

INTERNAL AUDIT DIVISION I
OFFICE OF INTERNAL OVERSIGHT SERVICES

TO: Mr. William Swing
A: Special Representative of the Secretary-General
MONUC

DATE: 22 November 2005

REFERENCE: AUD-7-5:7(/05) 00252

FROM: Patricia Azarias, Director
DE: Internal Audit Division-I, OIOS

SUBJECT: **OIOS Audit No. AP2005/620/03: MONUC Child Protection Programme**
OBJET:

1. I am pleased to present herewith our final report on the above-mentioned audit, which was conducted in June and July 2005.
2. We note from your response to the draft report that MONUC has generally accepted the recommendations. In order for us to close out the recommendations, we request that you provide us with the additional information as discussed in the text of the report and a time schedule for their implementation. Please note that OIOS will report on the progress made to implement its recommendations, particularly those designated as critical (i.e. recommendations 1, 2 and 3) in its annual report to the General Assembly and semi-annual report to the Secretary-General.
3. IAD is assessing the overall quality of its audit process, and kindly requests that you consult with your managers who dealt directly with the auditors and complete the attached client satisfaction survey.
4. I take this opportunity to thank the management and staff of MONUC for the assistance and co-operation provided to the auditors in connection with this assignment.

I. INTRODUCTION

5. OIOS conducted an audit of the Child Protection Programme (the Programme) in MONUC in June and July 2005. The audit was conducted in accordance with the standards for the professional practice of internal auditing in the United Nations organizations.
6. The term 'child protection', as used in the report, means protection of children from violence, abuse and exploitation. In its simplest form, child protection addresses every child's right not to be subjected to harm. It complements other rights that, *inter alia*, ensure that children receive what they need in order to survive, develop and thrive. Child protection is a special

problem in situations of emergency and humanitarian crisis such as existing in DRC. Such situations may result in large number of children becoming orphaned, displaced or separated from their families, abducted or forced to work for armed groups, disabled as a result of armed conflict or trafficked for military purposes or for prostitution and pornography.

7. The Child Protection Section spearheads the Child Protection Programme in MONUC in line with Security Council Resolutions 1261 (1999) and 1314 (2000) that recommended employment of child protection advisers in peacekeeping operations, where appropriate. The overall objectives of the Programme in MONUC are to:

- (i) Contribute to the improvement of children's rights, and to strengthen child protection with a particular focus on children affected by armed conflict;
- (ii) Ensure that child protection issues are integrated into all MONUC's programmes and that staff adopt a child-conscious approach to their work;
- (iii) Ensure child protection issues is given priority within the transition process;
- (iv) Ensure that MONUC support child protection-related activities of United Nations agencies and Non Governmental Organizations (NGO); and
- (v) Advocate for proper behavior of MONUC staff towards children.

8. The section has its main office in Kinshasa with 8 sector offices in Beni, Bunia, Bukavu, Goma, Kalemie, Kisangani, Lubumbashi, and Mbuji-Mayi. The staff use uniform operational guidelines.

9. The comments made by the Management of MONUC on the draft audit report have been included in the report as appropriate and are shown in italics.

II. AUDIT OBJECTIVES

10. The main objectives of the audit were to assess the:

- (i) Efficiency and effectiveness of operations of the Programme;
- (ii) Adequacy of reporting relating to the Programme; and
- (iii) Compliance with United Nations and Mission guidelines relating to child protection.

III. AUDIT SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

11. The audit covered the two-year period from July 2003 to July 2005 and was conducted in Kinshasa, Goma, Bukavu and Bunia. It included review of documentation, interviews with key staff and observation of selected activities.

IV. OVERALL ASSESSMENT

12. The Child Protection Programme in MONUC is contributing to improvement in children's rights and strengthening child protection in the DRC in line with the United Nations and Mission guidelines. The programme has been well integrated in the Mission's programmes and reporting and monitoring mechanisms have been put in place. The staff shortage in the Child Protection Section is adversely affecting the effectiveness of the programme.

