

DEED OF COMMITMENT

We, the representatives of the Karenni National Progressive Party (KNPP) and the Karenni Army (KA):

Affirm the definition of children, stipulated in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, as individuals aged below 18 years old;

Recognize that children without distinction, by reason of their physical and mental vulnerability, need special and appropriate protection, assistance and care;

Affirm that the rights of children require special protection and continuous improvement for their development and education in conditions of peace and security;

Consider that children should be fully prepared to live an individual life in society and are brought up in the spirit of peace, dignity, tolerance, freedom, equality and solidarity, and with the guidance and support of their parents;

Recognize the importance of co-operation for improving the living conditions of children in Myanmar and along the Thai-Myanmar border;

Take due account of the importance of the traditions, and cultural and ethnic values, of each people in Myanmar for the protection and harmonious development of each child;

Disturbed by the harmful and widespread impact of armed conflict on children and the long-term consequences it has for durable peace, security and development,

Recognize that, in Myanmar and along the borders, there are children living in exceptionally difficult conditions and that such children need special consideration;

Condemn the use and recruitment of children as soldiers;

Agree that a "child soldier" is defined as: "any person under 18 years of age who is or who has been recruited or used by an armed force or group in any capacity, including but not limited to a child used as fighters, cooks, porters, messengers, spies or for sexual purposes. It does not only refer to a child who is taking or has taken an active part in hostilities"

Welcome the adoption of the following legal instruments for the protection of children associated with armed groups and forces: **Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict** which raises the age of possible recruitment of persons into armed forces and their participation in hostilities to eighteen; **International Labour Organization Convention No. 182 on the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour** which prohibits forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict; and the **Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court**, which categorizes the conscription, enlistment or use in hostilities of children under the age of 15 as war crimes in both international and non-international armed conflicts;

~~Recognize the adoption of Security Council Resolution 1612 (2005) and previous Security Council resolutions on children and armed conflict and the need to comply with the international norms contained therein;~~

We hereby declare our commitment and adherence to the principles of Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict and shall take the necessary and immediate actions, as follows:

1. We will not recruit or use in any circumstances, "voluntarily" or by force, persons under the age of 18 years under any circumstances;
2. We will undertake all feasible measures to prevent such recruitment and use of children as soldiers within the KNPP and KA;
3. We will permit the monitoring, by independent third parties agreed upon, of our commitment and adherence to the principles of the Optional Protocol and compliance with the provisions thereof;
4. We will undertake to make the principles and provisions of the Optional Protocol widely known and promoted by appropriate means, within our own organizations and communities we work with;
5. We will undertake all feasible measures to ensure that children within our jurisdiction/protection recruited or used in hostilities are demobilized or otherwise released from service, as stated in a comprehensive Plan of Action, developed in close cooperation with the United Nations Country Team, as stated in the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1612;
6. We will also facilitate the provision of appropriate assistance by United Nations agencies, international development organizations and NGOs, for the physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration of demobilized or released children within the KNPP and KA;
7. We will cooperate with other international and non-government organizations in the implementation of the principles of the Optional Protocol, including in the prevention of any activity that leads to the recruitment and use of children in armed conflict.



Signed:

Khu Htae Bu Peh

Khu Htae Bu Peh
Chairman
Karenni National Progressive Party



Bee Htoo

Maj. Gen Bee Htoo
Commander-in-chief
Karenni Army

Date: April 13, 2007