

The end of child labour:  
Within reach

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL

# The end of child labour: Within reach

Global Report under the follow-up to the ILO Declaration  
on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work

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## Preface

The fight against child labour in the world continues to be a daunting challenge, but this Global Report provides evidence that a breakthrough could be in the making. We are beginning to see an encouraging reduction in child labour – especially its worst forms – in many areas of the world. We know today that with the political will, the resources and the right policy choices we can definitely put an end to this scourge in the lives of so many families worldwide.

Four years ago, the ILO provided a set of statistics that allowed us to reliably assess the extent of the problem. Using the same methodology, the statistics in this Report now show that our collective action is paying off. The number of child labourers globally fell by 11 per cent over the last four years. It is particularly significant that the decrease is occurring most sharply in the area of hazardous work by children: the more harmful the work and the more vulnerable the children involved, the faster the drop. The number of children in hazardous work decreased overall by 26 per cent, and by 33 per cent in the 5-14 age group.

How did it happen?

As late as the end of the 1980s, the reaction to child labour in the world ranged from indifference to resignation to denial. Meanwhile, the ILO's research was shedding light on different dimensions of the problem, generating greater global awareness. In those years, the ILO promoted a more receptive environment to the need for concerted action against child labour.

When the United Nations adopted the watershed Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989, the ILO was poised to provide direct assistance to countries to tackle child labour. With financial support from the Federal Republic of Germany, the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) was launched in 1992. The six partner countries who signed up to the programme at that time – Brazil, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Turkey and

Thailand – were willing to venture into uncharted territory and to work with the ILO to test approaches to the fight against child labour. IPEC quickly turned into the single largest global programme exclusively focused on child labour. Today, it has some 30 funders (the United States and, more recently, the European Commission are the largest) and 86 programme countries. It is also the ILO's biggest technical cooperation programme. Two political leaders have been instrumental in this respect: Minister Norbert Blüm of Germany, who trusted the ILO to launch IPEC, and Senator Tom Harkin, who is today a stalwart champion of the ILO's work on child labour in the United States Congress.

A further impetus to the fight against child labour came from the Social Summit in Copenhagen in 1995, the Preparatory Committee of which I had the honour of chairing. The Summit called on all countries to honour the rights embodied in the ILO's core Conventions, including those on child labour. And, in 1998, the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work was adopted. It included the elimination of child labour as one of the four fundamental principles which the ILO's Members undertook to respect, regardless of whether they had ratified the relevant Conventions. In 1999, the ILO's constituents adopted the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention (No. 182). It has achieved a phenomenally rapid ratification rate – pulling along with it the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138). Ratifications of Convention No. 182 now stand at 158, while those of Convention No. 138 have doubled, with 77 new ratifications since 1999. There can be no doubt that this reflects a major political consensus on urgent action against child labour.

This progress has not been automatic. It has required political mobilization by our tripartite constituency and practical action. It is the result of

initiatives at various levels. We have reached out to many, including parliamentarians, non-governmental organizations, and local authorities, consumers and public opinion in general. Our own work has both benefited from and supported a global movement against child labour. And in 2002, the Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly on Children held in New York helped to keep attention focused on shaping a world fit for children.

International political support has been essential. The elimination of child labour was not explicitly included in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) set in 2000, but achieving universal primary education was. In addition, one of the MDG targets included a call to develop decent and productive work for youth. Both are important elements of any strategy to eliminate child labour. The global commitment to tackle these challenges in an integrated way was expanded in September 2005, when the World Summit of more than 150 Heads of State and Government stated in the United Nations:

We strongly support fair globalization and resolve to make the goals of full and productive employment and decent work for all, including for women and young people, a central objective of our relevant national and international policies as well as our national development strategies, including poverty reduction strategies, as part of our efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. These measures should also encompass the elimination of the worst forms of child labour, as defined in International Labour Organization Convention No. 182, and forced labour. We also resolve to ensure full respect for the fundamental principles and rights at work.<sup>1</sup>

We have made substantial progress in connecting the fight against child labour with education. The international financial institutions and other United Nations agencies are pursuing the link between child labour, poverty reduction and Education For All. After the 2005 World Summit, the link with employment must now become much more of a common priority.

In short, we have witnessed a sea change in the awareness of child labour across the world, and a broad consensus has emerged on the urgency of eradicating this scourge. Countries are taking on the challenge. There is now widespread agreement on the tools that are needed to do the job. The ILO's labour standards and policy advice have been central to this process. They have guided awareness raising and practical ac-

tion. We must build on this positive evolution in full consciousness that the task ahead is still enormous.

Let me share some points that emerge from our experience.

- Economic growth is important, and progress has been slower where economic progress has lagged behind. But economic growth is not enough – countries must combine it with the right policy mix, focusing on equality, human rights, decent work for all adults, and education for all children. The elimination of child labour cannot be achieved in isolation. The improvements noted in the Report reinforce this message. So in shaping future strategies, we must remember that economic and social policies must work in the same direction to provide sustainable decent work for parents and, for children, education at least up to the minimum age for admission to employment.
- Employers' and workers' organizations play a decisive role in the fight against child labour. Their continuous commitment and engagement remain essential.

During the period under review, employers' organizations have focused in particular on strengthening the capacity of their members to deal with child labour in agriculture. Many individual enterprises have given high priority to addressing child labour issues, and we have seen how action against child labour can also stimulate action on other dimensions of decent work at the enterprise level.

Globally, trade unions have been a driving force in the fight against child labour. Locally, they have been mobilizing and organizing workers in the informal economy around the theme of child labour. This is important to catalyse action against child labour directly. Trade unions have contributed to identifying pockets of child labour which escape official oversight in certain sectors.

- Advocacy and action at various levels have driven progress. A worldwide movement has been instrumental in keeping child labour on the global agenda. ILO experience over the years also confirms that national and community action is crucial. Local authorities are close to the daily lives of people in their communities. Through local authorities and municipalities, we can reach the small and medium-sized businesses that provide the bulk of employment; reach children in the informal economy; and apply integrated approaches within the community to get children out of work and into school.

1. United Nations General Assembly: *2005 World Summit Outcome*, para. 47.

- Standard setting, backed by a promotional approach, advocacy and technical assistance, has proven to be effective. Advocacy has paid off – as reflected in the high ratification rate of the child labour Conventions. To implement them, we are working with countries to develop strategies that are appropriate to their needs and circumstances, building trust and partnerships that are essential for sustainable action.

As we have seen, countries are willing to assume responsibility for ending child labour. The international community needs to give full support to national efforts. At a time when we are beginning to see results, we must not relent. The ILO plays a catalytic role – and a crucial one. Our work has been highly dependent on extra-budgetary resources. We urge our funding partners to make it possible for us to continue to provide the assistance that countries need to sustain progress and to make the breakthroughs where progress has been slow in coming.

In this Report we propose the ambitious but achievable goal of eliminating the worst forms of child labour in the next ten years. The empirical evidence

suggests that this goal is feasible if we can sustain the rate of reduction that has been achieved over the last four years and if the necessary technical cooperation support is available. This goal has been adopted by many member States – more than 30 have already set time-bound targets with a similar or even earlier target date to abolish the worst forms of child labour. These countries will continue to need backing even if the nature of our assistance changes. There is much groundwork to be done so that countries feel able to make a commitment to abolishing the worst forms of child labour within a specific time frame.

As we study this Report, look ahead and plan our future actions, let us remember the message of hope that it brings: it is within our capacity to make this a world without child labour. We are on the right track. We can end its worst forms in a decade, while not losing sight of the ultimate goal of ending all child labour. Clearly, there is still much to be done. And none of us can do it alone – each of us must continue to invest in the struggle for the dignity of all the world's children.

*Juan Somavía*





## Executive summary

A future without child labour is within our grasp. Significant progress is being made in global efforts to end child labour, but this should not lead to complacency – much remains to be done. A strong and sustained global effort is still required. The ILO has a central leadership role to play in the promotion of a more cohesive and coherent worldwide movement mobilized around attainable targets.

This second Global Report on child labour under the follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work offers for the first time a truly dynamic picture. The new global estimates presented in Part I allow the ILO to assess global and regional trends. A remarkable picture emerges. In 2004 there were 218 million children trapped in child labour, of whom 126 million were in hazardous work. Although the participation of girls in child labour and hazardous work is on a par with that of boys in the youngest age group (5-11 years), boys predominate considerably at older ages in both categories.

However, *the number of child labourers globally fell by 11 per cent over the last four years, while that of children in hazardous work decreased by 26 per cent.* For the age group of 5-14 years the decline in hazardous work was even steeper – by 33 per cent. The global picture that emerges is that child work is declining, and the more harmful the work and the more vulnerable the children involved, the faster the decline.

Latin America and the Caribbean are making the greatest progress – the number of children at work has fallen by two-thirds over the last four years, with just 5 per cent of children now engaged in work. The least progress has been made in sub-Saharan Africa, where the rates of population growth, HIV/AIDS infection and child labour remain alarmingly high.

An important aspect of the positive trends set out here relates to ILO standards. There are encouraging advances in ratifications in many parts of the world

and, while ratification of Conventions Nos. 138 and 182 is only a first step, many ratifications have been accompanied by concrete action against child labour.

Political commitment, through the adoption of coherent policies in the areas of poverty reduction, basic education and human rights, is central to the progress, both past and present, made by countries in combating child labour. Economic growth alone will not eliminate child labour, although it is clearly important. Policy choices matter, and those which open gateways of opportunity for poor people are central to efforts aimed at eliminating child labour. The Report presents examples from East Asia, including China, and from Brazil to illustrate the fact that, in addition to poverty reduction, the decision to focus on mass education in particular is an important prerequisite for moving countries to the transition point in tackling child labour.

Part I goes on to examine the historical experience of the first industrial nations to reinforce the central message of what works in combating child labour. Around a century ago, the extensive use of child labour ended in the first industrial nations thanks to a mix of interventions that helped transfer children from the workplace to the schoolroom. Economic growth, improvements in the adult labour market, changes in technology, a decline in fertility rates, the availability of decent schools, changing cultural patterns, and legal instruments and their enforcement worked together to create a virtuous cycle. The Report goes on to examine how a society can be “tipped” from a situation where there is a high prevalence of child labour to one where the right of children not to work is fully recognized and becomes the social norm.

This distilled wisdom on how to put an end to child labour has become part of the ILO’s policy framework and is embodied in its core standards on child labour. In fact, as this Report makes plain, our

knowledge of the dynamics of child labour is profound. What has become clearer over the years is that responding to child labour requires making the right policy choices, and not simply having the right technical tools. And it requires the central involvement of employers' and workers' organizations in the spirit of social dialogue.

In many cases these choices have to be made within a context of crisis and insecurity, exemplified by the tsunami of 2004 and the earthquake in Pakistan and other parts of South Asia in 2005, as well as by disasters of human origin, such as conflict and economic crisis. Children are often the most affected by crises, which place them at increased risk of entering child labour, particularly its worst forms. The final section of Part I of the Report documents the efforts the ILO is making to respond to the increased vulnerability of children in the wake of conflict and natural catastrophe.

Global Reports provide an important opportunity to reflect on progress over the preceding four years. Part II of the Report reviews efforts to strengthen the ILO's largest programme of technical cooperation – the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) – and in mainstreaming child labour as part of the Decent Work Agenda. IPEC is the leading international programme dedicated to child labour elimination and the largest programme of its kind within the ILO. Since its establishment in 1992, IPEC has spent US\$350 million, with annual expenditure running at US\$50-60 million. Since 2002, IPEC's projects and programmes have reached around 5 million children.

Taking stock of the last four years, there is much to be proud of. IPEC has continued to gain support from the donor community and has been at the forefront of the worldwide movement against child labour. New frameworks and technical tools have been put at the disposal of member States, in particular support to Time-Bound Programmes (TBPs) aimed at assisting countries in implementing the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182). Important contributions have been made to research and data collection, not least in illuminating the global and regional trends set out in Part I of the Report. There have been important breakthroughs by IPEC in advocacy, tackling the worst forms of child labour, child labour monitoring, developing a learning culture through knowledge management, and mainstreaming child labour within the Decent Work Agenda.

Set against these considerable accomplishments, the Report highlights important challenges. Agriculture and child domestic work have been relatively neglected in action taken against child labour at

national and international levels. Furthermore, there is a need to craft political strategies that seize opportunities to mobilize constituencies for combating child labour, utilizing multiple entry points. The Report concludes that greater national ownership, supported by employers' and workers' organizations, and backed up by a more vibrant worldwide movement, can create an environment in which technical tools and frameworks are put to optimal use and child labour action taken to national scale to have real impact.

Part III of the Report sets out the main challenge facing the worldwide movement against child labour: how best to mainstream child labour elimination into key development and human rights frameworks. Of particular concern is how to position child labour concerns within the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the poverty reduction strategies linked to them. Although child labour is not an explicit target, action will have to be taken against child labour to reach many of the MDG targets, especially those related to education. The Report draws attention to the increasing recognition of this connection at the national and international levels, although much still needs to be done.

Perhaps the greatest progress has been made in recognizing the link between child labour elimination and Education For All (EFA). Since 2002, an inter-agency group combining the ILO, UNESCO, UNICEF, the World Bank and the Global March Against Child Labour has met annually, leading to the establishment of a Global Task Force on Child Labour and Education at the meeting of the High-Level Group on EFA in Beijing in November 2005. The Report also highlights the extent to which HIV/AIDS is transforming our view of child labour and achieving EFA, and how IPEC is developing models of response to the pandemic. In many ways education can be viewed as a "social vaccine" against HIV/AIDS.

Youth employment has a prominent place in the MDGs and is also, from a life-cycle perspective, intimately linked to the Decent Work Agenda. This Report suggests ways in which a better connection can be made between youth employment and child labour concerns, using both the Youth Employment Network (YEN) and the resolution concerning youth employment adopted by the 93rd Session of the International Labour Conference in 2005.

Sub-Saharan Africa remains the greatest challenge to the development community, as the region least on track to reach the MDGs. The region also has the highest incidence of working children and has made the least progress, owing in part to its staggering population growth, with the population doubling every generation. This Report examines a

number of possible entry points through which child labour elimination can be strategically placed in the follow-up to the agenda set out at the G8 Summit in Gleneagles in July 2005 and looks at IPEC's role in helping the region face this crisis.

The need to strengthen and widen the worldwide movement against child labour is a major theme. A growing set of global actors has emerged over the last decade, including other United Nations agencies. Donors have been central to putting child labour on the international agenda. Of course, the role of employers' and workers' organizations remains central to child labour elimination efforts, and the Report provides examples of important initiatives taken by them over the last four years. It also examines the challenge presented by the growth of the informal economy, where much of the world's child labour, particularly its worst forms, is to be found. It provides examples of how employers and trade unions are broadening their partnerships with other civil society actors, for instance through sectoral alliances in areas such as sporting goods and agriculture.

There is a growing consensus that children should be viewed as active partners in the worldwide movement against child labour. The first Global Report on the subject reflected this, and this second Report explores the meaning of children's participation and the strategies that have been adopted to ensure that this goes beyond tokenism.

One of the by-products of a more vigorous and pluralistic worldwide movement over the last decade has been an increasing diversity of opinion concerning basic concepts, causation and responses. This has not always been in support of ILO policy, and there were points during the last decade where the worldwide

movement appeared to be polarized. The adoption of Convention No. 182 in 1999 did much to accommodate diversity within unity, but some disagreements on strategy remain among the international agencies and some international non-governmental organizations (NGOs). That said, the worldwide movement is stronger than a decade ago, although part of the momentum generated at the end of the 1990s appears to have stalled. The Report outlines several steps that need to be taken at all levels, in particular by the ILO, towards revitalizing and strengthening the global effort against child labour.

Part IV sets out an action plan that builds on the three-pillar approach set forth in the 2002 Global Report, but in a more focused way, defining clear targets. It proposes that the ILO and its member States continue to pursue the goal of the effective abolition of child labour, committing themselves to the elimination of all the worst forms of child labour by 2016, and that they put in place appropriate time-bound measures by the end of 2008. In pursuit of these targets, over the next four years the ILO will strengthen its efforts to develop coherent and comprehensive approaches to abolishing child labour. The proposed action plan rests on three pillars: supporting national responses to child labour, in particular through effective mainstreaming in national development and policy frameworks; deepening and strengthening the worldwide movement; and promoting further integration of child labour concerns within overall ILO priorities regarding decent work as a global goal. This more focused and strategic approach to global leadership will help ensure that the ILO will make a more effective contribution to making child labour history.





## Introduction

1. A future without child labour is at last within reach. Significant progress is being made worldwide in combating child labour. The new global estimates of trends reinforce this message of hope. However, a strong and sustained global movement is needed to provide the extra push towards eliminating the scourge of child labour. This is no time for complacency.
2. The future belongs to those with a vision to shape it. The ILO and its partners stand for a world where no girl or boy is forced to work at the expense of their health and development and their future prospects of decent work. This Report charts the significant progress that has been made towards turning this vision into a reality.
3. Our understanding of child labour – its causes and remedies – is profound. There is over 150 years of accumulated wisdom from all parts of the world to draw on. Child labour first emerged as a public policy issue when the impact of the Industrial Revolution made itself felt. Many of the actions that were initiated by the first wave of industrialized countries have become standard elements of the universally recognized package of interventions: advocacy campaigns; public inquiries (in which children and their families were interviewed); minimum age legislation; labour and schools inspectorates; and education provision for working children. These policy responses have been further developed by many other nations, often through technical cooperation by the ILO or other international actors. Indeed, many developing countries today have been able to benefit from the experience of the first industrial nations to introduce laws and programmes at a faster pace than they did.
4. Child labour was one of the first and most important issues to be addressed by the international community. The ILO adopted an international standard aimed at the elimination of child labour at its first Conference in 1919, and has continued doing so in a progression culminating in its most recent standards establishing an immediate obligation to eliminate the worst forms of child labour. In the last generation the ILO has distilled this accumulated knowledge into comprehensive policy frameworks. And since 1992, through its International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC), the ILO has had a unique operational capability enabling us to test what works on the ground in some 90 countries. The efforts of the ILO and its partners in the worldwide movement to bring this issue to centre stage have been aided by an expanded awareness that economic development must go hand in hand with respect for human rights. Yet despite these efforts we still have a long way to go, not least in taking our child labour elimination efforts to scale.
5. Experience also demonstrates that progress is not guaranteed. There have been false starts and reversals, especially where the impact of natural disasters, conflict or economic shocks forces families back into traditional modes of coping. But these too provide important lessons that we ignore at our peril. In a divided world, subject to calamities of human and natural origin, progress often appears fragile at best.
6. Such contemporary realities force a sense of proportion. Child labour is one aspect of world poverty. Every single day, 30,000 children die as a result of extreme poverty.<sup>1</sup> Ending poverty in a generation – in *this* generation – is the great global cause of today.
7. This will not be achieved without consigning child labour to history. Child labour is a neglected element of the poverty trap – part of the “Faustian bargain” poor people are forced to make in order to

1. *Make poverty history*, at <http://www.makepovertyhistory.org>.

achieve a degree of immediate security.<sup>2</sup> It is both a result of poverty and a way of perpetuating it. Especially in its worst forms, it dehumanizes children, reducing them to an economic asset, which in turn fuels spiralling population growth among countries least able to cope. By turning a blind eye to abuse of young workers, it impoverishes and even destroys the human capital that is necessary for the economy to grow in the future. Allowing children to be part of an international market involving sexual exploitation erodes the social fabric of societies. Child labour remains a central obstacle to realizing the right of all children to education and to protection from violence, abuse and exploitation.

8. This Report builds on the foundations of the first Global Report on the effective abolition of child labour under the follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work.<sup>3</sup> That Report was comprehensive in scope and highlighted the key issues to be addressed if progress is to be made in a global effort against child labour.

9. This second Global Report on child labour reflects on the progress that has been made over the last four years, using the three-pillar approach of the 2002 action plan: reinforcing the work of IPEC; mainstreaming child labour across the ILO's Decent Work Agenda; and strengthening joint worldwide action.<sup>4</sup> The Report also points to areas where progress has not been so marked and where further efforts are needed, particularly as regards the strengthening of a

worldwide movement. Finally, the Report presents a draft action plan with concrete targets over the next four years.

10. The Report is divided into four parts. Part I presents a dynamic global picture tracing child labour trends, and outlines national progress and the policies that underpin it. It highlights the progress being made in reducing child labour around the world. Part II examines ILO action on child labour since 2002.

11. Part III explores key policy issues and global challenges presented by mainstreaming child labour into broader development frameworks, the special plight of Africa, and strengthening the worldwide movement.

12. In order to assist the ILO Governing Body in determining priorities for future technical cooperation, Part IV outlines an action plan built around specific targets under the three-pillar framework. It also shows how combating child labour can have a catalytic effect, combining with other efforts to achieve basic changes in human rights and human security.

13. The challenge ahead has two related elements. The first task is to rally a broader, deeper and more dynamic global alliance against child labour. The second is to consolidate and build on the gains made so far on the ground, while expanding them in a growing number of countries. The action plan set out at the end of the Report challenges the ILO and its constituents to work more strategically and intensely towards *consigning child labour to history*.

2. See G. Wood: "Staying secure, staying poor: The 'Faustian bargain'", in *World Development* (Oxford), Vol. 31, No. 3 (Mar. 2003), pp. 455-471.

3. ILO: *A future without child labour*, Global Report under the follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, Report I(B), International Labour Conference, 90th Session, Geneva, 2002.

4. This action plan was later refined in Governing Body document GB.285/TC/5, Geneva, Nov. 2002.





# PART I

## Making progress in combating child labour

### Child labour trends

14. The main objective of Global Reports under the Declaration is to provide a dynamic global picture. The previous Global Report on child labour in 2002 presented updated and more complete data on the problem across the world. The 2002 estimates were also a refinement on previous statistical exercises in that an attempt was made to assess the number of children involved in the worst forms of child labour – the greatest challenge to child labour data collection because they are hidden.

15. The expectation in 2002 was that four years on, a sharper picture would emerge that would provide grounds for supporting the cautious optimism expressed then. This Global Report presents trends in child labour on the basis of new estimates that are fully comparable with those published in 2002. It is thus possible to provide, for the first time, a truly “dynamic global picture” of the state of child labour. The newly emerging picture is a remarkable one, fully justifying the approach and efforts of the ILO and its partners over the years: it confirms that the elimination of child labour is within reach.

### Methodology and underlying data

16. As background for this Global Report, the ILO’s Statistical Information and Monitoring Programme on Child Labour (SIMPOC) prepared new global estimates on the overall involvement of children in work. This includes estimates on the number and dis-

tribution of economically active children, the magnitude of child labour and the extent to which children are involved in hazardous work.

17. The estimates are based on data taken from national SIMPOC surveys on child labour; the World Bank’s Living Standards Measurement Study (LSMS) surveys; the Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS) conducted by the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF); labour force surveys; and the United Nations Population Division. Survey data were also provided by the inter-agency Understanding Children’s Work (UCW) Project.

18. Various estimation approaches were employed in order to arrive at the results presented below.<sup>1</sup> A key objective was to make the new estimates fully comparable to the previous ones, published by the ILO in 2002,<sup>2</sup> and thus to enable the ILO to assess global and regional trends for the first time. In addition, a large number of countries included in the 2002 sample have meanwhile conducted a second child labour survey.<sup>3</sup> Data derived from the matched sample form the basis of the global trend assessment. All data were harmonized to the benchmark year 2004 in order to make them comparable with the previous estimates, based on 2000 data.

### Definitions

19. The new global estimates and trends are presented in terms of three categories: economically

1. A separate technical publication will provide a full account of the estimation methodology and underlying data, and will present results in greater detail.
2. IPEC: *Every child counts: New global estimates on child labour* (Geneva, ILO, April 2002).
3. Seventeen of the 29 sample countries used in 2002 have conducted a second survey with data on children’s work.

Table 1.1. Estimates of different categories of child work by age, 2000 and 2004

	Age group (years)	Child population		Of which: economically active children		Of which: child labourers		Of which: children in hazardous work	
		2000	2004	2000	2004	2000	2004	2000	2004
5-17	Number (millions)	1 531.4	1 566.3	351.9	317.4	245.5	217.7	170.5	126.3
	Incidence (% of age group)	100.0	100.0	23.0	20.3	16.0	13.9	11.1	8.1
	% change from 2000 to 2004	-	<b>2.3</b>	-	<b>-9.8</b>	-	<b>-11.3</b>	-	<b>-25.9</b>
5-14	Number (millions)	1 199.4	1 206.5	211.0	190.7	186.3	165.8	111.3	74.4
	Incidence (% of age group)	100.0	100.0	17.6	15.8	15.5	13.7	9.3	6.2
	% change from 2000 to 2004	-	<b>0.6</b>	-	<b>-9.6</b>	-	<b>-11.0</b>	-	<b>-33.2</b>
15-17	Number (millions)	332.0	359.8	140.9	126.7	59.2	51.9	59.2	51.9
	Incidence (% of age group)	100.0	100.0	42.4	35.2	17.8	14.4	17.8	14.4
	% change from 2000 to 2004	-	<b>8.4</b>	-	<b>-10.1</b>	-	<b>-12.3</b>	-	<b>-12.3</b>

Source: Statistical Information and Monitoring Programme on Child Labour (SIMPOC).

active children, child labour and children in hazardous work. These categories are explained below.<sup>4</sup>

**20.** “Economic activity” is a broad concept that encompasses most productive activities undertaken by children, whether for the market or not, paid or unpaid, for a few hours or full time, on a casual or regular basis, legal or illegal; it excludes chores undertaken in the child’s own household and schooling. To be counted as economically active, a child must have worked for at least one hour on any day during a seven-day reference period. “Economically active children” is a statistical rather than a legal notion.

**21.** “Child labour” is a narrower concept than “economically active children”, excluding all those children aged 12 years and older who are working only a few hours a week in permitted light work and those aged 15 years and above whose work is not classified as “hazardous”. The concept of “child labour” is based on the ILO Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138), which represents the most comprehensive and authoritative international definition of minimum age for admission to employment or work, implying “economic activity”.

**22.** “Hazardous work” by children is any activity or occupation that, by its nature or type, has or leads to

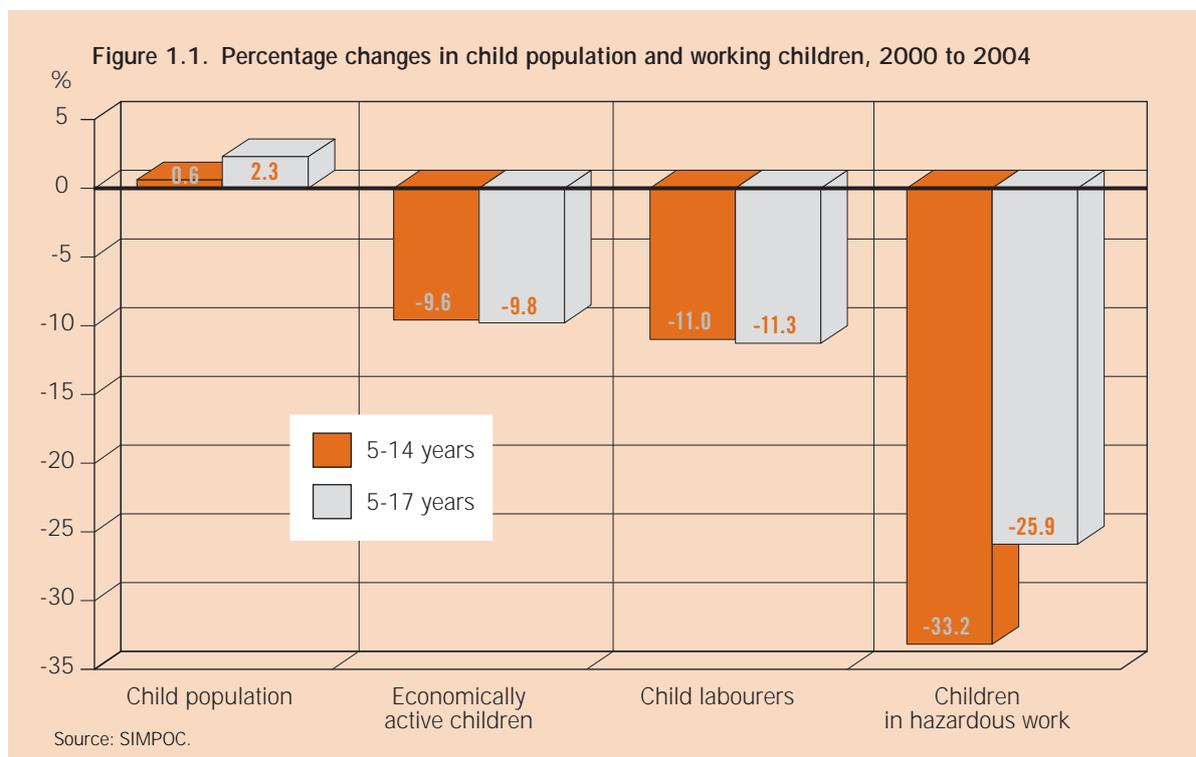
adverse effects on the child’s safety, health (physical or mental) and moral development. Hazards could also derive from excessive workload, physical conditions of work, and/or work intensity in terms of the duration or hours of work even where the activity or occupation is known to be non-hazardous or “safe”. The list of such types of work must be determined at the national level after tripartite consultation.

### Key results

**23.** Table 1.1 and figure 1.1 present an overview of the main results, disaggregated by age group and category of work. Hazardous work is a subcategory of child labour, which in turn is a subcategory of economic activity.

**24.** The new estimates suggest that there were about 317 million economically active children aged 5 to 17 in 2004, of whom 218 million could be regarded as child labourers. Of the latter, 126 million were engaged in hazardous work. The corresponding figures for the narrower age group of 5 to 14 year-olds are 191 million economically active children, 166 million child labourers, and 74 million children in

4. See IPEC: *Every child counts*, op. cit., pp. 29-34.



hazardous work. The number of child labourers in both age groups of 5-14 and 5-17 fell by 11 per cent over the four years from 2000 to 2004. However, the decline was much greater for those engaged in hazardous work: by 26 per cent for the 5-17 age group, and 33 per cent for 5 to 14 year-olds.

25. The incidence of child labour (percentage of children working) in 2004 is estimated at 13.9 per cent for the 5-17 age group, compared to 16 per cent in 2000. The proportion of girls among child labourers, however, remained steady.

