

ADDRESS BY FIRST LADY OF GHANA
HER EXCELLENCY NANA KONADU AGYEMAN RAWLINGS

**AT THE CONFERENCE ON WAR-
AFFECTED CHILDREN IN WEST AFRICA**

26 April, 2000

**Mr. Chairman,
Hon. Members of Council of State,
Hon. Ministers of State and Members of Parliament,
Your Excellencies Members of the Diplomatic Corps,
Nananom, Niimeɪ, Naamei,
Representatives of Civil Society Organizations in West Africa and
elsewhere,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I am happy to join you at this Conference and to share my thoughts with you on this important subject of "War-affected Children" which has very serious implications for the future of the West Africa Sub-region and indeed the whole continent of Africa.

Mr. Chairman,

I believe that the time has come for us Africans to reflect more seriously on the fundamentals of our time, the fundamentals of the post-cold war period.

During the cold-war period, internal conflicts in Africa were merely suppressed by the logic of the West/East political ideological rivalry.

Following the collapse of the cold-war, the ugly head of the once suppressed internal conflicts began to rise well above the troubled waters of inter-state conflicts.

We are now living at a most frightening moment when virtually everything we do in life, within the realm of development is being undermined by internal conflicts.

We are all vulnerable to this state of affairs.

Mr. Chairman,

We have watched with great sadness, the civil wars in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea Bissau, Rwanda, Burundi, Angola, Somalia, Ethiopia, Eritrea and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Regrettably, these wars have gone on for so long without capturing the international conscience.