

11. b) Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict

New York, 25 May 2000

ENTRY INTO FORCE: 12 February 2002, in accordance with article 10(1).

REGISTRATION: 12 February 2002, No. 27531.

STATUS: Signatories: 130. Parties: 173.

TEXT: United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 2173, p. 222; Doc.[A/RES/54/263](#); and C.N.1031.2000.TREATIES-82 of 14 November 2000 [Rectification of the original of the Protocol (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish authentic texts)]; C.N.865.2001.TREATIES-10 of 13 September 2001 [Rectification of the original of the Protocol (Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish authentic texts)].

Note: The Optional Protocol was adopted by resolution [A/RES/54/263](#) of 25 May 2000 at the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly of the United Nations. In accordance with its article 9 (1), the Optional Protocol will be open for signature by any State that is a party to the Convention or has signed it.

<i>Participant</i>	<i>Signature</i>	<i>Ratification, Accession(a), Succession(d)</i>	<i>Participant</i>	<i>Signature</i>	<i>Ratification, Accession(a), Succession(d)</i>
Afghanistan.....		24 Sep 2003 a	Cabo Verde		10 May 2002 a
Albania.....		9 Dec 2008 a	Cambodia.....	27 Jun 2000	16 Jul 2004
Algeria		6 May 2009 a	Cameroon.....	5 Oct 2001	4 Feb 2013
Andorra.....	7 Sep 2000	30 Apr 2001	Canada	5 Jun 2000	7 Jul 2000
Angola		11 Oct 2007 a	Central African Republic	27 Sep 2010	21 Sep 2017
Argentina	15 Jun 2000	10 Sep 2002	Chad.....	3 May 2002	28 Aug 2002
Armenia	24 Sep 2003	30 Sep 2005	Chile.....	15 Nov 2001	31 Jul 2003
Australia.....	21 Oct 2002	26 Sep 2006	China ^{2,3}	15 Mar 2001	20 Feb 2008
Austria	6 Sep 2000	1 Feb 2002	Colombia	6 Sep 2000	25 May 2005
Azerbaijan.....	8 Sep 2000	3 Jul 2002	Congo.....		24 Sep 2010 a
Bahamas (The).....		28 Sep 2015 a	Costa Rica.....	7 Sep 2000	24 Jan 2003
Bahrain.....		21 Sep 2004 a	Côte d'Ivoire		12 Mar 2012 a
Bangladesh.....	6 Sep 2000	6 Sep 2000	Croatia	8 May 2002	1 Nov 2002
Belarus		25 Jan 2006 a	Cuba.....	13 Oct 2000	9 Feb 2007
Belgium ¹	6 Sep 2000	6 May 2002	Cyprus.....	1 Jul 2008	2 Jul 2010
Belize	6 Sep 2000	1 Dec 2003	Czech Republic.....	6 Sep 2000	30 Nov 2001
Benin.....	22 Feb 2001	31 Jan 2005	Democratic Republic of the Congo.....	8 Sep 2000	11 Nov 2001
Bhutan.....	15 Sep 2005	9 Dec 2009	Denmark ⁴	7 Sep 2000	27 Aug 2002
Bolivia (Plurinational State of).....		22 Dec 2004 a	Djibouti.....	14 Jun 2006	27 Apr 2011
Bosnia and Herzegovina	7 Sep 2000	10 Oct 2003	Dominica		20 Sep 2002 a
Botswana	24 Sep 2003	4 Oct 2004	Dominican Republic.....	9 May 2002	14 Oct 2014
Brazil	6 Sep 2000	27 Jan 2004	Ecuador.....	6 Sep 2000	7 Jun 2004
Brunei Darussalam		17 May 2016 a	Egypt.....		6 Feb 2007 a
Bulgaria	8 Jun 2001	12 Feb 2002	El Salvador	18 Sep 2000	18 Apr 2002
Burkina Faso.....	16 Nov 2001	6 Jul 2007	Eritrea		16 Feb 2005 a
Burundi	13 Nov 2001	24 Jun 2008	Estonia	24 Sep 2003	12 Feb 2014

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Eswatini		24 Sep 2012 a	Liechtenstein.....	8 Sep 2000	4 Feb 2005
Ethiopia.....	28 Sep 2010	14 May 2014	Lithuania.....	13 Feb 2002	20 Feb 2003
Fiji	16 Sep 2005	29 Mar 2021	Luxembourg.....	8 Sep 2000	4 Aug 2004
Finland	7 Sep 2000	10 Apr 2002	Madagascar	7 Sep 2000	22 Sep 2004
France	6 Sep 2000	5 Feb 2003	Malawi.....	7 Sep 2000	21 Sep 2010
Gabon.....	8 Sep 2000	21 Sep 2010	Malaysia.....		12 Apr 2012 a
Gambia.....	21 Dec 2000	27 Sep 2019	Maldives	10 May 2002	29 Dec 2004
Georgia		3 Aug 2010 a	Mali.....	8 Sep 2000	16 May 2002
Germany	6 Sep 2000	13 Dec 2004	Malta.....	7 Sep 2000	9 May 2002
Ghana.....	24 Sep 2003	9 Dec 2014	Mauritius.....	11 Nov 2001	12 Feb 2009
Greece.....	7 Sep 2000	22 Oct 2003	Mexico	7 Sep 2000	15 Mar 2002
Grenada.....		6 Feb 2012 a	Micronesia (Federated States of)	8 May 2002	26 Oct 2015
Guatemala.....	7 Sep 2000	9 May 2002	Monaco	26 Jun 2000	13 Nov 2001
Guinea.....		8 Apr 2016 a	Mongolia.....	12 Nov 2001	6 Oct 2004
Guinea-Bissau.....	8 Sep 2000	24 Sep 2014	Montenegro ^{5,6}		2 May 2007 d
Guyana.....		11 Aug 2010 a	Morocco.....	8 Sep 2000	22 May 2002
Haiti	15 Aug 2002		Mozambique		19 Oct 2004 a
Holy See	10 Oct 2000	24 Oct 2001	Myanmar.....	28 Sep 2015	27 Sep 2019
Honduras.....		14 Aug 2002 a	Namibia	8 Sep 2000	16 Apr 2002
Hungary	11 Mar 2002	24 Feb 2010	Nauru	8 Sep 2000	
Iceland	7 Sep 2000	1 Oct 2001	Nepal.....	8 Sep 2000	3 Jan 2007
India.....	15 Nov 2004	30 Nov 2005	Netherlands (Kingdom of the).....	7 Sep 2000	24 Sep 2009
Indonesia.....	24 Sep 2001	24 Sep 2012	New Zealand ²	7 Sep 2000	12 Nov 2001
Iran (Islamic Republic of).....	21 Sep 2010		Nicaragua.....		17 Mar 2005 a
Iraq.....		24 Jun 2008 a	Niger		13 Mar 2012 a
Ireland.....	7 Sep 2000	18 Nov 2002	Nigeria	8 Sep 2000	25 Sep 2012
Israel	14 Nov 2001	18 Jul 2005	North Macedonia	17 Jul 2001	12 Jan 2004
Italy	6 Sep 2000	9 May 2002	Norway	13 Jun 2000	23 Sep 2003
Jamaica	8 Sep 2000	9 May 2002	Oman		17 Sep 2004 a
Japan	10 May 2002	2 Aug 2004	Pakistan.....	26 Sep 2001	17 Nov 2016
Jordan.....	6 Sep 2000	23 May 2007	Panama.....	31 Oct 2000	8 Aug 2001
Kazakhstan.....	6 Sep 2000	10 Apr 2003	Paraguay	13 Sep 2000	27 Sep 2002
Kenya.....	8 Sep 2000	28 Jan 2002	Peru.....	1 Nov 2000	8 May 2002
Kiribati.....		16 Sep 2015 a	Philippines	8 Sep 2000	26 Aug 2003
Kuwait		26 Aug 2004 a	Poland	13 Feb 2002	7 Apr 2005
Kyrgyzstan.....		13 Aug 2003 a	Portugal.....	6 Sep 2000	19 Aug 2003
Lao People's Democratic Republic		20 Sep 2006 a	Qatar		25 Jul 2002 a
Latvia.....	1 Feb 2002	19 Dec 2005	Republic of Korea.....	6 Sep 2000	24 Sep 2004
Lebanon	11 Feb 2002		Republic of Moldova.....	8 Feb 2002	7 Apr 2004
Lesotho	6 Sep 2000	24 Sep 2003	Romania.....	6 Sep 2000	10 Nov 2001
Liberia.....	22 Sep 2004		Russian Federation	15 Feb 2001	24 Sep 2008
Libya.....		29 Oct 2004 a	Rwanda		23 Apr 2002 a
			Samoa		17 May 2016 a

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San Marino	5 Jun 2000	26 Sep 2011	Tajikistan		5 Aug 2002 a
Saudi Arabia		10 Jun 2011 a	Thailand		27 Feb 2006 a
Senegal.....	8 Sep 2000	3 Mar 2004	Timor-Leste		2 Aug 2004 a
Serbia.....	8 Oct 2001	31 Jan 2003	Togo.....	15 Nov 2001	28 Nov 2005
Seychelles	23 Jan 2001	10 Aug 2010	Tunisia	22 Apr 2002	2 Jan 2003
Sierra Leone.....	8 Sep 2000	15 May 2002	Türkiye.....	8 Sep 2000	4 May 2004
Singapore.....	7 Sep 2000	11 Dec 2008	Turkmenistan		29 Apr 2005 a
Slovakia	30 Nov 2001	7 Jul 2006	Uganda.....		6 May 2002 a
Slovenia	8 Sep 2000	23 Sep 2004	Ukraine	7 Sep 2000	11 Jul 2005
Solomon Islands	24 Sep 2009	20 Jan 2023	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland ^{7,8,9} .	7 Sep 2000	24 Jun 2003
Somalia	16 Sep 2005		United Republic of Tanzania.....		11 Nov 2004 a
South Africa.....	8 Feb 2002	24 Sep 2009	United States of America.....	5 Jul 2000	23 Dec 2002
South Sudan.....		27 Sep 2018 a	Uruguay	7 Sep 2000	9 Sep 2003
Spain	6 Sep 2000	8 Mar 2002	Uzbekistan		23 Dec 2008 a
Sri Lanka.....	21 Aug 2000	8 Sep 2000	Vanuatu.....	16 Sep 2005	26 Sep 2007
St. Lucia.....	22 Sep 2011	15 Jan 2014	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	7 Sep 2000	23 Sep 2003
St. Vincent and the Grenadines		29 Mar 2011 a	Viet Nam.....	8 Sep 2000	20 Dec 2001
State of Palestine		7 Apr 2014 a	Yemen.....		2 Mar 2007 a
Sudan	9 May 2002	26 Jul 2005	Zambia	29 Sep 2008	
Suriname.....	10 May 2002	16 Nov 2021	Zimbabwe		22 May 2013 a
Sweden.....	8 Jun 2000	20 Feb 2003			
Switzerland	7 Sep 2000	26 Jun 2002			
Syrian Arab Republic		17 Oct 2003 a			

Declarations and Reservations

(Unless otherwise indicated, the declarations and reservations were made upon ratification, accession or succession.)

AFGHANISTAN

Declaration:

".....according to the Decree No. 20 dated 25 May 2003 on the voluntary enrollment to the Afghan National Army, signed by H.E. Hamed Karzi Head of State of Afghanistan, the minimum age for recruitment of Afghan Citizen to an active military service is limited by the age of 22 to 28. All recruitments of personnel in the Afghan National Army is voluntary and is not forced or coerced."

ALBANIA

"Pursuant to Article 3 (2) of the Protocol, the Republic of Albania declares that the minimum age at which it permits voluntary recruitment into its national Armed Forces is nineteen years. This age limit is prescribed by Law nr. 9171, dated 22.1.2004.

The age permitted for conscription is established by Article 5, paragraph 2 of the Law no. 9171, dated 22.2.2004."

ALGERIA

In accordance with article 3 of the second Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on

the involvement of children in armed conflict, and with a view to concluding the procedures for the ratification thereof, I have the honour to transmit to you the following Declaration on behalf of the Government of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria:

By virtue of Order No. 74-103 dated 15 November 1974 containing the National Service Act, Algerian youths who have reached the age of 19 years may be recruited for National Service.

In application of Order No. 06-02 dated 18 February 2006 containing the General Military Service Personnel Act, Presidential Decree No. 08-134 dated 6 May 2008 specifies the conditions for the recruitment of officers serving in the Algerian Army under which the minimum age for the recruitment of persons in this category shall be 18 years.

The same legislative provision shall apply to enlisted military personnel, primarily non-commissioned officers, and is extended to private soldiers by virtue of internal regulations since 1969 (Order No. 69-90 dated 31 October 1969 containing the Act on Non-Commissioned Officers Serving in the National People's Army).

Furthermore, all the guarantees relating to the voluntary recruitment of those concerned and which, in the case of minors, require the permission of the persons

legally responsible for them as well as adequate knowledge of the obligations inherent in military service are contained in the Algerian legal texts. Those texts, in addition to establishing the free and uncoerced nature of recruitment in the ranks of the National People's Army, are also applicable to holders of the baccalaureat who have reached the age of 17 years and who, by virtue of article 14 of Presidential Decree No. 08-134 dated 8 May 2008, must obtain the permission of their parents or legal guardian.

It is worth mentioning that the military schools that are scheduled to be established in Algeria do not fall within the scope of article 3 of the second Optional Protocol because the students of such establishments are under the administration or tutelage of the armed forces which are exempt from the obligation to raise the minimum age of voluntary recruitment (article 3, paragraph 5, of the Optional

Protocol).

ANDORRA

With regard to article 3, paragraph 2, of the Protocol, the Principality of Andorra declares that it currently has no armed forces. The only specialized forces in the Principality are those of the Police and Customs, for which the minimum recruitment age is that specified in article 2 of the Optional Protocol. Moreover, the Principality wishes to reiterate in this declaration its disagreement with the content of article 2, in that that article permits the voluntary recruitment of children under the age of 18 years.

ANGOLA

The Government of the Republic of Angola declares, in accordance with Article 3 of paragraph 2 of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, related to Children and Armed Conflict, that in the terms of its Military Service legislation, the inclusion of persons in the Angolan Army, as appropriate, is done upon their reaching 20 years of age, and that the minimum age for voluntary enlistment is 18 years.

ARGENTINA

"The Argentine Republic declares that the minimum age required for voluntary recruitment into the national Armed Forces is eighteen (18) years."

ARMENIA

"According to Article 47 of the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia "Every citizen shall participate in the defence of the Republic of Armenia in a manner prescribed by law.

Participation of the citizens of the Republic of Armenia in the defence of the country is regulated by the laws of the Republic of Armenia on "Military Duty" (15 September 1998) and on "Performance of Military Service" (3 June 2002).

According to Article 4, paragraphs 1 and 2, of the law of the Republic of Armenia on "Performance of Military Service", "the military service consists of active and reserve military services; the active military service consists of obligatory and contractual military service. Obligatory military service means the military service of ranks and officers called up to the armed forces or other forces and of cadets of military schools".

According to Article 11, paragraph 1, of the law of the Republic of Armenia on "Military Duty", male conscripts aged between 18 and 27 and reserve officers of the first group assessed as fit for military service in peace time according to their state of health are required for military service".

Based on the above-mentioned laws, the citizens of the Republic of Armenia, who have attained the age of 18, are required to serve in the armed forces of the Republic of Armenia; the Republic of Armenia

guarantees that those citizens who have not yet attained the age of 18 cannot be called upon for either obligatory or contractual (voluntary) military service."

AUSTRALIA

"The Australian Defence Force (ADF) shall continue to observe a minimum voluntary recruitment age of 17 years.

Pursuant to Article 3 (5) of the Optional Protocol, age limitations do not apply to military schools. A list of authorised establishments, both military and civilian (including those used to train apprentices), to which this age exemption applies is held by the Service Director-General Career Management. Age limitations also do not apply to cadet schemes, members of which are not recruited into, and are therefore not members of, the ADF.

Persons wishing to join the ADF must present an original certified copy of their birth certificate to their recruiting officer. Before their enlistment or appointment, all ADF applicants who are less than 18 years of age must present the written informed consent of their parents or guardians.

All applicants wishing to join the ADF must be fully informed of the nature of their future duties and responsibilities. Recruiting officers must be satisfied that an application for membership by a person less than 18 years of age is made on a genuinely voluntary basis."

AUSTRIA

Under Austrian law the minimum age for the voluntary recruitment of Austrian citizens into the Austrian army (Bundesheer) is 17 years.

According to paragraph 15, in conjunction with paragraph 65 (c) of the Austrian National Defence Act 1990 (Wehrgesetz 1990), the explicit consent of parents or other legal guardians is required for the voluntary recruitment of a person between 17 and 18 years.

The provisions of the Austrian National Defence Act 1990, together with the subjective legal remedies guaranteed by the Austrian Federal Constitution, ensure that legal protection in the context of such a decision is afforded to volunteers under the age of 18. A further guarantee derives from the strict application of the principles of rule of law, good governance and effective legal protection.

AZERBAIJAN

"Pursuant to Article 3 of the protocol, the Republic of Azerbaijan declares that in accordance with the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan on the military service of 3 November 1992, the citizens of the Republic of Azerbaijan and other persons, who are meeting the defined requirements of the military service, may voluntarily enter and be admitted in age of 17 the active military service of the cadets military school. The legislation of the Republic of Azerbaijan guarantees that this service shall not be forced or coerced, shall be realized on the basis of deliberative consent of the parents and the legal representatives of those persons, that those persons shall be provided with the full information of the duties regarding this service, and that the documents certifying their age shall be required before the admission to the service in the national armed forces."

BAHAMAS (THE)

"The Government of the Commonwealth of The Bahamas declares that the State will permit

voluntary recruitment into its national armed forces at the minimum age of eighteen and will state the general conditions of the engagement to be entered into by the recruit and a recruiting officer shall not enlist any person in that Force unless satisfied by that person that he has

been given such a notice, understands it and wishes to be enlisted."

