

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

YOUTH STATEMENT FOR MINISTERIAL MEETING

Good afternoon, Merhaba, hosh galden, baherben, salut, taato, mire dita, somkorup, fellow delegates.

We would like to welcome you and thank you for this opportunity to participate in this conference. Although some of us now live in peace in Canada, among us we represent war-affected children worldwide.

We speak to you as young people with the experience of war. We have lost our homes and our schools. We have been abused, tortured, and raped. We have witnessed brutal murders and have been abducted and separated from our families. Some of us have fought in wars against our own kin.

We also speak to you as young people who want to be involved in building peace in communities. We have many concerns but also many ideas that we would like to share with you.



Based on what we have seen, and are seeing, what we have felt and are feeling, as well as what we have shared with one another, we have come to a consensus that children are the people most affected by war.

During this conference, we have heard a lot of rhetoric about how young people are the leaders of the future. While not dismissing the truth of this statement, we say that we have a crucial role to play in our societies now. Our recommendations to improve our future must be respected and we need to be involved in the planning and implementation in all levels. From this conference, we want to see practical solutions that benefit war-affected children emerge. We wish to see the mere discussions of these issues cease and encourage action to see more and better quality support for war-affected children.

Many of the solutions are already there (for example the Convention on the Rights of the Child), but so far we have not seen any strong and effective actions regarding what has been written. We would like to share with you what we strongly believe to be the main priorities that have been highlighted by us, the young experts in this conference.