



THE UNIVERSITY OF WINNIPEG

M E D I A R E L E A S E

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For Immediate Release

**Jimmie Briggs & Olara Otunnu join the QUEST:  
Goodwill Ambassador & UN Special Envoy  
for Children & Armed Conflict at  
UWinnipeg's War-Affected Children Conference**

WINNIPEG— **Jimmie Briggs**, the first African American to be appointed Goodwill Ambassador and United Nations Special Envoy for Children & Armed Conflict, will be a key-note speaker at **The University of Winnipeg QUEST War-Affected Children Conference September 9 & 10, 2005**.

It's been five years since the International Conference on War-Affected Children in Winnipeg. The goal? To move the international community to action.

Yet in the last decade alone, more than two million children have died as a result of war and some 15 million children have been displaced within their countries or made refugees. But are the rights of children better protected today and is Canada fulfilling its responsibility on the foreign policy and domestic fronts? The free\* and open-to-the-public conference will examine these questions in depth.

Briggs joins **Olara Otunnu**, former United Nations Special Envoy for Children & Armed Conflict, and **Alexandre (Sacha) Trudeau**—documentary filmmaker (“Embedded” & “The Fence”), journalist, and director Canada World Youth and the Pierre Elliot Trudeau Foundation—and a host of national and international speakers at The University of Winnipeg's third **OmniTRAX/Broe QUEST conference**:

**War-Affected Children  
Two Steps Forward: Looking Back & Facing the Future  
September 9 & 10, 2005  
on The University of Winnipeg Campus**

The conference brings together war-affected children and activists with educators, policy makers, members of the immigrant and refugee communities, researchers, students, and youth to consider how to make this a century of peace in which the rights of the child are globally respected, protected, and promoted.

As part of the War-Affected Children QUEST conference, the public is also welcome to attend the **Manitoba premiere of the National Film Board's *Peacekeepers* documentary by the Genie award-winning Paul Cowan on Friday, September 9 at 7:00 p.m. at the Ramada Conference Centre (330 Garry Street).**

For a complete OmniTRAX/Broe QUEST: War-Affected Children Conference program and list of speakers, please visit [www.quest.uwinnipeg.ca](http://www.quest.uwinnipeg.ca)

*Located in the heart of downtown, The University of Winnipeg is a compact, diverse, multicultural academic community committed to access and excellence. Ranked by our graduates in Maclean's magazine University Graduate Survey (November 15, 2004) in the Top Ten of all Canadian universities when asked about their "Entire Educational Experience." UWinnipeg is home to more than 8,700 full- and part-time students.*

**\* Cost for lunch on Friday and Saturday: \$2 & Canned Good for the UWSA Foodbank.**

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For more information, please contact:

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## **KEY-NOTE SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES**

### **Jimmie Briggs**

#### **Goodwill Ambassador and UN Special Envoy for Children & Armed Conflict**

Jimmie Briggs is the first African American to be appointed as a Goodwill Ambassador and Special Envoy for Children and Armed Conflict by WAFUNIF at the UN.

He has worked for the UN Special Session on Children and Seeds of Peace in both New York City and Kabul, Afghanistan, among other organizations. He has received several fellowships for his writing and advocacy. Briggs's work has appeared in The New York Times Magazine, People, Vibe, Bust, and Fortune, and he has served as an adjunct professor of investigative journalism at the New School for Social Research.

In *INNOCENTS LOST: When Child Soldiers Go to War* journalist Jimmie Briggs explores the lives of child soldiers and war-affected children, focusing on young people in Uganda, Rwanda, Sri Lanka, Colombia, and Afghanistan. He profiles a youth, family member, or advocate in each country to portray that country's specific child-soldier phenomenon. Once recruited, child soldiers may serve as porters or cooks, guards, messengers or spies. Girls may be raped, or in some cases, given to military commanders as wives. Many are pressed into combat, where they may be forced to the front lines, sent into minefields ahead of older troops, or even used on suicide missions. These innocents are forced to commit atrocities against their own family or neighbors, desperate acts that ensure that the child is stigmatized by his or her crime and unable to return to the community. Briggs brings us their tragic stories in this profound and revealing book.

**Olara A. Otunnu**  
**Former United Nations Special Envoy for Children & Armed Conflict**

Olara A. Otunnu was appointed UN Under-Secretary-General and 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 mobilize 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 and effective response for the protection of children affected by violent conflict. His appointment, following the Graça Machel Study on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Children, 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 was 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 (1983-84); Vice-President of the General Assembly (1982-83); and Facilitator of Global Negotiations (1982-83).

Mr. Otunnu served as Minister for 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 his mandate as Special Representative, Olara Otunnu was President of the International Peace Academy (IPA).

Mr. Otunnu is 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, Aspen France, and the Jury for the Hilton Humanitarian Prize.

Mr. Otunnu has received several awards, including recently the German Africa Prize (2002) and the Sydney Peace Prize (2005).

## Alexandre Trudeau

### Filmmaker

Director, Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation and of Canada World Youth boards

Alexandre Trudeau graduated with a philosophy degree from McGill University in Montréal. Upon completing his studies, in 1998, he went on to co-direct an experimental project about the Liberian civil war: *Liberia. The Secret War*.

From 1998 to 2000, Alexandre worked as a videographer and reporter on the bilingual CBC Newsworld/RDI program “Culture Shock”. In his reports, he focused mainly on Canadian aboriginal issues.

In 2000, Alexandre reported on the democratic hopes and despairs of the Yugoslavian youth. His report aired on CBC’s “The National Magazine”.

In 2003, Alexandre produced and directed his first full length documentary *Embedded in Baghdad*. Shot over six weeks, during the U.S. led war on Iraq, *Embedded* is the intimate journal of the filmmaker living with a middle-class Iraqi family. The film explores the true meaning of the war for civilians caught at its epicentre.

Produced in 2004, *The Fence* is Alexandre’s second documentary. In this film, Alexandre is embedded with two families on opposing sides of the newly erected security barrier between Israel and the Palestinian territories.

Alexandre is also a contributing editor at Canada’s national news magazine “Maclean’s”. He has reported from Iraq, Liberia, Haiti, Israel and Chechnya. He is a director on the board of the Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation and of Canada World Youth.

Official Conference Host:



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