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RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

**Annual report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General
for Children and Armed Conflict, Mr. Olara A. Otunnu, submitted
in accordance with General Assembly resolution 51/77***

* In accordance with General Assembly resolution 53/208B, paragraph 8, this document is submitted late so as to include the most up-to-date information possible.

Executive summary

In the present report progress in several initiatives begun earlier as well as new developments are highlighted. One important development has been the list of parties to conflict recruiting or using children in conflict situations currently on the Security Council's agenda annexed to the Secretary General's report to the Council. This constitutes a significant advance in monitoring and reporting efforts towards achieving an "era of application" of international norms and standards for the protection of children affected by armed conflict. Recommendations contained in the present report for the protection, rights and well-being of children affected by armed conflict highlight the role of the Commission on Human Rights and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) towards this end.

Two landmark international instruments for the protection of children affected by armed conflict entered into force - the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

The Office of the Special Representative contributed to the preparation of guidelines for the Special Court for Sierra Leone prosecutor and judges, and to the commissioners and staff of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Sierra Leone regarding protection of war-affected children.

The Office continued its efforts to ensure the inclusion of child protection in United Nations peace operations through two working groups; the Working Group on the Incorporation of Child Protection in United Nations Peacemaking, Peacekeeping and Peace-building Processes has drafted the first set of guidance material; and the Working Group on Child Protection Training for Peacekeeping Personnel has produced a complete draft set of training materials.

Working with the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Task Force, the Office of the Special Representative contributed to the six core principles on the prevention of sexual exploitation adopted by the IASC Task Force.

The Office of the Special Representative continued to work with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in the deployment of child protection advisers in the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) and the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC).

Several regional and subregional organizations and arrangements incorporated the children and armed conflict agenda in their work. The initiative promoted by the Special Representative to integrate child protection concerns in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) resulted in the establishment of a Child Protection Unit (CPU) in the ECOWAS secretariat.

In order to assess the situation of children affected by armed conflict, and to advocate for their protection, the Special Representative undertook field missions to Northern Ireland, Guatemala, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Angola, the Russian Federation, including the Northern Caucasus, and Afghanistan.

In the ongoing efforts to ensure a more systematic engagement of youth in the protection of children affected by armed conflict, the Office of the Special Representative initiated a comprehensive Youth Programme.

As a result of information provided by the Office of the Special Representative, the Committee on the Rights of the Child made several recommendations for the demobilization and reintegration of child soldiers in Guinea-Bissau.

A major development was the submission of the Secretary-General's third report on children affected by armed conflict (in the preparation of which the Office of the Special Representative is the designated focal point) and the subsequent Security Council resolution 1460 (2003). The report breaks new ground by annexing a list of 23 parties to armed conflict recruiting or using children in conflict situations currently on the Council's agenda. For the first time, an official United Nations report has specifically named and listed parties to conflict using or recruiting children in violation of international obligations applicable to them. The report urges the international community to move forward in a concerted manner to achieve an "era of application" of norms and standards for the protection of war-affected children through dissemination, advocacy, monitoring and reporting. Following the submission of the report, the Security Council, after an open debate, adopted resolution 1460 (2003), which supports the Secretary-General's call for an "era of application" and expresses the intention of the Council to develop clear and time-bound action plans to end the practice of recruiting or using children as soldiers.

To achieve an "era of application", the Commission on Human Rights and OHCHR, along with other partners, have an important role to play. In this regard, the Special Representative makes several recommendations.

While welcoming the efforts already being undertaken by the Commission in order to further the protection, rights and well-being of war-affected children, the Special Representative urges the Commission and OHCHR to ensure that the protection, rights and well-being become a central concern throughout their work.

The Special Representative encourages the human rights mechanisms, including the Special Rapporteurs and Representatives as well as the treaty body mechanisms, to integrate international norms and standards on children affected by armed conflict in their examination and recommendations with regard to country situations, as well as in thematic mandates, particularly with respect to parties to conflict listed in the annex to the Secretary-General's report.

When considering or adopting resolutions on country-specific situations or thematic issues the Commission members are encouraged to include therein recommendations on or references to protection of children affected by armed conflict.