26. The global picture that emerges is thus highly encouraging: *Child work is declining, and the more harmful the work and the more vulnerable the children involved, the faster the decline.*

#### Child labour by sex

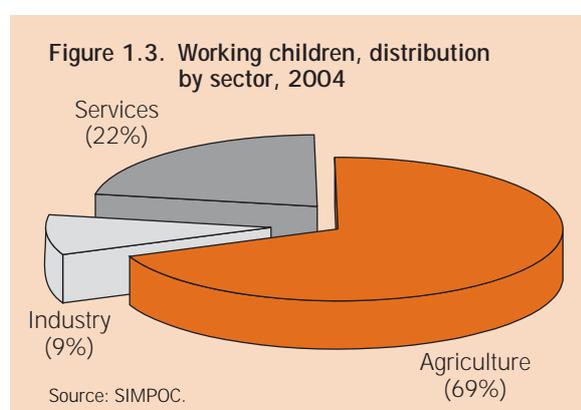
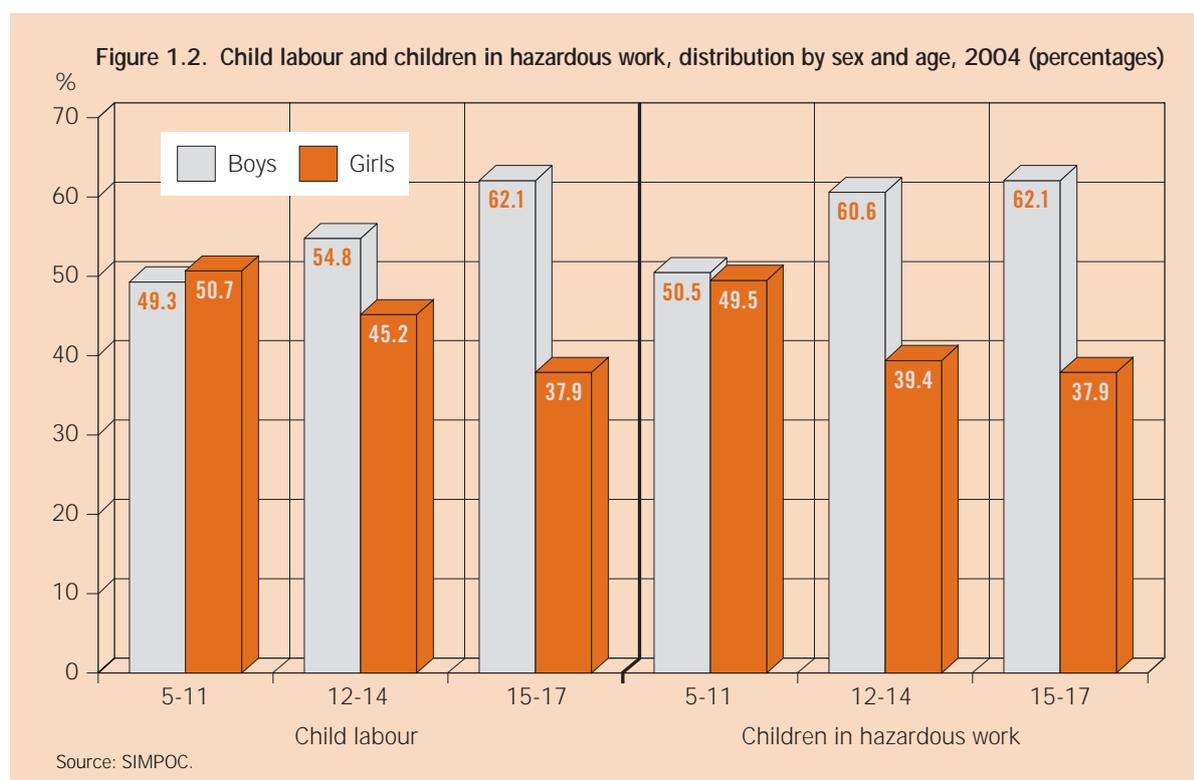
27. There has been no major change during the last four years in the distribution of working children by sex (see figure 1.2). Boys continue to be more exposed to child labour, particularly work of a hazardous nature, than girls. The difference becomes more pronounced with increasing age.

#### Child labour by economic sector

28. The indicator for employment by sector breaks down employment into three broad groupings of economic activity: agriculture, industry and services (figure 1.3). It is based on the International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities, Revisions 2 (1968) and 3 (1989). The agricultural sector comprises activities in agriculture, hunting, forestry and fishing. The industry sector consists of mining and quarrying, manufacturing, construction and public utilities (electricity, gas and water). The services sector includes wholesale and retail trade, restaurants and hotels, transport, storage and communications, finance, insurance, real estate and business services, and community, social and personal services.

#### Regional trends

29. The new estimates permit a regional breakdown for the 5-14 age group (table 1.2 and figure 1.4). The economic activity rate among 5-14 year olds has declined in all regions. However, the underlying dynamics have varied. Latin America and the Caribbean stand out in terms of rapid decline. The number of



economically active children fell by two-thirds over four years, and the activity rate by even more. The region's recent activity rate, 5.1 per cent, places it on a par with "other regions" – a heterogeneous group consisting of developed countries, transition economies and the developing region of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). It is well ahead of both Asia and the Pacific on the one hand, and sub-Saharan Africa on the other, which registered far more modest decreases.

**30.** In sub-Saharan Africa, the region with the highest incidence of child labour, the small decline in the activity rate from 28.8 to 26.4 per cent was

**Table 1.2. Global trends in children's economic activity by region, 2000 and 2004 (5-14 age group)**

Region	Child population (million)		Economically active children (million)		Activity rate (%)	
	2000	2004	2000	2004	2000	2004
Asia and the Pacific	655.1	650.0	127.3	122.3	19.4	18.8
Latin America and the Caribbean	108.1	111.0	17.4	5.7	16.1	5.1
Sub-Saharan Africa	166.8	186.8	48.0	49.3	28.8	26.4
Other regions	269.3	258.8	18.3	13.4	6.8	5.2
<b>World</b>	<b>1 199.3</b>	<b>1 206.6</b>	<b>211.0</b>	<b>190.7</b>	<b>17.6</b>	<b>15.8</b>

Source: SIMPOC.

not caused by a drop in the number of economically active children – which in fact rose somewhat. This is explained by the extremely high rate of population growth. The challenges facing the region are discussed in Part III of this Report.

31. Asia and the Pacific registered declines both in the child population and in the number of economically active children, but only a very small decrease in activity rates. The present state of data did not allow regional breakdowns for the MENA region or industrialized countries. There was no new data available for the unconditional worst forms of child labour.

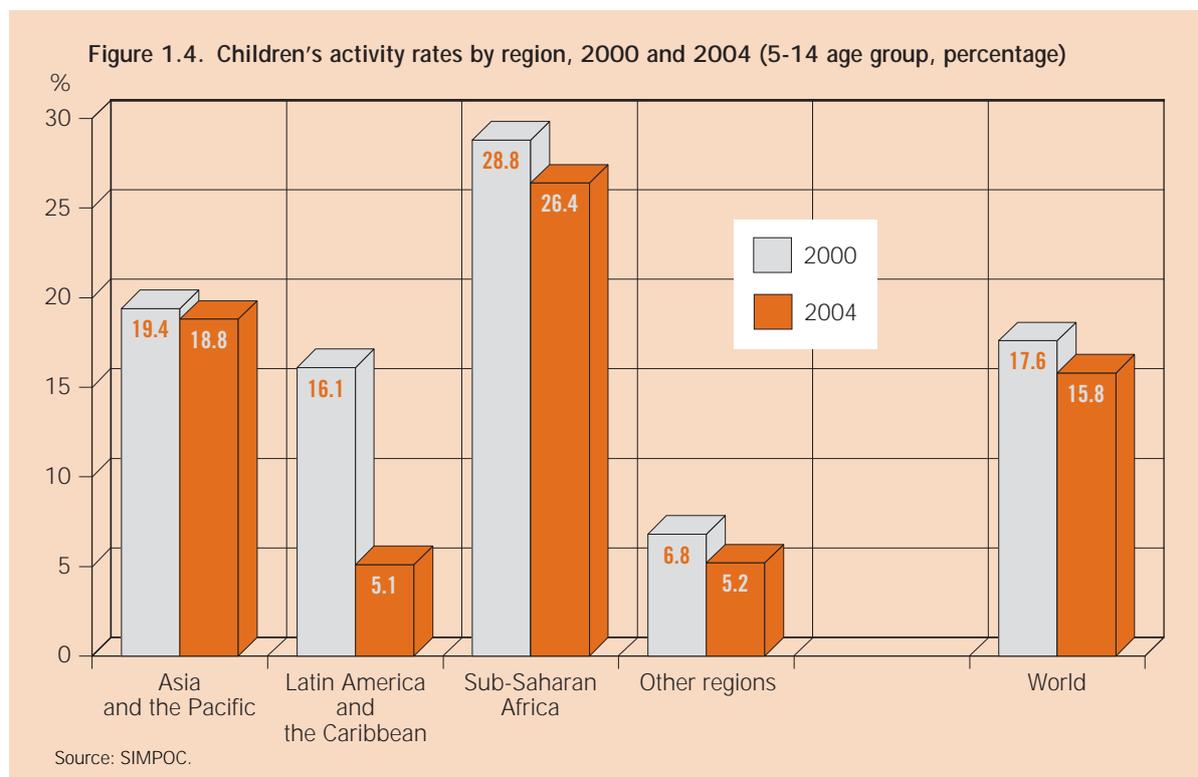
### Summary

32. The involvement of children in work has declined in all three categories over the last four years – both in absolute and in relative terms – and among all age groups and both sexes. Two trends stand out: the qualitative decline in child labour (the younger and

more vulnerable the child and the more hazardous the work, the greater the decline), and the massive declines shown by the Latin America and Caribbean region, putting it on a par with some developed and transition economies.

33. The decline in hazardous work by one-third among the 5-14 age group gives reason for cautious optimism – if this pace were to be maintained over the next decade the elimination of the worst forms of child labour by 2016 would be a feasible proposition. The data show that we are reaching a critical threshold in the elimination of child labour.

34. It is premature to speculate on the reasons for this overall decline. What is clear is that it comes at a time when there is a growing international commitment to the elimination of child labour, and acceptance of the policy measures that contribute to reducing the number of children at work. This is reflected in increasing ratification of the ILO Conventions, and in continuing efforts by the worldwide movement against child labour at the national and international levels.



## National action

### Progress at the national level

#### *The importance of policy coherence*

35. The following examples illustrate that it is policy choices made by governments rather than poverty levels alone that explain why certain countries have managed to reach a critical threshold in achieving universal education and with it child labour elimination.

#### *Poverty, education and the extent of child labour*

36. It is difficult in many countries to obtain a direct measure of child labour. School attendance and poverty levels, however, provide surrogate or proxy measures for child labour. School attendance imposes limits on the hours of work and the nature and conditions of work. Full-time school attendance is largely incompatible with the worst forms of child labour. In country after country the establishment of universal schooling up to the age of 14 has signalled the effective demise of child labour.<sup>5</sup> The key factor here has been the commitment of the State rather than income levels.<sup>6</sup> Child labour also declines with increases in gross domestic product (GDP) per capita – a historical pattern that is found in low-income countries today.<sup>7</sup> The labour force participation rate of children aged from 10 to 14 years is extremely high at 30-60 per cent in countries with a per capita income of US\$500 or less. But it declines rapidly to 10-30 per cent in countries with incomes between US\$500 and US\$1,000. This negative correlation becomes less marked thereafter, where cultural factors may come into play. The best predictor of child labour appears to be the structure of production in a country – the higher the share of agriculture in GDP, the higher the incidence of child labour.<sup>8</sup> When it adopted the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), the International Labour Conference recognized that efforts to end child labour work best when measures to combat poverty and promote edu-

cation are linked to increased regulation and enforcement in selected areas.

#### *Examples from East and South-East Asia*

37. Perhaps the best illustration of what can be done to end poverty is the experience over the last four decades in East and South-East Asia. Development in this subregion has seen countries such as Malaysia, poorer than Ghana at independence in 1957, take off economically in the 1960s and virtually eradicate US\$1-a-day poverty today and achieve universal education. Below are a number of examples from the subregion, where political commitment to reducing poverty and expanding education has had an important bearing on child labour elimination.

#### *Republic of Korea*

38. Within a generation of independence in 1945, the Republic of Korea went from being an exceedingly poor country with low levels of school enrolment to implementing a mass education system. Compulsory education was initiated in 1948 for six years, and was subsequently extended to nine years. From 1955 to 1970 priority was given to primary education, with 99 per cent of all elementary school-age children enrolled by the end of the 1970s.<sup>9</sup>

39. The Republic of Korea's remarkable economic growth starting in the early 1960s – 6.6 per cent annually from 1965 to 1985, with per capita income rising from US\$83 in 1961 to US\$2,150 in 1985 – was accompanied and facilitated by an expanding education system.<sup>10</sup> From 1965 onwards, greater attention was given to expanding secondary education, and it is this development that helped pave the way for spectacular economic growth.

40. Moreover, one significant effect of concentrating efforts on basic as opposed to higher education was that more girls were educated, and this increase in the number of women with a basic education led to a

5. M. Weiner: *The child and the State in India: Child labor and education policy in comparative perspective* (Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 1991), p. 156.

6. *ibid.*, p. 4.

7. See G. Betcherman et al.: *Child labor, education, and children's rights*, Social Protection Discussion Paper Series, No. 0412 (Washington, DC, World Bank, July 2004), pp. 12-13.

8. P. Fallon; Z. Tzannatos: *Child labor: Issues and directions for the World Bank* (Washington, DC, World Bank, 1998), p. 3.

9. Weiner, *op. cit.*, p. 171.

10. *ibid.*

stable school-age population. This allowed a growing amount of resources to be devoted to improving the quality of education. This progressive approach – of building up the education system stage by stage – was sustained over a long period and paid dividends.<sup>11</sup>

#### Malaysia

41. Malaysia has managed to reduce the incidence of poverty drastically and lessen inequalities in income and education while achieving rapid economic growth and maintaining racial harmony.

42. At independence in 1957 Malaysia was a deeply divided society, with the urban-rural divide and huge education gaps reflecting racial divisions. Successive development plans emphasized rural development and affirmative action programmes targeted at the poor to bridge the racial divide. In the 1960s nine-year compulsory education was introduced, and by the 1980s universal primary education had been achieved with gender parity. From the mid-1990s secondary school enrolments took off, reaching 70 per cent by 2002. Malaysia's economic progress was aided by its relatively small size and annual population growth rates of around 2 per cent.

#### Thailand

43. Thailand was one of the first countries to join IPEC, in 1992. In 1994 IPEC assisted the Government in setting up a National Steering Committee to respond to child labour under what is now the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare. In addition, IPEC managed to link more than 170 agencies, although it directly supported fewer than 50.

44. IPEC contributed to important legislative and policy developments in Thailand in the first decade of its operations, including the Prevention and Suppression of Prostitution Act (1996), the Labour Protection Act (1998), which increased the minimum age for work from 13 to 15 years, and the National Education Act (1999).

45. Child labour had already begun to decline quite significantly when Thailand joined IPEC in 1992, with the child labour participation rate down

to around 5 per cent in 1989.<sup>12</sup> This was due to rapid economic and educational progress. This downward trend was maintained in the 1990s despite the economic crisis starting in 1997, so that the participation rates of children under 15 years of age fell to around 1 per cent by 2000.

46. Important factors accounting for this steady decline in child labour were the firm commitment in 1992 by the first democratically elected Prime Minister following a period of military rule to ending child labour and sexual exploitation. In the following year, the upgrading of the government agency dealing with child labour to a full Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare was a further major step. Despite the economic crisis, in 1999 compulsory education was increased from six to nine years starting from the age of 7. Primary education has become universal since 1999. The Government is working towards achieving the ultimate goal of 12 years of compulsory education as stipulated in the new Constitution of 1997. As a result, there have been significant increases in enrolments in both primary and lower secondary education.

47. Since 2001, the national response to child labour has been strongly linked to trade issues and has focused on certain worst forms of child labour, such as commercial sexual exploitation and trafficking, which still persist, whilst there is a growing concern with children engaged in illegal activities related to the trade in narcotics.

#### China

48. China has 350 million children, accounting for 20 per cent of the world's total. Although there is little hard statistical information on child labour trends in China, the evidence on poverty reduction and educational expansion can be taken as important proxy indicators. In the past 25 years, China has taken more people out of poverty and enrolled more children in school than any other country. There is thus strong circumstantial evidence that this has also had a dramatic impact on child labour in China.

49. Much of the world's progress in alleviating extreme poverty over the last two decades has occurred in China,<sup>13</sup> and it averaged annual growth rates of over 10 per cent in the 1990s.<sup>14</sup> China dramatically

11. K. Tomasevski: *Education denied: Costs and remedies* (London, Zed Books, 2003), p. 23.

12. S. Ptanawanit et al.: *A review of IPEC's contribution to national efforts to combat child labour in Thailand: 1992-2002* (Bangkok, ILO, 2005), p. 32.

13. J. Wolfensohn; F. Bourguignon: *Development and poverty reduction: Looking back, looking ahead* (Washington, DC, World Bank, 2004), p. 17.

14. J. E. Stiglitz: *Globalization and its discontents* (New York, Norton, 2003), p. 181.

**Box 1.1.**  
**Addressing child labour in Turkey**

The protection of children from exploitation has been at the forefront of the national agenda since the formation of the Turkish Republic in 1923. Turkey was one of the first countries to join IPEC in 1992 and has ratified both key Conventions on child labour. Under IPEC over 100 action programmes have been implemented with national partners. IPEC strategies in Turkey have evolved, building from a foundation of improved knowledge to awareness raising among policy-makers to developing institutional capacity of key partners. IPEC has also developed successful intervention models and made efforts to have these taken up by partner organizations, including other United Nations agencies such as UNICEF, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). IPEC has also provided support for the establishment of coordinating mechanisms such as the National Advisory Group and Action Committees at local government level. In 2002 Turkey adopted the target of eliminating the worst forms of child labour within ten years.

Turkey can point to a significant reduction in child labour in recent years. While roughly 1 million children were engaged in economic activity in 1994, this figure declined drastically to half a million in 1999 – a drop of 50 per cent in five years. This was due to a combination of factors, including the extension in 1997 of compulsory education from five to eight years, covering the 6-14 age group, as well as enhanced awareness and capacity developed over a decade of IPEC experience. The Government's commitment to child labour elimination featured in its 8th Five-Year Development Plan (2001-05), which also sets the goal of providing education to every girl and boy under the age of 14 years. The Plan also addresses the eradication of poverty as the most significant factor behind the elimination of child labour.

Source: IPEC project on combating the worst forms of child labour in Turkey – Supporting the time-bound national policy and programme for the elimination of the worst forms of child labour in Turkey (2004-06).

reduced large-scale poverty – the largest reduction in history<sup>15</sup> – through specific government reforms and rapid economic growth. Using the World Bank's \$1-a-day measure, the number of poor is estimated to have declined from about 490 million in 1981 to 88 million in 2002, a reduction in the incidence of extreme poverty from 49 per cent to 6.9 per cent.<sup>16</sup> About half of this progress occurred in the first half of the 1980s, as China took the first major steps in liberalizing its rural economy.<sup>17</sup> China's reforms began in agriculture.<sup>18</sup> Since poverty in China was mainly a rural phenomenon, growth in the rural sector has been key to reducing poverty levels. When rural economic growth slowed down in the second half of the 1980s and late 1990s, China saw relatively slower progress in poverty reduction, accompanied by widening inequalities.<sup>19</sup>

**50.** China has also experienced a major educational expansion, managing to achieve nearly universal primary education (UPE) despite having the largest

number of children to enrol, and with 80 per cent in the rural areas.<sup>20</sup> In 1949 only around 25 per cent of children were in primary school. In 1982, 93 per cent of children attended primary school and 70 per cent completed sixth grade – the vast majority went on to junior secondary school.<sup>21</sup> As soon as economic growth began to slow in the mid-1980s, China embarked on educational reforms that boosted long-standing efforts<sup>22</sup> to achieve UPE. China enacted the Law of Compulsory Education in 1986. The new law extended basic education to include three additional years of junior secondary school, decentralized the education financing and administrative systems, diversified senior secondary education, and started to introduce market elements to the management of the system.<sup>23</sup>

**51.** As a result, the aim of achieving at least five years of primary education for virtually all children by 2000 has been largely attained. The average net primary enrolment rate reached 98.9 per cent in 1998,

15. *ibid.*

16. Wang Sangui; Li Zhou; Ren Yanshun: *The 8-7 national poverty reduction program in China – The national strategy and its impact* (Washington, DC, World Bank, 2004), p. 3.

17. Wolfensohn and Bourguignon, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

18. Stiglitz, *op. cit.*, p. 182.

19. Wang Sangui, *op. cit.*, pp. 7-8.

20. C. Colclough; K. Lewin: *Educating all the children: Strategies for primary schooling in the South* (Oxford, Clarendon, 1993), p. 84.

21. Weiner, *op. cit.*, p. 162.

22. Dating from 1949. The goal of UPE had first been set for 1962.

23. X. Liang: *China: Challenges of secondary education* (Washington, DC, World Bank, 2001), p. 11.

**Box 1.2.**  
**Addressing child labour in China**

China ratified Convention No. 138 in 1999 and Convention No. 182 in 2002. New regulations that took effect on 1 December 2002 ban the employment of children under the age of 16 years. The new regulations impose fines for violations and require employers to check workers' identification cards.

There are other indications that China is increasingly willing to address the issue of child labour. During the consideration by the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child of China's second report in September 2005, there was official recognition that there were children in need of special protection measures, including street children, children of migrants and those vulnerable to trafficking.<sup>1</sup> China still faces multiple challenges in child protection owing to visible disparities between urban and rural areas and a traditional culture favouring boys over girls.

Since the proportion of children working is low, the challenge is to reach out and identify the isolated pockets of child labour. One group that is receiving greater attention are the children of migrant workers left behind with family members or those living with their parents in cities but not necessarily having access to education. Moreover, the problem of child labour may spread with the rapid growth of labour-intensive industries.

IPEC has been working in Yunnan Province since 2000 as part of the Mekong subregional project to combat trafficking in children and women and in 2004 launched a new project to prevent trafficking in girls and young women for labour exploitation within China. China was also represented at the first regional capacity-building training course on child labour data collection organized by the ILO, together with the inter-agency research project Understanding Children's Work (UCW), held in Bangkok in November 2004. This reflects a growing willingness by China to learn from experience in other countries.

1. Introductory remarks by Ambassador Sha Zukang at the Consideration of the Second Periodic Report of the People's Republic of China on Implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (19 September 2005).

with only three provinces registering a rate lower than 95 per cent. The average dropout rate at the primary level is about 1 per cent.<sup>24</sup>

**52.** At the same time China is well on the way to implementing its nine-year compulsory education policy, although problems persist. Regional and urban-rural inequalities remain, whilst the education of ethnic minorities presents another challenge. There is also considerable variation in the quality of education provided.<sup>25</sup> One important element of China's strategy has been the prohibition of the employment of children who have not attained nine years of schooling. This is probably a unique requirement among developing countries.<sup>26</sup>

**53.** China has achieved universal education at a lower cost than most other countries<sup>27</sup> owing to slower population growth (0.9 per cent on average in the 1990s) and market reforms. Moreover, as we have seen, educational reforms were part of much wider

socio-economic reforms from the early 1980s. A generation later these had a dramatic impact in terms of poverty reduction, universal education and child labour. For example, the percentage of children aged 10-14 who work steadily decreased from 48 per cent in 1950 to 12 per cent in 1995. The sharpest decline – the transition point – occurred in the 1980s, when the country's economic growth rate soared.<sup>28</sup>

**Brazil**

**54.** The history of industrialization in Brazil shows that, as in Britain, it went hand in hand with child labour. For example, in the last decade of the nineteenth century, 15 per cent of workers in industrial establishments in São Paulo were children and adolescents. In 1920, children comprised 40 per cent of the workforce of the textile sector in the state.<sup>29</sup>

24. *ibid.*

25. *ibid.*, p. 12.

26. Colclough and Lewin, *op. cit.*, p. 89.

27. See Liang, *op. cit.*, pp. 15-16. China has devoted just over 2 per cent of its GNP to education compared to a world average for less developed countries of 3.9 per cent. However, the 11th Five-Year Plan (2006-10) includes the intention to spend 4 per cent of GDP on education.

28. See K. Basu: "Child labor: Cause, consequence, and cure, with remarks on international labor standards", in *Journal of Economic Literature* (Nashville), Vol. 37, No. 3 (Sep. 1999), pp. 1086-1087. Basu used ILO (1996) data.

29. Organização Internacional do Trabalho [ILO]: *Boas práticas de combate ao trabalho infantil: os 10 anos do Ipec no Brasil* (Brasília, 2003).

55. Despite the structural changes in the economy in modern times, child labour remained an important feature of the labour market, and indeed appeared to grow in intensity in the 1980s. This was also associated with high rates of population growth – around 2.2 per cent annually on average from 1970 to 1990 – which meant that the 5-17 age group comprised 29 per cent of the population in 1992.

56. This upward trend in child labour in the 1980s, and in particular the emergence of the highly visible phenomenon of street children, began to attract world attention and with it the involvement of NGOs and international agencies such as the ILO and UNICEF. The time was also ripe for action with the restoration of democracy and the adoption of a new Constitution in 1988, followed by the Statute on Children and Adolescents enacted in July 1990. The Statute included ten sections on child labour and made it plain that child labour and the right to education are incompatible. The Statute also instituted Tutelary Councils for the Rights of Children and Adolescents to assist children whose rights have been violated and monitor the effective enforcement of standards related to the rights of the child. At the local level, it established Municipal Councils to oversee the delivery of services to children. These Councils, together with their national umbrella agency, the National Council for the Rights of Children and Adolescents, have multiple functions, acting as a public forum where child labour problems are discussed and placed on the public policy agenda; as disseminators of new approaches, for example, to school integration of street children; or as watchdogs concerning children's welfare and the public budget.

57. It was against this backdrop that Brazil joined IPEC in 1992 as one of the original six participating countries. The next decade saw impressive developments, as Brazil reached a threshold in the fight against child labour. The activity rate for the 10-17 age group declined by 36.4 per cent from 1992 to 2004 (from 7,579,126 to 4,814,612). The decline was sharper in the 5-9 age group, which fell by 60.9 per cent during the same period. In 1992, a total of 636,248 children were working, compared to only 248,594 in 2004.<sup>30</sup>

58. Many factors explain the decrease in the incidence of child labour from around the mid-1990s. One reason is the high level of social mobilization in Brazil. A number of NGOs at the local and national levels run programmes aiming at fighting poverty, im-

proving living standards (including basic sanitation, health and education) and promoting fundamental rights. Some innovative actions have been extremely successful, such as the mobilization of the business sector and municipal authorities, targeted by two of the Abrinq Foundation programmes (“Child-friendly Company” and “Child-friendly Mayor”). The mobilization of media professionals and institutions through the News Agency for Children's Rights (ANDI) also deserves mention, for giving unprecedented visibility to the movement for children's rights in Brazil. Trade unions have also played a key role and, during this period, underwent a radical change in approach to the issue of child labour, undertaking an extensive awareness programme based on courses, seminars, publications, mobilization and surveys, which contributed enormously to the discussion of alternatives to child labour (for instance, mobilization of society and local authorities to discuss alternatives to children being involved in the footwear industry in Franca, in the State of São Paulo). What really made the difference was the establishment of a unique and innovative quadripartite structure, the National Forum for the Prevention and Eradication of Child Labour, set up at the end of 1994, as a permanent environment around which social actors could build consensus and discuss policies and issues related to child labour and youth employment. The new Constitution made eight years of education compulsory, and in February 2006 it was extended to nine years. From the mid-1990s an important breakthrough began to occur in primary school enrolments in the poorest regions – the North, North-East and Central West. This was made possible by a strong public policy commitment under the “Every Child in School” Programme, fostered both by school attendance cash transfer programmes to poor families with school-age children<sup>31</sup> and by the innovative Programme for the Eradication of Child Labour (PETI), established in 1996, which has now reached over 1 million children aged from 9 to 15.<sup>32</sup> In 1999 the net enrolment rate for the 7-14 age group rose to 96 per cent from 86 per cent in 1991, and by 2004, only 2.9 per cent were out of school. The goal of UPE had been practically attained. This has in turn generated a strong demand for secondary education, in which enrolment increased by 10 per cent annually from 1995, a growth rate that is perhaps unparalleled in any other country.

30. Organização Internacional do Trabalho [ILO]: *O Brasil sem trabalho infantil! Quando? Projeção de estimativas de erradicação do trabalho infantil, com base em dados de 1992-2003* (Brasília, 2005).

31. The Bolsa Escola programme (1995) and, since 2003, the Bolsa Família (Family Grant) programme, which had reached 13,363,210 children by February 2006.

32. Under the programme, in order for families to receive the monthly stipend, all children must be enrolled in school and attending after-school activities such as sports, arts, dance, or music classes.

*Summing up: The importance of policy choices*

59. Child labour elimination and poverty reduction through economic development go hand in hand. The relationship is not automatic, however. Policy choices matter, and they must be coherent. The pace of child labour elimination accelerates when strategies open up “gateways of opportunity” for poor people.<sup>33</sup> For example, where development efforts focus on the reduction of rural poverty, when the length of compulsory education is progressively extended and when government agencies, employers, trade unions and others combine forces to enforce minimum age for employment laws and create opportunities for children to avoid the trap of premature work, especially under hazardous conditions, then progress is made in fighting child labour.

60. The examples from Asia and Brazil reinforce the message that poverty reduction and mass education are important prerequisites for moving countries to the transition point in child labour elimination. If Brazil and China can manage this historical transition, other countries can too.

**Progress on ratification and implementation of standards**

61. An important part of the global picture has been progress related to ILO standards. In terms of standard setting on child labour, 1999 was clearly a pivotal year. The adoption in that year of the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention (No. 182) triggered a show of commitment on the part of ILO member States not only to taking action to eradicate the worst forms of child labour, but to the struggle against child labour in general. This commitment was expressed first and foremost through the unsurpassed rate of ratification in subsequent years of both Convention No. 182 and the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138). In addition to the 156 ratifications of Convention No. 182, Convention No. 138 has received 73 ratifications since 1999 for a total of 141, as compared to 68 ratifications over the period 1973-99. In fact, the rate of ratification of Convention No. 138 had already begun to accelerate before Convention No. 182 was adopted.

62. This growing support for the principal ILO standards concerning child labour is solid proof of member

States’ political commitment, even if the progress on the ground is not homogenous among the regions.

63. Certainly, the ratification of an international instrument is only a first step in tackling child labour, and there are many cases in which the promises made by ratification still remain to be put into practice. All the same, there are encouraging advances in many parts of the world, and the present analysis should contribute to targeting further efforts for promotion in coming years.

64. It is also important to emphasize that Global Reports established under the Declaration follow-up do not examine the application of the relevant Conventions themselves, but of the principles underlying the Conventions. The Global Reports do, however, aim to provide a dynamic global picture, encompassing all the information available to the Office. The references to the Conventions here signal the growing commitment of member States through ratification, and the information that has arrived in the Office following those ratifications.

*Overview*

65. Globally speaking, nearly 87 per cent of member States have now ratified Convention No. 182. These States include more than three out of four children in the world – 77 per cent of the world child population. In the case of Convention No. 138, which is a more complex instrument, the rate of ratification is over 79 per cent – these countries account for a little less than two out of three (63 per cent) of the world’s children. These figures show not only that the two main ILO Conventions have been accepted by an overwhelming majority of countries, but also that they cover a large proportion of children worldwide. However, 20 ILO Members have yet to ratify either Convention. Convention No. 182 has been ratified by all but 21 ILO Members, while 36 have yet to ratify Convention No. 138.<sup>34</sup>

*Africa*

66. Forty-two out of 53 African countries have already ratified both main ILO child labour Conventions, and only five have ratified neither. Thus, the overall rate of ratification is good in Africa,

33. See G. Wood: “Staying secure, staying poor: The ‘Faustian bargain’”, in *World Development* (Oxford), Vol. 31, No. 3 (Mar. 2003), p. 459.

