

**Evaluation of the Offices of the
Special Representatives
of the Secretary-General for
Children and Armed Conflict,
for Sexual Violence in Conflict,
and on Violence against Children**

29 March 2018

Assignment No: IED-18-005



Inspection and Evaluation Division

FUNCTION

“The Office shall evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of the implementation of the programmes and legislative mandates of the Organization. It shall conduct programme evaluations with the purpose of establishing analytical and critical evaluations of the implementation of programmes and legislative mandates, examining whether changes therein require review of the methods of delivery, the continued relevance of administrative procedures and whether the activities correspond to the mandates as they may be reflected in the approved budgets and the medium-term plan of the Organization” (General Assembly Resolution 48/218 B).

Project team members:

Demetra Arapakos, Chief of Section

Ellen Vinkey, Team Leader

Michael Craft, Team Member

CONTACT INFORMATION

OIOS-IED

Tel +1 212-963-8148 | Fax +1 212-963-1211
ied@un.org

Demetra Arapakos, Chief of Section

Tel +1 917-367-6033
arapakos@un.org

(Eddie) Yee Woo Guo, Director

Tel +1 917-367-3674
guoy@un.org

Executive Summary

The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) examined the relevance and effectiveness of the Offices of the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General (OSRSG) for Children and Armed Conflict (CAAC), for Sexual Violence in Conflict (SVC), and on Violence against Children (VAC) in catalysing change in their respective areas of concern. The evaluation was conducted using a survey, interviews, on-site visits, case studies, direct observation, document reviews and secondary data analyses.

Despite political and operational challenges, as well as their small size, the three OSRSGs have been effective champions in their thematic areas. Member States, United Nations partners, and civil society all agreed that OSRSG high-level political advocacy contributed to sustained global visibility and strengthened global norms. The OSRSGs effectively used their unique position as high-level advocates to consolidate political buy-in for the sensitive issues they addressed.

The OSRSGs also catalysed positive action in the country and regional contexts where they worked; they effectively brokered and facilitated commitments with a range of parties to conflict, which contributed to – for example – the release of children from armed groups, prosecution of high-level conflict related sexual violence perpetrators, and justice reform for children.

While effective overall in utilizing their unique position as high-level advocates for the sensitive issues of CAAC, SVC and VAC, efforts to do this using traditional and social media had mixed results. Pro-active use of press releases and other traditional media channels provided an important avenue for wider public outreach, and global media reporting increased for all three offices over 2014-2017. However, advocacy campaigns did not consistently lead to discernible outcomes, and use of social media was less strategic.

While the three OSRSGs have been effective overall in coordinating and mainstreaming with United Nations partners, their activities in these areas faced challenges. These included a lack of clarity around forms and desired outcomes of OSRSG partner coordination efforts. At times, headquarters inter-agency coordination mechanisms chaired by these offices did not achieve their coordination potential. And, despite effective use as advocacy tools, CAAC and SVC reporting systems lacked coherence, for example, in reporting on a shared violation.

The OSRSGs have not systematically engaged in strategic planning to inform their activities. In some cases, they lacked distinct and discrete strategic plans, and thus did not adequately identify where and how to focus limited resources. The three offices also did not sufficiently coordinate amongst themselves, although in those instances when they did, positive outcomes resulted.

OIOS makes five important recommendations to the three OSRSGs to:

- (a) Enhance their communication strategies;
- (b) Strengthen their respective headquarters coordination task forces;
- (c) Continue to develop options for incorporating lesson learning mechanisms into their work programmes;
- (d) Introduce regular risk assessment and strategic planning into their work programmes; and,
- (e) Enhance coordination and cooperation between the three offices.

Table of contents

I. Introduction	1
II. Background	1
III. Methodology	3
IV. Evaluation Results	4
A. Despite their broad mandates and small size, the three OSRSGs for Children and Armed Conflict, Sexual Violence in Conflict, and Violence against Children have been effective champions in their respective thematic areas.....	4
B. All three offices have catalysed positive action in most countries and regions where they have worked through high-level political advocacy	7
C. While the three offices have been effective overall with regard to coordinating and mainstreaming with United Nations partners, their activities in these areas have faced challenges.....	10
D. Despite being used as effective advocacy tools, reporting on CAAC and SVC has faced potential risks related to unclear roles and responsibilities and lack of coherence	13
E. The OSRSGs have not systematically engaged in strategic planning to inform their activities, including planning around possible synergies between the three offices	15
V. Conclusion	17
VI. Recommendations	18
VII. Annex – Management Responses	20

I. Introduction

1. The Inspection and Evaluation Division (IED) of OIOS identified for evaluation, on the basis of a risk assessment, the OSRSGs for CAAC, SVC, and VAC. The Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC) selected the programme evaluation of the Executive Office of the Secretary-General (EOSG), including these OSRSGs, for consideration at its 57th session in June 2017.¹ Due to differences between the OSRSGs and the balance of EOSG functions, OIOS conducted a separate evaluation of the three OSRSGs.²

2. The general frame of reference for OIOS are General Assembly resolutions 48/218B, 54/244, 59/272, and ST/SGB/273, which authorize OIOS to initiate, carry out and report on any action that it considers necessary to fulfil its responsibilities. The Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation provides the reference for OIOS evaluation.³

3. The evaluation objective was to assess the relevance and effectiveness of the three OSRSGs in catalysing change in their respective areas of concern. The evaluation topic emerged from the scoping described in the evaluation inception paper,⁴ and was conducted in conformity with norms and standards for evaluation in the United Nations.⁵

4. Comments from the three OSRSGs were sought on the draft report and considered in the final report. Formal OSRSG responses are annexed.

II. Background

5. The OSRSGs have distinct thematic mandates established over the last two decades:

- **OSRSG/CAAC** – The General Assembly recommended in 1996 ([A/RES/51/77](#)) a SRS/CAAC to: assess progress and challenges in strengthening the protection of children in conflict; raise awareness and promote the collection of information; work with the Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC), relevant United Nations bodies, and non-governmental organizations; and, foster international cooperation to ensure respect for children’s rights.
- **OSRSG/VAC** – The General Assembly requested in 2007 ([A/RES/62/141](#)) a SRS/VAC to: act as an independent global advocate for promoting the prevention and elimination of all forms of VAC; promote and support implementation of the 2006 VAC study recommendations; identify and share good practices and develop more comprehensive data collection on VAC; and, collaborate with United Nations partners, Government, and external partners including civil society.
- **OSRSG/SVC** – The Security Council requested in 2009 ([S/RES/1888](#)) a SRS/SVC to: provide coherent and strategic leadership; strengthen existing United Nations coordination mechanisms; engage in advocacy efforts with Governments, parties to armed conflict and civil society; and, promote cooperation and coordination of efforts among relevant stakeholders to address

¹ Report of the CPC, Fifty-fifth session, A/70/16, June 2015.

² OIOS informed the CPC in April 2016.

³ [ST/SGB/2016/6](#).

⁴ IED-17-002.

⁵ United Nations Evaluation Group, 2016.

SVC. The office also includes the Team of Experts (TOE) established by S/RES/1888 to assist national authorities to strengthen the rule of law with respect to accountability for SVC, which includes experts from the co-lead entities Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

6. The SRSs have a direct reporting line to the Secretary-General. The SRS/CAAC and SRS/SVC are Under-Secretaries-General and SRS/VAC is an Assistant Secretary-General. Staffing levels are shown in Table 1.

Table 1:
Regular budget staffing, 2016-17

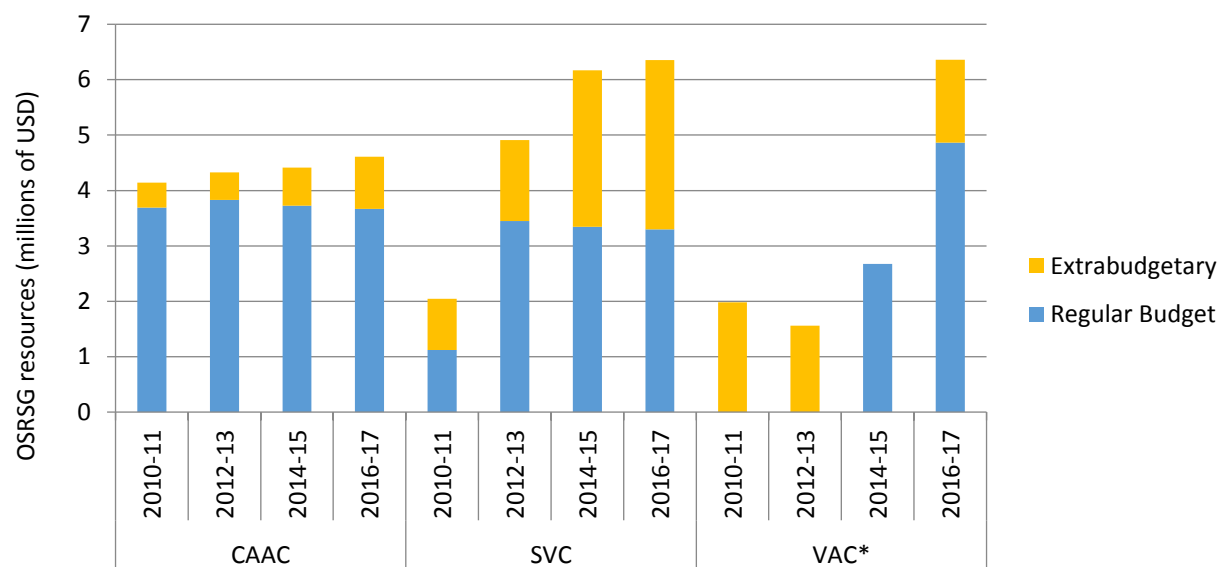
Category	OSRSG		
	VAC	SVC*	CAAC
USG		1	1
ASG	1		
D-1		1	
P-5	1	1	1
P-4	3	1	2
P-3	3	2	3
GS/PL	1		1
GS/OL	1	2	2
Total	10	8	10

*The office has 6 XB-funded posts

Source: A/70/6 (Sect. 1)

7. Figure 1 shows OSRSG financial resources increased over the last four biennia. Extrabudgetary (XB) funding has been an important funding source for OSRSG/SVC and OSRSG/VAC; the latter was approved for RB funding in 2014-15.

Figure 1:
OSRSG financial snapshot, 2010-17



*Over the 2010-13 period, OSRSG/VAC was entirely XB-funded

Source: Biennial budget fascicles and financial statements

8. The OSRSGs are mandated to facilitate inter-agency cooperation in the United Nations system, including: United Nations Headquarters Task Force on CAAC (HQTF/CAAC) chaired by the SRS/CAAC; the United Nations Inter-Agency Working Group on VAC (IAWG/VAC) chaired by the SRS/VAC; and UN Action against SVC (UN Action) chaired by the SRS/SVC. The SRS/VAC also chairs the United Nations Task Force on Children Deprived of Liberty supporting the development of a global study on this topic.

