



World View

CANADA

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Building a fit **world** for children

The UN Special Session on Children

Tackling unfinished business

Canadian priorities at the Special Session

Senator Landon Pearson presents our position

Canadian youth interns abroad

Working for children of the world



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

OUR COVER
A young Angolan landmine victim practises running at an orthopedic centre in Huambo, central Angola.

photo: CANAPRESS

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COMING EVENTS

SEPTEMBER

September 19–21
United Nations Special Session on Children
New York, U.S.A

September 25
Opening of the 56th session of the
United Nations General Assembly
New York, U.S.A

OCTOBER

October 6–9
Commonwealth Heads of Government
Meeting
Brisbane, Australia

October 17–21
APEC Summit
Shanghai, China

October 26–28
Francophonie Summit
Beirut, Lebanon

NOVEMBER

Tabling of the report of the
International Commission on
Intervention and State Sovereignty
United Nations, New York, U.S.A

DECEMBER

December 3–4
Organization for Security
and Co-operation in Europe
Ministerial Council meeting
Bucharest, Romania

December 6–7
North Atlantic Treaty Organization
Council meeting
Brussels, Belgium

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Carol Bellamy

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How the world views and treats children:
Time for change

On September 19 and 20, heads of state and government (including Prime Minister Jean Chrétien), non-governmental organizations, children's advocates and young people will gather at the United Nations in New York to discuss how to build a world fit for children. The UN General Assembly Special Session on Children will review progress since the landmark 1990 World Summit for Children, and will decide on what needs to be done over the next decade.

The 1990 Summit came a year after the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. At the Summit, world leaders promised to protect children, lessen their suffering and promote their full development. "We do this," they declared, "not only for the present generation, but for all generations to come." They also promised that they would always put the best interests of children first in all circumstances.

***We cannot waste our precious children.
Not another one, not another day.***

—Nelson Mandela and Graça Machel

Eleven years later, the record is mixed. On the plus side, infant mortality has fallen; expanded immunization programs save 3 million lives a year; severe malnutrition is becoming rarer; iodized salt is being used by 1.5 billion more people now than in 1990, reducing brain damage, retardation and other physical impairments; millions more children are in school; and the number of people without access to safe drinking water has dropped from 1.5 billion to 700 million.

photo: UNICEF / Giacomo Pirozzi



Graça Machel, Nelson Mandela and 12-year-old Kamo Masilo of South Africa use a laptop computer to register their support on-line for the "Say Yes for Children" campaign.



photo: CANAPRESS

Agricultural worker Lenise Aparecida Mota and her children sit in their cardboard shack near a tomato field in the town of Riberão Branco, near São Paulo, Brazil. According to a recent estimate of the UN World Food Programme, over 800 million people go hungry in developing countries alone, not because of sudden crisis or drought but as a matter of everyday life.

On the minus side, more than 10 million children still die each year from preventable causes; 150 million still suffer from malnutrition; 100 million (most of them girls) still are not in school; promised resources have yet to materialize; social services are underfunded; and the lives of millions continue to be devastated by hazardous labour, HIV/AIDS, the sale and trafficking of women and children, the recruitment of child soldiers, the commercial sexual exploitation of children, and general abuse and violence.

Carol Bellamy heads UNICEF (the United Nations Children's Fund). She sees the Special Session as an opportunity to make world leaders aware of the distance still to be travelled. One way of putting across the message, she says, is by marshalling the support of the world's citizens. That is the rationale behind a worldwide campaign called "Say Yes for Children," launched by UNICEF and the Global Movement for Children (<http://www.gmfc.org/en/index.html>)—a group of partners led by former South African President Nelson Mandela and his wife Graça Machel, former Education Minister of Mozambique. The results of the campaign will be presented to world leaders at the Special Session.

This issue of *Canada World View* examines the situation of children around the world, and looks at what to expect from the Special Session. We hear from Carol Bellamy and also learn what Canada is doing from Senator Landon Pearson, Prime Minister Chrétien's Personal Representative to the Special Session. ●



photo: UNICEF / Jeremy Horner



The UN Special Session on Children

Tackling unfinished business

Children are the bearers of our common future.
—Carol Bellamy

At the 1990 World Summit for Children, 71 heads of state and government and other senior officials signed the World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children. They also adopted an action plan with a set of precise, time-bound goals that included improving children's living conditions, reducing the spread of preventable diseases and protecting children in danger.

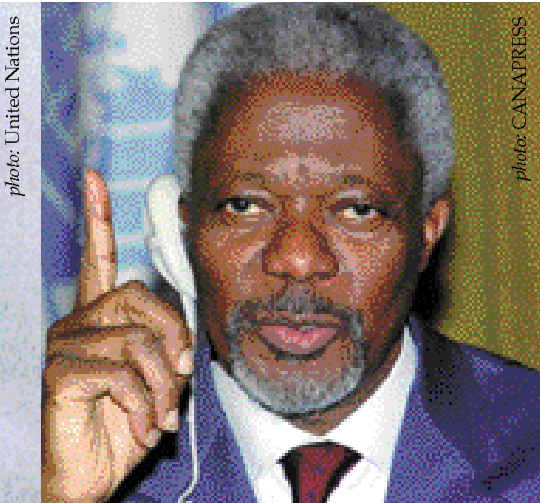
This September, world leaders are gathering at the United Nations to assess the situation anew. Says UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, "The Special Session will indeed be a special session in several ways. It will have the potential to shape the lives of children and adolescents throughout the world. It will assemble leaders from governments and non-governmental organizations, as well as children and adolescents, in a model of wide participation and partnership that must be the way of the future in the work of the UN."

