more vulnerable. Children are being used as suicide bombers and human shields, while schools continue to be attacked, affecting girls' education in particular, and to be exploited for military purposes. In addition, children are being held in security detention for alleged association with armed groups. Furthermore, drone strikes have resulted in child casualties and have had a detrimental impact on the psychosocial health of children"[9]

■ In some cases, warfare rages on and off throughout childhood, girls and boys reaching adulthood never having known long-lasting peace in their homeland. Some of the countries in the Eastern and Western African sub-regions have experienced conflict for more than a decade, and suffer the consequences of protracted conflict, e.g. the DRC, Liberia, Northern Nigeria, Northern Uganda, the Republic of South Sudan, Sierra Leone and Somalia.

- The denial of humanitarian access to children in conflict areas is often a great concern, as demonstrated in recent years in Sri Lanka and Sudan. When denied humanitarian assistance, children are deprived of their right to survival, development, food, water and medication.

- Whether sudden or chronic, warfare leads to violations of children's rights. Physical survival becomes a daily challenge, often with difficulty accessing clean water, an adequate food supply and appropriate shelter, among other deprivations.

- Access to adequate healthcare and securing appropriate drugs (both preventative and curative) and vaccines are major concerns for both children and mothers, including pregnant and breastfeeding women. In many conflicts, the majority of child mortalities occur away from the battles, bombings and terrorist attacks.[10]

> The denial of humanitarian access to children in conflict areas is often a great concern, as demonstrated in recent years in Sri Lanka and Sudan. When denied humanitarian assistance, children are deprived of their right to survival, development, food, water and medication.

- Conflict-related targeting of educational facilities (of both their staff and infrastructures) has increased significantly since 2004, resulting in school closures and even the collapse of education systems.[11] Over 50% of all primary school-aged children who are not in school reside in a 'fragile state'.[12]

- Armed conflict affects children at all levels, as individuals and as members of both a family and a community. Conflict fragments a society, generating questions of identity and allegiance while dividing communities through suspicion.

- Emergencies disrupt daily routines, weakening the social ties they provide, as people are separated from their social support networks and displaced from their homes. In addition to losing loved ones, homes and possessions, children lose geographical references (such as a favourite tree or route to school) and symbolic personal items (such as photographs or an inherited stamp collection), which serve as important reminders of their life, identity and culture.[13]

- Warfare has an impact on personal safety and security, as children often rely on adults for their protection. As conflict unfolds, protective structures often break down and the social norms that regulate behaviour are affected, making children even more vulnerable to abuse and exploitation.

- Armed conflict can have long-term effects on a family's financial well-being and ability to support all of its dependents, especially when it causes displacement. There is often increased poverty resulting from loss of land and assets, which causes depletion of savings, as people barter what they have for safety or basic needs. This often results in reduced access to education, including secondary and professional schooling, as well as disruption of earnings, as family members are imprisoned or killed.

- Children who are separated from their traditional caregivers or who are orphaned during times of conflict are frequently left to be taken in by other families or institutions, or to fend for themselves and/or their siblings. Children with a pre-existing vulnerability factors, such as orphans and children with disabilities are particularly at risk of emotional instability, physical injury, sexual violence, torture, recruitment into armed conflict, and death.[14]

Peacekeeping Training

It is generally observed that the AU, the RECs and Regional Mechanisms and various peacekeeping training institutions collaborate regularly on numerous projects, including conducting Training Needs Assessments (TNA), joint delivery of trainings and funding coordination.

In spite of this collaboration in the field of training, the research undertaken has shown some of the areas that remain a challenge within the training of stakeholders. The points of weaknesses identified include insufficient interoperability and lack of standardised training resources. Although the African Peace Support Trainers Association (APSTA) is keen on harmonising the various training programs, at the time of research for this study, training remained a loosely coordinated activity, mainly donor-driven, and weakened by the lack of stable internal funding.

Training opportunities do exist among stakeholders in both sub-regions of Eastern and Western Africa. For instance, demands from the AU, RECs and AU member states for capacity building in regard to protection of civilians/child protection, as well as training on Gender-Based Sexual Violence, were expressed by most of the key informants of the implementing institutions. On a similar note, it was established that the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) had expressed the need for specialised courses as well as basic POC and child protection training.

