



Security Council

Fifty-sixth year

4422nd meeting

Tuesday, 20 November 2001, 11 a.m.
New York

Provisional

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| <i>President:</i> | Miss Durrant | (Jamaica) |
| <i>Members:</i> | Bangladesh | Mr. Chowdhury |
| | China | Mr. Shen Guofang |
| | Colombia | Mr. Valdivieso |
| | France | Mr. Levitte |
| | Ireland | Mr. Corr |
| | Mali | Mr. Ouane |
| | Mauritius | Mr. Gokool |
| | Norway | Mr. Kolby |
| | Russian Federation | Mr. Gatilov |
| | Singapore | Mr. Mahbubani |
| | Tunisia | Mr. Jerandi |
| | Ukraine | Mr. Krokhmal |
| | United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland | Sir Jeremy Greenstock |
| | United States of America | Mr. Cunningham |

Agenda

Children and armed conflict

Report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict (S/2001/852).

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The meeting was called to order at 11.45 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Children and armed conflict

Report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict (S/2001/852)

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Belgium, Canada, Egypt, Iraq, Israel, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, Nigeria, the Republic of Korea, Slovenia and South Africa, in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. De Ruyt (Belgium), Mr. Heinbecker (Canada), Mr. Aboul Gheit (Egypt), Mr. Aldouri (Iraq), Mr. Lancry (Israel), Mr. Motomura (Japan), Mr. Hasmy (Malaysia), Mr. Navarrete (Mexico), Mr. Adekanye (Nigeria), Mr. Lee Ho-jin (Republic of Korea), Mr. Petrič (Slovenia) and Ms. Ndhlovu (South Africa) took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President: In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, and in the absence of objection, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Olara Otunnu, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I invite the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict to take a seat at the Council table.

In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, and in the absence of objection, I shall take it that the Security Council

agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mrs. Carol Bellamy, Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I invite the Executive Director of UNICEF to take a seat at the Council table.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2001/852, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict.

I shall now give the floor to the Secretary-General.

The Secretary-General: It gives me great pleasure to join the Council today. As members know, we had hoped to hold this debate in September to mark the opening of the General Assembly's special session on children, but the meeting had to be postponed for obvious reasons.

The United Nations has always sought to alleviate the plight of children affected by war. The situation in Afghanistan has only reaffirmed this concern. For that reason, the United Nations Children's Fund and the Office of my Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict are working with Mr. Brahimi to ensure that the protection of children and of civilians in general is a key part of the efforts to restore and rebuild Afghanistan. This generation of Afghan children must become a harbinger of peace.

The draft resolution before the Council today tells each of us what we have to do to protect children in armed conflict. It calls on States to punish conduct that fuels and exacerbates conflict. It draws attention to issues such as the recruitment of children and trafficking in arms and natural resources. It urges donors, lenders and others to use their financial leverage. And it insists that the Council, the United Nations system, the international financial institutions and others use their influence as well.

Field monitoring is also essential, and I shall continue to ensure the deployment of child protection advisers. The Council also needs timely, accurate information about implementation of its resolutions,

and I am committed to providing those reports. I also stand ready to bring to the Council's attention the identities of parties that are in violation of any of the provisions of the draft resolution.

War, violence and political instability continue to inflict appalling damage on the world of children. I look forward to working with the Council in the struggle to keep their needs uppermost in our minds, and to ensure that the rights of children and their protection is maintained as one of our main agenda items. I hope that we will all agree on that.

The President: I thank the Secretary-General for his statement and for his commitment to protecting the rights of children.

I now give the floor to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, Mr. Olara Otunnu.

Mr. Otunnu: As always, it is a great honour to participate in this debate under your presidency, Madam; you are a true advocate of the protection and rights of children.

This is the fourth open debate of the Security Council devoted to the protection, rights and rehabilitation of children affected by conflict. Since 1998 we have seen the progressive integration of these concerns into the peace and security agenda of the United Nations. This has resulted in an impressive body of practice, key elements of which include resolutions 1261 (1999) and 1314 (2000); the progressive inclusion of child protection provisions in peacekeeping mandates; the creation of the role of child protection advisers; the incorporation of child protection issues into peace agendas and peace accords; and the establishment, as a regular feature of reports to the Security Council, of specific sections on child protection.

The Security Council is at the centre of these developments. On behalf of millions of war-affected children, I would like to thank the members of the Council for embracing and promoting their cause. My Office has developed very close collaboration on this agenda item with various United Nations partners, particularly the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the United Nations Children's Fund; I express warm appreciation to Carol Bellamy and Jean-Marie Guéhenno for their strong support and cooperation. I must pay a special tribute to our partners

in the non-governmental-organization community; quite simply, the advancement of this agenda depends in large measure on their work — their advocacy and programmes on the ground. I also thank members of the Council for inviting to today's debate a young person who comes from a conflict situation where children have experienced unbelievable horrors of war. I extend to Alhaji Babah Sawaneh of Sierra Leone a very warm welcome.

In spite of the impressive progress which has been registered, especially at the levels of advocacy, public opinion, policies and programmes, I regret to report that the overall situation of children exposed to war remains grave and entirely unacceptable. The full magnitude and details of this situation are set out in the report of the Secretary-General, which is before the Council.

We share a common preoccupation: how to change the situation for children on the ground. In this context, I should like to underscore some measures, drawn from the report of the Secretary-General and the draft resolution before the Council, which I believe are particularly important for changing the situation on the ground.

There is an urgent need for the international community to organize a more systematic and effective way of monitoring and reporting on the conduct of parties to conflict in terms of their treatment of children. Who is brutalizing and targeting children? When and where are they doing so? Which parties to conflict are observing or flouting their obligations and commitments concerning the protection of children? Such monitoring and reporting, conducted on an objective and impartial basis, would then serve as the basis for concerted action, triggering targeted advocacy and mobilization of pressure by all concerned.