The Special Representative urges the Commission to hear direct testimonies of war-affected children.

The Special Representative encourages OHCHR to ensure that international norms and standards on the protection, rights and well-being of children affected by armed conflict become an integral part of programmes and initiatives on human rights education.

The Special Representative urges relevant intersessional and pre-sessional working groups under the aegis of the Commission to integrate the protection, rights and well-being of children affected by armed conflict into their work.

Finally, in order to effectively establish an “era of application”, the Special Representative urges all commissions, committees, agencies and institutions of the United Nations to integrate the protection, rights and well-being of children into their work in a cross-cutting manner.

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. The present report to the Commission on Human Rights supplements the report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict to the General Assembly (A/57/402), and the report of the Secretary-General to the Security Council (S/2002/1299).

II. STRENGTHENED FRAMEWORK OF NORMS AND STANDARDS

2. Since the previous report of the Special Representative to the Commission on Human Rights two landmark international legal instruments entered into force - the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict (12 February 2002) and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (1 July 2002). The Optional Protocol sets the age-limit for compulsory recruitment and direct participation in hostilities at 18, and requires States parties to raise the minimum age for voluntary recruitment to at least 16. It prohibits insurgent armed groups "under any circumstances" from recruiting persons under 18 years or using them in hostilities. The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court provides a mechanism of accountability for war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide, including crimes specific to children. For example, the Statute classifies conscription, enlistment or use in hostilities of children below the age of 15 as a war crime in both international and internal armed conflicts. The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the Geneva Conventions, ILO Convention No. 182, the entry into force of the Optional Protocol, the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, as well as Security Council resolutions 1261 (1999), 1314 (2000) and 1379 (2001), including the latest Council resolution 1460 (2003), constitute a comprehensive framework of norms and standards for the protection of children affected by armed conflict.

III. ADDRESSING IMPUNITY

3. The need to address impunity and to bring to justice those responsible for violations of the rights of children in situations of armed conflict continues to remain an important preoccupation of the Special Representative, since it represents a key component of comprehensive efforts aimed at strengthening adherence to international norms and standards for the protection of children affected by armed conflict. The Office of the Special Representative contributed to overall efforts to provide concrete, child-centred guidance during the development of truth commissions and war crimes tribunals. It continued to work with United Nations partners as well as with civil society and the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) to guide developments related to the involvement of children in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Sierra Leone (TRC) and the Special Court for Sierra Leone. The Office of the Special Representative contributed to the preparation of guidelines for the Special Court prosecutor and judges, and to the commissioners and staff of TRC regarding the protection of children as participants, victims, witnesses or perpetrators of grave abuses during the war.

IV. STRENGTHENING ENGAGEMENT OF YOUTH IN THE PROTECTION, RIGHTS AND WELL-BEING OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH AFFECTED BY ARMED CONFLICT

4. In the ongoing efforts to ensure a more systematic engagement of youth in the protection, rights and well-being of war-affected children, the Office of the Special Representative initiated a Youth Programme, consisting of the Global Peace School Programme involving young people in promoting the protection, rights and well-being of children affected by armed conflict through educational processes; a Youth-to-Youth Network involving the formation of an informal network of young people to work on issues of children and armed conflict; and the “Voice of Children” radio initiative. The “Voice of Children” initiative has started in Sierra Leone where UNAMSIL Radio will oversee and manage the programme for a temporary period with the support of local West African and Sierra Leonean personnel. Young Sierra Leoneans will also be trained to participate in the “Voice of Children” initiative.

V. TWO WORKING GROUPS IN PEACE OPERATIONS INITIATED BY THE OFFICE OF THE SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE

5. The Working Group on the Incorporation of Child Protection in United Nations Peacemaking, Peacekeeping and Peace-building Processes, initiated and co-convened by the Office of the Special Representative, drafted the first set of guidance material. The guidelines are in the final review stage and will be followed by similar tools intended to ensure that peacekeeping operations and peace-building efforts are attentive and responsive to children’s rights and needs. The Working Group on Child Protection Training for Peacekeeping Personnel, initiated and co-convened by the Office of the Special Representative, has produced a complete draft set of training materials that can be adapted to train military, police and civilian staff of any peace operation.

