

Report on The National Forum 2000 and National Forum Youth during and after the Conference on War-Affected Children

During the next days, the 9 conference themes of the Experts Meeting and the 7 caucus issues were presented and delegates did "walkrounds" on each topic, focussing on the same framework of analysis asked to the Experts: What's Working, What's Not Working, Recommendations, and as an extra What Youth Can Do. Discussions refined the "walkaround" notes and ideas into presentations, workshop presentations, speeches and media briefings. The Youth Spokespersons gave two full media briefings, presenting statements, then answering questions from the media for about one-half hour. Throughout the event, individual and group interviews were scheduled for many of the delegates, with the media spokes team helping to support other delegates in their interviews.

At the Opening of the Experts Meeting, two youth speakers gave a highlight presentation of youth concerns and issues and the Movement Team opened with a dramatic presentation. Youth delegates attended all of the workshops, and in some functioned as speakers, resource people and co-chairs.

At the Ministerial Meeting, youth again had Opening Speaking Roles, plus speaking roles in several workshops, and again were full delegates for the workshops. The video created by the youth was shown. Youth spoke powerfully to the Ministerial Meeting to close the Conference.

Media coverage was intense, but dealing with it and preparing youth for it required extensive time and resources, distracting from the programming. Major interviews were given by youth, not only during the two full press briefings they gave, but also to the Globe and Mail, Toronto Star, all Winnipeg papers, BBC, Radio Netherlands, several CBC radio and TV programs (English, French, Sasha Petrocic, Newsworld)... and more.

Maria Minna, Canadian Minister for International Co-operation, dropped in several times informally to join the youth discussions and promised her support for the networking efforts of the youth and ongoing projects which they create.

Graça Machel, one of the world's foremost advocates of children's rights, in her addresses to the formal meetings, several times spoke directly to the youth about the significance of their participation. Afterwards, she informally scrummed and chatted with them.

Carol Bellamy, Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), came to breakfast with the youth delegates for an informal discussion.

Sarah Stevenson, Canadian Program Manager for Save the Children Canada came and spoke about the opportunity for youth to become involved in the 2001 UNGAS (2001 United Nations General Assembly Special Session UNGAS) for followup to the World Summit for Children.



THE STUDENT'S
COMMISSION