

NEW YORK, 12 July 2011 – UNICEF welcomes the United Nations Security Council's unanimous adoption of Resolution 1998, which recognizes schools and hospitals as safe havens for children. The resolution calls for all parties that attack such facilities to be held accountable.

"These horrific attacks are not only a violation of international and humanitarian law, they are a violation of our common humanity," said Anthony Lake, UNICEF Executive Director. "Today, the Security Council has taken a major step toward ending the culture of impunity and protecting children at their most vulnerable."

The new resolution recognizes attacks against schools and hospitals as a grave violation of children's rights. It also calls for the perpetrators of such violence to be listed in the Secretary-General's annual report on Children and Armed Conflict.

The annual report already lists those parties which commit grave violations, including recruitment and use of children in conflict; killing or maiming of children; and rape or other forms of sexual violence against children.

In at least 31 countries in Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Middle East, schools have become the target of violent attacks or threats by both state security forces and non-state armed groups.

Such attacks have devastating consequences on children's lives and on their communities, weakening education and health systems and potentially deepening deprivations and disparities.

The resolution calls for parties listed as violators to develop action plans to address these attacks, and to put an end to child recruitment and other grave violations.

The list of violating parties has grown over the last year, and while a few parties have signed

action plans to address violations, no parties were de-listed in 2010.

Beyond strengthening the legal framework for addressing these violations, greater effort should be focused on providing children with a protective environment that includes programmes and services to help them overcome their experiences.

“These remarkably resilient children don’t need our pity; they need the protection of international law and they need practical support – programmes designed to help them reach their full potential and to make a positive contribution to their societies.”

About UNICEF

UNICEF is on the ground in over 150 countries and territories to help children survive and thrive, from early childhood through adolescence. The world’s largest provider of vaccines for developing countries, UNICEF supports child health and nutrition, good water and sanitation, quality basic education for all boys and girls, and the protection of children from violence, exploitation, and AIDS. UNICEF is funded entirely by the voluntary contributions of individuals, businesses, foundations and governments. For more information about UNICEF and its work visit: www.unicef.org

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