

New York, June 9 2011

Two senior United Nations officials today welcomed Pakistan's ratification of an international treaty that prohibits the sale of children and bans child prostitution and child pornography, making it mandatory for States to end the sexual exploitation and abuse of children.

Pakistan has become the 144th country to ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography.

*"The ratification of this Optional Protocol marks a significant milestone in the efforts to protect children from sexual exploitation in Pakistan. This is also part of a global effort to bring the international community together in the fight against the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography,"* said Dan Rohrmann, the Representative of the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) in Pakistan.

Welcoming the ratification, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children, Marta Santos Pais, said: *"I salute this solemn commitment by Pakistan to criminalize these serious child rights violations, to protect child victims and witnesses and to fight impunity within and across borders."*

The protocol places special emphasis on protecting the rights and interests of child victims, requiring governments to provide legal and other support services. This obligation includes considering the best interests of the child in any interactions with the criminal justice system. It obliges governments to also provide the necessary medical, psychological, logistical and financial support to aid the child victim's social reintegration.

*"Pakistan was an early leader in the international community's commitment to defending the rights of children around the world, ratifying the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in 1990,"* said Mr Rohrmann.

The Optional Protocol is an important adjunct to the CRC adopted by the General Assembly in 2000. It supplements the convention by providing States with detailed requirements to end the sexual exploitation and abuse of children. It also protects children from being sold for non-sexual purposes, such as other forms of forced labour, illegal adoption and organ donation.

*"With this important development, the international community is moving increasingly closer to the universal ratification of the optional protocol. This is a goal I am committed to promoting, as part of the global campaign launched in May 2010 with the Secretary-General, in cooperation with UNICEF and other UN partners,"* said Ms. Santos Pais.

Source: [UN News Centre](#)