III. Methodology

9. This evaluation focused on the following questions:
- i. What role has each OSRSG played in their respective fields, and how has this role differed from other United Nations entities and key stakeholders working on the same issues?
 - ii. How effectively has each OSRSG advocated on their respective issues of concern?
 - iii. How effectively has each OSRSG coordinated with other United Nations entities working on the same issues?
 - iv. How effectively have the OSRSGs contributed to the mainstreaming of their focus issues into the work programmes of other United Nations entities?
 - v. To what degree have the OSRSGs contributed to the achievement of results in their respective areas of concern?
10. As the General Assembly mandate for this evaluation covered all three OSRSGs, OIOS assessed the key activities of each office individually, as well as across the offices at a broader thematic level. The evaluation primarily covers the period from 2014-2017. This evaluation defines: advocacy as raising awareness and catalysing positive change around their respective issues of CAAC, SVC and VAC; coordination as bringing together and working with different entities to address their respective issues; and mainstreaming as bringing their respective issues into the agendas and work programmes of other entities.
11. Data collection was undertaken between July and December 2017. Evidence was derived from triangulation of documentary, testimonial, observational and analytical sources collected through quantitative and qualitative methods, including:
- **Interviews** with OSRSG staff (39) and Headquarters stakeholders (15);
 - **Case studies** of eight countries/regions where OSRSGs have been active based on field visits (3), interviews (103) and document reviews;⁶
 - **Missions** to Colombia, Indonesia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC);
 - **Survey** of all Member States and a non-random sample of OSRSG stakeholders;⁷
 - **Document review** of evaluations, audits, policies, office reports, Headquarters coordination mechanisms, and senior compacts;
 - **Media analysis** of online news and social media using Crimson Hexagon in partnership with UN Global Pulse; and,
 - **Direct observation** of selected OSRSG and intergovernmental meetings.
12. Additionally, an external advisory panel, comprised of two expert consultants, reviewed the inception and draft reports.
13. The evaluation faced limitations of a low Member State survey response rate and methodological considerations of using social media as a proxy indicator of OSRSG outreach and engagement. To mitigate against these limitations, all analyses were triangulated with data from multiple sources to strengthen the evaluation results.

⁶ Case studies included: OSRSG/SVC (DRC, Guinea and Iraq); OSRSG/CAAC (Colombia, Myanmar and Central African Republic); OSRSG/VAC (Latin America and Southeast Asia).

⁷ The survey was sent to 287 stakeholders, with 127 respondents for an overall response rate of 44 per cent, including individuals (46 percent response rate) and Member States (7 percent response rate).

IV. Evaluation Results

A. **Despite their broad mandates and small size, the three OSRSGs for Children and Armed Conflict, Sexual Violence in Conflict, and Violence against Children have been effective champions in their respective thematic areas**

The offices have operated with broad mandates and limited resources

14. The OSRSGs were established in recognition of serious gaps in addressing protection and human rights concerns and as expressions of the will of the international community to do better; their mandates were thus created broadly to allow the offices flexibility to respond on a global scale. Their geographic scope varied: OSRSG/VAC covered all forms of violence against children, in all settings and in all countries where children are affected by violence; OSRSG/SVC covered 19 country situations in 2017, including conflict and crisis situations where there was credible information;⁸ and OSRSG/CAAC covered 22 country situations of armed conflict in 2017 where children were exposed to grave violations.⁹

15. For 2016-17, the offices were allotted between US\$ 3-5 million regular budget funding with about 10 staff to implement mandates of large substantive and geographic breadth. Their resource allocations were arguably low relative to other United Nations special mandate-holders with comparable functions. As a result, a limited number of OSRSG staff covered large geographic areas: for example, one OSRSG/VAC staff member covered all of sub-Saharan Africa and two to three OSRSG/CAAC staff covered all of sub-Saharan Africa plus Colombia. All three offices indicated that requests for support often exceeded office capacity, and country partners in most case studies (6 of 8) expressed demand for more OSRSG visits and other activities, while recognising the offices were already thinly spread across their respective portfolios.

The offices have been effective in promoting and sustaining global visibility for their respective issue areas

16. Interviewed and surveyed United Nations, OSRSG, civil society and Member State representatives agreed that the offices acted as effective global advocates for their respective issue areas. Ninety-three percent of surveyed stakeholders rated advocacy work of the offices positively overall, and most noted the greatest value of the offices was to raise awareness and increase visibility. Within United Nations intergovernmental fora, Member States expressed strong support for office mandates and commonly stated their specific commitment to addressing related issues, including in open debate sessions of the Human Rights Council, the Security Council and the General Assembly.

The three offices have contributed to strengthening global norms and standards

17. The OSRSGs effectively worked through intergovernmental channels to propagate norms in their respective areas; Table 2 illustrates specific OSRSG contributions. The offices also facilitated, together with their partners, the publication of United Nations system-wide standards in their respective areas. In one case, OSRSG/CAAC and OSRSG/VAC worked in tandem to support ratification by Member States of the CRC Optional Protocols.

⁸ [S/2017/249](#) indicates many countries not in the report are affected by the threat, occurrence or legacy of conflict-related sexual violence.

⁹ [A/72/361-S/2017/821](#) stresses information is indicative and not representative of all violations.

Table 2:
Examples of OSRSG contributions to global norms and standards*

Key area of contribution	OSRSG		
	CAAC	SVC	VAC
Non-recruitment of children into government security forces			
Thematic resolutions adopted by the Security Council related to Conflict-Related Sexual Violence (CRSV) ¹⁰			
Prohibition of state parties listed in SG annual reports on CAAC and CRSV as troop contributing countries			
Model Strategies on the Elimination of Violence against Children in the Field of Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice			
Inclusion of VAC into SDG agenda, including target 16.2			
Ratifications and signatories to CRC Optional Protocols ¹¹			

*Areas of contribution are shaded.

Sources: Case studies, OSRSG senior compacts, and interviews

While traditional media channels provided an important avenue for wider public outreach, efforts to leverage social media have not been strategic

18. OSRSGs made proactive use of traditional media channels, such as press releases, interviews and official statements, to increase awareness of their work and to advocate for their respective issues at the global and national levels. Global media reporting increased for all three offices over 2014-2017. In the top 30 online newspapers, OSRSG/CAAC and OSRSG/SVC were mentioned most frequently, followed by OSRSG/VAC.¹² High media interest around the Secretary-General annual report listing of CAAC and SVC violations indicated that the process contributed to sustaining global visibility around the issues. Engagement with the Department of Public Information (DPI) United Nations News Centre allowed for broadcasting of messages to wider channels; both OSRSG/SVC and OSRSG/CAAC effectively used this medium.¹³

19. The OSRSGs also used social media such as Twitter and Facebook, but less strategically. First, OSRSG communications strategies lacked social media performance measurements beyond basic static counting of followers, which has limited their capacity to adapt their respective approaches in an evidence-based manner.¹⁴ Second, offices did not have a plan for how to proactively engage target audiences through social media linked to other OSRSG advocacy activities, resulting in missed opportunities to reach a wider global audience. Table 3 shows variable performance for the analysed office accounts across several social media metrics.

¹⁰ Including most recently [S/RES/2331\(2016\)](#).

¹¹ Across the three CRC Optional Protocols, there have been 8 signatories and 51 ratifications since 2014 (United Nations Office of Legal Affairs, 01 March 2018).

¹² Between 2014-17, top 30 online newspapers published: 103 articles (mentioning OSRSG/SVC); 91 (OSRSG/CAAC), and 28 (OSRSG/VAC). List not exhaustive.

¹³ Estimated stories related to offices over 2014-17: OSRSG/SVC = 96; OSRSG/CAAC = 82; OSRSG/VAC = 15.

¹⁴ Two offices had indicators on social media followers in planning documentation: OSRSG/VAC budget fascicle A/70/6; OSRSG/CAAC communications strategy.

Table 3:
Selected OSRSG social media metrics*

Area / metric	OSRSG ¹⁵		
	CAAC	VAC	SVC
Activity			
Twitter posts, 2014-17	3,788	3,389	2,813
Twitter posts per week (average), 2014-17	18	16	14
Voice and reach			
Twitter share of voice (of relevant posts in thematic area)	0.25%	< 0.01%	~3%
Twitter impressions	200m	123m	61m
Engagement			
Twitter followers	38,212	5,922	43,804
Twitter follower increase (per cent), 2014-17	65%	636%	93%
Twitter retweets, 2014-17	13,659	52,601	4,362
Twitter replies, 2014-17	728	249	281
Twitter mentions, 2014-17	45,813	19,262	24,918
Facebook page "likes"	15,699	4,321	33,858
Facebook followers	15,720	4,293	33,325

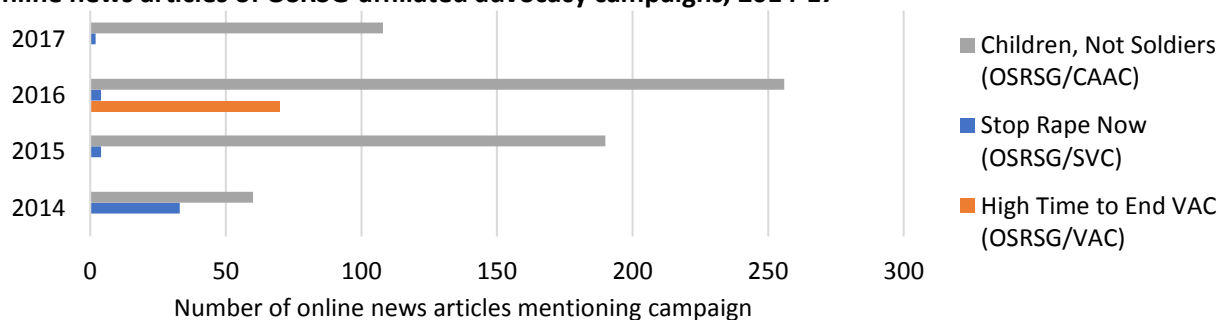
*Data as of 08 Feb 2018, unless indicated; multiple accounts combined for OSRSG/VAC and OSRSG/SVC

Source: Twitter, Facebook and Crimson Hexagon

Campaigns and mobilization initiatives had mixed results based on targeted objectives and partner synergies

20. Outcomes related to OSRSG advocacy campaigns, whose media coverage is shown in Figure 2, was uneven. Through clear objectives and strong partnering, OSRSG/CAAC effectively co-led the “Children, Not Soldiers” campaign with the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), which stimulated all eight countries targeted to sign action plans for ending recruitment of children into armed forces by 2016. The office integrated its campaign messaging into overall advocacy activities, focused the campaign objectives on one grave violation, and leveraged its institutional partnership with UNICEF, allowing “Children, Not Soldiers” to gain broad visibility with Member States and the wider public.

Figure 2:
Online news articles of OSRSG-affiliated advocacy campaigns, 2014-17¹⁶



Source: Crimson Hexagon (Jan 2014-Sept 2017)

¹⁵ Accounts analysed: @childreninwar; @childrenandarmedconflict; @UNAction; @endrapeinwar; @SRSRVAC; @ZerViolence2030; @martasantospaispage.

¹⁶ Data not exhaustive.