34. This section deals only with Conventions Nos. 138 and 182, which are the fundamental Conventions on child labour covered by the Declaration. It should be recalled, however, that some countries, including those to which reference is made here, remain bound by the lower standards of earlier Conventions on minimum age because they have not yet ratified Convention No. 138. For instance, ten countries are still parties to the Minimum Age (Industry) Convention, 1919 (No. 5).

especially in terms of the percentage of child population covered. Among the countries that have ratified neither Convention are those that have faced severe internal conflict in recent years, for example Sierra Leone and Somalia.

### Americas

67. Twenty-five out of the 35 countries of this region have ratified both main ILO child labour Conventions. The two countries with the largest populations of children, the United States (75,893,000) and Mexico (39,800,000), have not ratified Convention No. 138, but have ratified Convention No. 182.

### Arab States

68. All Arab States have ratified Convention No. 182, and only Bahrain, Qatar and Saudi Arabia have yet to ratify Convention No. 138, leaving 12,534,000 children out of 37,030,000 not covered by the latter Convention.

### Asia

69. Out of 29 countries in Asia, 14 have ratified both ILO child labour Conventions. Among the remaining countries, there seems to be more reluctance to ratify Convention No. 138, and more than half the population of children aged under 18 in Asia are not yet covered by this Convention. The fact that neither Convention has been ratified by India, which has the biggest child population in the world, raises the global percentage of children not covered by the fundamental Conventions. Among these countries are the ILO's most recent member States in the Pacific, which have not yet ratified any ILO Conventions but have indicated that they are preparing to do so.

### Europe

70. Europe's rate of ratification is encouraging; with only six countries yet to ratify both Conventions Nos. 138 and 182, out of 49 countries in all. The

countries concerned are Armenia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

### Ratification prospects

71. Most of the countries that have not yet ratified these Conventions have expressed the intention to do so, or have stated that the process of ratification is under way. There are only a few cases in which governments report that they will not be able to ratify them in the near future.

### Other international instruments

72. In the year following the adoption of Convention No. 182 in 1999, three other new international instruments were adopted dealing specifically with some of the issues defined as among the worst forms of child labour, namely:

- the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict (OPAC);<sup>35</sup>
- the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography (OPSC);<sup>36</sup> and
- the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (Palermo Protocol).<sup>37</sup>

73. The rapid rate of ratification of these instruments, adding to international legal protection in this area, can be welcomed, although they have not yet attained the levels of ratification of Conventions Nos. 138 and 182.

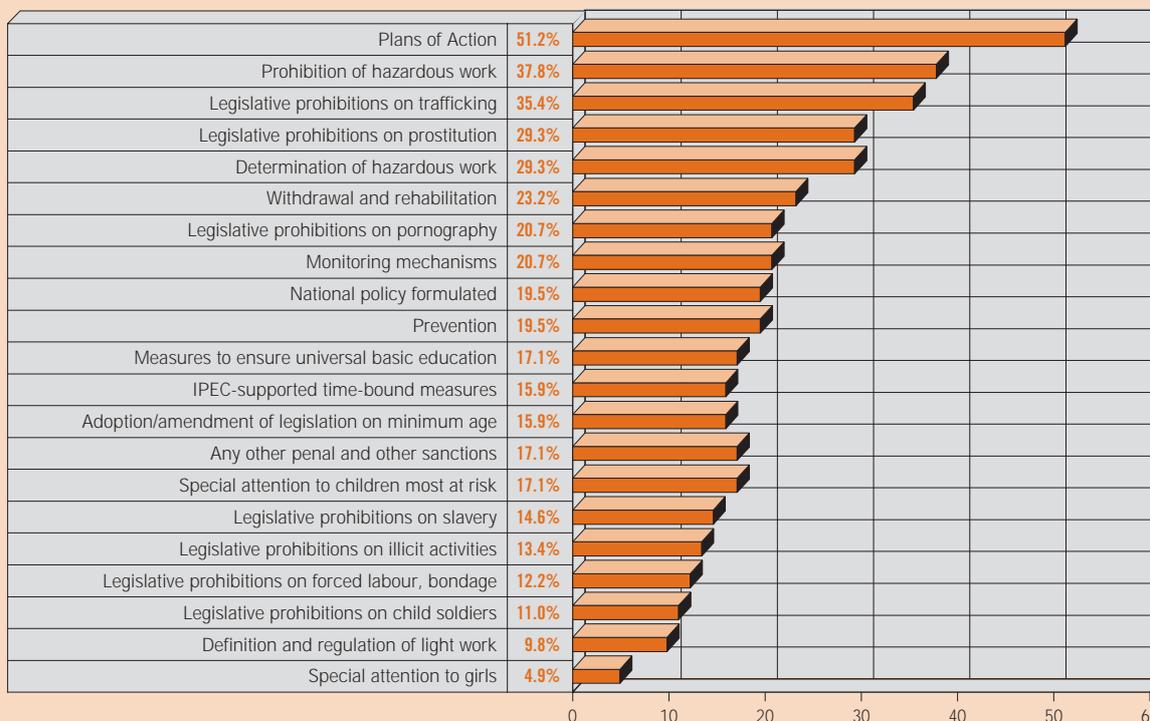
74. The 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is almost universally ratified (the United States and Somalia are the only exceptions). Conventions Nos. 138 and 182 have been ratified much more widely than the other instruments: the OPSC covers a little more than one in two children of the world (54 per cent), and the OPAC only about one in three children (36 per cent). As for the Palermo Protocol, it currently covers only about one in four children worldwide (26 per cent).

35. Adopted by General Assembly resolution A/RES/54/263 of 25 May 2000, and entered into force on 18 January 2002 (currently 92 ratifications).

36. Adopted by General Assembly resolution A/RES/54/263 of 25 May 2000, and entered into force on 12 February 2002 (currently 90 ratifications).

37. Adopted by General Assembly resolution A/RES/55/25 of 15 November 2000, and entered into force on 25 December 2003 (currently 86 ratifications).

Figure 1.5. Action reported under Conventions Nos. 138 and 182 since 1999 (percentage of reports submitted)



Sources: IPEC; Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations (CEACR).

**Impact of ratification of Conventions Nos. 138 and 182 since 1999 on national action**

75. To what extent does this show of commitment by countries translate into concrete action against child labour in legislation, policy and operational action? It is inherently difficult to obtain a complete picture of all actions and measures that countries have taken to combat child labour. However, a reliable measure of the actions taken by States in relation to the ratification of the Conventions since 1999 can be made by examining the reports they have submitted to the ILO’s Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations (CEACR). Since 1999, more than 200 first reports have been received by the ILO from member countries on the application of the two Conventions, the majority of which have been examined by the Committee of Experts. Taking 1999 as a starting point, the cases of action reported by governments provide a reasonably accurate picture of the extent to which countries’ commitments under the Conventions have given rise to positive measures. Of course, actions taken by coun-

tries prior to 1999 under Convention No. 138 are not included, and their value should not be underestimated. However, the picture emerging from government reports since 1999 (see figure 1.5) provides an overview highlighting both areas of high activity and areas where more action is required. There is thus solid evidence that ratification of these instruments has had a direct and positive effect on governments’ actions to eliminate child labour, including its worst forms. This too is part of the global picture required under the Declaration’s follow-up procedures.

76. Of course ratification is not the end of the story – it is the beginning of a process that should end in the total abolition of child labour. The picture captured in this section is only a partial one. It refers only to the lessons emerging from first reports following ratification of these Conventions, and it does not include all the contributions made by the employers’ and workers’ organizations and other actors in civil society. But it does provide reliable pointers for setting the future agenda for the fight against child labour.

77. Some encouraging developments are evident. Many countries have taken steps towards

formulating partial or comprehensive policies towards fighting child labour, a fundamental point in IPEC advocacy, as well as a requirement under both Conventions Nos. 138 and 182. Coupled with this high activity in policy formulation, a very significant development can be seen in the adoption of Plans of Action to tackle one or more categories of child labour and its worst forms. Other areas where high levels of activity can be distinguished are the adoption of legislation against trafficking in human beings, particularly children, the involvement of children in prostitution and the production of pornography, and the prohibition of hazardous work for all children under 18 years. These are encouraging signs, which suggest areas in which the ILO can provide further assistance.

**78.** A substantial number of countries have adopted time-bound measures against one or more of the worst forms of child labour. It should be noted, however, that virtually all the time-bound measures reported by governments have been taken in countries that benefited from an IPEC project of support to their Time-Bound Programme (TBP) for eliminating the worst forms of child labour. It is imperative that countries start setting time-bound objectives without external support in the fight against the worst forms of child labour.

**79.** While the high rate of activity in policy formulation and the adoption of plans of action is encouraging, within those policies and plans of action, only limited attention is given to the most vulnerable children, and even less to the special situation of girls. Giving adequate consideration to the special position of these groups is a critical factor for success in fighting child labour, particularly its worst forms. Clearly, countries should be encouraged to focus more clearly on these issues and to seek technical cooperation if necessary. As concerns technical cooperation, IPEC data show that countries benefiting from TBPs are markedly more successful in incorporating special attention to girls and other vulnerable children in their child labour policies.

**80.** The global picture also indicated that few governments have reported giving attention to measures to combat the forced labour of children, including bonded child labour. This is disappointing, since last year's Global Report on forced labour estimated that children represented between 40 and 50 per cent of all victims of forced labour, or 5.7 million children in forced and bonded labour.<sup>38</sup>

**81.** Likewise, very little action has been reported on improving legislation against the use, procuring or offering of a child for illicit activities, in particular for the production and trafficking of drugs. This is of particular concern, because practice has shown that very few countries have adequate legislation in place in this field to begin with, and the gaps in national legislation hamper overall efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labour as a matter of urgency. This is being addressed in part through IPEC's work in helping countries to define hazardous child labour.

**82.** In all, while there are many encouraging signs that ratification of the Conventions has had a positive impact on national frameworks for combating child labour, there are also areas where increased emphasis is necessary. This should provide guidance not only for countries, but also for the ILO's technical cooperation activities and those of other international agencies, workers' and employers' organizations and NGOs.

### The central role of employers' and workers' organizations

**83.** Employers' and workers' organizations have been the historic pioneers in promoting international labour standards, including those on the prohibition of child labour. Through the ILO, which they helped to create, employers' and workers' organizations continue to play a critical role in national and global efforts to combat child labour.

**84.** The cooperation of employers is crucial in the fight against child labour, because they can help to ensure that their enterprises are free of child labour. They also play a powerful role in influencing those who hire children – often small enterprises in the informal economy. Moreover, national employers' organizations have the potential to help in the collection of data on the incidence of child labour in various sectors; to influence the development of appropriate national policies on child labour elimination; to partner trade unions and NGOs in the design of relevant responses, particularly vocational and skills training for working children; and to promote public awareness on the wrongs of child labour and the rights of children. The impact of employers' organizations is not limited to the national level. Through the International Organisation of Employers (IOE), they are also active on the international stage in support of child labour elimination efforts through a variety

38. ILO: *A global alliance against forced labour*, Global Report under the follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, Report I(B), International Labour Conference, 93rd Session, Geneva, 2005, para. 61. See also IPEC: *Every child counts*, op. cit., p. 26.

of capacity-building measures, including the development of guidelines for action.

85. It was workers' organizations in the 1860s that first called for campaigns against child labour.<sup>39</sup> Child labour remains an affront to the objectives of trade unions everywhere and is therefore a key entry point for developing workers' organizations. As mass membership organizations, trade unions bring many strengths to efforts to eliminate child labour. Collective bargaining – as part of social dialogue – is one of the main trade union strategies to combat child labour. As campaigning organizations, trade unions can disseminate new messages and take direct action to influence labour law and practices. As vertically

integrated organizations they provide a unique link between the global and the national level on issues related to social protection and children's rights. Trade unions are well placed to act as watchdogs and to take direct action to prevent child labour and remove children from the workplace and help provide the alternatives of quality education and preparation for the adult world of work. Teachers' organizations at the national and international level have a key role in promoting Education for All (EFA). Finally, the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) has continued to play a central role in promoting child labour elimination as part of wider human rights and development debates.

39. See A. Fyfe; M. Jankanish: *Trade unions and child labour: A guide to action* (Geneva, ILO, 1997), p. 2.

## Reaching a critical threshold in child labour elimination

86. Part of our accumulated understanding relates to what works in eliminating child labour. In examining how societies can reach a critical transition point in the fight against child labour, it is natural to look at past experience.

87. The modern history of child labour in the industrialized countries began with the industrial revolution in Britain.<sup>40</sup> Prior to the end of the eighteenth century, child labour went largely unquestioned. As the first industrial nation, the United Kingdom was, however, in many ways atypical as regards the extent and intensity of child labour.<sup>41</sup> Children and young people made up between one-third and two-thirds of all workers in many British textile mills in 1833 and over one-quarter in many mines in 1842. Child labour was more extensive in Britain than any other country past or present.<sup>42</sup> However, the long-term trend is clear. The participation rate of children in the 10-14 age group was 30 per cent in 1851, but by 1901 it had been brought down to 17 per cent.<sup>43</sup> The critical transition point appears to have occurred around 1870, when state education was first introduced. The United States also reached a participation rate of 17 per cent by 1900, while the first census in France showed a child labour participation rate of 20 per cent in 1896.<sup>44</sup>

88. Japan also began to industrialize in the nineteenth century, but it adopted protective measures for children simultaneously with industrialization and built on the foundations of a high level of literacy. By 1905, primary schooling was nearly universal in Japan, and by the introduction of the first labour law in 1911, 98 per cent of children aged 6-13 were in school. Japan thus avoided a major child labour problem.

89. Around a century ago, the era of extensive child labour was over in the first industrial nations. The historical watershed in the decline of child labour appears to have occurred in most cases by around 1900, when the economic participation rate of children fell below the 20 per cent mark.

90. An examination of past and contemporary examples shows that the effective abolition of child labour is possible if it is approached on many fronts. The overall growth of the economy is by no means the only factor in the decline of child labour. Improvements in the adult labour market, changes in technology, decreasing fertility rates, the availability of decent schools, changing cultural patterns (including changing power relations within the family supporting women's empowerment) and legal instruments and their enforcement can all lead to a radical drop in child labour. But these factors have to be made to work together to create a virtuous cycle.

91. How can this come about? The economist Kaushik Basu has used the concept of multiple equilibria to illustrate how societies can be trapped into a vicious cycle of poverty with high child labour and how they might be "tipped" towards a virtuous cycle where low child labour maintains itself.<sup>45</sup>

### The high child labour equilibrium society

92. High levels of child labour can be *self-reinforcing*. For example, in a situation of mass poverty, child labour is part of the survival strategy of poor families. This in turn increases the pool of workers, which in turn drives wage rates down, further convincing families that their children should work rather than go to school. The economic value placed on children helps keep fertility rates high, also leading to an increased labour supply. Mass child labour also acts as a disincentive to employers to invest in new technology. Moreover, in a society where child labour is the norm the demand for education will be low, and it will be difficult to enforce laws on minimum age and compulsory education. Finally, as child labourers become adults, it is increasingly likely that they in turn will send their children to work rather than school. In a society marked by a high child labour equilibrium, families and whole societies can thus be trapped in a vicious cycle of poverty.

40. This does not mean that other countries have a negligible history regarding child labour elimination. For example, Germany was one of the first countries to introduce compulsory education linked to child labour laws. See Weiner, op. cit., pp. 127-131.

41. J. Humphries: *Child labour: The experience of today's advanced economies and the lessons of the past*, paper prepared for the Conference on "The Economics of Child Labour", Oslo, 28-29 May 2002, p. 18.

42. *ibid.*

43. *ibid.*, p. 19; See also H. Cunningham: "Combating child labour: The British experience", in H. Cunningham; P.P. Viazzo (eds.): *Child labour in historical perspective, 1800-1985: Case studies from Europe, Japan and Colombia* (Florence, UNICEF, 1996), p. 42.

44. Humphries, op. cit., pp. 19-20.

45. K. Basu: "The economics of child labor", in *Scientific American* (New York), Vol. 289, No. 4 (Oct. 2003), pp. 84-91. This model is closely linked to the concept of the tipping point.

**Box 1.3.**

**Explaining the decline of child labour: Lessons from history?**

What caused child labour to decline in the first industrial nations? A number of interpretations have been put forward over the years, which boil down to four basic factors.

The simplest argument is that child labour is a function of poverty. Once household incomes rose, the economic contribution from children necessarily declined. Rising wages allowed working families to change their strategy and invest in their children by sending them to school.

The second argument focuses on the level of technology. The early phase of industrialization was very labour-intensive, but once technology became more sophisticated, as for example in the mines and mills, the demand for child labour declined.

The traditional explanation suggests that the most important factor was legislation, but opinions differ as to which kind was the most important. For some, the critical factor was child labour laws governing minimum age for work and accompanying action. Others stress that legislation making education compulsory was the key element of state intervention, and is easier to enforce.

Finally, some historians look to changing views of childhood that emerged with the Romantic Movement, from which developed the notion that children had rights and it was the duty of the State to defend the defenceless.

What came to be asserted for the first time in the early nineteenth century is that children had the right not to work.

In fact, no single explanation will do. Each of these factors played an important role in the historical decline of child labour, but they tended to operate in concert. Economic growth alone will not suffice, while more focused direct measures against child labour will not be successful without it.

Source: H. Cunningham: *Child labour and industrialization*, Working Conditions and Environment Department Working Paper No. 1 (Geneva, ILO, 1995).

**Towards a low child labour equilibrium society**

**93.** It is possible, however, to reach a new equilibrium in which the forces making for the elimination of child labour combine in a virtuous circle that also becomes self-reinforcing. Consider a society that is caught in a high child labour equilibrium as described above. Now suppose, for example, that child labour is banned and that ban is enforced. Suppose education up to the early secondary stage (to 14 years) is made compulsory, and that this is enforced and quality improvements make education attractive to poor children and their families, leading to rising demand for education. The supply of children for the labour market is thereby reduced. Employers that were using child labour will seek adults to fill those gaps. Enterprises used to employing children may have to invest in new technology, further reducing the demand for child labour. Adult wages and household incomes will rise. Earning enough to get by, parents will invest in their future by sending their children to school, thereby diminishing the supply of child labour further. In this new situation, families who send their

children to work rather than school face social disapproval. The right of children *not* to work will be the social norm. Hence few children work. Society is in a new equilibrium – the low prevalence of child labour reinforces itself. And once it locks into a new equilibrium it stays there. This becomes a one-time effort.<sup>46</sup>

**94.** Is there one mechanism that deflects a society from one child labour state to another? The analysis has illustrated that interventions have to be made on a broad front – economic, social and cultural – and they feed off each other. As a result of this strategic interaction, the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. For example, in the United States, child labour remained widespread until 1900. But once it began to drop, through the efforts of campaigners and the expansion of education, the decline was extremely rapid. By 1930 child labour had almost disappeared.<sup>47</sup>

**95.** The evidence from past experience appears to suggest that the critical threshold in child labour elimination occurs somewhere between the 10 and 20 per cent child work participation rate. In this case, enforcement of compulsory education is also much easier to achieve.<sup>48</sup>

46. This is an illustrative and not an exhaustive modelling of these “feedback loops” in child labour elimination. See also Wood, *op. cit.*, on breaking out of the “Faustian bargain” of dependent security.

47. Basu, *op. cit.*, p. 91.

48. See Weiner, *op. cit.*, p. 191.

**A caveat**

96. A word of caution is necessary. Getting beyond a critical threshold is not automatic, but requires deliberate action on many fronts. The route to the effective abolition of child labour needs shaping. For example, economic growth and expansion of education may lead to an overall reduction in child labour, but is not sufficient to tackle many of the worst forms of child labour. Socially excluded groups, such as the Roma in central and eastern Europe,<sup>49</sup> may not be reached by these broad interventions. This is where a rights-based approach to tackling child labour through targeted

interventions, including legislation and enforcement, becomes essential.

97. Many countries will need assistance. However, it is important to acknowledge that today's developing countries have many advantages not available to the first industrial nations a century ago, not least a positive enabling environment that is supportive of children's rights and accumulated "how to" knowledge. The ILO's role is to win the argument for child labour abolition as a national and international priority and then, with its partners, to work to make space for poor people to invest in their future and secure their rights. Here the ILO's conceptual and policy framework is important.

49. See UNDP: *Avoiding the dependency trap: The Roma in Central and Eastern Europe* (2003).

## Guiding principles and concepts

98. One of the major aims set for the International Labour Organization at its foundation in 1919 was the abolition of child labour. Historically, the ILO's principal tool in pursuing the goal of effective abolition of child labour has been the adoption and supervision of labour standards that embody the concept of a minimum age for admission to employment or work. Furthermore, from 1919<sup>50</sup> onwards the principle that minimum age standards should be linked to schooling has been part of the ILO's tradition in standard setting in this area. Convention No. 138 provides that the minimum age for admission to employment shall not be less than the age of completion of compulsory schooling.

### A comprehensive policy framework

99. The basic elements of the policy framework that continues to guide the ILO's efforts to combat child labour were set out a generation ago. From the 1970s, with the adoption of the first Convention (No. 138) on child labour that covered all economic sectors,<sup>51</sup> the ILO began to articulate the principles of a comprehensive approach to child labour elimination that stressed the need for a variety of interventions: implementation of appropriate ILO standards, more effective labour inspection, introduction of compulsory education, public awareness campaigns, development of international solidarity and cooperation with developing countries and efforts to establish a fairer international trading system.

100. Further conceptual and policy pronouncements in the early 1980s<sup>52</sup> reinforced the principle that child labour had to be viewed in the wider context of socio-economic policies, in particular macro-economic policies and employment programmes, women's equality and educational expansion. Furthermore, priority action at both national and international levels should focus on the worst forms of exploitation and hazardous working conditions, which could neither be justified by poverty nor allowed to prevail until it was fully eradicated.

### A growing global consensus

101. In recent years there has been a refinement in basic concepts and approach in response to a changing environment in the 1990s. First, the adoption by the United Nations of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in 1989 has encouraged viewing child labour as a human rights as well as a development issue. The CRC has, in particular, influenced the approach taken on child labour by UNICEF and many within the NGO community who have tended to be guided by the "best interests" principle articulated in the Convention. This led in turn to a more child-centred approach in parts of the NGO community that questioned the utility of blanket minimum age laws and saw child work in more positive terms. This was coupled with a strong urge to promote children's empowerment, for example through working children's movements.

102. The ILO's adoption ten years later of Convention No. 182 consolidated the global consensus on child labour elimination.<sup>53</sup> It provided much-needed focus without abandoning the overarching goal, expressed in Convention No. 138, of the effective abolition of child labour. Moreover, the concept of the worst forms helps set priorities and can be used as an entry point in tackling the mainstream child labour problem. The concept also helps to direct attention to the impact of work on children, as well as the work they perform.

### Types of child labour proscribed under international law

103. Taken together, Conventions Nos. 138 and 182 set the boundaries of the types of work that are unacceptable under international standards. To the international community, the term "child labour" does not encompass all work performed by children under the age of 18 years. The consensus view is that work that falls within the legal limits and does not interfere with children's health and development or prejudice their schooling can be a positive experience.<sup>54</sup>

50. See the Minimum Age (Industry) Convention, 1919 (No. 5).

51. See the resolution concerning the International Year of the Child and the progressive elimination of child labour and transitional measures, adopted by the International Labour Conference at its 65th Session, June 1979. See also ILO: *Report of the Director-General*, International Labour Conference, 69th Session, Geneva, June 1983.

52. See: *Report of the Director-General*, op. cit. See also ICFTU: *Breaking down the wall of silence: How to combat child labour* (Brussels), 1985.

53. The principles behind Convention No. 182 had been articulated by the ILO in the 1970s and 1980s and stated in a 1996 resolution (resolution concerning the elimination of child labour).

54. Inter-Parliamentary Union/ILO: *Eliminating the worst forms of child labour: A practical guide to ILO Convention No. 182*, Handbook for parliamentarians No. 3-2002 (Geneva, 2002), p. 15.

104. Child labour that is proscribed under international law falls into three categories:

- The unconditional worst forms of child labour, which are internationally defined as slavery, trafficking, debt bondage and other forms of forced labour, forced recruitment of children for use in armed conflict, prostitution and pornography, and illicit activities.
- Labour performed by a child who is under the minimum age specified for that kind of work (as defined by national legislation, in accordance with accepted international standards), and that is thus likely to impede the child's education and full development.
- Labour that jeopardizes the physical, mental or moral well-being of a child, either because of its nature or because of the conditions in which it is carried out, known as "hazardous work".<sup>55</sup>

105. Under the Declaration, the effective abolition of child labour became a shared goal of the international community. It is also an objective of the Organization as a whole.

#### Growing understanding of the causes of child labour

106. A better conceptual grasp of child labour has also gone hand in hand with a better understanding of the shape of the problem and its causes. The 2002 Global Report indicated that the vast majority (70 per cent) of children's work is concentrated in the agricultural sector and that the informal economy harbours most child labour across all economic sectors.<sup>56</sup> In addition, gender plays a significant role in determining the different types of work done by girls and boys. For example, girls predominate in domestic work, while boys are heavily represented in mining and quarrying. The situation is made worse when, as for domestic work in many countries, the kind of work is excluded from regulation in a large proportion of countries.

107. Our understanding of the causes of child labour has also become more sophisticated as different academic perspectives have been brought to bear on the problem. Seeing child labour as a product of market forces – supply and demand – has been a fruitful approach, taking in the behaviour of em-

ployers as well as of individual households. Poverty and economic shocks clearly play an important if not a key role in determining the market for child labour. Child labour in turn contributes to the perpetuation of poverty. For example, recent empirical findings by the World Bank from Brazil demonstrate that early entry into the labour force reduces lifetime earnings by some 13 to 20 per cent, increasing significantly the probability of being poor later in life.<sup>57</sup>

108. However, poverty in itself is not a sufficient explanation of child labour, and it certainly fails to explain some of the unconditional worst forms of child labour. A human rights perspective is necessary for a fuller understanding of child labour, as it focuses on discrimination and exclusion as contributing factors. The most vulnerable groups when it comes to child labour are often those subject to discrimination and exclusion: girls, ethnic minorities and indigenous and tribal peoples, those of low class or caste, people with disabilities, displaced persons and those living in remote areas.

#### Strategic frameworks to guide the response

109. A comprehensive and coherent approach to child labour must therefore aim at poverty reduction, provision of quality education, and social protection measures including protection of workers' rights, to respond to the multidimensional reality of child labour. The ILO has over the years developed a range of tools to support member States in their implementation efforts. The Time-Bound Programme concept has been promoted since 2001. Since 2002 the ILO has been working with countries using the Strategic Programme Impact Framework (SPIF) as an approach to identifying desired outcomes and ways to achieve them. These tools will be examined in more detail in Part II of the Report. At the same time, UNICEF has developed a complementary strategic framework around the concept of the protective environment.

110. The United Nations General Assembly Special Session on Children in 2002 endorsed a mainstreaming approach – placing child labour on the development agenda. This implied that a new ambition had to be set for the worldwide movement

55. ILO: *A future without child labour*, Global Report under the follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, Report I(B), International Labour Conference, 90th Session, Geneva, 2002, para. 26.

56. *ibid.*, paras. 70 and 72.

57. See N. Ilahi; P. Orazem; G. Sedlacek: *How does working as a child affect wage, income and poverty as an adult?* Social Protection Discussion Paper Series, No. 0514 (Washington, DC, World Bank, May 2005), p. 3.

against child labour. In political terms this means putting child labour on the agenda of finance and planning ministries – after all, the worldwide movement has to convince *governments* to act to end child

labour. Child labour elimination comes down to a set of political choices rather than a technocratic exercise. And everyday realities of instability and crisis challenge attempts at making progress.

## The impact of instability

**111.** The vast majority of poor people face chronic insecurity. This is not only part of the causality of child labour – it also conditions the response. Crises, whether of natural or human origin, are an increasing feature of the global context within which child labour abolition efforts have to take place. In particular, conflict and economic crisis (such as the Asian financial crisis of 1997-98 and the effects of transition to a market economy in the States of the former USSR where the role of the State has declined) have led to a growing incidence of some of the unconditional worst forms of child labour, such as the use of children in armed conflict and trafficking of children to feed an expanding international sex industry.

**112.** Natural disasters have affected a number of countries in the Asia and Pacific region in recent years, most dramatically the earthquake and resulting tsunami – the deadliest in recorded history – that hit Indonesia, southern Thailand, Sri Lanka, southern India, Myanmar and Malaysia and left more than 300,000 people dead or missing. In the aftermath of the disaster, the vulnerability of all children increased a hundredfold. Separated from their families, girls and boys became vulnerable to abduction and the more general risk of becoming entangled in child labour as part of the coping mechanism adopted by surviving families and communities. Livelihoods and industries such as fishing and tourism were also affected, with the resulting loss of income adding to the vulnerability of families and children.

**113.** The ILO responded immediately to the tsunami. For example, in Aceh Province in Indonesia, one of the areas most affected, IPEC launched a joint initiative with the Government to restore livelihoods and generate income. This is crucial to reducing chil-

dren's vulnerability to exploitation. A second component, CHILD PROTECT, focused on expanding child labour programmes, in particular non-formal education, nutrition, health and counselling services, support for those most at risk and improving the vocational skills of young people in the 15-17 age group.

**114.** Children are often hit hardest by crises, whatever their nature, and are at increased risk of being trapped in child labour. In the wake of conflict and civil unrest, child protection mechanisms break down, putting boys and girls at risk of exploitation, violence and abuse. These trends both add to the vulnerability of children to some of the worst forms of child labour, and impede national and international efforts to provide solutions.

**115.** The tragic earthquake that struck Pakistan and other parts of South Asia on 8 October 2005 resulted in more than 4 million people losing their homes, in addition to destroying over 1.1 million associated jobs and livelihoods. As part of its response, the ILO identified the prevention of hazardous work and trafficking of children aged 5 to 14, including through educational provision, among areas of immediate assistance within the overall United Nations relief and recovery effort.

**116.** In Nepal, cooperation with trade unions continues through the ILO's international trade union project on child labour despite the difficult political and military situation. Channels of communication have been maintained with the General Federation of Nepalese Trade Unions (GEFONT), by developing joint trade union web sites and setting up a radio programme from the capital – linking the issue of child labour with trade union rights and human rights in general.

### Box 1.4.

#### After the tsunami: Protecting the vulnerable in Sri Lanka

In the assistance plan of support by the ILO to the Government a major priority was the protection of the most vulnerable groups – women and children – living in camps months after the tsunami. In Daru Setha, Galle district, southern Sri Lanka, a child protection programme was set up in partnership with the National Workers' Congress (NWC), a Sri Lankan trade union. The loss of parents or family support and delays in opening schools made children more vulnerable to exploitation. After the tsunami, which left 70 per cent of the fishing community without any form of livelihood, the union set up a monitoring group to identify cases of child labour. The union recorded an increase in the demand for child labour. However, with the support of IPEC an education programme was set up along with a vocational training centre for livelihood recovery.

Source: ILO: *Working out of disaster: Improving employment and livelihood in countries affected by the tsunami* (Bangkok, 2005), pp. 44-47.





