

- The exposure of children to weapons of war through local production, distribution, utilization and through exposure to harmful electronic and print media without effective monitoring systems and legislation in place.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS ARISING FROM THE WORKSHOPS

Prevention

- Strengthen military capacity to deal with war-affected children in the heat of conflict, especially with the child combatants as the military often comes face-to-face with them and may be the only people available to deal with these children.
- Prevention of conflict must be a holistic effort involving government, civil society and communities; this collaboration should be strengthened to deal with the root causes of conflict.

Rehabilitation and Reintegration

- Governments and the international community should be encouraged to give priority to the rehabilitation and reintegration of children in post-war societies by providing and strengthening social structures that are critical for healing and re-socialization.
- The plight of girls should be highlighted; national structures and programs to address the needs of the girl child in the post-war society should be given attention.

Advocacy

- Governments should sign and ratify conventions and protocols on the rights and protection of the child including the Rome Statutes on the establishment of the International Criminal Court and the Optional Protocol on the Convention on the Rights of the Child, when it is opened for signature.
- Governments should publish the international and regional conventions on the rights of the child in their local dialects and circulate them widely within their jurisdiction.
- Upon review, the ECOWAS Moratorium should be developed into a legally-binding agreement in order to ensure that the issue of small arms proliferation in the sub-region is addressed.

Education

- Governments and the donor community should adopt a participatory approach and involve communities in all aspects of programming.
- Priority should be placed on government and donor coordination in the development of projects to avoid duplication of effort and inefficient/inappropriate use of resources.