21. However, OSRSG/SVC and OSRSG/VAC campaign and mobilization initiatives have not led to discernible outcomes nor significant public visibility over 2014-17. The OSRSG/SVC managed initiative, “Stop Rape Now,” was launched in 2007 by UN Action members and later subsumed by the office. While the campaign website continues to be updated minimally, there were no known activities over the evaluation period. OSRSG/SVC attributed this primarily to a lack of human resources. Thirty-one percent of surveyed stakeholders (10 of 32) indicated fair or poor management of OSRSG/SVC campaigns and events. Regarding OSRSG/VAC, the office launched its “High Time to End VAC” multi-stakeholder initiative in 2016. Almost all interviewed stakeholders familiar with the initiative questioned how OSRSG/VAC activities fit together with those of the “Global Partnership to End VAC”, which UNICEF supports administratively, since both share the same goals.¹⁷ Both stakeholders and office staff also indicated poor conceptualisation of the “High Time to End VAC” initiative.

B. All three offices have catalysed positive action in most countries and regions where they have worked through high-level political advocacy

The offices have facilitated achievement of national and regional commitments to address violence against vulnerable groups

22. The OSRSGs effectively brokered and facilitated commitments and agreements with parties to conflict as well as with regional entities, as illustrated in Table 4. Such political dialogue led to concrete actions to release children from armed groups, pursue accountability for emblematic cases of CRSV, and adopt regional plans to address VAC. For example, as noted in the OSRSG/CAAC 20-year anniversary report, over 115,000 child soldiers have been released since 2000 because of dialogue and Action Plans that the OSRSG/CAAC has led.¹⁸ The investigation and prosecution of high-level CRSV perpetrators advanced with sustained OSRSG/SVC support in selected country contexts, such as DRC and Guinea. In addition to Table 4 results, OSRSG/VAC and OSRSG/SVC contributed to policies, guidelines and strategies of partner regional entities. Overall, 88 percent of surveyed stakeholders stated the offices played a positive catalytic role in stimulating action by multiple actors; 93 percent rated them positively in facilitating political commitments.

**Table 4:
OSRSG facilitated and/or supported political commitments and agreements, 2014-17¹⁹**

Country/ Region	Agreement (year)	Entity type	
		Non-state actor	Govern- mental
OSRSG/CAAC			
Arab States	Cooperation Agreement (2014)		
Yemen	Action Plan (2014)		
South Sudan	Action Plan (2015)		
	Action Plan (2016)		
DRC	Roadmap to accelerate Action Plan implementation (2015)		
Sudan	Joint Statement on Situation of Children in Darfur (2015)		
	Action Plan (2016)		
	Action Plan (2016)		

¹⁷ The OSRSG/VAC serves on both the Executive Committee and Board of the Global Partnership.

¹⁸ OSRSG/CAAC (2016).

¹⁹ Based on: (1) active OSRSG support, and (2) demonstrated public Member State commitment. Other agreements were established before 2014. For brevity, full names of parties not included.

Nigeria	Action Plan (2017)		
Mali	Action Plan (2017)		
OSRSG/SVC			
South Sudan	Joint Communiqué (2014)		
	Communiqué (2014)		
Africa	Framework of Cooperation (2014) – ICGLR		
	Framework of Cooperation (2014) – AU		
Cote d’Ivoire	Action Plan (2014)		
Mali	Communiqué (2017)		
Iraq	Joint Communiqué (2016)		
Arab States	Framework of Cooperation (2016)		
OSRSG/VAC*			
Global	Annual joint statements of the role of regional organizations/institutions (2014-17)		
Latin America	Declaration on Violence against and Exploitation of Children (2014)		
	Resolution on Children and Adolescents (2014)		
Southeast Asia	Regional Plan of Action (2015)		
Africa	Agenda for Children 2040 (2016)		
South Asia	Implementation of SDGs relating to Ending VAC (2016)		

*Regional agreements involving OSRSG/VAC were generally supported by national action plans

Source: OSRSG websites, data request and case studies

23. System-wide efforts to strengthen the United Nations response to CAAC, CRSV and VAC, including through child and women’s protection posts in mission contexts, were essential to achieving and implementing such agreements. United Nations partners with operational mandates – particularly the DPKO, Department of Political Affairs (DPA), OHCHR, UNDP and UNICEF – laid the groundwork for OSRSGs to engage in high-level dialogue. The Security Council played an active complementary role in mandating instruments in the CAAC and CRSV areas, including the: listing of parties in the Secretary-General annual reports; Security Council Working Group on CAAC; and Security Council Informal Expert Group on Women, Peace and Security. The Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM) for CAAC and the Monitoring, Analysis, and Reporting Arrangements (MARA) for CRSV were effective advocacy instruments regarding grave violations against children and patterns of sexual violence.

24. Given the cross-border nature of several conflicts on their respective agendas, and as a core part of their mandates, OSRSG/CAAC and OSRSG/SVC additionally took a regional and sub-regional approach to establishing political agreements. As indicated in Table 4, OSRSG/SVC reached cooperation agreements with organizations in Africa and the Arab States, including the League of Arab States, African Union, and International Conference of the Great Lakes Region. The office established these partnerships along with implementation plans with shared advocacy objectives. In addition to activities in Table 4, OSRSG/CAAC and OSRSG/SVC have continued ongoing cooperation with several organizations based on agreements reached prior to 2014-17.

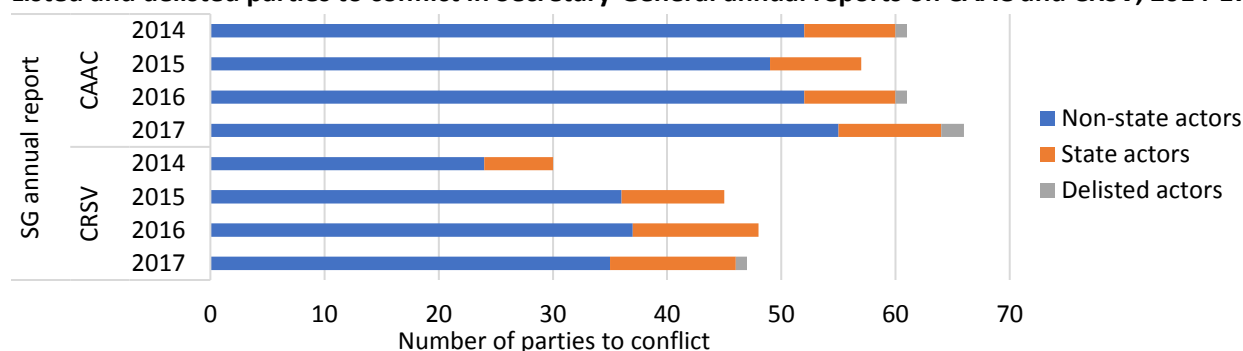
25. The OSRSG/VAC contributed to policy outcomes as reflected in commitments by a wide range of actors.²⁰ At the regional and sub-regional levels, the office initiated and participated in forums with regional organizations, Member States, civil society organisations, government officials, and children that were perceived as helping to catalyse political will and elevate critical issues such as bullying and detention

²⁰ According to OSRSG/VAC, since the beginning of its mandate countries with a comprehensive legal ban on all forms of VAC increased from 16 to 54 and countries with a national agenda on VAC increased from 47 to over 90.

of children. The office successfully led cross-regional forums that assembled like-minded intergovernmental institutions. Such results were achieved through sustained engagement following a consultative process with partners that capitalised on the regionally oriented implementation of the recommendations of the 2006 VAC Global Study.²¹ In selected countries, its work around specific advocacy and policy dialogue goals precipitated government commitments, including: promotion of legislative reforms and national plans of action on VAC; development of VAC data surveys in Africa and Asia; and justice reform regarding children in Latin America. OSRSG/VAC research and related publications were seen by stakeholders as strong components of this advocacy work.

26. While the precise roles of OSRSG/CAAC and OSRSG/SVC in promoting compliance of country-level agreements were not clearly defined, their engagement faced significant political and operational challenges. Delisting of parties to conflict from the Secretary-General annual reports constitutes one means by which to assess whether such commitments have been successfully implemented. As shown in Figure 3, four cases of delisting were achieved from 2014-17. All related case studies of OSRSG/CAAC and OSRSG/SVC indicated that constraining factors to delisting more parties included the gravity and complexity of the conflict, including the characteristics of implicated non-state actors and strength of institutional partnerships in country. OSRSG staff noted the lack of capacity, including OSRSG and field-level specialists, as an additional constraining factor.

Figure 3:
Listed and delisted parties to conflict in Secretary-General annual reports on CAAC and CRSV, 2014-17



Source: Secretary-General annual reports on CAAC and CRSV (2014-17)

High-level advocacy with Member States has been a critical tool for both creating and sustaining interest, as well as for pushing for change in sensitive areas

27. The SRSOs effectively used their unique position as high-level advocates to consolidate political buy-in for the sensitive issues they addressed. Ninety-three percent of surveyed stakeholders rated the offices positively in conducting advocacy with Member States, and almost all interviewed OSRSG staff (32 out of 34) considered advocacy as their most effective area of work compared to mainstreaming and coordination. This was performed through bilateral engagement and “Group of Friends” arrangements at headquarters and country levels; the latter was most proactively organised under the CAAC thematic umbrella to facilitate regular and structured engagement with Member States.

28. Advocacy efforts targeted at government decision-makers brought greater visibility to the issues. Almost all case studies (7 of 8) indicated the offices responded to requests of United Nations partners to

²¹ A/61/299.

undertake advocacy to address political blockages to progress in their respective thematic areas. For example, OSRSG/VAC responded to UNICEF requests and through subsequent advocacy helped to elevate VAC issues on national policy and legislative agendas. In Colombia, both OSRSG/CAAC and OSRSG/SVC worked at the request of United Nations country teams to engage in peace negotiations over 2014-2016, supporting the integration of child protection and CRSV concerns into the process. Such examples demonstrated strong complementarity between OSRSG global advocacy and United Nations system programme mandates.

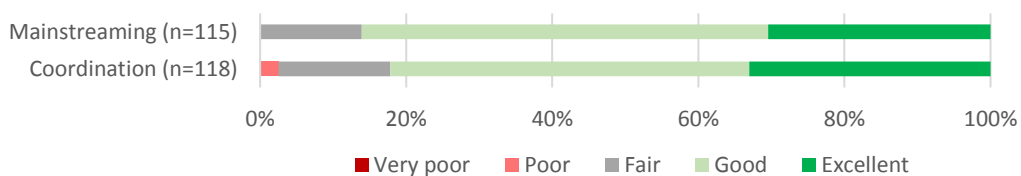
C. While the three offices have been effective overall with regard to coordinating and mainstreaming with United Nations partners, their activities in these areas have faced challenges

OSRSG roles in coordinating with their United Nations partners were not always clearly defined, with some related challenges

29. The OSRSG mandates reference coordination with other United Nations entities, although their emphasis varies: OSRSG/CAAC is required to “foster cooperation”; OSRSG/SVC is required to “promote cooperation and coordination; and OSRSG/VAC should “work closely and cooperate with” and “establish a mutually supportive collaboration” with United Nations entities.²² These broad mandates have necessitated clarity around the forms and desired outcomes of OSRSG coordination and collaboration efforts, which has at times been lacking. None of the eight case studies resulted in an assessment of ‘high’ clarity of OSRSG roles; six of eight were assessed as having ‘moderate’ clarity, and one ‘low’.

