COVER PHOTO: Two girls at a camp for 100,000 displaced persons in Sierra Leone
UNICEF HQ95-0951/ROBERT GROSSMAN

BACK COVER PHOTO: Sudanese children walk away from small arms and light weapons they have just discarded. UNICEF/01-0093/MANN

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## Contents

1. A decade of war  

2. UNICEF policy and partnerships on children and armed conflict  
   - UNICEF's medium-term strategic plan  
   - UNICEF's peace and security agenda evolves  
   - Partnerships  
   - Panel: Milestone decisions for safeguarding children  

3. Ensuring humanitarian protection  
   - Children as zones of peace  
   - Safety of humanitarian personnel  
   - Engagement with non-State entities  
   - Panel: Growing the Sheltering Tree  
   - Panel: Child-friendly spaces in refugee camps  
   - Impact of sanctions  

4. Afghanistan  
   - Humanitarian convoys  
   - Back-to-school campaign  
   - Immunization ‘plus’  
   - Supplementary feeding centres  
   - Child protection  
   - UNICEF's objective  
   - Afghan refugees  

5. Child soldiers: returning home  
   - Disarmament, demobilization, reintegration  
   - Recent milestones  
   - UNICEF's approach  
   - UNICEF actions  

6. Refugees and the internally displaced  
   - Uprooted by war  
   - UNICEF's approach  
   - Partnerships  
   - UNICEF actions
7. HIV/AIDS and conflict
   UNICEF’s approach
   UNICEF actions

8. Gender-based violence and sexual exploitation
   UNICEF’s approach
   World Congress on sexual exploitation
   Panel: Protection from sexual exploitation in humanitarian crises

9. Education in emergencies
   UNICEF’s approach
   UNICEF actions
   Psychosocial support: UNICEF actions
   Peace education: UNICEF actions

10. Health, nutrition, safe water
    UNICEF’s approach
    UNICEF actions
    Panel: National Immunization Days

11. Landmines and light weapons
    Landmines and unexploded ordnance
    UNICEF’s approach
    UNICEF actions
    Small arms and light weapons
    UNICEF’s approach
    UNICEF actions

12. Adolescent programming and participation
    Young people speak up
    Youth in action
    UNICEF actions
    Panel: The world soccer federation teams up with UNICEF

13. International standards for child protection
    Convention on the Rights of the Child
    Optional Protocols
    Optional Protocol on children and armed conflict
    Other international standards
    Reporting and monitoring
    UNICEF actions
14. Mechanisms for seeking truth and justice
   International Criminal Court
   Ad hoc tribunals; truth and reconciliation commissions
   UNICEF’s approach
   UNICEF actions
   Panel: Juvenile justice

15. Peacemaking, peacekeeping, peace-building
   UNICEF’s approach
   Building partnerships
   UNICEF actions

16. Data and information on children
    and armed conflict
    UNICEF pilot data project
    Multiple indicator cluster surveys
    UNICEF actions

Acronyms

Endnotes
Chapter 1

A decade of war

“I’ve seen so much that a child should never see.”
17-YEAR-OLD AGYUN, CHILD REFUGEE

Boys live, and sleep, on the streets of the Rwanda capital, Kigali, after losing their parents to genocide.
More than a decade ago, in September 1990, the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) entered into force. Today the Convention, the most universally ratified human rights instrument, is the standard against which we measure the success or failure of our efforts to serve the best interests of children.

Yet during the last decade the world has witnessed a growing threat of armed conflicts targeting children throughout the world. An increasing number of ‘internal wars’ have emerged as characteristics of the post-cold war era. The obligation imposed by article 38 of the CRC, to ensure protection and care for children whose lives are caught up in conflict, has fallen far short of its goal.

Today’s wars are not to be understood according to the old world order, where conflict was seen as a temporary state of instability in the formation of nation-states. Rather, today’s wars are symptoms of a protracted disorder, where children and women are made increasingly vulnerable to the worst possible violence and abuse. War has always produced spoils within some sectors of society and so the profits of war are not new. But increasingly, conflict is stabilized through resource exploitation, creating an ‘economy of war’ that leaves civilian populations brutally abandoned. Children are the most vulnerable. Prolonged conflict disrupts children’s education, destroys their future and their life.

We must ask why, in the last decade of the 20th century marked by rapid economic growth and unprecedented technological improvements, we are faced with evidence of a sustained state of violence and exploitation. Under such conditions — where conflict for profit proves more profitable than development — ethnic, religious or tribal tensions may be cultivated in order to destabilize populations and seize power, along with mineral and land resources. The targeting of children and women, slaughter of civilians, training children to torture and kill, abduction of young girls for sexual slavery and campaigns of mass rape — all have been witnessed in the last decade. Children’s best interests have been flouted with impunity.

Adding to the conflict and instability that characterized the 1990s is the ever widening gap between the wealth of the developed countries and the poverty of the developing world. Limited official development assistance (ODA) has been accompanied by severe disparities in distribution of resources, reflecting strategic and political interests within the donor community. Whereas Bosnia and Herzegovina received $238 per person in ODA during 1998, the Democratic Republic of the Congo received only $3 per person. In sub-Saharan Africa, where the combined effects of armed
conflict and HIV/AIDS have devastated entire populations, ODA dropped by nearly 60 per cent between 1990 and 1999.\(^2\)

And conflicts themselves are proving more and more costly. The Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict has estimated that the major conflicts of the 1990s, excluding Kosovo, cost the international community around $200 billion.\(^3\)

Unless there is a sustained increase in assistance to developing countries in the coming decade, we will see greater isolation of the global poor and exclusion from the world economy of millions more children.

But there can be no question of failure. If the challenges are great then we must strengthen our resolve and redouble our efforts. We must not fail to provide protection and humanitarian assistance for children trapped by the machinery of war.

Many encouraging steps have been taken. Many more are under way. This publication presents examples of UNICEF’s activities in countries experiencing conflict or its aftermath. It tells about some of the challenges UNICEF has experienced, while continuing as much as possible to provide children with life-saving protection and assistance. It tells how, in crisis situations, UNICEF is likely to face serious obstacles in providing food, health care, immunization, education and other needed support, and outlines the strategies devised to overcome those obstacles.

This publication charts a way forward so that UNICEF, together with its partners — governments, United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society groups, and young people themselves — can continue efforts to protect, care and support the children and women most vulnerable to the impacts of war.
Chapter 2

UNICEF policy and partnerships on children and armed conflict

“Why do world leaders wage war all the time?”

11-YEAR-OLD, UNITED KINGDOM

A girl waits to be examined at a hospital in southern Sudan
UNICEF’s medium-term strategic plan

Protecting children in armed conflict is integral to UNICEF’s medium-term strategic plan, which articulates UNICEF’s vision and framework for action for 2002–2005 — what UNICEF seeks to achieve, and how to achieve it. The plan combines a results-based management approach and rights-based programming, with a focus on five key priorities. The five priorities are:

- Girls’ education
- Integrated early childhood development
- Immunization ‘plus’
- Fighting HIV/AIDS
- Improved protection of children from violence, abuse, exploitation and discrimination.

The impact of armed conflict on children is specifically mentioned as an issue for improved protection of children from violence, abuse, exploitation and discrimination. However all five priorities of the medium-term strategic plan are implemented during a complex emergency and, when there is a breakdown caused by conflict, each of the priorities must be adapted to meet the particular challenges of crisis situations.

The implementation of each of the medium-term plan priorities during emergencies thus requires unique strategies. For example, if schools are in danger of being targeted for abduction of girls or recruitment of child soldiers, then special arrangements with school and local authorities are needed to ensure children’s safety in the classroom. Early childhood development has been implemented during emergencies through the creation of ‘child-friendly spaces’, particularly in camps for refugee or displaced populations. ‘Days of tranquillity’ have been negotiated between warring parties to suspend hostilities and allow access to immunize children during conflict. HIV/AIDS education and prevention can be combined with landmine awareness in the school curriculum of war-affected communities. These special interventions are necessary to meet the challenges facing boys and girls in conflict and emergency situations and to ensure the implementation of UNICEF’s commitments and priorities.

The activities described in these pages tell about some of the strategies that have been developed in situations of armed conflict to ensure that the rights of all children — especially those in war — to protection and assistance are fulfilled.
UNICEF’s peace and security agenda evolves

The CRC provides the framework for UNICEF’s programme activities, based on the principles of non-discrimination, the best interests of the child, the right to survival and development, and child participation. The articulation of that framework is provided in UNICEF’s current medium-term strategic plan, 2002 to 2005.

UNICEF’s policy, programmes and advocacy on behalf of children affected by armed conflict are also based on the findings of the report on Impact of Armed Conflict on Children, submitted by Graça Machel to the United Nations General Assembly in 1996, and on UNICEF’s Peace and Security Agenda for Children, presented in February 1999 by UNICEF’s Executive Director to the Security Council’s open briefing on the protection of civilians. Other steps forward are included in statements by the Executive Director to the General Assembly, the Security Council, and the Commission on Human Rights, and in various Security Council resolutions, in particular resolutions 1261, 1314 and 1379.

The report on Impact of Armed Conflict on Children, by Graça Machel, broke new ground. Using the CRC as a guiding framework, it provided the first comprehensive human rights assessment of war-affected children. In addition, the report drew particular attention to the situation of child soldiers, internally displaced and refugee children, child victims of landmines and sanctions, and the physical and psychosocial consequences of conflict. It examined the relevance and adequacy of international standards to the protection of children in conflict situations. The report explored systematically the dimensions and complexities of these concerns and firmly established their relevance to the international peace and security agenda. It also led to the establishment of the office of the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict, with whom UNICEF works very closely. In 2001, an update of the 1996 Machel report was prepared and raised new issues, such as the threat of HIV/AIDS during conflict.

Ensuring that children are always identified as an explicit priority in all efforts to resolve conflict and build peace, whether as part of peacekeeping mandates and observer missions or in concluding peace agreements and peace-building activities, is a key concern for UNICEF. In February 1999, UNICEF officially presented its Peace and Security Agenda for Children to the Security Council. That agenda focuses on seven key elements:

- End the use of children as soldiers
- Protect humanitarian assistance and humanitarian personnel
- Support action against landmines
- Protect children from the effects of sanctions
- Ensure that peace-building specifically includes children
- Challenge the impunity for war crimes, especially against children
- Promote early warning and preventive action for children.

Partnerships

UNICEF works closely with a wide range of partners — governments, NGOs, the private sector, civil actors, community leaders, and children — in fulfilling its mandate to provide protection and assistance during conflict and emergencies. These critical partnerships lie at the core of UNICEF’s work for children.

UNICEF works with governments to develop and implement programmes in areas such as health, education, and protection. To do so, UNICEF relies largely on donor support. NGOs are among the key implementing partners for UNICEF in complex emergencies, as well as significant allies in policy development and global advocacy. Issues of mutual concern have led to fruitful partnerships with the Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers and with the International Campaign to Ban the Use of Landmines.

UNICEF collaborates actively with other parts of the United Nations system at different levels and through different mechanisms. At country level, UNICEF is part of the United Nations Country Team, and participates in joint planning and action through the Consolidated Appeals Process. In addition, UNICEF often takes part in thematic working groups, such as a technical follow-up group on internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Burundi. Globally, UNICEF is a member of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) on Emergencies, and participates in several of its subgroups, such as the Reference Group on Gender and Humanitarian Assistance, the Working Group on Human Rights and Humanitarian Action, and the Informal Working Group on Engaging with Armed Groups. In February 2002, UNICEF was named co-chair (with OCHA, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs) of the newly created IASC Task Force on Protection from Sexual Abuse and Exploitation in Humanitarian Crises. Through the inter-agency processes of the IASC committees and other bodies, UNICEF is able to participate in broader humanitarian policy debates, while at the same time ensuring that children’s rights are included in these debates.
UNICEF works closely with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict on a range of peace and security issues. In particular, both bodies have collaborated on advocacy to stop the use of child soldiers and on the CRC Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict. UNICEF also collaborates with the Special Representative on advocating issues of children and armed conflict at the Security Council and other intergovernmental fora.

In November 2001, UNICEF launched a new era of partnership with the world soccer federation (Fédération Internationale de Football Association or FIFA), in dedicating the 2002 World Cup to children. Through this partnership, UNICEF and national football associations will promote football and other sports and recreation all over the world, for young people to reclaim their childhood in countries affected by conflict. The partnership will also include a call for ‘days of tranquillity’ during the World Cup, to allow humanitarian assistance to reach children and families in conflict zones.

**Milestone decisions for safeguarding children**


**AUGUST 1996**: Graça Machel’s report on the *Impact of Armed Conflict on Children* is introduced at the fifty-first session of the United Nations General Assembly.

**AUGUST 1996**: First Security Council briefing (under the Arria formula) on children in armed conflict.

**SEPTEMBER 1996**: Olara Otunnu is appointed to the position of Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict.

**JULY 1998**: Adoption of the Rome Statute for an International Criminal Court, to adjudicate, inter alia, crimes against humanity and war crimes against children and women.

**FEBRUARY 1999**: UNICEF launches its Peace and Security Agenda for Children.

February 2000: The Secretary-General releases child-focused guidelines on the *Role of United Nations Peacekeeping in Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration*.

May 2000: Adoption of an Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child establishing 18 as the minimum age for children’s participation in hostilities.


September 2000: International Conference on War-affected Children, Winnipeg, Canada.


November 2001: A 14-year-old former child combatant from Sierra Leone addresses the Security Council during the fourth debate on children and armed conflict.


April 2002: On 11 April 2002, the 60th ratification of the Rome Statute for an International Criminal Court was deposited, ensuring its entry into force on 1 July 2002.

May 2002: Security Council meeting on children and armed conflict, on the occasion of the General Assembly special session on children.
Chapter 3

Ensuring humanitarian protection

“Children have nothing to do with the war. They should leave us out of it.”

INES, AGED 10, COLOMBIA

Hundreds of residents of Dili take up temporary residence in a football stadium—a designated safe haven.

UNICEF/HQ99-0952/J M HOLMES
During armed conflict children’s access to protection and assistance is threatened. Refusal of access is a violation of children’s right to health, education and even survival. Whether they are unable to journey to distribution centres, or isolated in the midst of hostilities where food, clothing and other life-saving humanitarian aid cannot reach them, the failure to provide access heightens children’s vulnerability to disease and malnutrition.

There is no question about the right of access. The Security Council has explicitly and unequivocally called on all parties to armed conflict for full, safe and unhindered access of humanitarian personnel and the delivery of humanitarian assistance to all children affected by armed conflict. This right to access is fundamental to the protection of children during emergencies. Protection includes both their protection from harm and violence, and protection of their right to humanitarian assistance. These rights are basic tenets of human rights and humanitarian law principles. Sovereign governments and non-State actors are both bound to uphold these principles.

**Children as zones of peace**

In order to ensure access to children in situations of armed conflict, UNICEF promotes the concept of ‘children as a zone of peace’. The idea was first conceived in the 1980s, as a fulfilment of the irrefutable notion that the targeting of children during hostilities can never be justified or tolerated, under any condition. As a practical way to ensure the protection that children are entitled to, UNICEF has often helped negotiate ‘days of tranquillity’, during which services for children, such as immunization and micronutrient supplements, are organized. The first time that ‘days of tranquillity’ were arranged was in 1985, in El Salvador. Since then ceasefires have been arranged for immunization of children in numerous conflicts, including Afghanistan, Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sri Lanka, Sudan and Somalia. In some instances, ‘corridors of peace’ have been designated to allow the delivery of food, medicine and other supplies. These measures are limited and temporary in scope and cannot replace the broader protection, namely the end of conflict.

The General Assembly has endorsed the concept of children as zones of peace and the Security Council has called for such measures in its statements and resolutions.
Safety of humanitarian personnel

If UNICEF is to be successful in honouring its mandate, then the safety of UNICEF staff and partners is an absolute priority. In simple terms, UNICEF cannot effectively protect the lives of children if the lives of all UNICEF partners and staff are not also protected.

Over the last decade, United Nations personnel have faced increasingly high risks when carrying out their duties, which often require them to work in volatile and dangerous environments. Two hundred and nine United Nations staff members lost their lives between January 1992 and March 2002. Of these more than half (111) died from gunshot wounds, another 52 were victims of ethnic violence, 28 were killed in aircraft accidents, and 16 were victims of other acts such as bombing and landmine explosions. A further 255 staff members have been taken hostage and many others have fallen victim to crimes such as robbery, rape, assault and car-jacking.  

So far the vast majority of offenders, many of whom are known, have not been prosecuted. Impunity is thus a major concern. UNICEF joins the Secretary-General in calling on those Member States that have not yet ratified the 1994 Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel to do so immediately.

While governments have a responsibility to protect humanitarian workers, it must also be recognized that the United Nations has a duty to care for its workforce and a clear responsibility to ensure that measures are put into place to ensure their continued safety. In December 2001, the General Assembly adopted a resolution strengthening security considerably. Measures include the appointment of a full-time security coordinator, as well as professional security officers employed at United Nations Headquarters in New York. The number of field security officers worldwide has almost doubled. This comes in addition to the development of important policy, such as the introduction of minimum operating security standards and guidelines on improving security collaboration with NGOs and other operating partners. Further to this, urgent work is ongoing to develop a comprehensive system of accountability and to introduce a new training package with the intention of increasing security awareness throughout the entire United Nations system.

In all of this UNICEF has taken a very active role, being both an advocate for, and a full participant in, the United Nations security management system. UNICEF will continue to work closely with all United Nations agencies and with all its humanitarian operating partners to make sure that
the maximum is done to enhance safety and security, thereby ensuring that the protectors are themselves protected.

**Engagement with non-State entities**

In order to pursue its humanitarian activities, UNICEF, together with other United Nations agencies, often finds itself in situations where it has to engage and negotiate with non-State entities — typically, insurgent groups. Engagement with those groups aims at ensuring the provision of assistance and protection to children and security for humanitarian workers, and includes, inter alia, negotiations for access and advocacy for the respect of children’s rights. This creates a whole series of legal, political and operational dilemmas.

The IASC Working Group recognized in September 2001 an increased need for agencies to assist United Nations Country Teams in these dilemmas and encouraged inter-agency consultations to develop criteria and guidelines on the subject. A working group of United Nations humanitarian agencies has undertaken to address this issue, agreeing that its main objective would be the drafting of a manual for humanitarian United Nations field staff. The manual will incorporate best practices collected from the field, as well as guidance on practical steps — when, how and on what basis to engage or disengage with armed groups.

UNICEF is collecting experiences from the field to document lessons learned, as practical guidance, and to ensure a coherent and principled approach in engaging with non-State entities for the purposes of delivering humanitarian assistance:

- **In December 2001, the Congolese Rally for Democracy (RCD-Goma), an armed group which controls territories in the east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, co-signed a plan of action with UNICEF for the demobilization and reintegration of 2,600 child soldiers. The UNICEF country office had spent several months negotiating directly with the armed group, which has agreed to stop recruiting children under 18 and to allow UNICEF and its partners to provide psychosocial support to these children and reintegrate them within their families and communities. This demobilization process is now under way.**

- **UNICEF Sri Lanka has been holding regular advocacy meetings with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), following a commitment made by the LTTE in 1998, to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict, not to recruit children under**
17 to its armed forces and not to engage children under 18 in hostilities. Discussions between the LTTE and UNICEF monitor this commitment and also focus on other issues. In coordination with the LTTE, UNICEF is working with community groups and schools, promoting compulsory education through the ‘Every child back to school’ campaign, as a strategy to deter child recruitment.

**Growing the Sheltering Tree**

In 1998, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Reference Group on Humanitarian Action and Human Rights was tasked with finding ways to better protect human rights during the delivery of humanitarian assistance. Recognizing that the work done in zones of conflict had generated many innovative methods and programmes to prevent or mitigate abuses, the IASC group decided to identify and share these ‘best practices’. This led to the concept of the book *Growing the Sheltering Tree*.

Through field visits and submissions the IASC team, under UNICEF’s leadership, began to collect examples from humanitarian workers in diverse situations, demonstrating how strategically designed programmes can enhance the protection of civilians. By working with communities humanitarian workers have helped alleviate suffering directly caused by armed conflict and empowered people to exercise their rights. *Growing the Sheltering Tree* tells the stories of those efforts. For example, a Colombian research institute (Consultoria para los Derechos Humanos y el Desplazamiento), with support from UNICEF and the European Community Humanitarian Office, set up community-level ‘sentinel sites’ in Colombia to gather information and evaluate the risk of displacement. The data were shared with local leaders to generate prevention measures and help prepare contingency plans. The data system was also used immediately after displacement to rapidly determine the needs of newly displaced populations and plan emergency relief efforts (*Growing the Sheltering Tree*, page 50).

The book demonstrates that when emergency relief is wedded to a rights-based agenda, there is every possibility of laying the foundation for sustainable peace. But if the protection of human rights is left out of the picture, humanitarian assistance runs the risk of actually prolonging conflict by maintaining the warring factions. Integrating a human rights and child rights agenda within the framework of humanitarian assistance is therefore essential. Underlying
that prospect is the realization that peace-building cannot be accomplished unless the underlying causes of conflict are addressed.

The link between humanitarian assistance and the protection of human rights calls for the keeping of a difficult balance. It is necessary, while embracing a strategy of protection and peace-building, to maintain impartiality in the delivery of humanitarian relief in order to maximize child welfare and support fundamental child rights, as set forth in the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Growing the Sheltering Tree: Protecting rights through humanitarian action is intended to provide a way to better promote and protect the rights of war-affected communities through humanitarian work. It is scheduled for publication in summer 2002 by UNICEF on behalf of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee.

Child-friendly spaces in refugee camps

Child-friendly spaces were first established in 1999, to provide integrated care for children in Albanian refugee camps. The approach has gained recognition as a successful and innovative model for promoting the rights of refugee and internally displaced children. Child-friendly spaces have since been adapted to serve the needs of war-affected children in Angola, the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor, Guinea and, most recently, Liberia.

