

Winnipeg and Beyond: NGO Priorities for the Conference on Children and Armed Conflict

A report on the afternoon discussion of the NGO Consultation on the Winnipeg Conference
July 14, 2000, written by NGO representatives.

Introduction

The afternoon provided an opportunity for further discussion of questions and priorities among representatives of organizations and interested individuals in attendance.

In response to questions, a brief history of the Working Group was provided. While the group retains an inclusive, informal structure, a steering committee was developed to prepare for the conference. The present steering committee is composed of Kathy Vandergrift, Chair, Hilary Homes, Janet Durno, Dr. Sam Nutt, Pamela Teitelbaum, and Robin Wentzell (since resigned because of other workload).

Previous meetings and e-mail discussion established four priorities for NGOs in relation to this event:

1. Strengthen and expand the NGO network so it can be a mechanism for follow-up to Winnipeg, as well as facilitate the role of NGOs in the event;
2. Develop an NGO plan of action.;
3. Co-operate in an NGO Fair to show what NGOs are doing and facilitate networking among NGOs; and
4. Serve as an advisory body to the Secretariat regarding NGO positions and participation.

Funding has been obtained from the Secretariat to work on these four aspects. There is no long-term funding beyond Winnipeg. Prior to this, the group has operated without funds; administrative costs have been covered by individual members. .

Suggestions for diversifying the group included the Canadian Teachers' Federation (who were invited), the Breastfeeding Co-ordinating Committee, groups from Atlantic Canada, and geographic coalitions, such as the Mozambique coalition. It was explained that the group has tried to put the children's agenda on the agenda of the various country-based NGO coalitions in Canada.