

REVERSE:
WINNIPEG
CONFERENCE
official poster



WAR-AFFECTED CHILDREN

the facts

OVER THE LAST DECADE:

- 2 million children were killed in conflicts.
- Over 1 million were orphaned.
- Over 6 million were seriously injured or permanently disabled.
- Over 10 million suffered grave psychological trauma.

VICTIMS IN MANY WAYS

- Around the world, 300 000 young persons under the age of 18—some as young as 7—are currently being exploited as child soldiers in as many as 30 areas of conflict.
- Approximately 800 children are killed or maimed by landmines every month.
- Right now, there are over 20 million children who have been displaced by war within and outside their countries. They account for well over half the world's displaced people.
- Today, in approximately 50 countries, children are suffering in the midst of armed conflict and its aftermath. Children are being raped, sexually abused and uprooted from their homes.

CALL TO ACTION

- In 1989, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child. At the World Summit for Children the following year, all political leaders endorsed the Convention. It has now been ratified by 191 states, making it the most widely ratified international instrument in history.
- In 1994, negotiations began at the UN on ways to better protect children from war. On January 21, 2000, agreement was finally reached on an important measure: raising from 15 to 18 the minimum age for conscription and participation in combat. In June, Canada became the first country to sign and ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict.
- Also in 1994, Graça Machel, former Minister of Education of Mozambique, was invited to chair a UN study on the subject. Her report, tabled in 1996, painted an appalling picture. As a result, in September 1997, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan appointed Olara Otunnu his Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict.
- In August 1999, the UN Security Council unanimously adopted a resolution seeking to protect and ensure children's welfare in the midst of armed conflict and its aftermath. Among the measures: appointment of Child Protection Advisers to UN peace operations, and inclusion of specific child protection activities in the mandate of peace missions.
- In April 2000, Ghana and Canada co-hosted the West African Conference on War-Affected Children in Accra. Conference participants adopted a declaration and a plan of action for the region.
- In July, Secretary-General Annan tabled a report in the Security Council with 55 recommendations outlining what the international community could and should do to improve the lot of war-affected children—especially young girls and adolescents, who tend to be forgotten in conflict situations.
- From September 10 to 17 in Winnipeg, Canada is hosting the first ministerial-level International Conference on War-Affected Children. The aim is to formulate a plan of action to help the children of war.
- In September 2001, the UN General Assembly will hold a Special Session on Children. High on the agenda will be the situation of war-affected children.

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INFORMATION

{ www.waraffectedchildren.gc.ca
www.acdi-cida.gc.ca
www.savethechildren.net
www.child-soldiers.org

www.unicef.org
www.unhchr.ch
www.icrc.org
www.amnesty.org