We have good news on the Optional Protocol: just last week we attained the required threshold of 10 instruments of ratification. This means that that important treaty will enter into force in February next year. The entry into force of the Optional Protocol will constitute a milestone in our collective endeavours to end child soldiering. But this milestone will remain largely a theoretical achievement unless it becomes a prelude to concrete measures on the ground. We need to take the following actions, among others: ensure the application of the Optional Protocol in theatres of conflict; mobilize adequate resources for programmes

of demobilization and social rehabilitation for children who have already been made to participate in conflict; and, above all, address underlying causes — political, social and economic factors — that create an environment conducive to the alienation, exploitation and radical indoctrination of children and young people, thus facilitating their involvement in conflict.

A particular scandal in warfare today is the pillage of natural resources by parties to conflict and others. This is robbing children of their birthright. Resources that should provide for rehabilitation, education, health care and nutrition for children are instead being plundered by networks of local, neighbourhood and international actors. Who is reaping the benefits of the rich diamond resources of Angola and Sierra Leone, or the diamond, gold, coltan, timber and coffee of the Democratic Republic of the Congo? Certainly not the children of those countries. Moreover, this has become a means of fielding and prolonging conflicts in which children suffer most. For the children of Angola, Sierra Leone, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and other countries, the blessings of natural resources have been turned into a veritable curse. I urge the Security Council to redouble its efforts in this regard.

As indicated by the Secretary-General earlier, the appointment of child protection advisers represents an important innovation for integrating child protection concerns into peacekeeping operations. This practice needs to be strengthened and given wider application. The current situation in Afghanistan and Burundi present immediate opportunities for designing child-conscious mission mandates and for deploying child protection advisers.

We are eager to learn from our collective experience thus far. For this reason, we have formed an informal inter-agency working group to strengthen our ongoing initiatives on incorporating child protection into peacemaking, peacekeeping and peace-building processes. Similarly, following the call made by the Security Council, we have formed an informal working group to strengthen the training of peacekeeping personnel.

The international community is not doing as much as it should to prevent harm to girls in times of war and to ensure their recovery and rehabilitation. Several recent examples underscore the very particular vulnerability of girls in situations of war. I recall that

girls in Rwanda suddenly became the heads of some 60,000 households in the aftermath of the genocide; the trafficking of girls from the Balkans into prostitution rings in Western Europe; the abduction of schoolgirls by the Lord's Resistance Army in northern Uganda; the systematic denial of education to girls in Afghanistan; that in January 1999, the Revolutionary United Front abducted more than 4,000 children from Freetown alone, 60 per cent of them girls; and sadly, that there are fighting groups we know whose preferred agents to serve as suicide commandos remain girls. We must do much more to protect and rehabilitate girls exposed to war.

Last year the Security Council took up for the first time the issue of the correlation between war and the spread of HIV/AIDS, especially in the corridors of war. We need to do a good deal more to ensure public education and prevention.

We meet at a time when our collective attention is focused on Afghanistan. Indeed, taking place in Washington at this very moment is a very important meeting, convened by Japan and the United States, on recovery and reconstruction in Afghanistan. Children today make up more than 50 per cent of the total population of that country. Twenty-three years of war in Afghanistan has defined the lives of at least two generations of children and youth, most of whom have grown up amid violence, death, deprivation, lack of education and despair. Key indicators present a sobering picture of the direct and indirect impact of that conflict on Afghan children.

I appeal to the Security Council and the international community in general to ensure that the well-being and rehabilitation of war-affected children become central concerns in any response to the situation in Afghanistan. In order to facilitate this, I urge the Council to support the efforts of the United Nations Special Mission to Afghanistan to ensure that child protection remains a priority throughout the peacemaking and peace-building processes in Afghanistan, including through the deployment of specialized child protection staff. No peace is likely to be sustainable there unless children and youth are provided with rehabilitation and hope, so that instead of being potential spoilers they become a constructive force in rebuilding their country.

Only by doing what is right for children today can we build a solid foundation for peace and security

tomorrow. However, while properly focusing on the serious situation in Afghanistan, we must not lose sight of the needs of other war-affected children who equally need our attention and support.

The full text of my remarks will be distributed, and therefore I will not read the entire text. However, before concluding, I hope you will forgive me, Madam President, for invoking the voice of Jamaica's favourite son, your special gift to the world, whose powerful voice gave the world the gift of reggae music. Bob Marley's often deeply spiritual renditions of the themes of suffering and redemption seem particularly appropriate for our deliberations today. I hear Bob Marley's voice calling us to action on behalf of children. I hear him saying something like this:

"Hear the children cryin'
We had told them in yesteryears
Don't worry about a thing
'Cause every little thing gonna be all right.

"Hear the children cryin'
From Afghanistan to Angola
Asking for the same thing –
One Love.

"Hear the children cryin'
From the Balkans to Burundi
Waiting for the same thing –
Redemption Songs. Redemption Songs.

"Won't you help to sing
These songs of redemption
Rendering hope and protection.

"I hear three little birds
Perched on the doorsteps of the Council
Singin' melodies pure and true
Sayin' again and again
'This is our message to you-ou-ou.'"

The President: I now call on the Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund, Ms. Carol Bellamy.

Ms. Bellamy: The draft resolution before the Council today represents another step forward in making the world a safer place for every child.

As all of us are only too well aware, and as the Secretary-General noted, today's debate on children and armed conflict was to have been convened almost exactly two months ago, in the midst of the General Assembly special session on children. The world is a

very different place because of what occurred on 11 September, but, as the Secretary-General has observed, we can take heart in the international community's strong reaffirmation of collective action in defence of that most basic of human rights — the right of all people to live in peace and security.

Today's draft resolution builds upon the two previous measures on the issue — resolution 1261 (1999) and resolution 1314 (2000) — as well as the Council's earlier resolutions on protection of civilians; on women, peace and security; and on the threat of HIV/AIDS. These measures are a testament to what the United Nations does best — changing attitudes through incremental development, establishing standards for what is right and just, and making their implementation obligatory.

