

**Präsentation des DEU Staatenberichts
zum Fakultativprotokoll „Kinder und bewaffnete Konflikte“ der KRK
vor dem VN-Ausschuss für die Rechte des Kindes
18. Januar 2008, Genf**

---Entwurf Statement---

**Mr Chairperson,
Distinguished members of the Committee,**

I have the honour to address you today on behalf of the German Delegation. Let me take this opportunity to first of all express Germany's sincere appreciation for the work of this Committee to foster the worldwide promotion and protection of the rights of the child.

Germany has consistently supported the work of this Committee and will continue to do so. We will continue to cooperate actively and unconditionally with this mechanism, but also with other relevant international and regional actors in the field of children's rights.

Mr Chairperson,

While the focus of our discussion today rests on Germany's action at the national level, I would like to briefly place our action at home in the context of Germany's activities to address the plight of child soldiers and children affected by armed conflict also on the international level.

Germany is very much concerned that despite considerable and sustained efforts of the International Community – not the least on the level of the UN Security Council – the situation regarding the involvement of children in armed conflicts remains very disturbing: In the past decade alone, armed conflicts are estimated to have claimed the lives of over two million children and physically maimed millions more. At any given time, there are estimated to be around 300,000 child soldiers participating in armed conflicts.

These children are deprived of their parents or other care-givers, of education and other basic social services. Tens of thousands of children are killed, maimed, raped or abducted from their homes

every year as a result of unlawful recruiting practices. Robbed of their childhood and deprived of basic human rights, they are often left traumatized or stigmatized for life.

To change this intolerable situation, Germany, together with its EU partners, has already for years taken action to end the use of child soldiers and to contribute to improving the situation of children affected by armed conflict. To this end, Germany is also actively cooperating with relevant international actors in the field of Children's Rights, most notably the UN and its special mechanisms – in particular the Special Representative on Children and Armed Conflict, the UN Security Council, UNICEF as well as civil society organizations.

In the EU's external human rights policy, action is being taken in the framework of specific "Human Rights Guidelines" on Children in Armed Conflict. These Guidelines were adopted in 2003 and foresee a range of concrete measures, bilaterally vis-à-vis countries particularly concerned, also on local level, as well as on multilateral level. Consequently, Germany has used its EU Presidency in the first half of 2007 to take, on behalf of the EU, a number of initiatives to implement these EU Guidelines through concrete action. Examples are in particular the development of "local implementation strategies" for a number of countries particularly affected by children in armed conflict as well as the establishment of a comprehensive list of all projects supported by all EU member states as well as from EU funds to help children affected by armed conflict in order to allow the EU's help to become more effective. On the international level, Germany, as EU Presidency, ensured strong EU support for the adoption – and subsequent implementation – of the so-called "Paris Principles" for a more coherent international approach towards the issue of children in armed conflict.

In this spirit, Germany continues, also after our term as EU presidency, to contribute actively to the implementation of the EU's policy on Children in armed conflict. In so doing, we know that we will be all the more convincing in our endeavors vis-à-vis others the better we ourselves do at home. This is why I very much hope that the German delegation will now be able to show to this Committee that we ourselves are very keen to comprehensively fulfill our obligations arising out of the Optional Protocol.

Before handing over the floor to the Head of our delegation, I would just like to briefly introduce the members of this delegation:

**- Dr. Almut Wittling-Vogel
Federal Government Commissioner for Human Rights Issues
at the Federal Ministry of Justice, Berlin**

**Dr. Hans-Jörg Behrens
Deputy Federal Government Commissioner for Human Rights
Issues at the Federal Ministry of Justice, Berlin**

**Dr. Alexander Strafner
Public Prosecutor
Federal Ministry of Justice, Berlin**

**Mr. Frank Neumann
Human Rights Officer
Federal Foreign Office, Berlin**

**Mr. Hans Jürgen Heiß
Lieutenant Colonel
Federal Ministry of Defence, Berlin**

**Ms Uta Saumweber-Meyer
Head of Division
Federal Office for Migration and Refugees,**

**Ms Wiebke Schindel
Head of Unit
Ministry for Social Affairs, Land Hesse**

**Ms Tanja Stücklen
Interpreter
Federal Ministry of Justice, Berlin.**

Thank you very much. Can I now ask Ms Wittling-Vogel to take the floor