V. AUDIT FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Child Protection Programme performance

13. The MONUC Child Protection Programme's main achievements include the following:

(i) Integration of child protection issues into other Mission programmes like Disarmament, Demobilization, Repatriation, Resettlement and Reintegration (DDRRR), Human Rights, and Rule of Law;

(ii) Spearheading advocacy against exploitation of minors by MONUC staff. Child Protection Section was involved in deterring sexual exploitation by MONUC staff by circulating the code of conduct and awareness briefings before a dedicated unit was created;

(iii) Development of effective working relationship with other child protection partners in the country. Regular and *ad hoc* meetings were held with child protection partners and DRC Government. On 14 June 2005, OIOS witnessed a Child Protection staff facilitate the release of 80 children associated with the 13th Brigade (ex-Mai Mai), including two girls, in Nyabiondo-Goma. A verification team composed of Save the Children, National Commission for Disarmament Demobilization and Re-integration of Ex Combatants of the DRC (CONADER) and local partners interviewed each child to ensure that they were less than 18 years old and had been associated with an armed group. The children were subsequently transported to Goma and split amongst 3 Centres for Transition and Orientation (CTOs) supported by UNICEF and Save the Children and managed by local partners;

(iv) Facilitation of withdrawal of children from armed groups – 9,000 children reported to have been withdrawn from January 2004 to March 2005;

(v) Assisting in transportation of children to transit centers and to communities for reunification;

(vi) Participation in designing, printing and distribution of sensitization material on children associated with armed conflict;

(vii) Contribution towards raising awareness of prosecution of child recruiters. In May 2005, the *Chef de l'Etat Major* (a high ranking military officer in DRC army) issued orders to all military commanders not to recruit or have children in their groups or face prosecution;

(viii) Documentation of cases of children in detention and following up cases of child rights abuses. In 2003-04, the section conducted 498 investigations (66% more than budgeted) into individual cases of killings, abductions, sexual violence and minors in conflict with the law;

(ix) Lobbying for the protection of children in the draft constitution of the DRC; and

(x) Raising public awareness of risks of exploitation of children in elections.

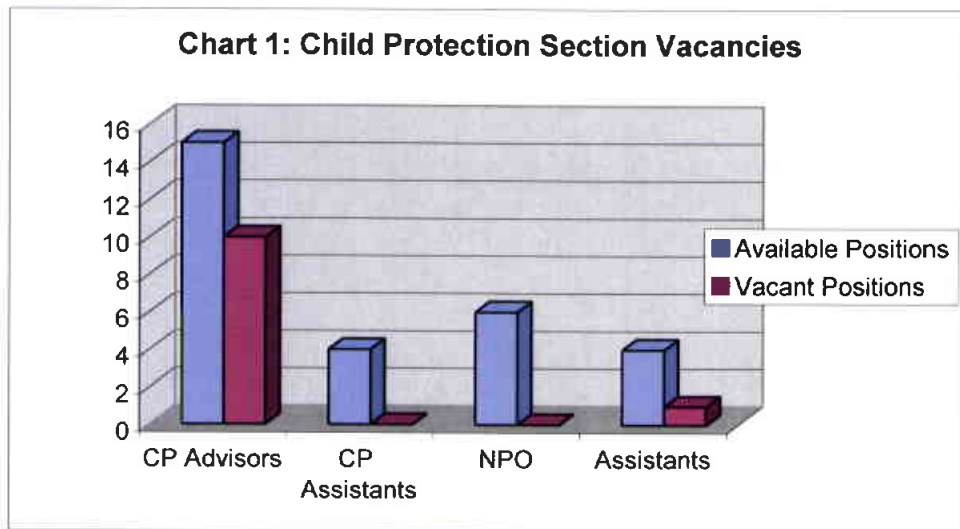
14. A DPKO cable indicated that an OIOS team that visited MONUC in 2003 was "highly impressed" with the integration of child protection issues in the mission and observed that it "could serve as a model for other peacekeeping mission". The "Comprehensive assessment of the United Nations system response to children affected by armed conflict" report of the Secretary-General presented at the 59th session also noted the positive approach by MONUC on the issue.