The issue of child soldiers is a prime example. As recently as five or six years ago, understanding and awareness of the issue were limited. Recruitment of children was usually carried out with little or no notice and often with complete impunity. Since then, the world has received the important contribution of our good friend Graca Michel. I understand the Council has received her latest publication, which I commend to members for reading. The world also now has in force an international legal standard, as Olara mentioned — the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child — which raises the age of recruitment and prohibits the involvement of children under the age of 18 in hostilities.

The recruitment of children is defined as a war crime in the Rome Statute for the establishment of an International Criminal Court. Under the terms of the draft resolution before the Council, those who recruit or use children in violation of international obligations will be brought to the attention of the Council by the Secretary-General, who would be called upon to prepare reports as necessary.

This is a crucial step in the campaign to end the recruitment of children for armed combat and their use as soldiers. It is a sign of serious and continuing commitment, and it certainly is our hope that all members of the Security Council will continue to demonstrate that commitment by urging all States to sign and ratify the new Optional Protocol.

Let me also commend the members of the Council and especially you, Madam President, for inviting a young person from Sierra Leone to address

us today. Alhaji Sawaneh's presence is a reminder not only of the suffering that children endure in armed conflict, but also of the contribution that they can make by participating in the realization of their own rights.

As the Council is aware, access to children caught up in situations of conflict remains a major problem. Most child fatalities in armed conflict occur not as a direct result of violence, but because children are denied access to such essential services as health care, food security and clean water.

I know that this fact was underlined earlier this year, when many Council members visited the Democratic Republic of the Congo and saw evidence to back up a study that showed that of the approximately 2.5 million civilian deaths above the million deaths that might have been expected to occur in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, one-third were children under the age of five.

Resolution 1314 (2000) called for unhindered access to children affected by armed conflict. Today's measure would reiterate that call with renewed urgency and make explicit reference to internally displaced populations. We thank the Council for endorsing this imperative in its resolution, and we urge you to keep up the pressure in all country-specific undertakings.

Today's draft resolution also calls upon parties to armed conflict to collaborate in days of immunization and other opportunities for the safe and unhindered delivery of basic necessary services. This year, UNICEF, the World Health Organization and its partners have been able to carry out successful national immunization days for polio eradication in countries such as Angola, Somalia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sierra Leone, Sudan and, just last week, Afghanistan.

In so doing, we have been able to show that even conflict need not be an obstacle to fundamental development imperatives where the political will exists. But let us not forget that these are partial steps towards securing full, safe and unhindered access to children in situations of conflict.

In this connection, I want to point out that later today, UNICEF and the Fédération Internationale de Football, joined by the Secretary-General, will launch an initiative to dedicate the 2002 World Cup to children. Part of this effort will be to call upon warring parties around the world to take special measures

during the time of the World Cup to ensure humanitarian access to children.

Let me also say how gratifying it is to see the issue of HIV/AIDS addressed so forthrightly in the draft resolution. The call to ensure that all peacekeeping personnel receive appropriate guidance and training is a vital follow-up to resolution 1308 (2000). And the request that the United Nations system integrate HIV/AIDS awareness, prevention, care and support into humanitarian programmes is both appropriate and timely.

Clearly, we have an immense task before us. We know from surveys on the ground in conflict-affected countries that levels of awareness of HIV/AIDS and how to prevent it are quite low. We know, too, that girls and women in conflict situations are extremely vulnerable because of sexual violence perpetrated by armed forces and rebel groups, camp police and displaced men and boys. Research has shown that, in conflict areas, men and boys often talk about violence against girls and women as normal and acceptable behaviour.

In line with the draft resolution, UNICEF will continue to seek to protect children from all forms of sexual violence and to include HIV/AIDS education as part of all emergency education programmes, with particular attention devoted to the needs of demobilized child soldiers.

In Afghanistan, the international community is confronting a crisis in which the survival of millions of children and women hinges on an immediate and coordinated response. Our folks on the ground recently estimated that without an adequate humanitarian response, over 100,000 children could die during the winter — which is why we are urgently seeking short-term assistance in the form of continued funding, access to those in need and security for humanitarian staff.

But much more is needed if we are to ensure the long-term well-being of the children of Afghanistan and the sustainable protection of their rights. A major priority for us will be education, making certain that girls, as well as boys, have access to schooling as soon as possible.

In post-war situations — and even during the worst times of conflict — education provides an environment of relative stability and normalcy for

children. It offers an alternative to recruitment. And in affording them opportunities to learn, education gives children a chance to gain basic skills that will allow them to work, to contribute to society and, in time, to support their own families.

Other key priorities are child protection in all areas of recovery, with an emphasis on landmine awareness — Afghanistan is probably the most heavily mined country in the world — and the full participation of women in peace-building efforts.

The Council's draft resolution pledges to put children at the centre of recovery and rehabilitation efforts, and whether in Afghanistan, Sierra Leone or the Great Lakes region, I can assure you that we and our partners, both within and outside the United Nations system, will do everything to make that a reality.

The work of UNICEF is inspired by a vision of a world where leaders use their power and influence to assure that every child grows to adulthood in health, peace and dignity. It is a goal set out in the draft outcome document for the Special Session on Children, which will likely convene in May 2002 — a document in which you, Madam President, have played a crucial guiding role in your capacity as Chair of the Preparatory Committee, and for which I want to take this opportunity to extend on behalf of UNICEF our heartfelt thanks.

The central message of the draft outcome document from the Special Session is a challenge to all of us to assert leadership for children in every sphere of life. I believe that, in the resolution before you today, the Security Council has again risen to that challenge and, in so doing, affirmed that together we can truly change the world with children.

In conclusion, it is my pleasure to introduce the next speaker, Alhaji Sawaneh of Sierra Leone. He is 14 years old. He became a child soldier after being abducted. He spent two and a half years with the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), where he commanded one of several child combat units. He was later cared for by the group of Caritas Makeni. He has a very special and important perspective on the issue of children and armed conflict, including — as I pointed out before — not only the problem but the enormous and largely untapped contribution that young people themselves can make.

The President: Let me, on behalf of the members of the Council, extend a warm welcome to Alhaji Babah Sawaneh, to whom I give the floor.

Mr. Sawaneh: My name is Alhaji Babah Sawaneh. I am 14 years old, and I come from Sierra Leone.