BAHRAIN

With reference to Article (3), Paragraph (2) of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child concerning the involvement of children in armed conflict, the Kingdom of Bahrain hereby declares that the minimum age for voluntary recruitment to Bahrain Defence force is 18 years.

BANGLADESH

"In accordance with Article 3 (2) of [the Optional Protocol], the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh declares that the minimum age at which it permits voluntary recruitment into its national Armed Forces is sixteen years for non-commissioned soldiers and seventeen years for commissioned officers, with informed consent of parents or legal guardian, without any exception.

The Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh further provides hereunder a description of the safeguards it has adopted to ensure that such recruitment is not forced or coerced:

The process of recruitment in the national Armed Forces is initiated through advertisement in the national press and the media for officers and other ranks without exception.

The first induction of new recruits is conducted invariably in a public place such as a national park, school ground or a similar place. Public participation is welcomed in such programmes.

Before a recruit presents himself he has to submit a written declaration from his parents or legal guardians consenting to his recruitment. If the parent or legal guardian is illiterate the declaration is verified and counter signed by the Chairmain of the Union Parishad.

The recruit is required to present birth certificate, matriculation certificate and full school records.

All recruits whether officers or other ranks have to undergo rigorous medical examination including checks for puberty. A recruit found to be pre-pubescent is automatically rejected.

Officers and other ranks without exception are required to undergo two years of compulsory training. This ensures that they are not assigned to combat units before the age of 18. All officers and other ranks are carefully screened before being assigned to combat units. These tests include tests of psychological maturity including an understanding of the elements of international law of armed conflict inculcated at all levels.

The Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh declares that stringent checks in accordance with the obligations assumed under the Optional Protocol will continue to be applied without exception."

BELARUS

The Republic of Belarus, pursuant to article 3 of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, declares that voluntary recruitment of citizens into the armed forces of the Republic of Belarus shall occur upon the attainment by them of 18 years of age.

Admission to a military academy, to which citizens aged 17 years or over, including those who attain 17 years of age during the year in which they are admitted to such an academy, are entitled, in accordance with article 43 of the Act of the Republic of Belarus of 5 November 1992 on Military Obligations and Military Service, shall constitute an exception to the above. Such admission shall not be forced or coerced.

The legislation of the Republic of Belarus guarantees that entry into military service as a cadet at a military academy:

Shall be voluntary;

Shall occur with the informed consent of the person's parents or legal guardians;

Shall occur on condition that such persons are fully informed of the duties involved in military service;

Shall be permitted on condition that such persons provide reliable proof of age prior to acceptance into military service.

BELGIUM¹

1. In accordance with article 3, paragraph 2, and bearing in mind article 3, paragraph 5, the Government of the Kingdom of Belgium states that the minimum age for voluntary recruitment into the Belgian armed forces is not lower than 18 years.

2. The Government of the Kingdom of Belgium states that it is absolutely forbidden under Belgian law for any person under the age of 18 years to participate in times of war and in times of peace in any peacekeeping operation or in any kind of armed operational engagement. Moreover, non-governmental militias are prohibited, regardless of the age of the persons concerned.

3. The Government of the Kingdom of Belgium shall not act upon a request for judicial cooperation where doing so would lead to discrimination between governmental and non-governmental forces in violation of the principle of international humanitarian law of equality of parties to a conflict, including in the event of armed conflict of a non-international nature.

BELIZE

"The Government of Belize declares that in accordance with Article 3 of the Protocol, the minimum age at which voluntary recruitment to any military service in Belize shall be permitted is sixteen years. In recruiting among persons who have attained sixteen years but less than eighteen years, the following principles are to be observed:

1. Such recruitment is to be genuinely voluntary and reliable proof of age must be given;

2. Such persons are to receive the informed consent of his/her parent or guardian;

3. Such persons are, before being recruited, well-informed of the duties involved in the military service;

4. Such persons may be able to withdraw from the military service within the first month of having enlisted."

BENIN

The Government of the Republic of Benin declares that the minimum age at which it permits the recruitment of volunteers into the armed forces and the national gendarmerie is eighteen (18) years (cf. article 13 of Act No. 63-5 of 30 May 1963 on recruitment in the Republic of Benin).

The Government of the Republic of Benin also indicates below the safeguards that it has adopted to ensure that such recruitment is in no event forced or coerced:

(a) The process of recruitment into the Beninese Armed Forces and the national gendarmerie is initiated by an announcement in the national press and news media for young persons;

(b) The recruitment file is composed, as appropriate, inter alia, of a birth certificate, a certificate of school attendance and/or a certificate of apprenticeship;

(c) The induction of young persons takes place in public, at a sports ground or a similar location;

(d) All recruits undergo a rigorous medical examination.

BHUTAN

"In accordance with Article 3, paragraph 2, of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on Involvement of Children in Armed Conflicts, the Royal Government of Bhutan declares that the minimum age at which it permits voluntary recruitment into the national armed forces is 18 years. The minimum age is prescribed by the legal system and no recruitment is carried out without the submission of compulsory proof of age."

BOLIVIA (PLURINATIONAL STATE OF)

Bolivia declares that, under its legislation in force, the minimum age for compulsory military service in the armed forces is 18 years. As for pre-military service, it is a voluntary alternative available for young persons from the age of 17 years.

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

"The State of Bosnia and Herzegovina will not permit voluntary recruitment into its national armed forces of any person under age of 18. Such provision is incorporated into the Law on Defense of Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina ("Official Gazette of Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina" No. 15/96, 23/02, 18/03) and Law on Army of Republika Srpska ("Official gazette of Republika Srpska" No 31/96, 96/01), and is in compliance with Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child that was ratified by Bosnia and Herzegovina."

BOTSWANA

"The Government of the Republic of Botswana declares, pursuant to Article 3 (2), of the Optional Protocol, that:

- a) There is no compulsory conscription into the Defence Force.
- b) The process of recruitment in the Defence Force is initiated through advertisement in the national press in which the minimum age limit of 18 years is stipulated as one of the requirements.
- c) The induction of all recruits is conducted in public.
- d) All recruits are required to present a national identity card which states their date of birth, school completion certificate, and other educational records where necessary.
- e) All recruits undergo a rigorous medical examination where pre-pubescence would be noticed, and any person determined to be underage is routinely rejected from recruitment."

BRAZIL

"With regard to article 3, paragraph 2, of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, the Brazilian Government declares that, according to article 143 of the Federal Constitution, military service is compulsory, as set forth by law. The Constitution also provides that it is within the competence of the Armed Forces, according to the law, to assign an alternative service to those who, in times of peace, after being enlisted, claim imperative of conscience. Women and clergymen are exempt from compulsory military service in times of peace, but are subject to other duties assigned by law.

According to the Military Service Act (Law no 4.375, of 17 August 1964), the obligation to military service, in times of peace, begins the 1st January of the year the citizen becomes 18 years old (article 5). Pursuant to the Regulation of the Military Service (Decree no 57.654, of 20 January 1966), citizens may freely present themselves to voluntary military service provided they have the

minimum age of 16 years (article 41, paragraph 1 and article 49, paragraph 4).

However, their acceptance to voluntary military service is only possible from the 1st January of the year they become 17 years old (article 127). The acceptance of voluntaries to Military Service requires special authorization from the Armed Forces (Military Service Act, article 27).

Pursuant to the Regulation of the Military Service, the civil incapacity to act, to the purposes of military service, ends on the date the citizen becomes 17 years old. Voluntaries who, upon the act of incorporation or enrollment to the military service, have not yet completed 17 years old, must present written consent from parents or guardians (article 239)."

BRUNEI DARUSSALAM

"Pursuant to Article 3 paragraph 2 of the Optional Protocol, the Government of Brunei Darussalam declares that, as stipulated in the Royal Brunei Armed Forces Act (Cap. 149), the minimum age of enlistment to the Royal Brunei Armed Forces and Reserve Regiment is 18 years and that enlistment is voluntary."

BULGARIA

The Republic of Bulgaria declares hereby that all men, Bulgarian citizens who have attained 18 years of age shall be subject to a compulsory military service.

Bulgarian citizens who have been sworn in and done their military service or have done two thirds of the mandatory term of their military service shall be admitted, voluntarily, to regular duty.

Persons who have not come of age shall be trained at military schools subject to the conclusion of a training agreement to be signed by them with the consent of their parents or guardians. Having come of age, the trainees shall sign a training agreement on a regular military duty.

BURKINA FASO

The Government of Burkina Faso, pursuant to article 3 of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, hereby declares that the minimum age for voluntary recruitment into its national armed forces is 18.

Recruitment is voluntary and such persons must provide reliable proof of age.

They are fully informed, prior to recruitment, of the duties involved in such military service.

The Government of Burkina Faso hereby states that it is forbidden for any person under the age of 18 to participate in times of war and in times of peace in any peacekeeping operation or in any kind of armed operational engagement.

BURUNDI

With regard to Article 3 of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, the Government of the Republic of Burundi declares that the minimum age at which it permits voluntary recruitment into its national defence forces is eighteen (18) years (cf. article 1 of Act no. 67-8 of 30 October 1963 on recruitment in the Republic of Burundi).

The Government of the Republic of Burundi further notes that it has adopted the following safeguards to ensure that such recruitment is neither forced nor coerced:

(a) Recruitment into the national defence forces and the national police of Burundi is initiated through announcements in the national media for young men and women;

(b) Prospective recruits are required to provide, inter alia, a birth certificate, proof of school attendance, and/or apprenticeship certificate;

(c) The enlistment ceremony for young people is conducted in public, at a sports field or other similar venue;

(d) All recruits undergo a thorough medical examination.

CABO VERDE

[The Republic of Cape Verde] declare[s] on behalf of the Cape Verdean Government, that the minimum age for special voluntary recruitment into the Cape Verdean armed forces is 17 years in accordance with article 31 of Legislative Decree No. 6/93 of 24 May 1993, published in official gazette No.18, series I.

Moreover, Decree-Law No. 37/96 of 30 September 1986, published in official gazette No. 32, series I, which governs the provisions contained in the above-mentioned Legislative Decree, states the following in its article 60:

Special recruitment ... shall apply to citizens, who of their own freely expressed will, decide to enter military service subject to meeting the following requirements:

(a) They must have attained the minimum age of 17 years;

(b) They must have the consent of their parents or legal guardians;

(c) They must be mentally and physically fit for military service.

Article 17 of Legislative Decree No. 6/93 and articles 29 and 63 of Decree-Law No. 37/96 provide that persons to be enrolled must be fully informed through appropriate documentation prepared by the high command of the armed forces about the duties involved in national military service.

Under article 28 of that Decree-Law, all volunteers shall provide, prior to enlistment and as reliable proof of identity, their national identity card or passport.

While article 8 of Legislative Decree No. 6/93 provides that in war time the minimum/maximum age for recruitment may be amended, the fact that Cape Verde is bound by the Convention on the Rights of the Child and is becoming a party to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, means that in no case shall the minimum age for recruitment be lower than 17 years. Indeed, article 12, paragraph 4, of the Constitution provides that the norms and principles of general international law and international treaty law duly approved or ratified shall take prece, after their entry into force in the international and domestic legal system, over all domestic municipal legislative or normative acts under the Constitution.

CAMBODIA

"According to Article 42 of the Law on the General Status of Royal Cambodian Armed Forces stipulated that the Cambodian citizen of either sex who has attained the age of 18 years should be permitted or recruited into the armed forces."

CAMEROON

Pursuant to article 3 (2) of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, the Government of Cameroon declares the following:

1. There is no conscription in Cameroon. Recruitment into the defence forces is voluntary, and forced military service does not exist.

The minimum age for entry into the defence forces and national service is eighteen (18) years, pursuant to article 2 of Decree No. 2001/187 of 25 July 2001, which establishes the conditions for recruitment and admission to officer training schools; article 12 of Decree No. 2001/190 of 25 July 2001 on the specific status of defence force personnel below the rank of officer; and article 30

of Law No. 67/LF/9 of 12 June 1967 on the general organization of defence.

2. The following measures have been taken as additional safeguards:

a) Recruitment is widely publicized in the media;

b) Prior to admission to military service, reliable proof of age is required of all candidates, i.e., a certified copy of the candidate's birth certificate no more than three (3) months old;

c) Candidates who are not eighteen (18) years of age or older must provide the written, informed consent of a parent or legal guardian;

d) A background check is conducted to confirm the accuracy of the information provided by the candidate;

e) Candidates undergo a medical fitness examination;

f) During training, members of the defence forces are fully informed of the duties associated with military service;

g) The defence forces provide the public with regular information on the duties associated with military service, through radio and television broadcasts as well in the print media.

CANADA

"Pursuant to article 3, paragraph 2, of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on Involvement of Children in Armed Conflicts, Canada hereby declares:

1. The Canadian Armed Forces permit voluntary recruitment at the minimum age of 16 years.

2. The Canadian Armed Forces have adopted the following safeguards to ensure that recruitment of personnel under the age of 18 years is not forced or coerced:

(a) all recruitment of personnel in the Canadian Forces is voluntary. Canada does not practice conscription or any form of forced or obligatory service. In this regard, recruitment campaigns of the Canadian Forces are informational in nature. If an individual wishes to enter the Canadian Forces, he or she fills in an application. If the Canadian Forces offer a particular position to the candidate, the latter is not obliged to accept the position;

(b) recruitment of personnel under the age of 18 is done with the informed and written consent of the person's parents or legal guardians. Article 20, paragraph 3, of the National Defence Act states that 'a person under the age of eighteen years shall not be enrolled without the consent of one of the parents or the guardian of that person';

(c) personnel under the age of 18 are fully informed of the duties involved in military service. The Canadian Forces provide, among other things, a series of informational brochures and films on the duties involved in military service to those who wish to enter the Canadian Forces; and

(d) personnel under the age of 18 must provide reliable proof of age prior to acceptance into national military service. An applicant must provide a legally recognized document, that is an original or a certified copy of their birth certificate or baptismal certificate, to prove his or her age."

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

The Government of the Central African Republic declares that, in accordance with article 4 of Decree No. 85.432 of 12 September 1985, which establishes regulations for non-army military personnel, and with article 6 of Decree No. 09.011 of 16 January 2009, which sets out the rules for the implementation of Act No. 08.016, which establishes regulations for the Central African police force:

The minimum age for recruitment into the Central African armed forces, the gendarmerie and the police force is set at eighteen (18) years of age.

Recruitment is entirely voluntary and cannot be carried out against the will of the individual concerned.

CHAD

The Chadian Government declares that, pursuant to article 3, paragraph 2 of the Optional Protocol, the minimum age for recruitment into the armed forces is 18 years.

Enlistment is entirely and absolutely voluntary and may take place only on a fully informed basis.

CHILE¹⁰

Pursuant to the provisions of article 3, paragraph 4, of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict, the Republic of Chile is amending the declaration made when it deposited the instrument of ratification of the Protocol, as follows:

"The Government of Chile declares that, in accordance with its internal legislation, the minimum age for voluntary recruitment into its national armed forces is 18 years. As an exception, persons who are 17 years of age may, at their request, advance by one year their ordinary conscription into military service, although they may not be mobilized before they have reached the age of 18."

CHINA

1. The minimum age for citizens voluntarily entering the Armed Forces of the People's Republic of China is 17 years of age.

2. The Government of the People's Republic of China is applying the following safeguard measures in implementing the foregoing provision:

(1) The Military Service Law of the People's Republic of China provides that each year, male citizens who have reached 18 years of age by 31 December shall be recruited for active service. To meet the needs of the armed forces and on the principle of voluntary participation, male and female citizens who have not yet reached 18 years of age by 31 December of a given year may be recruited for active service. Citizens eligible for enlistment who have registered for military service but who have not been recruited for active service shall serve in the enlistees reserves, for which the minimum age is 18. The Regulations on the Recruitment of Soldiers formulated by the State Council and the Central Military Commission of the People's Republic of China on the basis of the Military Service Law of the People's Republic of China, provides that in order to meet the needs of the armed forces and on the principle of voluntary participation, male and female citizens who have not yet reached 17 years of age by 31 December of a given year may be recruited for active service.

(2) The Criminal Law of the People's Republic of China provides that whoever engages in favouritism and commits irregularities in conscription work or accepts or delivers unqualified recruits shall be sentenced to not more than three years of fixed-term imprisonment or criminal detention, if the circumstances are serious; such an offender is to be sentenced to not less than three years but not more than seven years of fixed-term imprisonment if the consequences are especially serious.

(3) Under the provisions of the Regulations on Honest and Non-Corrupt Recruitment, formulated by the State Council and the Central Military Commission of the People's Republic of China, neither the loosening of recruitment conditions nor the lowering of enlistment standards are to be allowed. They further provide for the implementation of a system of visiting the homes and work units of youth who enlist, and for verifying the ages of enlisting youth.

COLOMBIA

The military forces of Colombia, in application of the norms of international humanitarian law for the protection

of the best interests of the child and in application of domestic legislation, do not recruit minors in age into their ranks, even if they have the consent of their parents.

Act 418 of 1997, extended through Act 548 of 1999 and amended by Act 642 of 2001, stipulates that persons under 18 years of age shall not be recruited to perform military service. Students in the eleventh grade who are minors, in accordance with Act 48 of 1993, and who are selected to perform such service, shall defer their enlistment until they have reached age 18.

If, on reaching majority, the youth who has deferred military service shall have been matriculated or admitted to an undergraduate programme in an institution of higher education, he shall have the option of serving his duty immediately or deferring it until completion of his studies. If he should choose to serve immediately, the educational institution shall reserve a space for him under the same conditions; if he should choose to defer, the corresponding degree may be granted only when his military service has been completed as ordered by law. Interruption of higher-level studies shall entail the obligation of enlistment into military service. Civilian or military authorities who disregard this provision shall be subject to dismissal on grounds of misconduct.

The youth recruited who has deferred his military service until completion of his professional studies shall fulfil his constitutional duty as a graduate professional or technician in the service of the armed forces in activities of social service to the community, public works and tasks of a scientific or technical nature as required in the respective unit to which he has been assigned. In such case, military service shall be of six months' duration and shall be credited as the rural service year, practicum, industrial semester, year of court internship, obligatory social service or similar academic requirements that the programme of study establishes as a degree requirement. For those entering a law career, such military service may replace the thesis or monograph for the degree and in any case, shall replace the obligatory social service referred to in article 149 of Act 446 of 1998.