In the chaos that accompanies displacement during conflict, the delivery of humanitarian assistance is often fraught with difficulties. Child-friendly spaces offer a safe haven for children and women, distinct from the rest of the camp. A basic package of services is made available for children, adolescents and mothers in a secure environment that is family-focused and community-based.

Services include infant feeding and nutritional support; hygiene, water and sanitation services; early childhood care; psychosocial counselling; education and recreation; and basic health care. Toys, such as puzzles and puppets, and creative art supplies are provided for psychosocial support and early childhood development.

The key to the success of the child-friendly spaces approach is building participation of children and communities into the planning of the activities, while recognizing the links between physical and emotional security, social and cognitive development, and health and nutritional status. The approach thus provides the framework for a coordinated effort, guaranteeing
children’s rights to survival, development, participation and protection.

**SOME COMPONENTS OF A CHILD-FRIENDLY SPACE:**
- Mother and child care centre, including separate areas for baby hygiene and breastfeeding
- Safe area for women and girls
- Playground
- Water and sanitation facilities and garbage disposal
- Community bulletin boards for posting of public service messages
- Classrooms
- Meeting space and recreation area for adolescents.

**ALBANIA AND THE FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA**
Child-friendly spaces were established, with UNICEF’s help, in refugee camps in Albania and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in 1999. Thousands of Kosovar refugee children were able to receive an integrated package of services, including schooling in a safe, protected environment.

**ANGOLA**
In Angola, child-friendly spaces have been introduced in eight provinces. A network of 10 national and international NGOs facilitate activities at each location, including nutritional training and instruction on early childhood care. Mothers learn how to use simple games and practical exercises to stimulate the mental and physical development of their children. Building on this experience, other informal early childhood development initiatives are being evolved for child-friendly spaces and nutrition centres.

**RUSSIAN FEDERATION**
In Chechnya, UNICEF is assisting community-based child-friendly spaces, including recreational, sporting and vocational projects. One important aim is to reduce stress and decrease the risk of adolescents becoming involved in illegal and exploitative activities. In Grozny, small-scale child-friendly spaces were developed for more than 200 vulnerable children.

**UNITED NATIONS TRANSITIONAL ADMINISTRATION IN EAST TIMOR**
UNICEF is supporting child-friendly spaces in eight districts. For example, the child-friendly space in Comoro, a suburb of Dili, has about 500 children registered and participating in recreational and learning activities, such as language, mathematics, cooking and sewing instruction. Each of these
child-friendly spaces is overseen by local and international NGOs who work together with the community to manage the centre.

LIBERIA  The camps for internally displaced persons in Liberia include child-friendly spaces, providing a sense of security amid the chaos of conflict and flight. Mothers care for their infants in safe areas and children are able to come together to play and learn. School and recreational kits are provided with supplies including crayons, books, slates and teaching aids. Teachers and nurses are being trained among the local displaced population to assist in organizing schooling and health care.

**Impact of sanctions**

UNICEF holds that children should never bear the impact of sanctions, and when sanctions are applied, measures should be taken to ensure that children do not suffer. Before imposing sanctions, an assessment and analysis should be undertaken to determine the impact on the civilian population, particularly vulnerable groups, such as children and women. UNICEF is a member of the IASC Reference Group on Sanctions which has provided input into the Secretary-General’s assessment studies of the humanitarian impact of sanctions imposed in Afghanistan and Liberia.

In 1999, UNICEF released surveys of children and mothers in Iraq, describing the adverse impact of two wars and nine years of comprehensive sanctions. UNICEF has continued to monitor and assess how the embargo affects the lives of children and women and has produced several studies, including a 2001 report — *The Situation of Children in Iraq: An assessment based on the Convention on the Rights of the Child*. The report notes the emergence in the past decade of wasted, stunted, and impoverished children, plagued by disease and malnutrition.
Chapter 4

Afghanistan

“We want to learn something we can become — teachers, doctors or engineers.”

WINOUS, 12-YEAR-OLD GIRL

A convoy of some 700 donkeys and horses laden with UNICEF supplies approaches the Afghan border.
After the last two decades of war and four years of drought in Afghanistan, the population was impoverished and struggling to survive. The country was reporting some of the grimmest statistics for children and women in the world:

- One child in four dying of preventable causes before the age of five
- Half of all children suffering from malnutrition, more than half suffering from stunting
- Second highest maternal mortality rate in the world (1,700 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births)
- 2 million Afghan children displaced, either internally or as refugees across the borders
- 5 to 10 deaths each day from landmine explosions, half of the victims children.

The new crisis, following 11 September 2001, called for an unprecedented humanitarian response. UNICEF estimated that 7.5 million Afghans were dependent on international relief to survive the winter — two thirds of them women and children. In order to prevent an escalating disaster, the combined efforts of the humanitarian community were stretched to the limit.

**Humanitarian convoys**

The first phase of UNICEF’s response was the speedy delivery of life-saving food, clothing, medicines and other necessities. Humanitarian convoys carried supplies over rugged mountainous terrain, racing to beat the onset of winter. In a single week of October, five UNICEF winter convoys for children set out from northern Pakistan carrying hundreds of tons of medicines, high-protein food mix and shelter materials. In some cases humanitarian cargo was loaded onto the backs of donkeys and horses and carried across mountain passes. In one instance, 4,000 mules carried 200 tonnes of emergency aid, including clothes, shoes, kitchen supplies, food, medicines and tents, and 90 tonnes of educational materials, over Shah Shaleem pass into Badakhshan in north-eastern Afghanistan. By February UNICEF had sent some 100 emergency convoys into Afghanistan, delivering enough blankets and clothing for 200,000 children, medicine for 3 million to last the winter, and supplies to provide safe drinking water for 2.5 million. Other supplies included soap and family hygiene articles, 12 hospital generators, and enough textbooks, workbooks, pencils and teaching materials for 1 million children.
Back-to-school campaign

More than two decades of fighting have left the education system of Afghanistan devastated. Since 1979, some 2,000 schools have been destroyed or fallen into disrepair, with only about 32 per cent of boys and 8 per cent of girls receiving some form of primary schooling. Educational materials were given high priority in UNICEF’s humanitarian campaign from the beginning because schooling is seen as a way to provide security and stability for Afghanistan’s children traumatized by war.

In recent years, UNICEF has worked in villages and towns from Herat to Kabul to supply learning materials for home-based schools, enabling girls and boys to study, often in opposition to the official Taliban rule. For example, in 2000, UNICEF provided educational materials and teacher training to support the primary education of over 130,000 children, 30 per cent of them girls. That support was given through non-formal channels in Taliban areas and formal channels in non-Taliban areas. Provision for home schools has continued, including 800 home schools in the Kabul area, with more than 50,000 children studying. Many of these home schools operated for years in secret and now offer transitional classes for children returning to formal schooling.

Early in 2002, some 200 schools were rehabilitated, with UNICEF support, to open for the first day of class on 23 March. Already in January, accelerated classes were under way for girls to catch up on their studies in time for the start of the new school year. In Badghis province of western Afghanistan, for example, a girls’ school shut down by the Taliban for six years was reopened and hundreds of girls arrived more than a month in advance to register. Some of the younger girls had never attended school. Many of the older girls were returning after a hiatus of five or six years.

The new Ministry of Education has taken the lead on Afghanistan’s back-to-school campaign, with UNICEF’s help and with community support. Work proceeded at a rapid pace to provide schooling for all the children waiting to enrol. The overwhelming success of that effort can be measured by the 1.5 million children attending class on 23 March 2002, the first day of the new school year — double the number of children enrolled in recent years. School supplies and teaching materials were produced and delivered under extremely difficult conditions, within a shattered infrastructure, over terrain at times infested with landmines. In one month alone before 23 March, more than 18,000 blackboards and close to 8 million textbooks were distributed. One of the greatest challenges is finding classroom space. While the urgent renovation of school buildings continues,
at least 500 tented schools have been set up in places where school buildings have been destroyed, with portable toilets to ensure safe, hygienic conditions.

Training new teachers is a key priority of the back-to-school campaign and requires nationwide mobilization, since most women teachers stopped work under the Taliban restrictions. A single teacher training and orientation workshop in Kabul, in January 2002, provided training for 170 women and 70 men teachers to work in six Kabul schools, reconstructed with UNICEF assistance. Massive teacher orientation, to prepare 50,000 newly identified teachers across the country for the opening day of school, has relied on a combination of workshops, print materials, lectures and demonstrations, as well as radio broadcasts to alert parents and community leaders. In-service teacher training, building on the orientation programme, will continue throughout the school year, along with interim teacher recruitment and selection.

A new curriculum has been developed locally. The learning materials are adaptable to the learning environment of the child, something very important in the context of Afghanistan. Each student receives a cloth school bag with books for the appropriate grade level, as well as basic school supplies such as a slate, notebooks, chalk, pencils, pens, erasures, sharpeners and a ruler. Textbooks designed and written by Afghan educators in both Dari and Pashto were printed in neighbouring Pakistan on presses kept running 24 hours a day. In order to deliver more than 7,000 tonnes of learning materials to 3,000 schools in Afghanistan, in time for the first day of the new school year, UNICEF hired donkeys, jeeps, trucks and planes. UNICEF field offices in each of the six regions of Afghanistan have offered support to the regional ministry working groups, coordinating transportation and delivery of supplies. The total budget of the back-to-school campaign is about $30 million, with a third of that needed to kick-start the initiative and the remainder for ongoing support.

Ongoing support includes the cost of sustained advocacy, to encourage parents to register their children, especially girls. The advocacy campaign is known as Sabakh, which translates from Dari and Pashto as ‘Let’s learn’. Radio messages have been prepared in partnership with the British Broadcasting Corporation, along with television spots, and outreach through posters, leaflets and local and national newspapers. Word has also been spread through religious leaders, local authorities and numerous NGO partners. Megaphones have been distributed to community mobilizers, and medical staff working in the vaccination programme have promoted school registration. A network of landmine awareness workers have
taken the message of Sabakh across the country as part of their work in communities. Children themselves are spreading the word. In the northern centre of Mazer-e-Sharif, a local children’s group, Children’s Voice, have performed street theatre and organized community gatherings to promote education. In Herat, children have painted wall murals with back-to-school messages.

Immunization ‘plus’

As with education and other social services, Afghanistan’s routine immunization programme is in need of massive support. Throughout the 1990s, immunization had fallen behind and an effort is now being mounted to rebuild the services and delivery infrastructure. While long-term support is being planned, more immediate measures are under way. UNICEF, together with the World Health Organization (WHO) and local health officials, has embarked on two major vaccination campaigns to protect children weakened by malnutrition and exposure.

MEASLES In recent years, Afghanistan’s measles mortality rate has been the second highest in the world. The current emergency measles campaign, launched in July 2001 by UNICEF, WHO and the Ministry of Public Health, continued even during the height of military action. The goal is to immunize upwards of 10 million children, aged from six months to 12 years. By March, an estimated 5 million had already been reached. The campaign, scheduled for completion in August 2002, will save an estimated 35,000 lives.

One phase of the measles campaign was launched by UNICEF on 2 January in Kabul, where in just four weeks more than 1 million children were vaccinated. The campaign was then expanded to other cities and smaller towns throughout the country. The actual work involves training local workers to ensure the vaccines are safely stored and administered. UNICEF pays the salaries of staff and also covers the cost of the vaccines, auto-disposable syringes, storage equipment, transportation and local publicity. Travel to remote villages is sometimes by horseback, and if no phones or radios are available the vaccination team will simply arrive in the village and go to work, using a megaphone to alert villagers by word of mouth. One team of three persons can immunize about 200 children per day.

POLIO The campaign against polio in Afghanistan coincides with efforts under way in other polio-endemic countries to reach the goal of global
eradication of the polio virus by 2005. The global polio eradication
initiative, spearheaded by WHO, Rotary International, the US Centers for
Disease Control and Prevention, and UNICEF, is now in its last mile to
put an end to the threat of polio forever. But war-affected countries are a
difficult challenge, and Afghanistan is one of the most difficult countries
to declare polio-free. The combined effects of war, destroyed infrastructure,
a countryside littered with landmines and the need to reach villages in
remote mountainous regions require renewed and concentrated efforts. The
recent push to eradicate polio in Afghanistan was initiated in 2000, and
in 2001 a week-long ceasefire in the ongoing civil war was negotiated
which allowed the vaccination of 5.7 million children in 330 districts. A
polio immunization campaign in the last few months of 2001 was
able to reach nearly 10 million children. Two more rounds of polio immu-
nizations will follow in 2002, since three doses are required for immunity.

Supplementary feeding centres

UNICEF is working actively to reduce malnutrition through supplementary
feeding centres in local villages and towns. Together with the World Food
Programme and other partners, UNICEF is helping to reach more than
650,000 children and women with special food needs, including pregnant
and lactating women. The therapeutic feeding centres are equipped to
treat acute malnutrition and chronic hunger with fortified milk and high-
nutrition bars. Once recovery begins the children continue on feeding
regimens that include three to five meals of fortified porridge per day in
addition to their normal food intake. Children are discharged when
they have maintained at least 80 per cent of their normal weight for a
week. UNICEF, together with implementing partners, provides the fortified
milk and foods, equipment, technical assistance, training, salaries and
monitoring. Nutrition surveys are currently being conducted in as many
distant places as possible.

Child protection

No child or family in Afghanistan has been spared the effects of an intense
prolonged conflict, which has changed all aspects of the economic and
social environment. Experience of violence, loss of parents, siblings and
other close relatives, massive displacement, extreme poverty and a lack
of developmental opportunities are threatening children’s normal social,
emotional and mental development. Decades of conflict and massive human
rights violations have severely limited families’ ability to protect their
children from violence, exploitation, abuse and discrimination. Without adult protection, children have become breadwinners on the street, are being sold and trafficked, have been forced into labour, were recruited into armed forces or have become involved in crime in order to survive.

Together with national and international partners, UNICEF has undertaken a psychosocial needs assessment of children who are victims of violence and war. Similarly, an assessment is in progress of the protection and reintegration needs of child soldiers, street and working children, young people not attending school, women- and child-headed households and other war-affected young people.

Child soldier and youth reintegration programmes have been initiated in selected locations in the country, and a campaign for awareness of landmines and unexploded ordnance has been initiated, linked to the back-to-school effort. In collaboration with the Mine Action Programme for Afghanistan, UNICEF has supported training on child-focused methodology for landmine awareness agencies.

UNICEF has reached agreements with the Ministry of Justice and other governmental partners to promote the establishment of appropriate protection and justice systems for children in conflict with the law. An interministerial juvenile justice task force has been initiated, bringing together representatives of the Ministries of Justice and the Interior and the Prosecutor General’s Office.

**UNICEF’s objective**

Millions of children in Afghanistan remain at high risk of death by malnutrition, exposure and preventable diseases such as measles, diarrhoea and acute respiratory infections. A shortage of safe water and poor sanitation adds to the burden of disease. The high levels of malnutrition and wasting have left children with no strength to fight even common infections. In order to ensure and maintain the survival of the most vulnerable children and women, in particular the displaced and refugee Afghans in camps near or across the border, a multipronged relief effort is under way. UNICEF is cooperating with the new Afghan Government and the Governments of Pakistan, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Turkmenistan along with international agencies, including the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the World Food Programme and the International Organization for Migration. Clear objectives have been established. At the top of the agenda are a number of immediate priorities:

- Continue life-saving humanitarian aid, especially medicines,
water and clothing
- Continue support for the back-to-school campaign
- Support catch-up learning for girls and boys in home-based learning
- Reduce child malnutrition through supplementary feeding programmes
- Carry out nationwide immunization for children.

Longer-term goals for Afghanistan include an improved health care network, especially for pregnant women; psychosocial support for children traumatized by war; landmine awareness; and an improved legal code to protect the rights of children and women.

**Afghan refugees in Pakistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran**

**PAKISTAN** The number of refugees who entered Pakistan, following the events of 11 September, was not as large as anticipated. However, many new camps were established and UNICEF worked together with the Pakistan Government, UNHCR and other United Nations and NGO partners to provide support, including access to safe water, sanitary latrines, basic health facilities, basic education, and improved child protection. At the same time, natural emergencies were addressed, such as the continuing drought in parts of Balochistan, flash floods in the North-West Frontier Province and parts of Punjab, and the earthquake in Sindh.

It is estimated that prior to 11 September 2001, more than 3 million Afghan refugees were already living in Pakistan. The impact of the influx of Afghan refugees has been most significant for the low-income Pakistani host communities. To help address that problem, UNICEF initiated a three-pronged emergency response to the crisis: meeting the immediate needs of new arrivals; continuing support services, such as immunization for Afghan refugees; and responding to the special needs of women and children in the affected Pakistani communities. Through the establishment of mother and child care centres, awareness is being raised on issues such as early marriage and child care.

The Afghan emergency situation has offered opportunities for closer linkage between emergency and regular programmes, especially in the areas of education, health, and water and sanitation. At the same time, partnerships have been cultivated between Afghan civil society organizations
and Pakistani host communities, for mutual learning and cooperation.

**ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN** It is estimated that more than 2 million Afghans have sought refuge in the Islamic Republic of Iran over the last two decades. The vast majority of them have not settled in refugee camps and generally live among poor Iranian communities. Since 2000, with funds from the United Kingdom Department for International Development, UNICEF has been providing basic health and education services to Afghan refugee children and women in the three areas with the highest concentrations of Afghan refugees, namely Sistan/Baluchestan, Khorasan and Tehran.

The Literacy Movement Organization, an institution of the Ministry of Education, provides literacy and life-skills classes to nearly 12,000 Afghan women and girl refugees, with UNICEF support. The education project includes a pilot mobile library scheme in the two provinces of Sistan/Baluchestan and Kerman. With about 10,000 books, the mobile libraries are providing more than 5,500 children the chance to read and learn.

A unique advocacy collaboration was initiated during 2001 with the renowned Iranian film director Mohsen Makhmalbaf, director inter alia of the film *Kandahar*. Mohsen Makhmalbaf produced a film free of charge for UNICEF on education for Afghan refugees, entitled *The Afghan Alphabet*. Successful advocacy generated by the film has contributed to a new policy instated by Iranian authorities which permits Afghan children to enrol in formal schools.
Chapter 5

Child soldiers: returning home

“When I found myself alone, I decided to become a soldier. Usually I was at the front line. I’ve fought a lot…I’m only a little soldier; I should return to school.”

DIEUDONNE, AGED 16, DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

At a special demobilization ceremony for boy soldiers in southern Sudan, they learn to ‘put down the gun and take up the pen’.
A child soldier is any child — girl or boy — under the age of 18, who is part of any kind of regular or irregular armed force or armed group, including but not limited to combatants, cooks, porters, messengers, and anyone accompanying such groups other than as family members. It includes girls and boys recruited for sexual purposes or forced marriage. It does not, therefore, refer only to a child who is carrying or has carried weapons.

A child may be recruited compulsorily, forcibly or voluntarily by armed forces or groups. Children are susceptible to recruitment by manipulation or they may be driven to join armed groups because of poverty or discrimination. Very often they are forcibly abducted by military troops at school, on the streets or at home.

There is evidence to suggest that, as conflicts drag on, more and more children are recruited. One reason is that deteriorating economic and social conditions force families further into poverty. Children may join armed forces for daily food and survival. Conflict also disrupts education, and when schools are closed children may be left with few alternatives. When the conflict is prolonged, armed forces are more likely to use children to replenish their ranks. This trend is facilitated by the availability of light, inexpensive small arms that can be easily handled by children aged ten and younger.

Robbed of childhood, these children are often subjected to extreme brutality. Armed groups have been known to drug child soldiers before sending them out to fight, and some force young children to commit atrocities against their own families, in order to destroy their family and community ties. Girls are frequently used for sexual purposes, assigned to a commander or at times gang-raped by groups of men. Armed forces have been known to carve their name on the bodies of these children, branding them for life.

Research suggests that at any one time over 300,000 child soldiers, some as young as eight, are exploited in armed conflicts in over 30 countries around the world. Since recruitment continues as children grow older, the cumulative number of children brutalized in conflict over the last decade is much higher. Exact numbers are not known, but efforts are being made to collect more reliable information on the use of child soldiers and to gather data systematically on the impacts of war on children.

**Disarmament, demobilization, reintegration**

From its experience with disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) in a broad range of countries, UNICEF has drawn a number of important lessons, which have become the backbone of policy and
programming on the issue and inform UNICEF’s ongoing work in the demobilization of child soldiers:

- The demobilization of child soldiers has generally been considered part of the final peace agreement between fighting parties. But today the demobilization of children is more likely to take place as a unilateral commitment while the armed conflict is still continuing, in the absence of a political settlement or a political process and sometimes in the absence of a demobilization programme. In all cases, children should be removed from hostilities at the earliest opportunity and immediately separated from adult soldiers. Their amnesty should be unconditional and there should no obligation to hand in a weapon for participation in the programme.

- Upon release, children should be transferred within 48 hours to civilian control. Once in civilian care they should receive health care, counselling and psychosocial support.

- Girls should be included in all aspects of the demobilization exercise, including education and vocational training. Special efforts are needed to provide girls victimized by sexual abuse with the opportunity to establish an identity independent of their abductors, and restart their lives.

- Family tracing and reunification should be given priority in the reintegration process. Children who have lost their families or have been rejected should be provided with alternative foster or community-based care.

- Children should participate in the process of demobilization and reintegration, including peer counselling and healing or forgiveness rituals, as appropriate.

- A minimum three-year commitment of resources and staff is necessary to provide for children’s longer-term needs, including education, psychosocial support and vocational training. A specific plan to promote secondary education and life-skills training for adolescent career development should be part of country strategies for post-conflict countries.

**Recent milestones**

The year 2002 has seen two milestones in the fight against child recruitment. One is the entry into force of the CRC Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict. The second is the Secretary-General’s list called for by Security Council resolution 1379 of November 2001 on children and armed conflict. Scheduled to appear as an annex
to the Secretary-General's yearly report on children and armed conflict, the list will report on parties to armed conflict that recruit or use children in violation of their international obligations. The Secretary-General's list will draw the attention of the international community to the recruitment and use of children in armed conflict, in violation of their rights, and so offers great possibilities as an advocacy tool to further promote and improve the situation of children in armed conflict.

