

the Child to address the issue of sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography; welcomed measures taken by governments to implement the Programme of Action for the Prevention of the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography; welcomed the adoption and dissemination of the Declaration and Agenda for Action of the World Congress against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children; called on states to develop, implement and enforce measures to eliminate the sale of children and their sexual exploitation; called on states to criminalize commercial and all other forms of sexual exploitation of children and ensure that child victims are not penalized for such practices; called for cooperation and concerted action by all relevant law enforcement authorities and institutions and for the allocation of resources for rehabilitation of child victims of trafficking and sexual exploitation; requested the Working Group on the optional protocol to meet for two weeks (less if possible) prior to the 1998 session of the Commission to finalize the draft optional protocol before the 10th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

IV. Protection of children affected by armed conflict: welcomed the final report of the Expert of the Secretary-General and welcomed the General Assembly recommendation to appoint a Special Representative on the impact of armed conflict on children; welcomed the report of the Working Group on the draft optional protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict; called on states to consider acceding to relevant international human rights and humanitarian law instruments and to implement those to which they are parties; called on states to participate constructively in negotiations on the optional protocol with the aim of early agreement on a text; called on states to integrate into military programs, including those for peacekeeping, instruction on responsibilities towards civilian populations, particularly women and children; called on states and other parties to armed conflict to respect international humanitarian law, end the use of children as soldiers, and ensure their demobilization and reintegration into society, including victims of land mines and other weapons, and child victims of gender-based violence; reaffirmed that rape in the conduct of armed conflict is a war crime and may constitute a crime against humanity and an act of genocide; called on states to protect all women and children from gender-based violence, including rape, sexual exploitation and forced pregnancy, and to strengthen mechanisms to investigate and prosecute perpetrators; reaffirmed that humanitarian responses in conflict situations should emphasize the special reproductive health needs of women and girls; reaffirmed the importance of preventive measures such as early-warning, preventive diplomacy and education for peace to prevent conflicts; reaffirmed support for the recommendations of General Assembly and the International Committee of the Red Cross related to the assessment and monitoring of the consequences of sanctions upon children, as well as those related to humanitarian relief; requested the Working Group on the optional protocol to meet for two weeks prior to the 1998 session of the Commission in order to finalize the draft optional protocol; invited all relevant and interested parties to cooperate with the prospective special representative of the Secretary-General on the impact of armed conflict on children.

V. Refugee and internally displaced children: called on states to protect refugee and internally displaced children, including through policies for care, well-being and development; called for early identification and registration of unaccompanied refugee and internally displaced children, for priority to be given to family tracing and reunification, and for continued care for unaccompanied children; called for other parties to armed conflict to recognize the particular vulnerability of refugee and internally displaced children to recruitment into armed forces and sexual violence, exploitation and abuse; stressed the special vulnerability of child-headed households and called for all concerned to give these situations urgent attention; called on states and all relevant parties to involve women and youth in the design, delivery and monitoring of measures for their protection against sexual violence and recruitment of children into armed forces.

VI. Elimination of exploitation of child labour: welcomed measures by governments to eliminate exploitation of child labour; welcomed governmental initiatives to convene an international conference on various forms of child labour; called on states that have not yet done so to ratify and implement ILO conventions related to child labour and the minimum age for employment and eliminate all extreme forms of child labour such as forced labour, bonded labour and other forms of slavery; called on states to take the necessary measures to provide for a minimum age or ages for admission to employment, regulation of hours of work and conditions of employment, and appropriate penalties or sanctions to ensure enforcement of laws and standards; called on states to set specific target dates for the elimination of all forms of child labour that are contrary to accepted international standards, to ensure full enforcement of relevant existing laws and enact legislation necessary to implement obligations under the Convention on the Rights of the Child and ILO conventions; called on states to support the proposed drafting of an ILO instrument aimed at eradicating the most intolerable forms of child labour; requested the Secretary-General to provide information on initiatives aimed at eliminating exploitation of child labour and recommend ways and means to improve cooperation at national and international levels in this area.

VII. The plight of street children: called on states to continue to seek comprehensive solutions to the problems of children on the street, in conformity with obligations under relevant international human rights instruments; called on states to ensure the reintegration of street children into society and to provide them with adequate nutrition, shelter, health care and education; called on all states to take measures to prevent the killing of street children, to combat torture and violence against them, and to ensure that legal and juridical processes respect children's rights against arbitrary deprivation of liberty, maltreatment and abuse.

VIII. The Commission decided: to request the Secretary-General to appoint for a three-year period a Special Representative on the impact of armed conflict on children.

* * * * *