The Special Session will review the progress achieved since 1990, and will identify shortcomings. It will also set specific targets and deadlines for achieving what Kofi Annan describes as "our main objective over the next decade: protecting and fulfilling the rights of all children and women."

Millions of children lead safer, healthier, fuller lives than a decade ago, but the rights of too many children and women are abused or threatened. The challenge is to find practical solutions to these problems and to commit the necessary human and economic resources. The Special Session is expected to produce a Global Agenda with a set of goals, and a Plan of Action for ensuring that children have the best possible start in life.



UN headquarters in New York City, site of the Special Session on Children



UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan

UNICEF Executive Director Carol Bellamy reflects on the Special Session

Canada World View

Ms. Bellamy, you have publicly expressed disappointment at the results of the 1990 Summit commitments. Were the goals too ambitious?

Ms. Bellamy
They were ambitious, yet they were realistic and they reflected what was sorely needed. Sadly, the world, as demonstrated in the UN Secretary-General's report *We the Children*, has not met its own standards for children. It has fallen short on many goals, with terrible consequences. More than 10 million children still die each year from preventable causes, and not enough progress has been made in immunization, education and general protection of children.

We are also confronted with three acute challenges: poverty, civil conflict and HIV/AIDS, all of which are compounded by continuing discrimination against women and girls. Hundreds of millions of children are born in entrenched poverty; there have been more conflicts over the last decade than at any time since the Second World War; and in some countries AIDS is reversing gains made for children over the last decade. When I see this, I certainly cannot be pleased. None of us can.

Canada World View

What is needed to redress the situation?

Ms. Bellamy
It is vitally important that the Special Session galvanize the leadership, political will, commitment and resources to address these challenges. Experience shows that the difficulties are not insurmountable. If intention and determination are in place, we have



Carol Bellamy with schoolchildren in China

demonstrated that we can achieve all our goals for children.

Canada World View

What do you expect from the Special Session?

Ms. Bellamy
It is the arena where we hope to get the message across to world leaders that there is unfinished business to be completed. With the support of our partners and of citizens worldwide, we aim to demonstrate that people care about children and want governments to keep the promises they make to them. We have learned so much over the past decade; surely we can do better in the next 10 years.

Canada World View

What if the Special Session fails to produce satisfactory results?

Ms. Bellamy
It is crucial that we fulfil our commitments to children. We must never forget that we are our own keepers. History will judge us harshly if we continue to fail to use our knowledge, our resources and our will to ensure that each new member of the human family arrives in a world that respects and protects the invaluable, irreplaceable years of childhood.

Ten imperatives of the Global Movement for Children

- Leave no child out.
- Put children first.
- Care for every child.
- Fight HIV/AIDS.
- Stop harming and exploiting children.
- Listen to children.
- Educate every child.
- Protect children from war.
- Protect the earth for children.
- Fight poverty: invest in children.

The Global Movement for Children is a collection of people and organizations around the world dedicated to promoting the rights of the child. With UNICEF it is spearheading the "Say Yes for Children" campaign. Its spokespersons are Nelson Mandela and Graça Machel.

Convention on the Rights of the Child

In 1989, the UN General Assembly unanimously adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child. This is a universally agreed set of obligations spelling out the basic human rights of all children: the right to survival, the right to develop to the fullest, and the right to protection from abuse and exploitation. Defining a child as a boy or girl under the age of 18, the Convention protects these rights by setting standards in health care, education, and legal, civil and social services.

The Convention came into force in record time in September 1990. Today it has been ratified by 191 states, making it the most widely adopted international human rights treaty in history.

UNICEF in action

UNICEF was established in 1946 to meet the needs of children in war-devastated Europe and China. In 1950 its mandate was refocused to address the urgent needs of children and mothers in developing nations.

UNICEF now operates in over 160 countries. In partnership with governments, civil society organizations and communities, it is active in immunization, education, HIV/AIDS, child protection, early childhood development, water and sanitation, nutrition, emergency relief operations, and other areas.

Based in New York, UNICEF has offices around the world. In Canada it has an education, advocacy and fund-raising committee. Last October, the Government of Canada recognized the unique role of the organization by proclaiming October 31 as annual National UNICEF Day. ●—

For more information on all aspects of UNICEF, the Special Session, the Global Movement for Children, the "Say Yes for Children" campaign, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and other children's issues, visit UNICEF's Web site: <http://www.unicef.org>
See also the Web site of UNICEF's Canadian office: <http://www.unicef.ca>

Canadian priorities at the Special Session

Senator Landon Pearson presents our position

In 1999, when Prime Minister Chrétien appointed Senator Landon Pearson his Personal Representative to the UN General Assembly's 2001 Special Session on Children, the choice came as no surprise. For over 40 years Landon Pearson has been a champion of children in Canada and abroad (see profile in **Canada World View**, Issue 9, fall 2000). She has forceful views on the international community's record on safeguarding children, and strong ideas on what the Special Session should accomplish.