UNICEF’s approach

Since the mid 1980s, UNICEF has been regularly involved in the demobilization of child soldiers, playing a key role in advocating and securing the release of children from armed forces and groups in Angola, Burundi, Colombia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mozambique, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somalia and Sudan. UNICEF and its NGO partners have also provided care, technical guidance and at times financial support for the successful implementation of national DDR programmes.

During 2001 there was marked improvement in the cooperation of a number of governments and rebel groups, in support of the demobilization and social reintegration of child soldiers. UNICEF’s capacity to support the demobilizing and reintegrating of child soldiers has also continued to grow as more effective strategies are developed from experience.

UNICEF efforts to demobilize child soldiers have been implemented even in the midst of war. This was the case in May 2000 when UNICEF successfully continued to demobilize children and reintegrate them with their families and communities in Sierra Leone, despite the resumption of hostilities by the Revolutionary United Front; hostilities were continuing in February 2001, when UNICEF, with the help of the World Food Programme, airlifted 3,551 child soldiers from the Sudan People’s Liberation Army in the south to safe areas in Rumbek county where transit camps were established. UNICEF and partner NGOs organized school classes, health facilities, games and sports, and life-skills and vocational training and began the urgent work of tracing family members.

By the end of August 2001, all the children had been reunited with their families. Follow-up programmes were developed in their home communities to sustain their reintegration. The programmes included basic health services, education, water and sanitation, with particular emphasis on schooling; support for income-generating activities by providing grinding mills to the schools; and reinforced efforts to prevent the children from
being re-recruited or volunteering again, a major challenge in the difficult conditions prevailing in southern Sudan.

Demobilization of children during armed conflict has taken place in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in other countries. In order to succeed in the midst of war, the demobilization and reintegration process for these children must be built on careful analysis and management of risk. In some cases UNICEF has been called upon to respond swiftly, moving children released by armed forces and groups to safe havens in order to arrange their return to families and communities.

**UNICEF actions**

**ANGOLA** UNICEF works together with the Christian Children’s Fund to demobilize children through a programme for reintegration of underage soldiers in Angola. Children returning from war receive assistance to trace their relatives, and are transferred back to their home villages to be reunited with their families. The programme also identifies appropriate school and job training opportunities. Work in the communities is conducted by catequistas, trained local church people who provide psychosocial assistance. The group uses traditional beliefs and practices to aid local communities to accept former child soldiers and to facilitate their reintegration. For example, former child combatants participate in ‘cleansing ceremonies’ that seek to release them from the spirits of war. To date, the programme reports that some 2,400 child soldiers in areas controlled by UNITA have been demobilized and returned home.

**BURUNDI** On 30 October 2001, UNICEF signed a memorandum of understanding with the Government of Burundi acknowledging the problem of child soldiers in Burundi and giving UNICEF permission to take the lead in developing a programme with the Government that would engage both the Burundian army and rebels in this effort. UNICEF agreed in the memorandum to undertake a study to analyse the underlying causes of child recruitment in Burundi; make recommendations for relevant interventions that would address the full range of causes with specific attention given to the prevention of re-recruitment; coordinate with UNICEF in the United Republic of Tanzania as regards recruitment in refugee camps; and develop a far-reaching advocacy campaign to support DDR activities. The Government pledged in the memorandum its engagement in these efforts and its support for community reintegration of demobilized children. Since the memorandum was signed, UNICEF has been invited by the Ministry of Defence to assist with the training of senior army
officers on child rights and issues related to child soldiers.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO UNICEF participated in the demobilization of about 200 child soldiers, initiated in December 2001 by President Joseph Kabila. Following a ceremony attended by members of Government, military authorities, diplomatic missions, international humanitarian organizations and journalists, the children were placed in a temporary transit centre, under the care of the National Bureau of Demobilization and Reintegration and a group of partners, including UNICEF, the only financial contributor.

At the same time, President Adolph Onusumba of the Congolese Rally for Democracy (RCD-Goma) signed a plan of action with UNICEF for the demobilization of 2,600 child soldiers in 2002. The demobilization process will consist of three phases: first, identification of the children to be demobilized and their transfer to transit centres; second, the actual demobilization and psychosocial support, to take place over a period of three months; and third, reunification and reintegration of the children with their families and communities. In April 2002, the first 104 child soldiers were released to UNICEF and its partners (International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Save the Children Fund (SCF), SOS Grands Lacs). The children have been placed in transit centres for a period of three months while their families are being traced. UNICEF is still advocating with the government and opposition armed groups to ensure that all child soldiers get demobilized without further delay. The Democratic Republic of the Congo remains one of the biggest challenges overall in UNICEF’s demobilization programme.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO/UGANDA In August 2000, rumours began to circulate that children from Bunia (Democratic Republic of the Congo) were being held in a military training camp in neighbouring Uganda, run by the Ugandan People’s Defence Force. The issue was also raised in a report of the Secretary-General to the Security Council. As a result, the Ugandan Government approved an assessment mission, led by UNICEF, which identified 165 children between the ages of 9 and 17 in the military barracks; three were girls. In February 2001, the Ugandan Government agreed to release them all. The children were placed in interim centres, where they were demobilized before returning home to their families. The children were repatriated in cooperation with the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Congolese Liberation Front and the Government of Uganda. An unprecedented and promising outcome was the pledge of all parties involved to end the future recruitment
of the children into any armed force.

The demobilization of the 165 children from Bunia stands as an example of how advocacy, cooperation and coordination between UNICEF, partner agencies, NGOs, and governments, can together provide the adequate leverage to successfully address the violation of children’s rights. Nevertheless, challenges remain; re-recruitment has been reported in some cases.

EAST ASIA AND PACIFIC The UNICEF office for this region is finalizing a report on the experience of child soldiers in Cambodia, the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor, Indonesia, Myanmar, Papua New Guinea and the Philippines. The report is based on case studies of some 50 child soldiers from the six countries and looks at common concerns and lessons learned in order to design advocacy and programmatic strategies for the future. The process has helped to start dialogue on the issue within UNICEF, as well as with counterparts in government and civil society.

SIERRA LEONE When Sierra Leonean President Ahmad Kabbah declared, on 18 January 2002, “The war done done,” a symbolic bonfire of thousands of small arms and weapons was lit to mark the end of the disarmament process, and the move to new beginnings. A total of 46,000 combatants have been demobilized since the exercise began in October 1999 — 6,821 were children.

The creation of an official DDR programme in Sierra Leone was a central tenet of the Lomé peace accord, signed in July 1999. The accord was the first such agreement to recognize the special needs of children in the process of demobilization and reintegration — an example of successful lobbying by UNICEF and partners.

UNICEF was the lead agency for child protection during the DDR process. Demobilized children were transferred to interim care centres supported by UNICEF where they were provided with health care services and psychosocial counselling, as well as participating in educational and recreational activities while family tracing and reunification was in progress.

UNICEF contracted a health partner to conduct routine health checks at the interim care centres. Most children suffered from ailments reflecting their difficult lives, including malaria, respiratory tract infections, skin infections and sexually transmitted infections.

The focus of psychosocial support was to create a stable and ‘normal’ environment for the children. In addition to their education and skills training, they participated in sports, cultural and group activities. One draw-
back was that centres frequently found themselves ill equipped to work with the higher-risk children, who suffered enormously in coming to terms with their past actions in the bush.

Children at the interim care centres also participated in a rapid response education programme, designed as a catch-up programme for children aged 10 to 14, the primary age group for former child soldiers. After completing six modules taught over six months, children were able to enrol once again in formal schooling. It is essential that DDR programmes include long-term support for schooling.

It was a challenge to ensure that the care was indeed interim and did not lead to institutional arrangements. The key to avoiding institutionalisation was a genuine commitment to trace and reunite children with their families as rapidly as possible. Despite many problems, by the end of October 2001, 3,425 children were reunited with their families. The end of the war and the opening up of previously rebel-controlled areas will further accelerate reunification.

The completion of this largest ever demobilization effort by UNICEF and partners was accompanied by a complete review of DDR programming. To ensure that the experience gained will inform future efforts, UNICEF Sierra Leone prepared a comprehensive study (Lessons Learned in Prevention, Demobilization and Reintegration of Children Associated with the Fighting Forces: A Sierra Leone case study), which includes 50 key lessons to be integrated into UNICEF’s future demobilization programmes.

SRI LANKA In 1998, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) made a commitment to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict to end their recruitment of children, but they failed to comply. Three years later, in 2001, the LTTE again pledged to stop recruiting children under 17. UNICEF Executive Director Carol Bellamy in a statement in July 2001 urged the LTTE to live up to their commitment.

UNICEF, together with the Special Representative, has continued to press for the release of children fighting with the LTTE forces. In 2002 UNICEF, in an effort to deter child recruitment, initiated a programme encouraging children who have dropped out of school in LTTE-controlled areas to return to their studies. UNICEF has created a programme to ensure all children are enrolled in school; this strategy will also serve as a way of monitoring recruitment. Some children have been released as a result of the extensive dialogue with LTTE. This initiative is ongoing.
SUDAN In 1995, the Sudan People’s Liberation Army (SPLA) signed the Operation Lifeline Sudan ground rules agreeing to end the recruitment of children for military purposes; two years later a demobilization task force was established. Although incidents of forced recruitment of children decreased, many children continued to join the military in order to escape conditions of extreme poverty.

In October 2000, UNICEF Executive Director Carol Bellamy was visiting a Dheng Nial school for demobilized child soldiers and made a plea to end the recruitment of child soldiers. A note was passed to her from the SPLA second in command. “You will get thousands of them,” the note said. It was a promise to remove all those under 18 from SPLA ranks. UNICEF realized that the commander’s promise, the result of many years of advocacy, was a major opportunity to end the recruitment of child soldiers in southern Sudan.

UNICEF made demobilization a priority, working around the clock to accommodate the largest ever single release of child soldiers. The number of children released exceeded expectation: 3,551 child soldiers came forward to be demobilized in February 2001. After considerable debate, it was decided to transport the children to transit centres in Rumbek county, away from the conflict zones and the likelihood of re-recruitment. On 23 February 2001, World Food Programme planes airlifted the children to Rumbek for the beginning of the demobilization process. On arrival, the children were interviewed and registered, and details to assist in reunification with their families were recorded. The difficult task was made easier by the structure of Sudanese society, with local elders able to identify all families within their village.

Meanwhile, the children were sent to five transit centres where health teams were ready to assist. Learning materials were provided for emergency education. Partnerships with Sudanese NGOs had been arranged to help run transit facilities. ‘Child soldier kits’, consisting of a blanket, slippers, mosquito net, tarpaulin, T-shirt and shorts, exercise books, pencils, cooking and eating utensils, were ready for distribution to each child.

Looking after the children was a challenging task. The number of children was far greater than expected and, as chief financial contributor, UNICEF was hard pressed to raise additional funds. Another problem was the difficulty for children in adjusting to a civilian routine. Most if not all were traumatized by their war experience.

The problems encountered during the first few weeks were addressed, and gradually the staff and the young people came to understand each
other better. Three weeks into the project, all the centres had formal teachers and catch-up classes were being held. Recreational activities, such as football and arts and crafts, were organized, helping to ease the boredom and sense of frustration. An important key to the success of the programme was encouraging the children to participate in the process. Efforts were made to listen to their complaints and take their suggestions seriously, so they became enthusiastic about participating in camp affairs.

The young participants achieved much during their stay at the interim care centre: 72 received training to work as primary school teaching assistants; 40 were trained as water pump mechanics; 96 were trained as facilitators for life-skills training; all participated in workshops on landmine awareness; and 30 were selected to facilitate community-based landmine awareness. These new skills proved useful when the children returned to their home villages.
Chapter 6

Refugees and the internally displaced

“My dream is to return home for one or two days before I die. It would give me everything. I’d go back to my house, my garden, my school.”

TEENAGER, AZERBAIJAN

Kosovar refugees. The mother holds an identification card for her four children. One has become separated from the family.
Today an estimated 20 million girls and boys are displaced by armed conflict or human rights violations. Forced to flee their homes, often traveling great distances to escape enemy fire, displaced children are the most frequent victims of violence, disease, malnutrition and death. In the chaos of flight, children may become separated from their parents and families and thus exposed to far greater dangers and exploitation. These children are in need of immediate assistance and protection. Girls face additional risks, such as sexual violence and rape.

When families and communities abandon their homes, taking what few possessions they can carry, they may plan to return to their communities at the earliest opportunity. But ‘temporary’ displacement often extends well over a decade. In such cases, children may spend their entire childhood in camps. Other long-term effects of displacement are an increased risk of poverty resulting from the loss of land, inheritance or other legal rights; incarceration or discrimination; and inability to resume schooling.

Adolescents have special needs because of their vulnerability to exploitation and recruitment. Yet the needs of displaced adolescents are usually considered last or not at all when programmes are instituted for education, health and protection during emergencies. In May 2000, the Secretary-General, reporting to the General Assembly, specifically recommended long-term assistance to displaced communities, including educational and vocational training for youth, to improve their opportunities for a future livelihood and economic stability.

**Uprooted by war**

Refugees are driven by war across national borders. The 1951 Refugee Convention sets the standards for the treatment of refugees and the obligations of countries. Although the international community has taken responsibility for their welfare, they often face terrible hardship, danger and suffering. Internally displaced persons or IDPs are displaced within their own national borders and they often include the most vulnerable groups. Because the majority of conflicts over the last decade have been within rather than across national boundaries, the number of IDPs has been increasing sharply.

IDPs currently make up about two thirds of the total population of 40 million displaced by armed conflict. No international agency is specifically mandated with their care and protection and, although governments are responsible for the welfare of IDPs, they may be unable or unwilling to offer them assistance and protection. The internally displaced, separated from
their support systems and often without identity papers, may be unable to obtain amenities such as food, water, shelter, health services and education. They are often subjected to hostility and discrimination, and displaced adolescents are especially vulnerable to forced recruitment, abduction, trafficking or sexual exploitation. In addition, legal ‘invisibility’ may leave IDPs susceptible to arbitrary actions and unable to seek help or protection from local authorities. Forced from place to place, they are likely to face the threat of landmines and may be perceived as outsiders and targeted by armed forces or groups.

UNICEF’s approach

All children, including those displaced by conflict, have the same rights to food, health and education, as well as the right to preservation of identity, and cultural, linguistic and inheritance rights. On this basis, UNICEF works to meet the survival, protection and development needs of children displaced by conflict.

Intervention is built around four primary components: advocacy, assessment, care, and protection. Through advocacy UNICEF seeks to mobilize support at all levels, community, national and international. Assessment, monitoring and evaluation ensure that efforts are effective and meet the needs of children within their communities. The care of displaced children includes family and community-based actions to restore psychosocial health and ward off malnutrition and disease. It also means planning for their safe and voluntary return, and preventing discrimination. Protection of displaced children, especially adolescents, focuses on shielding them from physical and psychological harm inflicted by others, such as violence, exploitation, sexual abuse, neglect, cruel or degrading treatment, or recruitment into military forces.

Children in flight are likely to become separated from their families and are thus urgently in need of special care, assistance and protection. In all cases, UNICEF’s first priority is to trace family members and reunite separated and unaccompanied children with their parents or primary caregivers. When evacuations from conflict areas become unavoidable, families should be moved together. If children are separated, UNICEF recommends community-based foster care until family members can be traced.

Refugee and IDP camps, intended as temporary refuge, often become shelters where entire generations of children grow up. It is crucial therefore, while negotiating safe return, to improve living conditions in the camps.
Children and young people uprooted by war must be given access to education, recreation, and creative and cultural activities.

**Partnerships**

There has been a concerted effort by various partners to mobilize better collaboration in addressing the needs of displaced populations. Much has been accomplished. The *Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement*, presented in 1998 by the Representative of the Secretary-General on Internally Displaced Persons, provide the normative framework for protection and assistance to IDP communities. Specifically, UNICEF has engaged its field offices in discussions on internal displacement and helped develop the *IASC Manual on Field Practices in Internal Displacement*, published in 1999 by OCHA, along with a *Handbook for Applying the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement*. The *Handbook* provides examples of practical actions that field staff can take to support and protect IDPs. These range from advocacy to concrete programmatic strategies for increasing protection and ensuring effective and appropriate assistance. The Manual is intended to support efforts by governments and agencies to implement the *Guiding Principles* and complements the *Handbook*.

UNICEF works in close collaboration with its partners in developing guidance and providing protection and assistance to displaced children and women. In June 2000, UNICEF assisted with the *Supplementary Guidance to Resident and Humanitarian Coordinators*. In the same month, the IASC established a senior inter-agency network on internal displacement, of which UNICEF is an active member. Partly in response to the network’s recommendations, an IDP unit has been set up in OCHA.

Inter-agency collaboration to address the needs of refugee children is also essential. UNICEF and UNHCR work as partners and in 1996 they outlined their collaboration in a memorandum of understanding that specifies how the two agencies can complement one another. In 1999, the steering committee of the Action for the Rights of Children (ARC) programme was expanded by its founding members, UNHCR and the International Save the Children Alliance, to include UNICEF and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. The ARC training project provides a framework for furthering children’s rights in the refugee context and has led to practical programme implications for refugee children.

The importance of adequate resources to assist and protect displaced populations cannot be overemphasized. Insufficient quantities of food and life-saving assistance can create situations where populations in desperate
need may be forced into exploitative relationships to survive; this is particularly true of refugee and IDP women and girls, who are already economically and socially vulnerable to exploitation. In 2002, a joint report by UNHCR and SCF on abuses of refugee populations in West Africa revealed the urgent need for greater measures to be taken to prevent the exploitation and sexual abuse of refugee children and women (see chapter 8 on gender violence).

**UNICEF actions**

**AZERBAIJAN** UNICEF established 35 community-based centres for early childhood care in IDP and refugee camps and in urban areas. Buildings to house the centres were made available by the community and refurbished with local support. Caregivers were recruited from among the young people living in the camps. Local authorities were also closely involved and supported the establishment of the centres through small contributions in cash or in kind. UNICEF, the World Food Programme and the Ministry of Education conducted training and seminars for care providers, parents and community members to increase their knowledge and skills for early child development; they also provided education kits and food for the children through a food-for-work arrangement. Monitoring and evaluation of activities in all of the 35 centres were conducted in cooperation with parents and community members.

**ANGOLA** During 2001, major efforts were made to advocate a new birth registration campaign, as a strategy to prevent violations of displaced children’s rights. A lack of birth registration and other important documents leaves internally displaced children unable to take advantage of educational and health services, vulnerable to early recruitment by armed forces, and at risk of losing their citizenship rights. Birth registration has been planned for hospitals and IDP camps, using an innovative idea of mobile teams for outreach to remote communities. Over 300 people have been trained to expand activities in all provinces.

**COLOMBIA** A growing initiative in UNICEF’s cooperation with Colombia is the humanitarian assistance project intended to improve the living conditions of children most directly affected by the country’s continuing internal strife, especially displaced children. Using a rights-based approach, the project focuses on three areas of intervention — basic education, primary health care and psychosocial attention. The project, which replicates its methodology and learning through a network of volunteers, is undertaken in collaboration with the Catholic Church in 15 municipalities.
located in conflict zones within six of the country’s 33 departments: Uruba, Darien, Meta, Caqueta, Putumayo and Sur de Cordoba.

KOSOVO (Federal Republic of Yugoslavia) The main focus of UNICEF’s work with isolated communities in Kosovo has been the reviving of services for returning IDPs and refugees. In consultation with the local education officials, UNICEF has provided desks, chairs and blackboards to many schools in the region, as well as basic learning materials. The lack of qualified staff is a major constraint for restarting health services. To accelerate refresher training for much-needed staff, UNICEF successfully advocated local training by visiting nurses. This has facilitated training of both Albanian and Serbian staff. The new localized training has provided an excellent supplement to existing skills and has built up a network within visiting nurse services across the region.

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA In Bosnia, UNICEF has established six health schools for refugee populations, focusing on teaching hygiene, prenatal care and nutrition. In addition, health care is provided in camps for displaced persons with no other access to regular health services.

SIERRA LEONE UNICEF’s water and sanitation programme in Sierra Leone ensures a minimum standard of delivery for IDPs and returning refugees in all camp environments. Working with partners, UNICEF has provided more than 200 new or rehabilitated water points and nearly 650 latrines. The daily trucking of water for drinking and hygiene is also supported at 500 posts.

In addition, UNICEF is working to involve communities in implementation. Sanitation tools have been provided to a women’s group and a youth group in the western area, and to 28 communities hosting IDPs and returning refugees. Training has been provided to 180 community pump attendants, and nearly 250 village development committees have been established to manage the water and sanitation facilities. Community involvement has been strengthened and methods for health education standardized.

SOMALIA While distributing sanitation tools to an IDP camp in Bossaso, the UNICEF water and sanitation team discovered that many of the women and girls lacked even basic literacy and life skills. To address this issue, UNICEF and an NGO women’s network initiated a pilot literacy project. Literacy and life-skills training was provided to 100 women and young girls in the camp. The project builds on traditional practices and uses non-formal educational materials developed by the UNICEF education programme.

SRI LANKA Ensuring school attendance is a key preventive strategy in
tackling child soldier recruitment in Sri Lanka, as well as reducing the high percentage of children dropping out from the education system. The provision of school kits, uniform materials, learning aids and training of volunteer teachers was effective in motivating displaced children to return to school. The programme has provided catch-up education for nearly 10,000 children. UNICEF is supporting psychosocial training for volunteer teachers to enable them to deal with children who are being reintegrated into the formal school system. Cooperation also continues with UNHCR on such issues as recruitment of displaced children and mine awareness in resettled areas.
Chapter 7

HIV/AIDS and conflict

“They should weigh the scales and decide which is more embarrassing, talking about sex or watching their children die of AIDS.”