CONGO

With regard to article 3 of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict, the Government of the Republic of the Congo declares that the minimum age at which it permits voluntary enlistment into the armed forces and national gendarmerie is eighteen (18) years in the case of the army and twenty (20) years in the case of the gendarmerie (see article 4 of Act No.17-61 of 16 January 1961 on the organization of and recruitment into the armed forces of the Republic of the Congo).

The Government of the Republic of the Congo further sets forth below the safeguards it has adopted to ensure that such recruitment is not forced or coerced:

(a) The procedure for recruitment into the armed forces of the Congo and the national gendarmerie shall be initiated through an advertisement addressed to young men and women in the press and the national media;

(b) Applications shall include a birth certificate, a certificate of school attendance and/or apprenticeship certificate;

(c) The induction ceremony of the young recruits shall be held in public, at a sports field or other similar venue;

(d) All the recruits shall undergo a thorough medical examination.

COSTA RICA

... article 12 of the Constitution of the Republic of Costa Rica proscribes the army as a permanent institution. Accordingly, my Government considers that the declaration in question may be dispensed with for the purposes of article 3, paragraph 2, of the Protocol.

CÔTE D'IVOIRE

1. The minimum age for voluntary recruitment in the national armed forces is 18 years. Recruitment is always voluntary, it is not coerced. No person may join the armed forces unless he or she meets the age requirement, in accordance with Article 2 of Act No. 95-695 of 7 September 1995 establishing the Code of Military Service.

2. A person may become a soldier through recruitment, or on the basis of qualifications or competitive examinations, in accordance with Article 59 of Act No. 95-695 of 7 September 1995 on the Code of Military Service. The presentation of documentary evidence of age is required prior to acceptance in the national armed forces (national identity card, birth certificate etc.). Furthermore, admission to recruitment examinations is subject to medical clearance.

3. The Code of Military Service guarantees rights to those who have chosen a military career or are carrying out their national military service in keeping with the particular constraints that service imposes. It defines the general status of military personnel and their pension system.

4. Military service of a maximum of eighteen (18) months of active service is a civic obligation for all nationals of Côte d'Ivoire of both sexes.

(a) Ivorians of both sexes must fulfil national service obligations once they reach the age of 18; service may be postponed until the age of 30.

(b) Students enrolled in higher education may defer or be exempted from military service.

Articles 81, 82, 83 and 88 of Act No. 95-695 of 7 September 1995 on the Code of Military Service.

5. It should be noted that article 3 of the Optional Protocol does not apply to military schools such as the Military Academy in Bingerville (EMPT) since the obligation to raise the minimum age for voluntary recruitment, as laid out in article 3, paragraph 1, does not concern educational institutions run by the armed forces of States Parties, in accordance with articles 28 and 29 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

CROATIA

"... The Republic of Croatia makes the following declaration in relation to Article 3, paragraph 2, of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflicts:

"Related to Article 3, paragraph 2 of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflicts, the Republic of Croatia states that Croatian legislation prevents persons under 18 from joining the Armed Forces of the Republic of Croatia.

In order to ensure that persons under 18 do not join its Armed Forces, the Republic of Croatia has made the following provisions:

- It has been stipulated by law that military service consists of duty to register as a recruit, to enter military service (conscription), and to serve in the reserves in the Armed Forces of the Republic of Croatia;

- The duty to register as a recruit arises in the calendar year in which a person turns 18, and remains until the person enters military service (conscription) or service in civilian life i.e. until the person is transferred to the reserves or until military service ceases pursuant to the provisions of the Defence Act. The process of recruitment includes registration in the military records, medical and other examinations, psychological tests and recruitment itself. It is a preliminary procedure required in order to determine whether a person is eligible for military service. The status of the recruit remains valid until entering military service (conscription) to which, according to the law, a recruit may not be sent before reaching the age of 18;

- Eligible recruits are sent to do their military service (conscription) after they come of age (turn 18), normally in the calendar year in which they turn 19, thereby becoming conscripts. Recruits are not part of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Croatia; conscripts make one component of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Croatia."

CUBA

With respect to article 3, paragraph 2, of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, the Government of the Republic of Cuba declares binding the minimum age of 17 for voluntary recruitment into its armed forces. It also declares that the guarantees and safeguards for this provision are contained in Act No. 75 (the National Defence Act) of 21 December 1994 and Decree-Law No. 224 (the Active Military Service Act) of 15 October 2001.

CYPRUS

"Pursuant to Article 3, paragraph 2, of the 'Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of Children in Armed Conflict, New York, 25 May 2000', the Republic of Cyprus declares:

1. The National Guard Law No. 20 of 1964, as variously amended, most recently in 2006, hereinafter 'The National Guard Law', provides that the obligation to military service, in times of peace, begins the 1st January of the year the citizen becomes 18 years old. Although military service is compulsory for all Cypriot citizens, women and some categories of [males] (e.g. clergymen) are exempted from military service in times of peace.

2. The National Guard Law also provides for the voluntary enlistment of citizens under 18 who have attained the age of 17 by the date of their recruitment in the armed forces. The acceptance of volunteers to Military Service, requires special authorization from the Ministry of Defense. Volunteers must have recent written consent from parents or legal guardians.

3. The recruitment, on a voluntary basis, by the armed forces at the minimum age of 17 years shall continue to be permitted under the conditions and with the safeguards provided in Article 3, paragraph 3, of the Optional Protocol.

4. Proof of age prior to recruitment is presented through the application of section 4A of the National Guard Law providing for mandatory registration for all citizens with the appropriate authorities in the District of their normal residence once they reach the age of 16. Section 4A of the Law specifies that the data must be submitted in a written form and include, among others, details on the place and date of birth. It is a punishable offence to submit erroneous data at the time of registration.

5. The Republic of Cyprus understands that Article 1 of the Optional Protocol would not prevent members of its armed forces to be deployed where:

a. There is a genuine military need to deploy their unit to an area in which hostilities are taking place; and

b. By reason of the nature and urgency of the situation:

(i) it is not practicable to withdraw such persons before deployment; or

(ii) to do so would undermine the operational effectiveness of their unit, and thereby put at risk the successful conduct of the military mission and/or the safety of other personnel.

The above understanding is all the more necessary under the circumstances prevailing nowadays in the Republic of Cyprus as a result of the continued illegal military occupation of 37% of its national territory by a foreign State, Party to the Optional Protocol."

CZECH REPUBLIC

Adopting this Protocol we declare in accordance with article 3 paragraph 2 of the Protocol that the minimum age at which voluntary recruitment into its national armed forces is permitted is 18 years. This age limit is prescribed by law.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

Pursuant to article 3, paragraph 2, of the Protocol, the Democratic Republic of the Congo undertakes to implement the principle of prohibiting the recruitment of children into the armed forces, in accordance with Decree-Law No. 066 of 9 June 2000 on the demobilization and rehabilitation of vulnerable groups on active service in the armed forces, and to take all feasible measures to ensure that persons who have not yet attained the age of 18 years are not recruited in any way into the Congolese armed forces or into any other public or private armed group throughout the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

DENMARK

"In connection with the deposit of Denmark's instrument of ratification of the Optional Protocol on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict [the Government of Denmark declares] that Danish legislation does not permit the recruitment of any person below the age of 18 in the armed forces."

DJIBOUTI

With regard to Article 3 of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict, the Government of the Republic of Djibouti declares that the minimum age for the voluntary recruitment of persons into its national armed forces and gendarmerie is eighteen years (see Article 1 of Decree No. 79-001/PR/DEF establishing the procedure for recruitment in the Republic of Djibouti in connection with commissions, enlistment and re-enlistment in the national armed forces).

In addition, the Government of the Republic of Djibouti sets forth below the safeguards it has adopted to ensure that recruitment is not forced or coerced:

(a) The procedure for recruitment into the national armed forces and gendarmerie is initiated with a recruitment campaign in the press and other media aimed at young people (young men and young women) (article 5 of Decree No. 79-001/PR/DEF establishing the procedure for recruitment in the Republic of Djibouti in connection with commissions, enlistment and re-enlistment in the national armed forces and gendarmerie);

(b) Applications include a birth certificate, a certificate of school attendance and/or apprenticeship certificate, as appropriate (articles 6, 7 and 8 of Decree No. 79-001/PR/DEF establishing the procedure for recruitment in the Republic of Djibouti in connection with commissions, enlistment and re-enlistment in the national armed forces and gendarmerie);

(c) Induction for the young recruits takes place in public, at a sports field or other similar venue (articles 6, 7 and 8 of Decree No. 79-001/PR/DEF establishing the procedure for recruitment in the Republic of Djibouti in connection with commissions, enlistment and re-enlistment in the national armed forces and gendarmerie);

(d) All the recruits undergo a thorough medical examination (article 6 of Decree No. 79-001/PR/DEF establishing the procedure for recruitment in the Republic of Djibouti in connection with commissions, enlistment and re-enlistment in the national armed forces and gendarmerie).

DOMINICA

"... the minimum age at which voluntary recruitment will be permitted into the Police Force (in the absence of national and armed forces) is eighteen (18) years in accordance with the Police Act, Chapter 14:01, Section 5 (a);

... recruitment will be carried out only through a recognized registered body;

... the consent of recruits is voluntary and is witnessed to with a signed declaration;

... an orientation period is provided prior to recruitment with the option of voluntary withdrawal."

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Declares that, under the Dominican legislation in force, persons enlisting in the armed forces must be at least 18 but less than 23 years of age at the time of recruitment. Persons between 16 and 18 years of age may enlist in the armed forces with the prior consent of their parents or guardians. Recruitment into the armed forces is voluntary in peacetime and forced or compulsory when a state of emergency has been declared in accordance with the Constitution of the Republic. Should compulsory recruitment be imposed, persons under the age of 18 years will not be enlisted, and persons under the age of 18 years who are already enlisted will not be permitted to take an active part in hostilities.

ECUADOR

The Government of the Republic of Ecuador hereby declares that, in accordance with the provisions of its Constitution, military service is compulsory. Citizens who invoke conscientious objection on moral, religious or philosophical grounds are assigned to community service, in the manner prescribed by the law.

Article 5 of the Act on Compulsory Military Service states that "military obligations begin, for Ecuadorian citizens, at 18 years of age, and end at 55 years of age. The period between the ages of 18 and 55 shall be called 'military age'".

EGYPT

The Arab Republic of Egypt hereby declares that in accordance with its current laws the minimum age for conscription into the armed forces of Egypt is 18 years and the minimum age for voluntary recruitment into the armed forces is 16 years.

The Arab Republic of Egypt is committed to ensuring that voluntary recruitment is genuine and entirely willing, with the informed consent of the parents or legal guardians after the volunteers have been fully informed of the duties included in such voluntary military service and based on reliable evidence of the age of volunteers.

EL SALVADOR

... pursuant to article 3, paragraph 2 of the above-mentioned Protocol, the Government of the Republic of El Salvador declares that the minimum age for Salvadorans who wish to enlist voluntarily for military service is 16 years, in accordance with articles 2 and 6 of the Act on Military Service and Reserves of the Armed Forces of El Salvador. The following is a description of the safeguards that the relevant Salvadoran authorities have adopted to ensure that the military service provided is legally voluntary:

- The 16-year-old minor must submit a written request to the Recruitment and Reserves Office or its subsidiary offices, unequivocally stating a desire to provide military service;

- Submission of the original birth certificate or minor's card;

- Document certifying knowledge of and consent to the request to provide military service from the

minor's parents, guardian or legal representative, all in accordance with the provisions of title II on parental authority, article 206 et seq. of the Family Code;
- Acceptance of the request shall be subject to the needs for military service.

ERITREA

"The State of Eritrea declares that the minimum age for the recruitment of persons into the armed forces is eighteen years."

ESTONIA

"According to Article 3 paragraph 2 the Republic of Estonia declares that the minimum age for voluntary recruitment into national armed forces is 18 years."

ESWATINI

"As regards Article 3 of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict, the Government of the Kingdom of Swaziland states that the minimum age at which it permits recruitment of volunteers in the armed forces is eighteen (18) years (see section 17 (3) of the Umbutfo Swaziland Defence Force Order No. 10 of 1977 on recruitment in the Kingdom of Swaziland).

The Government of the Kingdom of Swaziland further states below the safeguards it has adopted to ensure that such recruitment is by no means done by force or under duress:

A) The recruitment procedure in the armed forces of the Kingdom of Swaziland is committed by an advertisement in the press and national media for young people (boys and girls);

B) The record consists of recruitment as appropriate, inter-alia, a birth certificate, certificate of education, and/or a certificate of apprenticeship;

C) The inclusion of young people takes place in public, on a sports field or a similar place;

D) All recruits undergo rigorous medical examination."

ETHIOPIA

... in accordance with Article 3(2) of the said Optional Protocol, the Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia declares that the minimum age at which it will permit voluntary recruitment into its national armed forces is 18 years old ...

FIJI

"... pursuant to article 3 (2) of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict the minimum age for voluntary recruitment into the Republic of Fiji Military Forces is 18 years."

FINLAND

"The Government of Finland declares in accordance with Article 3, paragraph 2, of the Optional Protocol that the minimum age for any recruitment of persons into its national armed forces is 18 years. The minimum age applies equally to the military service of men and to the voluntary service of women."

FRANCE

France hereby declares that it recruits only volunteers aged at least 17 who have been informed of the rights and duties involved in military service and that the enlistment of recruits under the age of 18 is valid only with the consent of their legal representatives.

GABON

Concerning article 3 of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, the Government of the Republic of Gabon declares that the authorized minimum age for voluntary recruitment into the armed forces and the Gendarmerie Nationale is eighteen (18) years.

The Government of the Republic of Gabon further indicates below the safeguards it has adopted to ensure that such recruitment is not forced or coerced:

a) The recruitment procedure for the armed forces and the Gendarmerie Nationale in the Republic of Gabon is launched by an announcement in the national press and media for youth;

b) The recruitment dossier includes, as the case may be, a birth certificate and a certificate of school enrolment and/or apprenticeship, inter alia;

c) The induction of youths takes place in public, at a sports field or similar location;

d) All recruits undergo a rigorous medical examination.

GAMBIA

"[...] 1. That pursuant to Article 3 of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in Armed Conflict, the minimum age for voluntary recruitment into its national armed forces is 18.

2. That recruitment is voluntary and such persons must provide reliable proof of age.

3. That they are fully informed, prior to recruitment, of the duties involved in such military service.

4. That the Republic of The Gambia has established safeguards to ensure that such recruitment is not forced or coerced, including a requirement in Section 59 of the Children's Act, 2005, which stipulates that 'a child shall not be recruited into any of the branches of the Armed Forces of The Gambia or other Security Agencies and that the Government or any other relevant agency or body shall ensure that no child is directly involved in any military operations or hostilities'."

GEORGIA

"... , in according with Article 3 (2) of the additional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict [the] Government of Georgia declares that according to the legislation of Georgia the minimum age for the recruitment of a citizen of Georgia in the Armed Forces is clearly defined. According to the paragraph 2 of article 21 of Georgian Law on 'Military Obligations and Military Service', the decision concerning the recruitment of the citizens into the obligatory military service shall be made only upon they have reached 18 years of age.

According to the Georgian Law on 'Military Obligation and Military Service', for the recruitment in the capital of Georgia is established regional recruiting commission and on the local level – municipality commission. A citizen can appeal the decision of the recruiting commission in the central recruiting commission established by the decree of the President of Georgia or in the Court. In that case the decision of the recruiting commission will be suspended until the decision of the central recruiting commission is declared or Court's decision enters into force (Article 184 of the Administrative Code of Georgia and article 29 of the Administrative Procedure Code of Georgia).

In case the essential violation of the human rights is caused by illegal recruitment, the action of the official or equivalent shall be qualified as an [excess] of authority

and be subject of criminal responsibility (Article 333 of Criminal Code of Georgia).”

GERMANY

The Federal Republic of Germany declares that it considers a minimum age of 17 years to be binding for the voluntary recruitment of soldiers into its armed forces under the terms of Article 3 paragraph 2 of the Optional Protocol. Persons under the age of 18 years shall be recruited into the armed forces solely for the purpose of commencing military training.

The protection of voluntary recruits under the age of 18 years in connection with their decision to join the armed forces is ensured by the need to obtain the consent of their legal guardian and the indispensable requirement that they present an identification card or passport as a reliable proof of their age.

GHANA

“Pursuant to Article 3 (2) of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflicts, the Government of the Republic of Ghana hereby declares that the minimum age at which it permits voluntary recruitment into its National Armed Forces is 18. The age limit is prescribed in the Armed Forces Regulations Volume 1, Article 6.01 (1) (c) and applicants are requested to submit their birth certificate for verification.

The recruitment into the Army is not forced or coerced and is voluntary.”

GREECE

“Pursuant to article 3, paragraph 2 of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflicts, Greece declares that the minimum age at which voluntary recruitment in the Greek armed forces is permitted by national law, is 18 years.”

GRENADA

“With the aim of specifying the scope of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict and upon depositing its instrument of accession, the Government of Grenada, acting in accordance with article 3 of the Protocol, declares that it currently has no national armed forces, and hence, a minimum age for recruitment is not applicable in the case of the Government of Grenada.

The only specialized force in Grenada is the Royal Grenada Police Force. The Government of Grenada further declares that the minimum age required for voluntary recruitment into the Royal Grenada Police Force is nineteen (19) years in accordance with Section 16 (1) (a) of the Police Act.”

GUATEMALA

In conformity with article 3, paragraph 2 of the aforementioned Protocol, the Government of Guatemala makes the following declaration: ‘Guatemala shall not permit the compulsory recruitment of persons under 18 years of age into its armed forces, and, in keeping with article 3, paragraph 4, of the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, the description of the safeguards it has adopted to ensure that such recruitment is not forced or coerced shall be submitted at a later date.

