

## Conclusion

Your excellencies, to conclude.

Thanks especially to countries like Canada, Ghana and their like-minded partners other governments and civil society organisations, to Olara Otunnu and UN agencies like my own - there can be no doubt that children have found their place on the international peace and security agenda.

There is an expectation that this meeting of leaders will exercise leadership - to devise practical measures that can be applied in West Africa to ensure the prevention of armed conflict, and measures to protect children should war actually break out.

There should be an equal expectation in West Africa that the international community - governments, NGOs and international organisations - will stay around long enough, and with sufficient resources, to help you achieve these goals.

There will be a Special Session of the UN General Assembly in September 2001, to review progress for children since the 1990 World Summit for Children and the way ahead in the next decade. Canada, together with Mali from this region and four other countries, is already involved in preparing for that event. The organisation of this conference, and the high level of participation, is one indication of the importance now being given to issues of children and armed conflict by West African governments, Canada, civil society, youth and others.

This meeting, but more importantly, the timely and thorough implementation of its recommendations, offers us the opportunity to show true leadership, to demonstrate, as national, international, political, community and youth leaders, our real commitment and accountability to all our children.

Thank you.