There seems to be a gap in reliable information on which centres were or were not providing POC or child protection training at the time of writing. The exceptions are the Kofi Annan International Peace-keeping Centre in Ghana and the International Peace Support Training Centre in Kenya, who offer training as both stand-alone modules and in the format and when their main collaborating partners require it. There is also no reliable data on training materials, nor regarding how comprehensive and up-to-date trainee databases may be. Many of the training centres are carrying out monitoring and evaluation of their training activities. An informant met when collecting data for this report asserted that "nearly all of them face challenges with monitoring and evaluation and are dedicating resources to improve on these two aspects including the use of mobile evaluation teams.

On cooperation and collaboration, an informant said: "It [is] clearly obvious that even though the Training Centres of Excellence (TCEs) purport to and/or aspire to collaborate, the extent to which this is done and/or will ever be done is a matter of conjecture. The main reason being that […] the TCEs are in competition with each other (whether they admit it or not), and each of them is guarded as to what they can share and how the other party will use what they share."

> In light of these challenges, several recommendations emerged, with some of the interviewees feeling that, in order to enhance understanding of children's rights by military personnel, there was a need to integrate sociocultural aspects in child protection training for peacekeepers.

There are also countless perception issues that may be influencing training programs in the two sub-regions. The unclear line between the roles of military and civilian components in peace missions was evident in the contributions of some of the senior military officers. On military perceptions of need, another interviewee said: "My gut feeling is that the demand for training in child protection is not high. First of all this is perceived as a civilian component […] Militaries are not preoccupied with this to start with. They are fighters. They at least [sic] think they have more pressing things to look after. Police yes, but as they work in very unsafe environments, child protection would not be their first priority but maybe the second or third."[15]

In light of these challenges, several recommendations emerged, with some of the interviewees feeling that, in order to enhance understanding of children's rights by military personnel, there is a need to integrate socio-cultural aspects in child protection training for peacekeepers. This was supported by the view that knowledge and skills are not sufficient to overcome certain beliefs and representations of children and childhood.

THE UNFOLDING CONFLICT 'HOT SPOTS' IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

Despite all the military and political efforts towards building peace in Africa, the continent still experiences devastating conflicts. The list of new and long-standing peace and security threats includes the recent crises in the Central African Republic and Mali, as well as conflicts that "have thwarted all efforts at peacemaking" in Western Sahara. The list also includes the proliferation of armed groups in the DRC, the defiant Eritrea against her neighbours, and others that have seen some progress but remain areas of risk, in danger of reigniting, for example the Great Lakes region, Somalia, Darfur and the recently politically instigated crisis in the new Republic of South Sudan.

Despite attempts to delegitimise unconstitutional changes of government, coups d'état and other seizures of power have affected the Central African Republic, Guinea-Bissau, Madagascar and Mali.

Recourse to armed rebellion in Mali, the DRC and the Central African Republic were seen as governance-related and characterised in the report to the Security Council as the greatest threat on the continent to peace, security and stability because of their impact on civilians.

The cyclical conflicts in Sub-Saharan Africa seem unlikely to come to an end in the near future. Responses to these conflicts can vary widely in terms of preparation and of actual implementation.

In Mali, for instance, the African-led International Support Mission to Mali (AFISMA) had a Protection of Civilians mandate, and was the first African Union mission to have an approved Protection of Civilians policy.[16] It also had ground-breaking provisions for human rights training of troops pre-deployment. Nonetheless, most actors were unprepared to undertake child protection or Protection of Civilians (PoC) measures in general, when events began to unfold in January 2013. With the quickened pace of events, much human rights training was "side-stepped".[17]

As late as June 2013, no Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) on how to deal with children affected by armed conflict were in place for any of the armed forces operating in Mali, nor had the Malian Armed Forces or AFISMA troops received substantial child protection training, despite the fact that human rights observers from ECOWAS and from the AU were arriving in Bamako. The draft agreement on SOPs for the Malian Armed Forces remained unsigned. While transfers of children caught up in the conflict from AFISMA or Malian forces to civilian actors generally took place, this was as a result of the "good will" of involved parties, and was not institutionalised. The external support by the European Union Training Mission in Mali in April 2013 offered a one-hour course on child protection, and was put in place with the support of UNICEF and the International Bureau for Children's Rights.

