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CANADA World View

Issue 9 • Fall 2000

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Time for Action: Protecting war-affected children

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A Voice for Children

UN Special Representative
Olara Otunnu

The Winnipeg Conference

Mobilizing the international community
on behalf of war-affected children

The UN Millennium Summit

Defining a new UN for a new century



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ABOUT CANADA WORLD VIEW

Published quarterly, *Canada World View* provides an overview of current foreign policy issues and Canada's perspective on them. It also updates readers on Canadian initiatives, responses and contributions in the field of international affairs.

OUR COVER

Photo: Young Cambodian refugees on the Thai-Cambodian border
CANAPRESS/AP

Drawing: Illustration by Nikoleta, age 10, from Fažana, former Yugoslavia
UNICEF

ISSN 1491-4573

COMING EVENTS

SEPTEMBER

September 6-8
United Nations Millennium Summit
New York, USA

September 10-17
International Conference on War-Affected Children
Winnipeg, Manitoba

OCTOBER

October 2-6
Commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

October 4-6
10th Conference of Spouses of Heads of State and Government of the Americas
Lima, Peru

October 9-13
5th Ministerial Meeting on Children and Social Policy in the Americas
Kingston, Jamaica

NOVEMBER

November 12-13
APEC Ministerial Meeting
Brunei Darussalam

November 15-16
8th APEC Leaders' Meeting
Brunei Darussalam

DECEMBER

December 1-3
Global Summit of the Arts and Culture
Ottawa, Ontario

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Time for Action

Protecting and supporting war-affected children



Refugee camp in Thailand



Former child soldier, Uganda



Chechen refugee

The numbers are appalling: Over the last decade, 2 million children were killed in conflicts, over 1 million were orphaned, over 6 million were seriously injured or permanently disabled, and over 10 million suffered grave psychological trauma. Around the world, some 300 000 young persons under the age of 18 are currently being exploited as child soldiers in as many as 30 areas of conflict.

Today, in approximately 50 countries, children are suffering in the midst of armed conflict and its aftermath. Children are being raped, sexually abused and uprooted from their homes. Right now, there are over 20 million children who have been displaced by war within and outside their countries. They account for well over half the world's displaced people.

Children are especially vulnerable when they are deprived of food, sanitation and basic health care—the essentials for survival and healthy growth. Most of them live in extremely deprived and dangerously unsanitary conditions, in communities that are marginalized and economically depressed. They bear deep emotional scars or must cope with lasting trauma. Approximately 800 children are killed or maimed by landmines every month.

This cannot be allowed to continue. Since the World Summit for Children was held in 1990, the United Nations, several countries (including Canada) and non-governmental organizations have sought to draw international attention to the horrendous plight of children affected by armed conflict.

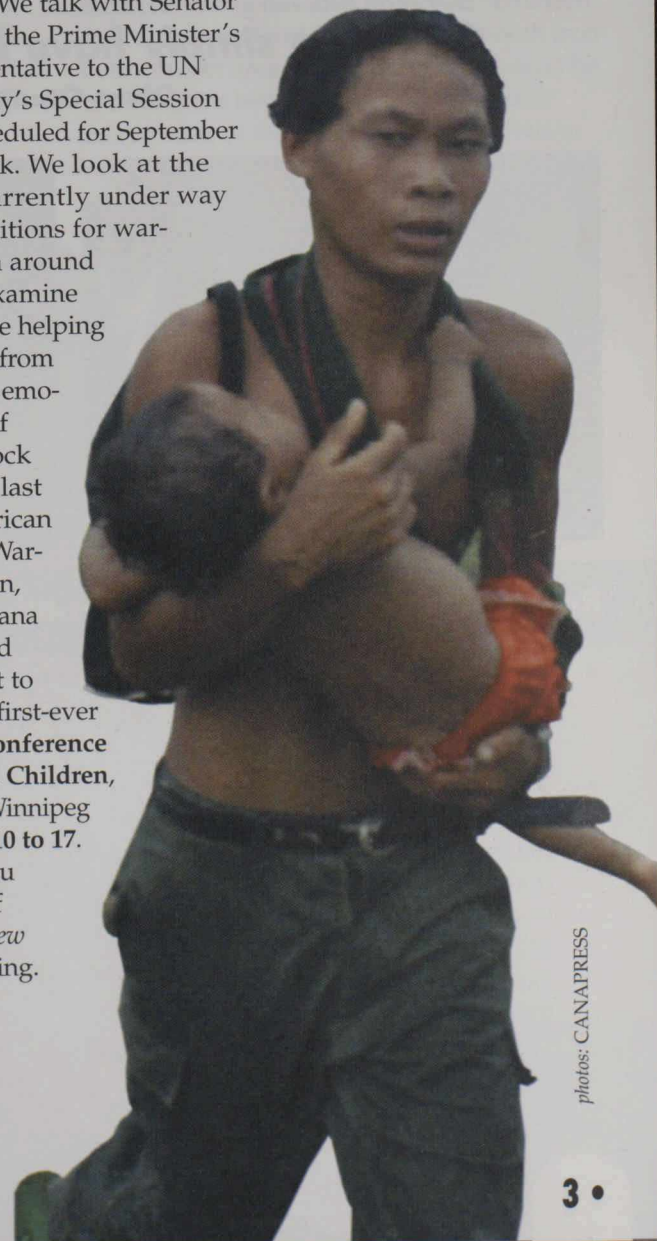
In this issue of *Canada World View*, we examine how the international community, and particularly Canada, has responded and is responding. We look at the root causes of modern conflict, how it affects civilians and children more than ever before, who is acting and what they are doing to help war-affected children, and how we can collectively contribute to the global movement against the exploitation of children in war.

We describe the advocacy work of Olara Otunnu, the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for Children and

Armed Conflict. We talk with Senator Landon Pearson, the Prime Minister's Personal Representative to the UN General Assembly's Special Session on Children, scheduled for September 2001 in New York. We look at the global effort currently under way to improve conditions for war-affected children around the world. We examine initiatives that are helping children recover from the physical and emotional wounds of war. We take stock of the results of last April's West African Conference on War-Affected Children, co-hosted by Ghana and Canada. And we look at what to expect from the first-ever **International Conference on War-Affected Children**, taking place in Winnipeg this **September 10 to 17**.

We hope you find this issue of *Canada World View* thought-provoking.

The Editors



photos: CANAPRESS



The International
Conference on
War-Affected
Children



September 10-17, 2000
Winnipeg, Canada
www.waraffectedchildren.com

A Voice for Children: Olara Otunnu

In September 1997, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan named Olara A. Otunnu to a three-year term as his Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict. In announcing the appointment, Mr. Annan underscored the urgent need for a public advocate and moral voice speaking on behalf of war-affected children.

Mr. Otunnu has taken the task very seriously. In his field missions, he has secured important commitments from warring parties, including undertakings

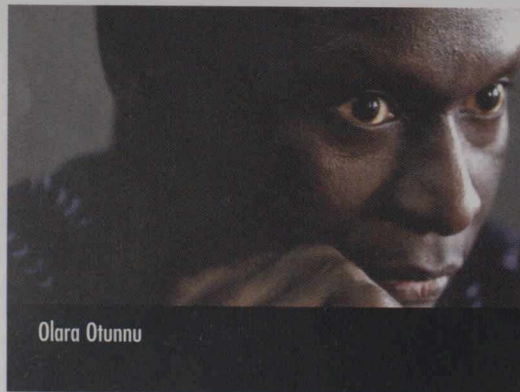
not to recruit children as combatants and not to target schools, hospitals and other public buildings. He has also been a highly effective catalyst for action by governments, UN agencies (which were already working on behalf of war-affected children) and humanitarian NGOs; and he has tirelessly promoted the rights of war-affected children.