Senator Pearson with a young Canadian delegate at a Special Session Preparatory Committee meeting in June 2001 in New York



Dr. Samantha Nutt, founder and executive director of the NGO War Child Canada, with children in the Upiem Mai refugee camp in Mae Sot, northern Thailand

Canada's views

Since her appointment, Senator Pearson has represented the Government of Canada at domestic and international conferences dealing with children's issues. As the Prime Minister's Personal Representative, she has headed Canada's delegation and put forward our country's views at all meetings of the Special Session's Preparatory Committee in New York, Geneva and elsewhere. Along with officials from DFAIT, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and other government departments, she also played a key role in developing the position that Canada will defend in New York. At the Special Session, she will be Mr. Chrétien's main adviser.

Senator Pearson says Canada has three priorities going into the Special Session:

- Allow children and youth to participate in a meaningful way. Canada blazed the trail at the first meeting of the Session's Preparatory Committee: it was the only country to

include youth representatives on its official delegation.

- Emphasize especially vulnerable groups, such as war-affected children, exploited child labourers, sexually exploited children, trafficked children, refugees and internally displaced children, children affected by HIV/AIDS, Indigenous children, children with disabilities, and child victims of poverty, famine and disease.
- Actively involve all key players—not only states but also NGOs, UN agencies and bodies, and the private sector—in support of UNICEF's work and in developing a truly global agenda for children for the next decade and beyond.

As the outcome of the Special Session, Senator Pearson says that Canada favours a short, focussed political declaration followed by a set of clear and measurable goals. No one has forgotten, she says, the unfulfilled promises that followed the World Summit for Children in 1990:

"The commitments have not yet been translated into reality, nor have they been able to create within governments and populations a culture of respect for the child. While there has been real progress in health and some in education, there remains much to be done." In future, she notes, "The central feature of actions for children will be to break the vicious cycle of poverty." But in every case, she insists, "Children must be seen as the subjects of rights rather than the objects of charity."

To promote that view, she says, "the Special Session must galvanize all parts of the UN system, as well as national and regional forums and organizations, into taking children's rights seriously and incorporating children's perspectives into their day-to-day work. The fulfilment of children's rights is the cornerstone for sustainable human development. With the Convention on the Rights of the Child and other human rights instruments, we have a strong base to build upon. Let's act accordingly." ●—

What Canada is doing at home

In preparation for the Special Session, most countries submitted reports on their efforts to meet the 1990 World Summit commitments. Canada's report cites national progress in several areas, including "a reduction in child and maternal mortality rates and certain childhood illnesses; increased immunization coverage; a decrease in child poverty; and enhanced access to information for children."

Notably, the federal government initiated a national action plan entitled Brighter Futures, to remedy conditions that put children at risk. In 1993 Parliament adopted November 20 as National Child Day, recognizing the importance of children for Canada's present and future. In 1996, the federal and provincial governments started developing a National Child Benefit initiative, which came into effect in July 1998. Its purpose is to reduce child poverty.

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child stresses the need for access to information. In 1993 the federal government responded by establishing its SchoolNet initiative; the goal was to connect all Canadian public schools to the Internet. This goal has now been achieved; Canada is the world's first nation to have all its schools "wired."

Among other federal and provincial initiatives: increased maternity and parental leave benefits; tax reductions for families; and the ongoing development of the National Children's Agenda.

On the other side of the ledger, Canada's report notes the need to improve the lot of children living in low-income families and particularly Aboriginal children.

Most important, the government now reviews all new federal legislation for compliance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

What Canada is doing internationally

Throughout the 1990s, Canada's foreign policy and official development assistance gave priority to children's rights. Canada has been a leader in promoting the rights of children worldwide and in ensuring their survival, development, and protection from exploitation and abuse. In partnership with other countries, UNICEF and NGOs, Canada has supported international initiatives including actions for war-affected children and for reducing poverty and debt among developing nations.

CIDA is the lead agency responsible for ensuring that Canada carries out its commitments to promote the rights and improve the lives of children in developing countries and countries in transition. CIDA's social development resources are concentrated in four priority areas: health and nutrition; basic education; the fight against HIV/AIDS; and child protection. Over the next five years, almost \$3 billion will be budgeted for these four priorities.

Canadian assistance is channelled through bilateral programs; organizations such as UNICEF and the Red Cross; UN agencies; regional forums such as the Commonwealth, La Francophonie and the Organization of American States; NGOs; and various government programs.

For more information on the Special Session and Canadian action, visit:
<http://www.sen.parl.gc.ca/lpearson>
<http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca>
http://www.unicef.org/specialsession/how_country/index.html
<http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca>

A severely malnourished child wearing an identification armband at a feeding centre in Sudan run by UNICEF and Médecins sans frontières

NATIONS

IN • THE • NEWS

Sierra Leone

Recovering with Canada's help

The people of Sierra Leone have suffered enormously in the brutal civil war that broke out in 1990. A cease-fire was called in fall 2000, and the bloodletting has lessened as the Sierra Leone Army and the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone extend their control into rebel-held territories. Further progress is expected this fall: peacekeepers will be deployed to the diamond-rich areas over which much of the war has been fought, and two new instruments for peace and justice will be established—the Special Court and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

The civil war has blighted the lives of children in Sierra Leone. Almost half the country's 4.5 million people have fled their homes. Those who reach comparative safety in the cities find that basic social services are inadequate. Others wait to return home from refugee camps in neighbouring countries.

