

- Establishing contacts with leaders of affected countries

The Special Representative has held discussions with government leaders from several countries affected by armed conflicts to inform them of his mandate and proposed activities, to seek their cooperation in the conduct of his work, to discuss the plight of children in each situation, and to prepare for field visits to those countries. Following these initial contacts, plans are now underway for the Special Representative to visit some of the affected countries to assess directly the conditions of children in the midst of on-going conflicts or in post-conflict situations.

- Developing a framework of collaboration within the UN

The Special Representative has conducted a series of consultations with the heads of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nation's High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Office of the Coordinator for Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the Department of Peace-keeping Operations (DPKO) and the Department of Political Affairs (DPA) in order to develop a framework of institutional and operational collaboration in support of this agenda.

As a follow-up to these discussions, the Special Representative has now established an informal advisory group consisting of senior officials from the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nation's High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the Office of the Coordinator for Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), for the purpose of reviewing cooperation and seeking advice on an on-going basis. The Special Representative will also use his participation in the Executive Committee on Peace and Security (ECPS), the Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs (ECHA), the United Nations Development Group (UNDG), and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee to ensure that the issue of the rights, protection, and welfare of children affected by armed conflict is fully addressed in the relevant policy discussions and programme activities on a system-wide basis.

- Discussions with leaders of regional organizations

The Special Representative has met and held discussions with the Secretaries-General of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the Organization of American States (OAS), and with the European Union (EU) Commissioners for Development and Humanitarian Affairs, in order to present this agenda to them and seek their support in its development. The European Union, in particular, has expressed a strong interest in working closely with the Special Representative to make the issue of children affected by armed conflict an important item on its agenda, as well as to collaborate actively on humanitarian initiatives and post-conflict projects.

In this connection, the Special Representative is pleased to report that, following discussions with government officials in London, the United Kingdom has offered to use the occasion of its current Presidency of the European Union to highlight this issue. To this end,