30. Overall stakeholder and staff ratings for OSRSG coordination and mainstreaming activities were generally positive, as shown in Figures 4 and 5. However, approximately one-quarter of staff interviewed (10 of 39) expressed some concern that working relationships with their United Nations partners needed strengthening, noting these partners were often primarily focused on their own defined programmes of work. In most case studies, OSRSG fostering of coordination and collaboration with other United Nations actors was determined to be ‘somewhat effective’ (5 of 8), while one was deemed ‘somewhat ineffective’. And, in half of the case studies (4 of 8), OSRSG mainstreaming work was ‘somewhat effective’, with two case study analyses resulting in an assessment of ‘somewhat ineffective’.

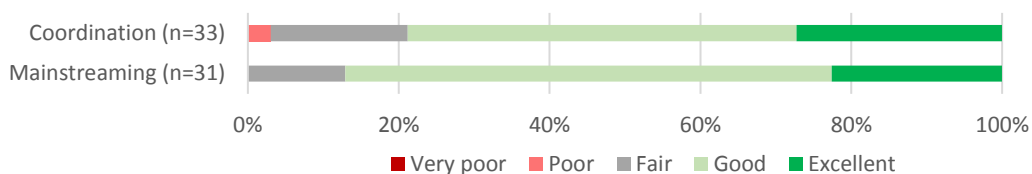
**Figure 4:
Stakeholder ratings on OSRSG coordination and mainstreaming work**



Source: Stakeholder survey

²² A/RES/51/77; A/RES/1888; A/RES/62/141.

Figure 5:
Staff ratings on OSRSG coordination and mainstreaming work



Source: OSRSG staff interviews

Headquarters coordination task forces have had some limitations

31. Each office chairs, or co-chairs, a headquarters inter-agency coordination task force, which have been utilized to varying degrees, shown in Table 5.

Table 5:
OSRSG Headquarters task forces

OSRSG	Primary coordination body	United Nations members	Meeting information		
			Frequency (avg.)	Participation (avg.)	Agenda items
CAAC	HQTF/CAAC	16	2 / year	Director-level staff or higher from 17 partners	Discuss draft CAAC annual reports and related issues
SVC	UN Action	13	7 / year	Technical-level staff from 10 partners	Prepare/debrief for country missions; discuss endorsement of SG Annual Reports
			1-2 / year	Director-level Steering Committee	
VAC	IAWG/VAC	6	1 / year	Technical/high-level staff with 4 partners	Discuss VAC-related developments and opportunities for UN partners to advance and mainstream VAC in the UN agenda

Source: Task Force meeting notes, 2014-17

32. OSRSG partners identified several limitations associated with these task forces and suggested areas for improvement. Regarding UN Action, it has in recent years become more oriented to sharing information than to coordination, with the exception of ongoing joint projects under the auspices of the UN Action Multi-Partner Trust Fund. All OSRSG/SVC Headquarters United Nations partners interviewed who had familiarity with UN Action indicated that it was thus not achieving its coordination potential. Observation of a recent UN Action working-level meeting corroborated this feedback: while significant engagement and information-sharing was observed, the meeting did not sufficiently address how two different OSRSG missions to the same country would be coordinated. OSRSG/SVC indicated that effectiveness was adversely affected because focal points of UN Action were only able to dedicate 20 percent of their time to the network.²³ Regarding the HQTF/CAAC, stakeholders noted that its narrow focus on coordination related to the OSRSG/CAAC annual report was necessary and useful, but did not facilitate broader and on-going coordination among United Nations partners working on the same issue. Finally, as noted in

²³ The recently appointed SRS/SVC has indicated a desire to re-invigorate the UN Action network, including mobilization of more principal level participation.

Table 5 above and based on a review of meeting notes, the frequency of and participation in IAWG/VAC meetings was limited.

Coordination with country and regional level United Nations partners has also been challenging

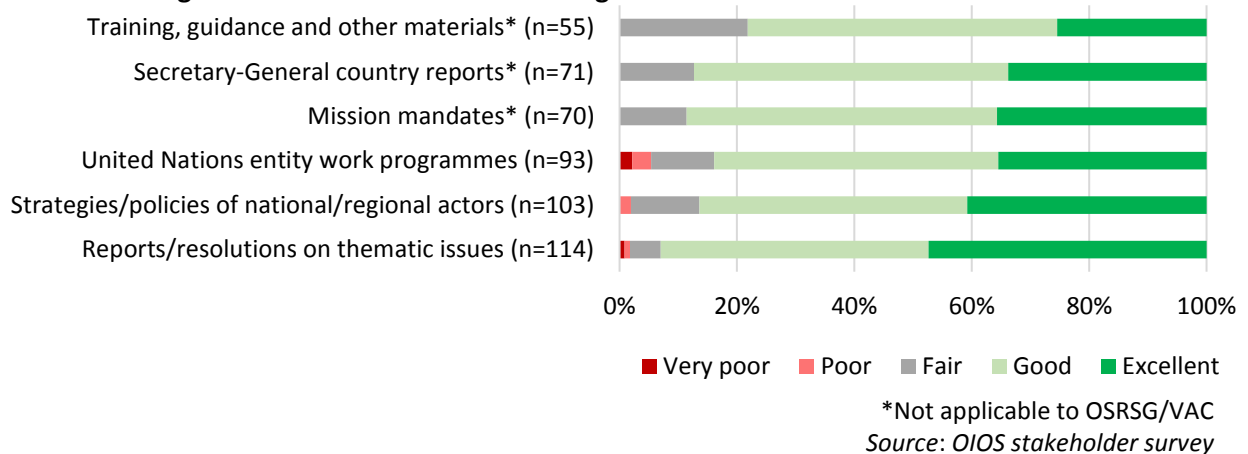
33. A key coordination challenge at the country and regional levels was the need to clarify, and achieve mutual agreement on, OSRSG roles and responsibilities in relation to United Nations partners in the field. Of eight case study locations, none was assessed as having ‘high’ alignment and complementarity between the OSRSGs and other United Nations entities; seven were assessed as having ‘medium’ alignment’, and one ‘low’. In addition, some stakeholders interviewed in the field and some stakeholder survey respondents noted the need for greater coordination by the OSRSGs.

34. While there was consistent OSRSG focus at the country and regional levels on supporting operationalization of Member State commitments to prevent grave violations and end violence, changing circumstances led to variation in the types of coordination activities undertaken in the eight case studies. Most coordination work in the three CAAC case study countries was performed through the CAAC Country Task Forces on Monitoring and Reporting (CTFMRs); examples of variation around coordination activities included the degree of OSRSG/CAAC leadership in negotiations with governments and non-State actors and the level of detail at which the office supported drafting, operationalization and monitoring of agreements, including action plans. In the three OSRSG/SVC case study countries, coordination usually occurred through the TOE and included engagement on project-specific activities such as fact-finding missions and engagement with national governments. Coordination in the two OSRSG/VAC case study regions centered around joint advocacy work and policy dialogue to promote mainstreaming of VAC in regional and national agendas.

While mainstreaming work at headquarters and regional levels facilitated integration of priority areas into the work of partners, it faced some challenges with United Nations partners

35. The OSRSGs supported integration of their respective thematic areas into the work of United Nations entities at headquarters level and regional organizations. OSRSG/CAAC and OSRSG/SVC aimed to integrate their priority areas into policy, guidance, training, peacekeeping or special political mission mandates, and other activities within the peace and security area. All three offices often provided inputs into the resolutions and reports of United Nations intergovernmental bodies. Stakeholders surveyed indicated general effectiveness of this work, shown in Figure 6, and considered it useful in keeping a spotlight on these issues within both the United Nations system and with partners. For example, most OSRSG/CAAC and OSRSG/SVC case studies indicated supportive advocacy around budget and post allocations for related protection functions in mission settings, as well as mandate renewals. OSRSG/VAC was recognized for its critical role in mainstreaming VAC as a distinct concern into the SDG agenda.

**Figure 6:
Stakeholder ratings related to OSRSG mainstreaming work**



36. Nevertheless, OSRSG/CAAC and OSRSG/SVC staff identified ongoing challenges to institutionalizing effective mainstreaming, particularly with United Nations partners. Most OSRSG/CAAC and OSRSG/SVC staff (16 of 29) indicated internal factors negatively affecting this work, including changes in staff, leadership and policy. United Nations partners were also less positive in their assessment of OSRSG mainstreaming across most categories compared to the other stakeholder survey respondent groups aggregated in Figure 6; the largest gaps were in training/guidance and entity work programmes, both of which were rated 16 percent less positively by United Nations partners. Staff from all three OSRSGs noted that responsibility for achieving results in mainstreaming did not rest solely with them but also depended on the active cooperation of entities with which they mainstreamed.

D. Despite being used as effective advocacy tools, reporting on CAAC and SVC has faced potential risks related to unclear roles and responsibilities and lack of coherence

MRM and MARA reporting have been successfully used for advocacy

37. As noted in paragraph 23, the MRM and MARA reporting systems have been useful instruments in supporting the OSRSGs in undertaking their critical advocacy roles.

Organizational roles and responsibilities associated with the MRM system were clearer than those associated with the MARA system

38. In all three OSRSG/CAAC case studies, the MRM system had achieved a high degree of maturity. Almost all stakeholders interviewed who provided information on the MRM system deemed this reporting mechanism to be effective overall. Respective roles and responsibilities, both between Headquarters OSRSG/CAAC staff and country-level members of the CTFMR, were reported to be clearly documented; stakeholders interviewed in Colombia and the Central African Republic, in particular, noted that data collection responsibilities were understood in a consistent manner across United Nations partners.

39. There was more variation regarding the MARA system across the three OSRSG/SVC case studies, due in part to its more nascent development. A fundamental challenge was the lack of an institutionalised partner to anchor and coordinate its establishment and functioning at the country level. While UNICEF or

relevant peacekeeping missions consistently coordinated MRM data collection at the country-level, responsibility to coordinate MARA varied across different settings and led to a lack of clarity and consistency. In Colombia, stakeholders who provided information on MARA deemed this reporting mechanism less effective than MRM. Responsibility for country-level CRSV data compilation was assigned to a designated sub-group of the gender-based violence cluster; interviews with members of this group and other United Nations partners indicated that there was not sufficient clarity on respective roles and responsibilities. In DRC, some stakeholders interviewed cited gaps in understanding among relevant parties on how MARA data were reported and coordinated between United Nations partners. Thirty-two percent of OSRSG/SVC stakeholder survey respondents rated the coordination of field monitoring data either 'fair' or 'poor', compared to eighteen percent of OSRSG/CAAC survey respondents giving similar low ratings. Due to the multitude of field and headquarter-based entities with some form of responsibility, inherent coordination challenges exist with both these monitoring systems.

