

- * WE STRONGLY SUPPORT THE APPOINTMENT OF THE SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE ON CHILDREN AND ARMED CONFLICT, MR. OLARA OTUNNU, AND APPLAUD HIS ROLE AS AN ADVOCATE FOR CHILDREN TRAPPED IN ARMED CONFLICT.
- * MY CABINET COLLEAGUES AND I ARE COMMITTED TO PROTECTING THE RIGHTS OF VULNERABLE CHILDREN, WHETHER IT BE IN THE CHILD SEX TRADE, IN EXTREME AND EXPLOITIVE CHILD LABOUR SITUATIONS, AND ARMED CONFLICT.
- * I AM PARTICULARLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE USE OF CHILDREN AS SOLDIERS. CHILD SOLDIERS, BROADLY DEFINED, INCLUDES ALL BOYS AND GIRLS PARTICIPATING IN HOSTILITIES, WHETHER THEY BE AS LABOURERS, SEX SLAVES, WATER CARRIERS OR THE MANY OTHER WAYS IN WHICH THEY ARE EMPLOYED BY FIGHTING FACTIONS.
- * I AM WORKING WITH MY COLLEAGUE, MINISTER MARLEAU AND WITH INTERNATIONAL AND DOMESTIC CIVIL SOCIETY GROUPS TO IDENTIFY CONCRETE WAYS FOR CANADA TO HELP PREVENT THE USE OF CHILDREN AS SOLDIERS, AND TO ASSIST THE PLIGHT OF CHILDREN WHO ARE BRUTALLY ABDUCTED INTO ARMED FORCES, OR BECOME SOLDIERS BECAUSE THEY ARE POOR, OR MARGINALIZED OR HAVE NO OTHER VIABLE ALTERNATIVES.
- * LAST MONDAY MY DEPARTMENT HOSTED A ROUNDTABLE ON CHILD SOLDIERS WITH LEADING NGO EXPERTS FROM AROUND THE WORLD. THEY ASKED CANADA TO JOIN IN A GOVERNMENT AND CIVIL SOCIETY COALITION TO STOP THE USE OF CHILD SOLDIERS AND RAISE THE AGE OF RECRUITMENT INTO ARMED FORCES. CANADA IS PUTTING \$50,000 DOLLARS TOWARDS SUPPORTING THAT COALITION AND PREVENTING THE USE OF CHILDREN AS SOLDIERS IN THE WARS OF ADULTS.
- * WITH MY COLLEAGUE, THE MINISTER OF CIDA, DIANE MARLEAU, AND I ARE SUPPORTING THREE PROJECTS AIMED AT DEMOBILIZING AND REINTEGRATING CHILD SOLDIERS IN ACUTE PEACEBUILDING SITUATIONS. MY DEPARTMENT IS ALLOCATING \$200,000 DOLLARS TOWARD REINTEGRATING BOY AND GIRL EX-SOLDIERS IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO.
- * THE PROJECT WILL SUPPORT NATIONAL AND PROVINCIAL AUTHORITIES TO DEMOBILIZE 1, 500 CHILD SOLDIERS, AGED NINE TO SIXTEEN, AND TO REINTEGRATE THEM INTO THEIR FAMILIES. OUR HOPE IS THAT EVENTUALLY THESE CHILDREN WILL TAKE AN ACTIVE PART IN REBUILDING THEIR COMMUNITIES.