> In 2011, ECOWAS also adopted a Code of Conduct for the Armed Forces and Security Services in West Africa. Its Article 7 specifies that "In the exercise of their duties, armed and security personnel shall provide adequate protection, refuge and assistance to all persons in need. They shall ensure that internally displaced persons, refugees, non-nationals, stateless persons, minorities, women, children, the elderly, and people with disabilities are not discriminated against. No one shall discriminate on the basis of race, identity, religion, political beliefs, status or condition."

POLICY GAPS AND OPTIONS

The policy options presented in this section provide a range of opportunities for consideration by individuals and organisations actively engaged in supporting initiatives for averting violence against children in armed conflict across Sub-Saharan Africa. The opportunities identified are useful for decision-makers in addressing some of the challenges faced by defence institutions. They include international and African child protection frameworks, the AU response to conflict, regional cooperation for conflict aversion and training issues.

International and African Political and Legal Child Protection Frameworks

Protection of Civilian norms and those specific to, or generally applicable to children affected by armed conflict, are derived from a wide range of sources: international humanitarian law, norms set by the United Nations (UN) such as within the UN Security Council or international humanitarian organisations, those found in peacekeeping mandates, those established by regional intergovernmental organisations, and within the Responsibility to protect UN initiative (R2P).

The R2P, adopted by UN members as part of the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document, obligates individual governments to prevent violence against their own populations, to react to protect those populations against "genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity", as well as to assume the responsibility of rebuilding afterwards if such acts have taken place. The R2P includes a second responsibility on the behalf of the international community: "where a population is suffering serious harm, as a result of internal war, insurgency, repression or state failure, and the state in question is unwilling or unable to halt or avert it,"[18] it becomes the responsibility of the international community to intervene for protection purposes.

The APSA follows a similar pattern in developing institutions for the protection of civilians, in particular of children. In July 2002, the AU adopted a Memorandum of Understanding on Security, Stability, Development and Cooperation in Africa that urges member states to ratify the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict. Many African states have also committed themselves to the 2007 Principles and Guidelines on Children Associated with Armed Forces or Armed Groups (Paris Principles), which provide that all children associated with armed actors should be considered primarily as victims of violations of international law, not perpetrators.

> "Where a population is suffering serious harm, as a result of internal war, insurgency, repression or state failure, and the state in question is unwilling or unable to halt or avert it," it becomes the responsibility of the international community to intervene for protection purposes.

The Proposed Guidelines for the Protection of Civilians in African Peace Support Operations, currently under review, make no specific mention of African or other legal frameworks explicitly focused on child protection or child's rights. The guidelines do include references to children in the provisions concerning civilian groups with specials needs, which are listed as women, children, the elderly, persons with disabilities, internally displaced individuals and refugees. It is obvious that both the international community and the AU are committed to institutionalising the protection of civilians in the AU peace operations. However, challenges related to the lack of a clear framework for implementation in the field, and the general scarcity of information on child protection issues seems to be hindering the efforts.

Regional Cooperation for Conflict Aversion

The AU Regional Task Force (RTF) pursuing the LRA operates within four nations affected by the armed group's actions: the Central African Republic, the DRC, the Republic of South Sudan and Uganda.

Even though the Task Force has been able to lower the number of LRA attacks against civilians, it struggles with many challenges. While the LRA has ceased to be a threat in Northern Uganda with the overall number of attacks reduced since 2012, it continues to maintain a presence in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Central African Republic and possibly in Southern Sudan[19]. Most of the LRA's attacks have generally taken place in areas where security, government presence, accessibility and communication infrastructures are poor. It is widely felt that LRA activities are currently limited largely to logistical raids aimed at ensuring its survival. In November 2011, the African Union Peace and Security Council declared the LRA a terrorist organisation.

In 2013, Save the Children, in collaboration with UNICEF, spearheaded a training schedule for the RTF in East and Central Africa with the intention to train at least 3,500 troops by the end of 2014. This initiative is, however, faced with myriad logistical challenges, as well as the cyclical nature of conflicts in the region.

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Training Issues

In both the Eastern and Western African sub-regions, peacekeeping training centres collaborate with the AU, RECs and Regional mechanisms on various activities, including training needs assessment and harmonisation of common courses. The African Peace Support Trainers Association (APSTA) coordinates most of these training standardisation activities.

Due to the capacity challenges facing peacekeeping training centres, there is a general feeling among actors that these centres require capacity building mainly in child protection and Gender Based Violence.