15. While OIOS noted the positive work by the mission in the Child Protection Programme, some opportunities for improvement exist in the areas of staff recruitment, quantification of objectives, record keeping, provision of physical security orientation for staff, and under-utilization of Radio Okapi for promoting programme objectives. These areas, together with our recommendations for improvement are detailed in the report.

B. Staff constraints

16. Security Council resolution 1355, article 35 calls for ensuring "sufficient deployment of Child Protection Advisors (CP Advisors) to ensure consistent and systematic monitoring and reporting on the conduct of the parties to the conflict as concerns their child protection obligations under humanitarian and human rights law and the commitment they have made to the SRSG for Children and Armed Conflict". Therefore, the Child Protection Section should have adequate staff to fulfill its role and mandate.

17. The Section had severe staff constraints. As at 23 May 2005, there were 11 staff vacancies in the Section as shown in Chart 1.



18. As can be seen in Chart 1, CP Advisors, a critical category of staff, was the most affected with 67 % positions going unfilled. Two CP Advisor positions for Kinshasa were vacant. United Nations Volunteers, instead of CP Advisors, run two of the three sector offices audited. In the 2004 budget, new sector offices were created in Kananga, Kindu, and Mbandaka but the posts remained unfilled due to difficulties in recruitment. The DPKO's review mission to MONUC from 26 July to 8 August 2002 also highlighted the matter hence the problem was long outstanding.

19. The Child Protection Section explained that vacancies were caused by staff turnover, new positions created, and long delays in the recruitment process. Management was particularly concerned with the recruitment delays. For example, a CP Advisor position that fell vacant in August 2004 had not been filled by June 2005 – 11 months later. The main problems encountered in recruitment include: delays in advertising vacancies, inadequate coverage of advertisement of vacancies, delays in interviewing candidates, candidates turning down offers, and unavailability of qualified persons in the United Nations Human Resources "Galaxy" roster.

20. The risks of the staff shortage include:

- (i) Critical tasks not being done or being done ineffectively;
- (ii) Available staff resources being over-stretched in trying to carry out additional responsibilities;
- (iii) Non-coverage of key geographical areas; and
- (iv) Important mandate goals and objectives not being achieved.

Recommendation 1

MONUC Management should identify the setbacks in the recruitment of individuals to fill the Child Protection Section posts and take appropriate action to expedite the filling of vacancies as a priority by fixing and adhering to a deadline for each vacancy (AP2005/620/03/01).

21. *MONUC Management accepted recommendation 1 and commented that while there are some things that MONUC management can do, many of the delays were experienced at the New York end of the process. Any deadline to be fixed for filling a vacancy must be discussed with New York. In particular, advertising of vacancies needed to be reviewed.* Recommendation 1 remains open pending receipt of documentation from MONUC showing that vacancies in the Child Protection Section have been filled.

C. Lack of performance indicators for the Programme

22. The Mission has a broad mandate of what the Child Protection Programme should achieve. Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement Article 3c requires “an end to all acts of violence against civilian populations through the respect and protection of human rights”. Security Council resolutions require the United Nations “to assist in the protection of human rights, including rights of children” (Article 5e, Resolution 1279 – 30 Nov 1999), and “to facilitate... human rights monitoring, with particular reference to vulnerable groups including women, children and demobilized soldiers” (Article 7g Resolution 1281 – 24 February 2000).

23. As a good management practice, the mandate should be translated into specific, preferably quantifiable, objectives, with measurement criteria, covering key activities of the Programme.

