

press release

For immediate release

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Save the Children Sweden highlights child protection issues with UN Security Council in El Fashir, North Darfur

El Fashir, North Darfur, 15 June, 2006

On Friday 9 June, SCS and six other INGOs in Darfur met with UN Security Council delegation in El Fashir, North Darfur. The Security Council had visited Juba and Khartoum, before ending up in Darfur for an update of the situation in the conflict stricken area. Save the Children Sweden addressed the members of the delegation on child protection issues, focusing on:

- The ongoing recruitment of children to the armed forces – many children have been killed and many others abducted following attacks on villages. The Government of Sudan has committed itself to criminalisation of recruitment of children to the armed forces, by signing the optional protocol to the CRC on children in armed conflict;
- Disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) and reunification – children must be demobilised and reintegrated with their families and communities. A rigorous system of independent monitoring of DDR must be put in place. Provisions of the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) are not sufficiently rigorous. Many children in armed conflict are separated from their families. There is an urgent need for the state to take responsibilities for setting up family tracing and reunification services. The DPA's provisions for this are not adequate;
- Child labour – conflict, displacement and impoverishment have increased child labour. Poor families/ households depend heavily on income from children's work. Children who work in these conditions are at risk of abuse, exploitation and recruitment to the armed forces. They are also at physical risk as many sexual and physical attacks on children take place when they are working; and
- Sexual violence against girls – more than one third of the reported sexual attacks in 2005 were carried out against girls below the age of 18.

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Save the Children Sweden started working in Eastern and Central Africa in 1965. It has offices in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; Nairobi, Kenya; and Khartoum, Sudan. Save the Children Sweden has long-term child-rights based development programmes in Ethiopia and Sudan, and it supports local partners in Kenya, Eritrea, Somaliland and Uganda.

The organisation focuses on building the capacity of local people, community-based structures and organisations. In Eastern and Central Africa, it works with more than forty different non-governmental organisations and government bodies. In addition, it has adopted a direct implementation approach in southern Sudan and the refugee camps of western Ethiopia. All of the work in the region focuses on children's rights, and tackles issues that affect marginalised children. The core of the work focuses on children affected by conflict, discrimination, abuse, exploitation, and HIV/AIDS. Save the Children Sweden's focus also includes education, child participation and good governance in the best interest of the child.

Save the Children Sweden is a non-governmental organisation. It is an active member of the International Save the Children Alliance – a global movement for children's rights. Through 18 offices around the world, the organisation contributes ideas, experience and funds to 500 projects in more than 60 countries.

Save the Children fights for children's rights. We deliver immediate and lasting improvements to children's lives worldwide. Save the Children works for a world:

- which respects and values each child.
- which listens to children and learns.
- where all children have hope and opportunity.

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