

Norway – 2003

Finn Myrstad

UN Youth Delegate Programme

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55. **Mr. Myrstad** (Norway), youth representative of his country, referring to agenda item 106, regretted that too few youth representatives participated in the debates, although young people constituted one fifth of the world population and should therefore have a say in decision-making at the local, national and international levels. Youth understood youth and youth communicated with youth: consequently, youth participation could lead to better outcomes, for example in Africa where the involvement of youth organizations had led to more efficient ways of raising awareness of HIV/AIDS. [*9*]

56. According to the World Youth Report, 2003 (E/CN.5/2000 3/4), more than 300,000 children (a child being, according to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, any human being under 18), many of them abducted, were fighting in armed conflicts in 49 countries. Some were even forced to kill friends and family members. Girls were even more vulnerable than boys. According to the report, more than two million children had been killed in armed conflicts during the last decade. Young people therefore urged all parties using children as soldiers to try to solve the conflicts peacefully. They also urged all countries to ratify and comply with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, incorporate its provisions into their national law, ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, support the International Criminal Court, combat impunity by furthering the rule of law and exercise strict control over the legal proliferation of light weapons, which fuelled conflicts and turned children into killing machines. They also urged that all peace negotiations should include specific measures to demobilize child soldiers and reintegrate them into society.

57. The fact that it was much easier to raise funds for war and military budgets than for conflict prevention and poverty reduction explained why young people lost hope in the future of peace, cooperation and sustainable development. The representative stressed that the world had not been inherited from the parents but had been borrowed from the children.

