

**RESOLUTION OF THE PLIGHT OF AFRICAN
CHILDREN IN SITUATION OF ARMED CONFLICTS**

The Council of Ministers of the Organization of African Unity meeting in its Sixty-Fourth Ordinary Session, in Yaounde, Cameroon, from 1 to 5 July, 1996,

Having carefully listened to the report of the Secretary-General on conflict situations in Africa, and to the UNICEF statement on the Situation of Children under Armed Conflicts and its Anti-War Agenda,

Noting with deep concern that the negative effects of armed conflicts are jeopardizing the survival and development of African children and hence the future of the continent,

Painfully aware that civil strife and armed conflicts have been impeding the tangible progress achieved through Member States' programmes on child survival, protection and development,

Recalling the strong commitment of African Heads of State and Government towards the eradication of wars and armed conflicts in Africa as demonstrated by the establishment, within the OAU General Secretariat, in 1993, of a Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution,

Convinced that dialogue is one of the most effective tool for creating conditions of peace, security and stability on the continent;

Mindful that Africa has committed itself to ensuring its children's welfare on the occasion of the World Summit for Children in 1990 as well as the OAU International Conference on Assistance to African Children, and through adopting several declarations and resolutions on child survival, protection and development, including the Consensus of Dakar and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child;

1. **TAKES NOTE** of the UNICEF Anti-War Agenda, aimed at protecting children and women from the scourge of armed conflicts;
2. **APPEALS** to OAU Member States which have not yet done so to sign and ratify the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child;
3. **APPEALS FURTHER** to OAU Member States to fulfill their commitments to children by fully implementing the Consensus of Dakar and the Convention on the Rights of the Child especially the articles on the protection of children under armed conflicts;
4. **CALLS ON UNICEF** and the international community as a whole to assist African countries concerned in clearing land-mines, and in rehabilitating people and lands affected by these deadly weapons;
5. **EXHORTS** all African countries, in particular the warring parties in those countries embroiled in civil wars, to keep children out of war situations and to refrain from recruiting children under the age of 18 in armed conflict or violent activities of any kind whatsoever;
6. **URGES** all the warring parties, Governments and others release child combatants from the army and give them adequate education and training, rehabilitate and reintegrate them in civil society so as to make them once more productive and

responsible citizens of their respective countries;

7. **REAFFIRMS** that the use of children in armed conflicts constitutes a violation of their rights and should be considered as war crimes;
8. **REQUESTS** the Secretary-General, in cooperation with international organizations and NGOs to consider modalities for organizing regional training programmes for members of the armed forces relating to the respect of basic human rights and international humanitarian law and to the protection of civilians, most of whom are children and women, during military operations;
9. **RECOMMENDS** that, zones and corridors of peace be established during armed conflicts to protect children and mothers in order to facilitate both the delivery of humanitarian aid and the provision of social services, such as education and health, and, in particular immunizations;
10. **INVITES** warring parties to pay special attention to the protection of girls and women;
11. **REQUESTS ONE MORE**, the UNICEF and the OAU General Secretariat to recommit themselves to the existing Cooperation Agreement as well as all earlier Resolutions which all upon UNICEF to assist the OAU with the necessary financial, logistical as well as material support aimed at promoting the welfare, survival, protection and development of African Children;
12. **COMMENDS** the active participation of children in the 1996 celebration of the Day of the African Child, and recommends that an Annual Children's Parliamentary Session to be held in each OAU Member States, for the Day of the African Child, in order to enable children discuss issues not only affecting their welfare, but also their respective countries;

13. **CALLS UPON** the Secretary-General of the OAU to follow-up closely the working relations between UNICEF and OAU and to submit a Report relating to the implementation of this resolution to the Council of Ministers as appropriate.