24. The Child Protection Section prepared comprehensive annual plans for 2003-04 and 2004-05 that stated the overall and specific objectives of the Programme supported by activities to be done with expected indicators. However, the objectives were not quantified. For example, the plan covered children associated in armed groups but did not specify the targeted number of meetings to be held with military, political authorities and civil society to advocate the end of child recruitment or a specific target of children associated with armed conflict to be transferred to transit centers. The objectives also did not have any time limits for execution.

25. The Section Management explained that most of the work done could not be meaningfully translated into quantifiable indicators and that qualitative indicators were more relevant. Furthermore, the section worked with other parties that made timing of planned activities difficult.

26. While OIOS agrees with management that qualitative indicators play a big role in the work of child protection, it also considers that management could benefit by quantifying, where possible, their operational targets in the annual plans as is done in the Results Based Budgeting (RBB).

27. In the absence of measurable performance indicators, it becomes difficult for management to assess if set objectives and targets have been achieved or if the Programme is operating efficiently or not. OIOS considers that such an effort to develop measurable performance indicators would add value to the work being done by the management. It would provide the Programme management with effective tool to monitor the progress of the Programme as a whole and also for each location where day-to-day supervision is not easy. The risks of inadequate specification of objectives include: difficulties in performance measurement, evaluation and reporting; and inadequacy of monitoring mechanisms to ensure achievement of objectives.

Recommendation 2

MONUC Child Protection Section should develop performance indicators for the Programme and adopt them for regular monitoring and evaluation of the Programme's performance and effectiveness (AP2005/620/03/02).

28. *MONUC Management agreed with recommendation 2 and indicated that the Mission was in the processes of developing better tracking tools for activities and compiling statistics. However, Management also pointed out that statistical data on number of meetings, number of investigations, number of training programmes (as included in the RBB) will not in itself be useful in assessing whether all that had to be achieved has been achieved or the programme is operating efficiently or not. For example, one of the principle aims of child protection work was to change behavior to improve respect for child rights. Therefore, further thought needed to be given developing meaningful indicators to measure the impact on behavior, particularly with regard to sensitization and advocacy activities where there is little political will to change in the short term.* While noting these constraints, OIOS considers that performance indicators are critical and should be developed. Recommendation 2 remains open pending receipt of confirmation by MONUC that the tracking tools and performance indicators have been developed.

D. Non-maintenance of records in line with annual plan

29. According to the 2004/05 Child Protection Programme plan, the sector offices should keep records relating to operational activities undertaken. The main activities include:

- (i) Integration of child protection into MONUC programmes;
- (ii) Legal and social protection of children;
- (iii) Institution building;
- (iv) Documentation of patterns of abuse/impunity;
- (v) Addressing the rights of minors in conflict with the law;
- (vi) Support for victims;
- (vii) Ending recruitment of children into armed groups with families and communities;
- (viii) Demobilization, reinsertion, re-integration of children affected with armed conflict;

- (ix) Protection needs of children in armed group; and
- (x) Raising awareness of child rights.

30. The section planned to keep operational records like activity dates, location, workshop participants; armed groups dealt with, workshop participants, statistics, nature of complaints received, prison – police station visited, and case outcomes.

31. In June 2005, the Child Protection offices in Goma, Bukavu and Bunia monitored and reported on the activities in daily, activity, and statistic reports to Kinshasa. Such reports from all sector offices provided continuous analysis of child related activities for management attention and action where necessary. The offices had not then implemented the detailed record keeping as indicated in the annual plans because of time constraints due to staff shortages. Furthermore, the templates designed for weekly and monthly statistics were based on word processing and not spreadsheets that could have extended analytical capabilities.

32. The non-maintenance of detailed record keeping could have adverse effects such as:

- (i) Critical data not being stored for future reference. For example, lessons learnt on what worked and what did not work might not be supported with reliable data;
- (ii) Inaccuracy or untimely reporting of activities done in particular periods because of difficulties in retrieving data;
- (iii) Inability to compare the plan with actual achievement; and
- (iv) Weaker accountability framework.