Coherence between the two reporting systems on a shared violation, as well as with other United Nations systems reporting on related issues, has been somewhat lacking

40. Due to differing methods and standards, the data produced by the MRM and MARA reporting systems in some instances lacked coherence, which posed potential reputational risk for the United Nations if not adequately explained.²⁴ A review of data for the one violation type that MARA and MRM had in common over the 2014-2017 period – CRSV cases against children – identified such discrepancies. Out of the ten countries for which both MRM and MARA reported on such incidents, there were three with a higher number of violations reported in MRM than MARA. While the two systems used different methodologies and sources for establishing trends and verifying cases, MARA figures for this shared violation should always exceed MRM figures, as the former includes both child and adult victims.

41. Other United Nations entities were also responsible for reporting related data, notably gender-based violence (GBV) statistics, which included CRSV. Case study and interview data indicated that the different methodologies being employed, including different violation verification criteria, resulted in two sets of CRSV statistics. A Guidance Note on information sharing between MARA and the GBV information management system was prepared under the auspices of UN Action.²⁵ In one case study country, every United Nations partner interviewed that was directly involved in the collection of MARA and/or gender-based violence statistics cited risks related to misinterpretation of these different data sets. Some cited a specific instance where a misinterpretation of these closely related numbers caused confusion regarding the degree to which CRSV had decreased.

Member States have expressed a strong interest for the OSRSGs to share and report on lessons learned

42. Member States have expressed a strong interest for the OSRSGs to play a role in lesson learning and best practices on their respective thematic areas. In several intergovernmental meetings, Member States repeatedly expressed their interest in learning about how other national governments were dealing with comparable issues, such as the development of legislation. None of the three offices had a systematic mechanism in place to identify, store and disseminate such knowledge for improved system-wide programme effectiveness. Some progress on this issue was already underway: OSRG/CAAC reported having started a lesson learning function; OSRSG/SVC identified and documented lessons learned associated with

²⁴ The systems are designed to collect data based on different Security Council mandates.

²⁵ [Provisional Guidance Note \(2016\)](#).

TOE work; and OSRSG/VAC has focused on documenting and sharing lessons learned in its overall advocacy approach through various methods. OSRSG staff added that additional resources would be required to perform this role effectively.

E. The OSRSGs have not systematically engaged in strategic planning to inform their activities, including planning around possible synergies between the three offices

Distinct and discrete OSRSG strategic plans are lacking

43. Strategic planning processes and documentation varied widely across the OSRSGs. As Table 6 indicates, all three performed some planning within the context of the budget process and SRSR senior compacts, but only one developed an annual strategic plan. Furthermore, OSRSGs were exempted from submitting programme performance reports for intergovernmental review, thus increasing the importance of ensuring programme planning for the offices was sufficiently strategic. While two of three offices did have some form of a workplan, these had several shortcomings: the OSRSG/CAAC plan was not up-to-date; the OSRSG/SVC plan did not integrate the work programme of the TOE and UN Action; and neither plan included adequate information on how the office would coordinate and collaborate with their United Nations partners at the country and regional levels.²⁶ Additionally, there was no evidence that risk assessment, which addressed prioritization among competing demands, was undertaken by any of the OSRSGs. This point was also noted by a 2016 OIOS audit of the OSRSG/CAAC, which stated that the office was “informally managing risks” but “needed to prepare and document a strategic plan and perform formal risk assessments.”²⁷ Several interviewed staff from all three offices echoed the need for more systematic and timely strategic planning beyond their core mandated reporting responsibilities.

**Table 6:
OSRSG strategic and work planning processes, 2014-17**

Planning process	OSRSG		
	CAAC	SVC	VAC
Programme budget (biennial)			
SRSR senior compacts (yearly)			
Strategic plan (yearly)			
Work plan (yearly)	*	**	
Risk assessment			

*Available only for 2015-16

**Prepared by: TOE (Joint Programme 2015-19); UN Action (2015-17); and implementation of several regional partnerships (2015-17)

Source: OIOS data request

44. The three offices also lacked standardized OSRSG work plans outlining activities they would undertake at the country and regional levels, although some methods were utilized on an ad hoc basis. OSRSG/SVC had implementation plans with some regional partners related to country-specific Joint Communiqués, and, in case study countries women protection or gender advisors took on some work planning. With regard to OSRSG/CAAC, the MRM Field Manual included information on roles and responsibilities among United Nations partners. OSRSG/VAC worked within the framework of eight regional action plans and related cross-regional roundtables. Nevertheless, detailed country and regional work plans were

²⁶ OIOS notes that some work plans had some information on how OSRSG staff would work with their colleagues in the field.

²⁷ OIOS Ref. 2016/173, pg. 2.

largely missing in the eight case studies. The specific roles of OSRSGs to support governments and/or work with United Nations partners were thus not sufficiently documented.

Inadequate strategic planning, including systematic risk assessment, has resulted in insufficient focus on where and how to use limited resources

45. Given the broad mandates and unmet stakeholder demand associated with the work of the three OSRSGs, as discussed above in paragraph 15, the offices needed to make two critical decisions on where and how to focus their efforts. Yet these decisions have not always been informed by a systematic assessment of risks and needs. This has differed somewhat between the three offices: OSRSG/CAAC office covered 22 geographic situations in 2017; OSRSG/SVC geographic focus covered 19 countries in 2017; and OSRSG/VAC had no restrictions on where to focus geographically due to its global mandate. However, across all three OSRSGs, the determination on how to engage with Member States and United Nations and civil society partners has, at times, been made through a more opportunistic approach. For example, in several cases, OSRSG/VAC engagement with national governments was unplanned and was primarily the result of an opportunity created by another United Nations entity, which led to the invitation by the national government to meet. OSRSG/CAAC reported undertaking several recent planning exercises, but these have not been a regular part of the work planning process.

46. The balance between advocacy and operational work of the three offices has not always been clear. In Colombia, several stakeholders interviewed noted there was insufficient clarity regarding the OSRSG/CAAC role in following up on the recent peace agreement between the government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, an agreement that was reached with critical support provided by the office. Regarding OSRSG/SVC, the issue pertained primarily to the TOE. In all three case study countries assessed, the TOE undertook activities described by most of its United Nations partners as “project-level collaboration” or “operational activities.” While this was within the TOE mandate, stakeholders raised questions about boundaries between TOE and field-based agencies. For example, in Guinea all stakeholders interviewed indicated the TOE worked in a somewhat isolated manner, concentrating its efforts directly on the legal preparations deemed necessary to prosecute SVC cases. This was deemed successful particularly in terms of fostering national ownership. At the same time, stakeholders raised questions regarding the sustainability of such efforts. In Latin American there was no articulated strategy for how OSRSG/VAC intended to operationalize its strategic collaboration with United Nations partners in the field; this collaboration was often demand-driven based on partner advocacy needs. While the approaches described above have enabled flexibility, they have also created several risks, including: duplication with United Nations partners; unclear roles; unmet client expectations; lack of sustainability; and opportunity costs of not engaging in other settings that have unmet needs.

The three OSRSGs have not been sufficiently strategic in the coordination of their own work programmes and working methods

47. Table 7 summarises the areas in which all three offices work, and illustrates their common areas regarding target population, type of violence, and context. In this respect, there is considerable overlap across their mandates.

**Table 7:
OSRSG mandate coverage***

Area	Sub-area	OSRSG		
		CAAC	SVC	VAC
Target population	Children			
	Adults			
Types of violence	Sexual violence			
	Grave violations		**	
	Other forms of violence			
Context	Conflict settings			
	Non-conflict settings		***	

*Areas in which offices work are shaded

**OSRSG/SVC mandate covers one grave violation (i.e. sexual violence against children)

***OSRSG/SVC covers post-conflict and crisis settings

48. The OSRSGs have not adequately planned and coordinated between themselves regarding their respective work programmes, thus missing opportunities for enhanced synergies and efficiencies. In those limited instances where joint planning did occur, positive outcomes have resulted. For example, the aligned initiatives by OSRSG/CAAC and OSRSG/SVC helped to support Colombia peace process negotiations, and joint activities by OSRSG/CAAC and OSRSG/VAC strengthened advocacy for the CRC Optional Protocols. Occasional joint press releases have also helped to further amplify coordination messaging around shared agendas. However, there were no formal mechanisms in place to share information and strategically coordinate around: work plans; SRSRSG visits; media engagement; and Member State and partner engagements. Stakeholders surveyed noted that there was room for greater coordination between the offices, and such coordination was assessed to be limited in all seven case studies where two or more OSRSGs were working.

V. Conclusion

49. The situations of children in armed conflict, sexual violence in conflict and violence against children are, without question, tragic. It was to raise greater awareness around these issues, and to more effectively focus the work of the United Nations in addressing them, that the three SRSRSG positions were created. Despite the relatively small size of their offices, and the enormity of their mandates, all three have been effective champions in their respective thematic areas on the global, regional and national stage.

50. Yet large gaps remain, due as much to factors beyond the control of the three offices – such as their limited budgets and the lack of political will among Member States – as to their own strategies and approaches. As thematic mandate holders, the SRSRSGs cannot be entirely successful without effectively harnessing the strengths and capacities of the larger United Nations system. But for this to occur, partnerships must be strengthened, roles further clarified, and work programmes more closely aligned. The responsibility and accountability for these actions do not rest solely with the three SRSRSGs, but they play a critical and pivotal role as the “guardian” of their respective thematic areas.

51. As advocates, the three offices have successfully strengthened global norms and standards, as well as prompted other United Nations entities to support implementation of those norms and standards on the ground. They have achieved these goals in a complex working environment. Despite the delineation

between non-conflict and conflict settings, these offices have addressed situations in which the fundamental root causes of violence, inequality, and abuse are perpetuated across all settings. Adding a further dimension to the work of the OSRSGs are the changes anticipated with the Secretary-General reform agenda for peace and security.

52. Moving forward, it must be acknowledged that there is overlap between the three offices in the beneficiaries they serve, the environments within which they work, the issues they address, and the goals they wish to achieve. While fully recognizing and appreciating the separate mandates given to each office by Member States, enhanced coordination and cooperation between the three offices could facilitate greater effectiveness and efficiency in the United Nations response to all three issues. This could include joint work planning and additional information sharing in areas of common focus. Such increased cooperation could strengthen the ability of the offices to be strong independent advocates for their respective areas of concern.

53. The three OSRSGs have existed long enough to take stock of their past achievements and look ahead to their future roles. The offices have undoubtedly acted as catalysts for transformational change by inspiring, supporting, and guiding positive action. Their unique value added as the voice of the Secretary-General, with moral authority and expertise, can be further enriched by identifying and capitalizing upon synergies between the three offices. While this evaluation did not review the question of structural efficiency, the three offices should discuss and consider a more integrated approach in order to achieve greater synergies and influence. It is also essential that Member States, who crafted and supported the offices through their mandate renewal process, are consulted on such fundamental issues. This is especially important within the context of ongoing United Nations institutional reform, as well as within the broader framework of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.

54. Considerable progress still needs to be made in addressing the critical issues of children in armed conflict, sexual violence in conflict and violence against children. Progress is reliant on making the right choices for how the three offices will function, the continued strong commitment and hard work of the OSRSGs and their staff, as well as the commitment and resolve of the entire United Nations system.

