

The recommendations in the report include, *inter alia*, that:

- ♦ concerned governments incorporate the protection of children prominently in their foreign policies and, with other key international actors, be prepared to use their collective weight and influence to deny political legitimacy, diplomatic recognition, the supply of weapons or the flow of funds to those responsible for committing atrocities and abuses against children;
- ♦ the Security Council remain actively engaged in the protection of children in armed conflict and make the rights, protection and welfare of children affected by conflicts a central and continuing concern in future consideration of specific crisis situations;
- ♦ non-governmental and other civil society organizations develop activities in three areas in particular: building a movement of advocacy at both the national and international levels; developing operational programmes on the ground to respond better to the needs of victimized children; and serving as an important source of independent and objective information on particular situations and issues;
- ♦ the international community seek to construct concrete initiatives on the ground with regard to: access to populations in distress, most of whom are women and children; recruitment and use of children; monitoring and restricting the supply of arms, especially light weapons, to theatres of conflict; and attending more effectively to the needs of displaced populations, the majority of whom are children;
- ♦ in post-conflict peace-building, sustained assistance for reconstruction be provided in order to consolidate peace and to support indigenous rehabilitation capacity; key actors responsible for designing post-conflict peace-building programmes — in particular the World Bank, the European Union, UNDP and bilateral development agencies — make the needs of children a central concern from the outset of their planning, and ensure that post-conflict peace-building does not mean a return to the conditions that gave rise to the conflict in the first place;
- ♦ local capacities for advocacy be built, with strong support from the international community, through, for example, the formation of an informal group of eminent persons to serve as local advocates within a country and the establishment of local radio stations or programmes devoted to the needs and interests of children;
- ♦ the age limit for recruitment and participation in armed conflict be raised from 15 to 18 years and a more effective campaign of pressure for the observance of existing legal standards in present theatres of conflict be organized;
- ♦ with regard to impact of sanctions on children, all efforts be made to relieve the suffering of children

living under sanctions regimes and a review of the impact on children of the sanctions regimes against Burundi and the FRY be undertaken, addressing in particular the health, educational and nutritional needs of affected children;

- ♦ the various institutions and networks that traditionally inculcate values and protect children and promote their welfare — such as parents, extended families, elders, teachers, schools and religious institutions — be strengthened; and
- ♦ the international community exert greater and concerted political efforts to address directly the real issues in conflict situations and not allow the humanitarian response to crises to become a substitute for political action.

### **Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child**

#### **Sale of children, child prostitution, child pornography**

By resolution 1994/90, the Commission on Human Rights established a working group to elaborate a draft optional protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography. The working group held its fourth session in January 1998. The report of that session (E/CN.4/1998/103) reflects discussion on, *inter alia*: definitions; penalization of offenders and protection of child victims; prevention, assistance and compensation; and information, education and participation.

The report notes that there was increasing support among states for the inclusion of definitions in the protocol, setting out specific definitions for “sale of children”, “child prostitution”, “child pornography” and “child sex tourism” in which the scope of meaning would be clear. Discussions on other points referred to: definitions of punishable conduct/acts/activities; protection of children who are exploited and issues related to the potential liability of children who exploit others; the status of the protocol vis-à-vis provisions in national law; the appropriateness, or not, of the protocol referring to the “spiritual and moral needs” of children; and, freedom of expression and the use of mass media to achieve the objectives of the protocol, particularly with regard to providing information and the education of the public.

The Annex to the report contains the draft texts resulting from the working group’s fourth session as well as texts to be considered at the 1999 session.

#### **Involvement of children in armed conflict**

By resolution 1994/91, the Commission on Human Rights established a working group to elaborate a draft optional protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on involvement of children in armed conflicts. The working group held its fourth session prior to the 1998 Commission. The report of the session (E/CN.4/1998/102) notes that topics discussed included: the ques-