## PART II

# ILO action against child labour

## ILO action on child labour since 2002: Developments and reflections

**117.** This section of the Report reflects on progress made under the 2002 action plan.<sup>1</sup> In 2002 important shifts were identified in IPEC's future strategy to abolish child labour. In particular, the intention was to move towards more tailor-made assistance to member States; greater focus on facilitation and technical and policy support; and the encouragement of national ownership.<sup>2</sup> In reviewing developments over the last four years, reference is made, where appropriate, to the independent evaluation of the InFocus Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour conducted in 2004.<sup>3</sup>

### Reinforcing IPEC

**118.** IPEC was created to enhance the ILO's response to its core goal of child labour elimination. The growth and expansion of IPEC has continued apace. The critical watershed began in 2000, when resource support from the United States gave the Programme an enormous boost. IPEC is now operational in 86 countries, of which 60 have signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the ILO. As a consequence, IPEC's share of the ILO's total technical cooperation programme has increased markedly in recent years, from 11.5 per cent in 1998 to 28.9 per cent in 2001 to 38.7 per cent in 2004, making it the largest such

programme in the ILO. Donor support has remained firm, with 30 donors supporting the Programme. Over its lifetime, the Programme has spent around US\$350 million, with annual expenditure running at US\$55-60 million. Since 2002 IPEC's projects and programmes have benefited around five million children.

### Advocacy

**119.** The evaluation of IPEC concluded that: "There is substantial evidence that IPEC's knowledge-based advocacy has informed global partners, generated public awareness and mobilized actors against child labour. Media and campaign materials have been effective and timely".<sup>4</sup> Evidence cited included the pace of ratification and the inclusion of references to child labour and core Conventions in international policy statements and documents.

### *SCREAM Stop Child Labour*

**120.** SCREAM Stop Child Labour (Supporting Children's Rights through Education, the Arts and the Media), launched in June 2002, is a community-based education and social mobilization initiative that

1. See ILO: *A future without child labour*, Global Report under the follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, Report I(B), International Labour Conference, 90th Session, Geneva, 2002, and Governing Body document GB.285/TC/5, Geneva, Nov. 2002.
2. GB.285/TC/5, op. cit., paras. 13-15.
3. ILO: *Evaluation of the InFocus Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour* (Geneva, 2004). See also Governing Body document GB.291/PFA/11, 291st Session, Geneva, Nov. 2004.
4. *ibid.* pp. 37-38.

has extended the range of non-conventional partners of IPEC to embrace schools, arts and youth groups in both developed and developing countries. SCREAM aims to help educators promote understanding and awareness of child labour among youth. The project has produced an education pack of 14 modules available in seven languages.

121. In December 2004, the ILO and the World Organization of the Scout Movement agreed to collaborate to enhance children's participation and youth empowerment as part of global efforts to eliminate child labour. The aim is to mobilize the 28 million membership, initially using the SCREAM resource package, to promote the engagement of girls and boys, in particular around the World Day against Child Labour. In the Arab States, UNESCO is also engaged as a partner in support of a SCREAM train-the-trainers programme within the Arab Scout movement. In February 2005, as part of this regional development, a World Seminar on Scouting and Child Labour was held in Cairo.

#### *The World Day against Child Labour*

122. The World Day against Child Labour initiated on 12 June 2002 has been another major advocacy tool. Each World Day has taken up a particular aspect of the worst forms of child labour. In 2003, the theme was trafficking. The World Day of 2004 focused on child domestic labour, based on an IPEC report on the subject.<sup>5</sup> Activities around the theme were carried out in 56 countries.

123. The World Day against Child Labour 2005 broke new ground by promoting a tripartite agreement in one sector – mining and quarrying. Here employers' organizations and trade unions took the lead, demonstrating their strategic potential in efforts to combat child labour and the value of the ILO's tripartite structure. Workers (the International Federation of Chemical, Energy, Mine and General Workers' Unions – ICEM), employers (the International Council on Mining and Metals – ICMM) and governments joined the ILO in calling for the elimination of child labour in small-scale mining and quarrying within five to ten years. With an estimated 1 million children in the sector, this is possible. The new initiative was launched with a "call for action" to make these small, family-based enterprises in the informal sector economically and environmentally sustainable

without the use of child labour. Tripartite delegations from 15 countries<sup>6</sup> signed accords committing themselves to a time-bound approach, which were presented to the ILO on 10 June 2005.

124. The World Day is supported by the "12 to 12 Partnership Initiative", aimed at harnessing the commitment, motivation and expertise of the ILO's partners, as well as the participation of young people, through a range of joint activities in the build-up to the annual World Day event. The initiative is intended to enhance inter-agency collaboration, building working relationships to the media and academic institutions.

125. The ILO's Red Card to Child Labour campaign launched at the African Cup of Nations in 2002 expanded to sporting events in Spain, Uruguay, the United States and Nigeria. The campaign moved to public transportation systems and has been endorsed by a number of celebrities and world leaders. It has also provided the context for joint work with the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) since 1996 regarding removing child labour from the supply chain of soccer ball production.

126. In this area, the evaluation of IPEC highlighted a general concern that the Programme may be spreading itself too thinly in embracing a widening set of partners, and specifically recommended that it review its advocacy approach in line with its shift in emphasis towards policy interventions and the worst forms of child labour.<sup>7</sup>

#### *Research and the knowledge base*

##### *Strengthening the knowledge base*

127. There has been an increasing emphasis on strengthening the knowledge base to enhance the ILO's role as an international centre on child labour. Knowledge generated through research, data collection and evaluation of field activities has contributed to the ongoing work of the Programme. Since 2002 the state of research and knowledge on child labour has grown considerably as a number of ILO research projects came on stream. Progress has been made on three fronts. First, the ILO's child labour survey work under the Statistical Information and Monitoring Programme on Child Labour (SIMPOC) has continued to expand, with over 50 countries assisted since 1998. Second, research has been conducted on

5. IPEC: *Helping hands or shackled lives? Understanding child domestic labour and responses to it* (Geneva, ILO, 2004).

6. Brazil, Burkina Faso, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Ecuador, Ghana, Mali, Mongolia, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Peru, the Philippines, Senegal, United Republic of Tanzania and Togo.

7. ILO: *Evaluation*, op. cit., p. 137.

### Box 2.1. Stories of hope

#### *Peru: The accident that changed Braulio's life*

Like many other children in La Rinconada, 14-year-old Braulio had worked in the mine since he was very young, carrying heavy loads of ore, and as a *quimbalatero*, or stone crusher. When he was 13, he says, "One day I didn't feel well, I was very tired and fell down a few times while I was working. At the exit from the mine my barrow overturned and all the ore fell out. The captain was watching me. He kicked me hard because of this." Braulio had heard about the IPEC project for the mines in La Rinconada, which had been reaching out to the community through its partner organization, CARE International. "I had heard about it on the radio. I decided to contact the project. They came to the mine and talked to the mine manager, and he was sanctioned. After that I only worked for one more month, helping to take care of the owner's warehouse."

The IPEC project in La Rinconada aims to strengthen and expand health, education, nutrition and other services, as well as to improve the working conditions of adult miners. Awareness raising is also a priority. When Braulio, his brothers and their father began to attend meetings organized by the project, "We learned that working was not good for us. I had aches and pains, sometimes we didn't eat well, and it was difficult to go to school and study. Now we are in a better situation. We know more and want to move ahead and be successful in our lives." Braulio's father now understands how important it is to offer a better future for his children. "My father was very grateful and told them that from now on only he would work, and that we could devote ourselves to school." Over 2,500 children have been helped by the IPEC/CARE project, which is working towards the progressive elimination of child labour in artisanal mines. The local community supports this goal and has increased its vigilance over child labour, to keep other children from sharing Braulio's experience in the mines.

#### *Indonesia: The story of Thao, a domestic worker*

Thao (not her real name) started working as a child domestic worker when she was 11 years old. Following her father's death she went to Jakarta with her mother to look for a job as a child domestic worker. She soon found an employer in the Bekasi suburb of the city. Though initially well treated, after her employer had a baby, she became increasingly harsh with Thao. Thao was subject to constant harassment and verbal abuse. She had not been paid for over a year and a half when she came to know of the centre for child domestic workers run by the Indonesian Children's Welfare Foundation (YKAI).

YKAI is collaborating with IPEC to prevent and eliminate child domestic work. The centre, called Sanggar Puri, provides non-formal education and vocational training. Social workers attached to the centre also regularly visit households in the local communities to identify child domestic workers and negotiate with employers (usually the woman of the house) to allow girls and boys time off to visit the centre and benefit from its education and training courses. The social workers aim to withdraw children from domestic service. This requires negotiation with employers and parents. Scholarships from YKAI encourage parents to send their children to school, although this is not always successful.

Thao is one of the children who has benefited from the project. She was withdrawn from domestic service two years ago and is now studying in junior high school. Although she now lives alone with her younger sister in financially difficult circumstances, Thao is keen to continue her studies. "I never want to go back to work as a child domestic worker," said Thao, "I prefer living alone with my sister to living with my employer in Jakarta."

Source: IPEC.

key issues related to education, health, HIV/AIDS, gender, the costs and benefits of eliminating child labour, bonded labour and the demand side of child labour. In addition, a study on the worldwide movement against child labour was concluded in 2005. Third, the ILO has continued to sponsor and to be an active partner of the inter-agency research project Understanding Children's Work (UCW).<sup>8</sup>

#### *Surveys*

**128.** In early 2003, IPEC formed an External Advisory Committee on Child Labour Statistics (SIMPOC External Advisory Committee – SEAC) with a view to further improving its survey methods and services to child labour researchers and policy-makers worldwide. In order to further enhance the

8. The publication of a textbook for university students and a bibliography were also important investments in supporting future child labour research. IPEC: *Child labour: A textbook for university students* (Geneva, ILO, 2004); idem: *Annotated bibliography on child labour* (Geneva, ILO, 2003).

sustainability of child labour surveys, SIMPOC reinforced its capacity-building activities, in particular through the publication of four comprehensive statistical manuals in 2004 and 2005.<sup>9</sup> An independent evaluation of SIMPOC in July 2003 assessed positively the large number of national child labour surveys, baseline surveys and rapid assessments undertaken. It found that SIMPOC had succeeded in enhancing national capacities in the field of data collection and had spin-off effects in terms of awareness raising and policy and programme formulation.

**129.** Another important line of work is aimed at an internationally agreed statistical definition of child labour. At the 17th International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS) held in Geneva in 2003, there was a unanimous demand for an agenda item on child labour at the 18th ICLS scheduled to meet in 2008. Preparatory work for the ICLS has taken the form of a SIMPOC project and raises important statistical definitional issues concerning: (a) the boundary of non-economic activities, particularly domestic chores, falling within the scope of child labour; (b) the refinement of thresholds for separating light work from child labour; (c) the identification of appropriate indicators for hazardous work; and (d) the development of measurement tools for national-level estimation of the worst forms of child labour. The 18th ICLS offers the prospect of an important breakthrough in achieving consistency and sustainability in the collection of child labour statistics worldwide.

#### *Research projects*

**130.** The research base continued to be strengthened, with several large-scale projects coming on-stream during 2002-05, notably on non-economic activities, education, health, bonded labour and the demand side of child labour. The cost/benefit study is covered in more detail in box 2.2.

#### *Measurement of children's non-economic activities*

**131.** A study on children's non-economic activities is part of a broader research effort by IPEC directed towards arriving at an internationally acceptable consensus on a statistical standard for measuring child labour. It looks at the effect of children's non-market

activity, in particular household chores, on school attendance and health, to identify a cut-off point on working hours above which non-economic activity carried out by children could be considered as "child labour" for statistical purposes.

#### *Impact of children's work on school attendance and performance*

**132.** According to the ILO's 2002 global estimates on child labour, close to half of all working children are also enrolled in school. What is the effect of working on going to and benefiting from school? There is reason to believe that hours of work are an important indicator in determining the nature of the link between work and school – but what is the threshold? An IPEC study drawing on new data from Brazil, Kenya, Lebanon, Sri Lanka and Turkey indicated that some differences did exist between working and non-working children in terms of educational inputs (for example, regular attendance, tardiness or tiredness). Moreover, children who are in school are to a large extent shielded against the potential negative effects of work that is not hazardous by nature, whether economic activity or domestic chores.

#### *Impact of working time on children's health and safety*

**133.** Little is known about the effect of children's working time on their health and safety. An IPEC working paper on working time and health<sup>10</sup> looked at household survey data from Bangladesh, Brazil and Cambodia to arrive at an understanding of the relationship between working time, conditions of work and health outcomes. The findings demonstrate that an important causal relationship exists: each additional weekly hour of work adds to the probability of suffering work-related ill health or injury. The study also endorsed the view that the sector where children work also appears to influence the nature of the health risk.

#### *Gender biases and girls' education*

**134.** Three studies published in 2004 confirmed the positive links between mothers' and fathers' decent

9. See, for example, ILO: *Child labour statistics: Manual on methodologies for data collection through surveys* (Geneva, 2004) and ILO/UNICEF: *Manual on child labour rapid assessment methodology* (Geneva, 2005).

10. ILO: *Impact of working time on children's health* (unpublished document, 2004).

**Box 2.2.****The costs and benefits of eliminating child labour**

A major research output during the period under review was an IPEC publication on the costs and benefits of eliminating child labour which appeared in early 2004. The study did not tell us whether to eliminate child labour – these commitments are in place and are based on human rights grounds – but it sheds light on the financial burden this will entail and the economic impacts we can expect as a result.

The study found that the elimination of child labour and its replacement by universal education yields enormous economic benefits. Over the period 2001 to 2020, the total sum of estimated global costs is US\$760 billion, whereas the benefits that accrue during this period come to US\$5,106 billion. Thus, benefits exceed costs by a ratio of 6.7 to 1. This amounts to an internal rate of return of 43.8 per cent.

All regions would experience very large gains, though some would benefit more than others. In North Africa and the Middle East, the benefits would be the highest relative to costs (8.4 to 1), whereas in sub-Saharan Africa they would be the lowest (5.2 to 1). In Asia, the ratio is 7.2 to 1; in transition countries, it is 5.9 to 1; and in Latin America, it is 5.3 to 1.

The study reveals the economic character of elimination of child labour as a generational investment, a sustained commitment to our children in order to reap the benefits when they reach adulthood. For approximately one and a half decades during which the programme is first implemented, the economic burden would exceed its return. After this, the net flows would turn positive, dramatically so after 2020, since at this point there are no further costs, only the benefits derived from improved education and health. Hence, taken as a whole, the delayed benefits would more than recoup the costs.

These results need to be put into context. In terms of financing, the average annual amount needed to eliminate child labour pales in comparison with the burdens currently borne to finance debt service or the military. For example, an average cost of US\$55 billion per year during the first decade of the global child labour elimination programme amounts to a mere 11 per cent of the US\$493 billion of global military spending, or 5.5 per cent of the US\$1 trillion for debt service. During the second decade, the average of US\$136 billion equals 28 per cent of annual military expenditure and 14 per cent of debt service.

While this study falls within an economic tradition espoused by the World Bank and others on the importance of human capital formation for development, it has to be noted that some very critical benefits, such as those of investing in education, can hardly be measured in monetary terms – benefits in terms of personal development and enhanced choice. Demonstrating that eliminating child labour is a high-yielding global investment adds impetus to advocacy efforts within the worldwide movement.

Source: IPEC: *Investing in every child: An economic study of the costs and benefits of eliminating child labour* (Geneva, ILO, 2004).

work opportunities and girls' education, including enrolment and attendance. Income-generating activities for women and the provision of school stipends were also seen to have a positive effect on girls' education. Moreover, mothers' educational levels were found to have a significant impact on children's well-being: not only did mothers' higher attainment both reduce the likelihood of children working and increase girls' enrolment, but it also had positive health benefits for children – all the more reason to invest in girls' education.

*Bonded child labour*

**135.** An ongoing study aims to gather evidence on aspects of bonded child labour in Ghana, Haiti, Niger and Pakistan. Special emphasis has been placed on domestic service and agriculture. The study focuses

on mechanisms, vulnerability, impacts and means of escaping bondage.

*The demand for child labour*

**136.** Demand-side research on child labour is relatively weak compared to research on supply-side household factors. If particular occupations could be identified in which child labour is especially profitable, demand-side interventions could be better designed and targeted. IPEC research in two occupations in each of four selected countries – India, Ghana, the Philippines and Uganda – gathered preliminary evidence on the relationship between wages and productivity for adults and children. The results of the research met the initial expectations: it can be said with some confidence that demand-side incentives do exist in particular child labour markets, and

## Box 2.3.

## Contributing to the United Nations study on violence against children

There is wide consensus that not enough is known about violence against children, and the United Nations General Assembly in 2001 asked the Secretary-General to report on this in 2006. The Secretary-General has asked UNICEF to oversee the study in conjunction with the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. The study aims to provide an in-depth global picture of violence against children and to propose clear recommendations. The ILO is contributing to the study with a chapter on workplace violence. The ILO contribution covers definitional issues, the situation of violence against children in different workplaces and situations, main causes and consequences, and existing frameworks to prevent and eliminate workplace violence against children, and will present models of intervention and key recommendations. The report is due to be finalized in July 2006 and presented to the General Assembly in October 2006. A child-friendly version will be produced.

that research to uncover these effects would be feasible and illuminating.

*Understanding Children's Work (UCW):  
An inter-agency research initiative*

**137.** The ILO has been considerably assisted in its research activities by the inter-agency research project, UCW. Launched in 2000 in response to one of the key themes (inter-agency cooperation) of the Oslo conference,<sup>11</sup> the UCW project was initiated by the ILO, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Bank. UCW is currently based at the Centre for International Studies on Economic Growth (CEIS) at the University of Rome "Tor Vergata".

**138.** The first project phase (2000-03) saw important progress towards the core goals of UCW in information mapping, filling knowledge gaps, developing new research tools and strengthening national capacity. Bringing three agencies with very distinct cultures, mandates, structures and operating modalities within a common research framework proved challenging during the first phase. That said, UCW has been instrumental in helping to focus and develop the research agenda within the partner agencies and within the wider research community. Technical discussions with UNICEF and the World Bank held under the aegis of UCW have resulted in the development of a common set of child labour indicators and a greater standardization in the child labour data collected by the agencies' main survey instruments. Collaborative UCW research also produced five detailed country reports (El Salvador, Guatemala, Morocco, Nepal and Yemen), providing for the first time common inter-agency perspectives on child la-

bour and broad policy priorities for addressing it. This is part of an impressive output of over 50 publications covering major thematic areas such as health, education and vulnerability.

**139.** In the second phase of the project (2003 onwards) these achievements were built on and put on a more sustainable footing by contributing to mainstreaming within broader agency efforts towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as a "technical arm" for child labour research. An important achievement of the project was to have child labour indicators included in the World Bank's World Development Indicators, offering an important opportunity for disseminating the child labour statistics produced by the project.

#### *Child Labour Research Network*

**140.** At the end of 2002, the ILO established a Child Labour Research Network. Bringing together more than 150 researchers, mainly from developing countries, the network is intended to facilitate and stimulate discussion and exchange of information on ongoing research projects, impact assessment of interventions, methodological issues, sponsorship and support, as well as priority topics for future research.

#### *Progress in technical cooperation*

**141.** IPEC is now the largest programme of technical cooperation in the ILO. This section of the report examines the strategic framework guiding IPEC's work at the country level, progress on TBPs as the major framework supporting country efforts

11. International Conference on Child Labour, Oslo, 27-30 October 1997.

to eliminate the worst forms of child labour, child labour in agriculture and mining, action against specific worst forms of child labour, the evolution of child labour monitoring, and the development of a knowledge management system.

*IPEC's Strategic Programme Impact Framework (SPIF): A theory of change*

142. The Strategic Programme Impact Framework (SPIF), introduced in Part I of this Report, guides IPEC's technical cooperation work and has evolved into a theory of change to help partners analyse and plan interventions against child labour.<sup>12</sup>

143. In supporting action at the country level, IPEC has developed an overall theory of change that refines and applies the strategic principles referred to in Part I of the Report and which can form the basis for a specific programme framework for action at the country level. Because child labour has multiple causes, any strategy to address the problem must be multidimensional. According to the overall theory of change, IPEC works along three lines of action in its programmes: prevention, withdrawal and protection. These in turn lead to a consideration of strategic areas of work where impacts are needed: the development of a knowledge base, awareness raising and social mobilization; the development of policies and legislation; and their implementation. Another essential element in IPEC's action is the provision of alternatives through improvements in education and training, income substitution and social safety nets. Lastly, the two cross-cutting issues are priority given to the worst forms of child labour and consideration of gender issues.

144. By working through the overall theory of change for a specific country, the required elements of the strategy can be identified and a TBP framework can be developed with clear outcomes and expected impact, which can be measured.

*Time-Bound Programmes*

145. At the time of the first Global Report on child labour, the TBP approach was at the launch stage, and it was expected that the present Report would provide an opportunity to review progress. Over the intervening period a number of lessons have emerged from the global evaluation and from IPEC's own stocktaking.

*Evolution of the approach*

146. The idea of a large-scale integrated Time-Bound Programme against child labour had been anticipated by ILO policy pronouncements in the 1980s. The TBP approach received special impetus from Convention No. 182, with its call for the design and implementation of programmes of action and "effective and time-bound measures" against the worst forms of child labour, and in the wake of its rapid ratification by member States. The TBP approach thus developed with a special focus on the worst forms of child labour as a priority, although it aims to set the stage for the progressive elimination of all child labour in the longer term.

147. Further refinements outlined below aim to make the TBP approach a much broader framework targeting certain sectors and groups and encompassing different national support modalities.

*The first TBP countries*

148. El Salvador, Nepal and the United Republic of Tanzania were the first three countries to implement TBPs. Programme implementation started in these three countries at the beginning of 2002.

149. Three other countries, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic and the Philippines, designed and started implementation of TBPs during 2002-03. Eight additional countries joined in 2004 – Bangladesh, Brazil, Ecuador, Indonesia, Pakistan, Senegal, South Africa and Turkey. Cambodia, Ghana, Kenya, Lebanon and Madagascar were the latest group of countries to adopt the TBP approach, commencing the implementation of their programmes towards the end of 2004 and the beginning of 2005. Several other countries are currently preparing similar programmes.

*Scope of TBPs and linkages to other frameworks*

150. The TBP concept provides an enabling and supportive framework for scaling up action against child labour at the country level. By providing a comprehensive framework within which prevention, withdrawal, rehabilitation and protection measures can be developed and applied on a large scale, TBPs offer countries a set of approaches, tools and mechanisms for achieving a measurable and timely impact in their fight against the worst forms of child labour. Moreover, within such a framework, contributions from existing programmes can be maximized while additional interventions are designed to fill gaps. In addition,

12. See IPEC: *IPEC action against child labour: Highlights 2004* (Geneva, ILO, Feb. 2005), pp. 63-67.

TBPs can facilitate the mainstreaming of child labour concerns into regular social and economic development programmes, including poverty reduction and Education for All (EFA), as organic approaches to wiping out the problem.<sup>13</sup> However, it must be made clear that IPEC TBP projects are there to support and not to supplant the national programme. National ownership is a key principle.

#### *Emerging lessons*

**151.** The IPEC support projects are still in their early phase. At present only five have produced mid-term reviews: the United Republic of Tanzania (2003), Nepal, El Salvador, Dominican Republic (all 2004) and Senegal (2005).<sup>14</sup> From these reviews a number of issues are emerging that will help inform future developments on the TBP approach and will feed into the ILO decent work country programmes (DWCPs) from 2006.

#### *The need for effective political support*

**152.** Although the rapid ratification of Convention No. 182 underscores the desire of national authorities to come to grips with the worst forms of child labour, in many countries this strong political statement has yet to be translated into effective mobilization within relevant ministries, departments and agencies at central and lower levels of government.

**153.** Much work remains to be done in sensitizing officials and community leaders concerning child labour issues, in identifying what needs to be done by each concerned department or agency, and in committing resources to address the problem. Most TBPs include advocacy and social mobilization activities for achieving this, but it is a huge challenge, particularly where human and financial resources are overstretched – which is the case in most countries with substantial child labour problems.

**154.** Overstretched departments dealing with education, employment, rural development, law enforcement, social welfare, etc. will seldom have child labour at the top of their agenda, or have any incentive to collaborate. Ways need to be found to help them perceive and address the problem as part of their regular work. The TBP approach is based on the understanding that success in winning the war against child labour requires the effective functioning and coordination of these different depart-

ments. However, the achievement of the social and economic goals of these departments is in many cases also dependent on progress in eliminating child labour, and hence there is a vicious cycle that cannot be broken unless special attention is given to the specific child labour issues faced by each department. For example, improving access to quality education is essential for reducing the incidence of child labour, but universal basic education cannot be achieved unless the factors that keep children out of school and at work are adequately addressed. An understanding of these issues should lead to effective action by each concerned department within a coherent and collaborative framework – but incentives need to be in place to make this happen.

#### *National and local community ownership*

**155.** National ownership is key to the success of a TBP. Heavy emphasis is therefore placed on the State's political will, its commitment and its capacity to undertake actions. Beyond strong political support at all levels, effective and sustainable large-scale action can be achieved only by empowering key agencies and institutions, including the ILO's social partners and civil society organizations, to mobilize resources and to formulate and implement interventions in an integrated and coordinated manner. In addition, painstaking work is needed to ensure full community ownership and participation in the design and implementation of interventions.

**156.** The management of this complex integrated framework requires much institutional and technical capacity, strong organizational skills, and a great deal of good will on the part of key agencies (government, as well as non-governmental, international and community-based organizations) to overcome institutional barriers to achieve a high level of collaboration. For many developing countries, this calls for a major emphasis on capacity building for key partners. In addition, there is a need for coalition building in support of child labour interventions (for example, within national policy dialogues and consultative processes such as those relating to poverty reduction strategies), including networking of local institutions and agencies. Such local networks can also benefit from links with international institutions and agencies, for instance in the areas of policy research and analysis, advocacy, programme formulation and implementation.

13. See IPEC: *Time-Bound Programme: Manual for action planning* (Geneva, ILO, 2003).

14. It should be noted that these reviews covered only activities of the support projects and not the national TBP frameworks. Evaluations of the latter need to be multi-partner joint activities led by the national partners.

*Resources matter – Both quality and quantity*

**157.** The mobilization of resources is a crucial prerequisite for large-scale interventions such as TBPs. The first three TBPs were developed as pilot programmes with support from an IPEC project funded by one donor, complemented by the domestic resources provided by the beneficiary countries themselves. Since then, there has been a gradual move towards joint funding of both preparatory activities and TBP interventions. As more countries seek to implement TBPs, resources may need to come from a variety of sources, including a basket of funds from a consortium of several donors. Multi-donor funding is essential if more countries are to make significant progress towards eliminating the worst forms of child labour. Domestic resources also need to be increased to support programmes that contribute to the attainment of TBP goals. Not only are more resources needed – they must be deployed in a manner that enhances impact, with the elimination of bottlenecks and minimal duplication and waste. Consequently, to be successful, TBPs require a high level of cooperation at national and international levels.

*Projects and programmes*

**158.** A major tension arises between the logic of the TBP approach and the way it is now resourced. As a comprehensive framework seeking to promote an integrated and comprehensive approach to the child labour problem, TBPs should be implemented using modalities that foster a coherent programme approach. Unfortunately, most donor funds are still provided through projects, and project execution tends to make the implementation of the programme approach difficult.

**159.** In particular, the project methodology poses significant challenges to the promotion of national ownership. In many countries implementing TBPs, stakeholders find it difficult to distinguish between the national TBP and the IPEC projects designed to support TBP implementation as one of many support projects. In fact, in some countries the country programme is limited to the IPEC project, which makes it unlikely to attain the ambitious goals of the TBP within the set timeframe. Moreover, IPEC's current reliance on the project implementation modality as the preferred donor approach also militates against the declared aim of becoming more of a facilitator and provider of policy/technical support.

**160.** Other ILO programmes and other international agencies face similar difficulties with regard to the adoption of a true programme approach that would favour and enhance TBP implementation. At the same

time, the multi-sectoral nature of any adequate response to child labour makes the adoption of more suitable modalities such as *sector-wide approaches* even more problematic. There is some hope, however, as more donors adopt multi-donor budget support mechanisms. Besides flexibility in allocating resources to agreed priority areas, such mechanisms are also more suitable for building national ownership and sustainable capacity.

**161.** Funding and the development of strong inter-sectoral linkages are some of the reasons why TBPs need to be integrated into broader development frameworks, as is happening in the United Republic of Tanzania.

*The need for an enabling international environment*

**162.** A key aim of the IPEC-supported TBPs is the creation of an enabling national environment. But this in turn requires support at the international level. For example, without some form of sanction at the international level (for example, from headquarters of the international financial institutions and bilateral donor agencies), the integration of TBP elements into poverty reduction strategies (PRSs), which facilitates the allocation of domestic and donor resources (including funds from the Heavily-Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative) to child labour interventions, is difficult to achieve at the country level. Similarly, international action and policy support are needed to link the TBP goal of eliminating the worst forms of child labour to the MDGs or EFA targets, for instance. So far, progress in mobilizing policy support for TBPs at the international level has lagged behind mobilization at the national level.

*Who leads?*

**163.** Governments need to be in the lead in conjunction with the ILO's social partners. Through the TBP platform, the ILO acts as an interface between countries and donors. Although the TBP concept has been developed by IPEC, it should be viewed as an international public good. TBPs should be, and in many cases are being, supported by other international agencies, such as UNICEF.

*Agriculture: The largest child labour sector*

**164.** The vast majority of working children are found in agriculture – 70 per cent, or over 130 million girls and boys under the age of 15. Rural children, in particular girls, tend to begin work young, at 5 to

**Box 2.4.**

**United Republic of Tanzania Time-Bound Programme**

In 2001, the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania committed itself to the elimination of the worst forms of child labour in the country by 2010 through the implementation of a TBP. Consistent with the TBP framework, the ILO initiated a project with financing from the United States Department of Labor (USDOL) to support the Government with its national programme.

Recent efforts by the Government to create a conducive policy environment, supported by the IPEC Project of Support to the TBP, demonstrate its commitment to the TBP framework. A child labour strategies document was developed and endorsed by the National Inter-sectoral Coordinating Committee (NISCC) to become the Strategic Programme Framework (SPF) for the Government's TBP. The implementation of the SPF is linked to the National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty (NSGRP, also known by its Kiswahili acronym, MKUKUTA). The Government has already developed the second phase of the NSGRP (2005-10). This document includes child labour indicators and addresses several important goals directly related to the elimination of child labour, more specifically under children's rights and child protection. The aim is to reduce the number of children engaged in the worst forms of child labour by 75 per cent by 2005 and the child labour participation rate from the current 25 per cent to less than 10 per cent by 2010.

The Government has accorded education a high priority, especially with respect to quality and access to primary schools. A special effort has been made to reduce the number of out-of-school children through the expansion of Complementary Basic Education in Tanzania (COBET) implemented by the Ministry of Education and Culture. Labour law reforms, including issues regarding the employment of children, were approved by Parliament in April 2004 and a child rights Bill has been drafted. The Government has also produced a list of hazardous tasks for children as mandated by Convention No. 182, which the TBP has translated into local languages to promote community awareness.