Recommendation 3

MONUC Child Protection Section should design spreadsheet templates that each of its offices should use to record operational data on all segments of their planned activities as an ongoing function (AP2005/620/03/03).

33. *MONUC management agreed with the recommendation and indicated that they would be developing better tracking tools for operational activities and compiling statistics.* Recommendation 3 remains open pending confirmation by MONUC that the standardized tracking tools have been developed and are being used.

E. Inadequate security briefing

34. All staff are obliged to undertake an online security course and receive security briefing in Kinshasa before being allowed to work in the field. As an additional security measure, armed MONUC soldiers escort staff on assignments to risky areas.

35. OIOS noted that the Child Protection Staff were not given practical security orientation in readiness for the security risks faced and on how to react appropriately in an emergency. For example, on 14 September 2004, a militia group ambushed two Child Protection staff, under Pakistan Battalion security escort, in Bunia. The staff were returning from a mission in Nizi when the militia fired at the convoy. Staff remained in the car for 10 minutes, unsure of what to do, while gunfire was being exchanged. The Pakistan soldiers did not give orders to staff in English or French.

36. Security Section explained that it was certain that staff needed appropriate security briefings and training and “unfortunately most of our staff do not take the time to undertake the mandatory on-line security training, which provides a solid basis.” Furthermore, the existing security training staff of two officers in Kinshasa was inadequate for regular training. The section had recently developed a priority-training program to strengthen the capacity of Security Officers deployed throughout the Mission.

37. Staff making trips into areas with the presence of armed groups, such as Child Protection officers, are exposed to avoidable security risks such as kidnapping, injury or loss of life.

Recommendations 4 and 5

MONUC Security Section should:

- (i) Provide special briefing to staff assigned to undertake missions in higher-risk areas, such as in locations where armed groups are known to be present, before departing for such mission (AP2005/620/03/04); and
- (ii) Ensure that security escorts to staff on mission to high-risk areas speak either English or French (AP2005/620/03/05).

38. *MONUC Management agreed with recommendations 4 and 5 and observed that security training had improved considerably in the previous three years although there was room for strengthening it.* Recommendations 4 and 5 remain open pending receipt of documentation from MONUC showing that they have been implemented.

F. Under-utilization of Radio Okapi

39. The Child Protection Programme works towards increasing awareness of children’s rights in the DRC. The media is an important means of raising awareness.

40. Radio Okapi, a radio station jointly run by MONUC and Fondation Hironnelle, is a national radio network based in Kinshasa. It also has 8 local stations in Bukavu, Kindu, Bunia, Mbandaka, Kisangani, Goma, Kalémie, and Lubumbashi and plans to open in Mbuji Mayi. The station broadcasts in French and local languages.

41. The station covers, among other things, child related news. The Child Protection Section also facilitates other partners' access to the radio station to highlight child issues. However, despite identifying the radio as a useful tool, the section was not able to use it for regular programmes because of shortage of staff to work on the programmes.

42. The under-utilization of the radio is an opportunity being lost to efficiently and effectively promote children's rights.

Recommendation 6

MONUC Child Protection Section should run regular child programmes on Radio Okapi as soon as the vacant posts in the Section are filled (AP2005/620/03/06).

43. *MONUC Management accepted recommendation 6 stating that it was aware of the underutilization of all public information possibilities, not just Radio Okapi, and it is something the Child Protection Section consciously wants to develop once they have greater resources in Kinshasa. Management also suggested that the recommendation should be directed to Public Information.* OIOS is of the opinion that the Child Protection Section should take the initiative for broadcasting child programmes in cooperation with Public Information. Recommendation 6 remains open pending receipt of documentation from MONUC showing that it has been implemented.

VI. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

44. We wish to express our appreciation to the Management and staff of MONUC for the assistance and cooperation extended to the auditors during this assignment.

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