VI. INTER-AGENCY STANDING COMMITTEE (IASC) TASK FORCE ON PREVENTION OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

6. Following allegations of sexual abuse and exploitation of refugee children in Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea, IASC on prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse in humanitarian crises established a Task Force to coordinate the response of the humanitarian community to such allegations. The Office of the Special Representative contributed to the development of the six core principles on the prevention of sexual exploitation adopted by the IASC Task Force and supports the call of the Security Council for the incorporation of these principles into pertinent codes of conduct for peacekeeping personnel and for the development of appropriate disciplinary and accountability mechanisms.

VII. CHILD PROTECTION ADVISERS

7. The Office of the Special Representative continued its efforts to systematically integrate child protection objectives in the mandates of peace operations, including through the deployment of Child Protection Advisers (CPAs). As a core member of the Integrated Mission Task Force on Afghanistan, and during his field visit to Afghanistan, the Special Representative

actively pursued these goals with respect to the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan. As a member of the Angola Task Force, the Office of the Special Representative worked to strengthen child protection capacity within the new United Nations Mission in Angola, including through the establishment of the post of a CPA. Similar efforts are under way with the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) and the United Nations Peace-building Support Office in Liberia, as well as the newly established United Nations Office for West Africa. These efforts are in keeping with relevant Security Council resolutions and presidential statements on children and armed conflict, which specifically call for the inclusion of child protection staff in peace operations.

8. The Office of the Special Representative continued to work with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and UNICEF in the deployment of CPAs in the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) and the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC). UNAMSIL strength of CPAs was increased to two. In addition, over the past year, four new CPAs were deployed in MONUC bringing the Child Protection Unit (CPU) to a total of nine international professional staff.

VIII. MITIGATING THE IMPACT OF ILLICIT COMMERCIAL EXPLOITATION OF NATURAL RESOURCES IN CONFLICT ZONES ON CHILDREN

9. The endorsement of the Kimberly process aimed at halting the illicit diamond trade which used to fuel conflict between representatives of Member States and mining and diamond companies at Interlaken, Switzerland, was an important step towards reducing conflict and alleviating the plight of children caught up in a war fuelled by the illicit exploitation of natural resources. The strong support of the Security Council for the Kimberly Process Certification Scheme through the adoption of resolution 1459 (2003) of 28 January 2003 is a welcome endorsement of the process.

10. The Office of the Special Representative encouraged the Panel of Experts on Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to highlight the impact of illegal exploitation of natural resources on children and contributed inputs - gathered from CPAs deployed in MONUC, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and UNICEF - to the Panel's final report.

IX. REGIONAL AND SUBREGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS/ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE PROTECTION, RIGHTS AND WELL-BEING OF WAR-AFFECTED CHILDREN

11. Several regional and subregional organizations or arrangements have incorporated the children and armed conflict agenda as a priority concern in their policies and programmes, including the G-8, the European Union (EU), the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Council of Europe and the African Union/Organization of African Unity. Recently, a declaration on ending the use of child soldiers was adopted by the General Assembly of the

Organization of American States. In addition, the Human Security Network decided to devote particular attention to the protection of children in armed conflict and, in this regard, to develop concrete initiatives on advocacy and activities in collaboration with the Office of the Special Representative.

12. An initiative promoted by the Special Representative to integrate child protection concerns in the work of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) resulted in the establishment of a Child Protection Unit (CPU) in the ECOWAS secretariat in April 2002. CPU plans to implement the Accra Declaration and Plan of Action; assess, document and harmonize child protection policies of ECOWAS member States; and encourage adherence to the Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict and to other relevant international and regional instruments. The Office of the Special Representative and CPU have agreed to conduct joint assessment missions in the subregion, beginning with the Mano River area.

13. In November 2002, the Special Representative discussed specific proposals on protection of children affected by armed conflict with senior EU representatives and highlighted issues relevant to children affected by armed conflict. He also addressed the European Parliament on this subject.