Born in northern Uganda in 1950, Olara Otunnu is particularly well qualified for his current position. A lawyer, he studied at Makerere University in Kampala, and at Oxford University and Harvard Law

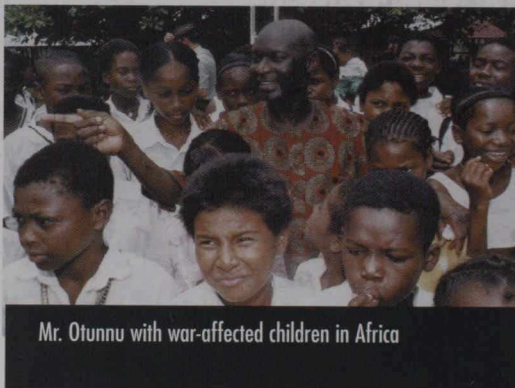
School. As a student leader in the 1970s, he played a prominent part in the opposition to the regime of Idi Amin. From 1980 to 1985 he served as Uganda's Permanent Representative to the United Nations; there he took a very active role, including as President of the Security Council. In 1985-86 he was Uganda's Minister of Foreign Affairs; and in following years he participated in many international organizations, studies and commissions focussing on world peace. He is a member of the Carnegie Endowment

Children simply have no part in warfare.

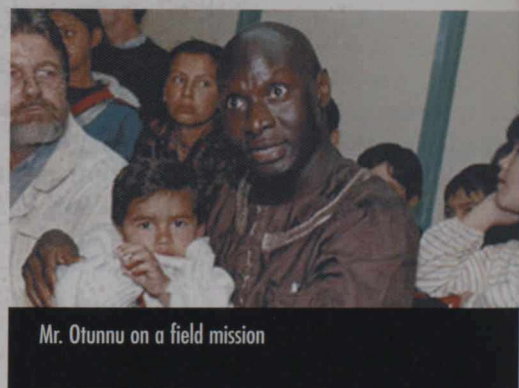
—Olara Otunnu, ADDRESS TO THE UN COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS, MARCH 12, 1998



Olara Otunnu



Mr. Otunnu with war-affected children in Africa

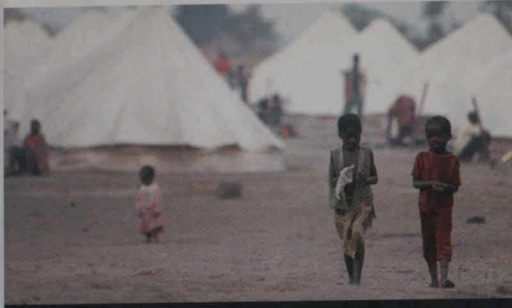


Mr. Otunnu on a field mission

photos: Office of Special Representative

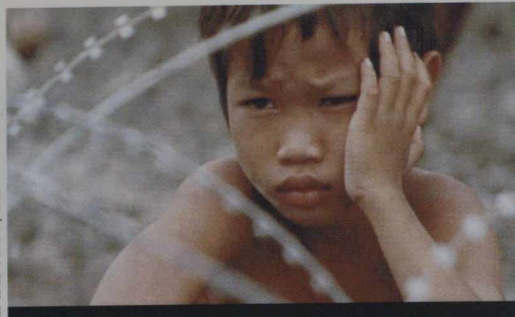
Recent key actions by the international community

- UN peace operations now include child protection activities and Child Protection Advisers.
- In East and West Africa and in Kosovo, "neighbourhood initiatives" have been developed to promote dialogue between governments, insurgency groups, civil society organizations and humanitarian agencies. The aim is to adopt concrete measures for protecting children from cross-border threats.
- In August 1999, the UN Security Council unanimously adopted a resolution specifying important measures for protecting and ensuring children's welfare in the midst of armed conflict and its aftermath.
- In the Security Council this past July, Secretary-General Annan tabled a report with 55 recommendations outlining what the international community could and should do to improve the situation of war-affected children—especially young girls and adolescents, who tend to be forgotten in conflict situations.
- Perhaps most important, last May the UN General Assembly adopted the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict. This new international instrument prohibits the conscription of children under age 18 and their participation in combat. Canada was the first country to sign the Protocol on June 6.



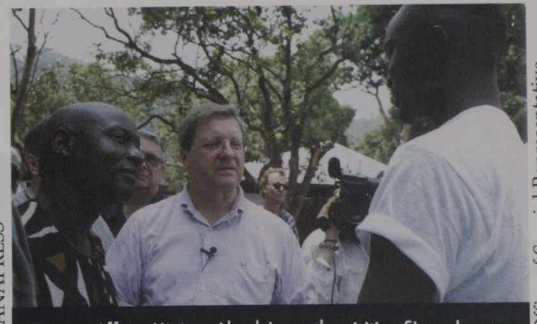
Refugee camp in Angola

photo: CANAPRESS/AP



Cambodian refugee

photo: CANAPRESS



Foreign Affairs Minister Lloyd Axworthy visiting Sierra Leone with Mr. Otunnu in April 2000

photo: Office of Special Representative

for International Peace, as well as the Advisory Committee of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute.

Himself the guardian of six children, Olara Otunnu was the perfect choice for an advocate to give a strong and credible voice to war-affected children. His mandate, he says, is simple: "To promote the protection, rights and welfare of children at every phase of conflict. . . . I undertake political and humanitarian diplomacy, and propose concrete initiatives to protect children in the midst of war. By the time my mandate expires, I hope to have succeeded in creating broad-based awareness of the fate of children affected by armed conflict, and that global outrage at these continuing abominations will in turn have led to a worldwide movement of repudiation."

Commitments that bring hope

Mr. Otunnu's field missions have certainly produced results. In Colombia, for instance, the government adopted a policy forbidding enlistment of youths below the age of 18 in the armed forces, while the insurgent Revolutionary Armed

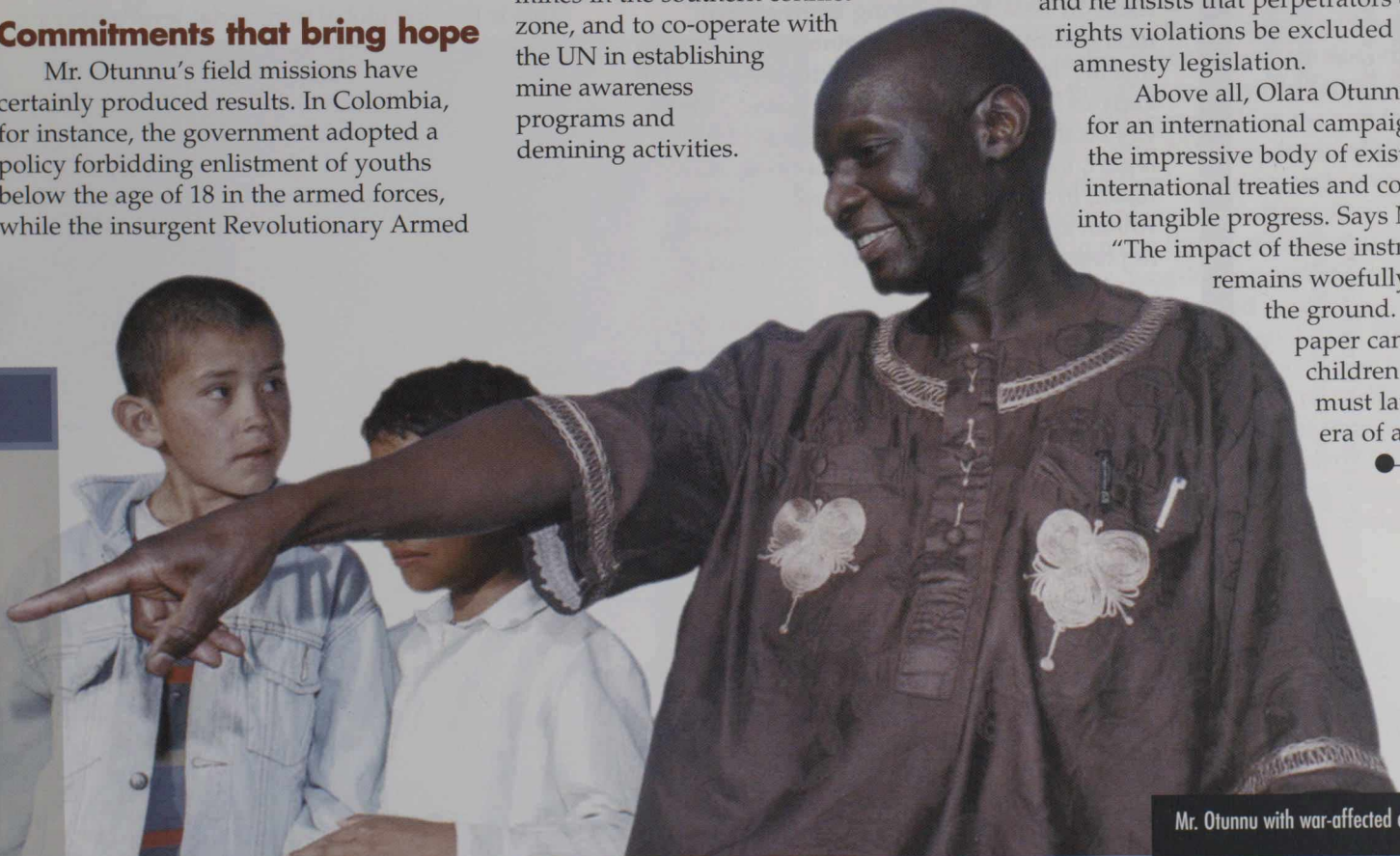
Forces of Colombia agreed to end recruitment of children below age 15. In Rwanda and Burundi, both governments undertook to raise to 18 the minimum recruitment age for the armed forces, and to pay special attention to children's needs in the post-conflict period, especially education and health requirements.