Many families were separated in flight and children were injured, lost or orphaned—or died. Those who survived remain haunted by the appalling deprivations, dismemberments and deaths they have witnessed. Adolescent girls traditionally are seen carrying younger siblings on their backs; in too many cases they bear the additional burden of heading their impoverished, homeless families.

An estimated 5500 children have been “recruited” into various armies—a substantial contingent of the 300 000 child soldiers around the world. Thousands of Sierra Leonean boys and girls have been abducted to provide slave labour for troops. Now a second generation of child soldiers is being born of girl children forced into sexual slavery.

Amid these serious problems, Canada supports international efforts to help the government of Sierra Leone restore peace, order and good governance for its people.

Bringing children home

In 1997, humanitarian agencies led by UNICEF established Child Protection Programs (CPP) to assist war-affected children in the southern region of Sierra Leone. CPP identifies, documents, traces and reunites children separated from their families.

Some 348 ex-combatant and unaccompanied children were reunited with their families in southern Sierra Leone through the initial efforts of World Vision Sierra Leone (WVSL) and World Vision Canada, supported by CIDA. Another 270 children were demilitarized and placed in foster care. But a soldier does not return to being a child overnight.

WVSL helps the girls and boys reintegrate into their families and communities. Aiding the process are activities to rebuild communities. WVSL has repaired schoolrooms and established village-based skills training centres.

The communities themselves are learning more about child rights and protection, including basic child welfare issues.

With ongoing support from CIDA's Child Protection Action Plan, WVSL is continuing and expanding its efforts. Among other things, it is trying to introduce child rights and protection sensitization efforts into rebel-held areas of eastern Sierra Leone.

A role for neighbouring countries

The most obvious impact of a civil war on a neighbouring country is the influx of refugees seeking safety and sustenance, often for many years. In Guinea alone there are 400 000 refugees from Sierra Leone. West African nations have agreed on a co-ordinated regional approach to meet the needs of the war-affected, especially children.

This past August, the Economic Community of West African States joined with Canada to set up the Child Protection Unit. The Unit will become a critical forum for all issues related to the protection of war-affected children in West Africa. Its primary role will be advocacy, seeking to secure strong regional linkages between governments, civil society and international organizations. It will also monitor the situation of children in conflicts, and will promote preventive mechanisms and the rehabilitation/reintegration of war-affected children.

Talking Drum Studio

In the confusion and horror of war, truth and accurate news are hard to find. Fortunately, reliable news and information are available in Sierra Leone over radio, Africa's primary mass communications medium. The source is Talking Drum Studio (TDS), which creates and distributes programming designed to promote and consolidate peace. The station has become a favourite of many Sierra Leoneans.

The studio also carries programs written and produced by children. *Golden Kids News* features news from children's perspectives. *Children's World* presents news plus music, drama and poetry by children.

Sierra Leoneans first heard the programming broadcast from Liberia, where the NGO Common Ground Productions set up TDS in 1997. Today, TDS-Liberia provides ongoing guidance and training to TDS-Sierra Leone staff. With Canadian support, TDS-Sierra Leone employs local journalists and production specialists. Aside from offering reliable news, the studio's programs lay the groundwork for the long-term process of reconciliation, and they help humanitarian relief agencies with media outreach.

Peace and justice for children

To rebuild society, those who have committed war crimes must be held accountable.

The UN has negotiated an agreement with Sierra Leone for establishment of a Special Court to try those bearing chief responsibility for crimes against humanity, war crimes and serious violations of Sierra Leonean law. Canada has allocated \$2.25 million over three years to support the Special Court. But what if some of the perpetrators are children?

This spring, DFAIT funded a workshop where local and international leaders of society and specialists (including children's rights lawyers, NGO representatives and teachers) worked out operational recommendations for the Sierra Leone Truth and Reconciliation Commission. They gave advice on how the Commission could be made “child-friendly”—that is, how it should deal with child witnesses, victims and perpetrators.

Both the Special Court and the Commission are expected to be established in Sierra Leone this fall. ●—

Canada in Sierra Leone

Canadian assistance in Sierra Leone is channelled primarily through two complementary programs:

- CIDA's Peacebuilding Fund promotes local peacebuilding initiatives.
- DFAIT's Human Security Program promotes the safety of people from threats of violence caused by conflict and political/economic upheaval. It also supports peaceful governance.

For more information about the Human Security Program, visit:
<http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/foreignp/humansecurity/menu-e.asp>



Young children wait their turn for a food handout from the World Food Programme at a refugee camp in Bo, central Sierra Leone.



In Freetown, Sierra Leone, on May 26, 1998, young men whose ears, hands or fingers were chopped off by rebels the previous day wait outside a hospital operating room.



photos: CANAPRESS

CHILDREN & LANDMINES



Protecting the innocent victims

In over 70 countries around the world, anti-personnel (AP) mines lie in wait, armed and ready to take a limb or the life of a child. These cheap and deadly remnants of war continue harming civilians years after the end of the conflicts in which they were planted. By their very nature they are unable to distinguish between the footsteps of a soldier and those of a child.

