

On our part in Ghana, given our wealth of experience in international peacekeeping dating back to the Congo in the early 1960s, we are committed to making the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre a centre of excellence in Africa for training peacekeeping personnel in this critically important area. We ask for the support of the Government of Canada and other interested donors to make this commitment a reality.

We are soon to mark the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of ECOWAS at a summit to be held in Abuja, Nigeria, in May. What more fitting a tribute to our sub-regional organization at this juncture in history than to make West Africa the pace-setter in the protection and rehabilitation of war-affected children. For this, we count on the support of all member states, as well as all sectors of civil society—non-governmental organisations, the media, the religious communities, our traditional authorities and our citizens themselves.

On my part, I pledge to take this agenda up at the Abuja summit. Let us all pledge to make the outcomes of this Conference tangible, meaningful and practical. In so doing, we will be benefiting not only those societies emerging from conflict, but also those of us that enjoy relative peace and stability, for it is only when all our children can live in peace that our countries will move forward with economic integration and prosperity for all.

I wish you God's blessings in your deliberations.

Thank you.