The mid-term review found that the IPEC TBP had established effective collaboration with other international agencies through the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and its various theme groups. The review also highlighted the importance of community-level involvement and commitment. The project had managed to support existing local structures and encourage the development of new ones, in particular, local-level child labour committees.

Sources: Report on the mid-term review and evaluation mission for the IPEC project of support to the National Time-Bound Programme on child labour in Tanzania, 10-25 Oct. 2003. IPEC: Support for the Time-Bound Programme on the worst forms of child labour in Tanzania – Phase II (2005-09).

7 years of age. In some countries, children under 10 are estimated to account for 20 per cent of child labour in rural areas. Much of that work is invisible and unacknowledged, as it is absorbed into "piece work" or "quota systems" based on family work units. Through various subcontracting arrangements, commercial agricultural enterprises can disclaim responsibility for any child labour found on their farms and plantations. Furthermore, agriculture is still under-regulated all over the world. Not surprisingly, this is a sector where trade unions are traditionally weak. Child labour laws – if they exist – are less stringently applied in agriculture than in other industries.

*Overcoming the "special" status of agriculture*

**165.** Moreover, the "family farm" element in agriculture, which is universal and bound up with culture and tradition, often makes it difficult to acknowledge

that children can be systematically exploited in such a setting. The fact that children work on family farms can be perceived as "family solidarity". Although this can be the case, it is important to take a closer look and examine working conditions (which may well be hazardous) and the amount of time that may be devoted to work and thereby lost to education, particularly by girls. At the other end of the scale, plantation agriculture can take place in closed environments that are difficult to penetrate.

**166.** These factors make agriculture both "special" and difficult to reach for child labour action. However, it is precisely because of all these factors – large numbers, hazardous nature, lack of regulation, invisibility and the denial of education – that agriculture should be a priority sector for the elimination of child labour, but this is not the case at the national level, where historically an urban and industrial view of what constitutes child labour has prevailed.<sup>15</sup>

15. ILO: *Bitter harvest: Child labour in agriculture*, Bureau for Workers' Activities (Geneva, 2002), p. 5.

**Box 2.5.**  
**National child labour projects in India**

Since the adoption of a National Child Labour Policy in 1987, the Government of India has spearheaded a major child labour elimination programme through its flagship National Child Labour Projects (NCLP). Thus far, 150 NCLPs have been launched across the country to provide educational and other rehabilitation services to children withdrawn from hazardous industries. The programme is supplemented by a budgetary allocation by the Government of Rs6,020 million (about US\$131 million) during the Tenth Five-Year Plan 2002-07 to cover 250 districts out of a total of 601 districts during the plan period. The national programme is complemented by efforts aiming at universal elementary education, whilst several major states (provincial governments) are implementing time-bound programmes for the elimination of child labour. India has been participating in IPEC since 1992 and, building on the experience, a comprehensive and large-scale project on child labour – INDUS – is now being implemented by the federal and state governments, with support from IPEC in 20 districts of four large states. The project is co-financed by the Government of India and the United States Department of Labor. It aims to develop an integrated multi-sectoral approach through several components dealing with education, training and income generation for poor families. The project has a strong partnership approach, involving the social partners in particular.

Source: IPEC: *IPEC action against child labour*, op. cit., box 2, p. 19.

*An emerging programme area*

**167.** Agriculture remains an underdeveloped area of work for IPEC as well, accounting for less than 15 per cent of projects and action programmes. However, since 2002, the ILO has been more active in this sector. Among its growing range of activities, IPEC is involved in efforts to combat child labour in cocoa production in West Africa and coffee plantations in Central America. In 2002, IPEC launched a three-year regional programme on prevention, withdrawal and rehabilitation of children engaged in hazardous work in commercial agriculture (Comagri) in Kenya, Malawi, the United Republic of Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia, which has also shown the value of social dialogue. In the United Republic of Tanzania, trade unions and employers came together to press for decent work – safe working conditions and fair pay – for 14-18 year-olds legally working on tea and tobacco farms.

**168.** In 2005 two important resources were developed. First, a training-of-trainers manual was published for farmers on child labour, drawing on experience from the growing number of activities in agriculture. The manual is targeted at smallholding farmers in the sectors where children are likely to be working, and supports improvements in workplace safety and health that will benefit adults as well as children. This is particularly important in the agricultural sector in West Africa, where child labour is endemic. Second, a kit was produced providing guidance on policy and practice. It is intended to assist policy/decision-makers involved in child labour elim-

ination efforts in agriculture, including government officials, the social partners, occupational safety and health specialists and agricultural specialists.

*Children working in mines*

**169.** The image of children blackened by coal dust, lugging heavy carts up from tunnels deep underground, was one of the factors which led to the creation of the ILO itself and the adoption by the Organization of the first international standards on child protection. Astonishingly, almost a hundred years later, that very image can still be seen in small-scale mines of Asia, Africa, Latin America and even parts of Europe. Although much reduced, the problem persists.

**170.** Far from the public gaze, children in small-scale mining are vulnerable to a range of social, psychological, and physical dangers not found in many other forms of work. Mining areas are notorious for violence, prostitution, drug use and crime. Schools are non-existent in many districts. Mining is a hazardous occupation, and children who work in mines and quarries are at serious risk of injury and illness, some disabilities becoming apparent only years later. Every year, an unknown number lose their lives.

**171.** Child labour in mining has not received as much attention as some other forms of child labour, perhaps because the number of children is small – estimated roughly at 1 million.<sup>16</sup> However, it was

16. IPEC: *IPEC action against child labour 2004-2005: Progress and future priorities* (Geneva, ILO, 2005).

precisely because mining is an extremely dangerous form of child labour, but also on a modest scale, that IPEC began to consider whether it was possible to tackle it through a global strategy.

172. A step-by-step approach was adopted that demonstrated the value of a global approach. In 2004, IPEC conducted a thematic evaluation of its mining projects (as well as relevant projects of others) to gauge whether feasible solutions existed. The evaluation found innovative strategies being developed and notable successes in policy change and removal of several thousand children from work in small-scale mining. Despite the sobering reality of trying to bring change to informal mining sites, the evaluation showed that there was a wealth of experience on which to draw.

173. The experience on the ground was accompanied by the development of sound policy foundations emanating from ILO global tripartite meetings in 1999 and 2000 which gave both policy direction and links to major actors such as the ICEM, the ICMM and Communities and Small-Scale Mining (CASM).<sup>17</sup>

174. Indeed, the mining sector is one in which there are powerful interests on all sides, ranging from the vigorous mining trade unions of South Africa to mining companies that have more assets than some of the countries in which they operate. And even though virtually all child labour is found in small-scale mines and quarries, which are unorganized, informal and often illegal, the fact that child labour occurs within the industry is a matter of concern to all those who wish for a socially responsible identity for themselves and the industry. Moreover, for development agencies and investment banks, the sector provides an entry point for tackling the larger and more intransigent issues of rural poverty, rural migration and the environment, which have a direct effect on the economic viability of the formal mining industry.

175. Taking these factors into account – IPEC experience on the ground, ILO policy directives, tripartite backing and the link with the decent work and poverty reduction agendas – when it came to selecting a theme for the World Day against Child Labour in 2005, the ground was already prepared for a focus on mining and quarrying. As mentioned above, this led to a global Call to Action to eliminate child labour in the sector. Over 50 countries marked the occasion, demonstrating widespread support at the global,

national and local levels for ending child labour in mines and quarries.

176. At the international level, a small inter-agency working group has been convened to prepare a work plan and an information package for resource mobilization. These form the basis and first steps for making the Call to Action a reality. At the national level, many of the actions begun on the World Day against Child Labour are turning into detailed follow-up plans as part of the first global sector-based Time-Bound Programme.

#### *Tackling the unconditional worst forms of child labour*

##### *Priorities*

177. Under Convention No. 182, ratifying member States have an obligation to respond as a matter of urgency to the unconditional worst forms of child labour, which include forced and bonded labour, use of children in armed conflict, child prostitution, trafficking in children for labour and sexual purposes, and use of children in illicit activities such as the drug trade. Some of these extreme forms of exploitation and abuse (particularly trafficking) were also the subject of the ILO's Global Report of 2005.<sup>18</sup>

178. Some of these unconditional worst forms of child labour featured in IPEC programming from the outset, and others were targeted after the adoption of Convention No. 182. Both operationally and at the political level, over the last four years, the ILO has clearly demonstrated its added value in these areas.<sup>19</sup>

179. It is important to acknowledge, as IPEC and its partners do, that these are areas where the worst human rights violations occur and where it is not appropriate to set programme priorities based purely on numerical values. There also has to be a degree of proportionality in setting strategic priorities, and although it may not always be clear to the public what criteria are used by the ILO and the international community for focusing more heavily on one issue rather than another within the unconditional worst forms, observed trends (for example, as shown in figure 1.5 in Part I on the implementation of Conventions Nos. 138 and 182) show a clear correlation between implementation and impact in some areas that are listed among the unconditional worst forms of child labour.

17. A network of mining-related agencies and technical specialists based at the World Bank and funded in part by the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID).

18. ILO: *A global alliance against forced labour*, Global Report under the follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, Report I(B), International Labour Conference, 93rd Session, Geneva, 2005.

19. See for example M. Dottridge: *Kids as commodities? Child trafficking and what to do about it* (Lausanne, International Federation Terre des Hommes, May 2004), recommendation 3, p. 86.

### *Trafficking*

**180.** Trafficking of children for sexual or labour purposes is a process leading to other worst forms. Estimates in the 2002 Global Report on child labour suggested that some 1.2 million children were the victims of trafficking. Governments have undertaken many positive steps in the right direction, through the amendment of existing provisions directly related to trafficking, or indirectly by changing labour migration laws and regulations. The Palermo Protocol on trafficking adopted by the United Nations in 2000 explicitly accepts a definition linked to exploitation that can include a labour purpose. The general consensus is that the Palermo Protocol contains the most authoritative definition to date. The debate has become more politicized in recent years, with connections being made to terrorism and security, as in the case of the United States and some of its alliance partners. In western Europe, trafficking is primarily viewed in the context of labour migration, both regular and irregular – an aspect of increasing globalization. This definitional debate suggests that this is an area where further guidance from the ILO is needed.

**181.** Since 2000 the ILO has been trying to influence the debate on trafficking by stressing the labour dimension, after having focused in the early years on commercial sexual exploitation of girls and boys as an outcome of trafficking, with particular emphasis on the highly visible tourism sector. This also meant that attention was skewed towards a few countries popular with tourists and the international media.

**182.** Early programmes from the mid-1990s tended to have a policy focus on the supply side of the phenomenon and on those countries, such as Nepal, that were seen as supply areas for commercial sexual exploitation. This is now being balanced by an emphasis on demand-side factors linked to the globalization paradigm, including labour market migration flows in particular. Starting in 2004, demand-side research has become a priority for a number of IPEC's sub-regional trafficking programmes, in particular in the Mekong subregion,<sup>20</sup> Europe and Central America.

**183.** Resource mobilization in this area has been very successful in recent years. As of 2005 seven donor countries are collaborating with the ILO to implement projects to combat trafficking of children. Some

US\$52.1 million has been raised, more than two-thirds of this in 2003–04. Starting with one project in 2000 and two in 2001, the ILO mobilized funding for seven projects in 2003 and 12 new projects in 2004. In 2005 the ILO established a task force on trafficking and now, across the ILO, there are 28 anti-trafficking projects, 17 of which are managed by IPEC.

**184.** This growing attention to the issue (and to the worst forms of child labour in general) is partly due to increased global mobilization through events such as the Second World Congress against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children, held in Yokohama in 2001, which followed on from the First World Congress held in Stockholm in 1996, but also reflects new overall political priorities among some of the major players.

**185.** For example, the United States Government has now taken up the issue. In 2001, the Department of State issued its first *Trafficking in Persons Report*, an annual report mandated by Congress assessing foreign governments' efforts to eliminate trafficking in persons.<sup>21</sup> This monitoring of performance is linked to non-trade and non-emergency assistance sanctions, including the possible veto of World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) loans.

**186.** IPEC, with its seven regional programmes<sup>22</sup> covering 45 countries, has become a significant force for influencing policy agendas towards incorporating the labour dimension of trafficking which leads to child labour exploitation. The issue has also provided a platform for inter-agency collaboration, for example with the International Organization for Migration (IOM), with which the ILO has signed a Memorandum of Understanding.

### *Commercial sexual exploitation of children*

**187.** Linked to the issue of trafficking, commercial sexual exploitation is an unconditional worst form of exploitation of children and manifests itself in a wide range of ways. Every year, more than 1 million children are forced into prostitution, trafficked and sold for sexual purposes or used in child pornography.<sup>23</sup> Studies carried out by the ILO and under the auspices of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography

20. Including the new project in China on internal trafficking. In an important breakthrough for IPEC, the trafficking issue opened up an opportunity in 2000 to tackle child labour in China.

21. Available at [www.state.gov/g/tip](http://www.state.gov/g/tip).

22. For example, the project on combating the trafficking of children for labour exploitation in West and Central Africa (LUTRENA), the project to combat trafficking in children in South Asia (TICSA) and the project of technical assistance against the labour and sexual exploitation of children, including trafficking, in countries of central and eastern Europe (PROTECT CEE).

23. United Nations: *Sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography*, Note by the Secretary-General, General Assembly, 50th Session, document A/50/456, 20 Sep. 1995, para. 51.

show that commercial sexual exploitation remains a problem in developed as well as developing countries.

**188.** Formerly the centre of attention in this area, the tourist industry has subsequently become part of the focus on trafficking and part of TBPs in many countries. Tourism has remained an important aspect of action in this area, and is ideally suited to a social dialogue approach. In recent years IPEC has worked with the World Tourism Organization to promote a sustainable form of tourism that protects children from prostitution and its accompanying violence and abuse. IPEC is promoting codes of conduct around the concept of “child-safe tourism” in Brazil, Cambodia, the Dominican Republic, Kenya, Mexico and the United Republic of Tanzania. The social partners are an important part of the strategy. In the Philippines, IPEC has provided training materials to help the National Union of Workers in Hotels, Restaurant and Allied Industries (NUWHRAIN) to combat commercial sexual exploitation of children in the tourism sector. In Thailand, the ILO Mekong Subregional Project to Combat Trafficking in Children and Women is promoting ecotourism as a means of providing income generation for indigenous and tribal peoples vulnerable to trafficking.

**189.** As is so often the case in child labour, the challenge is to make inroads into the less regulated part of the industry, such as small enterprises.

#### *Child domestic labour*<sup>24</sup>

**190.** Child domestic work remains a highly sensitive issue because it is so often masked by kinship arrangements within a supposedly protective environment where children – often girls – are learning useful skills. Child domestic work therefore enjoys social tolerance similar to that displayed towards agricultural work. Moreover, in many countries it is supported by the educated elite. Again, this illustrates the importance of the cultural dimension in an understanding of its causes, and of the measures needed in response.

**191.** IPEC research has shown how risky these assumptions are. Recent rapid assessments conducted in Asia, Africa and Latin America have begun to provide

a much clearer picture of the differentiated situations of children as domestic workers, from the benign to the gravest unconditional worst forms.<sup>25</sup> The gender dimension also emerges: for example, boys are more likely to be paid for domestic tasks than girls, who spend much longer on such tasks.<sup>26</sup>

**192.** Child domestic labour was the focus of the World Day against Child Labour in 2004, which led to many events around the world. A major report produced by IPEC supported efforts to raise awareness of this neglected issue.<sup>27</sup> In October 2002, tripartite participants from 16 countries in the Asia-Pacific region came together to share experience and develop a follow-up action framework.<sup>28</sup> Both initiatives played an important role in bringing this issue out into the open. Many governments, such as those of Brazil, Cambodia, Costa Rica, Honduras, Nicaragua and the Philippines, have taken major steps to address child domestic labour as part of national plans of action.

**193.** IPEC is moving towards a multi-faceted strategy aimed at removing children facing exploitative or hazardous conditions. For adolescents who have reached the legal minimum age, the emphasis can switch to improving conditions of work, including regularizing the sector so that domestic workers are covered by defined rights. Everyone legally able to work has a right to decent work. This is consistent with the approach to youth employment discussed in Part III.

**194.** However, the challenge of responding to child domestic labour is enormous, and remains largely unmet. An important starting point is continued support to self-organization within the sector and to advocacy at the national and international levels for inclusion of child domestic labour as a form of child labour, and potentially one of its worst forms.<sup>29</sup>

#### *Children in armed conflict*

**195.** The number of children involved in armed conflicts has increased significantly over the last decade and is generally thought to be in the range of 300,000.<sup>30</sup> While many are older, aged 15 or above, there has been a dramatic trend towards recruiting younger children. The abduction of children during

24. The term “child domestic labour” is used to differentiate between permissible work in the domestic sector by adolescents above the legal working age and cases where under-age children (all children under 18 years of age) are found in an exploitative situation.

25. See for example N. Kannangara; H. de Silva; N. Parndigamage: *Sri Lanka child domestic labour: A rapid assessment* (Geneva, ILO, Sep. 2003) and ILO: *Girl child labour in agriculture, domestic work and sexual exploitation: Rapid assessments on the cases of the Philippines, Ghana and Ecuador* (Geneva, ILO, 2004).

26. See for example D. Budlender; D. Bosch: *South Africa: Child domestic workers: A national report* (Geneva, ILO, 2002).

27. ILO: *Helping hands or shackled lives?* op. cit.

28. *ibid.*, pp. 86-89.

29. *ibid.*, p. 108.

30. See ILO: *Every child counts: New global estimates on child labour* (Geneva, 2002), p. 25.

armed conflict is a serious problem, leading to sexual slavery or forced labour, with girls as the likely victims. It is for these reasons that Convention No. 182 defines “forced or compulsory recruitment” of children aged under 18 for use in armed conflict as one of the worst forms of child labour.

196. The first attempt by IPEC to address the issue of child soldiers was launched in October 2002 with a series of rapid assessments in Burundi, Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda.<sup>31</sup> The inter-regional programme now also covers Colombia, the Philippines and Sri Lanka (core countries), as well as Côte d’Ivoire, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Uganda (non-core countries). Challenging as it is for IPEC to work in countries directly affected by conflict, the project has an important role in developing and providing appropriate skills training modules to former child combatants and to vulnerable communities. Ongoing activities are aimed at withdrawing and reintegrating 5,000 girls and boys and preventing another 5,000 from being recruited as child soldiers. Of these, 3,000 will receive education to prevent recruitment and 2,000 (affected by armed conflict but not recruited) are benefiting from other services. The rehabilitation of former child soldiers is a major priority, in which skills training is a key component. Reaching the girls affected by conflicts has proven to be a particular challenge for all international organizations involved, and new innovative outreach approaches are being tested through the IPEC projects in Central Africa and Sri Lanka.

197. Building the educational and vocational skills of young ex-combatants, who have been withdrawn and rehabilitated by other agencies in highly volatile situations, naturally calls for a prudent and efficient approach to inter-agency collaboration. The ILO has been able to use its experience of employment creation for young and vulnerable groups moving into “implementation” – previously more narrowly characterized as “humanitarian assistance” activities but now recognized as a combination of immediate, medium- and long-term development assistance for peace-building purposes. As part of this approach, the analysis of training institutions at the national level, as well as of local job opportunities, is being undertaken in those countries where the project is active. For example, a survey was carried out in some areas of Sri Lanka, while a labour market and training needs assessment was undertaken in Liberia as a joint activity by the ILO and UNICEF. This has been done with UNICEF in particular, but also with the World Bank

Multi-Country Demobilization and Reintegration Program (MDRP), IOM, International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and international NGOs. This is an area where inter-agency coordination has worked well, both at the national level in the seven target countries and at the international level, through the coalition to stop the use of child soldiers, the Task Force on Children and Armed Conflict (CAAC), and the Inter-Agency Working Group on Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR).

#### *Forced and bonded labour*

198. Forced and bonded labour comprises just over two-thirds (5.7 million children) of the unconditional worst forms of child labour<sup>32</sup> and although IPEC does not have many specific sector programmes in this area, the target group is partly covered through a number of TBPs and through the majority of trafficking projects. There have been specific projects in Nepal dealing with victims of the *kamaiya* system of bonded labour in agriculture among the Tharu indigenous people in the western parts of the country, and in brick kilns in Pakistan. The element of bondage in child domestic labour, for example, is a current subject of IPEC research, based on the evidence from operational experience. Bonded child domestic labour has been found in Pakistan. Mining and quarrying is another identified sector where forced and bonded labour conditions have been found. This aspect is being developed through increasing collaboration with programmes under the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, especially the Special Action Programme to Combat Forced Labour (SAP-FL).

#### *Illicit activities*

199. IPEC’s early projects on street children mainly dealt with what is covered in Convention No. 182 as “the use, procuring or offering of a child for illicit activities, in particular for the production and trafficking of drugs”, and in 2002 IPEC conducted action research in South-East Asia to arrive at a better understanding of the role of children in the production, sale and distribution of illegal drugs. This served as a basis for models of intervention, and a regional project has developed pilot interventions showing that the nature and degree of violence in this particular form of child labour, combined with heavy substance abuse among the target groups, calls for

31. For a synthesis of these rapid assessments, see: ILO: *Wounded childhood: The use of children in armed conflict in Central Africa* (Geneva, 2003).

32. See ILO: *Every child counts*, op. cit., p. 25.

**Box 2.6.**  
**Children in the illicit drugs trade in the United Kingdom**

An in-depth, 20-month study by a team of criminologists and drugs experts from King's College London found that:

- children aged 12 are selling drugs;
- more young people are becoming runners and spotters for dealers;
- many play truant from school in order to keep their clients supplied;
- many are drawn into this illicit trade by a close relative because they believe their age makes them less likely to be caught;
- teenagers in some rundown parts of British cities are so desperate to get into the drugs trade that they offer to work for free in order to gain a foothold, according to research led by Professor Hough, director of the Institute for Criminal Policy Research at Kings College.

Source: D. Campbell: "Revealed: Britain's network of child drug runners", in *The Observer*, 16 Oct. 2005.

specific approaches.<sup>33</sup> Similar approaches are being developed in Brazil.

**200.** In central and eastern Europe (CEE), many of the children trafficked for labour exploitation typically end up in some form of illicit street-based activity including petty theft, begging and pimping. So far in the region, the notion that children used for illicit activities are victims of one of the worst forms of child labour has not been mainstreamed within the juvenile justice system. Given that very little action has been reported on improving legislation against the use, procuring or offering of a child for illicit activities, in particular for the production and trafficking of drugs, this is certainly an area that needs more attention in the future, and there is considerable scope for collaboration with other agencies, especially UNICEF.

*Child labour monitoring: Evolution of a concept*

**201.** Child labour monitoring (CLM) has evolved over the years and is closely linked to the enforcement of national child labour legislation. A wide range of CLM initiatives have been designed, implemented and tested as part of the ILO's work against child labour.

**202.** CLM expanded from manufacturing (Bangladesh and Pakistan) to other economic sectors, such as fishing (Indonesia and the Philippines) and agriculture (Central America and the Dominican

Republic), and by now to all areas of IPEC intervention, including the informal and illicit sectors, as in CEE. More recently, CLM has also been integrated into the design of TBPs.

*A step-by-step process*

**203.** In practice CLM involves the identification, referral, protection and prevention of child labourers through the development of a coordinated multi-sector monitoring and referral process that aims to cover all children living in a given geographical area. Its principal activities include regularly repeated direct observations to identify child labourers and to determine the risks to which they are exposed, referral of these children to services, verification that they have been removed and tracking them afterwards to ensure that they have satisfactory alternatives.

*Early models*

**204.** The earlier CLM initiatives were developed in response to international pressure on specific export industries, and the main objective was the monitoring of workplaces. Two well-known examples of this are the Bangladesh garment industry project starting in 1995<sup>34</sup> and the Sialkot soccer ball industry project in Pakistan starting in 1997. These projects developed specific monitoring procedures and tools, with moni-

33. C. Vanaspong: *The use of children in the production, sales and trafficking of drugs: Intervention models developed in Indonesia, the Philippines and Thailand* (Geneva, ILO, 2004).

34. The monitoring and verification system developed from December 1996 is credited with effectively removing and preventing child labour in the garment industry and thereby saving the industry. See ILO/UNICEF: *Addressing child labour in the Bangladesh garment industry 1995-2001: A synthesis of UNICEF and ILO evaluation studies of the Bangladesh garment sector projects* (Dhaka, Aug. 2004), pp. 10-11.

toring carried out by professional and skilled workplace monitoring teams. These initial experiences highlighted the importance of having social protection activities on stream when monitoring starts, in order to provide viable alternatives for children withdrawn from work. With the Central America coffee and agriculture projects, the concept of “community-based monitoring” became more fully developed. Using local resource persons, such as teachers, and awareness-raising approaches to mobilize action, these projects began to demonstrate the capacity of non-traditional actors to engage in child labour monitoring.

#### *From industry to child focus*

**205.** These and other child labour monitoring initiatives have contributed to the evolution of the concept of CLM over recent years. The focus has shifted from the monitoring of the industry to the monitoring of the child as he or she is removed from work and provided with social protection services; from the “withdrawal” of children from work to a coordinated effort involving the identification, referral, verification and tracking of children to ensure that those removed from work are provided with satisfactory alternatives; and from monitoring specific target sectors to an area-based approach to monitor all types of child labour in a given geographical area.

**206.** Child labour monitoring has been applied somewhat differently depending on whether it is operating in the formal or informal economy.

**207.** In the formal economy, for example in the manufacturing industries, child labour is likely to be addressed through the formal labour inspection mechanism. Child labour monitoring is often conducted through multi-sector monitoring teams in which labour inspectors are joined by social workers, educators and sometimes NGO and community members, each with a specific function and purpose in the monitoring team. These multi-sector partnerships are often institutionalized and are a valuable complementary resource to general labour inspection work.

**208.** In the informal economy and other areas (transit points of trafficking, home-based work and sometimes agriculture) CLM uses a wide range of partners, such as civil society organizations and NGOs, with much of the emphasis put on prevention and raising awareness of the ill effects of child labour. This type of community-based monitoring is often carried out in rural areas and those child labour sectors where the physical withdrawal of children from the worksite is not possible, as is the case where the children live with their families on smallholder farms, small-scale mining sites or fishing boats. The task of

CLM is to engage the community to monitor child labour through social mobilization, training and provision of tools and to link the monitoring activity to local government and official enforcement systems so that the information on child labour can be used effectively. Much of this work involves attitude change rather than law enforcement.

#### *Mainstreaming efforts*

**209.** CLM is increasingly being mainstreamed through government enforcement and basic service structures such as labour, social welfare and education officials working together to respond to child labour. Such efforts are officially recognized and are anchored in the government structures and supported by local legislation or administrative ordinances to provide CLM with legitimacy and a mandate.

**210.** A good example of mainstreaming is CLM in the salt, fishing and rubber sectors in Cambodia. National-level partners include the Ministry of Social Affairs, Labour, Vocational Training and Youth Rehabilitation, as well as the National Subcommittee on Child Labour. This has helped ensure that child labour issues are mainstreamed into national programmes and resulted in the issuing of ministerial orders aimed at eliminating child labour in these sectors.

**211.** Community-based CLM has also been a feature of the Comagri initiative on hazardous work in agriculture mentioned above, first started in English-speaking African countries in 2003. A number of key lessons learned are emerging, including the need for continuous training and capacity building; coordination, co-operation and commitment from stakeholders; good data analysis; and scaling up and mainstreaming.

**212.** The concept of child labour monitoring has thus evolved from sector-specific and workplace-centred interventions to a more holistic and comprehensive approach to child labour. Child labour monitoring is used as a vehicle to sustain and continue the identification and referral of child workers beyond specific projects. When mainstreamed into the regular work of local government, CLM promotes a permanent response mechanism to child labour that can be shared among all the many actors in society working towards the elimination of child labour.

#### *Knowledge management: Creating a learning culture*

**213.** As may be seen from the above, knowledge generation, dissemination and use are a fundamental approach of the ILO. IPEC’s strategy is based on

**Box 2.7.**  
**Developing the role of labour inspectors**

Labour inspectors have a key role to play in combating child labour. This was affirmed at the Meeting of Experts on Labour Inspection and Child Labour held in Geneva in September 1999 and at the Tripartite Meeting of Experts from the African Region on the Role of Labour Inspection in Combating Child Labour held in Harare in 2001. In response, IPEC has focused on improving the capacity of labour inspectors to collect information, identify and assess work hazards and coordinate with others. To this end IPEC has developed various materials such as a handbook for labour inspectors (2002), a training manual (2005) and a set of technical sheets (2005) aimed at helping labour inspectors to tackle specific child labour situations. In addition, IPEC has promoted the role of labour inspectors in combating child labour at various technical forums such as the ILO/IALI Conference on Integrating Labour Inspection: Functions, Effectiveness and Training held in Bulgaria in 2003 and at the ILO/EU Interregional Conference on Integrated Labour Inspection Systems held in Luxembourg in 2005. At the Second Children's World Congress on Child Labour and Education held in New Delhi in September 2005, 70 child participants were able to present their perspectives and experiences in making the labour inspection system more considerate and responsive to child labourers' concerns, including mismanagement, corruption and intimidation by violence.

Source: IPEC/SafeWork/International Association of Labour Inspection (IALI): *Combating child labour: A handbook for labour inspectors* (Geneva, ILO, 2002).

generating and disseminating relevant knowledge for use by different target audiences, anchoring and linking knowledge to practical applications, and creating a "learning culture" within the Programme. Over the last four years IPEC has developed its knowledge management capacity encompassing assets, infrastructure and dissemination.

*Knowledge assets*

**214.** Some of these assets, such as survey data, have been examined in an earlier section. As regards learning from field programmes, IPEC has been extensively evaluated at the project and thematic levels. In 2002-04, a total of 87 evaluations were carried out, including four thematic evaluations on income generation strategies, children in scavenging, children in small-scale mining and quarrying and education and skills training. Evaluation studies were conducted with UNICEF on the project on child labour in the Bangladesh garment industry and a synthesis paper published in August 2004.<sup>35</sup> Other higher-level evaluation studies have been published and disseminated to highlight lessons learned and good practices. Impact assessment methodologies such as follow-up baseline surveys and tracer studies have focused on documenting longer-term impacts on children and their families of IPEC-supported interventions.

*Good practices and models of intervention*

**215.** IPEC has also produced a significant number of guidelines and tools on thematic areas, as well as a generic approach to identifying, documenting and sharing good practices in interventions on child labour.<sup>36</sup> Most of IPEC's projects have good practices components aimed at identifying and disseminating specific good practices within the country and across subregions for subregional projects. Several projects focusing only on identifying, sharing and using good practices have been carried out. IPEC's technical credibility has been strengthened in this area through demonstrating the potential of using UCW support for its work on good practices. Specific models of intervention have been developed for areas such as education and trafficking, which are based on the good practices and knowledge assets and have led to detailed model approaches, methodologies and tools for use by countries and IPEC.

*Information systems in support of the knowledge base*

**216.** Since 1999 IPEC has implemented a Programme Database and a web site in support of its activities, including campaigning and knowledge sharing. Since 2002 an integrated approach has been adopted with regard to the Web and the database, focusing on supporting the direct sharing of knowledge. The database has information on projects, partners

35. ILO/UNICEF: *Addressing child labour in the Bangladesh garment industry*, op. cit.

36. This emerged as a product from UCW. See also IPEC: *Time-Bound Programme Manual for Action Planning*, op. cit., Guide Book IV.