In 1997, when I was 10 years old, I went for my Christmas holiday to my uncle's house in my village, Madina Loko, in northern Sierra Leone. During the second week of my stay, we heard that the rebels were 10 miles away from us. We ran into the bush to hide. At night, we came out quietly and cooked whatever we had in an old farm hut. On the second night, my elder brother and I went to look for water to do the cooking when we ran into the rebels. They searched our pockets for money and, because nothing was found, we were beaten up. We were taken back to our village where we were tied up, beaten again and kept in the hot, burning sun. Many houses were burnt down, properties destroyed and people killed. A group of rebels who had gone into the bush in search of food caught my uncle and the rest of the family. My uncle was later killed.

That same night, we were ordered by the rebels to go with them to their base behind Kabala town. It was over 100 miles from the village. We walked for about 10 days in the bush, resting only a few hours in between, most times on empty stomachs. On arrival, we were trained for a week to shoot and dismantle AK-47 guns. Thereafter, I was used to fight when we attacked. During these attacks, we killed people, burnt down houses, destroyed properties and cut off limbs. But more often I went on food raids and did domestic work for my commander's wife. This is because I was so skinny.

In January 2000, two years after my capture, United Nations peacekeepers met with our commander to explain the process of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR). We were told that the discussion included the release of all child soldiers. Our commander returned to our base the next morning and ordered the other commanders to release us. He said that those who failed to do so would be killed. The information was passed on to all the fighters, and within two days over 250 children were released to the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) in the town of Kabala. We were taken to a care centre in Lunsar.

In Lunsar I was first registered for demobilization and then, later, handed over to Caritas Makeni for care and protection. I immediately reported to the health centre for treatment because I was completely covered in scabies. I had not seen any family member for about two years, so when Caritas told us they would assist us in finding our families I was very happy to give the information requested. Unfortunately, it was not safe for them to get to my village, so I was put into a community secondary school. In May that year, the leader of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) was detained again after a demonstration in Freetown. The rebels decided to attack again, and they attempted to recruit us again. We did not want to fight any more, so we ran away into the bush with our social workers. Over 200 of us were able to get to Freetown, where we were picked up by Caritas.

In Lungi we met other children in the Caritas programme who, also out of fear of being re-recruited, had escaped from centres in Port Loko and Makeni. There were over 350 children in that new centre. At first, the Lungi people did not want us in their town, and that was demonstrated by their highest-ranking chief. The United Nations Children's Fund and Caritas Makeni had a meeting with him and the other local leaders. They explained that we had been demobilized and did not want to fight any more. This changed their minds, and we were allowed to stay. I was again put in a community school, together with other children.

The meeting with the people did not end with the local leaders because the community school children were not friendly to us. They kept calling us rebel children. Thank God we attended the afternoon school, and therefore were able to avoid them for the most part. Caritas then had several meetings with various people of the community to get them to forgive and accept us. This worked very well because, at the end of the year, a woman from the community agreed to provide me with foster care. I am still living with her because my family has not yet been found.

It is important for the Council to know that the journey I have made so far has been less difficult because I entered the DDR programme. I did bad things in the bush, and I saw very bad things done to both children and adults. Taking my gun from me was a vital step for me. The programme helped me feel natural and normal again. It helped me develop ways to fit into society again.

As I have said, the road has not been easy. In school I suffered resentment from other schoolchildren. They looked at me differently, like an evil person. Maybe they had good reasons. After all, we used to do very horrible things to them, their families, friends and communities. But we suffered just like them because we were forced to do those things by our commanders. We have to ask for forgiveness and demonstrate extremely good ways of living.

I have faced a lot of distrust from family members. Some doubt whether I will ever be a normal child again. I am easily reminded of my past when I make mistakes. "Do not bring your rebel life here", they say. People in the community can be really dangerous. Some want revenge at all costs, and in whatever form. With the support of families, friends and agencies working for children, we are overcoming this.

The DDR programme is coming to an end, and I am very happy that thousands of children have been given the chance to go through the process. I know there are more children held back, especially our sisters. I ask this body, on behalf of all the children of Sierra Leone, to do all it can to bring our sad story to an end. We want to be able to move about freely in all parts of the country to attend the schools of our choice. We want to be able to visit our friends and families everywhere in the country without fear of abduction, recruitment and other dangers. Above all, we want our parents to be able to work and to educate us so that we can become useful citizens. This is what peace means for me in Sierra Leone.

I thank the Security Council for inviting me to tell my story on behalf of my brothers and sisters in Sierra Leone and in other countries at war. I hope that the United Nations and Governments in all countries will listen to children and take our words into account. We want a better life. We want peace. We are counting on continued support for this.

The President: Let me thank Alhaji Babah Sawaneh for putting a human face — his face — and the faces of millions of children on the issue before the Council this morning, the situation of children in armed conflict. Let me also thank him for coming to New York to speak to the members of the Council.

Sir Jeremy Greenstock (United Kingdom): I think all of us will feel that what has already been said in the Council this morning is all we really need to

hear. The statements by the Secretary-General, Mr. Olara Otunnu, Ms. Carol Bellamy and, in particular, Alhaji Babah Sawaneh have brought home to us that the work of the Council is there to affect real people on the ground in real ways. I am sorry that our intervention, and the interventions of my colleagues, will have to deal with the bureaucracy of what the Council does. But we have been asked some questions in this morning's statements, and I think that we have to try to point the way to some answers.

The Secretary-General's report, which he has addressed both to the Security Council and to the General Assembly, is a very relevant document in this respect, and I thank him for it. The Special Representative and the Executive Director have also pointed very sharply to ways in which the Council, as one of the organs of the United Nations concerned with children in armed conflict, has to act. Later on, Belgium will make a statement on behalf of the European Union that will also express some fundamental points. But there are some things that I would like to bring out.

The whole subject is of legitimate interest to the Council, because how the international community deals with this issue of children and armed conflict has a direct consequence, not only for the welfare of children in itself, but because failure to recognize the subject and tackle its effects will have a damaging impact on the international peace and security efforts of the Council. This is not simply an issue of morality; it is an issue of security. That is the point.