In Sri Lanka, government authorities and rebel leaders agreed not to use children below age 18 in combat, and not to recruit children under age 17. Both sides also gave commitments to allow the provision and distribution of humanitarian supplies in conflict-affected areas, and to permit the free movement of displaced populations. In Sudan, the government and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement both undertook not to use anti-personnel mines in the southern conflict zone, and to co-operate with the UN in establishing mine awareness programs and demining activities.

From words to action

Despite these breakthroughs, much remains to be done. Now that his mandate has been extended for another three years, Mr. Otunnu has several priorities. One is a worldwide Week of Tranquillity: "All warring factions in all ongoing conflicts would adhere to a simultaneous week-long cease-fire each year for the sake of children." Another priority is the Voice of Children initiative, promoting radio programming that focusses on the needs and interests of war-affected children. The Special Representative has also proposed "children-to-children networks" connecting youth from both conflict areas and countries at peace; he is calling for better and more systematic monitoring of the peace and humanitarian commitments given by parties to conflicts; and he insists that perpetrators of child rights violations be excluded from amnesty legislation.

Above all, Olara Otunnu is calling for an international campaign to translate the impressive body of existing international treaties and conventions into tangible progress. Says Mr. Otunnu, "The impact of these instruments remains woefully thin on the ground. Words on paper cannot save children in peril: we must launch an era of application."



Mr. Otunnu with war-affected children in Colombia

photo: Office of the Special Representative

For more information about Olara Otunnu and his work on behalf of war-affected children, visit the Web site of the Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict: www.un.org/special-rep/children-armed-conflict

War-Affected Children: stop the abuse

Gathering momentum to



Basic Facts

- Most cynical is the recruitment or kidnapping of children as young as 7 or 8 (girls as well as boys) to serve as soldiers. Easily manipulated, they can become ruthless and unquestioning tools of war. They committed some of the worst atrocities in Sierra Leone.
- Sources: Reports of the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict, 1998 and 1999
- Today's conflicts are primarily internal, often fought by multiple armed groups. The village has become the battlefield, and civilian populations are the primary target.
- Children are specifically targeted in strategies that seek to eliminate a new generation of potential adversaries. The same strategies encourage widespread sexual abuse of children, especially girls.

The 1980s saw awakening global concern about the situation of children, particularly in areas of conflict; this culminated in 1989, when the UN General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Convention has been ratified by 191 states, making it the most widely ratified international instrument in history. A key article stipulates that children exposed to armed conflict shall receive special protection, and that no child shall take part in any hostilities.

At the 1990 World Summit for Children, all the leaders attending fully endorsed the Convention. Even so, the situation of children continued to deteriorate in many states. But the Convention at least gave the United Nations and the international community a powerful new tool for drawing attention to war-affected children. The UN specialized agencies, many governments and numerous NGOs started focussing on the issue. In 1994, the growing international momentum led to the appointment of Graça Machel, former Minister of Education and First Lady of Mozambique, to chair a study for the UN on the subject. The conclusions of her report, tabled in 1996, were shocking. As a result, in September 1997, Secretary-General Annan appointed Olara Otunnu his Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict (see pp. 4-5).

Meanwhile, within the United Nations, work began on finding ways to better protect children from war. After six years of difficult negotiations, on January 21, 2000, agreement was reached on an important measure: raising from 15 to 18 the minimum age for conscription and participation in combat. On May 26, the General Assembly adopted the measure, known as the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict. The Protocol seeks to eliminate the use of child soldiers in armed conflict. Canada had worked hard for its adoption and became the first signatory of the Protocol in June and the first country to ratify it on July 7.

Spotlight on Winnipeg

In other ways, Canada is working to mobilize the international community. With Ghana, it co-hosted the West African Conference on War-Affected Children, held last April in Accra; this produced a declaration and a plan of action for the region. Among the initiatives proposed in the plan are: adoption of laws to raise the minimum recruitment age to 18; media awareness and public information campaigns on children's rights; rehabilitation and re-integration programs for children within safe communities; and conflict prevention.

From the regional level, Canada is now placing the issue before a wider forum as it hosts the International Conference on War-Affected Children, from September 10 to 17 in Winnipeg. This is the first global ministerial-level gathering

on issues facing war-affected children; among those attending are representatives of UN agencies, youth from all regions of the world, non-governmental organizations and academics.

The Conference will be divided into three parts: an international meeting of youth; an experts' conference; and the ministerial-level meeting. On the agenda: formulating an international plan of action to address the growing problem of children affected by armed conflict.

UNICEF is co-hosting one part of the Conference: a meeting of experts to propose ways of dealing with the challenges and generating political and moral resolve. The meeting is part of UNICEF's new "Global Partnership for Children" initiative, a world-wide effort to make children a priority for the public and decision makers in all walks of life. Says UNICEF Executive Director Carol Bellamy, "We must make a difference for war-affected children. This is our only option."

Key Conference partners include the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, the Canadian International Development Agency, the Department of National Defence, and UNICEF.

To break the cycle of violence

The task ahead is daunting. For example, for over 40 years, Colombian children have suffered as victims, witnesses and perpetrators of violence. At least 620 000 of them have been displaced by conflict, and 55 percent of the internally displaced are under the age of 18. In Kosovo, over 65 percent of refugees were children. In Rwanda, of the estimated 800 000 people massacred, 300 000 were children; and over 95 per cent of Rwandan children have witnessed killings, often in their own families.

What's more, the cessation of hostilities does not mean that war is over, particularly for children who have been extensively exposed to the culture of violence. A systematic program of healing and re-integration into society is the only way to break the cycle. Olara Otunnu says, "The healing and rehabilitation needs of children should constitute a central theme and not an afterthought of post-conflict peacebuilding programs."

At the Winnipeg Conference, Canada will seek recognition for the reality that children are not only among the victims of war—that they can also be actively involved in helping their families and communities recover from war's aftermath. Given this reality, better understanding is needed of the root causes of children's involvement in war, in order to better identify and implement solutions. Only with the participation of children can the world community develop and implement effective, long-lasting and meaningful responses to the problems of armed conflict.