Other pertinent issues identified during pilot training for the EASF child protection curriculum include the lack of solid participant selection criteria and weak monitoring and evaluation systems within peacekeeping training. Although efforts are underway to establish a roster, there seems to exist certain distrust among key stakeholders, concerning the transparency of the troop-generating countries throughout the process, even though they are the ultimate safeguards.

In May 2013, the Secretary-General's report to the UN Security Council on children and armed conflict, expressed "concern that the evolving character and tactics of armed conflict are creating unprecedented threats to children. The absence of clear front lines and identifiable opponents, the increasing use of terror tactics by some armed groups and certain methods used by security forces have made children more vulnerable. Children are being used as suicide bombers and human shields, while schools continue to be attacked, affecting girls' education in particular, and to be used for military purposes. In addition, children are being held in security detention for alleged association with armed groups. Furthermore, drone strikes have resulted in child casualties and have had a serious impact on the psychosocial health of children."

Source: United Nations, Report of the Secretary-General, Children and armed conflict, A/67/845–S/2013/245, May 2013

CONCLUSIONS

It is common knowledge that more than half of the AU's budget is now provided by Western donors and that this is unlikely to change in the foreseeable future. Virtually all future AU sanctioned interventions will be dependent on considerable financial, logistic and other military support from the international community, particularly the United States and the former colonial powers, France and the United Kingdom.

At the same time, the AU continues to cumulate yearly deficits. The performance rate per year is about 40 per cent. Sometimes funds arrive late, sometimes they are earmarked, but there is also a lack of capacity to absorb funding in a timely fashion. When funding is not steady and predictable, it is difficult to utilise 100 per cent. Part of the fault lies in donor funding restrictions, such as release times. Both the AU and donors are constrained by their own rules and capacities, which results in a very unpredictable environment.

The AU capacities have been developing for about 10 years, but that is still a very short timeframe for an international institution. There is likely to be a very uncertain environment for the next 10 to 20 years until its structures have proven their value. Ultimately, donor coordination and cooperation is limited, inconsistent and susceptible to changing resource levels, national political and security interests and domestic public attention.

What hope there was that the originally envisaged African Union Standby Force could be the answer to Africa's multiple security crises has been seriously eroded by the AU's inability to take the lead in stemming the Islamist-led insurgency in Mali. While some take solace in AMISOM's successes in pushing back insurgents in Somalia, that mission has been marked by individual AU states (Kenya and Ethiopia) intervening unilaterally and by reports of widespread human rights abuses.

With South Africa, Ethiopia and Uganda as leading participants, the "temporary" African Immediate Crisis Response Initiative is now being discussed. This initiative could possibly replace the stunted ASF as the intervention tool of choice for some African military powers with interests and reach from Southern Africa into Central Africa and the Horn. It is difficult to see Nigeria and other West African states collaborating in such an arrangement, rather than continuing to rely on ECOWAS. Another possibility is ad hoc arrangements dependent on several individual states cooperating in a joint intervention sanctioned by the AU, as in the case of the LRA Task Force.

Whatever military or political configurations they participate in, about half a dozen African militaries are likely to continue to lead in troop contributions: those from Ethiopia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania and Uganda.

> The execution rate year on year is about 40 per cent. Sometimes funds arrive late, sometimes they are earmarked, but there is also a lack of capacity to absorb funding in a timely fashion. When it is not steady and predictable, it is difficult to utilise 100 per cent. Part of the fault lies in donor funding restrictions such as release times. Both the AU and donors are constrained by their own rules and capacities and the result is a very unpredictable environment.

WHAT SHOULD BE DONE TO PURSUE AN EFFECTIVE STRATEGY FOR PROTECTING CHILDREN IN ARMED CONFLICTS

No single solution can be prescriptive to the myriad challenges faced by PSO actors. Nevertheless, decision makers and other programmatic staff within this context will have to prioritise attention to creating and sustaining synergy in training, knowledge generation, and advocacy initiatives.

The issues discussed and options considered in this report could increase efficiency of PSO actors in regard to the protection of children in armed conflicts. Increasing interactions and sharing of information through 'lessons learnt' mechanisms can be greatly beneficial to all stakeholders.

No single solution can be prescriptive to the multitude of challenges faced by PSO actors. Nevertheless, decision makers and other stakeholders will have to prioritise attention to creating and sustaining synergy in training, knowledge generation, and advocacy initiatives.