YOUNG ANGOLAN

A baby lying in a crib at a UNICEF-assisted centre for children suffering from HIV.
Over 10 million young people between 15 and 24 years of age are infected with HIV; and at least half of all new infections occur within that age group, with an estimated 7,000 new infections each day.¹ The magnitude and urgency of the threat against today’s youth is unprecedented. Yet in the midst of this crisis, little attention has been paid to the dynamic between HIV/AIDS and armed conflict and their combined impact. The 2001 update of Graça Machel's study, *The Impact of War on Children*, noted the mutually reinforcing — and devastating — links between AIDS and armed conflict.

Conflict creates and exacerbates the conditions in which HIV/AIDS spreads. These include the disintegration of communities, displacement, the separation of children from their families, rape and sexual violence, and the destruction of schools and health services. Furthermore, the impoverishment that accompanies conflict can leave women and girls forced to exchange sex for survival.

Crowded, unsafe camps for refugees and IDPs put women and children at risk of sexual violence. Without social networks to inform them about basic methods of HIV prevention, communities already torn apart by war are left exposed to rapidly increasing rates of infection. When young people lack the opportunities for recreation and learning, often without hope for the future, the stress and boredom of camp life are conducive to high-risk behaviours. Young people, experiencing the brutal conditions of war and confronted with the need to survive on a daily basis, are not apt to heed the warning that unprotected sex may pose long-term risks and so become susceptible to HIV infection. Yet the same young people, if given the opportunity, have the potential to act as communicators and peer counsellors, promoting HIV awareness and prevention within their communities.

Armed forces and groups also play a significant role in the spread of HIV/AIDS. It is well established that rape is used as a weapon of war, primarily against women and girls to terrorize communities. One consequence is the possible exposure to sexually transmitted diseases. Military personnel, on extended tours of duty far from home, may also exploit civilians sexually, often in exchange for small amounts of money, food or ‘protection’. The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) conservatively estimates that armies during peacetime have a rate of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections 2 to 5 per cent higher than civilian counterparts. The rate in some military squadrons has shown increases up to 50 times greater during periods of conflict.²
Conflict disrupts social infrastructure that could otherwise help prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS. In post-conflict Sierra Leone, 62 per cent of rural health units are currently not functioning.\(^1\) During conflict, schools may also be targeted or destroyed, and the disruption of education prevents access to the main entry point for life-skills education to counter HIV/AIDS. Determining accurate rates of HIV prevalence is close to impossible when health centres have been destroyed and health workers have fled. A dearth of information on the extent of the epidemic delays response, even as military spending drains available resources.

Pressured to meet the urgent demand for food, shelter and safety among conflict-affected populations, the humanitarian community has only recently begun to consider HIV/AIDS as part of its mandate. This shift was catalysed by Security Council resolution 1308, on HIV/AIDS and international peacekeeping operations, adopted in July 2000. The resolution calls for effective long-term strategies, incorporating HIV/AIDS education and prevention as part of the regular training for international peacekeepers.

**UNICEF’s approach**

The fight against HIV/AIDS is a key priority for UNICEF. For children and young people in countries affected by armed conflict, it is a matter of life and death that cannot be put off until the conflict is over.

There is, in response to that threat, a growing commitment within the international community to stop the spread of HIV/AIDS in war-torn countries. In June 2001, Member States unanimously signed a declaration of commitment, at the General Assembly special session on HIV/AIDS, which incorporates several goals specifically related to children and young people in conflict situations. Also in 2001, an inter-agency task team on HIV/AIDS and children in conflict, of which UNICEF is an active member, outlined steps to help prevent the spread of HIV in emergencies.

Seizing on this momentum, UNICEF has made significant steps to effect strong organizational response to HIV/AIDS in conflict situations. For example, HIV/AIDS has been made one of the five organizational priorities in UNICEF’s medium-term strategic plan for 2002 to 2005.

Assessing HIV prevalence and the factors that cause the spread of HIV in conflict countries is key to the development of strategic interventions. Despite impediments such as broken-down health infrastructures, several UNICEF country offices, in Angola and Somalia for example, have
initiated small sero-surveillance studies and surveys of knowledge, attitudes and practice. Others included an HIV component in their multiple indicator cluster surveys of 2000 and 2001, which revealed significant gaps in knowledge about HIV/AIDS.

Realizing that political commitment is often the key to reversing the HIV epidemic, UNICEF offices have turned their attention to mobilizing and informing political and religious leaders. Many UNICEF offices, for example in Eritrea and Sierra Leone, have worked with partners and governments to develop strategic frameworks and plans for HIV/AIDS. In Ethiopia and Rwanda, UNICEF has also provided guidance for the development of national policies to prevent mother-to-child transmission and policies on AIDS orphans and vulnerable children.

In displaced communities, UNICEF supports HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention at food distribution points and as part of mine awareness programmes. Other strategies to reach young people, the most vulnerable to infection, include peer education and public information campaigns on HIV. UNICEF also provides support for children orphaned by AIDS and war.

**UNICEF actions**

**ANGOLA** In Angola, UNICEF is working with local youth-run NGOs to encourage young people to make HIV prevention part of their lives and carry the message into their communities. The pilot project trains young peer-to-peer counsellors and educators in three provinces. The 20 NGOs participating are mentored by three larger and more experienced national NGOs to assist in the design and implementation of innovative approaches to HIV/AIDS education.

In one case, the national NGO Prazedor, run almost entirely by young women, produced minidramas in local languages for the radio. Within three months they were able to reach nearly 3,000 schoolchildren with their message about HIV risk and prevention. In addition, they have established a youth information centre in Lubango and work alongside the military and police. In 2002, Prazedor will assist in pilot-testing a community-based voluntary testing and counselling project.

The Union of Angolan Rural Adolescents (UAJACA), a youth NGO in Huambo province, has conducted 80 training sessions in nine health clinics, 10 training sessions for truck drivers, five debates among military personnel, and six radio broadcasts. These activities are managed entirely
by the young. For example, on the outskirts of Huambo where truck
drivers take breaks between long hauls, young activists speak to the large
crowds of truckers about HIV/AIDS prevention. UAJACA has also created
core groups of truck drivers and military personnel, totalling 75 individuals,
to serve as peer educators within their community. Presentations are
held in Portuguese and Umbundu. UAJACA works with the police, the
military, the medical community and schools in the fight against AIDS.

In Lobito and Benguela provinces, youth groups are gearing up to
promote HIV prevention among diverse populations, such as female sex
workers, street children, young people out of school, church groups,
health workers and schoolteachers. The leaders and members of each youth
group will be involved in all stages of the project, participating both in
the formulation of a survey and as field workers in the collection of data.

BALKANS Young people supported by UNICEF are working with key
community and religious leaders to investigate how HIV has spread in the
Balkan region. The report of their initial findings has been taken back
to the communities and used to engage local populations in formulating
initiatives to counter the disease.

ERITREA UNICEF, along with UNAIDS, is collaborating with the
Government of Eritrea in a programme to fight AIDS and other sexually
transmitted infections. UNICEF support includes the introduction of
life skills for an HIV/AIDS education programme. As part of the programme,
UNICEF trained a group of displaced young people to act as HIV/AIDS
educators; they now travel from camp to camp and in host communities,
training their peers in HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention.

UNICEF, together with the Ministry of Health and Family Health
International, has also initiated voluntary confidential counselling and
testing in several areas of the country. A social marketing group has
been contracted to distribute information on HIV prevention in kiosks, and
conduct training sessions.

GUINEA-BISSAU UNICEF provides training to young people to improve
their capacities, knowledge and skills to prevent HIV infection. As part
of the training, UNICEF has enabled youth leaders to participate in work-
shops within and outside the country, facilitating the exchange of ideas
and experiences.

LIBERIA In Liberia, UNICEF has helped establish community football
leagues for young people in eight counties. The network of leagues
also serves to create awareness of the CRC and provide information on
HIV/AIDS prevention. In camps and schools for internally displaced persons, training on HIV/AIDS prevention is being provided to teachers, caregivers and youth-to-youth peer educators.

RWANDA UNICEF provided support for the hosting of a summit meeting in May 2001 of African First Ladies, on HIV/AIDS prevention and the promotion of the rights of children in situations of armed conflict. The outcome of the summit was the Kigali Declaration. Collaboration and support are also being strengthened for the National AIDS Commission, the Great Lakes Initiative on AIDS, and other national institutions. In addition, UNICEF has supported the National Youth Council in creating AIDS coordination networks in all provinces and training teams of youth leaders in Gisenyi, Ruhengeri, Kibungo and Kibuye provinces. Assistance was provided to the Gisenyi provincial AIDS commission for the development of a three-year strategic HIV/AIDS action plan, and similar assistance is now under way in Ruhengeri and Gikongoro provinces.

SIERRA LEONE UNICEF Sierra Leone is initiating an HIV awareness campaign to help break the silence and stigma associated with AIDS. The campaign includes extensive consultation with religious and community leaders, and with adolescents. UNICEF is also collaborating with the Ministry of Education to develop a life-skills education programme to counter HIV/AIDS that will include peer counsellors for children and young people, both in school and out of school. Talking Drums, a radio programme for and by children supported by UNICEF, will be including HIV education in a soap opera series.

SOMALIA Though HIV/AIDS prevalence is low, the increase in the number of returning refugees from neighbouring camps in Ethiopia and Kenya, where prevalence is high, is expected to alter the situation. In collaboration with WHO, UNICEF has set up 12 pilot sentinel sites in three zones to monitor the spread of the disease. UNICEF supports the dissemination of kits and drugs to these sites, and information packages translated into Somali to complement ongoing training programmes. The HIV/AIDS programme also focuses on control of sexually transmitted infections as an entry point for HIV/AIDS education.

UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA HIV/AIDS education programmes have been initiated in camps for internally displaced persons and neighbouring villages, to raise awareness and foster collaboration between the young people in camps and in the local community. The project makes use of radio stations such as Radio Kwizera in Ngara, as well as local newspapers,
to facilitate dialogue around the issue of HIV/AIDS. UNICEF also supported pilot community theatre programmes on the topic of HIV/AIDS for adolescents out of school in Kibondo and Ngara. These initiatives created a forum in which young people could present their feelings and attitudes about HIV/AIDS and initiate a more open dialogue within the community.
Chapter 8

Gender-based violence and sexual exploitation

“We were all flattered by the attention they gave us, but now it has turned into a nightmare.”

YOUNG GIRL RECRUITED AS AN INFORMANT FOR AN ARMED GROUP

Girls learn to weave at a centre for abused children and former child soldiers in Sierra Leone.
In situations of armed conflict, girls and women are routinely targets in campaigns of gender-based violence, including rape, mutilation, forced prostitution, forced pregnancy and sexual slavery. Rape has been used systematically as a weapon of war and as a means to terrorize populations and destroy community ties. Adolescent girls are especially vulnerable to rape and abduction for purposes of trafficking and sexual slavery.

Sexual exploitation is another form of gender-based violence that is all too frequently a characteristic of warfare. During humanitarian crises, girls and women are faced with limited economic opportunities. Desperate to support themselves and their families, they may be forced into alliances with military forces, including peacekeepers and even humanitarian personnel, as a means to negotiate safety and survival. Those who have been employed to protect vulnerable populations may abuse their power with impunity.

**UNICEF’s approach**

In unstable environments, UNICEF works to ensure the safety of children and women. UNICEF focuses its efforts in three areas: prevention, protection, and recovery and reintegration.

Included as a prevention measure is gender awareness training for staff and partners, as well as a code of conduct setting minimum standards for staff behaviour. UNICEF’s approach to gender training, the Women’s Equality and Empowerment Framework, outlines steps for the empowerment of local women among displaced and vulnerable communities, enabling women to overcome discrimination in the distribution of resources. Another key effort in long-term prevention is to provide elements of social and economic stability. For example, safe schooling for girls and more economic opportunities for women help reduce their vulnerability to sexual abuse and exploitation. UNICEF also works to raise awareness within communities, especially among men and boys, and build the capacity of local groups to monitor and prevent abuse.

Protection focuses on countries’ laws and law enforcement. UNICEF advocates the ratification and implementation of international instruments designed to protect girls and women from gender violence, and also helps governments ensure that their police and judiciary are taking appropriate steps to enforce existing laws against sexual exploitation. Gender violence in conflict situations is a violation of the fundamental human right to mental and physical integrity as guaranteed under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Convention
Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, and the International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention 182. In addition, the Optional Protocol to CEDAW, adopted in October 1999, establishes an individual or group complaint system for women. The CRC Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, adopted in May 2000, calls for special attention to the criminalization of these serious violations of children’s rights. This applies to all children, including those in conflict areas, and to all abusers, including members of peacekeeping forces. Moreover, the Rome Statute establishing the International Criminal Court effectively defines rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy, enforced sterilization, or any other form of sexual violence of comparable gravity as crimes against humanity and war crimes.

Recovery and reintegration involves reaching and assisting children who have experienced sexual exploitation. Reproductive health care and psychosocial counselling should be available for the recovery of girls and women who have been exposed to sexual violence.

UNICEF continues to be an active and committed member and co-chair of the IASC Reference Group on Gender and Humanitarian Assistance, focusing in 2001 on the integration of gender into the planning and implementation of humanitarian assistance. UNICEF played a key role in assisting the development of training tools in order to ensure that gender considerations, together with capacity and vulnerability analysis, are fully integrated in all instruments used for the Consolidated Appeals Process.

On 31 October 2000, the Security Council adopted resolution 1325 on women, peace and security. The resolution called on the Secretary-General to prepare a study of the impact of armed conflict on women and girls, the role of women in peace-building, and the gender dimensions of peace processes and conflict resolution. The preparation of the study is being co-ordinated by the office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women and the Inter-Agency Task Force on Women, Peace and Security, which brings together United Nations agencies, observers and NGOs. UNICEF has contributed to this report and is an active member of the core group of the Inter-Agency Task Force reviewing drafts of the report, which will be presented to the Security Council in August 2002.

World Congress on sexual exploitation

UNICEF, together with ECPAT International, the NGO Group for the
Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the Government of Japan, co-sponsored the second World Congress against the sexual exploitation of children in Yokohama, 17-20 December 2001. The Congress was a great success, attended by 134 government delegations, and concluded with a ‘Yokohama global commitment’ that reaffirms and reinforces the commitments made at the first World Congress in 1996. More than 3,000 participants affirmed the rights of children to be protected from all forms of sexual exploitation and pledged to reinforce their efforts against such exploitation by addressing root causes such as violence and armed conflicts. At the Yokohama Congress 90 official youth delegates participated in all aspects of the meeting and also organized their own round tables, debates and presentations.

**UNICEF actions**

**ALBANIA** With UNICEF support, the NGO Ndihme per Femjet (‘Help the children’) in Albania works with children who have been sexually abused or exploited, many of them trafficked to Greece. The NGO helps reintegrate 400 children annually into schools in four Albanian cities. Their siblings also receive counselling and support, bringing help to 2,500 children each year. The social workers associated with the project stay in close contact, visiting the schools and the children’s homes, to keep the children in school and off the streets.

**ANGOLA** Protection initiatives for adolescent victims of sexual exploitation, abuse and drugs have been supported through two different approaches which offer assistance to young people; community drop-in centres and an institutional centre offering care on a voluntary basis. Over 600 girls and boys have been served by the centres, run by local NGOs.

**LIBERIA** UNICEF works with Save the Children UK to provide counselling and health care for 15,000 girls and women in camps for displaced persons in Bong county. Girls and women exposed to rape and sexual exploitation receive psychosocial support, treatment for sexually transmitted infections, and information on preventing HIV.

In collaboration with the American Refugee Committee, UNICEF provides psychosocial support and trauma counselling for approximately 4,000 children and women in a large camp for internally displaced persons. Activities include counselling, play therapy, literacy classes and construction of palaver huts.

In another programme psychosocial support and counselling is being
provided for former child combatants, both girls and boys who were used as sex slaves during the war and then rejected by their families and communities. The children are taught basic literacy and numeracy and also receive training in agricultural and life skills.

SIERRA LEONE In Sierra Leone, UNICEF has supported the establishment and coordination of a network of services for girls who were sexually abused during the war. The girls receive medical care, counselling, education and skills training, and legal support.

The child protection programme in Sierra Leone is continuing to provide services to girls who are victims of sexual abuse and violence. The difficulty is identifying the girls who have been victimized. Thousands of young girls who were abducted during the war and used for sexual purposes continue to stay with their commanders while others have returned anonymously to their communities, not coming forward to benefit from services. Only 320 girls entered the interim care programme, of whom only a small number were girls from the fighting forces.

In an effort to address these issues, a national sensitization campaign on rape was launched with information on sexual abuse, rape and how to help victims. A training workshop was conducted for 40 social workers who will be training other staff of the various agencies working on gender violence, including senior police officers. In a new programme for commercial sex workers established in central Freetown, young women receive basic services at a drop-in centre which also provides medical services for other girls and young women living on the street. The programme provides education as well and helps the girls return to their families.

Protection from sexual exploitation in humanitarian crises

A report prepared for UNHCR and Save the Children UK in November 2001 alleged widespread sexual exploitation and abuse of refugee and internally displaced children and women by humanitarian workers and peacekeepers in West Africa. The report highlighted the vulnerability of refugees, internally displaced persons and others affected by conflict to abuse and exploitation, especially the risks faced by women and girls. The report found that small amounts of food and other humanitarian assistance were being exchanged for sex. UNICEF, along with other humanitarian agencies, expressed outrage that humanitarian workers should have betrayed the trust of these children, and more broadly, that the system for protecting children
from abuses had so obviously failed. Recognizing that this was not a problem limited to West Africa, but one that exists wherever women and children are particularly disadvantaged socially and economically, UNICEF and its partners took both immediate and long-term steps to address the problem worldwide.

UNICEF upholds a policy of zero tolerance, prohibiting exploitative and abusive sexual activities by its staff and implementing partners. Those proven guilty of such abuses are dismissed and, when appropriate, handed over to local authorities for appropriate action. To ensure this policy is not compromised, UNICEF undertook a number of policy and programming responses as follow-up to the report:

- Relevant policy and administrative instructions were reviewed to ensure that they explicitly prohibit any sexual relations with children, and spell out the disciplinary measures for any staff found guilty of such abuses.

- UNICEF field offices are working to prevent abuse and exploitation by increasing protection for children and women at risk, and supporting communities with policy and programme guidance as needed. For example, in Sierra Leone, UNICEF has led a partnership of agencies to establish procedures for the immediate protection of children in the camps and communities, and to establish a community monitoring and reporting system for sexual exploitation and child abuse, for both camp and non-camp populations. The system will give children and women access to community support, legal advice and help, and psychosocial counselling.

- UNICEF regional offices are conducting an assessment to identify situations where children are at particular risk of being abused and exploited, so that preventive actions can be taken.

- UNICEF is producing training materials for a variety of initiatives concerned with the rights of girls and women in emergencies, including training of peacekeepers.

In recognition that these issues reflect on the humanitarian community as a whole, a task force was established, co-chaired by UNICEF and OCHA — the IASC Task Force on Protection From Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in Humanitarian Crises. The Task Force has outlined an agenda for IASC members to eliminate sexual abuse and exploitation by humanitarian personnel, and misuse of humanitarian assistance, within the overall objective of strengthening the protection and care of children in situations of humanitarian crises and conflict.
Accountability to the children and women themselves is the key to moving forward.

As a first step, the Task Force is identifying the core elements of a common code of conduct for humanitarian workers, as well as developing guidelines for child-sensitive and gender-sensitive investigations of allegations of abuse by humanitarian personnel. The Task Force will also identify ways to better manage the delivery of food and other humanitarian assistance in order to help prevent future abuse of power, as well as a safe procedure for reporting and monitoring of abuses within refugee and internally displaced populations.

UNICEF, together with the office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict, is also working with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to address the issue of sexual abuse and exploitation of children by United Nations personnel in United Nations peace operations. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and Save the Children UK, Sexual Violence and Exploitation: The experience of refugee children in Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone, January 2002.
Chapter 9

Education in emergencies

“I want to come to school with boys, like brothers and sisters, and study together so I can become somebody.”

MIRYA, AGED 10, AFGHANISTAN

In Afghanistan, UNICEF supports efforts to increase educational opportunities for girls and women who previously were not permitted to attend school.
When children are uprooted and traumatized by armed conflict, education is a key factor for bringing stability and security back into their lives. Education also works on a broader scale to help reestablish a normal routine within communities threatened by violence and war.

Education has typically been viewed as a component of long-term development rather than a key element of humanitarian aid during emergencies. But in recent years there has been an increased focus on education during conflict, not only because it provides children with a learning environment but because it strengthens and stabilizes community life and restores a sense of normal childhood. It also provides a way to reach war-affected children with information on health and safety, landmine awareness, HIV/AIDS prevention, gender sensitivity, human rights and life skills. Education cannot be put off until stability is achieved. It is essential that education is restored as soon as possible during emergencies to prevent the further collapse of social norms and services.

Making education available to children during the upheaval of war is complicated by the fact that education is a long-term commitment that must be sustained and integrated into community life. There is no quick or easy solution to providing education in emergencies. But the benefits endure. The routine of going to school creates a social safety net, providing psychological and emotional support. By attending classes and reestablishing a normal routine, war-affected children are given reason to believe in themselves, their families and their community and create hope for a better future.

UNICEF’s approach

UNICEF is committed to fulfilling the right to education for all children, as affirmed in the CRC and spelled out in the April 2000 Dakar framework for action for Education for All. The Dakar framework for action explicitly calls upon governments and others to provide education in situations of armed conflict, to help promote peace and understanding and prevent further violence.

Education is receiving a higher priority during and after emergencies. In the aftermath of the Kosovo conflict in 1999, for example, a rapid assessment revealed widespread damage to schools, compounded by the risk of landmines. UNICEF, working together with partner agencies and international and local NGOs, supported a massive campaign to resume schooling, providing school supplies and helping to repair nearly 400 schools. Because of these efforts and the unwavering motivation of
returning communities, 97 per cent of children were back in school only months after their return to Kosovo.