The report and our draft resolution outline very well the importance of designing a robust normative framework within which the practical work of the wider United Nations system can have an impact on the ground. The Geneva Conventions, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Optional Protocol on child soldiering, the Statute of the International Criminal Court and the International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention on the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour are all vital policy tools in that respect, and, of course, command the full support of the United Kingdom.

But it is particularly important to make those conventions bite. I welcome the Secretary-General's and the Special Representative's intention to name and shame those who contravene those norms and to take follow-up action.

When considering the report within the Council as well as the draft resolution we are to adopt, we should be aware of the need to understand the linkages between this subject and other relevant concerns in the area of those most affected by conflicts. This is important to ensure that we are developing the comprehensive approach to conflict prevention and peace-building that the Secretary-General exhorted us to consider in his report of June 2001 and which is enshrined in our resolution on the prevention of armed conflict, adopted this August.

The thinking outlined in resolution 1325 (2000), on women, peace and security, in last month's presidential statement on the same subject and in our work on civilians affected by armed conflict, to be discussed tomorrow, are all relevant here.

We welcome the progress that has been made in establishing child protection units in the context of peacekeeping missions. We are encouraged by progress in this respect in the work of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) and of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC), and the role that child protection officers play in the implementation of their mandates.

In resolution 1355 (2001), on MONUC, the Council called for all relevant parties to ensure that child-protection concerns were addressed. We encourage the efforts of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and of the Special Representative to continue to work to strengthen the role of these units in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, especially in the design of effective reintegration components of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programmes for child soldiers and other children most affected by conflicts. I think that Babah Sawaneh has brought that home to us in his statement this morning.

The United Kingdom will continue to support the system's efforts to extend the role of child protection advisers both at Headquarters and in the field. We hope that their work can also be linked, where appropriate, to the need for the important work of mainstreaming gender in the context of peace-building strategies, especially in situations of rehabilitation and reconstruction following the end of hostilities. Olara Otunnu and Carol Bellamy have pointed this out this morning, in particular in the context of the vulnerability of girls in armed conflict.

The United Kingdom takes note of the emphasis placed in the report and in the draft resolution on the inimical effects of illegal trade in natural resources and in small arms by parties to armed conflict and the direct negative link to the interests and well-being of children. We welcome the report's and the draft resolution's emphasis on these areas, as well as the direct link they draw to our work on HIV/AIDS, which is recognized in our draft resolution.

Let me say a final word on the cohesion of the system. Not least because resources are scarce, we would like to underline the need for the various parts of the United Nations system working on conflict issues to do so in a complementary fashion. It is a familiar theme, and perhaps we are now getting somewhere. The integrated mission task force philosophy has to spread out from New York to the ground and, of course, back to the intergovernmental system. There is a real chance to get this right again in the context of Afghanistan.

The United Kingdom is a strong supporter of the Office of the Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict, and we are working with UNICEF to help build the capacity of its Emergency Operations department to integrate children and conflict issues into their programmes more effectively.

We look forward to seeing these two Offices working increasingly closely together to continue to share information and approaches with each other, with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and other members of the United Nations system, and with non-United Nations partners in the development of effective, durable responses.

We share the Secretary-General's disappointment at the fact that the special session on children had to be postponed from this September. But our debate today, and the draft resolution we are going to adopt, can help inspire a really effective preparatory process — begun under your excellent coordinating role, Madam President — for the special session next year. Perhaps by then we shall feel that we have begun to make our "redemption songs" a reality.

Mr. Cunningham (United States of America): Madam President, I wish to thank you for convening this meeting today, and especially for your continued leadership on this issue. I also want to thank the Secretary-General; his Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict, Olara Otunnu; and the

Director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Carol Bellamy, for their statements this morning. They were illuminating and help us, I think, put this issue in perspective. It is important that the United Nations, the Security Council and our Governments as Member States keep the issue of children and armed conflict in focus, and I agree with Ambassador Greenstock that, for this Council, we also need to look at it as an issue of security and of direct relevance to our work and for the future of our work.

Mr. Otunnu and Ms. Bellamy's statements show that progress is being made and also that Member States are moving forward to help. Five additional nations have ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, the instrument that works most directly to address the problem before us today. With the tenth ratification filed by New Zealand on 12 November, the Optional Protocol will enter into force in 90 days. The United States is a signatory to the Optional Protocol, and President Bush has submitted it to the Senate for ratification. The Secretary-General's report also tells us that there are additional gains on a number of fronts, but that, unfortunately, there is still very much to be done. This issue will be with us for some time.

We meet today at a time when a new conflict dominates our thoughts and our work. The attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, and the subsequent action in Afghanistan, had not been envisioned when the Security Council considered this issue last year, or even when the Secretary-General released, on 7 September, the report we are discussing today. The war against terrorism has aspects that have not been traditionally considered in the debate on children and armed conflict, such as the thousands of children who lost their parents on 11 September.

However, some aspects of the victimization of children in this conflict are still frighteningly familiar. As First Lady Laura Bush stated in last Saturday's weekly presidential radio address, the plight of women and children in Afghanistan is a matter of deliberate human cruelty, carried out by those who seek to intimidate and control. The State Department report released in conjunction with that statement, entitled "The Taliban's War on Women", tells the story of an Afghan mother with a feverish child badly in need of a doctor. Unfortunately, she had no male family member to accompany her in public, a Taliban rule. Striving to

save her child, she went into the streets anyway, where she was shot by a Taliban guard. Luckily, bystanders were able to intercede to save her and the child.

Mercifully, the Taliban have been pushed out of most parts of Afghanistan, and the international community can now help bring relief to the people of Afghanistan, and especially the women and children. My Government has the honour of hosting today in Washington, together with Japan, a working session to advance that effort and to prepare for a better future.

As we have heard this morning, in addition to children as victims, the problem of child soldiers continues. Children under the age of 15 are still being conscripted or recruited and are being used directly in armed conflict. As the Secretary-General identified again this year, children become at the same time both victims and perpetrators. Our collective action is making this more difficult; we applaud that and are committed to a continuing effort to deal with the problem.