X. FIELD MISSIONS UNDERTAKEN BY THE SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE TO PROMOTE THE PROTECTION, RIGHTS AND WELL-BEING OF CHILDREN AFFECTED BY ARMED CONFLICT

14. The Special Representative visited Northern Ireland, Guatemala, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Angola, the Russian Federation, including the Northern Caucasus, and Afghanistan to assess the situation of children, as well as to advocate for their protection, rights and well-being. During these missions the Special Representative systematically engaged with a wide range of actors, particularly political leaders, United Nations country teams, NGOs and civil society organizations, the diplomatic community, children and their families, women's groups and religious leaders.

Northern Ireland

15. During his second visit to Northern Ireland, from 17 to 19 December 2001, the Special Representative expressed concern over the rise in the recruitment or use of children by paramilitaries and the continuing practice of "punishment beatings" of young people by paramilitary groups. Among other things, the Special Representative recommended combating sectarianism more effectively in homes, schools and at the political level in order to stem the inter-generational transmission of fear and prejudice; addressing social and economic factors that motivate the recruitment of young people into paramilitary groups; promoting the participation of young people in the consolidation of peace; maintaining children's issues at the forefront of political and public attention and action; and creating the Office of Commissioner for Children of Northern Ireland by adopting the bill to establish the office.

Guatemala

16. The Special Representative visited Guatemala from 24 to 28 February 2002. Expressing concern over the fate of disappeared children, the lack of opportunities for children and youth, particularly in the rural indigenous and resettlement areas, as well as the persistent climate of violence and human rights abuses and discrimination, the Special Representative recommended the establishment of a National Commission for the Search of Disappeared Children; accelerating educational reform to ensure universal access to education; strengthening the legal framework for promoting the rights and protection of children by enacting into law the Code on Children and Adolescents; ratifying the Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Cooperation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption as a means of tackling the problem of child trafficking; accelerating implementation of the national programme on food security and nutrition; and developing strategies for monitoring the implementation of the commitments related to children and youth contained in the peace accords.

Ethiopia and Eritrea

17. The Special Representative visited Ethiopia from 3 to 8 March and Eritrea from 9 to 13 March 2002. In both countries the Special Representative expressed concern over the plight of displaced and separated children, the large numbers of mines and unexploded ordnance as well as children affected by HIV/AIDS. The Special Representative was encouraged by the fact that no systematic recruitment and use of child soldiers had been taking place during the conflict in either Ethiopia or Eritrea. The Special Representative made several recommendations, including establishing conditions for the return to and reintegration of internally displaced persons and refugee children in their communities by providing schools, health centres, water and mine-clearance programmes, accelerating initiatives to reunite children with their families and communities, and ratification of the Optional Protocols to CRC and of the Convention on the Status of Stateless Persons. He also urged Ethiopia to ratify the Ottawa Convention on Anti-Personnel Mines; and Eritrea to ratify the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees. The Special Representative strongly urged setting child protection as an explicit objective of UNMEE, including the deployment of a CPA.

Angola

18. During the visit to Angola, from 11 to 17 May 2002, the Special Representative expressed concern over the large numbers and appalling conditions of internally displaced children, especially those emerging from previously inaccessible areas; the large numbers of separated and orphaned children; extensive landmines; widespread malnutrition; and the almost total destruction of the country's health and educational system. His recommendations included addressing the humanitarian crisis and its impact on internally displaced children - especially those emerging from the newly accessible areas of the country - by providing adequate food, water, schooling, sanitation and health care; redirecting national and international resources towards the rehabilitation of social services, especially schools, medical centres and vocational training centres. The Special Representative urged Angola to ratify the Optional Protocol to CRC on the involvement of children in armed conflict and the Ottawa Convention on Anti-Personnel Mines.

