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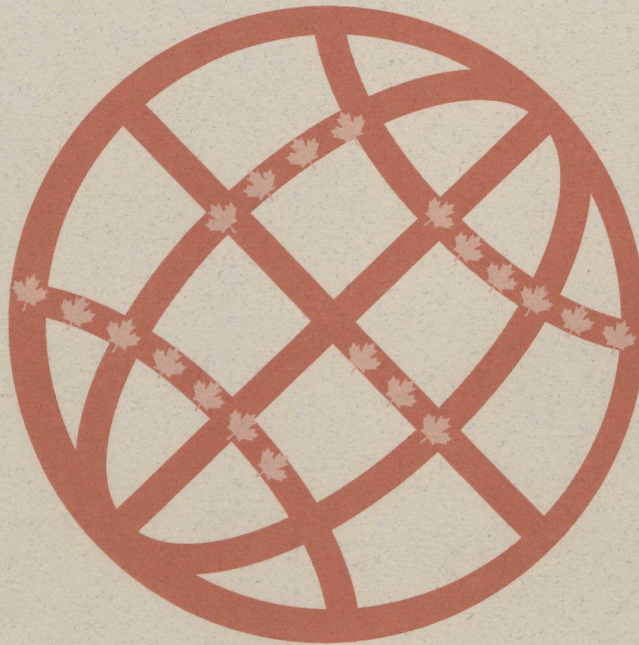
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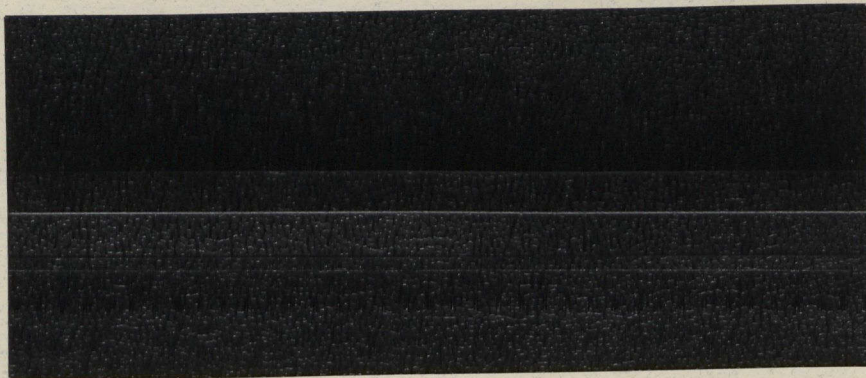
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REPORT FROM THE NGO-GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION ON  
THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON  
WAR AFFECTED CHILDREN

CCFPD  
Ottawa, July 14, 2000











NGO - Government Consultation on  
the International Conference on War Affected Children

July 14, 2000

Summary of Working Meeting with Government and NGOs

The meeting for the morning session was organized by both NGO and government representatives and was hosted by the Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development. For more information, please contact the author of this report.

**REPORT FROM THE NGO-GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION ON  
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WAR AFFECTED CHILDREN**

CCFPD

Ottawa, July 14, 2000

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- John Van Mervel has been...
- We need someone from the staff to work with the secretariat on the NGO...
- Logistics, space availability at the Parliament, the conference centre, the forks, etc. What do NGOs want to see?
- Background on the International Conference
  - This meeting has grown out of the... child protection from CIDA and human security from DPAIT.
  - A number of NGOs have also expressed interest in the meeting.
  - "Wanted and Beyond" is good - this is only a small part of a large process.
  - There was a report on the situation in China on war affected children which the Secretary will look at for this international conference.

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**NGO - Government Consultation on  
the International Conference on War Affected Children**

**July 14, 2000**

**Summary of Morning Meeting with Government and NGOs**

\*Please note that for the morning session which was attended by both NGO and government representatives, notes were taken by the Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development. For the afternoon session, which was attended by only NGO representatives, notes were written by NGO representatives.