The situation in Sierra Leone, the land of the young man who spoke to us so eloquently this morning, remains daunting. We commend the work that the United Nations Children's Fund and others are doing to address the physical, medical and psychological damage done to the children of Sierra Leone during the brutal civil war. These children are maimed, torn from their families, forced to engage in acts of brutality — helping them is an enormous challenge, and one that we must meet.

We must continue to work together to protect children affected by armed conflict. I have cited but two examples, but there are, all too regrettably, many more. We all have our roles to play, and the United States will continue to do its part to support these children and to make the world a safer place for them.

Mr. Kolby (Norway): Many of today's wars are internal, protracted, fought in developing countries along ethnic, linguistic or religious divides, fuelled by illicit economic activity and fought with small arms and light weapons, and they involve a high proportion of non-State actors. That combination of factors has exposed children to an unfortunately high risk of death, injury and suffering.

The important challenge of protecting civilians, not least children, in armed conflict must take its rightful place as an integral part of all relevant matters

dealt with by the Security Council. The reports and recommendations of the Secretary-General and of his Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict are highly relevant and should be given full consideration.

The draft resolution before us imposes a number of requirements on Member States, the United Nations system, financial institutions, regional organizations and, not least, the parties to armed conflict. That will raise expectations. We must now live up to them. To that end, improved cooperation among the whole range of intergovernmental, regional and non-governmental organizations is needed. My delegation is particularly pleased by the fact that, as a means to bridge the gap between short-term and long-term measures, the draft resolution makes direct reference to the international financial and development institutions and their responsibilities in this regard.

It is encouraging that mandates of some peacekeeping operations now include specific provisions for the protection of war-affected children. We also welcome the fact that child protection officers are included in the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone and in the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Because we all know that children are affected by armed conflict wherever it occurs, the most appropriate approach for the future will therefore be to include child protection staff in United Nations peacekeeping operations more as a rule than as an exception.

Small arms, including anti-personnel mines, play a central role in internal conflicts and destroy the lives of millions of people. Commitments made during the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects must be followed up. In order to protect the lives of innocent civilians, including children, we must continue our efforts to establish more efficient control mechanisms that will change today's easy access to those weapons.

War affects boys and girls differently. Girls are often more exposed to rape and other forms of gender-based violence. In wartime, increased numbers of women and girls are forced into prostitution by exploitation, poverty and hunger. Boys are exploited in other ways, most commonly as child soldiers. All these young people run a high risk of contracting HIV/AIDS, a disease that spreads even more rapidly in connection with conflicts and displacement.

Displacement also poses other extreme risks for children. Displaced children have lost the security of their communities and in many cases their families, and are often regarded with resentment and suspicion when they arrive in new communities. Because many of them have experienced traumatizing violations of human rights and humanitarian law, they may be in need of special protection in the country where they seek refuge. We support and encourage United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations in their work to reunite children with their families.

Those responsible for exploiting children during conflict should not enjoy impunity or be considered under amnesty provisions. With the coming into force of the International Criminal Court, the international community will have a good basis for enhancing accountability for crimes against humanity, including the conscription and enlisting of children under the age of 15 years into the armed forces and the use of children in hostilities. We urge those States which have not done so to consider ratifying the Rome Statute of the Court at the earliest possible date. We also urge States to provide financial support for the establishment of the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

The peace-building process hinges on civil society. Civil society's engagement is crucial for strengthening local healing processes and for preventing future violence. We must support the often imaginative endeavours of civil players to rehabilitate and reintegrate war-torn societies. In order to heal the wounds and truly integrate children back into their communities, peace and reconciliation processes must, to the extent possible, also include children.

Finally, my delegation finds that the draft resolution before us has taken an imaginative step by requesting the Secretary-General to attach a list of the names of those parties to armed conflict that recruit or use children in violation of relevant international obligations in situations that are of concern to the Council's agenda. That will hopefully increase accountability and provide more accurate information.

By adopting the draft resolution, the Council would reaffirm its commitment to keeping the question of children in armed conflict high on its agenda. We have the normative framework in place. Our challenge now is to find ways to apply it and to ensure that it is respected. My delegation totally agrees with the

Secretary-General that it is now time to initiate an "era of application" (*S/2001/852, para. 5*).

Mr. Shen Guofang (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation thanks you, Madam President, for arranging this important meeting on the question of children in armed conflict. We wish also to thank the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, Ambassador Otunnu and Ms. Bellamy for their important statements.

In recent years, the Security Council has made active efforts to press for a solution to the question of children and armed conflict.

Thanks to these efforts, the international community has been paying greater attention to this issue. In his report, the Secretary-General has made some concrete and focused proposals, which merit the attention of the entire United Nations system and all its members. We believe that the most urgent task is for the various parties to abide by the relevant legal norms universally accepted by the international community and to implement the relevant Security Council resolutions in earnest, so as to translate consensus on this issue into action. The Security Council has the primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security. In order to be truly concerned about the protection of children and civilians in armed conflict, priority should be given to taking effective measures to prevent and end armed conflict. Only when conflicts are resolved and crises are addressed in a timely manner can the protection of children be finally fully addressed.

The Security Council has considered the protection of civilians, women and children in armed conflict recently and on many occasions and has passed resolutions and presidential statements. Regrettably, in areas such as Palestine and Afghanistan, where conflicts are quite grave, the protection and the rights of these vulnerable social groups are not ensured, as they should be. According to the statistics of the relevant agencies, about 100,000 Afghan children and adolescents may not survive the coming winter. We are deeply concerned about this. We call upon the international community to increase assistance to the Afghan refugees and to find a political solution to the issue of Afghanistan at an early date.

The protection of children in armed conflict requires the joint efforts of the international community. The Chinese delegation has always

attached great importance to the protection of children. De jure and de facto protection of the rights of the child is a basic principle followed by China in the protection of children. Last year, the Chinese Government signed the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict. We hope that the various parties will abide by the relevant provisions of this Optional Protocol, such as that on recruitment age, at an early date. We hope that the various United Nations agencies will do their jobs well under their respective mandates and that, at the same time, they will strengthen cooperation and coordination so as to bring into full play their combined strengths.

