

- Strengthening standards for peace-keeping personnel
The Special Representative and the Under-Secretary-General for Peace-keeping Operations have held several discussions on the issue of standards, procedures and training relating to the conduct of peace-keeping personnel. They share a common commitment to reviewing and strengthening existing arrangements, and have constituted a consultative group to this end. The Special Representative has also been in contact with several interested delegations, UN agencies and programmes and NGOs to seek their perspectives and input. The Special Representative and the Under-Secretary-General for Peace-keeping Operations intend to complete this exercise and to issue its outcome soon.
- Developing pilot projects in post-conflict situations
The Special Representative has stressed the importance of a concerted and more effective response to the needs of children and women in the aftermath of conflict. He plans to propose two or three post-conflict cases that may serve as pilot projects for the development of "best practice" and more systematic application of "lessons learned". Several key actors, including UNICEF, UNDP, the World Bank, the European Union, and several governments, have expressed support for this idea and have indicated their strong interest in participating in the proposed pilot projects.
- Strengthening the knowledge base
One of the first casualties of war is often the truth. To be effective in his work, the Special Representative needs to have ready access to reliable and timely information. The Special Representative is working to build a process for information gathering, relying on a network of United Nations agencies, research institutions, non-governmental organizations, and the academic community. Much of the information on children affected by armed conflict at present is diffuse, segmented, and not readily accessible to those who need it. A more comprehensive system is needed. Plans are underway for establishing an electronic data base and a web site for this purpose. One of the objectives of this database will also be to make available information relating to "lessons learned" and principles of "best practice".

(iii) Setting up a secretariat for the Special Representative

Since his appointment in September 1997, the Special Representative has been engaged in efforts to get a secretariat established and functioning to support his activities; this has proved to be a particular challenge. An office has been provided at United Nations Headquarters in New York. At the time of writing this report, however, the secretariat for the Special Representative is not yet fully functional and staff have not yet been recruited for this purpose. The Special Representative very much hopes that efforts presently underway will soon remedy this situation.

The Special Representative has also spent time mobilising voluntary contributions to support his work. He is very grateful to several Governments and UN programmes that have responded generously with initial contributions. These have been most helpful and made it