

EC Response

Joint Hearing EP-17 April 2007

Towards an EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child

1. *How is the EC complying with the CRC principle on the participation of children in the drafting of the strategy?* Such principle is explicitly mentioned as a guiding principle on the draft Action Plan. Actions are already being taken with consultation to children and youth organizations on the Action Plan and seminars on enhancing EC capacities to involve children and youth in the Development process (see annex 1).

2. *Is the EC making use of data and approaches such as CRC?* : The EC has already been using the CRC committee's comments on the countries' progress reports on the CRC, for its review of the draft CSPs /NIPs of ACP countries, as well as the NGO network's alternative comments and other sources to better assess the situation of children and the pertinent actions needed in the CSPs/NIPs. Such assessments will be improved in future reviews and strategies through the actions foreseen in the toolkit and the collaboration with UNICEF in those areas at country level. The reviews of the draft CSPs in ACP countries already include these aspects (and others such as the ratification and implementation of the ILO Conventions on child labour) , especially in the political and policy dialogue, and the attention to governance as a focal sector and through the incentive tranche.

3. *How will the EC address the issue of Children in post-conflict fragile states?* Education will be a focal sector in a number of post-conflict fragile states such as Somalia, Sudan and Angola. ECHO is preparing a strategy on

children in emergencies, where access to education is also being considered as a priority. The DCI/investing in People, stresses the need to complement actions on education in post-conflict fragile states.

4. *How will the EC ensure Gender equality in children rights, as with safe schools for girls?* The gender dimension is paramount in the draft Action Plan as a guiding principle in all actions. The attention to gender issues within the political dialogue and the support to education through actions, will be further assessed and monitored under mainstreaming guidelines on children rights and needs.

5. *How will the strategy relate to SRHR?* SRH&Rs are seen in the draft Action Plan as a key priority in promoting children rights and supporting their needs in the external relations, especially in the adolescent period. These aspects are being discussed in the CSPs/NIPs where it is a political and governance issue which includes not only unsafe sexual relations but also other abused SRH&Rs of girls such as forced marriages and FGM. It is also being discussed in the attention to health and HIV/AIDS as a focal sector or in its relation with budget support; in the specific attention to SRH&Rs under Investing in people and partnerships with UNFPA and UNIFEM; and in specific actions foreseen in the area of fighting violence against children (also under DCI/investing in people), with a focus on sexual violence against girls.