GUINEA

The Government of the Republic of Guinea declares that the Republic of Guinea has adopted Act 001/CNT/2012 of 17 January 2012 on the general situation of members of the armed forces. Chapter I on recruitment states:

‘Article 39: Any citizen of Guinean nationality between the ages of 18 and 28 may be recruited to the Guinean armed forces.

Article 40: Recruits must have Guinean nationality, be in possession of their civic rights, have the physical and intellectual capacities required for their duties and be able to read and write.

Article 41: Recruitment to the army shall be by voluntary enlistment. However, in the event of a serious threat to the integrity of the national territory, the army may as an exceptional measure proceed with general mobilization. The arrangements for such mobilization shall be established by decree of the President of the Republic.

Article 42: Recruitment to the Guinean army shall take place each year, in the light of the staffing needs of the armies and units and on the basis of budget forecasts.

For the recruitment of specialists, the Chiefs of Staff and units shall be allowed to select their recruits, who shall be made available to the National Recruitment Board.

Article 43: All recruits shall be hired for an initial two-year contract and sent to infantry training centres for nine months’ joint basic training before joining the various armies and units.

Article 44: Six (6) months before the expiration of the initial contract, each recruit shall appear before the Review Board, which shall decide whether the recruit’s application to enlist is to be accepted. The accepted candidates shall appear before the National Recruitment Board for registration. Arrangements for recruitment to the ranks of career officers and non-commissioned officers shall be specified in the Special Statute.’

On behalf of the Government of the Republic of Guinea, I declare that the above provisions concerning the minimum age for voluntary enlistment in the Guinean armed forces shall be scrupulously and strictly observed.

GUINEA-BISSAU

Paragraph 1 of article 31 of Law No. 4/99, of 7 September, establishing the concept and objective of compulsory military service, published in the Supplement to Official Gazette No. 36 of Tuesday 07/09/99, stipulates that the minimum age at which Guinea-Bissau will permit voluntary recruitment into its armed forces is 17.

Such recruitment shall take place with the formal consent of the parents or legal representative of the young person concerned, after the latter has been informed of the legal responsibilities associated with national military service and upon presentation of proof of age documents.

GUYANA¹¹

“The Government of the Republic of Guyana hereby declares that under the Defence Act 15:01 Section 18(2), as amended, the age of recruitment into the national armed forces is eighteen years. Eighteen years is the age of adulthood under the laws of Guyana.

Recruitment is permitted between the ages of 16 and 18 years but must be with the consent of the parent or legal guardian.

Guyana does not practice conscription or any other form of forced or obligatory military service.

The Government of Guyana has adopted the following safeguards to ensure that recruitment is not forced or coerced:

(i) Recruitment is carried out by public advertisement and an open entrance examination;

(ii) Selection of Recruits is done by a Recruitment Board comprising Defence Force members and Government representatives;

(iii) Persons are not recruited without the reliable proof of age;

(iv) Before recruitment, persons are fully briefed on the duties and responsibilities involved in military service;

(v) Persons recruited have the option of withdrawing from military service after three years or before if the circumstances are extenuating;

(vi) Persons recruited undergo a full and rigorous medical examination."

HOLY SEE

"The Holy See, with regard to article 3, paragraph 2, of the Protocol, declares that, for what concerns the Vatican City State, the Regulations of the Pontifical Swiss Guard, approved in 1976, establish that the recruitment of its members is only voluntary and that the minimum age is set forth at 19 years."

HONDURAS

With the aim of specifying the scope of this Protocol and upon depositing its instrument of accession, the Government of the Republic of Honduras, acting in accordance with article 3 of the Protocol, declares that:

I (a). Under the legislation of the State of Honduras, the minimum age for voluntary recruitment into the armed forces is 18 years, as part of the country's educational, social, humanist and democratic system".

II. This Agreement shall be submitted to the Sovereign National Congress for consideration, for the purposes of article 205, number 30, of the Constitution of the Republic.

HUNGARY

"With reference to Article 3 paragraph 2 of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, the Republic of Hungary declares that under Hungarian law the minimum age for voluntary recruitment into the Hungarian national armed forces is eighteen (18) years. Pursuant to the Constitution of the Republic of Hungary all recruitments to the national armed forces are voluntary in peacetime, and the minimum age for mandatory military service during armed conflict is also eighteen (18) years."

ICELAND

"With regard to Article 3, paragraph 2, of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict, the Republic of Iceland declares that it has no national armed forces, and hence, a minimum age for recruitment is not applicable in the case of the Republic of Iceland."

INDIA

"Pursuant to article 3 (2) of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of Children in Armed Conflict, the Government of the Republic of India declare that:

(i) The minimum age for recruitment of prospective recruits into Armed Forces of India (Army, Air Force and Navy) is 16 years. After enrollment and requisite training period, the attested Armed Forces personnel is sent to the operational area only after he attains 18 years of age;

(ii) The recruitment into the Armed Forces of India is purely voluntary and conducted through open rally system/open competitive examinations. There is no forced or coerced recruitment into the Armed Forces."

INDONESIA

The minimum age for voluntary recruitment into the Indonesian National Armed Forces is 18 years old. Further, Article 28, paragraph (1) d, of the Law Number 34 Year 2004 on the Indonesian National Armed Forces regulates that "at the time of inauguration as a soldier, he/she shall be 18 (eighteen) years old at the minimum".

The recruitment of the member of the Indonesian National Armed Forces is genuinely voluntary. It is conducted openly and the public announcement is carried out by utilizing various means of communication and information technology. The recruitment requires, among others, birth certificate and proof of consent of parents or legal guardians, including for those who have aged 18 years.

IRAQ

Pursuant to article 3, paragraph 2 of the Protocol, the Government of the Republic of Iraq:

(a) Declares that the minimum age at which it permits voluntary recruitment into its national armed forces is 18 years;

(b) Sets forth below a description of the safeguards it has adopted to ensure that such recruitment is not forced or coerced:

- Such recruitment must be genuinely voluntary;

- Volunteers must present reliable proof of age prior to acceptance into the national armed forces.

IRELAND

"Pursuant to article 3, paragraph 2, of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflicts, Ireland declares:

In general, the minimum age for recruitment into the Irish armed forces is 17. An exception is made in the case of apprentices, who may be recruited at the age of 16. However, apprentices are not assigned to any military duties until they have completed up to four years apprenticeship trade training, by which time all would have attained the age of 18.

Ireland has adopted the following safeguards to ensure that recruitment of personnel under the age of 18 is not forced or coerced:

All recruitment to the Irish armed forces is voluntary. Ireland does not practice conscription and recruitment campaigns are informational in nature. Applicants must fill in an application and are selected on the basis of suitability. Applicants who are offered a position are under no obligation to accept that position.

All applicants are required to provide proof of age. All unmarried applicants who are under 18 must have the written consent of a parent or guardian. In Ireland a person attains full age or adulthood either on attaining the age of 18 or upon marriage if they marry before that age. Under Irish law a person who is under the age of 18 years may not enter into a valid marriage unless an exemption is granted by the Circuit or High Court."

"... refer[s] to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict and the declaration made by Ireland, pursuant to Article 3, paragraph 2, when depositing its instrument of ratification in respect of the Protocol on 18 November 2002.

... notif[ies], on behalf of Ireland, pursuant to Article 3, paragraph 4, of the

Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict, of the following amended declaration:

'Pursuant to Article 3, paragraph 2, of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights

of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict, Ireland declares:

The minimum age for voluntary recruitment into the Irish armed forces is 18 years of age. All recruitment to the Irish armed forces is voluntary. Ireland does not practice conscription and recruitment campaigns are informational in nature. Applicants must fill in an application and are selected on the basis of suitability. Applicants who are offered a position are under no obligation to accept that position. All applicants are required to provide proof of age."

ISRAEL

"The Government of the State of Israel declares pursuant to article 3 (2) of the Optional Protocol on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict that:

(a) The minimum age in which the State of Israel permits voluntary recruitment into its armed forces is 17 years of age, according to article 14 of the defense service law (consolidated version) 5746-1986;

(b) The Government of the State of Israel maintains the following safeguards in respect of voluntary recruitment into the armed forces so as to ensure that such recruitment is not forced or coerced:

1. In accordance with section 14 of the defense service law (consolidated version) 5746-1986, no person under 18 years of age may enlist in the Israeli armed forces without a written application submitted by the person and the written consent of the person's parents or legal guardian; however, should there be an appreciable difficulty in contacting one of the parents, the written consent of the other parent is sufficient;

2. Clear and precise explanation of the nature of the duties involved in military service is provided to both the person and the person's parents or legal guardian;

3. Prior to acceptance of any person into the Israeli armed forces a reliable proof of age is obtained through the Ministry of the Interior's official national population registry.

4. The IDF has several long-term programs in which participants may engage in academic or rabbinic studies or perform volunteer work, prior to the commencement of their actual military service. Enrollment in these programs is open to participants from the age of 17.5. For administrative purposes, these participants undergo a one-day administrative induction into the armed forces. Following their administrative induction, these participants are released from active service and enroll in their chosen program.

5. Persons under 18 years of age, who enlist in one of the aforementioned ways, may in no case be posted to combat duty."

ITALY

The Government of the Italian Republic declares, in compliance with article 3:

- That Italian legislation on voluntary recruitment provides that a minimum age of 17 years shall be required with respect to requests for early recruitment for compulsory military service or voluntary recruitment (military duty on a short-term and yearly basis);

- That the legislation in force guarantees the application, at the time of voluntary recruitment, of the provisions of article 3, paragraph 3, of the Protocol, *inter alia*, as regards the requirement of the consent of the parent or guardian of the recruit.

JAMAICA

"Pursuant to Article 3 (2) of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of Children in Armed Conflict, Jamaica hereby declares that:

1. The Jamaica Defence Force permits voluntary recruitment and enlistment at the minimum age of 18 years.

2. The Jamaica Defence Force has adopted the following safeguards, under the 1962 Defence (Regular Force Enlistment And Service Regulations) Act, to ensure that recruitment of personnel under the age of 18 is not forced or coerced;

(a) All recruitment to the Jamaica Defence Force is voluntary. If an individual wishes to enter the Jamaica Defence Force, he or she completes the relevant application (Notice Paper) form in accordance with Section 5 of the Act;

(b) The applicant is given the notice paper with the condition and warning that if he knowingly makes a false attestation, he is liable to be punished;

(c) The recruiting officer shall satisfy himself that the person offering to enlist is, or as the case may be, is not, over the age of eighteen years;

(d) The recruiting officer shall read or cause to be read to the person the questions set out in the attestation paper and shall ensure that the answers are duly recorded thereon;

(e) Written parental consent is required for applicants who have attained the age of 17 1/2 years. Persons in this category are not permitted to graduate as trained soldiers from training institutions, until they have attained the age of eighteen (18) years.

3. Personnel must provide reliable proof of age prior to acceptance into national military service, in the form of a legally recognized document, that is, an original or a certified copy of their birth certificate.

If the Jamaica Defence Force offers a particular position to the candidate, he or she is not compelled to accept the position."

JAPAN¹²

In accordance with article 3, paragraph 4, the Government of Japan notified the Secretary-General on 1 April 2010 of the following modified declaration:

"The Government of Japan, by relevant laws and regulations, recruits only those who are at and above the minimum age of 18 as a member of the Japan Self-Defense Forces."

JORDAN

I, Abdul Ilah Khatib, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan,

By the powers vested in me, with respect to Jordan's ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict,

In accordance with article 3, paragraph 2, thereof, providing for the deposit of a binding declaration on the minimum age for voluntary enlistment into the national armed forces and safeguards ensuring that such recruitment is not forced or coerced, do hereby declare the following:

(1) The minimum age for mandatory conscription into the Jordanian Armed Forces is 18 years, in accordance with article 3, paragraph (a), of the Military Service Act (No. 23 of 1986) and amendments thereto.

(2) The minimum age for voluntary enlistment is 16 years, in accordance with article 5, paragraph (b), of the Service of Individuals in the Armed Forces Act (No. 2 of 1972) and amendments thereto.

(3) The minimum age for voluntary enlistment at the rank of officer is 17 years, in accordance with article 13, paragraph 2 (b), of the Officer Service Act (No. 35 of 1966).

(4) The safeguards adopted by the Armed Forces to ensure that there is no forced or coerced recruitment of persons under the age of 18 are as follows:

Presentation of documentary evidence of age is required prior to acceptance of any person into military

service. A birth certificate is relied on as an official document for determining the age of a recruit.

Those wishing to enlist voluntarily are informed clearly and in detail of the duties entailed by military service.

Voluntary enlistment takes place with the permission of the parents or legal guardians of the recruits.

KAZAKHSTAN

"Pursuant to article 3, paragraph 2, of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on Involvement of Children in Armed Conflicts, the Republic of Kazakhstan hereby declares:

In accordance with the Military Service on Contract Basis Act No. 167-II 3PK of March 20, 2001:

1. Military Service on Contract Basis grounded on the principles of legitimacy, voluntary recruitment, professionalism and competency, social security and protection of rights of military servants.

2. Every military servant is entitled in full equality in his or her rights. No one shall be limited in his or her rights or attain any advantages realising the rights with regard to sex, age, race, nationality, language, religion, official capacity and social status.

3. Article 17, paragraph 1 permits voluntary recruitment at the minimum age of 19.

4. According to the article 14, paragraph 1 a contract should obligatory include description of the identification document, number and date of issue of the document, number of social individual code and taxpayer's registration number."

KENYA

"The Government of the Republic of Kenya declares that the minimum age for the recruitment of persons into the armed forces is by law set at eighteen years. Recruitment is entirely and genuinely voluntary and is carried out with the full informed consent of the persons being recruited. There is no conscription in Kenya.

The Government of the Republic of Kenya reserves the right at any time by means of a notification addressed to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, to add, amend or strengthen the present declaration. Such notifications shall take effect from the date of their receipt by the Secretary General of the United Nations."

KIRIBATI

"... the Republic of Kiribati has no national armed forces, and a declaration as to the minimum age of recruitment is therefore not applicable in the case of the Republic of Kiribati."

KUWAIT

... the Government of the State of Kuwait is committed to maintaining the minimum age for voluntary service in the Kuwaiti armed forces at 18 years of age, and to prohibiting the forced conscription of any persons under the age of 18, pursuant to article 3, paragraph 2 of the aforementioned Protocol.

KYRGYZSTAN

"In accordance with the Article 3, paragraph 2 of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, adopted in New York, 25 May 2000, I have the honour to declare that in the Kyrgyz Republic the minimum age for recruitment of its citizens (men) to an active military service is limited by the age of 18 years (Article 10 of the Law of the Kyrgyz Republic "On the general military service of citizens of the Kyrgyz Republic")."

LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

"In accordance with the Law of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, the minimum age at which it will permit voluntary recruitment into its national armed forces is 18 (eighteen). The law on obligations of national defense service stipulates in Article 13 that 'all young men of Lao nationality between 18 (eighteen) and 28 (twenty-eight) years of age, having good health conditions, shall be obliged to serve for a short-term in national defense forces. In case of necessity, young women between 18 (eighteen) and 23 (twenty-three) years of age may also be called upon to serve for a short-term in national defense; and in Article 7 that following health check-up, there shall be a selection process at a district level to select voluntary recruits, with good health, into short-term defense services, according to the recruitment number officially set forth on a yearly basis.' "

LATVIA

"1) according to the Article 17 paragraph 1 of the Mandatory Military Service Law adopted by the Parliament of the Republic of Latvia on 19th day of February 1997 citizens from the age of 19 years to the age of 27 years shall be liable for mandatory active military service;

2) according to the Article 17 paragraph 2 of the Mandatory Military Service Law male and female persons from the age of 18 years to the age of 27 years may enlist voluntarily for mandatory active military service."

LESOTHO

"In response to article 3 (2) of the Optional Protocol, in accordance with the Lesotho Defence Force Act of 1996, section 18 thereof, the minimum age at which the Government of Lesotho permits voluntary recruitment into the national armed forces is when the interested person has already attained the age of 18.

Such recruitment is voluntary as would be recruits submit applications for advertised vacancies in the armed forces."

LIBYA

...the required legal age for volunteering to serve in the armed forces of the Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, according to the national legislation thereof, is eighteen years.

LIECHTENSTEIN

"The Principality of Liechtenstein declares that, with respect to the Principality of Liechtenstein, articles 1 and 2 as well as article 3, in particular paragraph 2, of the Optional Protocol of 25 May 2000 to the Convention on the Rights of the Child of 20 November 1989 on the involvement of children in armed conflict have to be understood in light of the fact that the Principality of Liechtenstein has no national armed forces and that hence no legislation on a minimum age for the recruitment of persons into the armed forces and for taking part in hostilities exists. The Principality of Liechtenstein regards the ratification of the Optional Protocol as part of its continuing commitment to the protection of the rights of children and at the same time as an act of its solidarity with the objectives of the said Protocol."

LITHUANIA

".....the Republic of Lithuania declares that under Republic of Lithuania law the citizens of the Republic of Lithuania under the age of 18 years may not serve in the national armed forces: the minimum age of citizens of the Republic of Lithuania for voluntary recruitment into the

active military service is 18 years, and the minimum age of citizens of the Republic of Lithuania for enlisting into the mandatory military service must be 19 years. Compulsory recruitment of children under the age of 18 years into the national armed forces shall involve liability under law of the Republic of Lithuania."

LUXEMBOURG¹³

The Government of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg declares, in accordance with article 3 of the Protocol, that by law the minimum age for voluntary recruitment into the Armed Forces of Luxembourg is 18 years of age.

MADAGASCAR

Pursuant to article 11 of Edict No. 78-002 of 16 February 1978 on the general principles governing National Service, young men and women aged 18 years or more may request to be recruited into the Armed Forces or outside the Armed Forces before young men and women of their age-group. Any citizen may, from the age of 18 onwards, enlist in the Armed Forces for an indefinite period.

In order to preserve his or her contractual liberty, the person requesting voluntary enlistment shall submit a request approved by his or her parents or legal guardian. Offences against the requirements of these provisions shall be prosecuted and penalized under the Code of Justice on National Service or the Penal Code.