### Box 2.8. Tracer studies

Since 2003, as part of an impact assessment framework, IPEC has developed a tracer methodology that can be used to measure long-term changes that have occurred in the lives of direct beneficiaries and still present some time (from two years and more) after an intervention has been completed. The initial methodology has been piloted in six countries covering a sample of over 2,000 beneficiaries, with over 900 children actually traced. Interventions covered a variety of sectors:

- working street children in Ankara, Turkey
- mining in Ecuador
- fishing and footwear in Indonesia
- child domestic workers in Uganda
- integrated programme in five villages in the United Republic of Tanzania
- trafficking in Sri Lanka.

Impacts sought in the children covered education status, employment, economic well-being, health and recreation and attitudes. In Ecuador, for example, the school attendance of children under 12 years has risen significantly from 67.6 per cent in the period before project execution, to 80 per cent during the project, and is currently 100 per cent. The majority of children under 12 years are not working (81.3 per cent). In Indonesia, there was an increase in compulsory education as a main activity. In Uganda 31.5 per cent of the traced beneficiaries' households reported improvements in their economic conditions. In the United Republic of Tanzania, reports of declining child labour were attributed to increased awareness created by village government officials, NGOs and religious groups.

A wealth of information has been gathered, and further analysis should shed light on life transitions of the target group and the impact of policy and institutional development on children and their families.

Source: IPEC.

(such as institutions and key individuals) and products (documents and other materials), and serves as a repository for information resource centres for public and internal use and as a management tool for different parts of IPEC and ILO. Several reviews and assessments have pointed to the potential wealth of information and the need to strengthen the system, including adding more key knowledge assets, such as working papers and resource kits on how to deal with particular types of child labour. Given the demands on the ILO-wide information systems, within which the IPEC database resides, access to information can be hampered by existing infrastructure. The development of IPEC information systems has been in line with comparable ILO-wide systems and indeed in advance of it, and has therefore been in a position to provide input to facilitate development of wider ILO knowledge management – a good example of spill-over effects from IPEC to the rest of the ILO.

### Mainstreaming across the ILO's Decent Work Agenda

#### *Decent work as a global goal*

**217.** Since 1999 the ILO has developed three inter-linked concepts that orient its priorities for the medium term. These are:

- the Decent Work Agenda as a tool for development and social inclusion;
- productive employment for women and men as the main route out of poverty;
- achieving a fair globalization as a source of global stability and rising living standards.<sup>37</sup>

**218.** Making decent work a global goal serves to orient the ILO's work both internally and externally. Internally, it provides a common framework to ensure consistency and coherence in the work of the ILO. Externally, it orients the ILO's links to the broader multilateral and national development and rights agendas.

37. ILO: *Strategic Policy Framework (2006-09): Making decent work a global goal*, Governing Body document GB.291/PFA/9, Geneva, Nov. 2004, para. 10.

219. Child labour elimination has an important contribution to make to these corporate goals and it is therefore critical that the issue continues to be mainstreamed within the work of the Organization. There have been a number of attempts to promote greater integration but more effort is still needed.

220. For example, the evaluation of IPEC mentioned above found “a paucity of references to the elimination of child labour in the policy matters of other units and global initiatives of the ILO, including areas where the subject matter would seem most relevant”.<sup>38</sup> The evaluation team could not find an inventory of activities on child labour carried out by the Bureaux for Employers’ and Workers’ Activities (ACT/EMP and ACTRAV), and a global overview of initiatives from employers’ and workers’ organizations was not available.<sup>39</sup>

221. IPEC has recognized the need for greater collaboration and has taken significant steps to enhance this in line with its shifting strategic focus. The growing extent and nature of these steps have been comprehensively set out in recent IPEC implementation reports.<sup>40</sup> A few examples of good practice can be highlighted. Based on joint implementation and evaluation experiences, IPEC and the InFocus Programme on Boosting Employment through Small Enterprise Development (IFP/SEED) developed guidelines in 2004 on how to use enterprise development strategies for the elimination of child labour. Long-standing collaboration with the Social Finance Programme (EMP/SFP) resulted in guidelines on the use of social finance instruments in child labour programmes. There has been continuing cooperation on hazardous child labour with the InFocus Programme on Safety and Health at Work and in the Environment (SafeWork) and the Sectoral Activities Department (SECTOR), in particular over the agreements brokered in the mining and quarrying sector in 2005 examined above. In relation to education, IPEC has also worked with the InFocus Programme on Skills, Knowledge and Employability (IFP/SKILLS) to develop a comprehensive skills training programme for 14-17-year-olds. Moreover, with close to 20 well-funded TBPs in place, IPEC has experience and the potential to contribute and integrate with the decent work country programme

exercise. One example is how to use TBP tools such as SPIF for priority setting in decent work country programmes.

222. Beyond the ILO itself, the evaluation found that the report of a United Nations Development Group (UNDG) inter-agency working group chaired by the ILO on Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs), and the resulting Guidance Note sent to United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and World Bank representatives in the field, did not contain an explicit reference to child labour.<sup>41</sup> The new ILO manual on PRSPs takes child labour into account as part of human development, and in particular EFA.<sup>42</sup> In addition, IPEC and UNDP are increasingly working together to develop collaborative approaches to child protection.

### Gender mainstreaming

223. Promoting gender equality is integral to achieving the Decent Work Agenda. The overall strategy to further gender equality in practice is to intensify gender mainstreaming in all ILO programmes.

224. There have been significant advances in mainstreaming gender into IPEC programmes and structures, as documented in a participatory gender audit report in 2003.<sup>43</sup> The report highlighted a number of good practices<sup>44</sup> covering the design of TBPs and their implementation. The development of a substantial programme on child domestic labour, which mainly affects girls, represents a significant gender initiative. The integration of gender in the Programme is also evidenced by the systematic inclusion of gender analysis and gender-sensitive data collection in SIMPOC survey methodologies and the Programme and Operations Manual.

225. However, the auditors pointed to workload pressures that detracted from the effective monitoring of all products and activities from a gender perspective. The range and number of external partners also presented a challenge in this area. The auditors found that in the criteria for selecting partners there was still room for improvement in assessing their level of gender sensitivity, as well as their willingness to integrate and

38. ILO: *Evaluation*, op. cit., p. 107.

39. *ibid.*, p. 39.

40. See for example IPEC: *IPEC action against child labour*, op. cit., pp. 22-24, 2005.

41. ILO: *Evaluation*, op. cit., p. 108.

42. ILO: *Decent work and poverty reduction strategies (PRS): A reference manual for ILO staff and constituents* (Geneva, 2005), pp. 2:33-2:38.

43. ILO: *InFocus Programme on Child Labour: Gender audit report, 17 Nov.-5 Dec. 2003* (Geneva, 2003).

44. See also ILO: *Good practices: Gender mainstreaming in actions against child labour* (Geneva, 2003).

**Box 2.9.**  
**Child labour in a globalizing world**

What has been the impact of globalization on child labour? The answer is unfortunately inconclusive. The difficulties begin with the diverse perceptions of the concepts of globalization and child labour, although in the latter case the definition is more formally and firmly established by ILO Conventions. Statistical evidence too is still insufficient, particularly in regard to types of child labour where the scarcity of reliable data has often compelled analysts to resort to proxy indicators that are rarely adequate. In addition, the multitude of channels through which globalization affects child labour poses difficult methodological challenges.

There are only a limited number of studies on globalization and child labour, or some derivative, and these tend to limit their definition of globalization to increased international trade. A few studies are also available on the relationship between foreign direct investment (FDI) and child labour, and the impact of price liberalization on the latter. The findings broadly support the proposition that, under the right circumstances, the globalization process could lead to a reduction in child labour, although there is some evidence to the contrary as well. One study, for example, finds no empirical evidence that trade exposure (a measure of globalization) per se increases child labour. In a country that starts out with a largely uneducated workforce, globalization raises the wages of the uneducated relative to educated workers, which is likely to increase child labour. By contrast, globalization can help reduce child labour in countries where there is a relatively large pool of workers with at least a basic education, complemented with active social policies. Another study of the impact of a liberalized trade policy found that, in the case of Viet Nam, the resulting increases in the price of rice, an export crop, can account for almost half of the decline in child labour that occurred during the 1990s.

A few studies have also considered the links between FDI and child labour. Broadly speaking, child labour appears to diminish as FDI increases, although the lack of reliable and comparable data for long periods proved an obstacle in the analysis of the likely reasons for this and similar findings. An IPEC review of the literature suggests that the benefits of FDI are not primarily through increased employment, but rather through technological transfers and the modernization of industry. This highlights the fact that the most effective way of becoming involved in globalization and benefiting from it is through an educated workforce. Globalization raises the returns to education, and this is probably the key in the linkage between globalization and child labour.

Source: IPEC: *IPEC action against child labour*, op. cit., pp. 51-52.

monitor gender in implementing IPEC programmes. The Programme was advised to give consideration to sharing systematically the acquired knowledge of gender analysis and planning tools with its partners.

**226.** An overview of IPEC's evolving approach to gender issues in child labour programming shows that boys and girls are almost equally represented in economic activities, and boys are more represented in the worst forms of child labour. Gender segregation patterns of child labour reflect the adult's world and confine girls to tasks that are particularly difficult to identify and measure, especially in household, domestic and sex work. Gender plays a key role in identifying barriers to getting all girls and boys into schools and keeping them there. Gender relations and gender roles are also key to structuring the incidence and nature of child labour. For example, traditional masculine roles may confine boys to the

most unacceptable forms of labour because of a perceived "breadwinner" responsibility for the family's economic survival. This example points to a larger truth – gender sensitivity is not just about girls. It is important to avoid all assumptions about who does what, why, and when.

*ILO action for a fair globalization:  
Follow-up to the World Commission*

**227.** The Report of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization<sup>45</sup> makes specific mention of child labour in several contexts. It identifies child labour as "a serious problem in its own right and a major factor limiting school enrolment, retention and educational achievement".<sup>46</sup> It sees it as a consequence of poverty as well as a factor in

45. ILO: *A fair globalization: Creating opportunities for all*, report of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization (Geneva, 2004).

46. *ibid.*, para. 274.

its perpetuation. Mostly, however, the references to child labour are implicit in the Report, as for example in relation to the need to respect core labour standards within the broader international development agenda.

**228.** The evolution of IPEC strategy, in particular the development of an enabling environment for the elimination of child labour, is in line with the thrust of the Report. IPEC's strategies have increasingly been

focusing on global frameworks such as the MDGs, PRSPs and EFA highlighted in the first Global Report on child labour. Various strategies have been proposed by IPEC, including research, developing the connection to youth employment, mainstreaming child labour in broader policy frameworks, developing global sectoral partnerships, and giving greater emphasis to Africa.<sup>47</sup> These are explored in greater depth in Part III.

47. See IPEC: *IPEC action against child labour*, op. cit., pp. 51-55

## Summing up

**229.** Global Reports offer an important opportunity to take stock. Critical reflection is essential if we are to draw the right lessons from experience. How far has the Organization come in its child labour abolition efforts over the last four years? There is much to be proud of. IPEC has continued to gain support from the donor community and has been at the forefront of the worldwide movement against child labour. New frameworks and technical tools have been put at the disposal of member States. Important contributions to research and data collection have been made – not least in arriving at global trends for the first time. Set against these considerable accomplish-

ments, important challenges remain. Chief among these is the need to narrow the gap between technical maturity, on the one hand, and designing the necessary delivery strategy on the other – one that seizes opportunities to mobilize constituencies for child labour elimination utilizing multiple entry points. Moreover, greater national ownership, supported by employers' organizations and trade unions and backed up by a more vibrant worldwide movement, can create the political environment in which technical tools and frameworks are put to optimal use and child labour action taken to sufficient scale to have a real impact.





## PART III

# Global challenges

## Mainstreaming

### Rationale and requirements

**230.** It is now widely recognized that targeted interventions to withdraw, rehabilitate and reintegrate child labourers have their role for specific populations of children, and that many of these interventions can and must be scaled up. However, the effective abolition of child labour on a national scale is only feasible if countries succeed in diminishing the poverty dimension of the problem and if, at the same time, they take a variety of other measures to reduce exclusion and discrimination. This realization is based essentially on three premises:

- the massive scale of the problem, making interventions by an intergovernmental organization or other outside actor on a very wide scale unproductive;<sup>1</sup>
- the intimate links between the elimination of child labour and various other dimensions of development; and
- the principle that prevention is better than cure.

**231.** Fortunately, development efforts in many countries are now being channelled within the context of various complementary frameworks such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) process, the Education For All (EFA) initiative, the ILO's Decent Work Agenda and – specific to Africa – the New Partnership for Africa's Development

(NEPAD). Varying in focus – on the promotion of pro-poor growth strategies, expansion of educational opportunities, and extension of social protection to the most vulnerable groups – such frameworks constitute ideal vehicles for combating child labour, attacking its structural determinants and creating alternatives. The main theme of this section is on mainstreaming of child labour concerns as the key strategy to raising the profile of the issue and to ensuring greater impact.

**232.** The principal focus of mainstreaming efforts should clearly be at the national level (see box 3.1 for a definition of mainstreaming). This is where the main policies affecting child labour are formulated, decisions regarding resource allocation are made, and the final impact of action against child labour is assessed. The primary role of the international community is to assist national authorities in their mainstreaming efforts. But mainstreaming can also be fruitful, and indeed is essential, at the international level, in the form of the worldwide movement against child labour, as part of efforts to create a conducive environment for more effective action at the national and local levels.

**233.** Mainstreaming requires action on many fronts, which may usefully be grouped under four main headings: (i) improving the knowledge base; (ii) advocacy; (iii) capacity building; and (iv) policy development and coordination.<sup>2</sup>

1. IPEC estimates (see above) put the number of child labourers reached so far at roughly 5 million, as compared to the total of nearly 280 million child labourers in the world.
2. This section draws on H. Tabatabai: "Mainstreaming action against child labour in development and poverty reduction strategies", in IPEC: *Time-Bound Programme manual for action planning*, Paper IV-1 (Geneva, ILO, 2003), where a more detailed treatment may be found.

### Box 3.1. What is mainstreaming?

Broadly speaking, the term “mainstreaming” refers to concerted efforts to influence processes, policies and programmes that have a significant bearing on child labour elimination. It may be seen in some ways as analogous to the concept of gender mainstreaming that has evolved over the years and witnessed considerable success. Adapting an official definition of gender mainstreaming by the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), child labour mainstreaming may be more formally defined as:

- the process of assessing the implications for child labourers, or those at risk of becoming child labourers, of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in any area and at all levels;
- a strategy for making the concerns about child labour an integral part of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic, and societal spheres, so as to reduce both the supply of and demand for child labour, especially in its worst forms; and
- a process whose ultimate goal is the total elimination of child labour as soon as possible.

Source: H. Tabatabai: “Mainstreaming action against child labour in development and poverty reduction strategies”, in IPEC: *Time-Bound Programme manual for action planning*, Paper IV-1 (Geneva, ILO, 2003).

### Improving the knowledge base

**234.** Empirical evidence on child labour and the analysis of its links to other aspects of development are crucial in informing discussions about mainstreaming efforts, broadening the support base for the integration of child labour concerns in policy formulation, and facilitating this integration. But although IPEC has been working actively to improve coverage, this evidence is underdeveloped globally.

**235.** The main reason for the relative paucity of statistical data on child labour is the low priority it tended to receive in the past. If the elimination of child labour were to become a more fully mainstreamed development objective, it would attract the necessary resources to fill the gap. To some extent this is already happening. A number of countries have carried out child labour surveys on their own or, in most cases, with the assistance of the ILO or other international organizations. A variety of other types of survey are also being carried out that provide relevant information for child labour analysis, such as UNICEF’s Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS) and the Living Standards Measurement Study (LSMS) surveys of the World Bank. Furthermore, the data sets from these surveys are in most cases made available through the Internet to encourage their use and further analysis. The number of such surveys is still limited, however, and few countries have carried out more than one to allow for assessment of changes over time.

**236.** In regard to analytical work, the first priority should be to highlight the links, often running both ways, between child labour and the principal objectives of the policy processes into which it is to be in-

tegrated. These include poverty reduction of course, but also the development of human resources, universal primary education, economic growth, labour productivity, wage policy, income distribution and population growth and dynamics, as well as more intangible objectives such as improving the country’s image abroad. The results of such work would not only improve the knowledge base on child labour, they would also serve as a powerful means of convincing policy-makers of the importance of greater attention to child labour.

**237.** Another important priority in analytical work should be to assess the implications for child labour of the principal policy measures proposed and how their impact may be made more positive from the child labour standpoint. Analytical questions of interest with regard to poverty reduction strategies include, for example, whether the proposed strategy is able to reach child labour households, easing their income constraints through provision of greater opportunities for productive employment and income-generating activities. Are these households targeted in any way as a priority group? Will any proposed reforms of the education system ensure affordable access to quality schooling to *all* children, including child labourers? Are adequate economic incentives envisaged and budgeted to encourage parents to send their children to school and keep them there? Is the proposed strategy compatible with existing child labour legislation, policies and programmes? Is there any coordination with existing interventions, such as a Time-Bound Programme (TBP) for the elimination of the worst forms of child labour, and do they complement each other?

**238.** The question of who should undertake such efforts aimed at the generation of knowledge and its dissemination is an important one. Ideally, in each country a child labour knowledge network would be in place. This is unfortunately not yet the case in most countries. Capable research institutions exist in many developing countries that make an enormous contribution to the better understanding of socio-economic phenomena, but child labour is not often on their agenda.

### Advocacy

**239.** It is not surprising that child labour has a low profile in the policy process at the national and international levels. The poor have the weakest voice and their capacity for social action in a hostile political environment is limited.<sup>3</sup> Advocacy efforts are therefore an indispensable tool, and there are many entry points for raising child labour concerns.

**240.** There is a need to continue to raise awareness about child labour, its nature and extent, its determinants, links to poverty and the labour market, education, economic and social implications, population structure and dynamics, and its potential to act as an obstacle to and retard long-term development. It is also necessary to promote the elimination of child labour as an explicit development objective, and as a part of a poverty reduction strategy. In addition, the growing prominence of child labour concerns has now created an environment in which the formation of child labour constituencies is made easier than in the past. There is a need to take advantage of the current momentum to build such constituencies where they do not exist and strengthen them where they do, through active involvement in existing participatory processes (such as PRSPs and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), etc.), building alliances with the civil society groups most concerned.

### Capacity building

**241.** There is a need to strengthen the technical, organizational and managerial capacity of various child labour stakeholders, in particular ILO constituents,

as well as NGOs, through upgrading their technical expertise and the promotion of alliances among them. The formulation of national strategies for development and poverty reduction and the integration of child labour concerns in them involve many technical issues, but they are fundamentally political processes through which competing objectives, approaches and interests are resolved before national priorities are identified. Objectives and approaches that do not enjoy the support of sufficiently strong constituencies are bound to receive lower priority in the national agenda. One reason why child labour is not high on the development agenda is that such constituencies have so far been largely lacking or weak, both at the national and international levels. Within the government, the ministry or ministries responsible for child labour issues are often among the weakest politically and, as a consequence, technically as well. Similarly, international development frameworks such as the MDGs and PRSPs do not adequately accommodate child labour concerns.<sup>4</sup>

### Policy development and coordination

**242.** Comprehensive action against child labour involves a broad range of policies, programmes and projects, and thus many stakeholders in the public and private sectors. This poses a major challenge in terms of policy development and effective coordination among various state and non-state actors.

**243.** Mainstreaming efforts would be considerably helped if comprehensive national child labour policies and action programmes already existed. Article 1 of Convention No. 138 requires ratifying member States “to pursue a national policy designed to ensure the effective abolition of child labour”. Paragraph 1 of the accompanying Recommendation No. 146 provides guidance on the design of such a policy, noting in particular that “high priority should be given to planning for and meeting the needs of children and youth in national development policies and programmes and to the progressive extension of the inter-related measures necessary to provide the best possible conditions of physical and mental growth for children and young persons”.

**244.** There are as yet few countries where this requirement has been translated into a clear, coherent

3. See G. Wood: “Staying secure, staying poor: The ‘Faustian bargain’”, in *World Development* (Oxford), Vol. 31, No. 3 (Mar. 2003), p. 456.

4. See, for example, K. Heide: *Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers – Blind to the rights of the (working) child? The (I-)PRSPs’ perception of child labour: A problem outline and annotated collection of source material* (Heidelberg, Kindernothilfe and Werkstatt Ökonomie, Mar. 2004).

and comprehensive statement of a national policy on child labour. With increasing ratification of Convention No. 138 (as indicated by the analysis of reports submitted to the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations), a growing number of countries are moving towards the formulation of a national policy on child labour, but this is not yet the case in a large number of countries.<sup>5</sup>

### MDGs and PRSPs

**245.** The links between child labour and many of the MDGs are straightforward, and they tend to run both ways – between poverty reduction (MDG 1) and child labour on the one hand, and education for all (MDG 2) and child labour on the other. But child labour also has a gender equality dimension (MDG 3) in view of the discriminatory practices that deprive many girls of appropriate education and add to their burdens through excessive household chores. Combating HIV/AIDS (MDG 6) also bears on child labour, since AIDS orphans are among the children most at risk, as does the development of a global partnership for development (MDG 8), including the promotion of decent work for youth, whose linkages with child labour are discussed below.

**246.** The incorporation of child labour into the MDG framework as a target or an indicator for several MDG targets should be an objective for the worldwide movement, and in particular for the ILO in its drive to promote decent work as a global goal. This could constitute the foundation stone for the development of a TBP on the worst forms of child labour at the international level to complement those at the national level. Such a programme would be a vehicle for re-energizing the worldwide movement against child labour.

**247.** At the same time, the international community is committed to the elimination of the worst forms of child labour, as evidenced by the unprecedented ratification of ILO Convention No. 182. Article 1 of the Convention requires ratifying States to “take immediate and effective measures to secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour as a matter of urgency”. Although no specific time horizon is identified, it is clearly intended that this objective should receive priority of the highest order.

### Poverty reduction strategies

**248.** The poverty reduction strategies (PRSPs) are often seen (somewhat after the event) as the road map towards the MDGs. While the latter set the destination, the former elaborate the strategies, policies and programmes to get there. As a work in progress they offer an important opportunity for civil society engagement.

**249.** Poverty reduction strategies have been formulated by many developing countries in recent years. Extensive guidance for the preparation and assessment of the PRSPs is provided by the World Bank and the IMF in various documents, most notably a two-volume sourcebook.<sup>6</sup>

**250.** The PRSPs have all the hallmarks of national development plans, with poverty alleviation as the overarching objective. Indeed, in a growing number of countries they are replacing national development plans altogether. While external pressure has played a large part in this, there is little doubt that the PRSP process has struck a chord in many developing countries themselves. With its emphasis on social concerns alongside economic imperatives, on country ownership, and on a participatory approach, not to mention the financial backing it brings, the process enjoys significant support.

**251.** As mentioned earlier, explicit concern with the elimination of child labour does not appear in the MDGs, and as a consequence it is rarely found in PRSPs. The World Bank sourcebook, which runs to over 1,000 pages, barely mentions it at all. A review carried out by the World Bank in August-September 2005 found that of the 70 countries that have prepared an interim or full PRSP, only 12 dealt at any length with child labour. More disturbingly, populous countries such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Indonesia, Nigeria, the Philippines and South Africa, with a significant number of child labourers, provide no explicit treatment of child labour issues in key poverty reduction documents.<sup>7</sup>

**252.** However, the picture is changing, thanks in part to the efforts of the ILO. A growing number of countries have been taking steps to incorporate child labour indicators in the monitoring of PRSPs, as is the case in Bangladesh, Chad, Honduras, Pakistan, Senegal and the United Republic of Tanzania,<sup>8</sup> and in the MDGs, as in the case of Albania. The recent

5. For a remarkable example of the formulation of a national child labour policy and action programme, see the South African Department of Labour's web site (<http://www.labour.gov.za>).

6. J. Klugman (ed.): *A Sourcebook for Poverty Reduction Strategies* (Washington, DC, World Bank, 2002).

7. World Bank: *Going to school/Going to work: A report on treatment of child labor and EFA in World Bank projects and policy documents*, 2005, p. 11.

8. *ibid.*, pp. 20-24.

**Box 3.2.**  
**Mainstreaming child labour in the EU-Bulgaria**

*Joint Memorandum on Social Inclusion*

In the context of the country's upcoming accession to the European Union, IPEC in Bulgaria successfully negotiated the integration of worst forms of child labour issues in the Joint Memorandum on Social Inclusion between the EU and Bulgaria. It opens the way for the elimination of the worst forms of child labour to be part of the future joint policy monitoring and review process, and to benefit from resources from the European Social Fund. Bulgaria has helped set an important precedent in including the elimination of child labour as part of the EU accession process.

regional report from Central America on mainstreaming indicates some encouraging developments in putting child labour on key national agendas.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, the World Bank report cited above acknowledged that seven of the 12 countries dealing with child labour in their PRSP are participants in the Fast Track Initiative (FTI) in education, indicating that it could provide an important platform for more consistent treatment of child labour issues across sectors.<sup>10</sup>

**253.** Most PRSPs comprise, at least in principle, the fundamental elements of any effort to reduce child labour. Among these is the reform of the educational system to expand facilities and improve quality and, of course, the emphasis on poverty reduction itself. The stress on agriculture and rural development in many PRSPs is also encouraging, as most child labour is rural-based. The same goes for the priority accorded to the health sector, given the widespread hazards child labourers face. Most important, though, is the participatory process in the context of which the PRSP objectives and policies are defined. This process offers an excellent opportunity for the ILO's constituents to influence priorities, policy-makers and institutions, as has happened in Kenya, Nepal and the United Republic of Tanzania, for example.

### Child labour and education for all

**254.** An estimated 104 million children are currently without primary schooling, of whom 56 per cent are girls. South Asia and East Asia account

for almost half of these children although, if current trends continue, by 2015 more than half of out-of-school children will be African. An estimated 130 million children do not attend school regularly, many because of work commitments.<sup>11</sup>

### Progress towards education for all

**255.** Progress in meeting the challenge of EFA has been modest. Both gross and net primary enrolment rates increased by 2 percentage points worldwide between 1990 and 2000, and by the same amount in developing countries. One child in four drops out without completing five years of basic education. In sub-Saharan Africa the picture is more encouraging, as gross enrolment rates rose by 7 percentage points, while net enrolments increased by 3 percentage points. However, the picture is uneven, with some countries, such as Malawi, Mauritania and Uganda, doubling their enrolments between 1995 and 2000 while others have remained stagnant.<sup>12</sup>

**256.** Globally, if present trends continue, as many as 86 countries will fail to meet the MDG of universal primary education by 2015.<sup>13</sup>

**257.** As mentioned above, there is a growing recognition that the international effort to achieve EFA and the progressive elimination of child labour are inextricably linked. On the one hand, education – and, in particular, free and compulsory education of good quality up to the minimum age for entering employment as defined by ILO Convention No. 138 – is a key element in preventing child labour. Education

9. ILO: *Mainstreaming child labour concerns in broader development frameworks: Mapping efforts and potential* (San José, Costa Rica, May 2005).

10. World Bank, op. cit., pp. 11 and 19.

11. See G. Betcherman et al.: *Child labour, education, and children's rights*, Social Protection Discussion Paper Series, No. 0412 (Washington, D.C., World Bank, July 2004), p. 14, box 2.

12. *ibid.*

13. *ibid.*

**Box 3.3.**  
Examples of interventions to address child labour and education concerns

***In-school environment***

- Early childhood approaches to develop the rhythm of schooling
- Child-friendly schools as safe spaces, accountable to the community, using child-centred methods, where teachers exercise due care over pupils, following a curriculum seen as relevant and where parents and the community are welcomed and involved
- Teacher training, conditions and status
- Non-formal education approaches as a transitional measure
- Free school meals, regular health and nutrition checks
- After-school programmes
- Work orientation programmes such as livelihoods programmes for girls
- Distance education for remote and nomadic groups
- Water and sanitation facilities for girls

***Out-of-school environment***

- Birth registration for all children
- Abolish school fees
- Targeted and conditional cash grants
- Increased funding from education budgets
- Increased national income going to education
- Linking minimum age for employment with compulsory education legislation
- Anti-discrimination legislation to protect the rights of marginal groups
- Community-based monitoring systems

contributes to building a protective environment for all children and is *the* mechanism for opening up choice, which lies at the heart of the definition of development.<sup>14</sup> In turn, child labour is one of the main obstacles to full-time school attendance and, in the case of part-time work, prevents children from fully benefiting from their time at school.

***The EFA and child labour elimination movements: Two ships passing in the night***

**258.** Mainstreaming child labour into EFA monitoring and promotional efforts should therefore be a priority for the worldwide movement. Why has this interconnection taken so long to be recognized and acted upon at the international level? An important part of the answer lies in the nature of each movement. In the 1990s each inhabited a segregated world, moving in parallel directions – much like two ships passing in the night.<sup>15</sup> At the two major international conferences on child labour in 1997 held in Amsterdam and Oslo, the main actors in education – UNESCO and ministries of education – had limited representation.<sup>16</sup>

Likewise, neither of the education conferences held in Jomtien (1990) and Dakar (2000) included child labour elimination as an important strategic consideration.<sup>17</sup> As seen earlier in this report, this connection was not to be made formally at the international policy level until 2002 at the Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly on Children.

**259.** An important reason for this segregation lies in the failure of the child labour movement to develop a language and strategy to engage successfully with the movement for EFA. The world of education is resistant to taking on what it perceives as additional responsibilities. What the worldwide movement against child labour needs to do is convince the education mainstream that a concern for child labour is part and parcel of their concerns, and that enrolment, retention and attainment concerns require addressing both in-school and out-of-school factors that constrain families and working children. Box 3.3 outlines types of intervention that need to be considered in each area. An enabling and protective environment should be an integral part of the frame of reference of the EFA movement. This therefore needs to be given higher priority by the ILO in the next few years.

14. See A. Sen: *Development as freedom* (New York, Knopf, 1999).

15. See A. Fyfe: "Child labour and education: Revisiting the policy debate", in K. Lieten and B. White (eds.): *Child labour: Policy options* (Amsterdam, Aksant Academic Publishers, 2001).

16. Amsterdam Child Labour Conference, Amsterdam, 26-27 February 1997; International Conference against Child Labour, Oslo, 27-30 October 1997.

17. World Conference on Education for All, Jomtien, 5-9 March 1990; World Education Forum, Dakar, 26-28 April 2000.

### Legislative gaps

260. Roughly 85 per cent of developing countries have compulsory education laws, but there are 25 countries that have no such legislation. Moreover, at least 33 countries have no minimum age for employment. Many countries have failed to harmonize the school leaving age and the minimum age for work in line with ILO standards – something the ILO has called for since 1921.<sup>18</sup> While progress is being achieved as a consequence of ratification of ILO standards, inter alia, there remains an important gap – and it is compounded much more by the countries where the supply of schools lags far behind the number of children in spite of legal requirements.