After the Accra Conference, Foreign Affairs Minister Lloyd Axworthy travelled to Sierra Leone, where he visited the Amputee Camp at Murray Town and met with war-affected children. This gave him a first-hand look at their plight. Along with International Co-operation Minister Maria Minna, he is determined to make the Winnipeg Conference a turning point in international efforts to create a safer world for future generations. ●

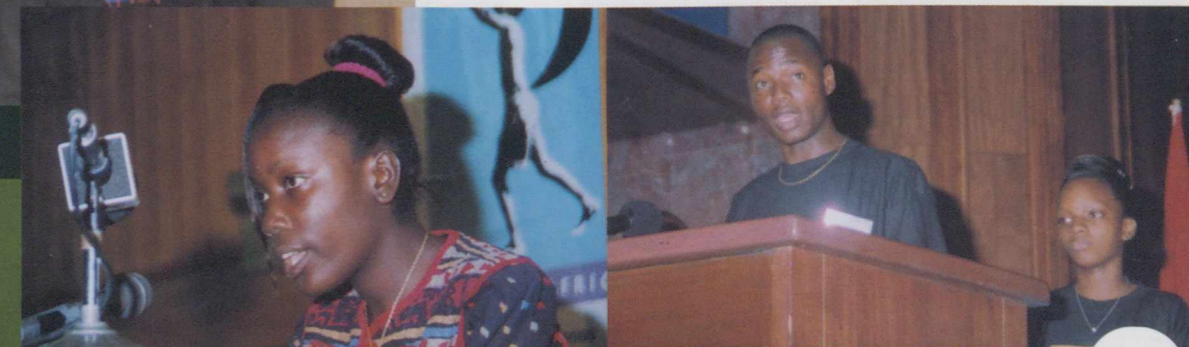


Foreign Affairs Minister Axworthy (far right) with Ghana's President Jerry Rawlings (centre) and Foreign Minister Victor Gbeho (fifth from left) at Accra Conference in April 2000

photos: DEAIT

One of the most basic human instincts is to protect one's child from harm and suffering. Children represent our global future, and the desire to guard them from the many forces that can destroy their hope and innocence is universal. Doing so is an essential part of our broader aspiration to promote human security and to create stable, peaceful societies.

—Foreign Affairs Minister Lloyd Axworthy, Accra, Ghana, April 2000



West African war-affected children at Accra Conference

NGO in the field



HELPING Sierra Leone's Children of War

Of the many horrors of the civil war in Sierra Leone, none has been more tragic than the use of children—some as young as 7—as soldiers, child labourers and sex slaves. Rebuilding the lives of these war-affected children is a considerable challenge. Canadian aid workers Paul and Beverley Carrick are helping to meet it.

The Carricks are the founders of Christian Aid for Under-Assisted Societies Everywhere (CAUSE) Canada, a non-governmental organization based in Canmore, Alberta. CAUSE makes a point of going to areas where few other NGOs venture.

Supporting the Carricks' work in Sierra Leone is the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). In July 1999, CAUSE received funding to build shelters and distribute basic domestic items (pots, mats, etc.) to persons displaced by the war.

More recently, a \$500 000 contribution from CIDA's Peacebuilding Fund has helped CAUSE foster reconciliation in Sierra Leone. The organization works with former child soldiers, orphans, and children who have suffered physically or psychologically, helping them re-integrate into their communities.

"We are teaching them to make nets and boats for deep-sea fishing, carpentry, auto mechanics, soap making, tie-dyeing and tailoring," says Paul Carrick.

photos: CAUSE Canada



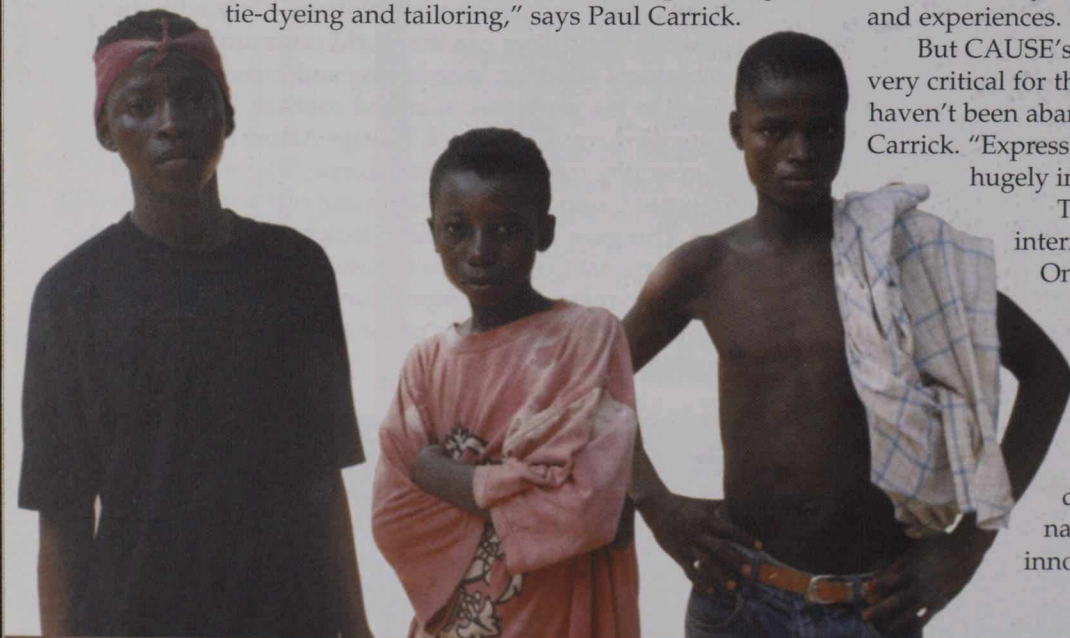
Some are also learning to make crutches and wheelchairs for the thousands of Sierra Leoneans (including children) who were injured or deliberately maimed in the war.

The problems of former child soldiers are less visible but no less real. Many saw their families killed and then were forced to commit similar atrocities. Some don't know where they came from; many know only their military identities—nicknames such as "Rambo" or "Killer Boy." Carrick describes a recent rechristening ceremony in which the children gave themselves new names, such as Prince and Mohammed.

Theatre is another therapeutic tool. Borrowing from Africa's dynamic storytelling tradition, CAUSE workers are teaching 200 former combatants in a child-soldier centre to stage plays for the community. This is a way for them to express their feelings and experiences.

But CAUSE's presence has another vital purpose. "It's very critical for the people of Sierra Leone to sense that they haven't been abandoned by the rest of the world," says Paul Carrick. "Expressing solidarity with people in crisis is hugely important."

That's why the group has called on the international community for action on two fronts. One is ending the flow of illegal arms into Sierra Leone from what Carrick calls "an evil industry that needs to have the plug pulled on it." The other is establishing an effective peacekeeping force. "I would argue," says Carrick, "that no more than 10 000 trained men have hijacked a country of 5 million people for a decade. It would be great to disarm them in the name of the 99 percent of the population who are innocent victims desperate for peace." ●



CAUSE Canada relies on private donations and support from funding agencies. For more information, visit its Web site (www.cause.ca) or write to CAUSE Canada at P.O. Box 8100, Canmore, Alberta T1W 2T8.

REVERSE:
WINNIPEG
CONFERENCE
official poster



WAR-AFFECTED CHILDREN

the facts

OVER THE LAST DECADE:

- 2 million children were killed in conflicts.
- Over 1 million were orphaned.
- Over 6 million were seriously injured or permanently disabled.
- Over 10 million suffered grave psychological trauma.

VICTIMS IN MANY WAYS

- Around the world, 300 000 young persons under the age of 18—some as young as 7—are currently being exploited as child soldiers in as many as 30 areas of conflict.
- Approximately 800 children are killed or maimed by landmines every month.
- Right now, there are over 20 million children who have been displaced by war within and outside their countries. They account for well over half the world's displaced people.
- Today, in approximately 50 countries, children are suffering in the midst of armed conflict and its aftermath. Children are being raped, sexually abused and uprooted from their homes.