**Government**

- John Van Mossel has been hired as the NGO liason
- we need someone from the NGO community to work with the secretariat on the NGO fair, organizing events and logistics.
- Logistics, space availability at the Fort Garry, the conference centre, the forks, etc. What do NGOs want to do?
- Background on the International Conference:
  - This meeting has grown out of two agendas: child protection from CIDA and human security from DFAIT.
  - Minister Eggleton has also expressed interest in the meeting
  - "Winnipeg and Beyond" is good - this is only a small part of a large process
  - There was a regional meeting in Ghana on war affected children which the Secretariat will draw on for this international conference
- The major piece that the Secretariat is putting forth is the Draft Agenda:
  - ▶ the version presented will go out to other countries for comments (it has not yet)
  - ▶ the Secretariat has tried to:
    - make it child centric
    - make it advocacy, convention focussed
    - keep it committed to deeper knowledge (through better research we could make our own efforts
    - get community leaders speaking out against what is happening to children.
    - look to the world summit for children, which we hope will be a climax.
    - make the language accessible (to appeal to broad interests)



- For the draft agenda:
  - ▶ NGO consultation has taken place to draft this agenda
  - ▶ many of these ideas emerged from the Ghana conference
  - ▶ there is a development aspect, and health
  - ▶ from many of the youth in Ghana, we heard that education was a key component
  - ▶ ideas like "children have rights" come out of the NGO meeting
  - ▶ there are no dates in this, we are hoping this will come out of the conference
  
- for youth participation, there is a draft agenda. We want them to be credible, since there is some scepticism about youth participation. There will be a lot of media attention on the youth.
  
- The experts meeting will be about 300 people. Keeping the numbers down is a challenge. The goals will be sharing knowledge, etc...
  
- The ministerial level meeting will include heads of UN agencies, e.g. Olara Otunnu, Graca Machel, possibly Nelson Mandela.
  
- For CIDA, the Minister (Minna) sees this issue within a broader concept of poverty and iniquity. This issue is one of the four priorities that Minister Minna has identified.
  
- For the web site, phase I will be up shortly. It will be a "one stop shopping" site with all the information that we can give about the conference.
  
- NGO invitations - there are 30-35 spaces for Canadian NGOs. The selection criteria is being developed.

### **NGO Involvement**

- War Child is planning a concert at the forks, ~12pm on Saturday
  
- The goals of the NGO fair for the working group on children and armed conference are:
  - ▶ showcase for the NGOs to inform about the issues
  - ▶ information sharing
  - ▶ to share materials that are being used for outreach
  - ▶ this could also be an outreach to the community (to engage people with the issue)
  
- For the working group:
  - ▶ we did channel input to the Secretariat through our list serve.
  - ▶ we participated on Monday with a group of international NGOs. There was some



concern that there should be a more specific NGO day. During the expert meeting, there was the idea that we have an NGO caucus. There was a concern about transparency with NGO representatives to the larger NGO community.

### Issues arising from the conference

- One of the problems that we came across in the roundtables was that the youth were not given enough time.
- The international youth will have a lot of time, hopefully with a lot of relaxing.
- Questions about the workshops, e.g. chronology, topics.
- Prevention must be a priority, yet government often cannot implement prevention because it involves changing social conditions. Research and prevention are all tied together.
- We (NGOs and government) should try to come up with a few very specific outputs that we wish to see, instead of "drifting" along, without being effective.
- For "Winnipeg and Beyond" we are looking to the UN special session, and interim events.
- Graca Machel has emphasized that she would like an independent voice.
- Questions about "civil society" vs. NGOs - who should be included, who is defined as "civil society?"
- The mental health aspect is an important aspect to address.
- The experts meeting is certainly one of the most complex aspects of the conference. The Secretariat encourages feedback about it, the sooner the better.
- Ideas about community involvement:
  - ▶ something permanent
  - ▶ engagement of schools (going to schools to present things)
  - ▶ people outside Winnipeg should be involved
  - ▶ interpreters should be available
  - ▶ youth involvement is vital
  - ▶ NGO mentors to work with the youth delegates.



