

- \* The omnibus resolutions of the Commission on Human on the Rights of the Child containing a section on children in armed conflict;
- \* Resolutions of the Red Cross Conference dealing with the protection of Women and children.

**6. Key sectors:**

(i) *Political:*

- \* Canada could continue to push for the recommendations laid out in the Machel Report. One of these is to dialogue with state and non-state actors to reach a consensus that children do not belong in armed conflict.
- \* The WG could convene a Roundtable in March on Children and Armed Conflict with an emphasis on Child Soldiers. The objective would be to assemble a core Canadian group (the WG expanded to include Nigel Fisher, Senator Pearson and representatives from key international NGOs active in this area) to develop an agenda for political action on the issue of children and armed conflict with an emphasis on child soldiers (broadly defined). Canada's role and niche can be extracted from the outcome.

(ii) *Development:*

- \* CIDA's programming in support of children in areas of armed conflict supports the goals of the Plan of Action of the 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1990 UN World Summit for Children and Canada's OECD commitment to help meet targets for poverty reduction, primary education, gender equity in schools, child health and maternal health. The challenge lies in designing projects to address the root causes for child soldiers from a child-centred perspective. Many studies have documented structural violence and poverty as the root causes for child soldiers. Poor children are disproportionately targeted for both voluntary conscription and abduction. Addressing the economic instability which surrounds poor children in situations of armed conflict will continue to be a central question for the donor community.

(iii) *Role of SRSG:*

- \* A visit from the SRSG, Olarra Otunnu to raise the political profile with Canadian Ministers, Parliamentarians and media about the issue of child soldiers;
- \* Canada could support SRSG's role as an advocate to raise awareness for the issue of children and armed conflict. SRSG believes that children and armed conflict must be perceived as a political issue by key governments, UN institutions, NGOs, religious leaders and civil society at large. He would like to mount a public relations campaign to overcome apathy and to mobilize the media, governments and civil society to show that: "we *should* do something and that something *can* be done". Finally, he sees countries such as Canada playing a key role in setting world public opinion.