Further action is needed in a number of key areas, including:

- Leading humanitarian organisations such as Save the Children to strengthen working relationships with regional standby forces and troop contributing countries to entrench and institutionalise the protection of civilians and child protection concepts and training. The regional standby forces could assume leadership on this, while benefiting from the necessary support on behalf of the international community;

- Greater synergy rather than competition among PSO actors will minimise tensions and duplication of efforts;

- Strengthening the capacities of regional standby forces and task forces in monitoring and reporting through system development and information sharing;

- Support training material harmonisation and promote the concept of Centres of Excellence so as to minimise the negative competition and maximise synergy and joint programming.

Save the Children is the world's leading independent organization for children. We work in around 120 countries. We save children's lives, we fight for their rights; we help them fulfil their potential. **Our vision** is a world in which every child attain the right to survival, protection, development and participation **Our mission** is to inspire breakthroughs in the way the world treats children, and to achieve immediate and lasting change in their lives.

ENDNOTES

1. For more information, please refer to the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) and 1889 (2009) on women, peace and security, Security Council Resolutions 1612 (2005) and 1882 (2009) on children and armed conflict, and for information specifically on sexual and Gender-Based Violence, to Resolutions 1820 and 1888 (2008).

2. Ekaterina Stepanova, "Trends in Armed Conflicts: One-sided Violence Against Civilians", SIPRI Yearbook 2009, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 2009, available online at http://www.sipri.org/yearbook.

3. African Standby Forces form part of the five bodies of the APSA. They are: Peace and Security Council; Continental Early Warning System; Panel of the Wise; African Standby Force and Special Fund.

4. The five Regional Economic Communities (RECs) are the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU), the East African Community (EAC), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

5. The division is composed of four units: Policy Development; Plans and Operations Unit; Capability Development; and Mission Support Unit.

6. For more information, refer to the various publications by Williams, Paul D., "Enhancing Civilian Protection in Peace Operations: Insights from Africa", Africa Center for Strategic Studies, Research Paper No. 1, National Defense University Press, Washington, D.C. September 2010; Williams, Paul D., *Peace Operations in Africa: Lessons Learned Since 2000*, Africa Security Brief, No. 25, July 2013, Africa Center for Strategic Studies http://africacenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/AfricaBriefFinal_25.pdf; Williams, Paul. D., 2013. "The African Union Mission in Somalia and Civilian Protection Challenges", *Stability: International Journal of Security and Development* 2(2):39, DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.5334/sta.bz.

7. This section is an extract of Chapter 2 "War-Affected Children – An Overview" in "Children and Armed Conflict: A New Guide to International Humanitarian and Human Rights Law" published in March 2010 by the International Bureau for Children's Rights. See http://www.ibcr.org/editor/assets/thematic_report/5/Conflict_Eng.pdf

8. For more information on the subject, refer to Haider, Huma, Topic Guide on Conflict, Governance and Social Development Resource Centre, University of Birmingham, 2012, available online at http://www.gsdrc.org/docs/open/CON69.pdf.

9. Children and Armed Conflict - Report of the Secretary-General, p.2, May 2013, available online at www.poa-iss.org/poa/S-2013-503-E.pdf

10. The International Rescue Committee (IRC), "Mortality in the Democratic Republic of Congo: Results from a Nationwide Survey", 2003, available online at http://www.reliefweb.int/library/documents/2003/irc-drc-8apr.pdf. The IRC estimated that 86% of deaths in the DRC's war-affected provinces were the indirect consequences of the conflict and affected children disproportionately. For a discussion on the indirect consequences on children of terrorist attacks, see Human Security Centre, "Human Security Report 2005", p.44, available online at http://www.humansecurityreport.info/index.php?option=content&task=view&id=28&Itemid=63.

11. Brendan O'Malley, "Education Under Attack", UNESCO, 2007, available at http://www.unesco.org/education/attack/educationunderattack.pdf.

12. Save the Children Alliance, "Rewrite the Future – Three Years On", 2009, p.1, available at http://www.savethechildren.org/publications/reports/Rewrite_the_Future_Three_Years_On_lowres-pdf-1.pdf. The OECD defines a 'fragile State' as a country that is "unable to provide physical security, legitimate political institutions, sound economic management and social services for the benefit of its population". See http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=4672&l=1.