We appreciate the various efforts made by the United Nations Children's Fund, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the Secretary-General's Special Representative, Ambassador Otunnu, for their efforts over a long period. The Chinese Government will continue to support their work, and we are ready to strengthen our cooperation.

Mr. Krokmal (Ukraine): My delegation welcomes the Secretary-General's important statement.

I would like to thank the Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Ms. Carol Bellamy, and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, Mr. Olara Otunnu, for their continuing efforts to strengthen the role of the United Nations in bringing this issue to the attention of the international community.

The story told this morning by a former child soldier, Alhaji Sawaneh, clearly shows how painful the realities of numerous armed conflicts are in various parts of the world, including Afghanistan. They represent a grave threat to the future of new generations, and my delegation appreciates your leadership, Madam President, in convening the Security Council meeting on this particularly important topic.

By adopting its landmark resolutions 1261 (1999) and 1314 (2000), affirming the protection of children affected by armed conflict as a peace and security concern, the Security Council has become actively engaged in the issue. Those documents became an important basis for advocacy on behalf of children affected by conflict.

Today is the time to analyze the progress achieved in the implementation of our resolutions and to determine ways to move forward in defending children who have suffered in wars. In my delegation's view, the Secretary-General's report to the Security Council is, in fact, a very useful source of reference for this debate. It contains a comprehensive overview of the fate of children caught in conflicts, draws on specific activities from the field, traces the progress made thus far and provides a list of additional key actions that may be taken in the near future. As the report shows, real progress has been made.

The Ukraine welcomes the efforts of the Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict, Mr. Otunnu, aimed at generating a series of child-protection pledges from the parties to conflict. And we can now see that important commitments made to the Special Representative and other relevant bodies have been met in several zones of conflict.

We especially appreciate the fact that the reports to the Security Council on some specific conflict situations now contain distinct sections on the protection and well-being of children. About 30 reports submitted recently to the Council integrated information and recommendations covering the protection of children affected by armed conflict. On this basis, seven Council resolutions and several presidential statements included concern for the plight of children affected by armed conflict.

We are pleased with the training on the rights of the child, and child protection is now an integral part of the curriculum of all peacekeeping training activities conducted by the Training and Evaluation Service of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations.

We also support the increasing and widespread engagement of non-governmental organizations in advocacy work, as well as the provision of information and programme activities on the ground. My delegation welcomes all those steps taken so far to implement resolutions and encourages all actors to continue these efforts. In spite of the progress achieved so far, a great deal remains to be done to ensure the effective protection and rehabilitation of children in times of war.

We are prepared to move ahead with the new recommendations of the Secretary-General. Many of those recommendations are built on and refine elements of resolutions 1261 (1999) and 1314 (2000).

We share in particular the Secretary-General's view that the mandates of peacekeeping operations should continue to include provisions for the protection of the rights of children.

Peacekeeping missions have a critical role to play in providing protection to children. In order to implement this particular dimension of their mandate, a child protection adviser should be responsible for coordinating activities to ensure the protection and welfare of children. Greater attention should be given to appropriate training of peacekeeping personnel, both civilian and military, in the area of the protection of the rights of children. We are sure that the greater involvement of women in peacekeeping missions will help enhance the capacity of missions in terms of protecting children and dealing with gender-sensitivity aspects.

We totally agree with the Secretary-General that the effective monitoring of adherence to the framework of international law and to consequent obligations is essential action contributing to the protection of children and their rights. In this regard, it is very important to continue to include observations concerning the protection of children in the reports to the Security Council on conflict situations.

Over the past few years, a number of parties to conflict have made concrete commitments to the protection of children. The challenge now is how to ensure adherence to those commitments. Such reporting can assist in exerting political pressure on parties, whose conduct falls short of their child-protection obligations and commitments. The Security Council can make a big difference in this regard by using its collective influence to lean on parties to conflict.

The demobilization and reintegration of soldiers should be an integral part of humanitarian relief and peace-building strategies. In this context, we fully support the Secretary-General's statement that there is an urgent need for the international community, especially for international and regional institutions, to provide sustained and adequate resources to all relevant actors, particularly peace operations, United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) engaged in implementing demobilization and reintegration programmes for children.

In conclusion, Ukraine would like to thank the delegation of France for its leadership in preparing a

new draft resolution on children in armed conflict that will assign new initiatives to a number of actors, including Member States, international financial institutions, regional organizations, the United Nations and the Council itself. We support this draft and look forward to further progress in this direction, and we express our readiness to contribute to the subsequent consideration of the question of children in armed conflict, in the Security Council and in the General Assembly.

We also recall another initiative of France, to convene a Security Council summit meeting on children in armed conflict during the General Assembly's special session on children, which will most likely take place in May 2002.

Mr. Ouane (Mali) (*spoke in French*): The problem of children in armed conflict is of increasing concern to the Security Council in the exercise of its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. This is also a crucial question for the countries of West Africa, which, for more than a decade, have been torn by conflicts in which children have been both the victims and the perpetrators. The touching testimony of Alhaji Babah Sawaneh this morning is revealing in this regard.

Mali, one of the initiators of the World Summit for Children — which led to the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, whose Optional Protocol focuses great attention on the question under consideration — welcomes the holding of today's debate, and we are grateful to you, Madam President, for having taken the initiative on this.

We also extend our thanks to the Secretary-General for his very useful and detailed report and his very important statement this morning.

We must not fail to congratulate and thank Mr. Olara Otunnu, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, for his intelligent and sustained action and, on this occasion, for his, as usual, lucid and detailed briefing.

Of course, I would also like to underscore the important work accomplished by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) for children affected by conflict. I thank Ms. Carol Bellamy, the Executive Director, for her highly useful contribution to our debate this morning.