## **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.



## Review of Agenda and Plans for the Conference

A review of the agenda provided the following additional points:

1. The NGO Day should include discussion about how NGOs can best include the youth, listen to the youth, and make sure that there is space and support for genuine youth participation.
2. Balance is required between NGO type of expertise and academic expertise. We need to make sure that NGOs are included as expert speakers, not just academics. Questions were raised about who decides who the experts are and on what basis. Concern was voiced about the profile of Canadian NGOs.

If people have suggestions for speakers, they should be sent to Geeta Narayan immediately.

3. While the Secretariat will decide who the presenters are, we can organize ourselves to have speakers at each session to make sure that NGO concerns are addressed. For example, NGOs can make sure that abuses by peacekeeping forces themselves are also included in the session on the military and non-state actors. This is a big problem and is often minimized in government-sponsored discussions.
4. Prevention needs to have a stronger focus. The root causes of conflict need to have a strong profile and be more visible in this event - no workshop is dedicated to this aspect. Unless we examine the factors that create these situations, we are not going to be successful. Linking an understanding of the causes to achievable steps forward is the key.

The outcomes of the Peacebuilding Consultation do include some specific elements of prevention that are not included in the current agenda for Winnipeg. Root causes can seem difficult to impact, so NGOs need to make that as concrete and achievable as possible.

5. More emphasis on economic-actors is required.
6. For the long-term, the group confirmed the need for NGOs to work together on specific situations, because every conflict has its own history, circumstances, and points of influence.
7. Support for including trauma as a separate workshop was emphasized. Mental health issues do not receive enough attention. Physical disabilities of children are often also neglected as an area of focus.
8. Need for a transparent mechanism to ensure that results of the Experts Meeting are carried over into the Ministerial meeting, which was first raised by the international NGO group, was confirmed.



## **NGO Action Plan**

Previous conferences and meetings of the group have focused on what needs to be done. This is being compiled for the draft NGO plan. Now we need more focus on "How" and "Who" should do the various components, to build an on-going action plan.

Additional focus is needed on what NGOs are committed to do themselves and what we think other actors should do, such as governments, multilateral agencies, military, private sector, and others.

We can divide what needs to be done into programs and services, advocacy, and monitoring function.

### Monitoring Role as one component of the plan

Further discussion occurred about the suggestion that NGOs taking on the role of monitors to ensure that governments fulfill their commitments through public reporting of progress made. Some concerns were noted. One suggestion was that a self-regulating mechanism be built into the conference, and NGOs could monitor the process.

International Ambassador program for youth was suggested - this could allow youth to monitor progress.

### Capacity-building for Canadian agencies who are delivering programs

The need for capacity-building for Canadian agencies who want to expand or improve their programming in this area was identified by different voices than those who have raised this in the past. It is fair to conclude that there is significant interest in this dimension of the work. CIDA had agreed to co-operate in organizing a capacity-building workshop earlier; this was delayed because of the conference, but it remains important from the perspective of NGOs.

## **Discussion on the Nature of the Document**

There was general support for the concept of a piece which can help to build public support, and a longer document with specific content that goes beyond vague promises to actions which can be monitored. Creativity was encouraged for the shorter document so it could serve as a poster, calendar, or other form for public promotion. Another suggestion was one over-riding call to action, with several points, so that people can choose one or two areas in which to focus their attention.

Concern was raised about the convergence between three separate streams of input: the Machel



update, the NGO plan, and the government framework. We will try to build a close linkage between the Machel update and the NGO plan. The NGO plan will do its job if it pushes the agenda forward by putting on the table more specific and more far-reaching proposals, which official government representatives cannot table.

Stories of youth will add a human dimension that will be useful for building public support.

It is difficult to create one document to answer everything. We will need to produce different pieces to reach different audiences.

How specific do we want to be? Some suggested we name names in the NGO plan of action, including individual groups in individual countries. We may need to follow-up with more detailed strategies to have an effective action plan.

The importance of follow-up to Winnipeg was highlighted again.