Tackling these hidden killers is the aim of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction (the 1997 Ottawa Convention). As of August 17, 2001, a total of 118 states had formally ratified the treaty, agreeing to abide by its comprehensive ban on these weapons. Vast tracts of mined land have been cleared and millions of stockpiled mines have been destroyed in fulfilment of Convention obligations.

Even so, mines continue to bar access to millions of hectares of land and to infrastructure vital to the well-being of thousands of communities. And in some areas where conflicts are raging, new mines are being laid.

In these mined areas, protecting children is a major challenge. One way to meet it is by teaching them about the danger of mines and by seeking to limit high-risk behaviour. Successful mine awareness education programs can significantly reduce the likelihood of a child's injury or death in an AP mine accident. For this reason, such programs are a priority of the international community.

Vulnerable targets

In general young men suffer the highest rates of injury and death caused by AP mines, but children are perhaps the weapons' most vulnerable targets.

Children are liable to touch and play with objects that appear interesting, including mines and unexploded ordnance. Some mines are particularly enticing—for instance, the colourful PFMN-1 butterfly mine, dropped in vast quantities from aircraft over Afghanistan.

Mine accidents often injure children more severely than adults because their relatively small stature places them closer to the ground and hence to the point where a mine explodes. If a growing child loses a limb to an AP mine blast, the prosthetic will have to be replaced far more frequently than in the case of an adult. Often the cost is prohibitive and prosthetics of good quality are unavailable.



Years after a conflict has ended, anti-personnel mines continue to indiscriminately harm civilians, such as this Bosnian boy. Successful mine awareness education programs can significantly reduce the likelihood of a child's injury or death in an AP mine accident.

Children also suffer when adults in their families and communities are injured or killed by AP mines. They may find that the caregivers on whom they depend have more difficulty providing for their well-being.

The role of UNICEF

UNICEF is the United Nations agency taking the lead on mine awareness education. It plays an important role in the direct delivery of mine awareness education. In addition, it has developed the *International Guidelines for Landmine and Unexploded Ordnance Awareness Education*, a manual for international donors and mine awareness providers.



A mine awareness educator in Cambodia teaches a community about the dangers of anti-personnel mines.

Translated into several languages and widely distributed throughout the global mine action community, the *Guidelines* promote the effective planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of mine awareness programs. With the help of this manual, mine awareness education is being better designed and delivered, in a way that is more sensitive to culture, age and literacy levels—and is more effective.

Canada's support

Most mine-affected countries now have mine awareness activities. Comprehensive programs are in place in almost all of the world's most seriously affected states. Of course it is difficult to draw a causal link between mine awareness education and casualty rates; but wherever mine awareness education is delivered in a comprehensive manner, casualty rates are declining.

Through the five-year, \$100 million Canadian Landmine Fund, Canada has supported a wide range of mine awareness education programs in over a dozen countries. Here are some examples:

- Child-to-child and teacher training approaches: Canada has supported the Mines Advisory Group teacher training and child-to-child mine awareness training in northern Iraq.
- Use of the media: In Afghanistan, Canada has supported an International Centre for Humanitarian Reporting radio education initiative. This makes it possible to reach children who may not have been included in more formal sessions.
- Distribution of mine awareness materials: As part of a World Bank program in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada is supporting the distribution of mine awareness posters and handbooks.



Interviewers administer a pictorial questionnaire to children in Huila province, Angola, as part of CIETCanada's evaluation of mine awareness education in that country.

- Emergency situations: After the flooding that hit Mozambique in early 2000, Canada supported the United Nations Mine Action Service emergency mine awareness program. The aim was to prevent landmine accidents among displaced populations returning to their communities after the floodwaters had receded.
- Popular education: In Angola, Canada supported UNICEF Canada's mine awareness by popular education program, which used theatre and children's games to convey its message.
- Evaluation: Canada also provided support for an evaluation of UNICEF Canada's Angola program by CIETCanada, an organization that conducts community-based research. The findings: some of the methods used in the program could be improved, and increasing children's knowledge about mines does not necessarily lead to a change in high-risk behaviour.

An ongoing struggle

UNICEF's *International Guidelines* set the standard for effective programs. Using the manual, efforts will continue to deliver mine awareness education. This is part of the wider effort to achieve universal adherence to the Ottawa Convention and implementation of the treaty in order to counter the global threat of anti-personnel mines. As the struggle goes on, the international community must keep striving to protect children from the multitude of AP mines that have been planted and that still remain hidden. We must take steps so that children can step forth without fear or danger. ●—

For more information about landmines and Canada's action, visit:
<http://www.mines.gc.ca>

Canadian youth interns abroad

Working for children of the world

Over the last year, the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade's Youth International Internship Program joined with several Canadian organizations to offer some 30 young Canadians exceptional opportunities in the field of children's issues.

Through the United Nations Association in Canada (UNAC), Lauren Baswick, Janet Ilott and Jennifer Smith (see right) worked with War Child Canada on a documentary entitled *Musicians in the War Zone*. Says Lauren Baswick, "I really enjoyed it. It helped me strive to be my best, both scholastically and personally." After her internship, Janet Ilott became marketing co-ordinator for Peace Child International in Britain.

Also through UNAC, Ayda Eke worked at UNICEF in New York on child abduction, child soldiers, and children and conflict. Hind Merabet served with the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict; the job involved documenting the War-Affected Children's Virtual Library and compiling a list of research institutions focussing on children and armed conflict.

