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SECRETARY-GENERAL'S STATEMENT ON OCCASION OF INTERNATIONAL DAY
OF INNOCENT CHILDREN VICTIMS OF AGGRESSION

Following is the text of a statement issued by Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar in connection with the observance of the International Day of Innocent Children Victims of Aggression (4 June):

By its resolution ES-7/8 of 19 August 1982, the General Assembly, "having considered the question of Palestine at its resumed seventh emergency special session, appalled by the great number of innocent Palestinian and Lebanese children victims of Israel's acts of aggression", decided to commemorate 4 June of each year as the International Day of Innocent Children Victims of Aggression.

On this solemn occasion, we need to recall the sacred duty, enshrined in the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of the Child, to ensure that all children, without any exception whatsoever, enjoy special protection. They are to be given the opportunities and facilities to enable them to develop in a normal and healthy manner, in conditions of freedom and dignity, and to grow up in an atmosphere of affection and security.

These objectives have, unfortunately, not been met. Too many children have suffered tragically as a result of aggression and violence. With the development of ever more sophisticated and destructive weapons, wars are no longer limited to fighting soldiers; they have taken a severe toll on civilians, among whom the most vulnerable are children. As a result of international conflicts, countless children have been killed or maimed and many of those who have survived have lost their parents and their means of sustenance. They are the primary victims of the inability to live in peace and harmony as envisioned by the Charter.

The terrible fate of such children is a cogent reminder that the first purpose of our Organization was to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war and that, despite our best efforts, armed conflicts continue to plague mankind. And as long as this unhappy state of affairs persists, the young and the innocent will continue to be among the groups which pay the highest price of aggression in its various forms.

We therefore can do these victims no better service as we commemorate this day than to urge a re-dedication and scrupulous adherence to the principles of the Charter.

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