More recently, education was a key focus in the aftermath of the war in Afghanistan. UNICEF contributed with its largest logistical effort ever in support of education, providing nearly 8 million textbooks and tens of thousands of stationery kits. A total of 7,000 tonnes of supplies are being provided by UNICEF. The distribution of supplies is one component of the back-to-school campaign led by the new Afghan administration. Its success is demonstrated by the fact that only three months after the interim Government was created, 3,000 schools across Afghanistan opened their doors to 1.5 million girls and boys, many of whom were entering a formal classroom for the first time in six years (see chapter 4).

In order to respond to educational needs during emergencies, UNICEF, together with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and UNHCR, has developed a teacher emergency package. Similarly, the UNICEF ‘school-in-a-box’ provides basic educational supplies for a classroom of 40 children. A typical school-in-a-box includes chalkboards and chalk, pens, pencils, erasers, exercise booklets, a ruler, scissors, tape, paper, glue, and a teacher’s guide and curriculum developed locally. School-in-a-box and other emergency education kits have been successfully adapted for use in over 30 countries, including Afghanistan, Angola, Eritrea, Guinea, Iraq, Liberia, Pakistan and Sierra Leone. They have been especially useful in camps and communities for refugee and internally displaced children.

UNICEF actions

ARMENIA In 2001, UNICEF supported local and international NGOs in establishing community-based centres for socially vulnerable children and their families. The project placed special emphasis on refugee children living in isolated, poor communities in Yerevan and surrounding regions. The centres supported vocational training for these children, facilitated their enrolment in formal schooling, and organized out-of-school activities for families at risk.

COLOMBIA The education programme within UNICEF’s humanitarian assistance project in Colombia was initiated in 2001. The programme is up and running in 22 primary schools, serving nearly 5,600 children in 15 municipalities located in conflict zones, with a high concentration of internally displaced children. As the result of a joint effort between UNICEF, the municipalities, the communities and the International Organization for
Migration, these schools were upgraded with new furnishings and 60 per cent of the students received educational kits. School buildings were renovated and, as part of the child-friendly schools initiative, all participating primary schoolteachers received training in child rights. As a result of these joint efforts, more than 1,500 new students were able to register for primary school in the first four months of 2001.

CONGO In Congo, UNICEF rehabilitated 47 preschools, primary schools, high schools and centres for remedial education in four districts. With support from parents and contributions from the World Food Programme, UNICEF rehabilitated classrooms, supplied school furniture, installed latrine facilities and made arrangements for the provision of potable water for schoolchildren. Over 2,000 desk/benches were distributed among the newly rehabilitated schools and more than 80,000 students received school supplies to prepare them for the beginning of the school year. In the Likoula region, UNICEF provided school supplies for approximately 5,000 refugee children from the Democratic Republic of the Congo. And in the Pool region, French and mathematics textbooks were distributed among 1,500 students from Kindamba. These actions contributed to an increase in the numbers of children at school, in some cases doubling enrolment.

ERITREA In Eritrea, UNICEF has focused on supporting education for internally displaced children and for children in the temporary security zone, an area established by the United Nations peacekeeping mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea. In 2001, learning materials were produced for over 67,000 children. More than 600 teachers upgraded and improved their teaching skills in refresher training supported by UNICEF. Schools and makeshift classrooms for over 8,000 war-affected children, including 3,220 girls, were rehabilitated.

GUINEA UNICEF is the lead agency for education in emergencies in Guinea, as part of the African Girls Education Initiative. The curriculum is geared towards the elimination of gender and other inequalities. Altogether the project supports 60,000 refugee, local and displaced children in primary and secondary classes. The repair and rebuilding of classrooms is accomplished in partnership with local and international NGOs, and support has been provided to train more than 700 teachers on peace education and children's rights. Emergency school supplies are provided, including tents for classrooms, blackboards, school-in-a-box kits and recreational kits.

INDONESIA In Indonesia, in order to create a space in religiously segregated
Ambon island where children from both communities can interact with each other and learn and play together, UNICEF established Maluku library as a neutral learning centre. In cooperation with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), a computer training centre for approximately 2,000 high-school students from both communities was opened in October 2001 at the library. Additional assistance from UNICEF and USAID will assist the library to expand and improve its services for children and adolescents from both communities, such as mobile book lending services in villages and schools throughout the island serving 100,000 children.

Liberia In war-torn Liberia, the education programme supports three critical activities: an accelerated teacher training programme at the Kakata Rural Teacher Training Institute, a catch-up learning programme, and support to the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) to build capacity. More than 140 teachers were trained in special emergency education methods and over 400 teachers were trained in accelerated learning methods. A total of 3,600 overaged students were provided with learning resources and mainstreamed into regular schools. In an effort to inform future programme interventions, UNICEF supported the evaluation of a national textbook distribution system and assessed the learning achievement of children enrolled in the catch-up learning programme.

In its efforts to improve the status of girls’ education, FAWE established 10 girls’ school clubs in six counties and trained 30 girls in life skills and HIV/AIDS awareness. Six workshops were held to train all the 15 county chairpersons of the FAWE clubs in the principles of girls’ education. UNICEF’s advocacy for girls’ education at the national, county and grassroots levels gained momentum with the inclusion of Liberia in the African Girls Education Initiative. The Liberia Girls Education Initiative monitors changes in literacy and enrolment patterns.

Occupied Palestinian Territory A distance remedial education project has been developed in Hebron and Khan Younis by Palestinian teachers and members of the community, with UNICEF support. The project was conceived in response to the curfew restrictions imposed during the second intifada.

The project curriculum provides self-learning worksheets that enable primary and some secondary students to continue their lessons during all-day curfews. In Hebron it has enabled 12,000 children, whose education was disrupted, to continue with their curriculum. The activities have involved more than 600 teachers, 30 schools, local television networks,
and parents. Summer camps and after-school workshops also emphasize interactive and remedial learning. Catch-up lessons are broadcast on local television stations so that students who are unable to reach school have access to education.

SOMALIA UNICEF Somalia completed a long and arduous reform of the primary school curriculum, syllabus and textbooks. The resulting materials have been distributed, following teacher in-service training on the teaching methods to accompany the new books. The initiative has won local support and received the approval of parents, teachers and communities.

SRI LANKA UNICEF is collaborating in conflict zones with the Ministry of Education and other counterparts to provide catch-up education, volunteer teacher training and training in multi-grade education, as well as the necessary teaching equipment and supplies. In 2001, catch-up education was provided to 5,000 children and more than 1,000 teachers were trained in education methodologies. An additional 1,000 preschool teachers were trained in early childhood development techniques. More than 50 temporary classrooms were renovated and new classrooms constructed. UNICEF is also advocating the demilitarization of schools that have been occupied by the armed forces or other armed groups.

‘Days of tranquillity’, established for access to health services, were also used to raise awareness in the community on the importance of education for all. Drama, exhibitions, visits to schools and other techniques were used to stress the importance of learning for young children. UNICEF ran a media campaign using television, electronic and print media to further publicize the importance of education.

UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA In the United Republic of Tanzania, UNICEF continued to advocate the establishment of schools as safe environments for children. Close to 500 teachers were trained on peace and conflict resolution. Much work was done with refugee children, both in formal and in non-formal education. UNICEF supported preschool centres for 20,000 preschoolers run by local women’s groups. Support was also provided for the rehabilitation of 120 classrooms in refugee camps. UNICEF worked with counterparts both in the United Republic of Tanzania and in Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo to implement home-country curriculums for refugee children, ensuring ease of reintegration on returning home. Educational centres for self-learning were established in refugee camps. UNICEF also supported youth centres, offering sports activities, skills training including tailoring and carpentry, book and video libraries, and HIV/AIDS prevention for adolescents.
Psychosocial support

The capacity of the community to respond to the psychosocial needs of children is seriously tested in unstable situations. UNICEF psychosocial programmes seek to create conditions of normalcy to ease trauma healing, facilitate communication and interaction among children, present opportunities for expression of children’s thoughts and feelings, and provide them with psychological counselling and support. The principles for assisting war-affected children developed during an inter-agency workshop led by UNICEF in 1998 are increasingly used in the design and application of psychosocial programmes by other United Nations agencies, NGOs and others. These principles emphasize long-term commitment to programming founded on human rights and child participation, based on family and community. UNICEF interventions for the psychosocial well-being of children fall into the following areas:

- Recreational activities
- Resumption of cultural activities and traditions
- Nurturing opportunities for expression of thoughts and feelings, such as art and role playing
- Mobilizing the existing child care system and strengthening existing resources
- Psychosocial counselling
- Support to the entire family.

**BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA** UNICEF, working with NGO partners, has continued to support children traumatized by the war by integrating psychosocial rehabilitation into the school system. Training was organized for 90 school psychologists, and strategy meetings were held to upgrade the school counselling system.

UNICEF is also implementing a school-based trauma project for adolescents in 32 secondary schools in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Specially trained school counsellors and psychologists provide support and therapy to adolescents who suffer from psychological problems as a result of the war. Together with World Vision, UNICEF has provided psychosocial and education support to over 1,300 refugee children and 500 parents in 10 refugee camps. With UNICEF support, a local NGO implemented an innovative community project addressing the psychosocial needs of about 1,000 displaced children from Srebrenica.

**COLOMBIA** The psychosocial component of the humanitarian assistance
project in Colombia evaluated more than 5,500 schoolchildren for their
cognitive, emotional and behavioural development. More than 1,200
children under the age of five received early childhood care, while 1,723
community members and 306 teachers were trained in basic mental health
care. The project also provided life-skills and psychosocial training for
approximately 130 health volunteers in 15 municipalities, over 70 education-
al volunteers and more than 550 adolescent peer counsellors.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO A mental health assistance
programme was developed in Kisangani and Bunia, to assist children traum-
matized by war. Altogether more than 90 social workers from North and
South Kivu have been trained in psychosocial counselling and care.

EAST ASIA AND PACIFIC In the Philippines, UNICEF is collaborating
with the psychosocial trauma and human rights programme of the
University of the Philippines to establish a regional network on psychosocial
response in emergencies. The network will have a resource and co-
ordination centre for information exchange, including a newsletter, CD-ROM
and website for conferencing. The project will build UNICEF’s internal
capacity to respond to psychosocial needs in the region, as well as the
capacities of partner organizations.

ERITREA The overall emergency child protection objective in 2001 was
the provision of psychosocial counselling services to women and children
affected by the border conflict. Child-friendly centres were established
in two camps for internally displaced persons, serving 3,000 children
separated from their families. A safe playground benefited some 5,000
displaced children within the temporary security zone, helping to restore
a sense of normalcy and provide a safe haven from the fear of life-
threatening landmines. Recreational supplies and toys also helped to create
a sense of normal life for 23,500 children in IDP camps. Counselling
services were provided for an estimated 23,000 children in four IDP camps
in the Gash Barka region.

UNICEF is also preparing a training manual on psychosocial guidance and
counselling for use in teacher training. This will ensure that teachers are
better prepared to provide psychosocial support for displaced children.

OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORY UNICEF supports a peer-to-
peer counselling project in the Occupied Palestinian Territory that addresses
the psychological and social well-being of adolescents. The programme
trains university students and other young volunteers to provide mentoring,
support and recreational activities for children and adolescents. Following
the training, young volunteers conduct a series of school-based sessions with adolescents in the most violence-stricken areas. This project gives youth volunteers an opportunity to contribute to their community in a positive way, boosting their self-esteem. It also provides new skills, such as active listening and methods of stress relief and peer counselling. For the adolescents who attend the school-based sessions, these sessions provide a peaceful outlet to express their views, opinions, fears and concerns, and ways to deal with their stress. Parents and some school staff also have taken part in sessions conducted by professionals, which enable them to better support their children at home and in school.

The project was implemented in collaboration with local youth organizations, including the Palestinian Youth Association for Leadership and Rights Activation (PYALARA) in the West Bank, and the Community Training and Crisis Management Centre in Gaza. The total number of volunteers trained so far is 110, and some 60 schools are involved in the project.

UNICEF has also prepared 13 psychosocial television spots for regional television, with the assistance of the UNICEF regional office, produced in cooperation with Save the Children Federation US and the secretariat for the national plan of action for children. The spots have aired on Palestinian television. In addition, UNICEF is providing advice on the content of a daily one-hour emergency programme on the psychosocial needs of children and adolescents that is being aired by the Palestinian Broadcasting Corporation.

SRI LANKA In Sri Lanka, UNICEF, in collaboration with 15 partner organizations, has developed psychosocial interventions to lessen the impact of conflict-related stress and trauma on children and women. Sports, games, books, drawings, dramas and other creative arts help to relieve children’s stress both at home and in school. The programme provides training for social and health care workers, including mental health workers, to address the psychosocial needs of children, women and adolescents. Extensive training courses have also been conducted for psychosocial resource persons who then act as trainers, and resource materials have been developed to complement these activities.

TAJIKISTAN In order to improve the knowledge of social workers in child psychology and communication skills, a local NGO in Tajikistan, Youth House, together with UNICEF, started a project to provide training in psychosocial support activities for adolescents at risk. The project trains social workers and psychologists who work directly with war-affected and other vulnerable children.
UGANDA All children returning to Uganda from southern Sudan, either via Khartoum and Entebbe or by crossing the border into Uganda, are offered psychosocial care and support to ease their reintegration into their home communities.

**Peace education**

Studies show that in countries affected by armed conflict, the school curriculum often mirrors or even reinforces the dynamics that give rise to hostilities. It is therefore essential that schools in post-war communities promote peace and reconciliation. Peace education, child rights and conflict resolution are most effective when integrated into the regular curriculum of primary and secondary school classes. This integration of peace education into formal schooling or life-skills training helps to strengthen and legitimize it.

INDONESIA The peace education project in Aceh (Indonesia) developed an innovative 21-module peace curriculum for secondary school. The syllabus is based on Islamic precepts and integrates traditions for peace and conflict resolution from Aceh culture. Five thousand copies of the curriculum were printed and distributed to all senior secondary schools in Aceh. Despite the unstable situation in the area, 50 teachers and 24 youth leaders were trained to use the curriculum. Through them, the initiative eventually reached over 7,700 high-school students in 25 schools across five regencies. The project will expand in 2002 to 65 new schools and five Islamic boarding schools.

UNICEF is also supporting the training of young people in constructive conflict management and peace-building skills in Ambon. In September, 40 educators, youth group leaders and community leaders received conflict management training. Ten of the most promising participants received advanced training in Yogyakarta. UNICEF plans to fund these practitioners to conduct follow-up training sessions, using these materials and a new training package developed by UNESCO.

SUDAN The peace education initiative in Wau (Sudan) seeks to create a culture of peace through interschool drawing, sports and cultural activities. The project has demonstrated that such opportunities for different ethnic and religious groups to live and work together and share resources promotes understanding and peaceful coexistence. Peace education training was provided to teachers in West Darfur.

TAJIKISTAN The nationwide expansion of peace education in Tajikistan
was undertaken through the joint efforts of the Ministry of Education, a national NGO and UNICEF. UNICEF is supporting the printing of a manual on peace education and tolerance for primary school teachers and children. The programme promotes tolerance and interpersonal communication skills among children.
Chapter 10

Health, nutrition, safe water

“I want to go to school, but we don’t have any money, we don’t have any clothes. We are suffering hunger and tired of this world.”

YOUNG CHILD, SIERRA LEONE

An infant receives a drop of oral polio vaccine at a UNICEF-assisted primary health centre in Erbil, Iraq.
In the last decade an estimated 2 million children have died as a direct result of armed conflict. But many times that number have died from malnutrition, disease and exposure caused by war. The chaos and insecurity of war threatens or destroys access to food, shelter, social support and health care, and results in increased vulnerability throughout the community, especially for children. When families and caregivers are unable to meet basic survival needs, children are much more likely to succumb to diarrhoea, respiratory infections, measles, cholera, malaria and other diseases. In fact, 7 of the 10 countries with the highest rates of under-five mortality are either in conflict or in the aftermath, and more than half of the 10 countries posing the greatest challenge to the global polio eradication campaign are war-affected.

During conflict, access to essential needs and services is often disrupted. The food supply may be blocked by military checkpoints or landmines may prevent safe passage on main roads. Moreover, food production is often greatly reduced and may come to a complete halt from displacement, mines or the threat of armed attack. The price of food is likely to soar and is thus unavailable to families faced with unemployment and deepening poverty as a result of conflict. Hospitals, water sources and food may become targets of military forces as they try to starve out and weaken communities. In addition, as national and local resources are channelled into war instead of development, children’s well-being is increasingly jeopardized. In all instances, children and communities forced to flee their homes face the greatest health risks and suffer the highest death rate.

**UNICEF’s approach**

UNICEF’s focus on health and the well-being of the child is at the core of its mandate. In non-conflict situations, UNICEF supports national governments in providing health care, nutrition and safe water for children, families and communities. During conflicts and emergency situations the brunt of this work falls on the humanitarian community. The protracted nature of many of today’s conflicts requires long-term assistance despite great difficulties, such as limited access, physical destruction of health facilities, human rights violations and danger to the security of humanitarian personnel.

Increasingly, UNICEF is adopting a more results-based approach to health programming in complex emergencies. Surveillance, immunization and the management of epidemics of diarrhoea, respiratory infections, meningitis, measles and polio are essential for containing mortality and
suffering. Furthermore, the impact of NGOs can be maximized if agencies such as WHO and UNICEF provide a common public health framework.

Underpinning UNICEF’s health programme in conflict countries are its core corporate commitments (CCCs), which identify minimum essential services provided during emergencies — health, nutrition, water and sanitation. UNICEF’s health care in crisis situations includes the control and treatment of preventable diseases for children and mothers, emphasizing immediate threats such as measles, malaria, cholera and respiratory infections.

Immunization programmes continue, even in the midst of war. During conflict, immunization may be the only health service to reach isolated populations, whether routine immunization or National Immunization Days. To accomplish this daunting task, immunization teams have managed to overcome seemingly insurmountable obstacles. In a number of instances, UNICEF has successfully negotiated days of tranquillity, a ceasefire to allow the immunization of children.

Basic support for maternal and child health is an essential aspect of emergency health care. UNICEF ensures the training of health workers and provides support for community-based mother and child health centres. UNICEF also supports supplementary feeding in conflict situations, helping to reduce malnutrition, particularly among young children and infants. UNICEF’s other emergency interventions in the area of nutrition include micronutrient supplementation (vitamin A, iron, iodine), and therapeutic and supplementary feeding programmes for children and pregnant or lactating women and adolescent girls.

Safe water during emergencies is a priority for survival. UNICEF helps provide water and sanitation facilities for children in refugee and IDP camps, in schools and classrooms set up in emergency situations, and in other general access areas.

Throughout, UNICEF seeks to increase the capacity of local communities to participate actively in their health care, thus supporting services weakened by war. For example, in Indonesia UNICEF trains mothers to recognize the symptoms of dehydration, enabling early detection. In a number of countries, UNICEF tackles malnutrition by providing instructions on good infant feeding practices along with supplies of therapeutic milk. In another case, vitamin A supplements and iodine testing kits were handed out during nutritional screening programmes. HIV/AIDS awareness, prevention and treatment has also become a key concern among war-affected populations.
This integrated approach underlines UNICEF’s commitment to mainstreaming emergency interventions with longer-term programming.

UNICEF actions

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA UNICEF provides continuing support to the Ministry of Health in Bosnia and Herzegovina in organizing ‘schools’ for future parents. The programme ensures healthy pregnancies and adequate care for newborns, with antenatal classes organized for pregnant women covering such subjects as nutrition and lifestyles for a healthy pregnancy, pregnancy risks, delivery with professional assistance, psychophysical preparation for labour, breastfeeding, infant care, and sexually transmitted infections. Currently 38 UNICEF-supported ‘schools’ reach 2,230 pregnant women, including six centres that provide for 600 refugee women.

CENTRAL AFRICA Between July and September 2001, a massive and coordinated polio immunization campaign was launched in Central Africa, targeting 16 million children in Angola, Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Gabon. These synchronized vaccination drives proved a major step in the global effort to eradicate polio, especially since Angola and the Democratic Republic of the Congo are considered two of the most difficult countries remaining in the battle against the polio virus. Although insecurity hampered efforts in some of the border areas between the two countries, well over 15 million children were immunized.

ETHIOPIA In post-conflict Ethiopia, the biggest challenge of the guinea worm eradication programme has been the containment of guinea worm infections imported over the border from Sudan. A number of imported cases were identified in 2001, primarily among Sudanese refugees in South Omo and Gambella. Efforts made to establish a guinea worm surveillance system in all Sudanese refugee camps have demonstrated successful containment, with no infections detected in the villages of South Omo. A similar survey will be carried out to monitor infections in Gambella.

ERITREA In order to enhance sustainability of the new and rehabilitated water supply systems in post-conflict Eritrea, local management systems were developed, with training and tools provided to maintain the new systems. Communities were also assisted in the construction of household and public latrines, and a separate project provided training for displaced communities on hygiene issues. A joint needs assessment on environmental health legislation, conducted jointly by UNICEF and WHO, indicated a
need for legislation to address many outstanding issues in the area of water and sanitation systems.

THE FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA Responding to the crisis between government forces and ethnic Albanian groups, UNICEF assisted health officials in the procurement and distribution of paediatric drugs, basic clinical equipment, oral rehydration salts, additional vaccines and other medical supplies to help reestablish primary health care services and to provide assistance for IDPs and their host communities in affected areas. UNICEF organized health education classes for displaced families and provided water tanks to a number of kindergartens cut off from the water supply. Through partner NGOs, UNICEF has also distributed hygiene supplies and infant starter kits to displaced communities.

OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORY UNICEF has provided support to the Ministry of Health to undertake polio vaccination campaigns in remote areas of the West Bank — particularly the Bethlehem, Ramallah and Hebron districts, where curfews have had a significant impact on the mobility of families and health staff. UNICEF supported a similar campaign conducted by the Ministry of Health during October and November 2001, which immunized about 200,000 children, including refugee children living in the most needy localities as identified in coordination with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). UNICEF is also supporting the Ministry of Health by transporting health professionals and supplies of vaccines and medicines.

RWANDA In Rwanda, UNICEF initiated youth-friendly health services in Gikongoro Ville and Ruhengeri. Health workers and health educators from the community were trained to provide information, counselling, recreation and skills training for young people. In collaboration with the National Youth Council, young people have conducted a media campaign of monthly radio broadcasts and a television debate on HIV/AIDS, promoting healthy lifestyles.