MALAWI

"In accordance with Article 3 (2) of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflicts (hereinafter referred to as 'the Protocol'), the Republic of Malawi declares that:

1. the Minimum age for recruitment for employment in the Defence Force of Malawi is eighteen (18) years. By Virtue of Section 19 (2) of the Defence Force Act of the Laws of Malawi (Number 11 of 2004), which applies Article 3 of the Protocol, a recruiting officer is prohibited from enlisting a person under the age of eighteen (18) years, or over the age of 24 years, into the Defence Force of Malawi;

2. the Protocol is applied by the Republic of Malawi in all areas where an officer of the Defence Force of Malawi is employed and is working;

3. recruitment into the Defence Force of Malawi is genuinely voluntary;

4. recruitment into the Defence Force of Malawi is carried out with the informed consent of each person's parents or legal guardians;

5. all persons interested to join the Defence Force of Malawi are fully informed of the duties involved in such military service; and

6. all persons interested to join the Defence Force of Malawi provide reliable proof of age prior to acceptance into national military service."

MALAYSIA

"Pursuant to article 3 paragraph 2 of the said Optional Protocol, the Government of Malaysia declares that the minimum age for a person to voluntarily enlist in its armed forces is at the age of seventeen and a half years. This enlistment shall be realised on the basis of deliberative consent of parents or guardians, upon the provision of full information regarding the general conditions of the engagement to be entered, and the production of a certified copy of an entry in the register of births verifying the enlistee's age."

MALDIVES

"1. The Minimum age at which the Maldives permits recruitment to its National Security Service and its Police Service is 18 years.

2. Any individual who wishes to enter the National Security Service and the Police Service has to apply for it in writing.

3. All applicants are required to present proof of birth date.

4. All applicants short listed for recruitment are carefully screened for medical fitness. "

MALI

In accordance with article 3, paragraph 2, of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict, the Government of the Republic of Mali declares that the minimum age for voluntary recruitment into the national armed forces is 18 years of age or older. No boy or girl under 18 years of age may be recruited or be allowed to be recruited, even on a voluntary basis, or be enrolled as a member of the national armed forces.

The Government of Mali is fully committed to this declaration and pledges to impose on anyone who violates such provision a penalty commensurate with the seriousness of the offence as provided for under its criminal law.

Children who are unlawfully recruited into the armed forces may, depending on their individual circumstances, receive support for their economic and social rehabilitation and reintegration.

MALTA

"Under the Malta Armed Forces Act (Chapter 220 of the Laws of Malta), enacted in 1970, enlistment in the Armed Forces of Malta shall be made on a voluntary basis and no person under the age of seventeen years and six months may be so enlisted. A person under 18 years may not be enlisted unless consent to the enlistment is given in writing by the father of such person or, if such person is not subject to paternal authority, by the mother or by another person in whose care the person offering to enlist may be. In any case, the term of engagement of a person enlisting under the age of 18 expires on reaching 18 years of age and enlistment has to be renewed. It is a mandatory condition for enlistment of potential recruits to produce a birth certificate from the national Civil Status Office to attest their age.

The Malta Armed Forces Act also provides that any person of whatever age offering to enlist in the regular force shall, before enlistment, be given a notice on the prescribed form stating the general conditions of engagement and the recruiting officer shall not enlist any person in the regular force unless satisfied that the potential recruit has been given such notice, understood its contents and wishes to be enlisted.

In practice the Armed Forces of Malta do not recruit and have not since 1970 recruited persons under the age of 18 years. The Government of Malta further declares that if in future recruitment of persons under 18 years were made such members of the armed forces will not take part in hostilities.

Regulations under the Malta Armed Forces Act provide for a Junior Leaders Scheme whereby persons under the age of seventeen and six months could be recruited for training but in a non-combatant position, but in effect no such recruitment has taken place since 1970."

MAURITIUS

"The Government of the Republic of Mauritius declares, in accordance with article 3 (2) of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict, that the minimum age for voluntary recruitment of persons into its paramilitary force is 18 years."

MEXICO¹⁴

In accordance with article 3, paragraph 2 of the Optional Protocol, the United Mexican States declares:

(i) That the minimum age for voluntary recruitment of its nationals into the armed forces is 18 years;

ii) That article 24 of the Military Service Act provides that only volunteers will be accepted into the armed forces for active service until the figure set annually by the Ministry of Defence has been met and provided that the following conditions are fulfilled:

I. They must submit an application;

II. They must be Mexican nationals who are over 18 but not over 30, and must be under 40 in the case of personnel enlisted as specialists in the army;

Those over 16 and under 18 shall be accepted into signals units for training as technicians under contracts with the State not exceeding five years in duration. Moreover, under article 25 of the Military Service Act, only the following persons may be accepted for early enlistment in the armed forces:

I. Those who wish to leave the country at the time when they would be required by law to undertake military service if they are over 16 at the time of requesting enlistment;

II. Those who are obliged to request early enlistment because of their studies.

The maximum number of individuals who may be allowed to enlist early shall be set every year by the Ministry of Defence; and

MICRONESIA (FEDERATED STATES OF)

"With regards to Article 3, paragraph 2, of the Optional Protocol, the Government of the Federated States of Micronesia declares that it currently has no national armed forces, and thus, a minimum age requirement for recruitment into its national armed forces is not applicable in the case of the Federated States of Micronesia. Similarly, it is not necessary for the Government of the Federated States of Micronesia to describe the safeguards that it has adopted to prevent any coerced recruitment of children into its armed forces."

MONACO

The Principality of Monaco declares, in accordance with article 3, paragraph 2, of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, that it is bound by the Franco-Monaguesque Treaty of 17 July 1918 and that the French Republic thereby ensures the defence of the territorial integrity of the Principality of Monaco.

The only bodies having military status in the Principality are the Prince's Guard and the Fire Brigade. In accordance with the provisions of Sovereign Ordinance No. 8017 of 1 June 1984 relating to the Police Code, members of the Guard and the Fire Brigade must be at least 21 years of age.

MONGOLIA

"Under the relevant law of Mongolia the minimum age for recruitment into military service is 18 years. Mongolian male citizens of 18 to 25 years have the duty to fulfill a military service. Men of 18 to 25 years who have not fulfilled their military service for the reasons of their religious faith or moral belief may fulfill an alternative service for a period of 24 to 27 months with rescue or professional units or divisions of the General Department on Disaster Management, assisting forces of the Border Troops or other humanitarian organizations."

MONTENEGRO⁶

"Montenegro does not impose mandatory military service. The minimum age at which Montenegro will permit voluntary recruitment into Montenegro Armed

Forces is 18 years. Military obligation for Montenegrin citizens starts from the age of 18 and ends at the end of the year in which they turn 60 years. They could be called to perform military service in time of peace and in case of state of war or state of emergency. This obligation is prescribed by the Law on Defence ('Official Gazette of Montenegro', N° 46/19) and the Law on the Armed Forces ('Official Gazette of Montenegro', N° 34/2019)."

MOROCCO

Pursuant to paragraph 2 of the article concerning the involvement of children in armed conflicts, the Kingdom of Morocco declares that the minimum age required by national law for voluntary recruitment in the armed forces is 18 years.

MOZAMBIQUE

".....in accordance with the Mozambican legislation, the minimum age for enlistment into its national armed forces is 18 years,

The Republic of Mozambique declares, also that according to the law, the incorporation starts at the age of 20.

The Republic of Mozambique, furthermore declares that in case of war the age for the military service can be modified."

MYANMAR

"With reference to Article 3 (2) of the Optional Protocol, the Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar declares that citizens may freely present themselves for voluntary military service provided they have attained a minimum age of 18 years, whereas citizens above 16 and under 18 years of age may voluntarily join military academies and military vocational training courses, if furnished with the proof of their age and the prior written consent of their parents or guardians."

"With reference to Article 4 of the Optional Protocol, the Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar considers that any responsibility deriving from recruitment of children under 18 years of age or their use in hostilities by non-state armed groups lies solely with such groups. In the prevention of underage military recruitment, the Government would collaborate with the ethnic armed groups which have signed the NCA (Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement). The latter shall also have a duty to apply at all times the principles governing international humanitarian law."

NAMIBIA

"Pursuant to article 3, paragraph 2, of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on Involvement of Children in Armed Conflicts, Namibia hereby declares:

1. The Namibian Defence Force permit voluntary recruitment at the minimum age of 18 years.

2. The Namibian Defence Force have adopted the following safeguards to ensure that recruitment of personnel at the age between 18 and 25 years is not forced or coerced.

(a) Advertisements on the availability of military career opportunities in the Namibian Defence Force are placed yearly in the local print and broadcast for the purposes of inviting interested young men and women to apply.

(b) As a standpoint the candidate is not obliged to accept the position if the Namibian Defence Force offer a particular position.

(c) Military career opportunities may emanate from Infantry, Engineering, Air wing, Maritime Wing, Communication and Medical Services. The potential recruits undergo instruction courses to give them an overview of what is expected of them as future soldiers in respect of military career opportunities stated under paragraph 2 c). The recruits may select their career paths after training.

(d) To ensure the absence of any possible form of remote or direct coercion the Namibian Defence Force requires that

- i) the potential recruit should not have previous criminal records or convictions
- ii) the potential recruits be Namibian Citizens

3. As a standpoint and policy Namibia Defence Force does not allow voluntary recruitment under the age of 18 years thus:

- i) as proof of age requires that the candidates show certified copies of legally recognised Namibian identity documents as well as birth certificates.

4. All recruitments of personnel in the Namibian Defence Force are voluntary. Namibia does not practice conscription or any form of forced obligatory service."

NEPAL

"(1) The minimum age for recruitment in the Nepal Army and the Armed Police Force shall be 18 years.

(2) The recruitment in the Nepal Army and the Armed Police Force shall be voluntary and shall be conducted through open competition."

NETHERLANDS (KINGDOM OF THE)¹⁵

"... in accordance with Article 3, paragraph 2, of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict (New York, 25 May 2000), the Government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands declares that the minimum age at which the legislation in the Netherlands permits voluntary recruitment into its national Armed Forces for both soldiers and commissioned or non-commissioned officers, remains eighteen years. However, persons that have reached the age of seventeen years, may on a strictly voluntary basis be recruited as military personnel in probation.

The relevant legislation in the Netherlands provides the following safeguards to ensure that such recruitment of persons under the age of eighteen years is not forced or coerced:

1. Appointment of such persons under the age of 18 years as a member of the armed forces in probation is only permitted with written consent of the parents of this person.

2. When the age of eighteen years has been reached, the member of the armed forces on probation can only become a regular soldier after having given written consent to this effect.

Moreover, the Law on Military Personnel 1931 ensures that a person under the age of eighteen years will not participate in an armed conflict, providing in particular that members of the armed forces on probation will not be tasked with peacekeeping or humanitarian missions, or any other form of armed service.

The above does not apply to the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba. The relevant legislation in the Netherlands Antilles and in Aruba sets the minimum age for joining the military service and other armed forces at 18 years. Furthermore, voluntary recruitment does not exist in the Netherlands Antilles [and] Aruba."

In a communication dated 29 September 2010, the Government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands informed the Secretary-General of the following:

"The [Optional Protocol is] extended to the Caribbean part of the Netherlands (Bonaire, Sint Eustatius and

Saba) as per 10 October 2010"

NEW ZEALAND

"The Government of New Zealand declares that the minimum age at which New Zealand will permit voluntary recruitment into its national armed forces shall be 17 years. The Government of New Zealand further declares that the safeguards which it has adopted to ensure that such recruitment is not forced or coerced include the following:

(a) Defence Force recruitment procedures requiring that persons responsible for recruitment ensure that such recruitment is genuinely voluntary;

(b) legislative requirements that the consent of parent or guardian is obtained for enlistment where such consent is necessary under NZ law. The parent or guardian must also acknowledge that the person enlisting will be liable for active service after reaching the age of 18 years;

(c) a detailed and informative enlistment process, which ensures that all persons are fully informed of the duties involved in military service prior to taking an oath of allegiance; and

(d) a recruiting procedure, which requires enlistees to produce their birth certificate as reliable proof of age."

NICARAGUA

In accordance with the requirements currently in force, young persons of both sexes wishing to enter the Nicaraguan armed forces must:

1. Be between 18 and 21 years of age. Young persons choosing a military career must submit a notarized authorization from their parents or guardians in order to prevent recruitment by force or coercion;

2. Be Nicaraguan nationals;

3. Be physically and mentally fit;

4. Be unmarried and without children;

5. Not be subject to criminal proceedings and not have been convicted by the country's jurisdictional bodies;

6. Consent voluntarily and freely to join the Nicaraguan army.

NIGER

With reference to article 3 of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, the Government of the Republic of the Niger declares that the minimum age at which it permits voluntary recruitment into the Niger armed forces and national gendarmerie is 18 years, in accordance with Act No. 62-10 of 16 March 1962 on the organization of recruitment in the Republic of the Niger.

The Government of the Republic of the Niger further indicates below the safeguards it has put in place to ensure that recruitment is never forced or coerced:

(a) The recruitment procedure for the Niger armed forces and national gendarmerie is initiated through a newspaper and national media advertisement for young men and women;

(b) The recruitment file includes, as the case may be, a birth certificate and a certificate of school attendance and/or apprenticeship;

(c) Induction for the young recruits takes place in public, at a sports field or similar setting;

(d) All recruits undergo a thorough medical examination.

NIGERIA

"(A) The minimum age at which Nigeria permits voluntary recruitment into her National Armed Forces is eighteen years of age;

(B) The Federal Republic of Nigeria has established safeguards to ensure that such recruitment is not forced or

coerced, including a requirement in Part III, Section 34(1) of the Child's Rights Act, 2003, which stipulates that no child shall be recruited into any of the branches of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria;

(C) Part III, Section 34(2) of the Child's Rights Act, 2003 states that the Government or any other relevant agency or body shall ensure that no child is directly involved in any military operation or hostilities;

(D) Part XXIV 277 of the Child's Rights Act, 2003 states that a child is a person under the age of eighteen years."

NORTH MACEDONIA

"Related to Article 3, paragraph 2 of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflicts the Republic of Macedonia states that under the Macedonian legislation there are no possibilities, neither on obligatory or voluntary grounds, to direct any person younger than 18 years of age to military service, i.e. there is no opportunity to violate the right to a special protection of persons of less than 18 years of age. In order to ensure that persons under 18 do not join its Armed Forces, the Republic of Macedonia has made the following provision:

Article 62 of the Law on Defense of the Republic of Macedonia sets forth that draftees shall be directed to military service after attaining 19 years of age. The draftee who requests to be drafted for military service shall be directed to military service after three months from the day of submission of the application, if he/she has attained 18 years of age."

NORWAY

"Pursuant to Article 3, second paragraph, of the Protocol, the Government of the Kingdom of Norway declares that the minimum age for voluntary recruitment to the armed forces is 18 years."

OMAN

..... subject to the Sultanate's reservations to the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

.....the minimum legal age for enlistment in the Ministry of Defence and the Sultan's armed forces is eighteen years; that a birth certificate or a certificate of ascertainment of age from the competent governmental authorities constitutes the precautionary measure for ensuring compliance with that requirement; and that enlistment is optional, not compulsory.

PAKISTAN

"The Islamic Republic of Pakistan, pursuant to article 3 (2) of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict, declares that:

- i. The minimum age of recruitment of personnel into the armed forces of Pakistan is 16 years.
- ii. The armed forces personnel are sent to combatant areas only after they attain eighteen years of age.
- iii. The recruitment into the armed forces of Pakistan is purely voluntary, and made through open competition on merit without any force or coercion.
- iv. The recruit is required to present B-Form issued by the National Database and Registration Authority as a token of proof of having attained minimum age prescribed under the law for recruitment."

PANAMA

The Republic of Panama, in ratifying the Protocol, declares that it has no armed forces. The Republic of Panama has a civilian security force consisting of the National Police, the National Air Service, the National

Maritime Service and the Institutional Protection Service. Their legal charters define the requirements for recruitment of personnel by such institutions and stipulate that recruits must have reached the age of majority, i.e. 18 years.

PARAGUAY¹⁶

... it has been decided to set the minimum age for recruitment into the Armed Forces at eighteen (18) years. The measures to be taken for recruitment shall be brought into line with the provisions of article 3, paragraph 3, of the aforementioned Optional Protocol.

PERU

In depositing the instrument of ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, the Government of Peru declares that, in compliance with its article 3, paragraph 2, the minimum age for voluntary recruitment into the national armed forces, under national legislation, is 18 years.

PHILIPPINES

"1. The minimum age for voluntary recruitment into the Armed Forces of the Philippines is 18 years, except for training purposes whose duration shall have the students/cadets/trainees attain the majority age at the completion date;

2. There is no compulsory, forced or coerced recruitment into the Armed Forces of the Philippines; and,

3. Recruitment is exclusively on a voluntary basis."

POLAND¹⁷

"1. Under the Polish law the minimum age in the case of obligatory recruitment of the Polish citizens into the national Armed Forces is eighteen (18) years.

2. Under the Polish law the minimum age for the voluntary recruitment of the Polish citizens into the national Armed Forces is eighteen (18) years. The candidate is obliged to show a special document certifying the date of his/her birth."

PORTUGAL

"Concerning article 2 of the Protocol, the Portuguese Republic considering that it would have preferred the Protocol to exclude all types or recruitment of persons under the age of 18 years - whether this recruitment is voluntary or not, declares that it will apply its domestic legislation which prohibits the voluntary recruitment of persons under the age of 18 years and will deposit a binding declaration, in conformity with paragraph 2 of article 3 of the Protocol, setting forth 18 years as the minimum age for voluntary recruitment in Portugal."

"The Government of Portugal declares, in accordance with article 3, paragraph 2, of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict that the minimum age for any recruitment - including voluntary - of persons into its national armed forces is 18 years. This age limit is already contained in the Portuguese domestic legislation."

QATAR

Pursuant to paragraph 2 of article 3 of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict,

The State of Qatar declares that recruitment to its armed forces and other regular forces is voluntary and is for those who have attained the age of 18 years and that it takes account of the safeguards set forth in paragraph 3 of the same article.