13. Terre des Hommes, "Child Protection: Manual for intervention in humanitarian crisis", 2006, p.14, available online at http://www.tdh.ch/website/doc_dnld.nsf/bf25ab0f47ba5dd785256499006b15a4/aa38138679a23d33c12571760041dd5d/$FILE/manuel_protection_en_2006.pdf.

14. For a more detailed analysis, please refer to the Children and armed conflict - Report of the Secretary-General, A/67/845–S/2013/245, May 2013.

15. Key informant 3, interview.

16. "According to an AU official that was interviewed on 17 May 2013, a Protection of Civilians (PoC) strategy for AFISMA was approved in May 2013. The official also pointed out that PoC was part of the AFISMA mandate as per UNSC Resolution 2085, and it was thus also strongly embedded in the CONOPS endorsed by ECOWAS and the AU." Freear, M. and de Coning, C. "Lessons from the African Union Mission for Somalia (AMISOM) for Peace Operations in Mali", (2013) 2(2): Stability: International Journal of Security & Development, 23, note 13.

17. Watchlist, "Where Are They…? The Situation of Children and Armed Conflict in Mali" June 2013, http://watchlist.org/where-are-they-mali/, p. 41.

18. The Responsibility to Protection: Core Principles. See http://www.responsibilitytoprotect.org/index.php/publications

19. LRA Regional Update: Central African Republic, the DR Congo and South Sudan, OCHA, April-June 2013, http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/LRA%20Regional%20Update%20%28April%20-%20June%202013%29.pdf.

Acknowledgements

ABOUT SAVE THE CHILDREN REGIONAL PROGRAMME

Save the Children in East Africa realises that the need to eliminate all forms of violence against children involves a multi faceted approach involving a number of stakeholders. This had led to the focus of protection interventions in the region geared towards establishing and strengthening national child protection systems to respond and prevent all forms of violence against children including abuse, neglect and exploitation in a holistic and coordinated manner. Since 2009, Save the Children has supported governments, civil society and children with technical support and financial resources to map child protection concerns and develop sustainable interventions in Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Ethiopia, Sudan and South Sudan.

Recently, Save the Children has supported and collaborated with the Committee of Experts and the African Union on research and general comments on protection provisions under the Charter and relevant AU Instruments including the need for national child protection systems, corporal punishment under the Charter and the right of a child to a family and parental care. Regional integration and regional cooperation are essential for sustainable development and peaceful coexistence. The AU and the RECs play a key role in strengthening regional integration and cooperation in Africa. The operationalisation as well as the institutional capacity of these Bodies vary and need to be strengthened in order for them to fulfill their respective mandates and strategic roles in promoting child rights and in particular child protection in the Member States across the Region.

The Regional Programme promotes and implements through a right based approach based on partnerships, building a strong evidence base through research and advocacy and building the capacity of organizations in the Region to hold governments accountable.

> Save the Children works in more than 120 countries. We save children's lives. We fight for their rights. We help them fulfil their potential.

ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL BUREAU FOR CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

Established in 1994, the International Bureau for Children's Rights (IBCR) is an international non-governmental organisation based in Montreal, Canada. Internationally renowned and bilingual, it is the only Canadian organisation working on children's rights that possesses Special Consultative Status granted by the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

The mission of the IBCR is to contribute to the respect and promotion of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and its Optional Protocols. The IBCR is convinced that the implementation of children's rights can be facilitated through the sharing of knowledge and good practices, as well as through the development of tools and models that help to monitor and inspire the implementation of the CRC. The IBCR seeks partnerships with those committed to ensuring the implementation of the CRC, including intergovernmental bodies, international, regional and local non-governmental organisations, and others that are also concerned by the rights and the dignity of all the children in the world.

In association with the United Nations Department for Peacekeeping Operations, the IBCR recently undertook a review of military staff training tools used by peacekeeping schools. It is currently implementing programmes in 12 countries in the Middle East and Africa to build capacities of security forces and justice personnel on children's rights. This work involves integrating permanent mandatory courses at the initial, continuous and specialised levels in training schools that adopt a competency framework and a participatory approach.

Group photo at the opening ceremony at the Abidjan Workshop organised by the International Bureau for Children's Rights in November 2013 with the training institutions of security forces from 22 African countries.