We need to include positives in the NGO report as well as call to action, such as the inclusion of conflict resolution in curricula in some locations. There were differences of opinion about the extent to which we name baby steps to see some positive progress and/or make strong statements to move the issue beyond the comfort zone of governments.

Perhaps a section of the NGO report should be used to name some of the challenges for NGOs and put issues on the table.

### **Provocative discussion areas for NGOs**

Some time was spent identifying policy questions which challenge NGOs.

Should NGOs take on a more direct role, e.g. develop a web-site where information on violations of the rights of children could be publicly posted? This could be a strategy to push for governments and multilateral agencies to strengthen enforcement mechanisms. If the conference can raise the profile of the need for stronger enforcement mechanisms on the international agenda, it could make a substantial contribution. NGOs will need to be strong about this, to prevent deflection of responsibility to NGOs.

Should NGOs become involved in training the military on respect for the rights of children? Some feel they should because expertise lies more in the NGO sector than in current military sectors. Others believe that involvement implies endorsement of what the military does, and complicity if they then commit atrocities.

Should NGOs play a bigger role with non-state actors? Whose responsibility is it to negotiate with rebel forces for the protection of children? Are NGOs assuming responsibilities which belong to the state? What if the state is unwilling or unable to do it?



We need a better term than reintegration or normalization. Reintegration assumes children were integrated in the first place. Bringing things back to normal is not positive if normal is what led to the conflict. The reasons youth became involved in the first place need to be addressed, not return to normal.

Distinctions are made between war and conflict, also in terms of selecting youth. Escalating conflict is not yet war, but it may be important to deal with it at that time, if we take prevention seriously.

There are different views about whether gender should be a separate focus or mainstreamed through all the workshops. Similar questions can be raised about child participation. There is agreement that gender specific research and findings from participatory research involving children need to be included in every aspect of this issue.

### **NGO Fair**

There is support for public access to the Fair. Youth interpreters were suggested, possibly working with local groups such as the Boys and Girls Clubs. Red Cross has a youth group in Winnipeg which may be interested.

Three people volunteered to focus on the NGO Fair: Megan Rock, Lai Ling Lee, and Kate Kane. They will work with John van Mossel on more detailed plans. Emphasis was put on letting all NGOs, including the international NGOs, know about the plans as soon as possible.





125 Sussex Dr. Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0G2

## AGENDA

### NGO Consultation on the International Conference on War Affected Children Ottawa, July 14, 2000

9:30 - 9:45	Coffee and Snacks
9:45 - 10:00	Welcome, Roundtable Introductions (Yannick Lamonde & Nancy Wildgoose)
10:00 - 10:30	Presentation on the Current Status of the International Conference on War Affected Children (Nancy Wildgoose)
10:30 - 12:30	Questions and Discussion Regarding the International Conference
12:30 - 1:15	Lunch
1:15 - 2:30	NGO Priorities for the Conference as an Event
2:30 - 2:45	Coffee and Snacks
2:45 - 4:00	NGO Plan of Action
4:00 - 4:30	Wrap-Up and Next Steps



List of Participants  
NGO Consultation on the International Conference on War Affected Children  
Ottawa, July 14, 2000

Hilary Homes  
Amnesty International - Canada

Ezat Mossalanejad  
Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture

Carolyn Day  
Canadian Federation of University Women

Janet Durno  
Canadian Peacebuilding Coordinating Committee

Megan Rock  
Canadian Red Cross

Nandini Saxena  
Foster Parents Plan Canada / PLAN International

Pamela Teitelbaum  
International Bureau for Children's Rights

Linda Dale  
Mapping Our World Children's Rights Project

Florence Pastoor  
Mapping Our World Children's Rights Project

Lai-Ling Lee  
Medicins sans Frontieres

Kate Kane  
Save the Children - Canada

Cathie Guthrie  
UNICEF Canada

Karen Wong  
Cantilevers

Paul Carrick  
Cause Canada

Michael Addams  
Xefina

Stacey Leclair  
Métis National Council of Women

Chok Hiew  
University of NB Dept. of Psychology

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