### The effects of discrimination

261. The largest numbers of children who are out of school are to be found in countries without birth registration systems.<sup>19</sup> Birth registration is a basic right of all children. Without an identity, children are excluded from access to school and other civic entitlements. Some 37 countries deny education to non-citizens such as refugees, internally displaced persons or those without birth certificates. Indigenous and tribal children and other ethnic minorities are often at particular risk of child labour and missing out on education.<sup>20</sup> Anti-discrimination legislation and active measures to combat these forms of discrimination are therefore vital to counter exclusion from education. Disability is another important cause of discrimination. The out-of-school rates for children with disabilities are up to ten times higher than for the population as a whole.<sup>21</sup> Enrolment statistics in most countries tell us the number of children who are at school, but not the number who *should* be there.

### Girls' education

262. It is important to prioritize girls' education. Girls often face double jeopardy: because of their sex

and because of their poverty. The majority of children not in school are girls – some 65 million. To redress this imbalance UNICEF has put forward a seven-step plan of action. UNICEF calls for a national ethos of “no girl out of school” to be created. There are many interventions that can facilitate girls' attendance, such as separate water and sanitation facilities, curriculum development and greater recruitment of female teachers.<sup>22</sup> IPEC's work on preventing many of the unconditional worst forms of child labour, such as trafficking and child domestic work, in which girls are often disproportionately represented, makes considerable use of educational interventions as a preventive measure. And it is clear from the reports received under Conventions Nos. 138 and 182 that States are not generally taking special action for protection of the girl child (see figure 1.5 in Part I).

### Is EFA affordable?

263. Cost and financing issues are critical to achieving EFA. While the right to education has been a key element of human rights since the United Nations was established, there has been a progressive shift away from the original position that education should be free. Experience has shown that when public expenditure declines, with a move away from free and compulsory education, there is almost always a deterioration in access and quality that inequitably impacts on girls, minorities, other marginalized groups and the poor. The policy implication is clear. Education is a human right and a public good. All fees and charges for primary school must be immediately abolished. Where this has been done – for example, in Burundi, Kenya, Malawi and Uganda – school enrolments have risen dramatically.<sup>23</sup> Countries should overall be allocating at least 6 per cent of gross national product (GNP) to education<sup>24</sup> with a bias to primary education but with a proper investment in secondary and higher education. In fact, the majority of sub-Saharan African countries and many under-achieving Asian countries spend less than 4 per cent of GNP.<sup>25</sup>

18. A. Melchiorre: *At what age?... are school children employed, married and taken to court?* (The Right to Education Project, 2004), pp. 4-7. Only 45 of 158 countries surveyed had synchronized the school-leaving age with the minimum age for employment.

19. K. Tomasevski: *Education denied: Costs and remedies* (London, Zed Books, 2003), p. 127.

20. See P.B. Larsen: *Indigenous and tribal children: Assessing child labour and education challenges* (Geneva, ILO, 2003).

21. Betcherman, op. cit., p. 17.

22. UNICEF: *The state of the world's children 2004* (New York, 2003), pp. 74-78.

23. The abolition of user fees requires careful planning and alternative public or private funding to compensate for the loss of income, especially for schools, otherwise it can result in hidden fees being imposed by head teachers or teachers, and/or exorbitant class sizes and lack of teachers, impacting on quality and negating the positive enrolment gains.

24. This is the policy position of the ILO. See ILO: *Note on the proceedings: Joint Meeting on Lifelong Learning in the Twenty-first Century – The Changing Roles of Educational Personnel*, Geneva, 10-14 Apr. 2000, in Governing Body document GB.279/STM/3/2, 279th Session, Geneva, Nov. 2000, p. 33.

25. See *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2005: Education for All: The quality imperative* (Paris, UNESCO, 2004), table 14.

**Box 3.4.**  
**The MISA Initiative**

Poverty is one of the most important reasons why millions of children of school-going age across the world fail to attend school. In recent years, several Latin American countries have followed the pioneering example of Brazil's Bolsa Escola programme and developed minimum income support schemes linked to school attendance by the children of recipient households. Although taking a variety of forms in the numerous cities where they have been introduced, these schemes have become increasingly popular, and have excited interest from other parts of the world. Various assessments suggest that such schemes – which the ILO and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) call Minimum Income for School Attendance (MISA) schemes – can contribute towards the development of human resources, reduction of poverty in short and long runs, the elimination of child labour, and the provision of a potential safety net to some of the poorest and most vulnerable people. MISA schemes address only the demand side of the problem; they would be ineffective in the absence of adequate supply of educational facilities to absorb the increased demand for schooling. The financial resources required for their implementation may also be prohibitive, particularly for the least developed countries, unless external resources are available. The evidence is also insufficient as yet to substantiate a positive impact on child labour. They are not meant to be considered in isolation, or as stand-alone solutions to the poverty and education problems. Rather, they should be seen in the context of the existing development and poverty eradication strategies of the country.

Source: ILO/UNCTAD: *The Minimum Income for School Attendance (MISA) Initiative*, Report of the Advisory Group on the desirability and feasibility of extending minimum income schemes conditional on school attendance to African least developed countries (Geneva, May 2001).

**264.** The EFA Fast Track Initiative (FTI), launched in 2002 and led by the World Bank, aims to provide needed resource support to an initial 18 countries (11 in Africa) that have sound policies and accept clear accountability for results.

*Quality matters*

**265.** The worst forms of education will never be the answer to the worst forms of child labour. Children have the right to quality education. Moreover, evidence from India reveals that the vast majority of parents value education and are quite capable of judging low-quality provision.<sup>26</sup> Parents will send their children to school if it is of acceptable quality, free, accessible, and particularly if there are incentives such as a midday meal. Moreover, increased participation by the poor in education can lead in turn to greater pressure to improve quality, demonstrating that quantity and quality go hand in hand.

**266.** Here it is important to reflect on the expansion of non-formal education (NFE) in the last decade, especially as a child labour tool. Properly designed and implemented, NFE can be a crucial means of providing a transition for working children from work back into formal education. Too often, though, NFE has turned out to be second-class education for second-class chil-

dren, and at worst it has become a parallel system competing against the formal education system. It is time that NFE approaches were thoroughly evaluated to see if they have been over-sold as a response to child labour. Schools will be attractive to children and have the support of parents and the community if they conform to the concept of the “child-friendly school”. We should not forget that teachers also have rights at work and are key to quality improvements – their voices must be heard, and their organizations have a vital role to play in EFA and child labour elimination efforts. In this context the problems of low and late pay and inadequate initial and in-service training must be addressed. Teachers’ status and conditions must be enhanced in line with the 1966 ILO/UNESCO Recommendation concerning the status of teachers.

**HIV/AIDS**

*Transforming our view of child labour*

**267.** The impact of the HIV/AIDS pandemic is transforming our view of the child labour challenge and also of achieving EFA. However, growing experience suggests that insisting on EFA is a strategy that can disproportionately benefit orphans and other children made vulnerable to HIV/AIDS. In a world with

26. See, for example, J. Dreze; A. Sen: *India: Development and participation* (New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 154 and 158.

HIV/AIDS, education is increasingly coming to be seen as a “social vaccine” against the disease. In particular, improving education opportunities for girls reduces their risk of HIV/AIDS.<sup>27</sup> While the threat and challenge of the pandemic is a stark reality, it can also act as a catalyst for accelerating change in schools and education systems. The sense of urgency HIV/AIDS generates might also provide an impetus to transform schools into more effective preventive and protective institutions.

### Recent surveys

**268.** A series of rapid assessments commissioned by IPEC in 2001-02 – South Africa, the United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe – appeared in 2002-03, along with a synthesis report. The following year a rapid assessment was commissioned by IPEC in Uganda and published in 2004. Some of the findings confirm that children who are severely affected by AIDS are more likely to be in the worst forms of child labour. The study in Zambia, for example, concluded that the pandemic has added as many as 23 to 30 per cent to the child labour force.<sup>28</sup>

**269.** IPEC also commissioned a review of good practices and lessons learned from policies and programmes in South Africa, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia. As a means of further disseminating both the research findings and the body of good practices and to build support for policy and programme responses, the ILO hosted a subregional tripartite workshop on the impact of HIV/AIDS on child labour in sub-Saharan Africa in May 2003 in Lusaka, Zambia, as well as national workshops in the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia. The subregional workshop produced a “participants’ strategy paper” that has been used as a policy document in the field by the ILO and its partners. This strategy sets out six key objectives:

- Awareness and understanding of the problem of HIV/AIDS-induced child labour, as well as issues related to prevention, are increased through an enhanced communication flow within families, communities and educational institutions.
- Community and faith-based organizations, as well as grass-roots associations, are mobilized in order to ensure sustainable responses and promote awareness.

- The media play a key role.
- The ILO’s constituents, in coordination with IPEC and its partners, target responses to AIDS orphans and child labour and mobilize resources.
- Time-bound programmes mainstream HIV/AIDS concerns.
- Research on HIV/AIDS is encouraged within national and international research institutions.<sup>29</sup>

### Launching pilot projects

**270.** As a means of developing this earlier work, the ILO launched a large project mainstreaming HIV/AIDS concerns into child labour policies and programmes in Uganda and Zambia, as well as in other African countries where TBPs are under way. In the ongoing preparations of action programmes in Uganda and Zambia, the basic concept is to build community-based models of intervention and promote the mainstreaming of tools, policy recommendations and good practices for dealing with HIV/AIDS and child labour. Over the three-year life of the projects it is expected that other sub-Saharan countries benefiting from ILO support in child labour will also gain from the project outcomes.

**271.** Additional models of intervention can be found as part of a mainstreaming strategy within other programme vehicles, such as the TBP support projects in South Africa and the United Republic of Tanzania, the Capacity-Building Programmes (CBP) for several sub-Saharan African countries, based in Zambia, and the projects on commercial sexual exploitation of children and child domestic labour in Africa and Latin America, as well as the anti-child trafficking regional projects and commercial agriculture projects in Africa. HIV/AIDS concerns are also being mainstreamed into the INDUS project to combat the worst forms of child labour in India.

### Youth employment

**272.** Youth employment has a prominent place in the MDGs, as target 16 under MDG 8 – “develop a global partnership for development” – which urges co-operation with the developing countries in designing and implementing strategies for decent and productive work for youth. The links between child labour and

27. S. Gregson; H. Waddell; S. Chandiwana: “School education and HIV control in sub-Saharan Africa: From discord to harmony?”, in *Journal of International Development* (Manchester), Vol. 13, No. 4 (May 2001), pp. 467-485.

28. A. Mushingeh et al.: *HIV/AIDS and child labour in Zambia: A rapid assessment on the case of the Lusaka, Copperbelt and eastern provinces*, IPEC Paper No. 5 (Geneva, ILO, 2003), p. 23.

29. B. Rau: *Combating child labour and HIV/AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa: A review of policies, programmes, and projects in South Africa, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia to identify good practices*, IPEC Paper No. 1 (Geneva, ILO, 2002).

youth employment therefore constitute another major avenue for mainstreaming child labour concerns.

**273.** The links between youth employment and child labour also illustrate the importance of a life-cycle approach – identifying the key stages of life when people are vulnerable to poverty and exploitation. Decent work can be achieved only if there is equality of opportunity for all individuals from childhood to old age. It is vital therefore to ensure that disadvantage and discrimination faced at one stage are not perpetuated at later stages, and that girls and boys are empowered from an early age to make smooth transitions to the next stages of their lives, and ultimately into the labour market. If children are at work rather than in school, they will grow up with greater constraints and fewer prospects for decent work.<sup>30</sup>

**274.** There are more than 1 billion young people aged between 15 and 24 in the world today, comprising 18 per cent of the global population. Taken together, young people and children account for almost half of the world's population, and 85 per cent of the world's youth live in developing countries.

**275.** Interest in the problems of child labour and youth employment has grown substantially in recent years, and the literature on each has been accumulating rapidly. There has, however, been relatively little effort to examine the relationship between them, most notably in regard to the implications of child labour for later employment. For instance, there are virtually no empirical studies on the labour market experiences of former child labourers in their youth and adulthood.

**276.** A key question of interest is whether child labour may act as a precursor of youth employment problems. At the aggregate level, it is arguable that the very existence of child labour deprives youth of some job opportunities that would otherwise have been available to them if children ceased to work. What children do may be mainly unskilled jobs that might not be particularly attractive to youth. But their removal from the labour market would reduce the labour supply and could conceivably generate dynamics that would give rise to improved production technologies, skilled or semi-skilled jobs, increased labour productivity, and higher wages to benefit young people to some extent.

**277.** For the child labourers themselves, the adverse implications of child labour are far more significant

as they grow older. Child labour tends to exacerbate the problem of youth employment in so far as it prevents children from acquiring the needed education and skills to compete on the labour market as young adults. The importance of that inhibitive effect is an empirical question on which there is relatively little evidence.

**278.** There is also the task of ensuring that those who are removed from child labour are properly equipped to enter the labour market at the appropriate age. It is clearly not sufficient to eliminate child labour without ensuring that the alternative provides opportunities for education and skill acquisition that are in demand and improve young people's "employability".<sup>31</sup> The absence of institutions that could provide such alternatives is indeed one reason why child labour is sometimes seen as the way to acquire the needed experience and skills to improve one's labour market prospects. The efforts to alleviate the problems of child labour and youth unemployment and underemployment are thus less likely to be successful if each is tackled alone.

**279.** The discussion above hints at several thematic areas in which further research will need to deepen the understanding of the relationship between child labour and youth employment.

**280.** The first is to improve knowledge of how child labour may be exacerbating the problems of youth unemployment and underemployment. Research in this area would also inform the development of tools and action programmes that need to be tested, improved and replicated. The main gap is the lack of appropriate panel data that would allow the empirical investigation of the dynamics involved. But there is still much that can be accomplished with skilful analysis of existing survey data, particularly in the case of countries such as Brazil.

**281.** Secondly, education and training constitute the principal channels through which child labour and youth employment are linked. Their attractiveness as an alternative to child labour is crucial to efforts to eliminate child labour as well as to prepare children for successful entry into the labour market, as they grow older. Three areas in which further work is needed are basic literacy, non-formal education, and skill formation and apprenticeship.

30. ILO: *Starting right: Decent work for young people*, Background paper for the Tripartite Meeting on Youth Employment: The Way Forward, Geneva, 13-15 Oct. 2004, p. 40.

31. Employability – entailing investment in education and training and improving the impact of such investments – is one of the "four Es", and probably the most important in the present context, that the High-Level Panel of the United Nations Secretary-General's Youth Employment Network (YEN) recommended as top priority in all national action plans on youth employment. The other three are equal opportunities for young women and men, entrepreneurship and employment creation. Of these, employability is the issue most directly related to the problem of child labour. This relationship has two major aspects: the ways in which child labour detracts from employability as children grow into youth; and the need for children removed from child labour to develop their employability.

**Box 3.5.**  
**Emerging models of intervention in HIV/AIDS and child labour**

- Working at the policy level through consultative meetings with National Steering Committees for child labour and all relevant stakeholders, including ministries of labour, health and education and national AIDS commissions.
- Raising awareness of community leaders, employers' and workers' organizations and the media on the links between the pandemic and child labour and the need to mainstream the issue as part of the response at all levels.
- Creating HIV/AIDS local committees in selected communities to coordinate the response to children both affected and infected by the disease.
- Working with local communities in small social protection schemes, including seed scholarships for children of severely affected families.
- Reinforcing and building the capacity of institutions, such as vocational training, rehabilitation centres and other institutions catering to orphans and other affected children.
- Psychosocial interventions for gravely affected children, particularly girls and boys in the sex industry.
- Providing vocational training for girls and boys withdrawn from child labour.

**282.** Thirdly, the target groups of concern, children and youth, fall into partially overlapping age brackets.<sup>32</sup> “Young people” or “children” aged 15-18 are, according to ILO Conventions, free to work so long as they are not engaged in worst forms of child labour (slavery, illicit activities, etc. – generally illegal activities) or in other hazardous forms of work (such as mining, construction, etc.). Initiatives to remove the hazard(s) from the working environment (for example, through adaptation of equipment or reduction of working hours) or to facilitate the transition of adolescents from prohibited forms of work into non-hazardous occupations would accomplish the twin objectives by converting a child labourer into an employed young person.

**283.** Fourthly, the coexistence of child labour and youth unemployment represents a cruel irony: while there is a demand for certain types of labour that is met by children who should not be working, there is also a supply of labour from young people that goes unused or under-utilized. It may well be that in some cases the demand for children's labour cannot be met by unemployed young people. Rural households relying on their own children for help in farming activities or to fetch water and wood may not turn elsewhere for help. On the other hand, it is also true that some work done by children outside of the home can, in principle, be done by young people (and adults) instead. Indeed, they would have to be done by them if child labour were effectively abolished. What is needed is to explore possibilities for better functioning labour markets with a view to reorienting the demand for la-

bour away from children and towards youth. Detailed research is also necessary to identify economically feasible alternatives – for example technological and organizational improvements in the production process – to current practices involving child labour.

**284.** As part of his efforts to contribute to the implementation of the MDGs, the United Nations Secretary-General established a Youth Employment Network (YEN) in 2002 with the United Nations, the ILO and the World Bank as core partners. One of the main objectives of YEN is to assist countries in developing national action plans on youth employment, as urged by two General Assembly resolutions. The process is most advanced in the YEN's “Lead Countries”. The national action plans provide a good opportunity for mainstreaming child labour concerns in a policy framework that is not only most relevant, but also enjoys significant political support in many countries, as well as internationally. For example, in Albania, where jobs for youth are scarce and where many children are drawn into some of the worst forms of child labour, a United Nations Joint Youth Programme was launched in April 2005. The partnership includes the ILO, UNICEF, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the United Nations Resident Coordinator (UNRC).

**285.** In 2005 the ILO adopted a plan of action to promote pathways to decent work for youth based on three pillars: building knowledge; advocacy; and technical assistance. The plan advocated drawing on the experiences of IPEC.<sup>33</sup>

32. International instruments commonly define childhood and youth by reference to age: those aged under 18 are children and those between 15 and 24 are youth.

33. Resolution concerning youth employment, International Labour Conference, 93rd Session, 2005, paras. 42 and 44.

## Child labour and Africa's future

### Africa at risk

**286.** As pointed out in Part I, the proportion of children engaged in economic activities in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) is currently the highest of any region at around 26 per cent.

**287.** The reasons are not difficult to find. About one-sixth of the people living in SSA are chronically poor, and this poverty has been worsening – the number of poor people is expected to rise from 315 million in 1999 to 404 million by 2015. Africa is the only continent where the proportion of the population in poverty is growing. Consequently, Africa is far off track in meeting the MDGs.

**288.** However, the 48 countries of the region are diverse and the picture is not uniformly grim. In 2003, 24 countries in SSA had economic growth rates of 5 per cent or more. In education, the picture is a little more encouraging, with primary school enrolments increasing by 38 per cent between 1990 and 2000. In Malawi, Mauritania and Uganda enrolments doubled between 1995 and 2000. But 47 million African children are still out of school and of those who start primary school, only one in three finishes.

**289.** Huge population growth compounds the problem of getting all children in school and keeping them out of child labour.<sup>34</sup> The population of SSA grew by a staggering 80 per cent between 1980 and 2002. At Africa's rate of growth, the population doubles every 25 years. And it is a young population, with 44 per cent under 15 years old.

**290.** To this picture has to be added the one of the worst epidemics in history. Africa accounts for one in seven of the world's population but two-thirds of all people living with HIV and AIDS. One consequence of the pandemic is that Africa had 43 million orphans in 2003. By 2010 the numbers will reach 50 million. The implications for child labour are stark.

### A moment of opportunity for Africa

**291.** In every crisis there is also an opportunity. Between the weight of Africa's past and the hopes for its future, the year 2005<sup>35</sup> was marked by an unprec-

edented international movement to put the plight of the continent front and centre of the world's attention. International agencies, governments, trade unions, NGOs, church groups and celebrities saw 2005 as a breakthrough year – a step change, as much in the policy framework as in the levels of aid.

**292.** The focus of this attention was the G8 Summit held in Gleneagles in July 2005 to discuss the recommendations of Prime Minister Blair's Commission for Africa. The Commission cast its net wide in its 450-page report, which set out both the challenges facing Africa and clear recommendations on how to support the changes needed to reduce poverty. The report fails, however, to make any major reference to child labour, despite the fact that its prescriptions are in line with a comprehensive approach to child labour.<sup>36</sup>

### Identifying entry points in the follow-up to the G8 Summit

**293.** As part of the follow-up to the report it would be appropriate to study the likely implications for child labour action in the continent of the agenda adopted at the G8 Summit in July 2005.<sup>37</sup> Such a study would serve two important purposes. First, it would constitute a first step towards explicit incorporation of child labour in the Commission for Africa's agenda for action. Second, it would help establish a precedent for child labour impact assessment of other major policy initiatives.

**294.** There are a number of possible entry points where child labour could be strategically placed in the follow-up to the agreed G8 agenda. To begin with, it is plain that Africa will remain a focus of the G8 given that it is the only continent not on track to meet any of the MDGs. What is needed is a set of mutually reinforcing actions that will act as a tipping point towards self-sustaining growth. An important part of this strategy is investment in education to ensure that all children have access to and complete free and compulsory education of good quality. Meeting this goal for Africa by 2015 will mean tackling child labour as an important constraint to EFA, as pointed out in Part II of this report. Similarly, the aim of an

34. The relationship between child labour and population growth has generally received little attention.

35. However, it is also important to acknowledge the Extraordinary Summit of the African Union on Employment and Poverty Alleviation in Africa held in Ouagadougou in 2004.

36. Commission for Africa: *Our common interest: Report of the Commission for Africa* (London, 2005).

37. See *The Gleneagles Communiqué*, July 2005.

AIDS-free generation in Africa requires recognition of the interconnection between the pandemic and child labour. While recognizing that agriculture is the most important economic sector for most Africans, support for a comprehensive set of actions to raise agricultural productivity must embrace the elimination of child labour. This should be linked to supporting the growing market for fair-trade goods and to global trade discussions under the Doha Round scheduled for 2006. Finally, support of youth employment, including vocational training relevant to labour market demands, provides another entry point for child labour concerns.

**295.** Certainly, the policy environment is now more conducive to effective action against child labour in Africa. As mentioned in Part I, the vast majority of African countries have ratified both ILO Conventions Nos. 138 and 182. Under the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) 24 African countries have now signed up to have their progress reviewed by their peers. Both the African Union and NEPAD are positive frameworks to promote poverty reduction and human rights.<sup>38</sup> All these developments represent a window of opportunity to tackle the underlying causes of Africa's child labour problems.

### The role of IPEC

**296.** The programmatic challenges faced by IPEC in Africa include insufficient awareness of the child labour problem at all levels, from the family to the policy-making level; lack of viable developmental alternatives to child labour, mainly educational and vocational; consideration of specific circumstances of a critical nature such as HIV/AIDS, food crises and traditional practices that encourage child labour; and inadequate capacity at the implementing partners' level, causing implementation delays and administrative problems.

**297.** The evolution of IPEC's strategy is in part a response to greater demand for its services, as more countries seek to fulfil their obligations under the two child labour Conventions. This trend is expected to continue in the coming years and indeed intensify in the case of the African member States. This prospect raises the issue of how the present IPEC strategy may be strengthened for more effective action and greater impact. The comparative advantage of IPEC lies not simply in the volume of resources it is able to bring to bear on the problem but rather in the power of its message and its tripartite and other partner-

ships. The most pertinent measure of IPEC's effectiveness is less in the number of children it reaches through its direct interventions than in the reach and impact of its advocacy efforts; less in the size of the resources it manages to mobilize itself than in its ability to influence the allocation of much larger resources at the national and international levels in ways that would contribute more towards the objective of child labour elimination. For this message to be credible and forceful, however, it has to be backed up not only by the moral imperative of social justice but also by a solid and rapidly growing knowledge base on child labour and the capacity to play a facilitative role, provide policy advice and develop stronger partnerships.

**298.** Accordingly, several areas of IPEC's work in Africa should be significantly strengthened. Among these are:

- *Knowledge base on child labour.* Statistical data, in-depth analysis and practical tools are necessary to help inform policy formulation and monitor progress over time. A substantial foundation has been in the making over the past few years, not least with the accumulation of much survey data on child labour. Nationwide surveys alone now number over 60, covering some 40 African countries, carried out, in most cases, with the support of IPEC, UNICEF and the World Bank. These constitute an exceptionally rich source of primary data for analytical purposes, but their exploitation has so far only scratched the surface. Of particular importance is the need to develop simple indicators of child labour and its associated variables for monitoring purposes in the context of frameworks such as the PRSP. A major effort is necessary to fill the knowledge gaps through greater cooperation with African research institutes and networks, notably the research units of the social partners. To this end, IPEC's own policy research capacity and partnerships need to be substantially strengthened if IPEC is to become the foremost international centre of excellence on child labour knowledge and policy advice, as well as a dynamic source of support for the expansion of research capacity in Africa.
- *National child labour policy.* Comprehensive action against child labour involves a broad range of policies, programmes and projects, and thus many stakeholders in the public and private sectors. This poses a major challenge in terms of policy development and effective coordination among various actors. Action against child

38. See also the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and its Protocols.

labour would be considerably helped if comprehensive national child labour policies and action programmes already existed. Unfortunately, few countries in Africa have so far developed such policy frameworks, although several are moving in that direction. A key ingredient would be to define the role of various actors involved and to secure their commitment to fulfil their respective roles. A possible initiative in this area may be a regional programme to synthesize existing experience with national child labour policy formulation and implementation and distil the lessons learned for widespread dissemination, training, etc. African research institutes would play a leading role in such an initiative.

- *Mainstreaming child labour concerns.* A major focus of IPEC's future action would be to promote mainstreaming of child labour concerns in development and poverty reduction strategies, notably the PRSPs, as well as in sectoral policies such as education, agriculture and rural development. This involves a variety of activities in the areas of improving the knowledge base, advocacy, capacity building, and policy development and coordination. The TBPs are playing an increasingly important role in intensifying this trend, but they cover only a handful of countries. As mentioned above, the challenge facing IPEC is to devise ways of reaching many more constituents who are equally committed to the elimination of child labour but need support. This calls for innovative modalities other than direct intervention and TBPs to provide strategic assistance in mainstreaming efforts. Among these are vastly expanded networks of child labour stakeholders, mobilization of resources for the provision of policy advisory services and training,
- and increased collaboration with other international organizations such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Bank and the IMF, not only at the country level but also at the level of headquarters.
- *Education and child labour.* Universal primary education (UPE) is an important goal in itself and a crucial pillar of a strategy to eliminate child labour. The main constraint is generally the lack of adequate resources, particularly in the least developed countries (LDCs). Evidence appears to suggest that it is a perfectly feasible proposition, even in the context of the African LDCs, as has been argued in a joint study by the ILO and UNCTAD.<sup>39</sup> Research of this nature is likely to have a large payoff in advocacy terms, as demonstrated recently by the reception of the IPEC study *Investing in every child*.<sup>40</sup> Activities in the area of child labour and education will be intensified in other areas as well, notably advocacy for the prioritization of child labourers and children at risk in the EFA initiative, improvement of education quality, skills development and transition education. A particularly promising area for mainstreaming child labour concerns is the school feeding programmes that are proliferating in Africa.
- *Capacity for action.* Capacity limitations are a major constraint in both the formulation and implementation of policies and programmes against child labour. The weakest links are probably the technical and organizational aspects. These need to be strengthened, notably for the social partners, including the various levels of the government, and other major stakeholders. However, ways would need to be found to expand substantially the capacity-building role of IPEC in Africa.

39. ILO/UNCTAD: *The Minimum Income for School Attendance (MISA) Initiative*, op. cit.

40. IPEC: *Investing in every child: An economic study of the costs and benefits of eliminating child labour* (Geneva, ILO, 2004).

## Strengthening the worldwide movement

### A key pillar of action

**299.** Much of the pressure to abolish child labour, particularly its worst forms, has come from the international community rather than from domestic sources.<sup>41</sup> The first Global Report on the subject identified the emergence of a worldwide movement that had dramatically altered the landscape in terms of recognition of the problem of child labour after decades of widespread denial. This growing worldwide movement began to take off a decade ago, when a constellation of groups representing the labour movement and the wider human rights community responded to unfair globalization to propel child labour up the international agenda and gave it unprecedented attention.

**300.** Promoting a worldwide movement is one of the primary strategies of the ILO's strategy to abolish child labour. Indeed, IPEC experience over the years confirms that local and national-level action needs to be reinforced and supported by key global actors such as the international financial institutions. In summary, more could have been accomplished if the tools developed by IPEC had been part of a conscious political process aimed at creating space for poor people to act on their own behalf. Here, through social dialogue, trade unions and employers' organizations can contribute to building solidarity and commitment at the national and local levels. Overall, the worldwide movement has had little attention in comparison with the development of technical tools.

### Defining the worldwide movement

**301.** The worldwide movement has been clearly defined and systematically explored in a report commissioned by IPEC. In the report, the worldwide movement is defined as a loose constellation of individuals, groups, organizations and governments focused on, and committed to, the elimination of child labour.<sup>42</sup> The concept of a worldwide movement has, however, come to refer to international-level action that provides an enabling environment for national and local action.<sup>43</sup>

### A growing set of global actors

**302.** The worldwide movement over the last decade has been characterized by a growing diversity of actors. The ILO is the convenor of the worldwide movement. Other organizations within the United Nations system have been increasingly active, in particular UNICEF, UNESCO, WHO, UNDP and the World Bank. Key bilateral agencies have provided resources and political support to ensure that the profile of child labour was promoted internationally and to encourage greater inter-agency collaboration. This has been complemented by civil society activism that has taken new forms, such as consumer movements and attempts to mobilize working children themselves. The mass media and the academic community have both responded to the rising international profile of child labour and helped to reinforce it.

**303.** The adoption of Convention No. 182 in 1999 marked a watershed in the worldwide movement. The new Convention has provided a dynamic for the Organization and a force for convergence around clear priorities within a growing pluralistic worldwide movement. The ILO – through its standards, research and the technical support provided by IPEC – has been in the vanguard of the worldwide movement.

### Employers

**304.** Turning to the ILO's immediate partners, employers' organizations have a vertically integrated structure of representation that allows enterprises to connect to each other from the local to the global. This provides an important resource for the worldwide movement. In the 1990s employers' organizations became more aware of the importance of their role in combating child labour. In a 1996 resolution, the General Council of the International Organisation of Employers (IOE) called on all its members to raise awareness concerning the human, economic and social costs of child labour and to develop policies and action plans to contribute to the international campaign.

**305.** Following the Resolution, the IOE issued a handbook for employers on child labour in 2001 and,

41. Inter-Parliamentary Union/ILO: *Eliminating the worst forms of child labour: A practical guide to ILO Convention No. 182*, Handbook for parliamentarians No. 3 – 2002 (Geneva, 2002), p. 59.

42. IPEC: *The worldwide movement against child labour: Progress made and future action* (forthcoming).

43. One of the aims set forth in the first IPEC programme document was to promote a worldwide movement against child labour, in order to establish an international climate conducive to action on behalf of working children.

**Box 3.6.**  
**Global partnerships**

There is substantial evidence that IPEC's partnering and strategic alliances have had a significant effect on the global movement.