CALL TO ACTION

- In 1989, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child. At the World Summit for Children the following year, all political leaders endorsed the Convention. It has now been ratified by 191 states, making it the most widely ratified international instrument in history.
- In 1994, negotiations began at the UN on ways to better protect children from war. On January 21, 2000, agreement was finally reached on an important measure: raising from 15 to 18 the minimum age for conscription and participation in combat. In June, Canada became the first country to sign and ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict.
- Also in 1994, Graça Machel, former Minister of Education of Mozambique, was invited to chair a UN study on the subject. Her report, tabled in 1996, painted an appalling picture. As a result, in September 1997, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan appointed Olara Otunnu his Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict.
- In August 1999, the UN Security Council unanimously adopted a resolution seeking to protect and ensure children's welfare in the midst of armed conflict and its aftermath. Among the measures: appointment of Child Protection Advisers to UN peace operations, and inclusion of specific child protection activities in the mandate of peace missions.
- In April 2000, Ghana and Canada co-hosted the West African Conference on War-Affected Children in Accra. Conference participants adopted a declaration and a plan of action for the region.
- In July, Secretary-General Annan tabled a report in the Security Council with 55 recommendations outlining what the international community could and should do to improve the lot of war-affected children—especially young girls and adolescents, who tend to be forgotten in conflict situations.
- From September 10 to 17 in Winnipeg, Canada is hosting the first ministerial-level International Conference on War-Affected Children. The aim is to formulate a plan of action to help the children of war.
- In September 2001, the UN General Assembly will hold a Special Session on Children. High on the agenda will be the situation of war-affected children.

WEB PAGES
WITH MORE
INFORMATION

www.waraffectedchildren.gc.ca
www.acdi-cida.gc.ca
www.savethechildren.net
www.child-soldiers.org

www.unicef.org
www.unhchr.ch
www.icrc.org
www.amnesty.org



WINNIPEG CANADA
SEPTEMBER 10-17 / DU 10 AU 17 SEPTEMBRE
2000

THE
INTERNATIONAL
CONFERENCE ON
**WAR-AFFECTED
CHILDREN**

CONFÉRENCE
INTERNATIONALE SUR
**LES ENFANTS
TOUCHÉS PAR
LA GUERRE**

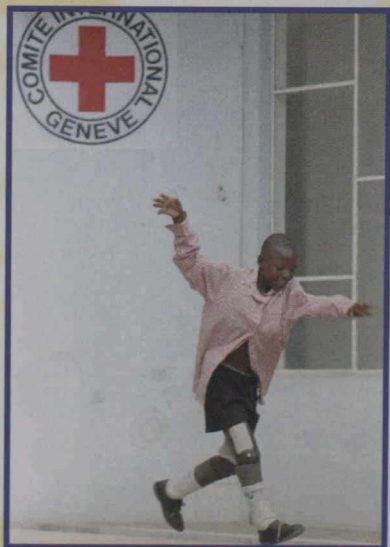


Government
of Canada

Gouvernement
du Canada

Canada

THE **FACES** *of* **WAR-AFFECTED CHILDREN**



Landon Pearson

The children's senator

From the extermination camps of Europe to the famines of Biafra and the killing grounds of Rwanda, the 20th century saw some of the grimmest chapters in the history of children's suffering. Now, at the start of a new century, Senator Landon Mackenzie Pearson sees a glimmer of hope—a dawning recognition that children too have human rights, including the right to be heard.

Senator Pearson can trace the growth of this awareness in her own life. Born in Toronto in 1930, she grew up in a small Ontario town. There the sufferings of children registered in her awareness only in her grandmother's exhortations to "remember the starving Armenians" when she wouldn't finish her dinner.

***I've never ceased to be amazed
at the survival skills of poor children.***

—Landon Pearson

"I understood that these were creatures I should be sorry for," she said in an O.D. Skelton Memorial Lecture entitled *Seen and Heard: Children's Rights in Foreign Policy*, delivered in Winnipeg in 1997. "But I could not grasp that they were children just like me. As for their human rights, the vocabulary of the time didn't include the term."

The vocabulary expanded during the Second World War, and so did Pearson's own perceptions when she became a mother: "I had no trouble comprehending that my own children were persons or . . . that they had rights."

The wife of a Foreign Service Officer—Geoffrey Pearson, son of Lester B. Pearson—she accompanied her husband on postings abroad and there came face to face with child suffering: "The starving children my grandmother taught me to pity (but never how to help) became young persons whose rights to survival and protection had been trampled upon."

In the over 40 years since then, Landon Pearson has been working at home and abroad to help children, most of the time as a volunteer.

In India, for example, she worked with a mobile child care service for the children of nomadic construction workers in New Delhi and Bombay. During rotations home, she fought for children's rights, co-founding a children's mental health program that operated for 23 years in Ottawa, and chairing many children's rights organizations.

But the experience that, she says, "politicized" her thinking about children's issues came in 1979, when she served as Vice-Chairperson of the Canadian Commission for the International Year of the Child and editor of its report, *For Canada's Children*. This became a virtual manifesto for children's rights in Canada.

At hearings across the country, Ms. Pearson realized with dismay that shockingly few children "felt truly valued, respected or consulted about important issues."

In 1994, Landon Pearson was appointed to the Senate of Canada. In her maiden speech she vowed to be "the Senator for children," working to give children a stronger voice and to protect their rights in law.

Since then she has represented Canada at domestic and international conferences on a multitude of children's issues. In 1999, Prime Minister Chrétien named her his Personal

Representative to the UN General Assembly's 2001 Special Session on Children.

In September, Senator Pearson has an important date on her schedule: the International Conference on War-Affected Children in Winnipeg.

To anyone tempted to despair at the scale of the atrocities against children and the extent of their vulnerability, the Senator counsels resolve and hope. "I've never ceased to be amazed at the survival skills of poor children," she says. "I've learned how much children can actually do for themselves if only we provide the necessary means. That part is up to us." ●



photo: Senator Pearson's office

For more information about Senator Pearson and her work for children, visit her Web site: www.sen.parl.gc.ca/lpearson/main.html

National Forum 2000

Young Canadians

talk about

war-affected children

When the Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development (CCFPD) invited young Canadians to share their thoughts about war-affected children around the world, hundreds responded enthusiastically.

As part of the National Forum 2000 throughout June and July, CCFPD held day-long workshops in Vancouver, Winnipeg, Toronto, Montréal and Halifax, where more than 200 young people discussed the effects of war on children. With the help of the Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture, they included youths ranging in age from 12 to 20, who could tell about their own experiences of war in Afghanistan, Bosnia, Iraq, Kenya, Kosovo, Liberia, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan and other countries.

Workshop recommendations:

- Arrest and punish all war criminals.
- Help community organizations in war zones.
- Get rid of all landmines.
- Control gun sales and the arms trade to cut off the supply of small arms to war makers.
- Recognize that international economic sanctions harm children, not government leaders.
- Divert money from war to education.
- Use school programs to spread awareness of refugee issues in Canada.
- Create more programs for war-affected children.
- Promote multicultural clubs in Canada.
- Provide more help from Canada for war-affected people abroad, especially children who have lost family and home.

Participants suggested many ways to stop or reduce the impact of war, and in roundtable discussions they offered a wide variety of recommendations. One and all agreed that people need more opportunities for coming together to understand each other better and eradicate the scourge of war.

Attending one of the workshops was Aziza from Somalia. She commented, "I think governments should spend less on the military . . . education should be the priority." Kale from Nigeria recalled, "We stayed in a refugee camp for two years. It was the worst time in my life. It was like hell. . . . The Canadian government can help by supplying education and books." Indira from Kosovo said, "I want to thank the government of Canada and all the people in Canada because we were so welcomed."

The National Forum culminates with a meeting in Winnipeg immediately before the International Conference on War-Affected Children. Some of the young people are participating in that final National Forum event, as well as in the Conference itself. To the foreign ministers and international experts at the Conference, they will present the recommendations and comments from the workshops. And they will tell of their experiences and call for a more peaceful world. ●



photos: CCFPD

Using the latest information technology, the Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development has created educational tools accessible via the Internet. To download elementary or high school modules for teaching about war-affected children, visit:
www.cfp-pec.gc.ca/NationalForum/nati-e.htm



Canadian Centre
For Foreign Policy
Development

NATIONS

IN • THE • NEWS

Sierra Leone: A society to rebuild

Located near the equator, Sierra Leone is a small land of plains and plateaus. Its fragile economy is based mainly on mining (bauxite, diamonds) and the production of coffee and cocoa beans. European contact goes back to 1462, when explorer Pedro de Sintra sighted and mapped this part of Africa's west coast, giving it the Portuguese name of Serra Leôa, or "Lion Mountains."