Human Rights Internet placed Megan McFadden on a project in Guatemala City, helping Casa Alianza organize activities for street children. The University of Saskatchewan's Native Law Centre placed Kjell Anderson and Steven Swan in Washington, D.C., where they participated in the Young Americas Business Trust's Young Indigenous People's Circle at the Organization of American States.

The Canadian National Institute for the Blind placed David Laine with the South African National Centre for the Blind in Pretoria; there he organized a national blind youth movement. In Gabon, CEGEP Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu interns Benoît Caron, Jean-Bernard Gariépy, Danny Bonetti and Martin Charbonneau repaired computers and set up systems and equipment in technical schools. And the Canadian Museums Association placed Julie Oya with the Kids Club Network in London, U.K.; there she redesigned the Web site of the Centre for Curiosity and Imagination, a hands-on project for children. ●—

Jennifer Smith finds the key to change

I was fortunate to do an internship at War Child Canada, which promotes awareness and offers support to children and youth affected by war.

To carry out its mandate, War Child Canada has fostered a unique relationship with the music and entertainment industry. Its respect and regard for youth has kept me with the organization since my internship ended.

When I began at War Child Canada, I was hesitant about promoting awareness; I felt I needed to work hands-on to do any real good. I learned that awareness is vital to change when I worked on *Musicians in the War Zone*, a documentary that followed Canadian recording artists into three areas of the globe affected by war. It showed me that awareness is what moves people to get their hands on something.

When the MuchMusic television network aired the documentary for the first time, hundreds of thousands of lives were touched by what they saw. One of those lives was mine. What we do here can really affect others.

Jennifer Jordan and the human aspect of conflict

Through Medical Aid for Palestine, I did my internship with the Palestine Red Crescent Society's Mental Health Department in Bethlehem. There I came face to face with the realities of conflict in the Middle East.

My work involved developing mental health plans, creating community projects and implementing existing programs. However, with the resurgence of tensions in the region in recent months, our focus on general well-being shifted to emergency crisis management. We created and implemented plans for helping people suffering from trauma, anxiety and stress-related disorders—particularly children.

The echo of shelling and gunfire rumbles through the hills, instilling fear in all who hear it. The conflict has infiltrated

every level of society. There are few who have not experienced some form of violence either directly or indirectly.

All too often, conflict is viewed solely in political and military terms, yet it is the people living in the area who are most affected. No one can understand the human aspect of conflict without seeing it first-hand. I am grateful for the opportunity I had to experience this reality and to help people deal with their traumas.

Marie Green and the faces of suffering

During my UNAC-sponsored internship with the Office of the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict in New York, I became acutely aware of a terrible modern tragedy: the fact that in the 1990s alone, 2 million children were killed and millions more were seriously injured or permanently disabled, orphaned, or left with grave psychological trauma in more than 30 conflicts around the world.

In the basement of a Manhattan apartment building, I saw faces mostly overlooked by the media. They belonged to children aged 7 to 21—refugees who now were organizing to change the world.

I heard them tell of seeing their relatives massacred in Sierra Leone. I listened to their stories of the refugee camps where they had stayed in Albania. Later, at our office, I watched footage of young people being executed in Sierra Leone; a child barely 6 years old was ordered to shoot at one of the victims. I was silent but a flame ignited inside me.

As my internship drew to a close, I began to realize that the atrocities continued because the public was unfamiliar with the faces of suffering. I decided that after returning to Canada I would launch an organization exposing this cruel reality.

