



Olara A. Otunnu

UN Under-Secretary-General Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict

Olara A. Otunnu was appointed by UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan as his Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict in September 1997. In this capacity, Mr. Otunnu serves as a moral voice and advocate on behalf of war-affected children, promoting measures for their protection in times of war and for their healing and social reintegration in the aftermath of conflict.

In seeking to mobilise international political will and public opinion behind the protection, rights and well-being of war affected children, the Special Representative has visited several countries still in the grip of conflict or in the process of recovery. He has worked closely with the UN Security Council, governments, regional organizations, UN agencies, and humanitarian NGOs, to develop a concerted approach for the protection and rehabilitation of children affected by violent conflict.

His appointment followed the Graça Machel Study on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Children and was mandated by General Assembly Resolution 51/77 of December 1996.

Born in Mucwini in Uganda, Olara Otunnu received his early education at Gulu High School and King's College Budo. He then attended Makerere University in Kampala (where he was president of the students union), Oxford University (where he was Overseas Scholar) and Harvard Law School (where he was Fullbright Scholar). A lawyer by training, he practiced law as an Associate with the law firm of Chadbourne and Parke in New York , prior to becoming Assistant Professor of law at Albany Law School.

In the 1970s, as president of Makerere students union and later as Secretary-General of Uganda Freedom Union, Mr. Otunnu played a leading role in the resistance against the regime of Idi Amin. At the Moshi Unity Conference on Uganda (1979), Mr. Otunnu was elected to serve as a member of the Uganda National Consultative Council, the interim administration in the post-Amin period (1979-1980).

From 1980 to 1985, Olara Otunnu served as Uganda's Permanent Representative to the United Nations. During his tenure, he played a very active role, providing leadership in various bodies, including President of the Security Council (1981), when he presided over the election of the Secretary-General; Chairman of the Commission on Human Rights (1983-1984); Vice-President of the General Assembly (1982-1983); and Chairman of the African Group (1981).



Mr. Otunnu served as Minister of Foreign Affairs of Uganda from 1985 to 1986, during which time he played a prominent role in the Uganda peace talks culminating in the Nairobi Agreement of December 1985.

Subsequently, he returned to academia. From 1987 to 1989, he was affiliated with the Institut Français des Relations Internationales (IFRI) as a visiting Fellow, and with the American University in Paris as a visiting Professor. From 1990 to the beginning of this mandate as Special Representative, Olara Otunnu was President of the International Peace Academy (IPA).

Mr. Otunnu has also been active in many civic initiatives, and organizations. He currently serves on the boards of several organizations, including the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, the Aspen Institute, Carnegie Corporation of New York, the International Selection Commission of the Philadelphia Liberty Medal and Aspen France.



November 5th to 7th 2003. Valencia Conference Centre (SPAIN).