Russian Federation including the Northern Caucasus

19. The Special Representative visited the Russian Federation, including the three Republics of Chechnya, Ingushetia and North Ossetia-Alania, from 17 to 24 June 2002. He drew particular attention to the situation of displaced populations and received assurances from the Deputy Prime Minister of the Russian Federation, the President of Ingushetia and the Government of Chechnya that internally displaced persons would not be returned to their places of origin by force. The Special Representative expressed concern about reports on the enlistment of children by the insurgents, and about abuses reportedly committed by security agencies against young persons suspected of being associated with insurgency groups. The Special Representative recommended observing the principle of voluntary return of the internally displaced populations, putting an end to the use of landmines and increasing the provision of assistance to children maimed by landmines and unexploded ordnance. He also called for the strict implementation of Order No. 80 of the Military Commander of Chechnya to protect civilians against possible abuses and violations by the military forces as well as for accelerating the ratification of the Optional Protocol to CRC. He called upon insurgents to halt the enlistment of children, their targeting of civilians and their abuse of children to plant landmines.

Afghanistan

20. The Special Representative visited Afghanistan from 21 to 28 July 2002. While expressing concern over the deplorable conditions of displaced and refugee children, the large number of orphans, street children and children killed and maimed by landmines and unexploded ordnance, and the virtually destroyed educational system, the Special Representative recommended urgent rehabilitation of schools; providing educational materials and paying teachers; reversing chronic malnutrition by breaking the poverty cycle through income-generating projects and other initiatives; paying special attention to basic health conditions of women and children; providing sustained support for landmine clearance as well as for provision of prostheses and awareness-raising campaigns; supporting efforts to strengthen traditional Afghan values that protect children; establishing a national commission for children that would help to translate the needs and concerns of children into national and international priority-setting, policy-making and resource allocation; and assigning a child protection adviser to the staff of UNAMA so as to ensure that the protection, rights and rehabilitation of children and youth are given priority attention in all aspects of United Nations activities in Afghanistan.

Other field visits

21. The staff of the Office of the Special Representative undertook visits to Colombia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Peru, El Salvador, and ECOWAS in Abuja to follow up on the implementation of a range of initiatives proposed by the Special Representative during earlier visits.

XI. WORKING WITH THE COMMITTEE ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD ON GUINEA-BISSAU

22. Having been informed in August 2001 by the United Nations Peace-building Support Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNOGBIS) of the presence of 603 children within the armed forces of Guinea-Bissau, the Office of the Special Representative worked with UNICEF and the Department of Political Affairs to provide advice to UNOGBIS and the UNICEF country office on the demobilization and reintegration of those children. The Office of the Special Representative requested the Committee on the Rights of the Child to help to obtain a clear picture of the extent to which a comprehensive programme for the disarmament, demobilization, resettlement and reintegration of child soldiers had been implemented. As a result, the Committee recommended in June 2002 that the State party (a) demobilize all under-age soldiers; (b) address the psychosocial needs of child soldiers; (c) continue its landmine detection programme; and (d) seek technical support for these measures, including from UNICEF.

XII. GENERAL ASSEMBLY DEBATE ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

23. At its fifty-sixth session, the General Assembly renewed the mandate of the Special Representative for a further period of three years from the end of the current mandate. The Assembly, in its resolution 56/552, requested the Special Representative to take into account the outcome document adopted by the Assembly during its special session on children in his reports to the Assembly and the Commission on Human Rights.

24. The section in the outcome document of the special session on children entitled "Protection of children from armed conflict" contains several recommendations including protection of children under foreign occupation. With regard to children under foreign occupation, developments in the occupied Palestinian territories and Israel are a matter of deep concern to the international community. Their impact on children caught up in the conflict is grave. The Secretary-General's Personal Humanitarian Envoy reported that stricter closures, curfews, roadblocks and checkpoints had resulted in humanitarian problems including frequent school closures in the West Bank and Gaza and a drop in immunization levels among Palestinian children. In this context, the Special Representative calls upon all parties to abide fully by human rights standards and international humanitarian law concerning the protection, rights and well-being of children.

XIII. A MAJOR STEP FORWARD: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON CHILDREN AND ARMED CONFLICT AND SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 1460 (2003) - MOVING TO AN "ERA OF APPLICATION"

25. The Secretary-General's third report on children affected by armed conflict was submitted to the Security Council on 26 November 2002. The report assesses progress made in the implementation of Council resolutions 1261 (1999), 1314 (2000), and 1379 (2001), and annexes a list of parties to armed conflict recruiting or using children in conflict situations currently on the Council's agenda. The list breaks new ground. For the first time, an official

United Nations report has specifically named and listed parties to conflict responsible for abusing children. The list is composed of 23 parties to conflict, including both Governments and insurgency groups in five conflict areas - Afghanistan, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia and Somalia.