SOMALIA To accommodate the volatile environment, UNICEF support for health sector reform in Somaliland focuses on decentralization of health management and cost recovery. UNICEF has helped by conducting regional workshops to train local health staff in management and co-ordination. Of the 44 maternal and child health centres in the region, 28 have adopted innovative methods for cost recovery, generating funds to improve and maintain the health service and supply incentives for staff.
Cholera supplies and chlorine for water purification were made available by UNICEF to all health centres treating cholera patients, particularly in urban areas and densely populated camps for the displaced. UNICEF also launched an intensive social mobilization campaign against cholera. In addition, WHO and UNICEF organized training workshops for health workers for preventing diarrhoea and cholera.

The Bossaso urban water project brought together a mix of private and public interests and successfully gained the support of local authorities, beneficiaries and donors, setting an example for similar water management schemes to be initiated in the Gardo and Galkayo regions of Puntland, and in the Boroma region of Somaliland. Rural water projects in the central and southern zones also contributed to reactivation of smaller but equally vital water sources for both rural populations and displaced communities.

SIERRA LEONE Immunization activities in Sierra Leone helped to open communication channels with the Revolutionary United Front and build confidence for humanitarian interventions, which has paved the way for the resumption of basic health services. This accomplishment was recognized when Sierra Leone was selected for the launch of the 2001 synchronized West Africa polio vaccination drives. President Alpha Konare of Mali (chairman of the Economic Community of West African States), President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria and President Ahmad Kabbah of Sierra Leone issued the Lungi Declaration, reiterating their commitment to the eradication of polio, not only in Sierra Leone but throughout the region.

**National Immunization Days**

During war, the breakdown of health infrastructure, and the lack of access caused by insecurity, conflict and political agendas, deprive children of life-saving vaccines. Without any immunization programmes and frequently weakened by malnutrition, children fall prey to measles, polio and other vaccine-preventable diseases.

National Immunization Days are mass campaigns, lasting up to a week, to mobilize entire communities and vaccinate children at risk. This allows immunization teams to reach otherwise inaccessible children. For example, in Afghanistan and Sierra Leone, the only humanitarian assistance to reach vulnerable populations at times of heightened conflict was the immunization campaigns. Maximizing on this window of opportunity, UNICEF uses the campaigns not
only to vaccinate children against measles and polio but also to distribute micronutrients such as vitamin A. In addition, negotiations to promote the National Immunization Days during conflict have proved a catalyst in bringing humanitarian, political and military personnel together to provide services for children.

In order to carry out this immunization work amidst fighting, the United Nations, in particular WHO and UNICEF, negotiates ‘days of tranquillity’ — when guns fall silent on every side, to allow the nationwide campaigns. These efforts require complex negotiations involving all the key agencies and parties to the conflict. When successful, these campaigns reach high levels of coverage for vaccine-preventable diseases, despite years of conflict and shifting conflict zones.

In Sierra Leone, the National Immunization Days proved effective in moving the peace process forward. UNICEF and WHO were able to convince rebel commanders and government officials to work together for the polio eradication campaign. In the end, rebel commanders did not merely allow the government health teams backed by the United Nations to immunize children in areas they had closed to humanitarian and human rights workers; they also mended roads long impassable to facilitate access, and rounded up 40 bicycles to allow the teams to reach areas unreachable by car.

In Sri Lanka, days of tranquillity have been observed in conflict areas to allow immunization and to promote the ‘Every child back to school’ campaign.

In 2000 and 2001, successful immunization campaigns included Afghanistan, Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sri Lanka and Sudan.

However, these days of tranquillity are only a small successful step towards safe, unhindered access to children. The widespread targeting and involvement of children in hostilities continues to jeopardize all children’s rights. The endorsement and promotion of the concept of children as a zone of peace, most notably by the General Assembly, is a stepping-stone towards changing this situation, the ultimate goal being the end of hostilities.
Chapter 11

Landmines and light weapons

“The ground exploded around me. For a long time, I hoped my leg would grow back.”

CHAN, AGED 15, CAMBODIA

Two boys, one with a prosthetic leg, learn to ride bicycles at a rehabilitation centre in Jalalabad, Afghanistan.
Landmines and unexploded ordnance

Unlike other weapons of war, landmines and unexploded ordnance are unique in that their destructiveness is indiscriminate, and the violence they cause long outlasts the conflicts for which they were used, endangering generation after generation of civilians, especially children. Years after the battle is fought and over, landmines remain hidden in fields, forests, roads and footpaths — until someone treads unknowingly and triggers a deadly explosion.

Communities live under the threat of landmines in over 80 countries around the world. Heavily mined countries, such as Afghanistan, see as many as 5 to 10 casualties per day. Anti-personnel landmines that would cripple an adult can prove fatal to a small child. When children survive but are left injured, their growing bodies and bones will require, on average, a new prosthesis every six months. This places an immense financial burden on families often already living under difficult circumstances. Child-friendly rehabilitation services are thus needed and must be complemented by psychosocial programmes, to guarantee physical recovery and assist emotional recovery as well.

Landmines and unexploded ordnance violate nearly all the articles of the CRC, including the child’s right to life, the right to a safe environment in which to play, the rights to health, clean water, sanitary conditions and adequate education. Furthermore, uncleared landmines and ordnance severely disrupt economic activity; they prevent access to reconstruct homes, roads, schools, health facilities and other essential services, and access to farmland and irrigation, leading to increased food insecurity.

The danger of landmines is exacerbated for children, who are intrigued by the sometimes colourful and curious designs. Butterfly mines and cluster bombs hold a fatal attraction for many young children. To make matters worse, children are less able to understand the signs marking minefields. Landmine warnings worldwide carry the skull and bones symbol, specifically because people living in areas infested by mines may be unable to read, and children need to be taught to recognize the symbol. Children and adolescents who herd animals or fetch water for their families, crossing fields and other rural terrain, run the greatest risk.

UNICEF’s approach

In addition to comprehensive and long-term country programmes, UNICEF maintains strong regional and country networks and national
partnerships to deal with the scourge of landmines and unexploded ordnance. UNICEF’s approach to mine action includes a focus on child rights, gender, human rights and humanitarian principles.

Mine action has five components: mine awareness and education to reduce risk; mine clearance; victim assistance; destruction of mine stockpiles; and advocacy to stigmatize the use of landmines. The United Nations mine action policy, approved at the fifty-third session of the General Assembly in 1998, mandated UNICEF as the United Nations focal point for all these activities except mine clearance.

A first step was the *International Guidelines for Landmine and Unexploded Ordnance Awareness Education*, developed to promote effective implementation, monitoring and evaluation of programmes. The term ‘mine awareness’ refers to programmes which rely on information sharing, teaching and identifying ways to avoid traversing mined areas, in order to shield populations from accidents involving landmines, unexploded ordnance or other anti-personnel devices left behind by military conflicts.

In 2001, UNICEF, together with the United Nations Mine Action Service, the ICRC and key NGOs, convened a mine awareness working group. By bringing together mine awareness organizations and field practitioners to share experiences and lessons learned, the working group enables mine experts to identify and steer the development worldwide of training, tools and other field support for mine awareness programmes.

Alongside its many partners, UNICEF has been actively involved in advocacy efforts to promote the adoption and ratification of the 1997 Ottawa Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Landmines and their Destruction (the Mine Ban Treaty). This legal instrument stigmatizes the use of landmines and gives guidance for humanitarian action in assisting mine-affected States. As of October 2001, 142 States had signed and 122 States had ratified the Mine Ban Treaty.

UNICEF is currently finalizing its own mine action strategy, which commits the organization to ensuring an effective response to the needs of children, women, families and communities affected by mines and unexploded ordnance. In addition to policy and guidance for landmine action and awareness, UNICEF is actively involved in victim assistance, working to strengthen partnerships that provide support for children and others injured by landmines, and ensuring access to services.

In 2001, recognizing the importance of direct assistance to country offices in the implementation of a comprehensive mine action programme,
UNICEF established a ‘flying team’ for mine action. The flying team provides technical support — including emergency response, programme start-up, needs assessments and programme design — to UNICEF country teams who request assistance. In its first year the team provided support to country offices in Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Burundi, Eritrea, Ethiopia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Kosovo (Federal Republic of Yugoslavia).

**UNICEF actions**

**ANGOLA** UNICEF’s mine strategy in Angola seeks to build the capacity of the Angolan National Institute for the Removal of Explosive Obstacles and Ordnance, to coordinate and develop a mine awareness education policy and programme. The strategy is based on a two-way information exchange, to learn from communities that survive the daily threat of landmines, and to identify how the risk of death and injury can be minimized. The programme raises awareness among communities at risk and collects data on mine incidents and the location of mines and unexploded ordnance. Specifically, the project aims to augment awareness among 500,000 internally displaced persons and 100,000 children in primary schools and communities in 11 provinces, including those areas most heavily mined.

With the assistance of a number of local NGOs, UNICEF and the National Institute produced eight radio programmes on mine awareness, four in Portuguese and four in Umbundu. These programmes were broadcast in the provinces of Huambo and Bie, two of the areas most heavily mined.

**BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA** A local NGO, Genesis, received support to produce mine awareness instruction through puppet shows for approximately 5,000 primary schoolers in about 40 schools in the Republika Srpska. A most encouraging follow-up has indicated that none of the children who participated have been involved in mine accidents.

**CAMBODIA** UNICEF supports an extensive mine action programme in Cambodia, one of the most heavily mined countries in the world. The programme includes mine risk education for children, community-based mine risk reduction, an information system on victims, and a community mine marking initiative. Assistance is also provided to victims.

- UNICEF support for child mine risk education, in collaboration with World Education and the Ministry of Education, continues to provide
mine risk education in the most affected districts of Cambodia. Practical child-to-child outreach has been developed to ensure that children not attending school receive life-saving instruction on how to avoid the risk of landmines. More than 1,500 teachers trained in 225 schools have been able to reach nearly 54,000 children. During school holidays, additional presentations have been conducted in over 150 rural villages, reaching an additional 15,000 schoolchildren, close to 12,000 children out of school, and 10,000 adults. Another 1,000 college students were trained in mine risk education. The project has since been expanded to include HIV/AIDS awareness as a component of risk education.

Continued assistance was provided to communities living in heavily mined environments. Community mine marking teams carried out selective mine clearance and long-term marking of safe and suspected areas. The teams have cleared and marked a total of 86 areas associated with water supply, roads and community spaces. In addition, some schools, pagodas and commune offices have been cleared. During this process a total of 2,130 mines and other explosive devices were destroyed.

For those who have already suffered landmine injury, a wide range of services are provided, including both physical rehabilitation and reintegration into community life. The implementing partners, Cambodia Trust and Veterans International, have provided more than 50 prostheses, 1,650 orthoses and 340 wheelchairs, mostly for women and children.

**COLOM BIA** UNICEF Colombia, together with governmental and NGO partners, including the national Red Cross and associations of boy and girl scouts, continued to support mine awareness education in the provinces of Antioquia, Bolívar and Santander, and started a new phase in Cauca. The initiative includes data collection and capacity building on mine awareness at the local level, as well as national advocacy directed at youth and community leaders. UNICEF has also helped establish the National Commission for Mine Action, and has advocated signing the Mine Ban Treaty and incorporating its provisions into national law.

**ERITREA** In Eritrea, UNICEF has established partnerships with a number of international NGOs to conduct mine risk education within displaced and host communities in Gash Barka and Debub. Mine risk education teams were trained and equipped by the Eritrean Demining Agency with UNICEF support. These efforts have enabled further training and the establishment of regional teams of community facilitators in the Gash Barka and Debub region. Discussions with the demining agency are also under way.
to start a school-based mine awareness project. Another milestone in mine risk education is the active involvement of children’s theatre groups. For example, the Sewit Children’s Theatre group was commissioned to tour communities providing landmine awareness. The group visits schools and community halls to educate communities on the risks of mines and unexploded ordnance.

**LAO PEOPLE’S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC** With the Lao Youth Union, UNICEF implements a sport-in-a-box project for children in mined areas not attending school. Messages about the dangers are promoted using safe play areas and game activities. Specific emphasis is placed on including vulnerable groups of children, notably young people not attending school, ethnic minorities and disabled children.

**RUSSIAN FEDERATION** UNICEF’s mine action programme works with UNHCR to provide vocational training for young invalids and widows in camps for internally displaced persons in the Northern Caucasus. The training, lasting three to six months, allows the beneficiaries to start earning income.

**SRI LANKA** UNICEF and partners in Sri Lanka have conducted workshops and seminars to increase landmine awareness among children, families and communities, mostly in Jaffna and the Vanni. Other mine awareness activities include education for reducing mine risk and the training of government and NGO officials and community leaders. Posters have been printed and distributed, and signboards with information on mine awareness have been posted. UNICEF is also supporting mine victims through community-based rehabilitation and income generation activities.

**VIET NAM** In 2002, UNICEF launched a new nationwide programme to reduce landmine casualties in Viet Nam. Projects include the production and airing of television and radio landmine awareness spots in heavily affected provinces. UNICEF also supports peer education activities among children and youth, and is working to ensure that children disabled by mine accidents are able to attend school.

A strength of Viet Nam’s new landmines programme is that it builds on experiences from other countries in the East Asia and Pacific region, and takes advantage of pre-existing activities to further landmine education and action. For example, community-based health monitoring and surveillance networks keep track of landmine locations and injuries.
Small arms and light weapons

In conflict situations, small arms and light weapons have a devastating impact on children’s lives. The vast majority of casualties are directly attributable to small arms and light weapons and, in addition to being victims, children have been taught to handle the weapons, which are lethal but light and easy to use. The use of small arms in conflicts has scarred and traumatized generations of children, both physically and emotionally.

Long after peace agreements have been signed and the soldiers have gone home, the high prevalence of small arms in post-conflict society perpetuates a culture of violence. Some former combatants view the gun as their means to economic survival. In other cases, civilians arm themselves to protect their families and property. Children are thus exposed to the dangers of weapons within their own homes. A vicious cycle of crime and violence results.

UNICEF’s approach

UNICEF was instrumental in putting the humanitarian impact of small arms on the agenda of the 2001 United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects. The conference helped build political will and awareness for action against small arms, including in relation to children. UNICEF also supports regional initiatives, which are essential to furthering programmatic work.

UNICEF has collaborated with NGO partners on the child-focused agenda within the International Action Network on Small Arms, which provides a forum for over 300 NGOs from around the world to network and undertake advocacy activities. As a result of UNICEF involvement, many of the NGOs have included child-focused elements in their programming.

UNICEF’s efforts are aimed at keeping weapons out of children’s hands and keeping weapons out of the hands of those who violate children’s rights. This is a daunting task given the scope of the problem and its complex nature. At the end of 2001, UNICEF launched a pilot project to ‘disarm the minds’ of children and youth by raising awareness and addressing the impact of small arms. The project addresses small arms at two levels — changing the attitudes of families and communities, and also increasing attention among decision makers in global, regional and national forums.

The first component of the project is already under way in four post-conflict countries — Kosovo (Federal Republic of Yugoslavia), Liberia, Somalia and Tajikistan. Surveys on the impact of small arms and perceptions
of violence are being conducted, and will serve as entry points to address the issue in communities devastated by the uncontrolled presence of such arms. In addition, the survey results will inform the next stage of the project — programmatic interventions and advocacy. The project will also support development of a regional strategy to respond to the growing prevalence of small arms in West Africa.

UNICEF actions

■ In Albania, the UNICEF campaign ‘Don’t let guns kill our dreams’ highlighted the threat of small arms and light weapons. The campaign is linked with landmine awareness.

■ In Kosovo (Federal Republic of Yugoslavia), a survey seeks to identify and analyse the link between an increase in the use of small weapons, and increased violence and intolerance among ethnic groups. UNICEF will use the findings to develop a targeted communication strategy for young people and children, promoting safer and more tolerant behaviour.

■ An innovative project in Liberia uses a ‘swords to tools’ strategy to encourage the young to say no to weapons. UNICEF and its implementing partner, the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ), provide education, psychosocial support and vocational training to 200 young people directly affected by war. As part of the programme, they convert their weapons both symbolically and practically into development tools.

■ UNICEF in Somalia approaches the eradication of gun culture through a holistic approach to youth development. Thirty-five youth groups are being set up across Somalia to provide a space for boys and girls to cope with the violent disturbances of their lives. The groups engage in recreational, sports and cultural activities, including traditional music, dance, drama and debate. They are also involved in organizing and implementing community development, peace promotion and disarmament.

■ Surveys in Tajikistan are using participatory methodologies to gauge children’s perceptions of small arms and violence. The children’s views and the results of the survey will then be used by local authorities, teachers, government representatives, community organizers and others, seeking to produce an agenda for action against small arms.
Chapter 12

Adolescent programming and participation

“By the end of the week we had plenty of ideas. We wanted peace education in our schools and a youth movement that worked for peace.”

FARLIZ CALLE, AGED 17, COLOMBIA, FOUNDING MEMBER OF THE CHILDREN’S MOVEMENT FOR PEACE

A girl participates in a radio show, part of UNICEF’s psychosocial programme for children living amidst war, Bosnia and Herzegovina.
Humanitarian assistance has typically focused on meeting the survival needs of young children, while the adolescent population has been overlooked. Yet adolescents are arguably at greatest risk in situations of armed conflict — exposed to forced recruitment and sexual violence, abuse and exploitation. They are frequently isolated and denied access to education and health care, without opportunities to develop their future potential. In their distress, they may lose hope in themselves and their communities.

During armed conflict parents find themselves without the means to provide for their children. Young people, in need of guidance from their parents and other adult role models during the tumultuous time of early adulthood, are left without support to face the impacts of war. Hundreds of thousands of adolescents are forced or manipulated into joining armed forces and groups, an untold number are sexually abused and exposed to HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections, and tens of thousands find themselves suddenly at the head of a household, caring for younger sisters and brothers, without the possibility of education or access to vocational and life skills.

Yet in spite of overwhelming odds, adolescents in the midst of war have demonstrated enormous resilience and capacity to survive. With adequate support, guidance and access to necessary resources, they can provide the foundation for rebuilding lives and communities, and contribute to a more just and peaceful society. The alternative is immeasurable loss. We simply cannot afford to ignore the tremendous capacities of young people or waste their unique potential.

Young people speak up

A key element of adolescent participation is providing an opportunity for young people to express themselves, contributing their voice, opinions and ideas to the social dialogue. The International Conference on War-affected Children in September 2000 in Winnipeg was the first conference on issues related to children and armed conflict that went beyond simply listening to youth opinion and opened the door for young people to work alongside adults. The Conference invited 50 young people from over 25 war-affected countries to participate as youth delegates. In addition, countries and NGOs were encouraged to include young people as part of their official delegations. The young people were key players in all aspects of the conference, brainstorming with academic and NGO experts at the expert meetings and engaging with world leaders at the ministerial meeting. The youth statement delivered at the close of the Conference
set forth young people’s priorities — education for all, peace-building, the protection of displaced people, and the prohibition of tools of destruction and violations against children’s rights. The young people also prepared their own anti-war agenda and provided substantial input to the Conference’s concluding resolutions.

UNICEF has helped support young delegates to follow up the Conference, for example by forming youth advisory boards and including Winnipeg youth delegates in the youth advisory board for the Global Movement for Children. UNICEF has also organized a children’s forum during the United Nations special session on children in May 2002, giving young people the opportunity to be directly involved in the proceedings.

Another initiative that promotes self-expression among young people is the UNICEF Voices of Youth interactive website, launched in 1995. The website is a unique forum that brings children together from around the world to engage in debate and discussion, hear what other children have to say, and share their own thoughts on global issues. Although computer access is not usually available in situations of armed conflict, the website’s chat room on children and war gives children of all ages an opportunity to learn about topics ranging from child soldiers and refugees to trauma and landmines, and voice their own opinions. One 11-year-old from Pakistan wrote, “Has not the United Nations failed to fulfil the need for which it was created? That was to stop the horrors of war, is the United Nations to be reminded of that?”

Youth in action

Meaningful participation in community life is the most effective way to develop the potential of young people, especially during times of social conflict and crisis. The community may be a village or camp for refugees or IDPs. During the Kosovo crisis in 1999, for example, young Kosovars in Albanian refugee camps turned fear and boredom into positive action. With support from UNICEF and the local Albania Youth Club, about 20,000 young people formed youth councils and contributed in significant ways to improving life inside the camps. They elected leaders among themselves, organized activities such as concerts and athletic events, and also participated in landmine awareness, camp security and peer support. The success of that venture has provided a role model for other adolescent programming during emergencies, involving young people in everything from landmine awareness and HIV/AIDS prevention to projects in community hygiene and sanitation.
Inherent in adolescents’ participation in situations of armed conflict are the risks that they may face as active peace advocates within a society torn apart by war. In zones of conflict children’s level of political awareness is likely to be very high, because of their family and community ties and loyalties. The participation of adolescents in activities for peace and community rebuilding can therefore be very challenging. Yet the risks for adolescents who do not have opportunities for meaningful community-based participation are even greater. Without positive alternatives, young people are more easily influenced to join military groups, or resort to other destructive or risky behaviours such as dropping out of school, drug and alcohol abuse, prostitution, crime, unprotected sex, or suicide.

**UNICEF actions**

**AZERBAIJAN** In Azerbaijan, youth resource centres have been established in 13 districts, including the three districts with the largest populations of refugees and IDPs. The centres were developed in partnership with the Ministries of Education, Health, Youth, Sports and Tourism, the national Youth Union, the National Youth Assembly, NGOs, and media. Several new youth groups and councils were developed from these centres and have become active volunteers, taking part in many UNICEF activities. For example, a child-to-child peace network has organized drawing competitions for children, for exhibition at the General Assembly special session on children.

