

CONFERENCE ON WAR-AFFECTED CHILDREN IN WEST AFRICA

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS FROM CIVIL SOCIETY DAY

**His Excellency the Honourable Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ghana,
His Excellency the Honourable Minister of Foreign Affairs of Canada.**

It is my singular and esteemed privilege to present to you on behalf of all participants and contributors to the Civil Society Day, their recommendations which they hopefully pray will be received and supported by your esteemed Governments.

Before I do so, however, permit me, your Excellencies to extend on their behalf their greetings, felicitations and sincere appreciation to the Government of Ghana and the Government of Canada for convening this conference which brings to the table the very sensitive and delicate issue of war-affected children in our sub-region.

It is hoped by all parties to the Civil Society Day that both governments will maintain this much needed and desired dialogue between government and civil society.

Once again, do accept our sincere thanks and greetings.

FACTORS WHICH CIVIL SOCIETY IDENTIFIED AS CAUSING CONFLICTS

- Lack of a culture for the respect of human rights on the part of governments which has resulted in their failure to ratify and implement international and regional instruments on the protection of human rights in general and on children's rights in particular.
- Bad governance, evident in the lack of decentralized systems, has resulted in the inequitable distribution of resources, a consequence of which is massive migration to cities, marginalization of social groups leading to resentment and aggression, a rise in poverty, and impoverishment and social aversion to the state system.
- The growing phenomenon of children in especially difficult circumstances, such as street children, especially in the urban areas of African states, has created a potentially explosive situation. This is a result of economic deprivation, stigmatization, lack of education and a normal family environment. This may stem from inadequate national/social policies.
- Lack of rigorous legislation in the acquisition and importation of small arms, and selective enforcement of said legislation has resulted in the proliferation of small arms and insecurity.