



NEPAL: United Nations, Government of Nepal and UCPN-M sign Action Plan for discharge of minors disqualified from the Maoist army

KATHMANDU, 16 December 2009 - The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, Ms. Radhika Coomaraswamy, today witnessed the signing of an Action Plan between the Government of Nepal, Unified Communist Party of Nepal (UCPN-M) and the United Nations for the discharge of Maoist army personnel disqualified in the United Nations-led verification process in 2007. "Today, the minors who have spent the last three years in Maoist army cantonments with their lives on hold will finally be able to take the next step towards a more positive future," said Ms. Coomaraswamy.

The UCPN-M has been listed as a party to conflict recruiting and using children in five Annual Reports of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict. The party needs to fully comply with the Action Plan in order to be removed from this list.

The Government of Nepal and the United Nations will assist the orderly rehabilitation of the disqualified once they have been officially discharged. The discharged individuals will have access to a range of rehabilitation options which have been developed by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) and the UN Development Programme (UNDP), in consultation with the Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction and UCPN-M. Financing for these packages will be provided from the UN Peace Fund for Nepal (UNPFN), which is supported by the Governments of Norway, Denmark, the United Kingdom, Switzerland and Canada and the UN Peace Building Fund. "The Government of Nepal, the United Nations, and our partners are prepared to ensure that these disqualified benefit from rehabilitation packages, including education and skills training to create a brighter future," stated UNICEF Representative, Ms. Gillian Mellsop.

"This is a historic step in Nepal's peace process. We hope that it will encourage other steps to unblock the current political stalemate," said Representative of the Secretary-General in Nepal, Ms. Karin Landgren.

The Action Plan will be monitored by a United Nations-led team to ensure that those disqualified are given the choice to partake in programmes to assist their return to a civilian environment, and that they are not exposed to recruitment by groups who engage in violence or criminal activities. Political youth movements, in particular, are a concern for protection partners working with children across Nepal.

Special Representative Coomaraswamy came to Nepal to finalise discussions with the UCPN-M and the Government, along with the United Nations Mission in Nepal (UNMIN), UNICEF and the United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator on this Action Plan in line with the recommendations of the United Nations Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict.

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CHILDREN AND ARMED CONFLICT

NEPAL: CONCLUSION OF DISCHARGE OF CHILD SOLDIERS IN NEPAL IS CRUCIAL FOR THE PEACE PROCESS

New York, 9 February 2010 - The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, Ms. Radhika Coomaraswamy, welcomes the conclusion of the historic release of 1843 Individuals who joined the Maoist Army as minors, after more than three years in Maoist cantonment sites.

In December 2009, the Special Representative went to Nepal to finalize the Action Plan that led to the discharge of Maoist army personnel verified as minors. The discharge process, which began on 7 January, 2010, was completed on 8 February, 2010.

A total of 2,973 individuals were disqualified from the Maoist army as minors in a United Nations verification process that ended in December 2007. The discharge is a key component of an Action Plan signed in December 2009 by the Government of Nepal, the Unified Communist Party of Nepal - Maoist (UCPN-M) and the United Nations, in the framework of the 2006 Comprehensive Peace Agreement.

The UCPN-M has been listed as a party to conflict for recruiting and using children in five Annual Reports of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict, within the framework of the monitoring and reporting mechanism established with the Security Council Resolution 1612. When the party fully complies with the Action Plan, it will be removed from this list.

Ms. Coomaraswamy feels that the return of these children to civilian life should be closely monitored to ensure that they are not re-recruited or exploited for political purposes and that they are fully integrated into society.

The Special Representative stated that the discharge of the children was an important step forward in the peace process and she encourages all parties to seize the opportunity to bring lasting peace and stability to Nepal.

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