**COLOMBIA** The Children’s Movement for Peace was born in 1996, as the result of a massive mobilization of young people in Colombia. Children wanted their opinion to be heard and so they organized a nationwide referendum. Almost 3 million children and adolescents between the ages of 7 and 18 came out to vote for peace. Since then the Movement has gained the support of numerous national and local institutions, UNICEF being one of the most active. Activities include conflict resolution and non-violence promotion in schools. In 2002, the Movement gained strength, taking an active part in preparations for the presidential elections. The story of the Movement is described by Sara Cameron in *Out of War: True stories from the front lines of the Children’s Movement for Peace in Colombia*, published in 2001. Also in 2001, the Children’s Movement for Peace supported the week-long annual campaign for peace involving thousands of people in Bogotá and in the municipalities of Sibate and Marinilla.

**LIBERIA** Working with NGO partners in Liberia, UNICEF is supporting life-skills education through the creation of child-friendly spaces that
bring children and young people together. Sports, art, music and play are key entry points for building strong child and youth networks. For example, children living on the street and former child soldiers have formed a band, playing traditional music as well as modern rap and reggae. A youth theatre for peace in the Mano river basin has also been established. George Weah, UNICEF goodwill ambassador and world-class football player, and other goodwill ambassadors have acted as mentors.

**OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORY** UNICEF assistance is focused on creating more opportunities for Palestinian adolescents to participate safely and peacefully in their communities, through collaboration with the media, government bodies such as the Information, Education, National and Political Guidance Agency, the Ministry of Youth and Sport, the secretariat for the national plan of action for children, and indigenous NGOs. For example, UNICEF provided financial and material support to these government bodies for nine summer camps in 2001 that brought together more than 1,100 girls and boys for a fortnight. The summer camps provided the children with an opportunity to play. It also gave them a chance to develop important life skills such as tolerance, critical thinking, listening and decision making.

UNICEF also supported two national workshops with Palestinian ministries and NGOs to develop a national declaration on summer camps. The declaration provides a framework to ensure that all summer camps promote equality, participation, non-violence, a child-focused approach, inclusion of children with special needs, and freedom of expression.

In order to overcome the extreme restrictions on mobility during the current military operations, UNICEF has focused on media and telecommunications to provide information and psychosocial support. In cooperation with the Palestinian Youth Association for Leadership and Rights Activation, a Palestinian youth NGO, UNICEF has established a youth-to-youth support hotline. Young volunteers, supervised by a professional, have been trained and are available on two toll-free lines to provide information and psychosocial support to adolescents and young people over the phone.

**SOMALIA** UNICEF has supported the establishment of 100 community-based groups for highly disadvantaged youth in Somalia. Activities include sports and recreation, with young girls and boys across Somalia participating in tournaments, matches and cultural programmes organized around the themes of peace, prevention of HIV/AIDS and eradication of female genital mutilation.

Using the opportunity offered by the Global Movement for Children,
UNICEF Somalia produced a video to document the words and stories of Somali children describing the trials and difficulties of living in the midst of conflict. It filmed children and youth from both urban and rural communities, and features the testimony of children from camps for IDPs, homeless youth on the streets, children in school and former child soldiers participating in vocational training. The video was produced in collaboration with Save the Children UK and Plan International, and was supported by the Italian National Committee for UNICEF.

The world soccer federation teams up with UNICEF

UNICEF has teamed up with FIFA (Fédération Internationale de Football Association), the world governing body for soccer, to ‘Say yes for children’. Sport represents a way for people to come together and have fun, and the UNICEF/FIFA alliance presents a unique opportunity to join forces with millions of soccer fans around the world to make changes for children. For the first time, the world’s most watched sporting event — the World Cup on 30 June — will be dedicated to a humanitarian cause.

In coordination with the World Cup dedication, UNICEF offices in countries of conflict will negotiate days of tranquillity, suspending hostilities to allow access for immunization and the provision of life-saving humanitarian assistance. A number of regional initiatives organized in collaboration with local and national football associations will seek to reclaim childhood in these war zones.

ALBANIA Discussions are under way with the Ministry of Sport and Albanian Football Federation to form a national girls’ football competition, linked to the World Cup/UNICEF initiative. UNICEF Albania will provide T-shirts for the competing teams and other athletic gear.

SIERRA LEONE In the days leading up to the World Cup, young players will form ‘shadow’ World Cup teams and participate in a series of football games, ending in a final game at the National Stadium on 19 June. The competition will take place in three locations: Makeni, Bo and Freetown.

SRI LANKA Young people from Tamil-speaking schools in the north-east and Sinhala-speaking schools in the south will play in special soccer matches organized by the Sri Lanka Football Federation and UNICEF. The Federation will also donate footballs and nets and provide coaching to underprivileged schools throughout the country.
SUDAN

UNICEF and the Sudan Football Association are joining forces to create awareness around HIV/AIDS. Famous footballers will speak with children at schools and community events about HIV/AIDS prevention. In addition, the Association will lobby its sponsors to support basic health and education for all Sudanese children. Regular radio and television broadcasts and the print media will carry HIV/AIDS and other messages for children.
Chapter 13

International standards for child protection

“I don’t want to hear any more speeches. I want to know what they’re going to do for us, I want to know how they’re going to take action.”

EWAR BARZANJI, AGED 17, KURDISH GIRL WHO FLED NORTHERN IRAQ

Graça Machel visits a demobilization centre for child soldiers in Sierra Leone as part of her global work on behalf of war-affected children.
Armed conflict violates children’s rights. It violates their rights to life, to health, to education, to an adequate standard of living, to protection from abuse, exploitation, neglect, discrimination and recruitment into the military. It creates additional rights violations against children and exacerbates existing ones. Girls are particularly vulnerable because of the prevalence of sexual abuse including rape.

Despite the best intentions and efforts of the international community to protect children from the impacts of war, violations continue. In order to better ensure that children’s rights are protected in the midst of social instability and conflict, a strong and consistent international legal framework and its proper implementation are needed.

**Convention on the Rights of the Child**

The CRC provides the guiding frame of reference and legal foundation for UNICEF’s work for children. The CRC is the first legally binding international instrument to incorporate the full range of human rights — civil and political rights as well as economic, social and cultural rights. Among human rights instruments, the CRC is the most universally accepted in history.

Four founding principles of the CRC underpin all the other articles and guide all phases of UNICEF’s work: non-discrimination (CRC article 2), the best interests of the child (article 3), survival and development (article 6), and the views of the child (article 12).

Although all the CRC articles are relevant to children in armed conflict situations, particular reference is made in articles 10, 22, 38 and 39, which call for appropriate measures to facilitate family reunification, to provide protection and assistance to refugee children, to prevent participation of children in hostilities, to guarantee care, and to promote physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration of child victims of war.

UNICEF has played a leading role in promoting States’ ratification and implementation of the CRC. The key to the implementation of the CRC is its application in national law. UNICEF assists governments with legal reform in order to promote local measures and policies that uphold and protect children’s rights.

The other important underpinning of the organization’s mandate and mission is the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).
Optional Protocols

There are two Optional Protocols that strengthen the provisions of the CRC. UNICEF welcomes the entry into force of the Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography, on 18 January 2002, and of the Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict, on 12 February 2002. Both Protocols are important steps towards furthering the protection of the rights of all children, including those affected by war.

UNICEF supports the worldwide ratification of the Optional Protocols and urges all States that have not done so to immediately ratify these important instruments for the protection of children around the world. In addition, UNICEF assists countries in implementing the Protocols at national level.

Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict

Currently an estimated 300,000 children are being used in armed conflicts worldwide as combatants, messengers, spies, servants and sex slaves. Children are increasingly being targeted for military recruitment because they are easily manipulated and coerced into violence. They may be abducted or recruited by force or driven to join armed groups in order to escape poverty or to find the assurance of food or perceived security. Girls are also used as soldiers in many parts of the world and are frequently subjected to sexual abuse.

The CRC Optional Protocol on children and armed conflict is a milestone in strengthening the protection of children affected by armed conflict and an effective tool in the campaign to end the use of children as soldiers.

The Protocol outlaws the involvement of children under age 18 in hostilities, raising the standard from 15 as set out in the CRC. In addition, the Optional Protocol requires States parties to raise the minimum age for voluntary recruitment beyond the current minimum of 15 and maintain strict safeguards to ensure that any such recruitment is genuinely voluntary. The Optional Protocol prohibits all recruitment and use before 18 by non-governmental forces. UNICEF joins other organizations, child rights advocates and NGOs in advocating a ‘straight 18 ban’ on all recruitment, compulsory or voluntary, and participation of children under 18 in hostilities.
The ratification of the Protocol must be accompanied by the reform of national legislation in order to comply with standards set by the Protocol. It also introduces a monitoring mechanism that becomes effective for those States that have ratified the Protocol. Under the terms of the Optional Protocol, States are required to submit within two years, and every five years thereafter, a comprehensive report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child, detailing measures taken to implement the provisions of the Protocol.

The Optional Protocol also calls upon States parties to provide technical cooperation and financial assistance for implementation, including the demobilization and social reintegration of children who are victims of armed conflict.

As of 25 April 2002, 22 governments had ratified the Optional Protocol. It is a priority now to achieve universal ratification and implementation. UNICEF, together with other United Nations agencies and NGO partners, has been actively involved in advocating ratification of the Optional Protocol, with country offices assisting governments in the ratification and implementation process.

The campaign in support of the Optional Protocol demonstrates a close and effective cooperation between United Nations agencies and NGO partners, in particular, the Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, UNICEF, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, and the Committee on the Rights of the Child.

The entry into force of the Optional Protocol is not in itself sufficient response, but it is a crucial step in a longer campaign. Monitoring and reporting on compliance with the Optional Protocol, combined with strong political leadership and a focus on the rights of children in post-conflict situations, can help put an end to the recruitment and use of child soldiers.

Other international standards

A number of other important international standards and guidelines support the protection of children in armed conflict. The Geneva Conventions of 1949 and their two Additional Protocols of 1977 limit the methods of conducting military operations and oblige belligerents to spare persons who do not participate in hostilities. Child-specific provisions are included.

The major instrument providing protection for refugees is the Refugee Convention of 1951 and its 1967 Protocol. In 1998, the Guiding Principles...
on Internal Displacement were introduced by the Representative of the Secretary-General on Internally Displaced Persons. They provide a comprehensive normative framework for the protection and assistance of IDPs. Displaced children are accorded special protection in several of the principles, relating to protection from forced labour (principle 11), protection from recruitment and participation in hostilities (principle 13), and education (principle 23).


Additional instruments include ILO Convention 182 of 1999 on the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour, which prohibits the forced or compulsory recruitment of children under 18 for use in armed conflict. Also in 1999, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child entered into force. It prohibits the recruitment or direct participation in hostilities or internal strife of anyone under the age of 18. On 11 April 2002, a historic development took place when the 60th ratification for the Rome Statute for the International Criminal Court was deposited; on 1 July 2002, the Statute enters into force, thereby making the conscription, enlistment or use in hostilities of children under 15 by national armed forces or armed groups a war crime.

**Reporting and monitoring**

It is not sufficient to have standards outlining the rights of children. The implementation of these rights and obligations needs to be monitored and reported. There are a number of mechanisms that monitor and report on the situation of children in armed conflict, some of which are outlined below.

UNICEF is supporting the work of thematic and country-specific human rights mechanisms which report to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights and the General Assembly on specific human rights issues. UNICEF attaches particular importance to the work of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict in monitoring and reporting violations of children’s rights in conflict situations.

Treaty obligations of international instruments are monitored by various bodies. The Committee on the Rights of the Child monitors progress
in achieving the CRC obligations and examines reports submitted to it by States parties. By ratifying the CRC or its two Optional Protocols, governments are obliged to protect and ensure children’s rights and are therefore accountable. UNICEF assists governments in preparing their reports. The Committee’s concluding observations provide important guidance for governments and all implementing partners.

In November 2001 the Security Council adopted resolution 1379, which requests the Secretary-General to provide, attached to his next report on children and armed conflict, a list of parties to armed conflict that recruit or use children in violation of their international obligations.

NGOs are also very much involved in reporting and monitoring children’s rights in conflict situations. In this context, the recently established Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict is a key initiative. The Watchlist aims to improve monitoring, reporting and follow-up action on the security and rights of children in specific situations of armed conflict. So far, the Watchlist has produced reports on Afghanistan, Angola, Burundi and the Occupied Palestinian Territory. UNICEF supports NGOs in this endeavour.

UNICEF actions

**BURUNDI** UNICEF has signed a three-year programme of cooperation (2001-2004) with the transitional Government focused on the promotion, protection and fulfilment of the rights of children and women. Included are initiatives for child protection and rights promotion, HIV/AIDS prevention, nutrition and health, education, and water and sanitation. UNICEF has helped to put children’s rights on the agenda of the transitional Government.

**UNITED NATIONS TRANSITIONAL ADMINISTRATION IN EAST TIMOR** UNICEF targeted communities, law enforcement officials and decision makers to raise awareness and build capacity on child rights. A range of advocacy materials on child rights and protection were developed, including a translation of the CRC into four local languages and a booklet entitled *Children have human rights*. A set of 13 posters on the rights of children is currently in production, and will be distributed widely.

**GEORGIA** A mobile campaign for child rights has been set up with UNICEF support and has travelled in different regions of Georgia. In the first half of 2001 the campaign travelled from village to village in eastern Georgia, providing special education on the CRC. As a result, 6,700 children received information on child rights. With the support of UNHCR, the
project continued its work, reaching out to children in communities for IDPs.

**INDONESIA** To support concerns about child protection shared by Christians and Muslims in religiously divided Maluku, UNICEF sponsored joint activities in connection with National Children’s Day in July 2001. Some 40 child rights advocates from both communities were also trained in child rights and subsequently established the Maluku Forum of Concern for Child Rights.

**SIERRA LEONE** The child rights monitoring network, which is made up of NGOs and community-based organizations, continues to monitor and report gross violations of children’s rights. The network documents cases of rape, abandonment, detention and injury from violence. The network also provides legal counsel to ensure that perpetrators of rape against young children are taken through the court system. The network continues to sensitize agencies working with children on child rights and provides guidance on how to document and report serious violations.

**TAJIKISTAN** UNICEF in Tajikistan continued to strengthen partnerships for the future of Tajik children, adolescents and families. UNICEF advocated government commitment in implementing the CRC. The first national conference for child protection was held in 2001, with support from UNICEF and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, which enhanced government commitment for child protection in Tajikistan. The conference resulted in the establishment of a National Commission for Child Protection, whose mandate is to design and implement a national plan of action for child protection.
Chapter 14

Mechanisms for seeking truth and justice

“Why should we be the martyrs of these stupid, ridiculous conflicts?”

YOUNG GIRL, BURUNDI

A six-year-old girl and her mother lost their left hands during a rebel attack on their village in Sierra Leone.
Accountability provides the foundation for a more just, stable and peaceful society. Those who commit war crimes against children must be held accountable for their acts. This has been underlined by the Security Council in all its resolutions on children and armed conflict and most recently in resolution 1379 of November 2001, calling for an end to impunity and the prosecution of those responsible for genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, and other egregious crimes perpetrated against children. In addition, it urges that the procedures of criminal tribunals and other truth and justice-seeking mechanisms put into place special measures to protect children in its work.

International criminal tribunals are one way to address impunity for serious violations, particularly against children. Truth and reconciliation processes, although not intended to prosecute perpetrators, also help build a more stable social order and contribute to a culture of accountability, protecting children from the atrocities of war and establishing what happened to children during conflict.

International Criminal Court

On 11 April 2002 the 60th ratification was deposited, ensuring that the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court enters into force on 1 July 2002, establishing the Court. The Court will help to put an end to impunity for acts of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes, including crimes committed against children.

The Court draws on international humanitarian law, such as the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and their two Additional Protocols of 1977, as well as children’s rights under international human rights law, including the CRC. There are three ways the Court specifically addresses children:

- Prosecuting crimes within the jurisdiction of the Court that target children
- Providing special measures to protect children during the investigation and prosecution of cases; in particular, ensuring protection and support for child witnesses
- Requiring the Court staff to have expertise on children’s rights.

The Court explicitly defines as a war crime the recruitment of children under age 15 into armed forces or groups. Also within the jurisdiction of the Court’s Statute, as crimes against humanity, are the trafficking of women and children, rape, sexual slavery, forced prostitution and forced pregnancy. War crimes, as defined by the Statute, include direct attacks against
schools, hospitals and civilian populations. The forcible transfer of children of a group targeted for intentional destruction is included in the definition of genocide. The International Criminal Court has jurisdiction over crimes committed after the entry into force of its Statute, and over crimes committed on the territory of a ratifying State or by a national of a ratifying State.

**Ad hoc tribunals; truth and reconciliation commissions**

During the last decade, two ad hoc criminal tribunals have been established by the Security Council to address serious war crimes: the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda. In the aftermath of the conflict in Sierra Leone, the Government of Sierra Leone and the United Nations signed an agreement establishing a Special Court for Sierra Leone. The mandate of such mechanisms is limited to a certain geographic region and to crimes committed in those regions during specific periods of time.

Truth and reconciliation commissions do not seek to prosecute and sentence perpetrators. They are set up rather as a means to promote reconciliation through the establishment of the truth, public recognition that atrocities have been committed, and more generally a national discussion about the past and recommendations for preventing such violations in the future. In El Salvador, Guatemala, South Africa, Sierra Leone and the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor, truth and reconciliation commissions have been established by the parties in conflict to provide a forum to establish the accurate account of history, particularly serious violations of human rights and humanitarian law, and formulate recommendations for the future.

**UNICEF’s approach**

In all instances when children are involved in international truth or justice seeking, whether as victims, witnesses or perpetrators, UNICEF stands ready to dedicate its expertise to help protect the rights of children throughout such processes, providing legal, psychosocial and other support to ensure that proceedings are child-friendly. That includes child rights training for investigators, prosecutors and judges; monitoring children’s involvement in the proceedings; and other support for children as needed, the
primary concern being to prevent victimization of children by the criminal justice system or other truth and justice-seeking bodies.

**UNICEF actions**

**UNITED NATIONS TRANSITIONAL ADMINISTRATION IN EAST TIMOR**
The Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation began its work in January 2002 and is expected to function for two years. UNICEF continues to work with the human rights unit of the United Nations Transitional Administration, the Ministry of Justice and the Commission, in developing standards for child participation and protection in relation to the Commission’s work.

**GUATEMALA**
In Guatemala, children and adolescents suffered atrocities during 35 years of armed conflict. The human rights reports of the Truth Commission (Comisión de Esclarecimiento Histórico) and of the Catholic Church describe the massive violations of children’s and women’s rights. UNICEF provided technical support to the Truth Commission for the documentation of violations against the rights of children and also helped prepare a summary for a wider audience. The Truth Commission proposed the creation of a task force to search for the children who disappeared. UNICEF provided technical support for the task force and also supported an NGO programme to help search for and assist separated children and family members. In follow-up to the recommendations of the Truth Commission, UNICEF also carried out a study on the impact of war on Mayan adolescents who survived the genocide.

**SIERRA LEONE**
In June 2001, UNICEF, in collaboration with the human rights unit of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone and the National Forum for Human Rights, organized a technical workshop on children and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Sierra Leone. Over 40 national and international experts convened, as well as a group of children, with the aim of developing recommendations for policies and guidelines on the involvement of children in the truth and reconciliation process. The workshop published recommendations that include the views of child participants for consideration by the members of the Commission. This report will facilitate the efforts of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to ensure that children’s interests are protected throughout the entire process and will also serve as a model for other similar judicial proceedings.
Juvenile justice

A wide range of special problems and concerns are associated with the treatment of children accused or convicted of an offence or crime during and following armed conflicts. Some are essentially specific to such situations, others are simply exacerbated by them.

Conflict situations are invariably characterized, among other things, by the breakdown of administrative and judicial systems. In the first place this can have serious repercussions for children who were deprived of their liberty, whether awaiting trial or sentenced, when the conflict began. They may remain forgotten in custody or be released en masse with no resources or protection.

During the conflict itself, a number of factors can contribute to severe problems for children deemed to have committed offences or crimes. Military or paramilitary forces may replace the police in ensuring law and order and be more susceptible, inter alia, to making arbitrary arrests, detaining suspects without charge, or even exacting their own punishment. In the absence of a functioning court system, children may remain in custody without trial for months or even years. Files and records may be destroyed. The community, too, may exact its revenge directly on suspected offenders without regard for due process. Conflict frequently leads to a breakdown in social values that in turn can generate acts, often violent and including rape, that would otherwise not be perpetrated.

The return to ‘normality’ during the post-conflict phase may be more or less long and painful. In extreme cases such as that of post-genocide Rwanda, where the court system was almost completely destroyed and most judges and lawyers had either been killed or had fled the country, the delay in restoring the system can stretch for many years. Thousands of children and young people have been detained for up to eight years without trial on suspicion of participation in the genocide, with insufficient judicial procedures in place to deal with their cases. Hundreds were under the age of criminal responsibility and required special rehabilitation before returning whenever possible to their communities.

In other cases, such as Kosovo, there may be a period of virtual impunity for all but the most serious crimes as the systems of law and order and the courts only gradually begin to operate again, or the police may simply demand that the alleged offender pay a bribe. The material poverty and homelessness consequent to a period of
conflict often lead to an increase in the number of children living on the street, who are particularly vulnerable to arbitrary arrest and abuse.

UNICEF’s approach to juvenile justice is relatively new and was first brought to the fore by the immediate post-genocide situation in Rwanda. UNICEF recognizes its special responsibilities in this sphere, by dint of both its mandate and its field presence. In the post-conflict context, it seeks to ensure the protection of children deprived of their liberty, to influence wherever possible the content and thrust of new legislation and policy, to facilitate through training the reestablishment of the necessary systems of law and order and due process as they affect children in particular, and to promote alternatives to deprivation of liberty for children, including ‘diversion’ schemes. Save in exceptional circumstances such as Rwanda, UNICEF will therefore not support the creating or refurbishing of separate detention facilities for children.

In several countries, UNICEF explores and supports, whenever possible and appropriate, the involvement of more traditional justice mechanisms where traditional leaders and local communities but also the families and children concerned play an active part. These mechanisms, if compliant with all human rights principles, have proven to be sound alternatives for dealing with young people in conflict with the law and also in post-conflict situations.