In making this declaration, the State of Qatar affirms that its national legislation makes no provision for any form of compulsory or coercive recruitment.

REPUBLIC OF KOREA

Declaration:

"In accordance with paragraph 2, Article 3 of the aforementioned Protocol, the Government of the Republic of Korea declares that the minimum age for voluntary recruitment into the Korean national armed forces is 18 years."

REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

In accordance with article 3 paragraph 2 of the Protocol, the Republic of Moldova declares that the minimum age for recruitment into conscript military service in the Republic of Moldova is 18 years.

ROMANIA

"According to the law, military service is compulsory for Romanian citizens, males, who reached the age of 20, except in case of war or upon request, during peacetime, when they may be recruited after the age of 18."

RUSSIAN FEDERATION

The Russian Federation, pursuant to article 3, paragraph 2, of the Optional Protocol, declares that, in accordance with the legislation of the Russian Federation, citizens under the age of 18 may not be recruited for military service in the armed forces of the Russian Federation and a military service contract may not be concluded with them;

In accordance with the legislation of the Russian Federation, citizens who have reached the age of 16 are entitled to admission to professional military educational institutions. Upon enrolment in these institutions they shall acquire the status of members of the military performing compulsory military service. The legislation of the Russian Federation guarantees that such citizens shall conclude military service contracts on reaching the age of 18, but not before they have completed the first year of education in these educational institutions.

RWANDA

Declaration:

"Minimum age for voluntary recruitment: 18 years.

Minimum age for entry into schools operated by or under the control of armed forces: Not applicable.

Status of pupils in these schools (are they part of the armed forces): Not applicable.

What reliable proof of age is required: birth certificate.

What do the armed forces comprise: Adult men and women."

SAMOA

"Pursuant to Article 3 paragraph 2 of the Optional Protocol, the Government of Brunei Darussalam declares that, as stipulated in the Royal Brunei Armed Forces Act (Cap. 149), the minimum age of enlistment to the Royal Brunei Armed Forces and Reserve Regiment is 18 years and that enlistment is voluntary."

SAN MARINO

"The Republic of San Marino, in accordance with article 3, paragraph 2 of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, declares as follows:

a) The minimum age for voluntary recruitment into the Military Corps of the Republic of San Marino, in conformity with the Special Regulations of each Corps, is set at 18;

b) In San Marino there is neither a compulsory military service nor a compulsory civil service, although Articles 3 and 4 of Law no. 15 of 26 January 1990 'Regulation and Discipline of Military Corps' provide that, in the exceptional circumstances of a general mobilization, all San Marino citizens from 16 to 60 years of age may be called up to serve in the military. This provision represents a historical heritage and such circumstances have never arisen in the whole history of the Republic. The Republic of San Marino intends to introduce a reform of the Regulation and Discipline of Military Corps to repeal this provision."

SAUDI ARABIA

1. Saudi laws and regulations include neither texts nor provisions that allow any form of compulsory recruitment into the armed forces.

2. Joining the national armed forces is limited to formal employment (voluntary); and the law requires that the person requesting to be recruited should be at least 17 years old.

SENEGAL

We hereby declare that the minimum age required for regular conscription and for entry into the schools for officers and sub-officers is twenty (20) years.

Candidates shall enlist in an individual capacity and shall sign enlistment and re-enlistment contracts freely and in person.

SERBIA

"Pursuant to article 3(2) of the Protocol, I have the honour to inform that the provisions of articles 291 and 301 of the Law on the Yugoslav Army specified that a person of military age who has turned eighteen may be recruited into the Army of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in that calendar year. The person of military age may only exceptionally be recruited in the calendar year in which he turns seventeen, at his own request, or during a state of war by order of the President of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

In the light of the fact that, under the Law, only persons who have done their military service or have undergone the required military training may be called up, the minimum age for voluntary recruitment in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia has been set at eighteen. Safeguards that recruitment of underage persons will not be forced or coerced are provided in the Penal Code of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and those of its constituent republics, relating to the criminal act against civil rights and liberties and dereliction of duty."

SEYCHELLES

"... WHEREAS the age of majority in Seychelles is established at 18 years, under the 'Age of Majority Act of 13th October 1980';

WHEREAS the 'Constitution of the Republic of Seychelles of 21st June 1993' enshrines the rights of minors in Article 31 where it recognises the right of children and young persons to special protection;

WHEREAS pursuant to Section 23 of the Seychelles 'Defence Act of 1st January 1981', no person who is under the age of 18 years shall be enrolled without the consent in writing of his/her parents or his/her guardians;

WHEREAS according with the same 'Defence Act of 1st January 1981' whenever a member of the Defence Force is under the age of 18 years and was enrolled irregularly or in error without the consent required by the law of Seychelles, he/she shall be discharged at the request of his/her parent or guardian;

WHEREAS the Defence Academy of Seychelles admits children above the age of 15 only with the consent of their parents or guardians;

BEARING IN MIND that Article 3, paragraph 4, of the aforesaid Protocol allows each State Party to strengthen its declaration at any time by notification to the Secretary-General of the United Nations;”

SIERRA LEONE

“With regard to article 3, paragraph 2, of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the participation of Children in Armed Conflict, the Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone declares that:

1. The minimum age for voluntary recruitment into the Armed Forces is 18 years;
2. There is no compulsory, forced or coerced recruitment into the National Armed Forces;
3. Recruitment is exclusively on a voluntary basis.”

SINGAPORE

“Pursuant to Article 3, Paragraph 2 of the Optional Protocol, the Republic of Singapore declares that:

1. The minimum age at which persons may be voluntarily recruited or enlisted into the Singapore Armed Forces is 16 years and 6 months; and
2. The Republic of Singapore maintains the following safeguards in respect of voluntary recruitment or enlistment of persons below the age of 18 years into the Singapore Armed Forces -
 - a. The person is required to produce documentary proof of age, including an authentic birth certificate and identity card;
 - b. Written consent of a parent or legal guardian of the person is required; and
 - c. The person is fully informed of the duties involved in military service by the Singapore Armed Forces through, among other things, informational brochures and career counselors to explain the demands of military life.”

SLOVAKIA

“.....the Slovak Republic declares that according to its legislation, the minimum age at which voluntary recruitment into its national armed forces is permitted, is regulated by

Act No. 570/2005 on the Conscription Obligation and on Amendment of certain Acts section 6, which stipulates that a person can voluntarily accept the conscription obligation as of 1st January of the calendar year in which he/she reaches the age of 19 years; and

Act No. 346/2005 on the State Service of the Professional Soldiers of the Armed Forces of the Slovak Republic and on Amendment of certain Acts section 13, which stipulates reaching the age of 18 years as the requirement for admission to the state service of the professional soldier.

The fact, that the recruitment can be performed exclusively on the basis of a law in accordance with the Constitution of the Slovak Republic, is the sufficient safeguard to ensure that such recruitment is not forced or coerced.”

SLOVENIA

“In compliance with Article 3, Paragraph 2, of the Optional Protocol, the Republic of Slovenia declares that the minimum age at which it will permit voluntary recruitment into its national armed forces is 18 years. The minimum age shall apply equally to men and women. By phasing out the recruitment system and introducing professional military service, the contractual reserve forces and service in the national armed forces shall be voluntary and regulated by a contract between the two parties.”

SOLOMON ISLANDS

“The Government of Solomon Islands declares that it does not have national armed forces, but in the event that any are established, it will ensure [that] the minimum age for voluntary recruitment of 18 years as provided for under the Police Act will in principle be applied for such recruitment. No

recruitment shall be carried out without the submission of compulsory proof of age.”

SOUTH AFRICA

“a) The South African National Defence Force (SANDF) is a voluntary force and therefore there is no compulsory conscription into the SANDF;

b) The process of recruitment in the SANDF is initiated through advertisement in the national newspapers and the minimum age limit of 18 years is stipulated by law as a requirement;

c) The induction of all recruits is conducted in public;

d) All recruits are required to present a national identity document which states their date of birth and where appropriate, their educational records; and

e) All recruits undergo a rigorous medical examination in terms of which prepubescence would be noticed, and any recruit determined to be underage is routinely declined from recruitment.”

SOUTH SUDAN

“... the Republic of South Sudan ..., in regards to Article 3 of the Optional Protocol, states that the minimum age at which it permits recruitment of volunteers in Armed Forces is eighteen years and in accordance with section 22 of the Sudan Peoples’ Liberation Army Act, 2009;

... the Republic of South Sudan also states that the safeguards provided in Article 3(2) of the Optional Protocol on Involvement of Children in the Armed Conflicts and in the Sudan Peoples’ Liberation Army Act, 2009 shall be observed and bound by to ensure that all recruitment is made in public places and not done under force or duress, advertised in the press and national media for young people, the recruits undergo medical examination and the record consist of recruitment as appropriate, among others, a birth certificate, certificate of education or apprenticeship”.

SPAIN

For the purposes of the provisions of article 3 of the Protocol, Spain declares that the minimum age for voluntary recruitment into its armed forces is 18 years.

SRI LANKA

“The Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka [...] declares in accordance with article 3 (2) of [the Protocol] that under the laws of Sri Lanka:

(a) there is no compulsory, forced or coerced recruitment into the national armed forces;

(b) recruitment is solely on a voluntary basis;

(c) the minimum age for voluntary recruitment into national armed forces is 18 years.”

ST. LUCIA

“In accordance with Article 3, paragraph 2 of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict, 2000, the Government of Saint Lucia declares that the minimum age required for voluntary recruitment into the Police Force is eighteen (18) years, in accordance with section 3 (a) of the Police (amendment) Act, 2013.”

ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES

"In accordance with Article 3, paragraph 2, of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on Involvement of Children in Armed Conflicts, 2000, the Government of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines declares that the minimum age required for voluntary recruitment into the Police Force is nineteen (19) years in accordance with the Police Act, Chapter 280 section 6(1) of the Law of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines."

STATE OF PALESTINE

"[...] in accordance with article 3(2) of the Optional Protocol, [...] the minimum age for recruitment of persons into Palestine's national armed forces is 18 years."

SUDAN

... pursuant to article 3 (2) of the Optional Protocol, the Government of the Republic of the Sudan declares that the Republic of the Sudan is committed to maintain the minimum age for voluntary service in the Sudan armed forces at 18, and to maintain the prohibition of forced or voluntary conscription of any person under the age of 18 years.

SURINAME

"Pursuant to Article 3, Paragraph 2 of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict, the Republic of Suriname hereby declares that in accordance with Article 9, Paragraph 1 sub b and Article 11, Paragraph 2 of the Military Legal Position Law (S.B. 1996 No. 28) of the Republic of Suriname, the minimum age for voluntary recruitment into the Suriname National Army is 18 years. In order to guarantee that applicants are not under aged, they are required to submit a certificate from the National Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages."

SWEDEN

"... in accordance with Article 3 paragraph 2 of the Optional Protocol, [...] the minimum age required for voluntary recruitment into the Swedish National Armed Forces is eighteen (18) years."

SWITZERLAND

The Swiss Government declares, in accordance with article 3, paragraph 2, of the Optional Protocol, that the minimum age for the recruitment of volunteers into its national armed forces is 18 years. That age is specified by the Swiss legal system.

SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC¹⁸

Ratification of the two Optional Protocols by the Syrian Arab Republic shall not in any event imply recognition of Israel and shall not lead to entry into any dealings with Israel in the matters governed by the provisions of the Protocols.

The Syrian Arab Republic declares that the statutes in force and the legislation applicable to the Ministry of Defence of the Syrian Arab Republic do not permit any person under 18 years of age to join the active armed forces or the reserve bodies or formations and do not permit the enlistment of any person under that age.

THAILAND

"1. Military service is compulsory by law. Thai men reaching the age of 18 have a duty to register on the inactive military personnel list. At the age of 21, selected inactive military personnel will become active

military personnel. Inactive military personnel may also voluntarily apply to become active military personnel to serve in the national armed forces. Women are exempt from compulsory military service both in times of peace and in times of war, but are subjected to other duties assigned by law.

2. In times of war or national crisis, inactive military personnel (men aged over 18) may be recruited to participate in the armed forces.

3. Admittances to military schools such as Army Non-commissioned Officer School, Air technical Training School, Navy Non-Commissioned Officer School, Armed Forces Academies Preparatory School and Army, Naval, and Air Forces Academies is on a voluntary basis, depending on the success in the entrance examinations and subject to the consent of parents or legal guardians.

4. High school and university students regardless of gender may voluntarily apply to receive military training from the Army Reserve Command, with the consent of parents or legal guardians, without any exception. Students who complete 3 years' training are exempt from military service (as active military personnel) when they reach the age of 21.

5. Non-governmental militias are prohibited by law, regardless of the age of persons concerned."

TIMOR-LESTE

"Pursuant to Article 3, paragraph 2 of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed conflicts the Government of Timor-Leste declares, that the minimum age for voluntary recruitment into its national armed forces is 18 years, as specified by the domestic law of Timor-Leste."

TOGO

In accordance with article 3 (2) of the Optional Protocol, the Government of the Republic of Togo:

(i) Declares that the minimum age at which voluntary recruitment into its national armed forces is permitted is eighteen (18) years;

(ii) The following is a description of the safeguards that the Government has adopted to

ensure that such recruitment is not forced or coerced:

Any person under 18 years of age cannot be recruited, neither accepted for recruitment, even voluntarily, nor registered as a member of the Togolese Armed Forces (FAT).

National military service does not exist in Togo.

The recruitment is national, voluntary, conducted in public upon presentation of a birth certificate, a school or training certificate and of diplomas obtained.

All recruits undergo a rigorous medical examination.

TUNISIA

In accordance with article 3, paragraph 2, of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, the Republic of Tunisia declares the following:

Under Tunisian law, the minimum age for voluntary recruitment of Tunisian citizens into the armed forces is 18 years.

In accordance with article 1 of Act No. 51-1989 of 14 March 1989 on military service, "all citizens aged 20 shall perform national service in person, except in the case of a medically certified impediment.

However, citizens may, at their request, and with the consent of their legal guardian, perform military service at the age of 18 years, subject to the approval of the Secretary General of the Ministry of Defence."

In accordance with article 27 of Act No. 51-1989 of 14 March 1989 on military service, "any citizen between

the ages of 18 and 23 may be admitted into military schools subject to such conditions as may be determined by the Secretary General of the Ministry of Defence.

Young people who have not attained the age of majority must first get the consent of their legal guardian; in such case, the first year of service shall count towards the fulfilment of military service obligations and be considered as enlistment before call-up."

Articles 1 and 27 of the Act of 14 March 1989 provide legal safeguards for citizens under the age of 18 years, since acceptance into national military service or recruitment into the armed forces is on a strictly voluntary basis.

TÜRKIYE¹⁹

"1. The Republic of Turkey declares, in accordance with Article 3 (2) of the Optional Protocol, that military service is compulsory in Turkey, however Turkish citizens are not subjected to compulsory military service before reaching the legal age of maturity. In accordance with the Turkish Military Code, military service begins on 1st January of the twentieth age; in cases of mobilisation and state of emergency, individuals who are liable to military service may be recruited at the age of 19.

There is no voluntary recruitment in Turkey.

However, Article 11 of the Military Code envisages a voluntary recruitment for navy and gendarmerie classes and non-commissioned officers at a minimum age of 18. Nevertheless, this article, which is in compliance with the age regulation of the Optional Protocol, is not applied in practice.

Students of military schools, who are exempted from the Optional Protocol according to Article 3 (5) of this protocol, are not subjected to compulsory military service. Under the Turkish legal system, such students are not considered as "soldiers" and are not held liable for "military service".

2. Admittance to the military high schools and preparatory non-commissioned officer schools is on a voluntary basis, depending on success in the entrance examinations and with the consent of parents or legal guardians. Students who have completed their primary school education and enrolled into such schools at a minimum age of 15 can quit them at any time if they so wish."

"The Republic of Turkey declares that it will implement the provisions of the existing Optional Protocol only to the States Parties which it recognizes and with which it has diplomatic relations.

The Republic of Turkey declares with regard to Article 3 (5) of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict that the reservation it made to Article 29 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which is referred to in the said paragraph of the Optional Protocol, fully retains its validity."

TURKMENISTAN

"A citizen of male sex at the age of 18 to 30 years, which has no right to discharge or deferment from conscription, is subject to a call to military service.

Decision on conscription of a citizen to a military service can be adopted after he has reached 18 years of age.

Decision to call a citizen to a military service can be adopted after achievement by him of 17 years of age after his personal application for voluntary military service."

UGANDA

"The Government of the Republic of Uganda declares that the minimum age for the recruitment of persons into the armed forces is by law set at eighteen (18) years. Recruitment is entirely and squarely voluntary and is

carried out with the full informed consent of the persons being recruited. There is no conscription in Uganda.

The Government of the Republic of Uganda reserves the right at any time by means of a notification addressed to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, to add, amend or strengthen the present declaration. Such notifications shall take effect from the date of their receipt by the Secretary-General of the United Nations."

UKRAINE

Ukraine confirms its obligations taken under Article 38 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in case of the armed conflicts which concern children and, referring to paragraph 2 of Article 3 of the Optional Protocol, declares hereby that the minimum age for the voluntary (on a contractual basis) joining into its national armed forces is 19 years.

Ukraine, in accordance with the provisions of its national legislation, guarantees its adherence to the exclusive principle of voluntarism in the process of recruitment of citizens into its armed forces on a contractual basis, without any manifestation of violence and enforcement.

UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND

"The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland will take all feasible measures to ensure that members of its armed forces who have not attained the age of 18 years do not take a direct part in hostilities.

The United Kingdom understands that article 1 of the Optional Protocol would not exclude the deployment of members of its armed forces under the age of 18 to take a direct part in hostilities where: -

a) there is a genuine military need to deploy their unit or ship to an area in which hostilities are taking place; and

b) by reason of the nature and urgency of the situation:-

i) it is not practicable to withdraw such persons before deployment; or

ii) to do so would undermine the operational effectiveness of their ship or unit, and thereby put at risk the successful completion of the military mission and/or the safety of other personnel."