VI. Recommendations

55. OIOS makes the following five important recommendations to the three OSRSGs:

Recommendation 1 (Result A, paras 18-21)

56. **Enhance their communication strategies** to more effectively share their advocacy messages, taking into consideration the following components:

- Establishment of performance benchmarks for engagement through social media and other communication activities against which to measure results;
- Strengthening of synergies with United Nations media channels, including DPI and partners in the field with in-house communications capacity; and
- For OSRSG/SVC and OSRSG/VAC, formulation of more targeted campaign initiatives.

Indicator of achievement: Revised communications strategies that factor in relevant components above.

Recommendation 2 (Result A, para 21, and Result C, paras 31-32)

57. **Strengthen their respective headquarters task forces**, in consultation with their partners, specifically by:

- For OSRSG/CAAC, assessing the feasibility of enlarging the current narrow focus of the HQTF/CAAC on the annual report to include wider coordination considerations;
- For OSRSG/SVC, identifying and implementing measures to improve UN Action so that it better supports coordination of programme activities; and
- For OSRSG/VAC, ensuring the IAWG/VAC holds frequent and regular meetings with the participation of its members as well as further identifying ways in which the office and the “Global Partnership to End VAC” can mutually support the shared goal of accelerating progress towards SDG 16.2.

Indicator of achievement: Meeting agendas, minutes, follow-up notes and any other relevant documentation demonstrating strengthened coordination function.

Recommendation 3 (Result D, para 42)

58. **Continue to develop options for incorporating lesson learning mechanisms into their work programmes** to collect best practices, including on the work of other United Nations entities and results achieved by national governments. This should take into consideration other related knowledge management platforms such as those housed within DPKO and other United Nations partners.

Indicator of achievement: Plan with options for lesson learning mechanisms.

Recommendation 4 (Result C, paras 33-34, and E, paras 43-47)

59. **Introduce regular risk assessment and strategic planning into their work programmes**, to better target where and how they will engage at the country, regional and global levels. This should also consider the roles of the OSRSGs in relation to their regional and country level United Nations partners, as well as the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.

Indicator of achievement: Development of OSRSG strategic risk assessment and planning mechanisms.

Recommendation 5 (Result E, para 48)

60. **Enhance the coordination and cooperation between the three offices**, taking into consideration the following components:

- Joint work planning, including assessment of possible efficiency gains achieved through joint mission travel;
- Additional information sharing in areas of common focus;
- Collaboration around joint media campaigns and other communication activities; and
- For OSRSG/CAAC and OSRSG/SVC, joint review of opportunities for increased coherence of MRM and MARA data collection and reporting.

Indicator of achievement: Relevant documentation demonstrating enhanced coordination and cooperation, including documentation of joint planning meetings.

VII. Annex – Management Responses

OIOS presents below the full text of comments received from the three OSRSGs on the report. This practice has been instituted in line with General Assembly resolution 64/263, following the recommendation of the Independent Audit Advisory Committee.

Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict



TO: (Eddie) Yee Woo Guo, Director
A: Inspection and Evaluation Division
Office of Internal Oversight Services

DATE: 28 March 2018

REFERENCE: CAAC-2018-20

THROUGH:
S/C DE:

FROM: Virginia Gamba, Under-Secretary-General
Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and
Armed Conflict

SUBJECT: Response to OIOS memo IED-18-00019 regarding the formal draft report of
OBJET: OIOS on the evaluation of the offices of the SRSs for CAAC, SVC and VAC

1. On behalf of the Office of the SRSs for CAAC, I welcome the evaluation report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services. We have appreciated the significant efforts of the evaluation team to research and understand our mandate and to thoroughly assess our activities, including through speaking to our team, UN colleagues, and other stakeholders, and reading extensive documentation. We made every attempt to provide complete information systematically and transparently to the evaluators, and spent significant time ourselves in ensuring we complied fully with all requests.
2. We have appreciated the opportunity to examine our progress over the past several years and welcome the recommendations contained in the report.
3. In particular, we welcome Recommendation 3, which calls on the offices to incorporate lessons learned into their ongoing work. During the reporting period before the report was issued, I created a Lessons Learned and Best Practices Unit in my office. This unit is looking back over 20 years of the CAAC mandate as well as interviewing partners and stakeholders to collate lessons learned globally and draw together best practices, to be shared with colleagues in the field and with a broader audience to further the protection of children. This unit will also institutionalize a lessons learned mechanism that will automatically feed information back into the system to ensure these lessons are constantly applied.
4. As regards Recommendation 1, I would like to underline the extraordinary success that we have had in our communications work during the review period. We carried out a two-year campaign entitled, "Children Not Soldiers," that has been hailed as extremely effective and it catalyzed real change on the ground for children. Through this campaign, we were able to encourage the signature of all eight countries appearing in annexes of the Secretary-General's report on CAAC to sign action plans with the UN to end the recruitment and use of children. Also over the reporting period, our metrics for social media and other platforms multiplied by many times and we were also able to leverage UN-wide platforms to spread the word about children and armed conflict. I am also pleased to report that in the first half of 2018, we will be launching a new global campaign aimed at raising awareness and encouraging action on the entire CAAC agenda.

5. Regarding Recommendations 2 and 4, we are equally supportive. We had reached the same conclusion independently that the HQ task force chaired by CAAC could benefit from a wider agenda to further mainstream this issue into the entities of the task force. This is a recommendation we will be actioning in 2018.
6. On carrying out additional strategic planning and introducing risk assessment into our work program, it would indeed assist my office in most strategically targeting our limited resources. This will also be actioned during 2018. As the OIOS Audit of my office was quoted in the evaluation, it is worth noting some additional relevant conclusions of that audit which was finalized in 2016: “a monitoring and reporting framework on grave violations against children in situations of armed conflict was established and functioning; performance indicators were in place; mechanisms were in place for coordination with other entities/agencies; activities to raise awareness on the plight of children affected by armed conflict were conducted in a manner consistent with the mandate; reports to the Security Council relating to the protection of children in armed conflict were timely and consistent with the approved MRM; risks to achievement of mandate were being managed but had not been formally documented; annual reports to the General Assembly and Human Rights Council were timely and consistent with the Office’s mandate; management of extrabudgetary funds was consistent with Organizational policies.”
7. On Recommendation 5, we agree wholeheartedly that increased cooperation between the three offices, as well as with other relevant entities, could increase our collective efficiency and impact positively on our outcomes. We are in frequent contact with the other two offices specifically, including providing talking points to the other SRSGs when they travel to countries that are on the CAAC agenda and consulting before and after trips to the field. While it is necessary to maintain the unique identities of each of the three mandates in order to have maximum impact, there are certainly more opportunities that could be taken advantage of in the realm of campaigns and communications that we will explore.
8. The coherence of MRM and MARA data collection and reporting is also referred to in sections of the text, including as a header in which the two systems are compared entitled, “Coherence between the two reporting systems on a shared violation, as well as with other United Nations systems reporting on related issues, has been somewhat lacking”. As noted in the text, these two mechanisms have different methodologies, different systems and different mandates, from which one should conclude that two different outcomes could be expected. Therefore, comparing two unique data collection and monitoring systems clouds unnecessarily the measurement of efficiency in the one area of small overlap—namely, the violation of *sexual violence* only for those *under 18* in situations of *conflict*. The way the text reads, specifically at the beginning of paragraph 40, could lead the reader to believe that the two reporting systems overall should aspire to increased coherence between them, and not just on this small area of mandate overlap. During the reporting period, the two offices shared information and data in this area to increase coherence in reporting and to paint the broadest possible picture regarding the violations the offices are mandated to cover. I agree with the report that additional explanation should be supplied regarding this particular issue to reduce potential reputational risk, however, expectations should be realistic in this regard as two separate monitoring systems will not always reflect exactly the same data, even on a small area of overlap.
9. A point that was raised at the beginning of the evaluation process is the usefulness of appearing to compare three offices with separate mandates to each other. As we understand it, the reason the

three are being assessed at the same time is because all appear in section 1 of the biennium budget. As such, the stated objective of the evaluation was: "To assess the relevance and effectiveness of the SRSO offices for CAAC, SVC and VAC in catalyzing change in their respective areas of concern." Such an objective is a welcome and needed opportunity to learn from the past and help plan for the future.

10. While we understand well the constraints in reporting within a certain word count, and therefore amalgamating some common conclusions about three offices makes sense, we found that the overall format of the report could lead a reader to believe that the primary objective of the report is to compare these offices to each other. Additionally, because the descriptions of the three offices' activities are merged in generalized statements in several paragraphs, many nuances between the offices regarding both successes and challenges have been lost. This has led on occasion to an oversimplification of the activities of each office, and more importantly, to a lack of clarity in the text as to which office needs to improve in which area, which makes addressing these concerns more difficult (e.g. paras 30, 33, figures 4, 5, 6). However, we will take on board all comments determined to be relevant to my office and endeavor to make improvements in these areas.
11. Overall, we have appreciated participating in this process as it has sharpened our focus on our work and methodologies. There are several good points of analysis in the report and we will be taking those on board immediately.
12. We thank the evaluation team and OIOS for their dedication to this task and for their efforts to ensure that the report was accurate and as constructive as possible. We look forward to continuing to review the elements of this report as it will help us greatly in our work.

Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Sexual Violence in Conflict


TO: Mr. (Eddie) Yee Woo Guo,
A: Director
Inspection and Evaluation Division
Office of Internal Oversight Services

DATE: 28 March 2018

REFERENCE:

THROUGH:

S/C DE:

FROM: Pramila Patten 
DE: Special Representative of the Secretary-General
on Sexual Violence in Conflict
Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General
on Sexual Violence in Conflict

SUBJECT: **Re: Formal Draft Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the
OBJET: Evaluation of the Offices of the Special Representatives of the
Secretary-General for Children in Armed Conflict, on Sexual Violence in
Conflict, and on Violence Against Children**

1. Further to my memorandum of 23 March 2018, transmitting my Formal Management Response, I here attach a revised response based on discussions between our offices.
2. Thank you again for your cooperation with this exercise.

Best regards.

cc: Mr. Tonderai Chikuhwa, OSRSG-SVC
Mr. David Kanja, OIOS
Ms. Heidi Mendoza, OIOS
Ms. Maria E Munoz, OIOS

FORMAL MANAGEMENT RESPONSE OF THE SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN CONFLICT (SRSG-SVC)

TO THE REPORT OF THE OFFICE OF INTERNAL OVERSIGHT SERVICES ON THE EVALUATION OF THE OFFICES OF THE SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVES OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL FOR CHILDREN AND ARMED CONFLICT, ON SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN CONFLICT, AND ON VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN

INTRODUCTION

1. **My Office acknowledges and accepts, in principle, the five overarching recommendations outlined in the report.** However, we have made a number of qualifying observations and caveats specific to our mandate during oral interviews and consultations throughout the process, as specified in the narrative below. The *Recommendation Plan of Action*, required as part of the implementation process related to this report, also reflects the qualifications and caveats as expressed hereunder.

At the outset of the review process our Office expressed the concern that a simultaneous review covering three complex mandates, to be captured in a single report of 8,500 words, may result in insufficient context, depth of analysis and mandate specificity – it is my view, unfortunately, that this is the case. Therefore, it necessitates this detailed management response that reflects the current state and challenges for the conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) mandate.