With a population of approximately 5 million, Sierra Leone is one of the poorest countries in the world. Its economy has declined considerably since civil war broke out in 1991. On the UN Development Programme's Human Development Index, Canada ranks first; Sierra Leone ranks last. Two-way trade between Canada and Sierra Leone is almost non-existent.

Sierra Leone long served as an important post for the trade in slaves between Africa and North America. British traders dislodged the Portuguese in the 17th century. In 1787, Britain established the settlement of Freetown, now the capital, as a haven for newly freed slaves. Sierra Leone became a British colony in 1808. It gained independence in 1961, joining the Commonwealth, and in 1971 it became a republic. Seven years later, its President and Prime Minister, Siaka Stevens, instituted a dictatorship. Democracy was brought back in 1991 by his successor, General Joseph Momoh, but he was soon ousted.

A horrific insurgency ensued, waged by the Revolutionary United Front (RUF); this left close to 100 000 dead, while warring factions deliberately amputated the limbs of thousands of people, including small children. Over 3 million Sierra Leoneans have been displaced by war within and outside the country; of these, more than 60 percent are children. Despite the signing of the Lomé Peace Accord in July 1999, fighting has continued in many parts of the country—as have human rights abuses, the majority perpetrated by the RUF.

Canada is concerned at the ordeal to which Sierra Leoneans, particularly children, have been subjected. Since the beginning of the conflict, Canada has

given millions of dollars in humanitarian assistance plus support to the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone. Most of the funding has been channelled through the Canadian International Development Agency. Targeted have been the most vulnerable areas and people in need. The help has included emergency food aid, shelter and emergency health supplies.

Last April 29 and 30, Foreign Affairs Minister Axworthy visited Sierra Leone to evaluate the country's political situation and to renew Canada's commitment to providing support for war-affected children, peacekeeping and peacebuilding activities.

The Minister announced that Canada would provide \$250 000 for a National Commission for War-Affected Children, to be created by the Sierra Leone government. The Commission will ensure that the Sierra Leone government gives priority to children's needs in policy making and resource allocation.

Said Mr. Axworthy, "The people of Sierra Leone, particularly children, have suffered tremendously. It is essential that we restore a sense of hope and ensure they can live a long, productive and secure life." ●—



FREETOWN



photos: Sierra Leone Web (www.sierra-leone.org)



Renewing the United Nations:

Leaders from all over the world will come to New York for the Millennium Summit. They will consider the challenges ahead, and what the United Nations can do to face them. Those leaders will be representing you, the peoples of the United Nations.

It is up to you to make sure they come here firmly resolved to take decisions which can lead to a better life for all of us, and for our children.

—UN SECRETARY-GENERAL Kofi Annan

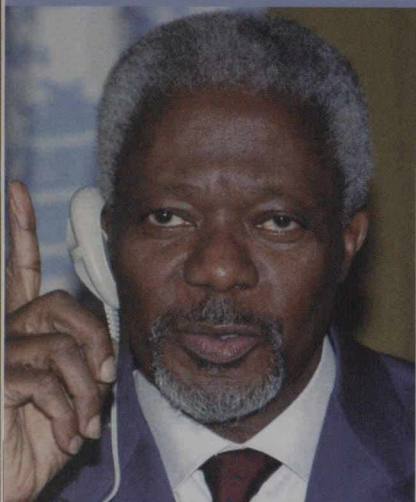


photo: CANAPRESS

What kind of United Nations does the world want in the 21st century? This question tops the agenda at the Millennium Summit, taking place September 6 to 8 at UN Headquarters in New York.

The Summit is being billed as the single largest gathering of heads of state and government in history. But it must be more than a celebration, says Secretary-General Annan: "It is essential that it should provide an opportunity for a 'moral recommitment' to the purposes and principles laid down in the Charter of the United Nations, and spur new political momentum for the international co-operation and solidarity that the peoples of the world increasingly demand."

A unique organization

The United Nations was created under the UN Charter, signed on June 26, 1945, by 50 countries attending the San Francisco Conference. The organization officially came into being later that year on October 24, the date by which a majority of signatories had ratified the Charter in their national legislatures. The UN replaced the League of Nations, which had been established by the Treaty of Versailles in 1919. Canada participated in the San Francisco Conference and is one of the founding members of the United Nations.

The UN Charter sets out the basic purposes of the organization:

- to maintain international peace and security;
- to develop friendly relations among nations; and
- to achieve international co-operation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural or humanitarian character, and in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights.

The Charter also specifies principles to guide UN action:

- all member states are equal;
- international disputes are to be settled by peaceful means;
- members may not use force or the threat of force against other members; and
- all members must fulfil their Charter obligations and help the UN in any action it might take in accordance with the Charter.

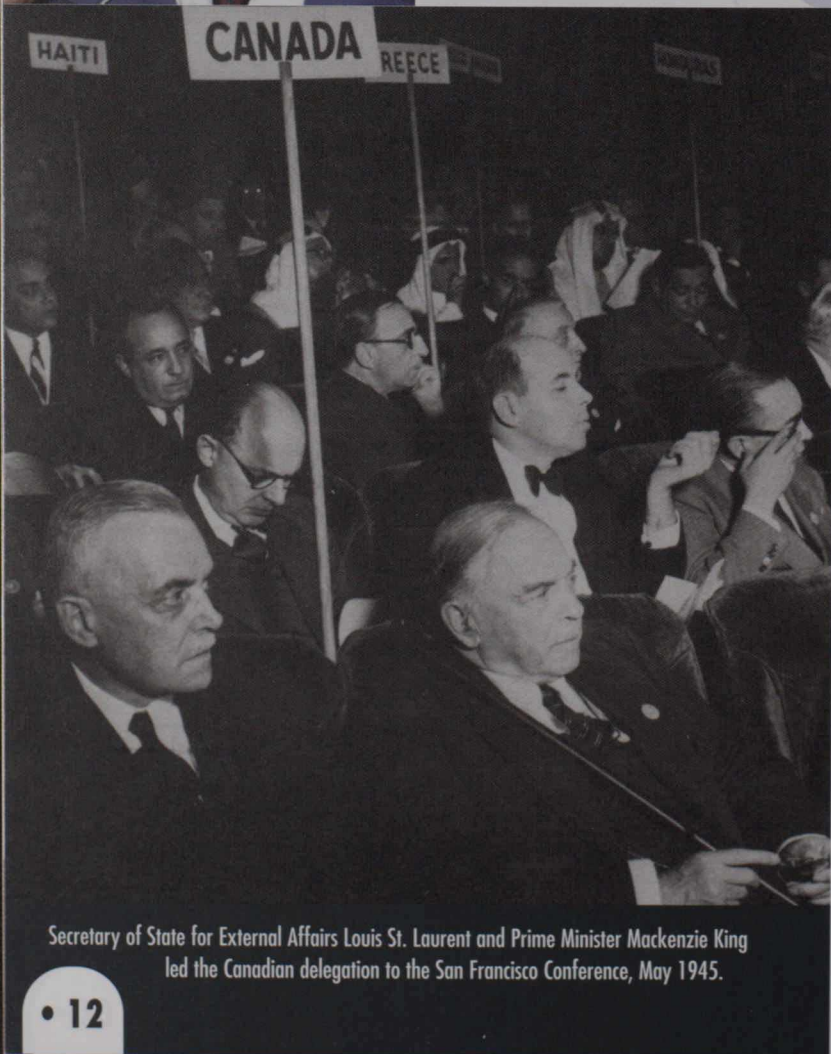


photo: National Archives of Canada

Secretary of State for External Affairs Louis St. Laurent and Prime Minister Mackenzie King led the Canadian delegation to the San Francisco Conference, May 1945.

photo: United Nations

THE MILLENNIUM SUMMIT CHALLENGE



UN Security Council in session

Over the past 55 years, the UN has achieved extraordinary successes. It has helped settle disputes between nations, prevent conflicts and put an end to fighting. It has conducted complex peace support and humanitarian operations, and has played a crucial role in resolving some of the longest-running conflicts of recent years.