We have carefully considered the report under consideration, on which I would like at the present time to make a few comments. First, Mali welcomes this second report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict, above all because it contains important measures, whose objective is to ensure the protection of children during and after armed conflict. We also welcome it because it reviews the measures that have been taken to follow up on past recommendations of the Secretary-General and relevant resolutions of the Security Council. Likewise, we are delighted at the forthcoming entry into force of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, of which Mali is completing the formalities of ratification. Along the same lines, we support the recommendations of the Secretary-General contained in paragraph 22 of his report, which are aimed at ensuring respect for the obligations and commitments undertaken for the protection of children in armed conflict.

Secondly, I would like to emphasize the increasingly active role of the Security Council on the question of children and armed conflict. My delegation is delighted in this respect with the efforts of the Secretary-General to make available to the Security Council first-hand information on children affected by conflicts, especially in specific countries. I have in mind in particular Sierra Leone, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Angola and Afghanistan. In this regard, my delegation is pleased at Mr. Otunnu's visit to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, followed by his briefing to the Security Council and its adoption of a resolution calling for greater attention to be given to the protection of children in that country and to strengthening the child-protection component of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC).

My third comment relates to the need to adopt a regional approach to ensure the protection of children in armed conflict. In fact, it is essential to take measures to put an end to the transboundary activities that are harmful to children in times of armed conflict, such as the transboundary recruitment and kidnapping of children, the sale of or trafficking in children, attacks on refugee or displaced-persons camps and installations, the contraband in precious minerals, the illicit traffic in small arms and other criminal activities.

In this regard, Mali took an active part in the adoption, in April 2000, of the Accra Declaration and

Plan of Action on War-Affected Children in West Africa. Likewise, Mali made a useful contribution to the training of officers of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) for the protection of children in armed conflict, to the meeting in Libreville in February 2001 on the economic exploitation of children and to the Arab-African forum in Rabat, from 24-26 October 2001, on the sexual exploitation of children. Along the same lines, we must welcome the holding in Cairo, in May 2001, under the auspices of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), of the Pan African Forum on the Future of Children in Africa, at which a Declaration and Plan of Action were adopted that envisage suitable measures for the protection of children affected by armed conflict. It is also reassuring to welcome the adoption by the members of ECOWAS, in April 2001, of an agreement to establish a Child-Protection Unit, which will ensure the integration of child-protection mechanisms into all relevant ECOWAS institutions and also the implementation of the Accra Declaration and Plan of Action.

These various initiatives are accomplishments that must be consolidated, inter alia, through sufficient financial aid from the United Nations and the donor community to regional organizations, such as ECOWAS, that have shown their determination to ensure the protection of children during and after armed conflict but that do not have the means to do so.

Concluding as I began, I would like to reiterate Mali's steadfast commitment to children, especially those that are affected by armed conflict. It is our hope that the special session of the General Assembly on children, to be held in May 2002, will give Member States, the United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations and civil society a useful opportunity to follow the example of the Security Council, through its resolution 1314 (2000) and the resolution to be adopted at this meeting, by taking decisive measures to ensure the protection of children.

Mr. Gatilov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The rights of the child have become among the most important areas of human rights throughout the United Nations system. We recently marked the tenth anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, a document that was the first-ever universal bill on the rights of the child and provides legal protection of children's rights. The strength of the Convention lies in its recognition of the need to ensure

special protection and assistance to children. Unfortunately, those lofty principles are not always fully applied in practice. The suffering of children from hunger, sickness and violence is not a thing of the past, but the bitter reality of today.

Adults start wars, but it is mainly children who suffer in them. Today, we heard first-hand one of the hundreds, perhaps thousands, such stories of suffering. The nature of conflict has changed and over 90 per cent of victims are now civilians, at least half of whom are children. Children constitute over 65 per cent of refugees and internally displaced persons. Behind these dry statistics lies enormous human sorrow, borne on the still frail shoulders of children. They lose parents, their homes are destroyed, their families are shattered, they live in destitution, they are unable to pursue an education and they suffer long-term psychological trauma.

Obviously, the international community must take steps when serious situations develop that cause children to suffer. The best way to protect children, however, is to prevent conflicts from erupting or to settle them before they become so destructive. The role of the United Nations and its Security Council can hardly be overstated in that regard.

We are pleased that our Council, the organ bearing primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, is focusing on the child dimension of armed conflicts. Moreover, Russia believes that the undertaking of humanitarian tasks in the context of protecting children is primarily the prerogative of the specialized agencies and humanitarian organizations, including the World Health Organization, the United Nations Children's Fund, the World Food Programme, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the International Committee of the Red Cross and other bodies with their own mandates that are autonomous at the operational and financial levels.

An important achievement in protecting the interests of children was the General Assembly's adoption on 25 May 2000 of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the

involvement of children in armed conflict. That document is intended to offer real help to children in war, but we need not stop at that. The Russian Federation calls on all States to raise the army recruitment age to 18 years. This issue was thoroughly discussed at the International Conference on War-Affected Children, held last September in Winnipeg, in which the Russian delegation participated. We believe that the exchange of views there was extremely useful and should be pursued.

We are deeply convinced that the problems of children are not confined to armed conflict alone. The protection of children should be approached from a somewhat broader angle. Neglect, childhood drug abuse, the traffic in children and even in their organs and tissues, the sexual exploitation of children — this is far from being a complete list of the bitter problems that threaten children in the world today and thus the future of the entire human race.

An altogether different issue is the problem of terrorism, which is becoming increasingly conspicuous and spares neither adults nor children. It is our common duty effectively to prevent the proliferation of these universal evils.

We greatly appreciate the Secretary-General's report prepared for this meeting of the Security Council. We are pleased that many of its recommendations have been taken into account in the Council's draft resolution and will thereby form the basis of a further intensification of our joint efforts in this very important area.

Children will be the custodians of this new century. By protecting them from war today, we will be taking an important step in building a world without violence or conflict, a world of democracy and prosperity.

The President: There are still a number of speakers on my list for this meeting. In view of the lateness of the hour, I intend, with the concurrence of the members of the Council, to suspend the meeting until 3.15 this afternoon.

The meeting was suspended at 1.20 p.m.