".....in accordance with Article 3, paragraph 2, of the Optional Protocol:

- The minimum age at which individuals may join the UK Armed Forces is 16 years. This minimum broadly reflects the minimum statutory school leaving age in the United Kingdom, that is the age at which young persons may first be permitted to cease full-time education and enter the full-time employment market. Parental consent is required in all cases of recruitment under the age of 18 years.

The United Kingdom maintains the following safeguards in respect of voluntary recruitment into the armed forces:

1. The United Kingdom Armed Forces are manned solely by volunteers; there is no compulsory recruitment.

2. A declaration of age, backed by an authoritative, objective proof (typically the production of an authentic birth certificate) is an integral and early requirement in the recruitment process. Should an individual volunteering to enter the United Kingdom Armed Forces be found either by their own declaration or by inspection of supporting evidence of age to be under 18 years of age, special procedures are adopted. These procedures include:

- the involvement of the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) of the potential recruits:

- clear and precise explanation of the nature of duties involved in military service to the both the individual and their parent(s)/guardian(s); and
- as well as explaining the demands of military life to the individual volunteer and establishing that he/she remains a genuine volunteer, the requirement that the parent(s) or guardian(s), having been similarly informed, freely consent to the individual's entry into the Armed Forces and duly countersign the appropriate application or other appropriate recruitment process forms.

UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA

"The minimum age for the voluntary recruitment into armed conflict is eighteen years."

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

"The Government of the United States of America declares, pursuant to Article 3 (2) of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict that -

(A) the minimum age at which the United States permits voluntary recruitment into the Armed Forces of the United States is 17 years of age;

(B) The United States has established safeguards to ensure that such recruitment is not forced or coerced, including a requirement in section 505 (a) of title 10, United States Code, that no person under 18 years of age may be originally enlisted in the Armed Forces of the United States without the written consent of the person's parent or guardian, if the parent or guardian is entitled to the person's custody and control;

(C) each person recruited into the Armed Forces of the United States receives a comprehensive briefing and must sign an enlistment contract that, taken together, specify the duties involved in military service; and

(D) all persons recruited into the Armed Forces of the United States must provide reliable proof of age before their entry into military service."

(1) **NO ASSUMPTION OF OBLIGATIONS UNDER THE CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD.**-The United States understands that the United States assumes no obligations under the Convention on the Rights of the Child by becoming a party to the Protocol.

(2) **IMPLEMENTATION OF OBLIGATION NOT TO PERMIT CHILDREN TO TAKE DIRECT PART IN HOSTILITIES.**-The United States understands that, with respect to Article 1 of the Protocol -

(A) the term "feasible measures" means those measures that are practical or practically possible, taking into account all the circumstances ruling at the time, including humanitarian and military considerations;

(B) the phrase "direct part in hostilities"-

(i) means immediate and actual action on the battlefield likely to cause harm to the enemy because there is a direct causal relationship between the activity engaged in and the harm done to the enemy; and

(ii) does not mean indirect participation in hostilities, such as gathering and transmitting military information, transporting weapons, munitions, or other supplies, or forward deployment; and

(C) any decision by any military commander, military personnel, or other person responsible for planning, authorizing, or executing military action, including the assignment of military personnel, shall only be judged on the basis of all the relevant circumstances and on the basis of that person's assessment of the information reasonably available to the person at the time the person planned, authorized, or executed the action under review, and shall not be judged on the basis of information that comes to light after the action under review was taken.

(3) **MINIMUM AGE FOR VOLUNTARY RECRUITMENT.**- The United States understands that Article 3 of the Protocol obligates States Parties to the

Protocol to raise the minimum age for voluntary recruitment into their national armed forces from the current international standard of 15 years of age.

(4) **ARMED GROUPS.**- The United States understands that the term "armed groups" in Article 4 of the Protocol means nongovernmental armed groups such as rebel groups, dissident armed forces, and other insurgent groups.

(5) **NO BASIS FOR JURISDICTION BY ANY INTERNATIONAL TRIBUNAL.**- The United States understands that nothing in the Protocol establishes a basis for jurisdiction by any international tribunal, including the International Criminal Court."

URUGUAY

In fulfilment of the obligation laid down in article 3, paragraph 2 of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, the Government of the Eastern Republic of Uruguay, in line with the reservation made at the time of depositing the instrument of ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, declares:

That in exercise of its sovereignty and in accordance with domestic law, it does not under any circumstances permit voluntary recruitment into the armed forces of persons under 18 years of age.

UZBEKISTAN

"To paragraph 2 of article 3 of the Optional Protocol : the Republic of Uzbekistan declares that, according to the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On general military duty and military service" adopted on 12 December 2002 enrollment of citizens to the Armed Forces of the Republic of Uzbekistan shall be allowed only after attainment by them of eighteen years of age."

VANUATU

"...the Government of the Republic of Vanuatu pursuant to Article 3 (2) of the Protocol hereby declares that the minimum age at which it will permit voluntary recruitment into its national Armed Forces is 18 years of age as provided under Section 3 (2) of the Police Rules. Further declaration is made that Vanuatu has adopted the following safeguards to ensure that recruitment of personnel is not forced or coerced:

A Candidate for appointment to the Force shall:

a) have reached the age of 18 years and shall not be over the age of 30 years;

b) be certified by a Government medical officer to be in good health, of sound constitution and fitted both physically and mentally to perform the duties on which he will be employed after appointment;

c) have a minimum height of 1.70 meters (5 feet 8 inches);

d) have a minimum education certificate of a Senior Primary Certificate on a Certificate d'Etudes Primaire or pass a Police Entrance Examination;

e) be of good moral character."

VENEZUELA (BOLIVARIAN REPUBLIC OF)

[The minimum age for conscription and voluntary enlistment into the national armed forces of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela is between 18 and 50 years, in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution and laws of the Republic.

The safeguards adopted by the Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to ensure that such recruitment is not forced or coerced are as follows:

1. Article 134 of the Constitution of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela provides:

"Everyone, in accordance with the law, has the duty to provide the necessary civilian or military services for the defence, preservation and development of the country, or

to deal with situations of public emergency. No one may be subjected to forced recruitment."

2. When a person has been subjected to forced recruitment, article 27, first paragraph of the Constitution of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela provides that: "everyone has the right to be protected by the courts in the enjoyment and exercise of all constitutional rights and guarantees, including those inherent personal rights which are not expressly laid down in this Constitution or in the international human rights instruments".

3. The Constitution also provides, in article 31, first paragraph, that "everyone has the right, under the provisions laid down in the human rights treaties, covenants and conventions ratified by the Republic, to send petitions or complaints to the international organs created for these purposes, in order to seek protection of human rights".

4. Furthermore, article 4 of the Military Conscription and Enlistment Act provides that military age is the period during which Venezuelans have military obligations and are between 18 and 50 years of age. No Venezuelan under the age of 18 has military obligations or the duty to register for military service.

VIET NAM

"To defend the Homeland is the sacred duty and right of all citizens. Citizens have the obligation to fulfil military service and participate in building the all-people national defense.

Under the law of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, only male citizens at the age of 18 and over shall be recruited in the military service. Those who are under the age of 18 shall not be directly involved in military battles unless there is an urgent need for safeguarding national independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity.

Male citizens up to the age of 17 who wish to make a long-term service in the army may be admitted to military schools. Voluntary recruitment to military schools shall be ensured by measures which, inter alia, include:

- The Law on Military Duty and other regulations on the recruitment to military schools are widely disseminated through mass media;

- Those who wish to study at a military school shall, on the voluntary basis, file their application, participate in

and pass competitive examinations; they shall submit their birth certificates provided by the local authority, their education records, secondary education diploma; they shall also undergo health check in order to ensure that they are physically qualified to study and serve the military."

YEMEN

In accordance with article 3, paragraph 2, of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, the Government of the Republic of Yemen declares its commitment to retaining 18 years as the minimum age for voluntary recruitment into the Yemeni armed forces, as well as to retaining the ban on the compulsory or voluntary recruitment of any person under 18 years of age.

ZIMBABWE

"Pursuant to Article 3, paragraph [2] of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict the Republic of Zimbabwe do hereby declare that:

In terms of the Zimbabwe Defence Forces Standing Orders, recruitment of members into the Defence Forces is voluntary but restricted to the ages of between 18 and 22 years. However, Zimbabwe contemplates to include this provision in its statutory law for certainty and consistency despite the fact that no problems have been encountered.

To ensure that every recruit is 18 years of age, every potential recruit must be in possession of his/her National Identity Card, Birth Certificate and school and professional certificates before he is recruited into the Defence Forces.

He/she also undergoes thorough medical and physical examinations in order to ascertain his/her fitness and age.

Recruitment commences at District Centres to ensure that there is equal representation of all members who join the Defence Forces, throughout the country.

In fact, all recruitments into the Zimbabwe Defence Forces are voluntary and is strictly for those who are of the age of 18 years."

Objections

(Unless otherwise indicated, the objections were made upon ratification, accession or succession.)

CYPRUS

"The Government of the Republic of Cyprus has examined the declaration made by the Government of the Republic of Turkey to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict, (New York, 25 May 2000), on 4 May 2004, in respect of the implementation of the provisions of the Optional Protocol only to the States Parties which it recognizes and with which it has diplomatic relations.

In the view of the Government of the Republic of Cyprus, this declaration amounts to a reservation. This reservation creates uncertainty as to the States Parties in respect of which Turkey is undertaking the obligations in the Protocol and raises doubt as to the commitment of Turkey to the object and purpose of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and of the said Protocol. The Government of the Republic of Cyprus therefore objects to the reservation made by the Government of the Republic of Turkey to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict.

This reservation or the objection to it shall not preclude the entry into force of the Convention on the Rights of the Child or the future entry into force of the said Protocol between the Republic of Cyprus and the Republic of Turkey."

FINLAND

"The Government of Finland has carefully examined the reservations made by the Government of the Sultanate of Oman to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict. The Government of Finland notes that the provisions of the Optional Protocol shall, according to the Government of the Sultanate of Oman, be subject to reservations concerning Islamic and domestic law.

The Government of Finland notes that a reservation which consists of a general reference to religious or other national law without specifying its contents does not clearly define to other Parties to the Convention the extent to which the reserving State commits itself to the Convention and creates serious doubts as to the commitment of the receiving State to fulfil its obligations under the Convention. Such reservations are, furthermore, subject to the general principle of treaty interpretation

according to which a party may not invoke the provisions of its domestic law as justification for a failure to perform its treaty obligations.

The Government of Finland therefore objects to the above-mentioned reservations made by the Government of the Sultanate of Oman to the Protocol. This objection does not preclude the entry into force of the Protocol between the Sultanate of Oman and Finland. The Protocol will thus become operative between the two states without the Sultanate of Oman benefiting from its reservations."

GERMANY

"The Government of the Federal Republic of Germany has carefully examined the reservation made by the Government of the Sultanate of Oman to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict.

The reservation refers to all the provisions of the instrument that do not accord with Islamic law or the legislation in force in the Sultanate of Oman.

The Government of the Federal Republic of Germany is of the opinion that the aforesaid restrictions make it unclear to which extent the Sultanate of Oman considers itself bound by the obligations from the Optional Protocol and that this gives rise to serious doubts as to the commitment of the Sultanate of Oman to the object and purpose thereof. The Government of the Federal Republic of Germany therefore objects to the reservation made by the Sultanate of Oman to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict. This objection shall not preclude the entry into force of the Optional Protocol between the Federal Republic of Germany and the Sultanate of Oman."

"The Permanent Mission of the Federal Republic of Germany to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and has the honor to inform the Secretary-General, in his capacity as depositary of the Optional Protocol of May 25, 2000 to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict (hereinafter "the Optional Protocol"), that the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany has carefully examined the interpretative declaration made by the Republic of the Union of Myanmar upon ratification of the Optional Protocol on September 27, 2019.

1) Objection

By maintaining that any responsibility deriving from recruitment of children under 18 years of age or their use in hostilities by non-state armed groups lies solely with such groups, the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, in its declaration, purports to modify the legal effect of Article 4(2) and Article 6 of the Optional Protocol in their application to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar. The Federal Government therefore qualifies the first sentence of this interpretative declaration as a reservation under Article 2(1)(d) of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties.

In accordance with Article 4(2) of the Optional Protocol, States Parties shall take all feasible measures to prevent the recruitment and use of persons below the age of 18 years in hostilities, including the adoption of legal measures necessary to prohibit and criminalize such practices.

Under Article 6 of the Optional Protocol, each State Party shall take all necessary legal, administrative and other measures to ensure the effective implementation and enforcement of the provisions of the present Protocol within its jurisdiction. The States Parties undertake to

make the principles and provisions of the present Protocol widely known and promoted by appropriate means, to adults and children alike. They shall take all feasible measures to ensure that persons within their jurisdiction recruited or used in hostilities contrary to the present Protocol are demobilized or otherwise released from service. States Parties shall, when necessary, accord to such persons all appropriate assistance for their physical and psychological recovery and their social reintegration.

It is incompatible with the object and purpose of Article 4(2) and Article 6 of the Optional Protocol to assign any responsibility arising from the recruitment of children under the age of 18 or their use in hostilities by non-state armed groups solely to those groups.

The Government of the Federal Republic of Germany recalls that, according to customary international law as codified in the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties, reservations that are incompatible with the object and purpose of a convention are not permissible.

The Government of the Federal Republic of Germany therefore objects to the above-mentioned reservation by the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to the Optional Protocol. This objection shall not preclude the entry into force of the Optional Protocol between the Federal Republic of Germany and the Republic of the Union of Myanmar in its entirety. The Optional Protocol will thus become operative between the two States without the Republic of the Union of Myanmar benefitting from the aforementioned reservation.

2) Declaration

The Government of the Federal Republic of Germany understands the second and the third sentence of the interpretative declaration made by the Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to mean that all ethnic armed groups in the Republic of the Union of Myanmar also have a duty to apply at all times the principles governing international humanitarian law."

HUNGARY

"The Government of the Republic of Hungary has examined the reservations made by the Sultanate of Oman on 17 September 2004 to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict. The Government of the Republic of Hungary notes that the Sultanate of Oman does not consider itself bound by the provisions of the Optional Protocol that do not accord with the Islamic law or the legislation in force in the Sultanate, and also notes that the Sultanate of Oman intends to apply the Optional Protocol within the limits imposed by the material resources available.

The Government of the Republic of Hungary is of the view that the Sultanate of Oman has made reservations of a general nature which do not define clearly to what extent it considers itself bound by the provisions of the Optional Protocol. The Government of the Republic of Hungary notes that according to Article 19 of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties reservations that are incompatible with the object and purpose of the treaty shall not be permitted.

The Government of the Republic of Hungary therefore objects to the above-mentioned reservations. The objection shall not preclude the entry into force of the Optional Protocol between the Republic of Hungary and the Sultanate of Oman, without the Sultanate of Oman benefiting from its reservations."

NETHERLANDS (KINGDOM OF THE)

"The Government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands has carefully examined the interpretative declaration

made by the Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar upon ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict on 27 September 2019, relating to Article 4 thereof.

The Government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands considers the first sentence of the interpretative declaration to be contrary to the terms of Article 4, paragraph 2, of the Optional Protocol, according to which States Parties commit themselves to 'take all feasible measures to prevent such recruitment and use, including the adoption of legal measures necessary to prohibit and criminalize such practices'. This sentence is also contrary to the terms of Article 6 of the Optional Protocol, according to which States Parties 'shall take all necessary legal, administrative and other measures to ensure the effective implementation and enforcement of the provisions of this Protocol within its jurisdiction' as well as 'all feasible measures to ensure that persons within their jurisdiction recruited or used in hostilities contrary to this Protocol are demobilized or otherwise released from service'.

The first sentence of the interpretative declaration made by the Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar implies that Myanmar would not be responsible for the recruitment of children under 18 years of age or their use in hostilities by non-state armed groups and that it has no obligation to address such recruitment and use. This is incompatible with the object and purpose of the Protocol and with Article 4, paragraph 2, and Article 6 thereof.

The Government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands therefore objects to the first sentence of the interpretative declaration of the Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict. This objection shall not preclude the entry into force of the Optional Protocol between the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

The Government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands further understands the last sentence of the interpretative declaration made by the Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to mean that all ethnic armed groups in the Republic of the Union of Myanmar also have a duty to apply at all times the principles governing international humanitarian law."

NORWAY

".....Norway has examined the second and third reservations made by the Government of the Sultanate of Oman on 17 September 2004 on accession to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict (New York, 25 May 2000) which concern Islamic and domestic law and limits imposed by the material resources available.

The Government of Norway is of the view that these general reservations raise doubts as to the full commitment of the Sultanate of Oman to the object and purpose of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict and would like to recall that according to customary international law as codified in the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties, a reservation incompatible with the object and purpose of the Convention shall not be permitted.

The Government of Norway therefore objects to the aforesaid reservations made by the Government of the Sultanate of Oman to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict. This objection does not preclude the entry into force, in its entirety, of the

Convention between Norway and the Sultanate of Oman, without the latter benefiting from these reservations."

POLAND

"The Government of the Republic of Poland [has] examined the reservation made by the Government of the Sultanate of Oman upon accession to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child as regards the participation of children in armed conflicts, which confirms that the reservations made to the Convention are currently valid. The above mentioned reservations refer in general to all the provisions of the Convention which are not in accordance with Islamic Law of the legislation of the Sultanate of Oman and stipulate that the provisions of the Convention should be applied within the limits imposed by the materials resources available.

The Government of the Republic of Poland considers that reservations do not specify the extent to which the Sultanate of Oman has accepted the obligations of the Convention are contrary to the object and purpose of the Protocol, i.e., to guarantee better protection of the rights of the child set forth in the Convention. The Government of the Republic of Poland would like to note that pursuant to article 19 of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties, any reservations contrary to the scope and purpose of the treaty are unacceptable.

The Government of Poland therefore objects to the aforesaid reservation made by the Government of the Sultanate of Oman to the Optional Protocol.