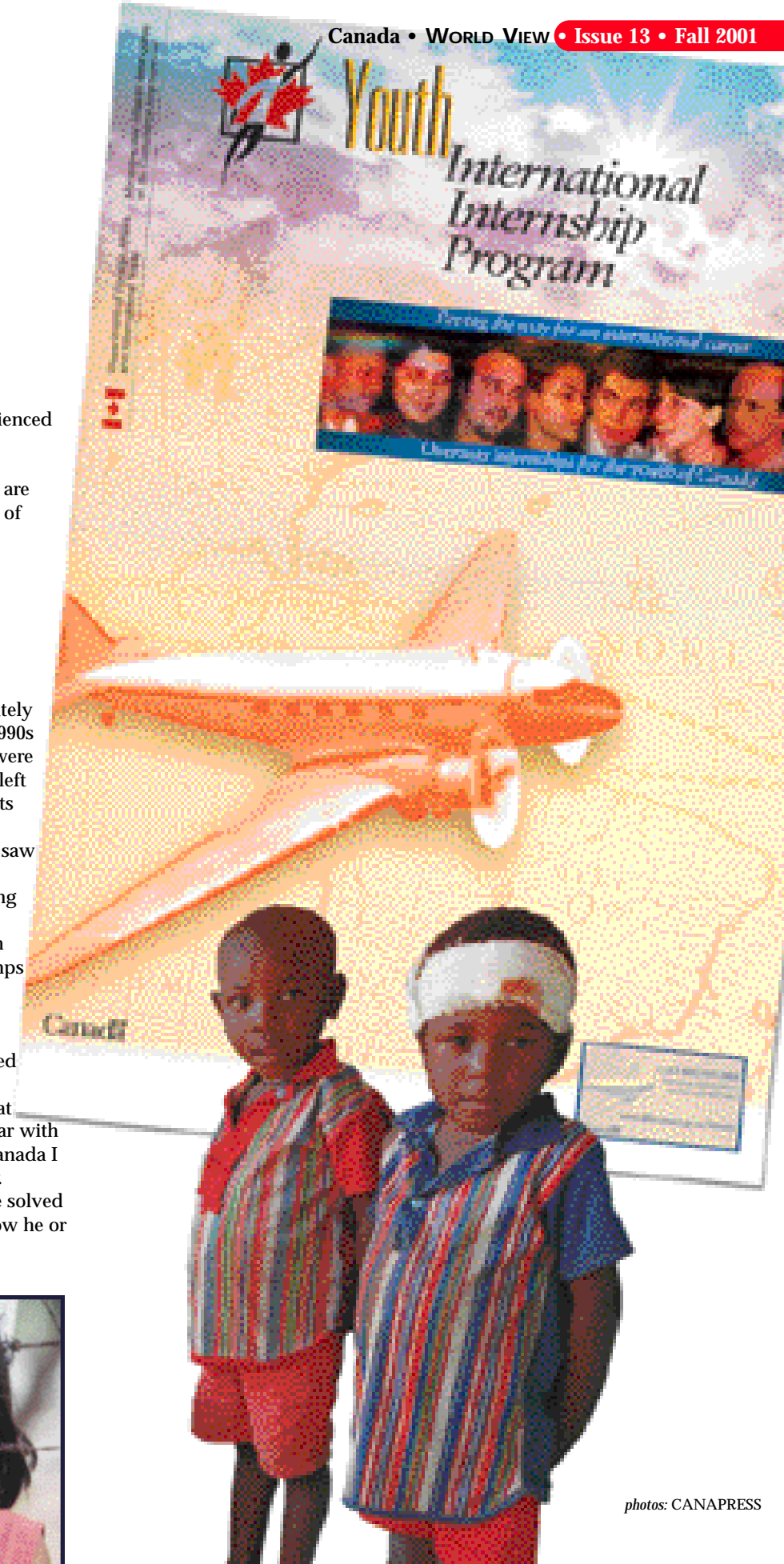
The problem is enormous but I am convinced it can be solved so that every child has a fighting chance to determine how he or she will live.



Ethnic Albanian refugees from Kosovo, including children, struggle for loaves of bread near a refugee camp in Kukes, Albania, May 1999.



Two Vietnamese girls at the Sikhui refugee camp in Nakorn Ratchasima, northeast of Bangkok, Thailand



photos: CANAPRESS

For more information, visit the Youth International Internship Program
Web site: <http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/interns>

Olympic Aid

Human security for children



OLYMPIC AID



Scarred physically and psychologically, war-affected children are often deprived of the very thing that can help heal the scars: play. To fill that gap is the aim of Olympic Aid, a humanitarian organization established by athletes and supported by DFAIT's Human Security Program, the Australian and Norwegian governments, and the International Olympic Committee.

It defines play (including sport) as a physical activity that promotes fun, the empowerment of children and participation. "Children's freedom to be children is important to their mental and physical development," says Silken Laumann, Olympic and world champion rower and Olympic Aid's Canadian ambassador. "Play is not a luxury, it's a right recognized by the UN in the Convention on the Rights of the Child."

"Sport is a development tool for both children and communities," adds Olympic Aid Chair Johann Olav Koss. As the organization's first athlete ambassador, just before the 1994 Winter Games Koss travelled to Eritrea, where Olympic Aid sought to rebuild schools in the refugee camps. He returned to Norway in time for the Games, held that year in Lillehammer. There he took three gold medals, and challenged fellow Norwegians and visitors to the Games to contribute to Olympic Aid. The effort raised a heartwarming \$27.5 million. Says Koss, "The support funded the building of 1000 primary schools and a teachers' education centre in Eritrea, where we trained 600 teachers over three years."

The success at Lillehammer set the stage for 1996 and the Atlanta Summer Olympics. Before the Games, the International Olympic Committee came up with the idea of the "Olympic Truce," which was ratified by the United Nations. During the Games, temporary cease-fires were declared in war-torn areas. UNICEF and Olympic Aid seized the occasion to organize sports festivals at which children could play and people were vaccinated. In Afghanistan alone, 2.2 million children and 800 000 women were immunized.

In 2000 Olympic Aid organized activities in connection with the Sydney Olympics, and it is preparing for the 2002 Winter Games in Salt Lake City.

Its focus now is on developing sustainable sports and play programs. Under the programs, children learn skills that they can retain for life, and sports and play become permanent features in the community. This year Olympic Aid is sending volunteers to train local coaches in refugee camps in Angola, Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Nigeria, Tanzania, Uganda and, possibly, East Timor. They show how to give children constructive, positive guidance.

"Olympic Aid makes so much sense," says Silken Laumann. "Through sport and play, children improve their self-esteem, their self-confidence. They learn to resolve conflict and to accept each other as equals." Laumann visited refugee camps in Eritrea and Sudan last summer, seeing first-hand the need for Olympic Aid projects. She recalls, "Once, when we were playing soccer, a young boy stopped and told me, through a translator, that it was the first time in two months he hadn't felt angry."

