**Terms of Reference**

**AIN-Child Protection Working Group (CPWG)**

**Background**

The Association of International NGOs (AIN) is an informal network of INGOs working in Nepal since 1996. AIN has come together to promote mutual understanding, exchange of information and share experiences of our work in Nepal in order to better collaborate together. At present the AIN membership includes more than 100 INGOs. AIN members work on a wide range of issues and sectors to contribute to development efforts in Nepal. Over the years INGOs have played a crucial role as key stakeholders and partners in the development of Nepal.

**Rationale**

Even though most countries have ratified the UNCRC since 1989 (except for the U.S) children’s rights are globally being violated on a large scale. The guiding principles under this Convention include non-discrimination; adherence to the best interests of the child; the right to life, survival and development; and the right to participate. Additionally, the articles of the Convention may be grouped into four categories of rights; survival rights; development rights; protection rights and participation rights.

This compilation and clarification of children’s rights sets out the necessary environment and means to enable every human being to develop to their full potential.

Around 45% of Nepal’s 29 million people are below the age of 18 and according to international standards considered children. When Nepal ratified the UNCRC in 1990, it gave its commitment to protect the rights for these children. Despite the fact that since the interim constitution of Nepal in 2006 child rights were included as fundamental rights (UNCRC, Children’s Act of Nepal, ILO Convention 182, National Campaign 2009) and (I)NGO efforts to increase the respect for children’s rights and especially protection of children, many social, cultural and economical factors contribute to threatening and harmful living conditions for a large group of Nepali children. Where sexual abuse of children, commercial sexual exploitation of children (approx. 20,000 children; MoWCSW, 2006) and child labor (approx. 2.6 million children; ILO, 2010) are obviously happening in shockingly high numbers, children are also often deprived of their right to an identity, education, family reunification and more. In our work we should therefore focus on what we can do to ensure children are being protected against inhumane practices and their healthy development is being ensured.

In view of the existing problem magnitude, the Government of Nepal has, besides other abovementioned international treaties, drafted and adopted a National Child Policy in 2012, which is mainly developed to ensure children are being protected from intentional and unintentional harm. Despite the actions taken by the government, we should all clasp our hands together to build national capacity to effectively respond to the violations of child rights and ensure their protection.

*“Child protection is a set of, usually government run, services designed to protect children against intentional or unintentional harm, and to encourage the family stability. More specifically it includes protecting children from abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence and aiming for the safety and well-being of all children”*

The INGO community has contributed significantly to the national child rights/child protection response in Nepal and has been playing a key role in ensuring the rights of children are implemented and children are at the core of our work. Furthermore, children are the future generation and at the same time the most vulnerable group to work with. In this context, the AIN can and should play a positive and constructive role in identifying priorities, coordinating program activities and mobilizing or sharing resources to ensure the protection of children through a Child Protection Working Group (CPWG). As part of this CPWG, gender issues, where related to children, will be taken into account as well.

The Child Protection Working Group (CPWG) has therefore been formed to enrich its members with existing best practices, sharing resources, working with government and likeminded child rights activists.

**Purpose/Mandate**

The purpose of the CPWG is to maximize the positive effects that AIN members can have on the protection of children and making sure their rights are fulfilled. The mandate of the CPWG is not of limited duration but will function as a standing group within AIN for as long as deemed necessary to cater possible changes against the violations of children’s rights. The CPWG will review the mandate and objectives annually to ensure the CPWG is required, and is fulfilling its purpose. Annual outcomes and quarterly milestones will be prepared based on identified priorities. The CPWG has a two-person team to facilitate group processes and coordinate activities under the AIN secretariat.

**Objectives**

Following are the objectives of the CPWG to fulfill its purpose/mandate:

* Fostering a common knowledge/understanding of the changing context of the country when it comes to child protection and ways of working on ensuring child protection and implementation of their rights among AIN members and other relevant stakeholders
* Creating an environment for coordination and collaboration among members’ activities to avoid unnecessary duplication and thereby establishing synergy in the efforts to ensuring children’s rights are respected in the country
* Sharing of resources, problems and good practices, and infrastructure to uplift the protection of children
* Recommending pressing issues that AIN can work on so that it remains an accountable and responsive advocate for child protection
* Engage with relevant ministries, government bodies, local partners and other national established working groups to exchange information and facilitate implementation and scaling up child protection responses

**Activities**

1. Create a knowledge bank by collecting and sharing resources on child rights and child protection. This will include collating the following on the AIN website:

* Organizational mapping: collecting information from members and mapping the child protection initiatives within AIN CPWG and AIN members
* Organizing sharing sessions on best practices, organizing events collectively;
* Tools and resources useful for child protection activities;
* Links to the relevant research and publications;
* Facilitate initiatives to engage children for ensuring their rights are fulfilled

1. Organize quarterly CPWG meetings – or as required-- to update on progress in the child protection developments, prepare action plans, identify emerging issues and design activities.
2. Organize sharing sessions for local partners on challenges and best practices in the field of child protection and child rights.
3. Conduct relevant activities contributing to AIN strategic objectives and facilitate activities for the same.
4. Coordinate among AIN members (including other WGs) to inform AIN analyses and respond to specific issues through their local partners at district level and strengthened networks.