CONSIDERATIONS RELATED TO THE QUESTION OF THE OVERALL RELEVANCE AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THE OSRSGs

2. While the report acknowledges that “[d]espite political and operational challenges, as well as their small size, the three OSRSGs have been effective champions in their thematic areas”, it fails to acknowledge the fundamental paradigm shift that has occurred since the establishment of OSRSG-SVC, and the transformative nature and approach of the mandate, moving from an exclusively remedial, reactive, service-delivery response, to a proactive, political-diplomatic and preventive approach to addressing conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV).

3. In the past eight years since adoption of Security Council resolution 1888 (2009), the silence that has endured through the ages has finally been broken – conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) is no longer history’s ‘invisible’ and ‘unspoken’ crime. It is recognized as a tactic of war, torture and terrorism that constitutes a legitimate threat to the maintenance or restoration of international peace and security. It is now understood that an operational security and justice response is required to prevent sexual violence, combined with comprehensive services and reparations for survivors.

CONSIDERATIONS RELATED TO THE METHODOLOGY OF THE REVIEW

4. While the Office recognizes some of the practical constraints and challenges in conducting the review, there are nonetheless several aspects of the methodology that are problematic, with implications for the evaluation results, conclusions and final recommendations:

- a. As mentioned above, the simultaneous treatment of the three mandates with a comparative emphasis in order to draw overarching recommendations and conclusions, has adversely impacted the scope and specificity of the recommendations in particular;
- b. In terms of the guiding questions of the review, it would have been important to address an additional question to the UN Action entities and other UN stakeholders, on their role and performance in support of the SRSG-SVC. The emphasis on the overall responsibility of the UN system was deemed a crucial factor by the Security Council in crafting the mandate, as expressed in resolution 1888: “*encouraging the entities comprising UN Action Against Sexual Violence in Conflict, as well as other relevant parts of the United Nations system, to support the work of the aforementioned Special Representative of the Secretary-General and to continue and enhance cooperation and information sharing among all relevant stakeholders in order to reinforce coordination and avoid overlap at the headquarters and country levels and improve system-wide response*”.
- c. Selection of a limited number of country case studies and some of the broad conclusions that have been drawn on that basis, ultimately fail to capture the overall gains that have been made, and the strategic considerations and assessments of risk and opportunity that have consistently informed the execution of the CRSV mandate.
- d. Limited timeframe determined for the review – 2014-2017 – has resulted in an incomplete picture of the progress and challenges of the CRSV mandate.

CONSIDERATIONS RELATED TO THE EVALUATION RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

On coordination:

5. The analysis of coordination could benefit from a broader and more nuanced perspective. The review has focused primarily, if not exclusively, on the UN Action forum as the primary coordination vehicle for the mandate, and concludes that in recent years it has served primarily as an information-sharing forum. However, an assessment over the lifespan of the mandate reveals that the UN Action network has been effective and crucial in several respects beyond the important aspect of information-sharing, such as: knowledge building, guidance development and elaboration of training materials; discussion on strategic initiatives and catalytic action in priority countries; preparation and follow up of missions of the SRSG; policy considerations, consensus-building and decisions at the level of Steering Committee Principals, including discussion and clearance of the annual report of the Secretary-General.
6. Moreover, the scope of the review omits an innovation that has incentivized and driven coordination, namely the UN Action Multi Partner Trust Fund (MPTF). The MPTF disburses funds to UN Action entities for projects and initiatives in priority countries to catalyze responses to CRSV. A condition of funding approval for any project is that it be developed, submitted and executed by two or more UN Action entities. Implementation of these joint projects is one of the most salient and practical manifestations of coordinated action and partnership building. The SRSG has prioritized the mobilization of resources for the MPTF, raising millions of dollars for projects, and the continued functioning of a small UN Action Secretariat.
7. In addition, a vital part of the OSRSG-SVC strategy has been to simultaneously

strengthen bilateral relationships and coordination with specific UN Action entities, which review has not examined or taken this into consideration as an aspect of overall coordination. Key substantive and strategic considerations inform these bilateral relationships which have been built with each of the 14 UN Action entities on specific dimensions of the mandate, in order to ensure a holistic, survivor-centered and cross-sectoral response. These bilateral relationships are a fundamental manifestation of coordination and mainstreaming of CRSV considerations in policy and programmes throughout the UN system.

8. Furthermore, the review does not take into consideration issues of coordination and mainstreaming inherent in the structure and function of the Team of Experts on the Rule of Law/Sexual Violence (TOE), which is composed of officers from UNDP, OHCHR and DPKO. Every TOE engagement contributes to country-level coordination in support of affected countries.

9. I wish to address a specific reference in paragraph 40 of the report, which notes that survey respondents rated as either ‘fair’ or ‘poor’ the “*office coordination of field monitoring*”. I am concerned that the focus on and inclusion of this reference reflects a lack of understanding of the role of OSRSG-SVC related to the implementation of the MARA. It is not reasonable to expect an Office with a Programme staff of four officers to ‘coordinate field monitoring’ in over 20 situations of concern. This is the role and responsibility of the relevant operational entities at country level, including Women Protection Advisers who are mandated by the Security Council for this purpose. The role and contribution of OSRSG-SVC related to monitoring, analysis and reporting on SVC has been to facilitate the legislative basis for establishment of a global monitoring system through Security Council resolution 1960; provide policy guidance on implementation of the MARA, including a definition and conceptual framing of CRSV agreed in the UN system; and, on-going consultation with WPAs and other field-level focal points on implementation.

10. I agree in principle with the review Recommendation 5 to enhance coordination and coherence particularly between the SVC and CAAC Offices. However, as noted above, the collaboration with OSRSG-CAAC which is already an aspect of our daily work and interactions, is one among several critical partnerships that OSRSG-SVC wishes to enhance. Further discussion will be required between the Offices to determine practical measures or procedures to enhance collaboration.

On mainstreaming:

11. The review defines mainstreaming as “bringing the respective issues of CAAC, SVC and VAC into the agendas and work programmes of other entities”. As noted above, the focused and strategic bilateral engagements with each UN Action entity is representative of the coordination role of OSRSG-SVC, but also the mainstreaming of CRSV considerations in the policies and programmes of UN partners in order to foster a comprehensive and multi-sectoral response.

However, the review does not examine or take into account another fundamental aspect of mainstreaming, related to how CRSV considerations are now reflected in key aspects of the work of the Security Council itself. This is at the heart of the transformational change and paradigm shift that has occurred since establishment of the mandate, anchoring CRSV as a peace and security issue – it constitutes a central focus and strategy of the OSRSG-SVC. The CRSV infrastructure created by resolution 1888 is now fundamentally linked to UN sanctions through resolutions

1960, 2106 and 2331; every relevant country-specific sanctions regime includes CRSV as part of its sanctions designation criteria, and the Expert Panels and Monitoring Teams of the Sanctions Committees consistently interact with OSRSG-SVC and increasingly include CRSV as part of their investigations and reports to the Committees. A number of individuals have been designated for sanctions for sexual violence crimes. The 1267 Sanctions Committee on ISIL, Al Qaeda and affiliated groups now contains in its update resolution explicit reference to CRSV and cross-reference to resolution 2331, which represents a critical linkage of the CRSV agenda with the UN counter-terrorism infrastructure. All country-specific resolutions of the Security Council covered in the Secretary-General's report on CRSV consistently carry language on sexual violence including references to the implementation of the Joint Communiqués of the SRSG, in line with the key operational paragraphs of resolutions 1960 and 2106. CRSV considerations are now consistently reflected in the Security Council's peacekeeping mission mandate authorizations and renewals, security sector reform and disarmament demobilization and reintegration provisions of Council resolutions. A core aspect of the work of the OSRSG-SVC Programme Team is to interact with Security Council delegations to provide language and advice on SVC for Security Council Resolutions and Presidential Statements.

12. Another central aspect of the OSRSG-SVC mainstreaming strategy has been to build Member State consensus beyond the Security Council. This includes working with the United Kingdom for a General Assembly Declaration on the prevention of SVC that has been endorsed by 146 countries to date; and, working with Argentina for adoption of General Assembly resolution A/RES/69/293 designating 19 June as the *International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict*. These political level commitments are not reflected in the review report as they were achieved prior to the determined review period, yet they are important and indicative of efforts to universalize the consensus, foster accountability for CRSV crimes, and encourage greater resource allocation for the programmatic response.

On coherence between the MARA and MRM systems:

13. It is appropriate that the recommendations encourage OSRSGs to consider opportunities for “*increased coherence*” between the respective monitoring systems. However, in the evaluation results and recommendations there is little or no mention of the central responsibility in this regard of the field-based entities that anchor monitoring of violations, namely DPKO, DPA, OHCHR and UNICEF, and to a lesser extent UNFPA in terms of their lead role related to the Gender-Based Violence Area of Responsibility (GVB-AOR), which also feeds some data into MARA. The discussion of coherence between the systems should be driven primarily at field level, which is where information sharing and joint analysis is most critical. This would ensure that the information ultimately transmitted to the OSRSGs including for the reports of the Secretary-General, is coherent and consistent. OSRSG-SVC has consistently encouraged such field level interaction, as reflected in the Provisional Guidance on the Implementation of Resolution 1960.

14. It should also be noted that the issue of human rights information sharing, common verification standards and shared databases, is a long-standing and complex challenge in the UN system, and was the focus of intensive consideration over the past three years in the context of the Human Rights Up Front Initiative spearheaded by EOSG and OHCHR. Therefore, expectations should be realistic of the role that the OSRSGs can play to ensure coherence of the UN system in

this regard, notwithstanding their role as ‘guardians’ of their respective agendas.

On strategic planning and risk management:

15. The Evaluation Results indicate that: *“Inadequate strategic planning, including systematic risk assessment, has resulted in insufficient focus on where and how to use limited resources”*. While I agree that strategic planning and risk assessment has not been consistently structured across the different components of the Office and that improvements can be made to ensure more regular and structured strategic planning and risk assessment processes, the report leaves an incorrect impression of a lack of a clear and focused strategy of the mandate, and continuous consideration of opportunities and risks that inform that strategy.

16. Currently, strategic planning is reflected in the workplans of OSRSG-SVC, which have been built on the basis of the Security Council resolutions and the SRSG’s six-point priority agenda established in 2010; the Team of Experts multi-year Joint Programmes for 2012-2014 and 2015-2019, which are agreed by the entities composing the team, namely UNDP, OHCHR and DPKO, and ultimately approved by the SRSG; and the UN Action Strategic Frameworks, normally agreed among the member entities on an annual basis.

17. In terms of “where and how” to focus, the overarching strategic imperative is to prioritize the situations of conflict where incidents, trends and patterns of sexual violence are occurring, with the aim of preventing these violations.

18. Within this broad set of countries, the strategy of OSRSG-SVC has been to further prioritize engagement in situations where the Secretary-General has listed State parties, in order to support those Member States to put in place prevention measures and ultimately ensure their delisting. Therefore, it will be noted that structured agreements in the form of Joint Communiqués, Frameworks of Cooperation, and Implementation Plans, exist with all the State parties currently listed by the Secretary-General, with the exception of Syria and Sudan where to date agreements have not been reached in spite of our engagement. The largest expenditure of mandate resources has been in these situations.