That is the beauty of play. —

photos: Olympic Aid

Olympic Aid volunteers Johann Olav Koss and Silken Laumann with children at the Laffa refugee camp, Sudan

Season of Summits

October will be a busy month for Canadian diplomats and Prime Minister Chrétien. On the schedule are summits of three international organizations to which Canada belongs: the Commonwealth, the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum and La Francophonie.

The Commonwealth



From October 6 to 9, Brisbane, Australia, will host the 2001 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting. Leaders will examine how to reinvigorate and re-equip the organization to face the challenges of the new century, while maintaining and building upon its traditional strengths.

The Commonwealth is made up of 54 sovereign states representing nearly one quarter of the world's population. Binding them together are links of history, culture and language, plus a commitment to democracy, human rights, good governance and sustainable development.

Canada is the second-largest contributor to the Commonwealth and a strong supporter of its political and economic programs. Among these are the Commonwealth Youth Programme (a Canadian initiative) and the Vancouver-based Commonwealth of Learning, an agency promoting distance learning.

For more information, visit:

<http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/foreignp/menu-e.asp>

(follow link to "Commonwealth")

<http://www.chogm2001.net>

<http://www.thecommonwealth.org>

APEC



On October 20 and 21, Shanghai, China, will host the Ninth APEC Leaders' Meeting. The aim will be to support the initiatives of trade and investment liberalization and of economic and technical co-operation emerging from previous meetings.

APEC was established in 1989 in response to the growing interdependence of Asia-Pacific nations and the need to advance their economic dynamism. Canada was a founding member. The forum now has 21 members around the Pacific Rim.

Canada is strongly committed to supporting a new round of multilateral trade negotiations. With other members, it will continue to help developing APEC economies strengthen their capacity in order to participate effectively in the World Trade Organization.

For more information, visit:

<http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/canada-apec>

<http://www.china-apec.org.cn>

La Francophonie



From October 26 to 28, delegates from 55 member states and participating governments will converge on Beirut, Lebanon,

for the Ninth Conference of Heads of State and Government of Countries Using French as a Common Language. The focus will be on promoting harmony among the diverse cultures that make up La Francophonie.

Over the years, the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie has become an important component of Canada's foreign policy. Canada hosted the 1987 Francophonie Summit in Québec City, the 1999 Summit in Moncton and the IV Francophonie Games in Ottawa-Hull last July. Our primary objective continues to be the promotion of Canada's democratic, cultural and economic values.

"Francophonie" refers to the community of peoples or countries using or speaking the French language.

For more information, visit:

<http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/foreignp/francophonie/menu-e.htm>

<http://www.sommet2001.org> (French only)



Silken Laumann plays soccer with girls at the Laffa refugee camp, Sudan. Ethnic differences had stopped some of the girls from ever speaking to each other until this game began.

For more information, visit the Olympic Aid Web site:
<http://www.olympicaid.org>



photo: Jean-Marc Carisse

Top Secret documents from 1956–57 shed light on Suez Crisis

The Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade has published another volume in its series *Documents on Canadian External Relations*. The new publication sheds fresh light on the Suez Crisis, which erupted 45 years ago in July 1956.

Drawing from the Department's Top Secret and Confidential files, Volume 22 tells the story of the Suez Crisis from Canada's perspective. Among other things, it traces the efforts of Secretary of State for External Affairs Lester B. Pearson to prevent a major war in the Middle East. For his work, Pearson was awarded the 1957 Nobel Peace Prize.

Other issues documented in the volume include Canada's activities in NATO

in 1956–57, and Canadian efforts to mediate between the developed and developing worlds.

Volume 22 of *Documents on Canada's External Relations* is available from:

Canadian Government Publishing
Public Works and Government Services Canada
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0S9

Tel.: (819) 956-4800 or

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Fax: (819) 994-1498 or

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DID YOU KNOW THAT . . .

In 1999, the most recent year for which figures are available, the number of children born throughout the world totalled 129 million. Over 116 million of the births occurred in developing countries. In Canada, the number of births was 343 000.

In 1960, the mortality rate under age 5 was 33 per 1000 births in Canada. By 1999 the rate had dropped to 6 per 1000 births. That put Canada in 165th place worldwide. Sierra Leone ranked first with 316 deaths per 1000 births.

In 1999, life expectancy was 79 years in Canada, compared with 51 years in the least developed countries. In the same year, life expectancy averaged only 49 years in sub-Saharan Africa.

The per capita gross national product (GNP) was \$40 141 in industrialized countries (\$29 648 in Canada) in 1999. In the least developed countries, the GNP per capita was a mere \$401.

The scale of the HIV/AIDS pandemic now exceeds the worst projections of 1990, especially in sub-Saharan Africa. Already, AIDS has orphaned more than 13 million children worldwide, and that figure may reach 30 million before the end of the decade. In the hardest-hit countries, from half to more than two thirds of the 15-year-olds alive today will eventually die of the disease.

Source: *The State of the World's Children 2001: Early Childhood*.
New York: United Nations Publications, December 2000. 116 pp. ISBN 9280636332.

In our NEXT ISSUE

Issue 14 • Winter 2002

Appearing in early December, our next issue of **Canada World View** will focus on human security. Among the topics to be covered: a follow-up on the UN Special Session on Children; the fall release of the report of the Canada-sponsored International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty; and Canada's extensive Human Security Program, specifically designed to address the human dimensions of globalization. ●—