In May 2001, UNICEF’s Innocenti Research Centre in Florence (Italy) organized a workshop on juvenile justice in post-conflict situations; the background document for the workshop was an analytical report based mainly on country studies carried out by the UNICEF offices for Cambodia, Guatemala, Kosovo, Liberia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone and Somalia, and the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor. The main aim of the meeting was to consider potential strategies and guidelines to assist UNICEF and others to develop effective and appropriate policy and programme responses to juvenile justice issues in such situations. The Innocenti Centre is now in the process of formulating the results of these discussions in the most useful manner and form for field staff.

UNICEF has been engaged in a number of programmes supporting juvenile justice in post-conflict situations. In Rwanda, UNICEF was instrumental in securing the separation of suspected offenders under 18 from adults, and the rehabilitation of those under 14, the age
of criminal responsibility. UNICEF also contributed to the formulation of new legislation affecting juveniles. A police force with special responsibility for children was created in 2000, and UNICEF provided basic child-focused training and materials.

At the end of 2000, in the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor, UNICEF held a number of three-day training sessions for judges and public defenders on juvenile justice, child rights and protection. A total of 28 judges, public defenders, prosecutors and judicial officers received training that included site visits to Dili prison, participatory case studies, and group discussions. Emphasis was placed on the international guidelines for juvenile justice and alternatives to detention for minors.

UNICEF has worked closely with international and local counterparts to support reform of legislation in Kosovo, with a particular focus on legislation concerning juveniles in conflict with the law, as well as legislation on trafficking and family law. The draft law on juvenile justice is being finalized and UNICEF is also working with the Joint Advisory Committee on the drafts of two penal laws, criminal law and the law on criminal procedure. The next step will be to focus on training the juvenile judges, prosecutors, attorneys, social workers, and other individuals and institutions that deal with juvenile justice in Kosovo. The goal is to establish a model juvenile justice system in Kosovo that reflects international human rights standards, policies and procedures.
Chapter 15

Peacemaking, peacekeeping, peace-building

“We are tired of only being the victims; we want to be the ones who make a difference.”

YOUTH DELEGATE, INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON WAR-AFFECTED CHILDREN, WINNIPEG, SEPTEMBER 2000

The Children’s Movement for Peace has assumed a leading role in building peace in Colombia. UNICEF’s assistance includes supplying educational materials.
In recent years, the issue of children affected by armed conflict has been placed firmly on the peace and security agenda of the United Nations. There is increasing recognition that children’s rights and concerns should be integrated in all phases of peacemaking, peacekeeping and peace-building activities, in line with the evolving and more comprehensive role of United Nations peace operations.

Children’s concerns are taken increasingly into account by the Security Council in its resolutions and statements. Since 1998, the Security Council has held four debates on children affected by armed conflict and adopted three resolutions on the issue. Resolution 1261 was adopted in 1999 and resolution 1314 in 2000; the most recent was resolution 1379, adopted in November 2001. In these resolutions, the Security Council explicitly states that children’s concerns should be incorporated into its peace and security work. As UNICEF’s Executive Director, Carol Bellamy, said in her statement to the Security Council in November 2001: “The past actions of the Security Council have greatly elevated the relevance of child rights in the quest for international peace and security, and opened new opportunities for improving standards for child protection while strengthening humanitarian assistance.”

This means that the protection of children and their rights must be considered from the beginning of peacemaking efforts, when peace agreements are being negotiated, and in the mandate of peace operations. There is a need for child rights-based training of peacekeepers and particular sensitization on issues related to child rights, as well as the widest possible dissemination of international human rights, humanitarian and refugee law. It further implies enforcement of respect for international standards by all peacekeeping personnel through improved mechanisms to monitor compliance and respond to violations. Efforts to create a ‘culture of rights’ in post-conflict situations must be strengthened, along with processes to promote the active participation of children and women in peace-building and reconstruction activities.

**UNICEF’s approach**

The CRC, which serves as the framework for UNICEF’s agenda for action, knits together humanitarian and human rights law, making the protection of children during conflict essential to UNICEF’s mission and mandate. In most countries, UNICEF is operational before, during and after conflict, so it is UNICEF’s business to ensure that children are identified as an explicit priority in all peacemaking, peacekeeping and peace-building efforts.
It is UNICEF’s position that children present a unique opportunity in peace efforts. For example, negotiating days of tranquillity, in order to deliver life-saving humanitarian assistance, can create an opening for dialogue in the midst of conflict.

UNICEF’s Peace and Security Agenda for Children, presented to the Security Council in February 1999, sets out action points to ensure that children’s rights are considered in the Council’s deliberations and decisions. Addressing the Security Council on a number of occasions, UNICEF has urged, for example, that provisions be made to ensure that all disarmament and demobilization programmes address the special needs of children, in particular education, vocational training, and psychosocial support.

Specifically, UNICEF’s engagement with the Security Council includes the provision of information and specific observations for input to the reports of the Secretary-General on specific conflicts and situations. This input ensures that children’s concerns are included in resolutions and statements that involve peace-building and conflict resolution, and also helps inform decisions on United Nations peace operations. UNICEF also provided extensive input during the development of an aide-mémoire on the protection of civilians by the Security Council. The aide-mémoire is a checklist for the Council when considering the establishment, change or ending of a peace operation. The checklist includes a chapter on children, bringing to the attention of the Council the specific assistance and protection needs of children in armed conflict. The aide-mémoire was adopted by the Council on 15 March 2002.

On all these issues UNICEF works closely with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict, including in the preparation of the Annual Report of the Secretary-General to the Security Council on Children and Armed Conflict.

Advocacy efforts at the global level support efforts by the UNICEF country offices to advocate and engage with peacekeeping operations and political offices in the field. Advocacy at international level and engagement on the ground by UNICEF country offices are mutually supportive.

Building partnerships

In order to ensure that special protection and assistance for children and women are fully addressed in all peace efforts, a United Nations inter-agency working group on the incorporation of child protection within United Nations peacemaking, peacekeeping and peace-building processes has been established. Convened by the office of the Special Representative
of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Department of Political Affairs and UNICEF, the working group is developing recommendations and guidelines for integrating child protection in these processes.

The urgent need to include humanitarian and human rights components in training activities for peacekeeping personnel has been recognized for some time by governments, United Nations bodies and NGO partners. UNICEF has co-convened, together with the office of the Special Representative on Children and Armed Conflict and a Swedish NGO, a working group to produce a core training package on child rights and protection for use by all United Nations peace operations. The package will be adapted to the evolving mandate and local context of each particular mission and will contain materials relevant to the staff of each mission, for instance, military observers, peacekeepers, civilian police and other civilians.

**UNICEF actions**

**Bosnia and Herzegovina** The human rights office of the United Nations mission in Bosnia & Herzegovina cooperates closely with UNICEF and other organizations that address children’s issues, in particular with regard to the domestic violence initiative. This initiative is aimed at closely monitoring police performance in cases of domestic violence and child abuse, ensuring that the local police are aware of their responsibilities and penalizing those who mishandle cases. The initiative foresees the establishment of focal points for domestic violence in all police stations, who would be responsible for ensuring that cases of domestic violence are properly tracked and recorded in all stations, and that all local police officers understand how to address such cases.

**Colombia** In Colombia, in 2001, the peace-builders project trained 150 teachers and community leaders, as well as mothers and young people in more than several schools and child protection institutes in the coffee belt region of the country, with UNICEF support. The peace-builders project promotes peaceful life in school and communities. Since 1999 over 10,000 school-aged children and 200 children in protection institutes have benefited from this training, and 30 peace-building teams have been set up.

**United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor** UNICEF has been working closely with the human rights office of the United Nations transitional administration as well as with the Ministry of...
Justice, the police and the social services on juvenile justice and child rights. Several training sessions for law enforcement officials have been organized, and information materials on juvenile justice, child rights and child protection have been disseminated. UNICEF is also producing a comprehensive police training manual and cards in three languages outlining child rights.

ETHIOPIA/ERITREA The United Nations mission for Ethiopia and Eritrea and UNICEF launched a new handbook for United Nations peacekeepers on child rights at the United Nations Day ceremony in 2001, on the Mereb river bridge separating the two countries. The handbook, developed by UNICEF with inputs from the United Nations mission and Save the Children Sweden, provides a reference for peacekeepers on issues of child vulnerability in conflict and post-conflict situations, including HIV/AIDS, sexual abuse, child soldiers and landmines. It also includes the full text of the CRC. The objectives of the handbook are twofold: to provide the United Nations peacekeepers with a practical, user-friendly guide to help them better understand and monitor the conditions of vulnerable children and women, and to equip them with the basic tools of international conventions relating to children in armed conflict. The document was subsequently distributed to all 4,500 United Nations peacekeepers along the border between the two nations. UNICEF has already held a training-of-trainers course for 100 peacekeepers on child protection.

GUATEMALA After 35 years of armed conflict, peace accords were signed in Guatemala in 1996. The United Nations Mission for the Verification of Human Rights in Guatemala issued a verification report, the first ever by a United Nations peace operation to address child rights in a post-conflict situation. The report, The Situation of Children and Adolescents in the Peace Process, for which UNICEF provided technical assistance, was launched by the Mission and UNICEF in December 2000. It analyses the successes and shortfalls in fulfilling children's rights during the peace-building process. Furthermore, support for the peace process is an integral part of the UNICEF country programme in Guatemala for 2002-2006.

KOSOVO (Federal Republic of Yugoslavia) When the peacekeeping force arrived in Kosovo, UNICEF produced a booklet for raising awareness among military personnel on major child rights and child protection issues. The booklet highlights UNICEF's role and mandate with reference to child rights, draws attention to the CRC, and emphasizes the special vulnerability and developmental needs of children, giving explicit reasons why children should be afforded the highest priority by the United Nations peacekeeping
forces. The booklets were produced in close cooperation with SCF and produced in six languages.

**SUDAN** UNICEF’s activities in Sudan have peace-building as an explicit overall goal. This is achieved by addressing disparities and inequity in areas such as water and environmental sanitation, health, nutrition and education, which have fueled the ongoing conflict. Unicef is also directly supporting community-led peace-building and conflict resolution initiatives. One example is a women’s peace initiative based in the southern town of Malakal that is mediating between different groups from the Nuer community. UNICEF also has supported efforts by a local university and NGO to mediate between communities in the Nuban mountains, in order to resolve issues over leadership and land.
Chapter 16

Data and information on children and armed conflict

“Based on what we have shared with one another, we have come to a consensus that children are the people most affected by war.”

YOUTH STATEMENT, INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON WAR-AFFECTED CHILDREN, WINNIPEG, SEPTEMBER 2000

A Rwandan refugee searches for her missing son among the 4,000 ID photos at a camp near Goma, Democratic Republic of Congo.
Many reports and fora have underlined the importance of obtaining improved data on children affected by armed conflict, including both the Machel report (1996) and the Machel update (1996-2000). The latter report identifies improving information, data collection and analysis on children in conflict as one of 10 priorities for increasing children’s protection in armed conflict. In July 2001, a workshop entitled ‘Filling Knowledge Gaps: A research agenda on the impact of armed conflict on children’, convened by the office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict and the Government of Italy, in cooperation with UNICEF, also highlighted the critical need for better data.

UNICEF’s medium-term strategic plan (2002-2005) includes the protection of children from violence and abuse, exploitation and discrimination as one of five organizational priorities, and states the need to improve the knowledge base and identify indicators to document and analyse the impact on children of violence — including armed conflict — as a basis for programmatic interventions.

While there is thus a very strong case for improving data and related information on children affected by armed conflict, changing the situation for the better poses numerous challenges, including the sensitivity of data for the protagonists, very uncertain data quality, and difficulty of collection because of both poor access to the relevant population groups and weak collection infrastructures. During conflict humanitarian agencies, struggling to meet the basic needs of war-affected populations, may be unable to perform even routine monitoring and evaluation.

**UNICEF pilot data project**

The broad aim of this three-country pilot project is to assess the data and related information available on children affected by conflict, both across countries and within countries. There is a dearth of good data on children affected by armed conflict, but part of this is due to a poor appreciation of what data exist and how they might be used. Which data are relevant must also be considered, since a narrow interpretation might be restricted only to those children who have been directly affected by war, for example, injured by firearms or mines. A broader interpretation could include those who are indirectly affected — suffering the lack of supplies and services caused by conflict. Some of the confusion in the estimated numbers of children affected by conflict is undoubtedly due to differences, or a lack of clarity, in the definitions.
The specific aim of the project is to get a better understanding of the above issues by reviewing the situation in three countries affected by conflict — Angola, Colombia, Sri Lanka. The information that is sought for each country includes:

- Estimates of the number of children affected by armed conflict, by definition, and over time
- Data on child soldiers, refugees and internally displaced children
- Data on education, health, nutrition, HIV/AIDS
- Data on gender-based violence, sexual exploitation and psychosocial impact
- Data on landmines, unexploded ordnance, small arms, and sanctions
- Key information resources — major studies and reports by government, agencies or NGOs
- Data systems that have been used to obtain or monitor data on children and armed conflict
- New data systems or projects, planned for the near future, that could be used to obtain data
- List of organizations collecting data at the country level, with their programme aims and major outputs
- List of national, regional and international experts on children and armed conflict.

Such data are difficult to obtain. They are of highly variable quality, often produced from unclear or unknown sources, and in contexts that are not conducive to good documentation.

The tasks of the pilot project include: the documentation and assessment of the available data, information and research instruments from governments, United Nations agencies and NGOs; analysis of the country situation to identify gaps in knowledge and to take inventory of the existing systems that might be used to fill the data gaps; and the comparison of country findings in relation to commonalities and differences in data availability, capacity for data collection, and collaboration between organizations and institutions. It is expected that the findings from the present three-country pilot project will be used to plan and implement a more comprehensive approach to data and related information on children and armed conflict, covering more countries and helping fill data gaps.

An additional aim of the project is to develop a more systematic approach
to identifying and describing the data and information available at country level. Country data have to be the basis for regional or global estimates, hence the quality of the country data will dictate the quality of the regional and global estimates. Working on a few countries, together with discussions with regional and global organizations working on the same issues, can provide a set of guidelines for the future.

The data project will build on past assessment and data collection experiences, including the multiple indicator cluster surveys carried out in mid-decade and at the end of the decade, and numerous studies and reports carried out by UNICEF and its partners within countries affected by armed conflict.

**Multiple indicator cluster surveys**

During the 1990s, UNICEF embarked on a process of helping countries — including countries experiencing conflict — assess progress for children towards the goals set in 1990 at the World Summit for Children. The indicators used to assess progress at the end of the decade were developed through extensive consultation, both within UNICEF, especially the Programme Division and regional offices, and with WHO, UNESCO and the ILO. These indicators and additional information can be found at: www.childinfo.org.

**MID-DECADE SURVEYS** There are numerous sources of data for measuring progress at country level, but many either do not function well enough to give current and quality data, or do not provide the data required for assessing progress. Household surveys are capable of filling many of these data gaps. UNICEF's mid-decade assessment led to 100 developing countries collecting data either by using the multiple indicator cluster surveys — household surveys developed specifically for the mid-decade assessment — or by incorporating the questionnaire modules into other surveys. By 1996, 60 developing countries had carried out the surveys, and another 40 had incorporated some of the modules into other surveys.

**END-DECADE SURVEYS** The end-decade surveys were developed specifically to obtain the data for 63 of the 75 end-decade indicators reflecting the World Summit for Children goals. The surveys drew heavily on lessons learned from the mid-decade assessment and subsequent evaluation. They also drew on an even wider spread of organizations than at mid-decade. These included WHO, UNESCO, ILO, UNAIDS, the United Nations Statistical Division, the US Centers for Disease Control and
Prevention, the MEASURE project (USAID), Johns Hopkins University, Columbia University, the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, and others.

**UNICEF actions**

**ANGOLA** A recent study supported by UNICEF on the living conditions of children in UNITA-held areas revealed the high exposure of children to violence. Based on interviews conducted among Angolan refugees in Zambia during March and April 2001, the study indicated that 81 per cent of children had experienced combat violence during the course of displacement, and 56 per cent had witnessed landmine explosions. Although the effect of the sanctions imposed on UNITA is difficult to assess, the report indicates that the sanctions are having a negative impact on civilians living in UNITA-controlled areas, particularly children and women.

**COLOMBIA** UNICEF has supported research on the problems facing Colombian children, and the violations of their rights. The issues covered have included the forced displacement of children, the impact of anti-personnel landmines, work on non-sexist school textbooks, and social planning with a rights perspective for mayors. The publication of these studies has generated increased public debate, and increased national awareness of the situation of children in Colombia. One important achievement was the Government's approval of the law to demobilize children from the armed forces.

In addition, UNICEF has developed an integrated monitoring and evaluation plan to capture and link information available to governmental and non-governmental groups working with children. This integrated system will provide the most recent updates on the situation of children, including analyses of policies and of services impacting children's rights.

**EAST ASIA AND PACIFIC** UNICEF, together with a number of partners, has launched a major initiative in East Asia and the Pacific, to improve the knowledge-base on children affected by armed conflict. The results of the study will be used to formulate strategies addressing the protection needs of war-affected children. Children and youth are key participants in the process and will be involved in all phases, from data collection and analysis, to the development of new programmes.

**UNITED NATIONS TRANSITIONAL ADMINISTRATION IN EAST TIMOR**
To improve knowledge of issues relating to children in the area, UNICEF carried out several studies and evaluations in 2001, including a regional
opinion survey, ‘Speaking out!’, and an assessment of the situation of child soldiers covering participants in the armed conflict over a number of years. An assessment of nearly 40 orphanages and care institutions revealed that most of the children had been separated from their parents by poverty rather than death. UNICEF is currently working with a local NGO, experienced in mental health issues, to assess the extent of child abuse and develop strategies to combat the problem.

ERITREA In order to gauge the level of damage to education facilities, UNICEF supported a comprehensive assessment of schools in Eritrea after the war. Sixty-five schools in the temporary security zone were found to be at various levels of disrepair, their furniture looted or destroyed. The Ministry of Education mobilized resources for the rehabilitation of 36 schools, UNICEF contributing for 19 schools.

ETHIOPIA In November, UNICEF led a special study in the Tigray region on the conditions of populations deported and returning from Eritrea. The study, designed and implemented in cooperation with the Tigray bureaux for women’s affairs, for labour and social affairs and for disaster preparedness, identified a number of serious concerns affecting Ethiopians obliged to return from Eritrea, including family separation; almost 30 per cent of those interviewed had left one or more family members behind in Eritrea.

INDONESIA UNICEF is supporting a collaborative initiative between Hasanudin University and Maluku health services to assess nutritional deficiencies among children in IDP camps, including vitamin A and iodine deficiencies.

SOMALIA During the year, eight nutritional surveys were conducted in Somalia, in order to review trends across regions, monitor the level of malnutrition among children under five, and assess the impact of interventions by UNICEF and partners. Emphasis was placed on densely populated, high-risk areas and on vulnerable groups such as internally displaced populations. Survey results confirmed that although the levels of malnutrition are not deteriorating overall, stark differences prevail between various regions and population groups — the central and southern zone being the part of the country worst affected. Poor availability and accessibility of food — mainly due to droughts and conflict — poor quality of dietary intake, poor infant feeding practices and inadequate home management practices continue to be the most common causes of poor nutritional status among children.
SRI LANKA In 2000, the UNICEF regional office for South Asia engaged the Refugee Studies Centre of Oxford University to conduct secondary research in conflict-affected countries, including Sri Lanka, in order to study how conflict in these countries affects children. In November 2001, a two-day national workshop for Sri Lanka was conducted to disseminate the findings of that research and to share experiences among professionals and those who are working in the field. The workshop has provided a sound knowledge basis for programming, advocacy and monitoring, which will help ensure greater protection for children.

UGANDA An assessment of the situation of children in internally displaced communities camps in western and northern Uganda was conducted in 2001. The objective of the study was to obtain knowledge in depth of specific factors affecting the rights and development of children and adolescents, and recommend specific actions to reduce their vulnerability and improve their situation. Recommendations were made on the issues of abducted children, children orphaned by AIDS, and child abuse and exploitation.

Another project collected data on abductions in northern Uganda from 1986 to 2001 by the Lord’s Resistance Army. The registration exercise was later expanded to include south-western Uganda, where the Allied Democratic Front was also carrying out abductions. At the beginning of 2001, a comprehensive update and verification of information on persons abducted was launched in the seven affected districts. After being verified at village level, the update showed that 30,839 children and adults had been abducted between 1986 and 2001; the exercise provides the breakdown by age, sex, place of abduction, whether returned, and current place of residence if known.
**Acronyms**

AIDS acquired immune deficiency syndrome  
CEDAW Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women  
CRC Convention on the Rights of the Child  
DDR disarmament, demobilization and reintegration  
ECPAT End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes  
HIV human immunodeficiency virus  
IASC Inter-Agency Standing Committee (United Nations)  
ICRC International Committee of the Red Cross  
IDPs internally displaced persons  
ILO International Labour Organization  
NGOs non-governmental organizations  
OCHA Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (United Nations)  
SCF Save the Children Fund  
UNAIDS Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS  
UNESCO United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization  
UNHCR Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees  
UNICEF United Nations Children’s Fund  
USAID United States Agency for International Development  
WHO World Health Organization
Endnotes

Chapter 1: A decade of war

Chapter 3: Ensuring humanitarian protection

Chapter 4: Afghanistan

Chapter 5: Child soldiers: Returning home

Chapter 6: Refugees and the internally displaced
2. Ibid.

Chapter 7: HIV/AIDS and conflict
Machel, Graça, op. cit., p. 46.


**Chapter 10: Health, nutrition, safe water**


2. Ibid., p. 66.


**Chapter 11: Landmines and light weapons**

1. Unexploded ordnance is explosive munitions that have been fired, dropped or launched but have failed to detonate as originally intended, remaining active until set off.


**Chapter 12: Adolescent programming and participation**


**Chapter 13: International standards for child protection**