26. The report is seminal in other ways too. The gap between international standard-setting and compliance on the ground has been highlighted. The report urges the international community to move forward in a concerted manner to achieve an “era of application” of child protection norms and standards by “ensuring their implementation on the ground”. The Secretary-General’s report also observes that: “dissemination, advocacy, monitoring and reporting are the key components that an era of application must encompass”.

27. Following the submission of the report, the Security Council held its annual open debate on children affected by armed conflict on 14 January 2003. During the debate Member States strongly supported the Secretary-General’s call for an “era of application” and welcomed the list annexed to the report. Security Council resolution 1460 (2003), adopted after the open debate, endorses the Secretary-General’s call for an “era of application”. It also expresses the intention of the Council to enter, or support the Secretary-General in entering, into dialogue with parties to armed conflict that recruit or use children in order to develop clear and time-bound action plans to end the practice. The Council also expresses its intention to consider taking appropriate steps if it deems that not enough progress has been made by parties to conflict listed in the annex. The list annexed to the Secretary General’s report and Council resolution 1460 (2003) are a major step forward in ensuring the protection of children affected by armed conflict. Several other steps are needed to ensure comprehensiveness and systematization of monitoring and reporting and the ushering in of an “era of application”. The Commission on Human Rights and OHCHR, along with other partners, have an important role to play in meeting this objective.

XIV. THE COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

28. The Special Representative has worked closely with special rapporteurs to ensure that the Commission is presented with comprehensive information on children affected by armed conflict. The Special Representative is pleased to note that an increasing number of documents have highlighted the plight of children affected by armed conflict.

29. During the fifty-eighth session of the Commission, several reports submitted by special rapporteurs and other extra-conventional mechanisms of the Commission, as well as a number of resolutions adopted by the Commission, included issues of concern to children affected by armed conflict.

30. In keeping with the Secretary-General’s call for an “era of application” the Special Representative urges the Commission to make the protection, rights and well-being of children affected by armed conflict a central concern throughout its work.

31. To ensure a more universal, comprehensive and systematic monitoring and reporting, the Special Representative encourages the human rights mechanisms, including the special rapporteurs and representatives as well as the treaty body mechanisms to integrate international

norms and standards on children affected by armed conflict in their examination and recommendations with regard to country situations as well as in thematic mandates, particularly with respect to parties to conflict listed in the annex to the Secretary-General's report.

32. When considering or adopting resolutions on country-specific situations or thematic issues the Commission members are encouraged to include recommendations on or references to protection of children affected by armed conflict.

33. The Special Representative urges the Commission to hear direct testimonies of war-affected children during the consideration of the agenda item on the rights of the child.

34. The Special Representative encourages OHCHR to ensure that international norms and standards on the protection, rights and well-being of children affected by armed conflict become an integral part of programmes and initiatives on human rights education.

35. The Special Representative urges the relevant intersessional and pre-sessional working groups under the aegis of the Commission, for example, the Working Group on Situations, the Intergovernmental Working Group on the Effective Implementation of the Durban Declaration, the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances, the Working Group on Indigenous Populations, and the Working Group on the Right to Development, to integrate the protection, rights and well-being of children affected by armed conflict into work.

36. In order to effectively establish an "era of application", the Special Representative urges all commissions, committees, agencies and institutions of the United Nations to integrate the protection, rights and well-being of children into their work. Particularly, the Commission on Human Rights, the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, the Commission for Social Development, the Disarmament Commission and the Commission on the Status of Women, are encouraged to consider the issue of war-affected children as a cross-cutting theme in their agendas and coordinate their efforts through established mechanisms such as joint bureau meetings as well as coordination mechanisms with the Economic and Social Council. This would ensure greater cohesiveness in monitoring the situation of children affected by armed conflict in its various dimensions as well as contribute to enhanced effectiveness of the United Nations system's response to the protection, rights and well-being of children affected by armed conflict.