The United Nations and its member states have struggled against racism and colonialism, against disease and illiteracy. The UN has insisted on the fundamental necessity of respecting human rights (including the human rights of women and children) and ensuring peace, stability and development.

The UN touches on many aspects of our lives. Its specialized agencies regulate postal services worldwide, co-ordinate the registration of patents, manage the world's oceans and outer space, set and defend universal standards and values, and promote sustainable development.

In his report, the Secretary-General expresses optimism for the Millennium Summit. He sees it as a unique opportunity for reshaping the United Nations so that it can continue to make a real and measurable difference to people's lives in the new century. Mr. Annan has invited the public to follow the Summit closely, and to make sure that the UN redoubles its efforts to address effectively the important issues he has highlighted.

To learn more about the UN Millennium Summit, visit its Web site: www.un.org/millennium/summit.html



UN Headquarters in New York

Shared values, common action

To focus discussions at the Summit, last April the Secretary-General presented to the UN General Assembly a report entitled *We the Peoples: The role of the United Nations in the 21st century*. The report lists six shared values: freedom; equity and solidarity; tolerance; non-violence; respect for nature; and shared responsibility. Mr. Annan has called for the Millennium Summit to adopt a series of resolutions demonstrating the international community's will to act on those values. He has also proposed action in specific areas.

• Freedom from want

With the aim of drastically cutting the global poverty rate, the Secretary-General called for measures that include: achieving sustained growth; giving everyone full access to education; combatting disease; improving the lives of slum dwellers; increasing agricultural productivity in Africa; increasing access to information technologies; improving market access; and providing debt relief and better-focused development assistance.

• Freedom from fear

In the last decade, civil wars have claimed more than 5 million lives. The threat of deadly conflict, says Mr. Annan, must be tackled at every stage, through: conflict prevention; better enforcement of international and human rights law; intervening when necessary to protect civilians, particularly women and children; strengthening peace operations; better-targeted sanctions; and arms reductions.

• Sustaining our future

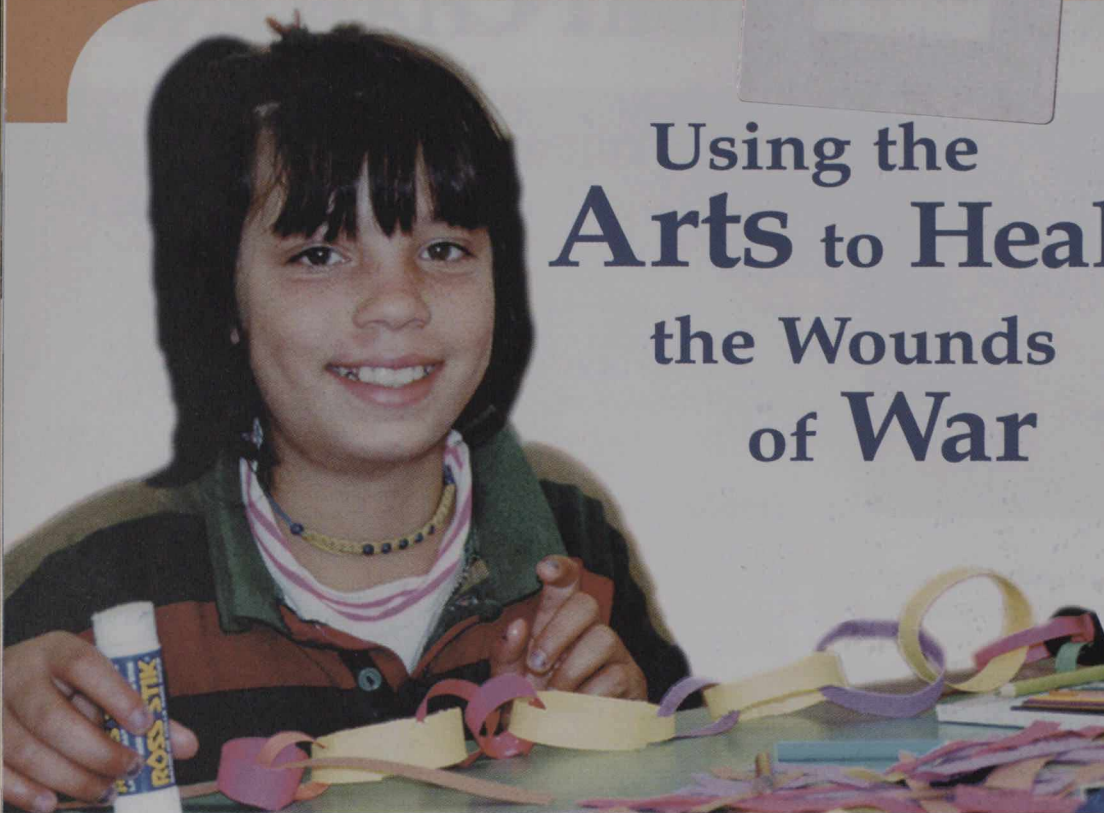
Before 2002, says Mr. Annan, UN member states must be prepared to act decisively in the following areas: coping with climate change; confronting the water crisis to give everyone access to safe water; examining the issue of biotechnology in agricultural production; preserving the world's biodiversity; and integrating environmental concerns into economic policy.

• Renewing the United Nations

Without a strong UN, says the Secretary-General, it will be much harder to meet the challenges facing the world. Among his proposals: to identify the UN's core strengths and build on them to improve people's lives; to strengthen links between the UN, international institutions, civil society, the private sector and national governments in pursuit of common goals; to use the new information technologies to make the UN more efficient and better-connected with the rest of the world; and to complete the structural reforms of the UN, develop a clearer consensus on priorities among member states and introduce results-based budgeting. ●

Cultur

Using the Arts to Heal the Wounds of War



Over the last decade, millions of children around the world have suffered inconceivably from experiencing war. A great many of them will remain severely traumatized for years, perhaps for life, by what they have witnessed or endured: killings, rape, torture and brutal amputations. We simply cannot imagine the terror or trauma they have lived.

To begin to recover, they need many types of help: medical attention, psychological support, a safe and stable environment, dedicated care, education and shelter. But that is not all. Often overlooked is their need to express their emotions; and the most valuable way they can do this is through the arts, through drawing and painting, writing stories, making music, through theatre and drama. To begin healing their psychological wounds, they need to laugh and to cry, and to play as children do.

Meeting this need is the aim of the Cultural Initiatives for War-Affected Children, a program set up two years ago by the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade in response to a call from the United Nations. Under the program, the Department has provided an annual fund for initiatives ranging from art therapy to drama workshops,

from clown shows and street circus to music and dance workshops. It has also financed the making of film and video documentaries to help raise awareness about war-affected children. Receiving support have been initiatives in Nicaragua, El Salvador, Mozambique, Kosovo, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Albania, Bosnia, Peru and other countries.

One initiative is the "Planning for Peace" project by Cultural Connections of Ottawa: in Rwanda and Mozambique, it brings children and youth together in workshops that use local cultural symbols and practices to promote healing and rebuild children's connections to their society. The visual arts are the focus in the "Painting Peace" project by Change for Children of Edmonton; this assists youth groups in Nicaragua and El Salvador to paint murals expressing their reality, and it also links them with Canadian youth to exchange experiences and understanding (see *Canada World View*, No. 8, p. 10). In Soweto, South Africa, Open City Productions of Montréal is running a project called "My Sister's Place"; its aim is to plan, prepare and establish a school arts curriculum for street kids who currently have nothing.



photos: International Children's Institute

All these projects involve the active participation of children—a key element in the healing process. Recalls Madeline-Ann Aksich of the International Children's Institute in Montréal, "In the spring of 1999, we visited several refugee camps in the Sarajevo area in Bosnia. We were struck by the fact that the number of children was very high, that they were depressed because they had nothing to do all day long. Communication between children and their parents was non-existent. Clearly, these children needed help."