19. In addition, strategic decisions have been made to focus on a number of other countries as ‘test-cases’ for important dimensions of the agenda. For example, in Guinea, the focus has been on supporting a nationally owned and led accountability process, for grave violations that were originally referred to the ICC by the Security Council. In Colombia, the focus was to engage parties to the conflict for the inclusion of CRSV provisions in the Peace Agreement between the Government and FARC-EP, and to support the implementation of the provisions. In Mali, the focus is on developing a more structured engagement with non-state armed groups, six of whom have now issued unilateral Communiqués on SVC. In Iraq, the focus is on engaging with federal and regional authorities to ensure accountability for ISIL fighters who have used sexual violence as a tactic of terrorism, to address the sale, trade and trafficking of women and girls, and secure services and reparations for survivors. At the same time, the mandate must also be flexible and responsive to address urgent and sometimes unanticipated situations. For instance, OSRSG-SVC is now focusing priority attention on Myanmar and Bangladesh related to the Rohingya crisis, with frameworks of cooperation under discussion with both countries.

On incorporating lessons learned

20. The strategic approach of the mandate as outlined above continues to generate lessons learned and best practices that feed into all on-going engagements and inform strategic decisions on future priorities.

21. In addition, at the level of the Team of Experts, a ‘lessons learned’ retreat was organized in 2015, and a ‘lessons learned’ publication building on this is anticipated in 2018. The Team of Experts also organized in 2017 an experience-sharing exercise among African militaries with whom the mandate is engaged, for them to share lessons learned on the measures being undertaken to prevent SVC. The report of this exercise will also serve as a lessons learned resource for armed forces in several countries.

22. In 2013, as a Five-Year Review of UN Action was conducted by an independent expert, with a number of recommendations made on the basis of lessons learned and innovative practice by the network since its establishment in 2008. That review has informed decisions related to UN Action priorities.

23. I agree with the observation that the mandate would benefit from more systematic stock-taking of lessons learned, and incorporation of the experience into strategic planning and risk assessment. However, I am skeptical about Recommendation 3 as it has been articulated in the report. Building on the forthcoming Team of Experts lessons learned report and the UN Action Five-Year Review, I would like to prioritize a more comprehensive exercise that looks at every aspect of the mandate’s work, including political engagements related to Security Council processes, advocacy for and implementation of national and regional level agreements, and engagement with civil society. The resulting product will feed into my decision-making regarding the future strategic direction and priorities of the mandate. From such an exercise, we will also be in a better position to determine how to incorporate lessons learning processes more systematically into our work programmes.

24. One important caveat in this regard relates to resources and the capacity required to establish lessons learning mechanisms. A number of UN entities have well-established lessons learning and best-practice hubs, with the resources required to sustain such structures. Yet, the report makes recommendations regarding an additional process for which OSRSG-SVC will be responsible, without any reference to the additional resources that will be required for its execution.

On resources for effective execution of the mandate:

I am extremely concerned that the review does not explicitly address the fundamental issue of capacity and resources for the Office to comprehensively execute the Security Council mandate. During the consultations with the OIOS team my Office emphasized the fact that the regular budget allotment and staffing capacity for OSRSG-SVC was agreed early in the life of the mandate, at a time when both the scope of countries covered and the depth of the country engagements were significantly more limited than they are now. As practice has been established in this area, there is now also a far greater demand and expectation of Member States for support from OSRSG-SVC. The practical inability of the Office to engage national authorities and provide

support as may be required in all the countries covered in the ambit of the Secretary-General's report, constitutes one of the most critical reputational risks for the Secretary-General and the UN system. Currently OSRSG-SVC has only 8 regularly budgeted posts, reduced from the level of 9 posts originally established.

25. Consequently, the Office relies heavily on extra budgetary resources, which carries a number of risk factors. The capacity and time required to fundraise and report to multiple donors is a risk factor for the execution of the programme. The unpredictability of extra-budgetary resources hampers strategic planning and is also a significant reputational risk factor as the Office may not be able to sustain engagements with national authorities in affected countries until such time as UN field-based entities are able to take up the burden. There is also a significant political risk, with sensitivities from many Member States that the mandate not become 'donor driven' and that certain countries not have greater 'leverage' over the mandate and its priorities as a result of their financial support, which is sometimes earmarked and conditional.

26. One of the consistent requests expressed by my Office throughout the review process was that the OIOS team also makes a realistic assessment of the 'size of the task and mandate' related to existing staff capacity; and, for this to be compared to other offices and mandates in the UN system. Therefore, I consider it essential for the review report, at a minimum, to surface these concerns, as well as the significant risk factors noted above, and for these considerations to be reflected as part of the report follow up process.


**Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General
on Violence against Children**



TO: Mr. (Eddie) Yee Woo Guo
A: Director, Inspection and Evaluation Division
Office of Internal Oversight Services

DATE: 23 March 2018

REFERENCE:

FROM: Ms. Marta Santos Pais 
DE: Special Representative of the Secretary-
General on Violence against Children, SRSG VAC

SUBJECT: **MANAGEMENT RESPONSE ON THE REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE
OBJET: EVALUATION OF THE OFFICES OF THE SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
SECRETARY-GENERAL FOR CHILDREN AND ARMED CONFLICT, FOR SEXUAL
VIOLENCE IN CONFLICT, AND ON VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN**

1. Thank you for your memo of 5 March 2018, sharing the draft report of the Evaluation of the Offices of the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, for Sexual Violence in Conflict, and on Violence against Children.
2. I would like to acknowledge the spirit of collaboration and engagement of the focal points in the Evaluation team in the process of the evaluation and their openness in reviewing the data and evidence gathered. This has been a constructive process and has resulted in a draft report containing useful information and helpful suggestions to strengthen the work of my Office. We are on the whole in agreement with the draft report and its recommendations.
3. As acknowledged by the draft report, the mandate of the SRSG/VAC covers all forms of violence, in all settings and in all countries, in line with General Assembly resolution 62/141, that defined its scope building on the recommendations of the United Nations Study on Violence against Children (A/61/299). To ensure a strategic focus and achieve concrete results, the SRSG/VAC mandate has, from its inception, given particularly high attention to three key priorities, namely the development in each country of a national agenda on VAC, the enactment of a comprehensive legal ban on all forms of VAC, and the consolidation of VAC data and research. These priorities informed the planning and implementation of the OSRSG/VAC activities, as well as its cooperation with partners, including regional organizations and national governments.

4. The draft report states "that the three offices lacked standardized country and regional level work planning mechanisms." In this regard, I would like to note that, as highlighted in the draft report itself (para. 25), at the regional and sub-regional levels, the OSRSG/VAC initiated and/or participated in forums with regional organizations, Member States and other partners that helped to catalyze political will, and it successfully led cross-regional forums assembling like-minded inter-governmental institutions; these results were achieved through sustained engagement following a consultative process with partners that capitalized on the regionally oriented implementation of the recommendations of the 2006 Global Study. I would also note that in this process, my office has worked in close cooperation with regional partners to support the development of eight regional plans on violence against children, which have been adopted at Head of State or Ministerial level. These high-level regional plans include key commitments to ensure children's protection from violence and provide a strategic planning framework for advancing and assessing progress in violence prevention and elimination. Periodic meetings are held with regional partners to assess and advance progress in their implementation and in several cases a regional monitoring mechanism was put in place and regional studies were co-produced to monitor progress. Moreover, my Office organizes an annual cross-regional meeting bringing together regional organizations from across the globe to assess, accelerate and sustain progress in regional implementation of commitments towards children's protection from violence.

5. The draft report states that "in several cases, OSRSG/VAC engagement with national governments was unplanned and the result of an opportunity created by other United Nations entities." In this regard, I would note that, as acknowledged by the draft report itself (para. 25), in selected countries the work of the OSRSG/VAC was oriented around specific advocacy and policy dialogue goals that precipitated government commitments, including the promotion of legislative reforms and national plans of action on VAC, and the development of VAC data surveys. These were indeed the core priorities pursued by the OSRSG/VAC mandate in its cooperation with Member States across regions. But in addition, while acting within the framework of the priorities set out for my mandate in GA resolution A/RES/62/141, my Office has consistently been open to seizing all opportunities to effectively support national implementation efforts and to advocate for increased protection of children from violence. As has been systematically documented in the OSRSG/VAC reports to the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council, my engagement with governments has primarily aimed at supporting the mandate's key priorities, namely the development in each country of a national agenda on ending violence

against children; the enactment of a legal ban on all forms of violence against children; and the consolidation of VAC data and research. This has led to concrete results, including a visible increase in the number of national plans of action on VAC - from 47 (at the start of the mandate) to more than 90 today, as well as an increase in the number of countries with a comprehensive legal ban on VAC, which more than tripled (from 16 at the start of the mandate to more than 50 now). In some cases, special opportunities were sought to support governments' strong expression of political will and commitment to act and achieve positive change by consolidating measures for violence prevention and elimination; as well as to address emerging concerns and prevent the adoption of measures that might create high risks for children's protection in any setting, for example, through the adoption of laws and policies that might weaken the level of children's safety and care. These actions have always been undertaken in close cooperation with UN partners, regional organizations, national governments and in collaboration with civil society organizations.

6. The draft report states that "in Latin America there was no articulated strategy for how OSRSG/VAC intended to operationalize its strategic collaboration with United Nations partners in the field with associated risks." The period under review (2014-2017) was critical to further advance implementation of the three sub-regional Plans on VAC which had been previously adopted at the ministerial level and developed in cooperation with UN and regional partners: for South America (in 2011), Central America (in 2011) and the Caribbean (in 2012). Guided by this policy framework, between 2014 and 2017 regular coordination meetings were held in the region and my office undertook 14 official country visits that were planned and organized in close collaboration with UNCTs, with UNICEF often playing a lead role, as well as national authorities. These missions achieved concrete results, including the widening of the ratification of the Optional Protocols to the CRC on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography and on a Communications Procedure; the enactment of new national laws on ending violence against children, including in the school context and in the administration of juvenile justice, and on enhancing the protection of child victims; as well as the promotion of household surveys on violence against children. My Office also promoted high level regional meetings on violence against children in close cooperation and with the active participation of UN partners and Member States, and in collaboration with civil society - these included an OAS Interamerican Congress, held in Brazil (2014); an OAS Interamerican meeting, held in Barbados (2017); a CARICOM regional meeting, held in Trinidad and Tobago (2014); a regional forum with the private sector in Brazil (2017); and a World Congress on the Rights of the Child held in Mexico.

In addition, my Office hosted four regional expert meetings which were co-organized with UN partners, regional institutions, Member States and promoted in cooperation with civil society organizations, respectively on early childhood (2015), children in centres of detention (2016), crime prevention and child protection from violence (2016), and children on the move (2017).

7. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you and your colleagues for the excellent cooperation over the course of the Evaluation.

cc: Ms. Ellen Vinkey, OIOS/IED