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SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE

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COMUNICATO

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• **"I BAMBINI NEI CONFLITTI ARMATI: RESPONSABILITÀ DI TUTTI"**: SIMPOSIO ORGANIZZATO DALLA MISSIONE PERMANENTE DELLA SANTA SEDE PRESSO LE NAZIONI UNITE E DALL'UFFICIO DEL SOTTOSEGRETARIO GENERALE PER I BAMBINI COINVOLTI NEI CONFLITTI ARMATI

The Permanent Observer Mission of the Holy See and the Office of the Under-Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict will co-sponsor a Symposium at United Nations Headquarters, entitled *Children in Armed Conflict: Everyone's Responsibility*, on Tuesday, 5 June 2001, from 3-6 p.m. in Conference Room 4.

Today in more than 50 countries, children are the innocent victims of armed conflict. Their suffering has many faces: children are killed and maimed; they are sexually abused; they are uprooted from their homes and families; they are recruited and used as child soldiers, and forced to give expression to the hatred of adults; they lose out on their childhood, their education and their health; and they inherit the deep psychological trauma of war. During the 1990's more than twenty million children were killed, injured or displaced as a result of war. Their suffering creates the conditions for continuing cycles of violence. Only a broad-based coalition of governments, religious and civil society organizations can create the critical mass needed to end the victimization of children in times of war.

The Symposium will feature the testimony of several former child soldiers and other war-affected children, a keynote address by H.E. Mr. Olara Otunnu, Under-Secretary-General and Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, and remarks by Government and Civil Society representatives devoted to assisting children caught in conflict situations and continuing cycles of violence.

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