However, this objection shall not preclude the entry into force of the Optional Protocol between the Republic of Poland and the Sultanate of Oman."

PORTUGAL

"The Government of the Portuguese Republic has examined the interpretative declaration made by the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to Article 4 of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict and considers that it amounts to a reservation that seeks to limit the scope of the [Optional Protocol] on a unilateral basis.

The Government of the Portuguese Republic considers this reservation to be contrary to the terms of Article 4, paragraph 2, of the Optional Protocol, according to which State Parties are obligated to take all feasible measures (including the adoption of legal measures necessary to prohibit and criminalize such practices) to prevent the recruitment and use in hostilities, by armed groups that are distinct from the armed forces of a State, of persons under the age of 18 years.

Furthermore, the Government of the Portuguese Republic considers the reservation to be contrary to Article 6, paragraphs 1 and first part of paragraph 3, of the Optional Protocol, under which State Parties are obligated to "(...) take all necessary legal, administrative and other measures to ensure the effective implementation and enforcement of the provisions of the present Protocol within its jurisdiction" and to "(...) take all feasible measures to ensure that persons within their jurisdiction recruited or used in hostilities contrary to the present Protocol are demobilized or otherwise released from service (...)".

Moreover, the Government of the Portuguese Republic considers that reservations allowing a State to limit its responsibilities under the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict by waiving its responsibility over the recruitment of minors by non-State armed groups raises doubts as to the commitment of the

reserving State to the object and purpose of the [Optional Protocol], as the reservation is likely to deprive the provisions of the [Optional Protocol] of their effect and is contrary to the object and purpose thereof.

The Government of the Portuguese Republic recalls that according to customary international law as codified in the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties, a reservation incompatible with the object and purpose of the [treaty] shall not be permitted.

Thus, the Government of the Portuguese Republic objects to this reservation.

This objection shall not preclude the entry into force of the Optional Protocol between the Portuguese Republic and the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.”

ROMANIA

“The Government of Romania has examined the interpretative declaration relating to Article 4 of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict (New York, 25 May 2000) made by the Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar at the time of its ratification of the Optional Protocol.

The Government of Romania considers that the aforementioned interpretative declaration constitutes in fact a reservation that seeks to limit the scope of Article 4, paragraph 2 and of Article 6, paragraph 3 of the Optional Protocol. Placing any responsibility deriving from recruitment of children under 18 years of age or their use in hostilities by non-state army solely with such groups runs counter to the obligation of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to take all feasible measures to prevent such recruitment and use, including the adoption of legal measures necessary to prohibit and criminalize such practices, as well as to ensure that persons within its jurisdiction recruited or used in hostilities contrary to the Optional Protocol are demobilized or otherwise released from service.

Therefore, such a reservation contravenes the object and purpose of the Optional Protocol centered on the due diligence obligation of States Parties to take all feasible measures to protect persons under the age of 18 years from taking a direct part in hostilities and from being compulsorily recruited in their armed forces.

The Government of Romania recalls that, according to customary international law as codified in the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties, a reservation incompatible with the object and purpose of a treaty shall not be permitted.

Consequently, the Government of Romania objects to the aforementioned interpretative declaration made by the Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict. This objection shall not preclude the entry into force of the [Optional Protocol] between Romania and the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.”

SPAIN

The Government of the Kingdom of Spain has examined the reservations made by the Sultanate of Oman on 17 September 2004 upon its accession to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict of 25 May 2004.

The Government of the Kingdom of Spain notes that the Optional Protocol is subject to the reservations made by the Sultanate of Oman to the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The reservations to the Convention include a general reservation to all those provisions of the Convention that do not accord with Islamic Law or the legislation in force in the Oman and a reservation to the effect that the provisions of the Convention should be applied within the limits imposed by the material resources available.

The Government of the Kingdom of Spain considers that the above mentioned reservations which subordinate all the provisions of the Optional Protocol to Islamic Law or the legislation in force in Oman, to which a reference of general nature is made, without either specifying its content or the limits imposed by the material resources available, do not permit to clearly determine the extent to which Oman has accepted the obligations derived from the Optional Protocol, and thereby such reservations raise doubts as to the Sultanate of Oman's commitment to the object and purpose of the Optional Protocol.

The Government of the Kingdom of Spain considers that the reservations made by the Sultanate of Oman to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of Children in Armed Conflict are incompatible with the object and the purpose of the Optional Protocol.

The Government of the Kingdom of Spain recalls that in accordance with customary international law as codified in the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties, reservations which are incompatible with the object and the purpose of a treaty are not permitted.

Consequently, the Government of the Kingdom of Spain objects to the reservations made by the Sultanate of Oman to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of Children in Armed Conflict.

This objection shall not preclude the entry into force of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict of 25 May 2000 between the Kingdom of Spain and the Sultanate of Oman.

SWEDEN

“The Government of Sweden has examined the Oman reservation to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict.

The Government of Sweden notes that the Optional Protocol is made subject to the reservation formulated by the Government of Oman concerning the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The reservation to the Convention contains a general reservation to all the provisions of the Convention that do not accord with Islamic law or the legislation in force in Oman. It also contains a general limitation of the application of the Convention, which stipulates that the provisions of the Convention should be applied within the limits imposed by the material resources available.

The Government of Sweden is of the view that the reservations which do not clearly specify the extent of Oman's derogation from the provisions in question raises serious doubts as to the commitment of Oman to the object and purpose of the Optional Protocol. The Government of Sweden wishes to recall that, according to customary international law as codified in the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties, a reservation that is incompatible with the object and purpose of a treaty shall not be permitted.

It is in the common interest of States that treaties to which they have chosen to become parties are respected as to their object and purpose, by all parties, and that States are prepared to undertake any legislative changes necessary to comply with their obligations under the treaties.

The Government of Sweden therefore objects to the aforesaid reservation made by the Government of Oman to the Optional Protocol to the Convention of the Rights of the Child in Armed Conflicts and considers the reservation null and void. This objection shall not preclude the entry into force of the Optional Protocol between Oman and Sweden. The Optional Protocol enters into force in its entirety between Oman and Sweden, without Oman benefiting from its reservation."

UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND

"The Government of the United Kingdom have examined the second and third reservations made by the Government of the Sultanate of Oman to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict (New York, 25 May 2000) on 17 September 2004 in respect of Islamic and domestic law and of limits imposed by the material resources available.

The Government of the United Kingdom consider that Oman's reservations do not clearly define for the other States Parties to the Convention the extent to which the reserving State has accepted the obligations of the Convention. The Government of the United Kingdom therefore object to the aforesaid reservations made by the Government of Oman.

This objection shall not preclude the entry into force of the Convention between the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Oman. "

"The Government of the United Kingdom has examined the declaration made by the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, [upon] its [ratification of] the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, which reads:

Declaration

'With reference to article 4 of the optional protocol, the Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar considers that any responsibility deriving from recruitment of children under 18 years of age or their use in hostilities by non-state armed groups lies solely with such groups. In the prevention of underage military recruitment, the government would collaborate with the ethnic armed groups which have signed the NCA (Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement). The latter shall also have a duty to apply at all times the principles governing international humanitarian law'.

The Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland considers that this declaration seeks to restrict Myanmar's obligations under Article 4(2) of the Optional Protocol and amounts to a reservation incompatible with the object and purpose of the treaty. The Government of the United Kingdom therefore objects to the aforesaid reservation.

This objection shall not preclude the entry into force of the Optional Protocol between the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Republic of the Union of Myanmar."

Notifications

(Unless otherwise indicated, the notifications were made upon ratification, accession or succession.)

Notes:

¹ For the Kingdom of Belgium. Further, on 23 June 2003, the Government of Belgium informed the Secretary-General that it had decided to withdraw its declaration made upon signature. The declaration reads as follows:

This signature is equally binding on the French community, the Flemish community and the German-speaking community.

² With the following territorial exclusion:

"... consistent with the constitutional status of Tokelau and taking into account the commitment of the Government of New Zealand to the development of self-government for Tokelau through an act of self-determination under the Charter of the United Nations, this acceptance shall not extend to Tokelau unless and until a Declaration to this effect is lodged by the Government of New Zealand with the Depositary on the basis of appropriate consultation with that territory."

³ In a communication received on 20 February 2008, the Government of China informed the Secretary-General of the following:

In accordance with provisions of article 153 of the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the

People's Republic of China, and of article 138 of the Basic Law of the Macao Special Administrative Region, the Government of the People's Republic of China decides that the ratification shall apply to the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and the Macao Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China.

⁴ With a territorial exclusion with respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland. Further, on 23 January 2004, the Government of Denmark informed the Secretary-General that it had decided to withdraw its territorial exclusion with regard to the Faroe Islands and Greenland made upon ratification. See also note 1 under "Denmark" in the "Historical Information" section in the front matter of this volume.

⁵ See note 1 under "Montenegro" in the "Historical Information" section in the front matter of this volume.

⁶ On 5 February 2020, the Secretary-General received from the Government of the Republic of Montenegro a notification of its decision to modify the following declaration made upon succession:

"The Republic of Montenegro hereby declares that in accordance with article 3, paragraph 2, the Government of the

Republic of Montenegro does not impose mandatory military service. The minimum age at which Montenegro will permit voluntary recruitment into its national armed forces shall be 18 years. This provision is already prescribed in the Bill on Defence and Bill on the Army of the Republic of Montenegro, which are currently in the procedure in the Montenegrin Government.”

⁷ On 29 April 2014, the Secretary-General received from the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland the following notification:

“... the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland wishes the United Kingdom's Ratification of [the Optional Protocol] be extended to the territory of the Bailiwick of Jersey for whose international relations the United Kingdom is responsible.

The Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland considers the extension of [the Optional Protocol] to the Bailiwick of Jersey to enter into force on the date of receipt of this notification by [the Secretary-General] for deposit ...”

⁸ On 4 November 2020, the Secretary-General received the following notification from the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland:

“... the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland hereby extends the application of the United Kingdom's Ratification of the [...] Optional Protocol [...] to Guernsey and Alderney for whose international relations the United Kingdom is responsible.

The Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland considers the extension of the [...] Optional Protocol [...] to Guernsey and Alderney to enter into force on the date of receipt of this notification...”

⁹ On 14 April 2023, the Secretary-General received the following notification from the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland:

“... the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland hereby extends the application of the United Kingdom's Ratification of the [...] [Optional Protocol] [...] to the Crown Dependency of the Isle of Man, a territory for the international relations of which the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland is responsible.

The Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland considers the extension of the [...] [Optional Protocol] [...] to the Crown Dependency of the Isle of Man to take effect on the date of deposit of this notification...”

¹⁰ On 13 November 2008, the Government of the Republic of Chile informed the Secretary-General that it had decided to amend the declaration made upon ratification to the Protocol which reads as follows:

"The Government of Chile states that, in accordance with its domestic law, the minimum age for the voluntary recruitment of

persons into its national armed forces is 17 or 18 years, and on an exceptional basis persons who have attained 16 years of age and meet certain criteria may participate in such programmes for shorter periods with the prior approval of the Director-General of the General Directorate for National Mobilization of the Ministry of National Defence and with the due consent of the parents or legal guardians."

¹¹ On 18 November 2010, the Government of the Republic of Guyana notified the Secretary-General that it had decided to withdraw its declaration made upon accession. The declaration reads as follows:

“The Government of the Republic of Guyana hereby declares that under the Defence Act 15:01 Section 18(2), as amended, the age of recruitment into the national armed forces is eighteen years. Eighteen years is the age of adulthood under the laws of Guyana.

Recruitment is permitted between the ages of 14 and 18 years but must be with the consent of the parent or legal guardian.

Guyana does not practice conscription or any other form of forced or obligatory military service.

The Government of Guyana has adopted the following safeguards to ensure that recruitment is not forced or coerced:

(i) Recruitment is carried out by public advertisement and an open entrance examination;

(ii) Selection of Recruits is done by a Recruitment Board comprising Defence Force members and Government representatives;

(iii) Persons are not recruited without the reliable proof of age;

(iv) Before recruitment, persons are fully briefed on the duties and responsibilities involved in military service;

(v) Persons recruited have the option of withdrawing from military service after three years or before if the circumstances are extenuating;

(vi) Persons recruited undergo a full and rigorous medical examination.”

¹² Upon ratification, the Government of Japan made the following declaration:

“In accordance with article 3, paragraph 2 of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, the Government of Japan declares as follows:

The Government of Japan, by relevant laws and regulations, recruits only those who are at and above the minimum age of 18 as a member of the Japan Self-Defense Forces, with the exception of the cases of the students solely receiving educational training at the schools within the structure of the Japan Self-Defense Forces (hereinafter referred to as "the Youth Cadets"), which come under "schools" stipulated in Article 3, paragraph 5 of the Optional Protocol.

The minimum age of recruitment of the Youth Cadets is 15 years.

In Japan, the safeguards to ensure that the recruitment of the Youth Cadets is not forced or coerced are as follows:

1. In accordance with the provisions of the Law on the Japan Self-Defense Forces (Law No 165/1954), the recruitment of personnel of the Japan Self-Defense Forces including the Youth Cadets is required to be based upon examination or selection, and it is prohibited to use such measures as threat, compulsion and similar means with the intention of realizing unjust recruitment of the members.

2. Further, in recruiting the Youth Cadets, the following shall be confirmed beforehand in accordance with the Instruction on the recruitment of the students of the Japan Self-Defense Forces (Japan Defense Agency Instruction No 51/1955).

(1) Either the person who executes the parental authority over a Youth Cadet or his/her guardian gives consent to the recruitment.

(2) The candidate for a Youth Cadet is fully informed of the duties to be involved in advance.

(3) A proof of the age of the Youth Cadets for being at or over 15 years is provided by a certifying document."

¹³ On 25 January 2013, the Secretary-General received from the Government of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg a modification of the following declaration made upon ratification:

The Government of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg declares that, in accordance with article 3 of the Protocol, the minimum age at which voluntary recruitment to the army of Luxembourg shall be permitted is 17 years.

The following principles shall be observed in recruiting persons aged 17 years:

1. Recruitment shall be on a voluntary basis.

2. Voluntary recruits under the age of 18 must have the written consent of their parents or legal guardian.

3. Voluntary recruits under the age of 18 may not take part in the following military operations:

(1) At the national level:

(a) The defence of the Grand Duchy's territory in the event of armed conflict.

(2) At the international level:

(a) Contributing to the collective or common defence within the framework of the international organizations of which the Grand Duchy is a member;

(b) Taking part within such a framework in humanitarian and evacuation missions, peacekeeping missions, and combat missions for crisis management, including peacemaking operations.

4. Voluntary recruits shall be fully informed, prior to their recruitment, of the duties connected with military service.

5. Voluntary recruits may withdraw from their military service at any time.

¹⁴ On 28 May 2013, the Government of the United Mexican States notified the Secretary-General of its decision to withdraw the following interpretative declaration made upon ratification of the Convention:

In ratifying the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 25 May 2000, the Government of the United Mexican States considers that any responsibility deriving therefrom for non-governmental armed groups for the recruitment of children under 18 years or their use in hostilities lies solely with such groups and shall not be applicable to the Mexican State as such. The latter shall have a duty to apply at all times the principles governing international humanitarian law.

¹⁵ See note 2 under "Netherlands" in the "Historical Information" section in the front matter of this volume.

¹⁶ Upon ratification, the Government of Paraguay made the following declaration: in accordance with the relevant national and international legal norms, it has been decided to establish the age of sixteen (16) years as the minimum age for voluntary recruitment into the armed forces. Moreover, the measures adopted to permit voluntary recruitment will be in conformity with the principles laid down in article 3, paragraph 3 of the Optional Protocol.

In a communication received on 22 March 2006, the Government of Paraguay informed the Secretary-General that it had decided to replace the original declaration made upon ratification. The declaration took effect for Paraguay on 22 March 2006, i.e. the date of its receipt.

¹⁷ On 28 June 2013, the Government of the Republic of Poland notified the Secretary-General of its decision to modify the following declaration made upon ratification of the Convention:

The Government of the Republic of Poland, with the regard to article 3, paragraph 2 of the Protocol, declares that:

1. under the Polish law the minimum age in the case of obligatory recruitment of the Polish citizens into the national Armed Forces is eighteen (18) years.

2. under the Polish law the minimum age for the voluntary recruitment of the Polish citizens into the national Armed Forces is seventeen (17) years. Joining the Polish Armed Forces is really voluntary and a candidate is obliged to show a special document certifying the date of his/her birth. Moreover the consent of the person's parents or legal guardians is required before the admission to the service.

¹⁸ With regard to the declaration formulated by the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic upon accession, the Secretary-General received on 18 July 2005, the following communication from the Government of Israel:

"The Government of the State of Israel has noted that the instrument of ratification of the Syrian Arab Republic of the

above-mentioned Protocol [...], contains a declaration with respect to the State of Israel.

The Government of the State of Israel considers that such declaration, which is explicitly of a political nature, is incompatible with the purposes and objectives of the Protocol.

The Government of the State of Israel therefore objects to the aforesaid declaration made by the Syrian Arab Republic."

¹⁹ On 29 July 2004, the Secretary-General received from the Government of Cyprus, the following communication with regard to the declarations made by Turkey upon ratification:

"The Government of the Republic of Cyprus has examined the declaration made by the Government of the Republic of Turkey to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict, (New York, 25 May 2000), on 4 May 2004, in respect of the

implementation of the provisions of the Optional Protocol only to the States Parties which it recognizes and with which it has diplomatic relations.

In the view of the Government of the Republic of Cyprus, this declaration amounts to a reservation. This reservation creates uncertainty as to the States Parties in respect of which Turkey is undertaking the obligations in the Protocol and raises doubt as to the commitment of Turkey to the object and purpose of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and of the said Protocol. The Government of the Republic of Cyprus therefore objects to the reservation made by the Government of the Republic of Turkey to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict.

This reservation or the objection to it shall not preclude the entry into force of the Convention on the Rights of the Child or the future entry into force of the said Protocol between the Republic of Cyprus and the Republic of Turkey."