The Institute developed a drama therapy program in which children wrote stories and scripts, made puppet characters and were able to act out their stories and feelings. They also performed for adults and parents, and thus began to open many doors for communication. The experience has been a great success and the Institute intends to use the model in other countries. Concludes Ms. Aksich, "Kids need to tell their story. It's a wonderful therapy for them." ●—



For more information, visit the Web site of the Cultural Initiatives for War-Affected Children:
www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/culture/children/menu-e.htm

News BRIEFS

CANADA RATIFIES MAJOR INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS

Canada ratified two major international agreements in July: the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict. Foreign Affairs Minister Axworthy deposited Canada's instruments of ratification at the United Nations in New York on July 7.

Canada is the first country to introduce comprehensive legislation (the Crimes Against Humanity and War Crimes Act) incorporating the provisions of the ICC Statute into Canadian law. The ICC will be the first permanent international tribunal having jurisdiction over the most serious crimes known to humankind: genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. As of mid-July, the ICC Statute had been signed by 98 states and ratified by 14. It will enter into force once it has been ratified by 60 states.

Mr. Axworthy has appointed a Special Adviser for the ICC: Irwin Cotler, Member of Parliament for Mount Royal. A former law professor at McGill University, Mr. Cotler is an internationally recognized expert on human rights and humanitarian law. He will help design a strategy to promote widespread ratification of the ICC.

The Optional Protocol on Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict sets new international standards. Most notably, it requires states to ensure that no one under the age of 18 takes a direct part in hostilities.

"Canada has been a driving force behind the creation of the International Criminal Court and the negotiation of the Optional Protocol," said Mr. Axworthy. "These two agreements will play an important role in advancing human security by ensuring that those who have committed crimes against humanity do not escape justice, and by protecting children, the most vulnerable victims of armed conflict."

NEW POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR THE NORTH

A new policy framework entitled *The Northern Dimension of Canada's Foreign Policy* has been unveiled by Minister Axworthy. The document outlines Canada's foreign policy objectives in northern and circumpolar affairs.

The Minister announced that \$10 million will be allocated over the next five years to implement the policy. Specifically, the funds will: support the Arctic Council and its Canadian permanent participants; help establish the University of the Arctic; contribute to Canadian and circumpolar policy research networks; assist Canada in collaborating with Russia to address its northern challenges; and promote sustainable development across the circumpolar region through the pursuit of economic and trade opportunities.

International Co-operation Minister Maria Minna announced an additional \$5 million contribution to an ongoing project that seeks to help Russia's northern Indigenous peoples play a more effective role in their long-term development.

"This policy framework builds on Canada's commitment to partnership with northern peoples and our circumpolar neighbours, to address issues of common concern and responsibility," said Mr. Axworthy. "The North is now a central part of our foreign policy."

CANADA RECOGNIZES NORTH KOREA

After a meeting with North Korean Foreign Minister Paek Nam Sun in Bangkok in late July, Minister Axworthy announced that Canada formally recognizes the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) as "a state and member of the international community." Discussions are now under way on the establishment of diplomatic relations and, eventually, on the opening of embassies in both countries.

"For some time now, the DPRK has been reaching out to the international community and attempting to increase the number of countries with which it has

foreign relations," said Mr. Axworthy. "Canada welcomes this initiative and intends to assist the DPRK to integrate itself into international affairs."

The Bangkok meeting was the first-ever ministerial-level encounter between the Canadian and DPRK governments. The process of formalizing bilateral relations was initiated by the Government of Canada in 1998, when Mr. Axworthy endorsed an approach of more active engagement with North Korea. Since then, contacts between the two countries have been conducted through the Canadian Embassy in Beijing.

Canadian NGOs have been active in North Korea from the mid-1990s, when the international community became aware of extreme food shortages in that country. Since 1997, the Canadian International Development Agency has also made humanitarian food aid donations to the DPRK through the United Nations' World Food Programme and Canadian NGOs. Total Canadian assistance to date is over \$30 million.

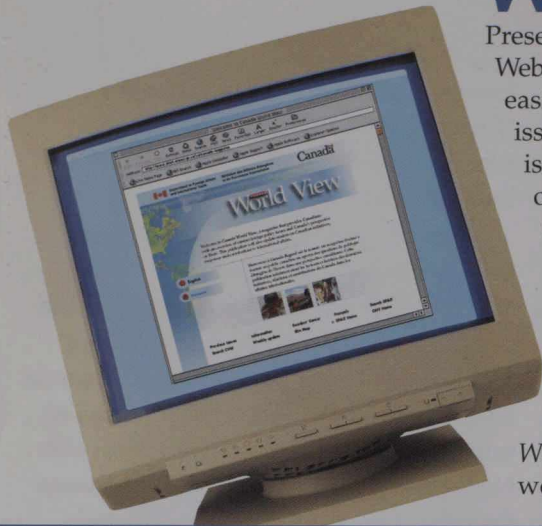
CANADIAN FUNDING CREATES VIRTUAL CLEARINGHOUSE ON SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Last June in Windsor, at the General Assembly of the Organization of American States, Minister Axworthy announced an Internet connectivity initiative. This has rapidly produced results: a Web-based worldwide Virtual Clearinghouse on Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs (www.atod.org).

Managed by the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse, the Virtual Clearinghouse identifies and links credible, timely and accurate Internet sources of information. The Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade has provided \$250 000 to fund the project—an essential service in the ongoing battle against substance abuse. ●

For more information on these and other issues, visit the Department's Web site at www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca and click on "Current Stories."

New on the *Canada World View* Web site



Presenting . . . the revamped *Canada World View* Web site! We have redesigned it to make browsing easier and to give a common look and feel to all issues posted to date. Among the new features is a Hyperlinks Centre; this gives hundreds of useful Internet links to a vast array of resources on Canadian foreign policy and international relations.

A button provides direct access to the "News Releases, Statements and Speeches" section of the Department's Web site. More features will be added in the coming months. Make the *Canada World View* Web site your portal to the complex world of international affairs!

Visit: www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/canada-magazine

DID YOU KNOW THAT . . .

Over the last decade, **2 million** children were killed in conflicts; over **1 million** were orphaned; over **6 million** were seriously injured or permanently disabled; and over **10 million** suffered grave psychological trauma.

Right now, there are over **20 million** children who have been displaced by war within and outside their countries. They account for well over **half** the world's displaced people.

Approximately **800** children around the world are killed or maimed by **landmines** every month.

On October 24, 2000, the **United Nations** will celebrate its **55th anniversary**. Canada was among the 50 countries that founded the UN at the 1945 San Francisco Conference. The Canadian delegation was led by Prime Minister **William Lyon Mackenzie King**.

Only one Canadian has ever served as **President** of the UN General Assembly: **Lester B. Pearson**, in 1952-53.

Canada opened its **first** Permanent Mission to the UN in New York in **January 1948**. Heading the Mission was **General A.G.L. McNaughton**, a distinguished soldier and former Minister of National Defence, who was then serving as Canada's representative on the Atomic Energy Commission.



The WINNIPEG CONFERENCE on the INTERNET

To learn all about the International Conference on War-Affected Children, visit the Web site created especially for the event:

www.waraffectedchildren.com

You'll find a wealth of information about the Conference and war-affected children, plus official documents on the issue, a list of related events and a photo gallery. And the many hyperlinks to related Web pages will allow you to explore the issue in depth.

Where *Canada* meets the world



Please come and visit the Lester B. Pearson Building, home of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, at 125 Sussex Drive in Ottawa, Ontario. Free guided tours are available until November 10.

For more information or to book a tour: Maricarmen Charbonneau
Tel.: (613) 992-9541
E-mail: maricarmen.charbonneau@dfait-maeci.gc.ca

In our NEXT ISSUE

Issue 10 • Winter 2001

Scheduled for December, our next issue will focus on the United Nations. We will report on the September Millennium Summit and will review Canada's achievements during its current two-year term on the UN Security Council. ●—