IPEC has been successful in attracting a wide range of external partners – from organizations mobilizing working children (the Global March), to other United Nations agencies, UNICEF, UNESCO, the World Health Organization (WHO), UNDP, and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), international financial institutions (World Bank), regional development banks (Asian Development Bank), multilateral co-sponsored programmes (the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)), other multilateral organizations (the European Commission, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)), international NGOs (Anti-Slavery International and Global Campaign for Education), research and arts groups, the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and multi-stakeholder initiatives (garment industry, sporting goods production, tobacco growing, and the International Cocoa Initiative).

However, there have been a number of problems arising from this broad-based approach to global partnering. Partnerships are not an end in themselves and need to be assessed in terms of what they deliver. Many IPEC partners do not see child labour in the same way. Transactional and maintenance costs are necessarily high and difficult to sustain in the longer term. The evaluation report<sup>1</sup> concludes that IPEC needs to develop a more focused approach based on strategic criteria and needs to find other “standard bearers” to carry the child labour message in global policy forums where the ILO has little or no weight. For example, there is still a long way to go to register, let alone integrate, child labour into the emerging global frameworks such as the MDGs and the United Nations reform process.

1. ILO: *Evaluation of the InFocus Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour* (Geneva, 2004).

in May 2005, it reaffirmed its commitment to tackling child labour through the adoption of a new position paper on the issue.<sup>44</sup> The purpose of the paper was to provide possible answers to difficult but important questions that business is likely to face in the course of its engagement in addressing child labour. A major challenge is the fact that the vast majority of child labour is found in the informal economy. Here employers' organizations can form partnerships with trade unions, NGOs and local communities. The position paper reaffirms that the proper role of business is to encourage, employ and reinforce the application of relevant laws and policies and work within national development plans.

**306.** This year, to provide a more practical tool for employers, the IOE, together with the Bureau for Employers' Activities (ACT/EMP), under an agreement with Norway, have worked on a tool for employers on eliminating child labour. This kit provides practical examples for business on how to deal with child labour, as well as setting out the challenges and considerations that businesses need to take into account when addressing child labour in their workplaces or their supply chains. The position paper and the new kit provide the IOE with a

platform from which it can renew its commitment to child labour elimination.

*Corporate social responsibility*

**307.** During the 1990s, large business concerns throughout the world came under pressure to pay greater attention to the impact that their activities were having on the environment, on the human rights of their workforce, and on others affected directly or indirectly by their activities. The corporate social responsibility (CSR) movement is a response by employers to these concerns, in ways that often exceed the legal requirements to which are they in any case subject. By the end of the decade, CSR had itself become an industry, providing advice to companies, particularly concerning their supply chains.

**308.** The trends in the 1990s were in the direction of corporate self-regulation and voluntary codes of conduct concentrated on particular sectors such as garments, sporting goods, footwear, toys, agricultural products, mining, etc. Other key social actors, such as trade unions and NGOs, have contributed to the pressure on companies to ensure that quality products

44. IOE: *Employers' handbook on child labour: A guide for taking action* (Geneva, 2001) and idem: *Challenges in addressing child labour: An IOE approach* (Geneva, 2005).

are part of a quality process. The United Nations itself endorsed this trend with the Secretary-General's voluntary initiative – the Global Compact<sup>45</sup> – launched in 1999. As of May 2005, the Global Compact had more than 2,000 companies and other stakeholders participating, with a growing involvement from developing countries, including Brazil, China and India.

**309.** Employers' organizations played a key role in the development of sectoral alliances in the last four years, in particular follow-up to agreements with the sporting goods industry with the participation of the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA). Some of these initiatives have taken the form of foundations, for example those concerning tobacco and cocoa, which bring the social partners together in the effort to rid industries of child labour.

*Capacity building for employers' organizations:  
A focus on agriculture*

**310.** An interregional workshop on the role of employers in the elimination of child labour was held at the International Training Centre of the ILO (Turin Centre) in May 2003. This workshop brought together representatives from 15 national employers' organizations to develop specific strategies and plans aimed at combating child labour. A key recommendation of the workshop was that priority should go to combating the worst forms of child labour in the commercial agricultural sector, as this is where a large proportion of their membership is to be found, and also accounts for the greatest percentage of hazardous child labour.

**311.** In 2004 ACT/EMP launched a programme under the Norwegian agreement on Capacity Building of Employers' Organizations on Child Labour in the Commercial Agriculture Sector. The programme is currently operating in eight countries, namely Azerbaijan, Ethiopia, Ghana, Malawi, Mali, Republic of Moldova, Uganda and Zimbabwe. In several of these countries discussions were held with Save the Children, UNICEF and UNDP to explore possible avenues for collaboration. To encourage further networking and the exchange of experience a study visit was organized by the Federation of Uganda Employers (FUE) in July 2004 for representatives from the employers' organizations in Ethiopia and Ghana. Two interregional capacity-building and information-sharing workshops have also been held at the Turin Centre in November 2004 and in Uganda

in November 2005, bringing together employer representatives from 12 different countries.

**312.** Child labour surveys have also been carried out by employers' organizations in Azerbaijan and Mali (cotton sector), Ethiopia (coffee and tea plantations), Ghana (palm oil and rubber plantations), Malawi (tea sector), Republic of Moldova (horticulture sector), Uganda (coffee sector) and Zimbabwe (tea sector) in 2004-05. Another major output of the programme has been awareness-raising and training programmes and the development of training and advocacy materials. In all the programme countries the national-level training and awareness-raising activities have brought together employers' organizations, trade unions, IPEC and other relevant stakeholders.

**313.** Working with employers' organizations to eliminate child labour is a highly relevant strategy, as employers' organizations can play a significant role in influencing their member enterprises to ensure that no child labour is used on their premises. They can also encourage their members to go a step further by taking measures to ensure that their suppliers and contractors in the informal economy also do not use child labour. Employers' organizations also play an important role in lobbying against child labour at the national level and in influencing national policies. In Azerbaijan, Malawi, Republic of Moldova and Uganda, for example, the employers' organizations have been very active in the media, and in Ghana, the employers' organizations were involved in discussions with parliamentarians on the new Human Trafficking Bill.

*Trade unions*

**314.** Trade unions play an important and, in some respects, a unique role in the worldwide movement. It was the labour movement in the mid-nineteenth century that first made child labour an international issue. Trade unions are well structured as movements and, as one of the constituents of the ILO, they provide one of the few means by which the concerns of ordinary people can be fed through into international policy-making.

**315.** The trade union movement was influential in helping to push the issue of child labour towards the top of the international policy agenda in the 1990s. The emphasis on human and trade union rights within the labour movement, allied with deep concerns to promote equality and social justice, means

45. The Global Compact asks participant companies "to embrace, support and enact, within their sphere of influence, a set of core values in the areas of human rights, labour standards, the environment and anti-corruption".

**Box 3.7.****Uganda: Employers addressing child labour in the agricultural sector**

The Federation of Uganda Employers (FUE) has been actively involved in combating child labour since 2001. It first addressed the tea sector through a project with ACT/EMP funded by the Norwegian Government. In this project the FUE conducted awareness-raising and training workshops for 160 top managers and 495 middle managers from the tea plantations across the country. Training and advocacy materials were also produced and 660 change agents were trained to carry on the work in the local communities when the project phased out. FUE has also implemented projects together with IPEC in the rice and sugar sectors, the outcome of which has been the setting up of child labour monitoring committees in the local communities, the adoption of by-laws on child labour in the rice schemes, the withdrawal of 418 children who have been supported in school thanks to income-generating projects on campus, and the inclusion of clauses on child labour in the collective bargaining agreements with workers in the sugar sector.

FUE is currently running a child labour project with ACT/EMP in the coffee sector. This programme, launched in 2004, is also funded under the Norwegian agreement. A survey was carried out which revealed the high incidence of child labour and the hazardous working conditions among smallholders and out-growers in the coffee sector. Poverty was identified as the main cause of child labour and the situation is exacerbated by the HIV/AIDS pandemic and large numbers of orphans. Action is being taken to assist small farmers and to create awareness of the consequences of hazardous child labour. Community change agents have been trained and training and information materials developed.

The work of FUE in the coffee sector has also roused the interest of the larger coffee producers and has resulted in new members in the formal sector joining FUE.

In November 2004, FUE signed a joint statement with the National Organization of Trade Unions (NOTU) and the National Union of Plantation and Agricultural Workers of Uganda (NUPAWU) agreeing to fight child labour in the agricultural sector and to develop joint programmes. In September 2005 FUE and NOTU organized a joint workshop supported by the ILO and agreed to specifically target the fishing sector, where a great deal of hazardous child labour exists.

Source: Federation of Uganda Employers.

that trade unions were receptive to a shift towards a rights-based approach to child labour, with a particular focus on the right to education.

**316.** Moreover, the basic values of the trade union movement stand in complete opposition to child labour, making it an issue around which a very broad consensus can be mobilized for action. Indeed, the issue of child labour can be used as a tool to promote social dialogue and as an entry point to develop trade unionism. This unity of purpose helped build momentum for the inclusion of Convention No. 138 as one of the core labour standards, eventually enshrined in the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, and in the adoption and promotion of a new instrument to tackle the worst forms of child labour.

**317.** The World Confederation of Labour (WCL) launched an international campaign for the ratification and application of Convention No. 182, while the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions

(ICFTU) launched its own campaign in 2001 with the involvement of youth structures. Global Union Federations (GUFs) such as Education International (EI) have also been active as part of the worldwide movement.<sup>46</sup> A workshop convened by the international department of the Netherlands Confederation of Trade Unions (FNV Mondiaal) in May 2005 identified gaps in the response of trade unions and generated ideas and a vision on how trade unions could better integrate child labour into their mainstream activities, as well as reaffirming the commitments of the labour movement to combating child labour.<sup>47</sup>

**318.** The workshop brought together six representatives from the GUFs, the ICFTU, the ILO (Bureau for Workers' Activities (ACTRAV) and IPEC), the Confederation of Norwegian Trade Unions (LO Norway) and two NGOs. The workshop aimed to identify gaps and highlight important challenges and opportunities facing trade unions in responding more effectively to combating child labour. Particular

46. See, for example, Education International support of the Global Campaign for Education and of the joint Trade union/NGO campaign: *Stop child labour: School is the best place to work*.

47. See FNV: *Report of the workshop: Global Union Federations and Child Labour*, Amsterdam, 19-20 May 2005.

**Box 3.8.****China: Employers' organization in Yunnan Province takes on the fight against trafficking**

The Kunming City Private Economy Association, with the support of IPEC's Mekong Subregional Project to Combat Trafficking in Children and Women, has been mobilizing the private sector as part of this effort. The aim is to increase the capacity of employers' organizations to take action against trafficking and labour exploitation. Since early 2005, selected lead employer representatives and some 800 employer representatives have been trained. Furthermore, an employers' handbook on trafficking, labour exploitation and gender has been developed and an Action Plan against trafficking has been adopted by the Association.

To add impetus to their action, 74 influential employers in Kunming City have developed, signed and disseminated letters calling on managers in the private sector to undertake self-monitoring, comply with labour law, take action against gender discrimination, and contribute to anti-trafficking efforts. The Association has also launched a street advocacy campaign.

Source: IPEC: *IPEC action against child labour 2004-2005: Progress and future priorities* (Geneva, ILO, 2005), box 3.

attention was given to how GUFs could collaborate with one another, with other trade union institutions (such as FNV Mondiaal, LO Norway, the ILO and the ICFTU) and NGOs in this process. The workshop examined the role of trade unions and the deficits found in the areas of research, resources and capacity, as well as identifying concrete proposals for priority activities and a division of labour over the next five years.

*The challenge of the informal economy*

**319.** What is clear is that capacity deficits at all levels of the trade union movement impair their ability to use their comparative advantage as a key actor in the worldwide movement. This is partly related to resources, although there is also an awareness gap that fails to recognize the opportunity child labour elimination provides to developing trade union organization through the core purposes of achieving decent work through self-organization, collective bargaining agreements and penetrating the informal sector. Making inroads into the informal economy is the critical step, both because most child labour is found there and because this is the reservoir of future membership. The two challenges go together. In Bulgaria, trade union centres supported by the ICFTU began to address the issue of the worst forms of child labour and the informal economy at a round table held in October 2005. In Ukraine, the Independent Trade Union of Miners of Ukraine (NPGU) has taken the lead in combating child labour in 500 unregistered small-scale mines, as part of the IPEC action discussed above.

*New opportunities for trade unions*

**320.** The trade union workshop mentioned above identified important opportunities for using child labour elimination as an entry point for organizational development. First, there was the need to ensure that governments and civil society groups did not separate Convention No. 138 from Convention No. 182. Trade unions also had a role in monitoring the impact of CSR initiatives related to child labour. Involving and organizing workers in the informal economy was also both a challenge and an opportunity.

**321.** In terms of future opportunities, the participants raised the possibility of creating a common platform with the large development NGOs, such as the Stop Child Labour campaign, and new creative mechanisms to coordinate trade union activities at the global level.

**322.** Recent attempts to form sectoral alliances to create child labour-free zones have provided important opportunities for social dialogue, and assign trade unions an important monitoring role to verify the credibility of these initiatives.

**Engagement of other intergovernmental organizations**

**323.** What of other United Nations agencies? Starting in 2002, *UNICEF* has made child protection one of five organizational priorities. This was reaffirmed in *UNICEF's* corporate plan for 2006-09, in which child labour features in both the focus area dealing with basic education and gender equality and that on child protection.<sup>48</sup> Child labour is an impor-

48. See UNICEF: *Medium-term strategic plan (MTSP), 2006-09. Investing in children: The UNICEF contribution to poverty reduction and the Millennium Summit agenda* (New York, 11 July 2005).

**Box 3.9.**  
**Trade unions joining hands against child labour in Andhra Pradesh, India**

Action taken by workers' organizations in Andhra Pradesh, India, provides an interesting example of how workers' organizations can join forces in combating child labour.

The IPEC Andhra Pradesh State Based Project (APSBP) for the Elimination of Child Labour began in 2000, and played a facilitating role in enabling six different trade unions that had rarely collaborated in the past to join forces to work towards eradicating child labour.

In 2001, following a series of meetings, consultations and workshops held with government and IPEC support, a collaborative programme of trade union action against child labour emerged. The Andhra Pradesh Federation of Trade Unions for the Elimination of Child Labour (APFTUCL), managed by a team of trade union leaders from each of the six unions, was formed as the coordinating body of trade union action against child labour in the state. Each trade union focuses on implementing a programme to eliminate child labour in one district, whereas in the other 18 districts, District Level Coordination Committees were formed for joint action by the unions. APFTUCL acts as the central support system for the field-level actions of the trade unions at the district level.

The focus districts together comprise around 25 per cent of Andhra Pradesh's population, and the unions are involved in a wide range of interventions. Interventions are carried out through their respective district child labour cells run by district project management teams, supported in each district by 25 organizers and motivators. Interventions which are common to all include:

- identifying and training workers, making them part of an Informed Workforce that will work to eliminate child labour within their own ranks and motivate others around them to do so too;
- reaching parents of child workers and key community leaders, educating them on child labour, and encouraging them to work to get children out of work and into schools;
- establishing close linkages with law enforcement agencies, education and child welfare departments, and the managers of national child labour projects to which working children can be diverted to receive education, mid-day meals and a stipend;
- working to enforce laws, especially those on minimum wages and those relating to children and their welfare;
- holding rallies, demonstrations and public meetings against child labour; and
- making efforts to divert working children to schools and alternative learning systems.

One outcome of this programme has been the formation of closer linkages among trade unions and between trade unions and government departments. The Andhra Pradesh government has consistently supported the programme and been responsive at all levels by ensuring the cooperation of its agencies, such as the education and labour enforcement departments and the National Child Labour Projects.

A major success of the trade union programmes has been the extensive sensitization of people at the grassroots level. Marches and rallies have been held across the state, and pamphlets and posters have been produced and distributed to all districts by the APFTUCL. The supporting and facilitating role of the APFTUCL and IPEC, as well as the extensive involvement and commitment of hundreds of ordinary members of the trade unions, working in small towns and villages across Andhra Pradesh, have been crucial to the successful implementation of the programme.

Source: IPEC: *Coming together: From confrontation to collaboration – A tale of trade unions joining hands against child labour* (Hyderabad, ILO, 2002).

tant element in UNICEF's child protection strategy, with particular emphasis on building a protective environment for children<sup>49</sup> and using education as a preventive strategy against child labour. UNICEF also played an important facilitating role in the Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly on Children held in May 2002. The Special Session re-

sulted in a new focus on child labour within the wider context of international cooperation efforts, citing the overriding need to "mainstream action relating to child labour into national poverty eradication and development efforts, especially in policies and programmes in the areas of health, education, employment and social protection".<sup>50</sup> Finally, in education,

49. Building a protective environment for children involves many elements, from government commitment to children's rights to providing services for recovery and reintegration of child victims. See Inter-Parliamentary Union/UNICEF: *Child protection: A handbook for parliamentarians* (Geneva, 2004), pp. 18-20.

50. United Nations General Assembly resolution S-27/2: A world fit for children, 10 May 2002, Twenty-seventh Special Session, doc. A/RES/S-27/2, para. 39.

## Box 3.10.

## Evolution of the international trade union project

ACTRAV has transformed its former International Trade Union Child Labour Project established in 1996 into a more focused endeavour – scaling back from 47 countries in 2002-03 to 18 countries under the new agreement with Norway. Furthermore, the countries are clustered in four subregions, to capitalize on related history and culture. Part of this more focused and grounded approach from the ACTRAV project has been the launch of the “Make Your Farm A Child Labour-Free Zone” campaign, which has produced collective bargaining agreements and political statements at the local level in Cambodia, Ghana, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, Uganda and Zimbabwe.

The project has demonstrated ways in which the fight against child labour can be an instrument to help free trade unions grow. The project is active in transition economies such as Cambodia, Kyrgyzstan, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Mongolia and Viet Nam. Indeed, in Kyrgyzstan, trade unions have initiated and led the fight against child labour. In Ghana, work with the General Agricultural Workers’ Union (GAWU) around the issues of hazardous work and child labour has demonstrated how the informal economy of small-scale farming can be penetrated to regain lost membership.

ACTRAV’s child labour project’s ability to create social dialogue within the trade union movement itself can be clearly seen in Benin and Burkina Faso, where all the trade union centres are working together on child labour. In Senegal, more trade unions are joining the fight against child labour through child labour monitoring teams, mostly in collaboration with IPEC.

UNICEF was given the leadership in 2002 of the newly launched United Nations Girls’ Education Initiative (UNGEI). *UNESCO* endorsed the need to take child labour into account in the drive to achieve EFA<sup>51</sup> and was a sponsor of the high-level round tables on child labour, education and poverty held in New Delhi (2003), Brasilia (2004) and Beijing (2005). *WHO* supported ILO efforts, starting in October 2002, to establish an inter-agency group on eliminating hazardous child work. By 2003, *WHO* collaborating centres in occupational health had identified child labour as one of 15 priority areas. In 2005, *WHO* produced a position paper on child labour as a means of supporting these growing activities. The *World Bank* officially recognizes child labour as one of the most devastating aspects of persistent poverty. Since 1998, the World Bank’s Global Child Labor Program (GCLP) has functioned as the institution’s focal point on the issues. The inter-agency research project Understanding Children’s Work (UCW) and the development of the World Bank’s Children and Youth Framework for Action offered scope for stronger engagement on the issue of child labour as part of its policy dialogues with governments. The World Bank continued to show increased research and policy engagement from an economic perspective, stressing

the role of household decision-making and viewing child labour elimination as integral to achieving the MDGs, including poverty reduction.<sup>52</sup> However, as the World Bank report mentioned above observes, this corporate position on child labour elimination does not always translate into priority for this issue in PRSPs and Country Assistance Strategies (CASs).<sup>53</sup>

324. In 2000, the *OECD* published its updated study on international trade and core labour standards in response to a request from OECD Ministers to examine the complex interplay between trade, employment and core labour standards. One outcome of the study was to look in more detail at the links between child labour and economic development. The ILO supported this follow-up study, which was published in 2003.<sup>54</sup>

325. The *Inter-Parliamentary Union* (IPU) has partnered the ILO and UNICEF to promote awareness and action among its membership on child labour and child protection issues in general.<sup>55</sup>

### The donor community

326. The donor community has been the great enabler of the worldwide movement. The Government of

51. See IPEC: *Combating child labour through education* (Geneva, 2004), p. 4.

52. See Betcherman et al., op. cit.

53. World Bank: *Going to school, going to work...*, op. cit., p. 11.

54. OECD: *International trade and core labour standards* (Paris, 2000); idem: *Combating child labour: A review of policies* (Paris, 2003).

55. IPU/ILO: *Eliminating the worst forms of child labour*, op. cit.; IPU/UNICEF: *Child protection*, op. cit.; IPU/UNICEF: *Combating child trafficking* (Geneva, 2005).

Germany took the decision in 1990 to make a major impact on child labour that led two years later to the creation of IPEC. Since then some 30 donors have joined the programme. In the 1990s, the Netherlands, Norway and the United States in particular helped shape the global agenda on child labour.

**327.** The Netherlands organized a conference on hazardous child work at The Hague from 25 to 27 February 2002,<sup>56</sup> and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway commissioned an evaluation of the impact of the Oslo conference (1997).<sup>57</sup> The IPEC evaluation report drew attention to the continuing weakness of inter-agency collaboration on child labour. However, it was the quantum leap in resource support from the United States, through the Department of Labor, that transformed the prospects of IPEC after 1999, particularly its capacity to support national efforts to implement Convention No. 182.

### Non-governmental organizations

**328.** NGOs, including faith-based groups, have continued to be active on the ground and in international debates concerning child labour, many focusing on specific types of abuse and exploitation. Human rights groups such as Human Rights Watch took up the issue of child labour in 1996 and have continued to return to it in recent years.<sup>58</sup>

**329.** Promoting children's participation has been the cornerstone of the approach advocated by many NGOs, particularly those within the Save the Children Alliance. The tensions that emerged in the 1990s, though somewhat attenuated since the adoption of Convention No. 182,<sup>59</sup> remain unresolved, leaving many NGOs and the international agencies too often on opposite sides of child labour debates, for example, on whether minimum age legislation is a central tool.

**330.** Consumer campaigns, in which trade unions and NGOs have often played a central role, have been an important means of attracting international attention to the issue of child labour. The Indian carpet industry was the first focus of this attention in the early 1980s with regard to child labour in the production of carpets. In the early 1990s, the focus shifted to gar-

ments from Bangladesh, and in more recent years consumer attention has moved on to other export sectors, in particular sporting goods, tobacco and cocoa.

### Sectoral alliances: A review 1995-2005

**331.** We are now in a position to consolidate the experience of a decade of sectoral alliances against child labour that were only briefly touched upon in the first Global Report on the subject.

**332.** The first sectoral initiative took place in the garment industry in Bangladesh, with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the ILO, UNICEF and the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) in July 1995. This became one of the most controversial child labour interventions of the last decade (see box 3.11). Partly as a response to this, the ILO and UNICEF undertook evaluation studies during 2002 and 2003. In August 2004 the ILO and UNICEF published a concise joint synthesis of the main findings and lessons learned from their evaluation studies.<sup>60</sup>

**333.** The garment industry project served as an important model, and its major lessons have been applied and replicated elsewhere in other export sectors over the last decade. The first example of this transfer is the soccer ball stitching industry in Sialkot, Pakistan (1997), followed by tobacco (1999), cocoa (2001) and the small-scale mining sector (2005). In all of these the ILO has played a prominent role.

**334.** What has been learnt from the child labour sectoral initiatives? First, many of these have been responses to political pressure by an industry, with the resulting danger of precipitous action. An industry or sector trying first and foremost to protect itself can leave children more exposed to exploitation and abuse: a tension arises between industry protection and child protection. First, as in the early stages of the crisis that was facing Bangladesh, when this took the form of summary dismissals of under-age workers, displacement effects occurred which resulted in some children ending up in worse conditions of work. Second, without social safety nets in place, many children and their families are left economically worse off through the loss of income. Third, time is of the essence. In the

56. Conference on Combating Child Labour: Building Alliances Against Hazardous Work, The Hague, 25 Feb., 2002.

57. See L. Bjerkan; C. Gironde: *Achievements and setbacks in the fights against child labour: Assessment of the Oslo Conference on Child Labour October 27-30 1997*, Fafo-report 439 (Oslo, Fafo, 2004).

58. See, for example, Human Rights Watch: *Small change: Bonded labour in India's silk industry* (New York, 2003).

59. On Save the Children's pilot projects in support of the implementation of Convention No. 182, see Save the Children: *Finding the right tools for the job: Lessons learned on the application of ILO Convention 182 on the worst forms of child labour* (London, 2003).

60. ILO/UNICEF: *Addressing child labour in the Bangladesh garment industry 1995-2001: A synthesis of UNICEF and ILO evaluation studies of the Bangladesh garment sector projects* (Dhaka, Aug. 2004).

**Box 3.11.****The Bangladesh garment industry project: Myth and reality**

More than any single child labour intervention, the MOU project helped focus international attention on the issue in the 1990s. At the same time, the MOU divided opinion within the worldwide movement, becoming its ideological fault-line. However, subsequent reflection a decade after its launch has provided a more balanced assessment, leading to a greater consensus on what to do, and what not to do, in similar emergency child labour situations. How did the MOU come about? In 1993 the garment industry in Bangladesh, in a climate of fear and panic brought about by the prospect of trade sanctions, summarily dismissed many thousands of its child workers – perhaps as many as 50,000. There was much speculation at the time that many of these children had been forced into more hazardous work in the informal economy, including prostitution. This perception remains deeply rooted among many in the worldwide movement.

Precipitate action was considered by the ILO, UNICEF and the NGOs not to be in the children's best interests, but given the sensitivity of the issue it took until July 1995 for an agreement to emerge. The MOU was signed on 4 July 1995 by the BGMEA, the ILO and UNICEF and endorsed by the Government of Bangladesh.

The purpose of the MOU was to remove child workers from the garment industry and place them in education programmes. UNICEF took the lead in education and the ILO in verification and monitoring, but these components were not fully operational until the second half of 1996 – 18 months after the MOU was signed. A skills training and micro-credit facility supported by the Italian social partners started in late 1999.

In 2002-03 both the ILO and UNICEF conducted separate evaluations related to those components of the MOU for which they were responsible. In the summer of 2004 a synthesis document was jointly published by the agencies. This provides an overview of the evolution and impact of the intervention.

Key among the findings was the need for a timely response; for social safety nets to be in place before children are removed; for good baseline data and needs assessment; and for ownership of the response by employers for sustainability. It is acknowledged that in the context of the panic response in 1993 and unavoidable delays in getting project components in place, many children and their families became worse off. In the end economic forces were swifter than the interventions that sought to protect children.

At a dissemination meeting for the report held in September 2004 in Dhaka, both the ILO and UNICEF identified important lessons, including the need for better research and early detection systems for likely future child labour emergencies.

Source: ILO/UNICEF: *Addressing child labour in the Bangladesh garment industry*, op. cit.

Bangladesh case, the industry moved far more quickly than the necessarily measured and consensual approach of the ILO and UNICEF. However, time lags meant that many children simply fell through the net. Fourth, the commitment of employers and consumer groups to a measured response is critical in avoiding these unintended consequences and in sustaining the benefits of the intervention. Finally, independent monitoring is key to establishing and sustaining the credibility of the initiative against expected scrutiny from a variety of interest groups.

**335.** IPEC experience in recent years, nevertheless, points to a number of benefits from investing in sectoral alliances. They have proven to be entry points for promoting the ratification of relevant ILO Conventions by governments, as in the case of the West Africa Cocoa and Commercial Agricultural Project to Combat Hazardous and Exploitative Child Labour (WACAP). Sectoral initiatives have also provided IPEC with opportunities to hone important research tools, such as rapid assessment and child labour monitoring systems. Finally, by their

very nature, such initiatives provide a vehicle for CSR and social dialogue and opportunities to promote fair globalization.

**336.** On the other side of the ledger are the very high transactional costs of setting up and sustaining these multi-stakeholder initiatives – it took two years to get the Bangladesh garment industry project off the ground – and their low coverage of intended beneficiaries. More external and independent assessments are needed to arrive at a full judgement as to whether the benefits of sectoral alliances outweigh the costs. An important part of the analysis must include the externalities – the extent to which they offer a bridge-head into more mainstream child labour situations and policy responses.

#### The media and the research community

**337.** The media have continued to take up the issue of child labour – responding to key events and reports such as the first Global Report on child labour, the

**Box 3.12.****Elimination of child labour in the soccer ball industry in Sialkot, Pakistan**

In 1996 trade unions helped bring to light the extent of child labour in the soccer ball industry of Pakistan. The ILO, through IPEC, has since 1997 been working with the Government of Pakistan, FIFA, the World Federation of the Sporting Goods Industry (WFSGI), trade unions, manufacturers, Save the Children, UNICEF and NGOs in eliminating child labour from the soccer ball industry in Sialkot district, Pakistan. In 1996, an estimated 7,000 children were working stitching soccer balls. Production was transferred from homes to stitching centres, and since March 1999 IPEC monitors have found no instances of child labour at the soccer ball stitching centres of participating manufacturers. An Independent Monitoring Association for Child Labour (IMAC) was established in May 2002 and became operational in March 2003 as a locally based monitoring system. The workplaces that do not participate in the IMAC monitoring programme represent less than 5 per cent of the annual production of the industry. In addition, IPEC and its partners have been responsible for educating 10,572 children through 255 non-formal education (NFE) centres, mainstreaming 5,838 of them into the formal education system and providing health cover for 5,408 children. The district government now spends around 70 per cent of its budget on education, and has passed a resolution making Sialkot a child labour-free zone. Lessons from the initiative, including the development by FIFA of a soccer ball module as part of rehabilitation efforts, will be replicated within Pakistan, the region and globally.

Source: IPEC: *From stitching to school: Combating child labour in the soccer ball industry in Pakistan*, 2005.

World Day against Child Labour (starting in June 2002) and major ILO research publications such as the cost/benefit study.<sup>61</sup> Though often reactive, the media have been influential in motivating other global actors to take up the issue – a good example is the research community. There has been a sustained growth in research on child labour, which registered a threefold rise in publications over the decade to 2002, with Asia dominating the focus of researchers.<sup>62</sup> To the traditional dominance of economics has been added interest from other disciplines, in particular history and childhood studies. The launching of the inter-agency research project UCW in 2000 encouraged this trend, as did the establishment by the ILO of a Child Labour Research Network in 2002, which now includes 150 researchers across the disciplines.

### Linking EFA and child labour elimination

#### *Linked global agendas*

**338.** In recent years real progress has been made in linking the EFA campaign and the campaign to end child labour. As indicated earlier in the report, the Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly on Children in May 2002 established the connection between child labour and development

frameworks in its outcome document. In addition, IPEC has followed up with a focus on policy dialogue at the international level, in particular through participation in the G8 Task Force on Education and the High-Level Group on EFA. These efforts resulted in both the G8 and UNESCO recognizing child labour as a key obstacle to achieving EFA.<sup>63</sup>

#### *High-level meetings lead to a Global Task Force*

**339.** As part of these efforts, IPEC has co-hosted with the World Bank, UNESCO, UNICEF and the Global March a series of round tables on child labour and education within the context of the annual meeting of the UNESCO High-Level Group on EFA. The first of these round tables, entitled “From Exploitation to Education: Achieving Education for All and the Elimination of Child Labour”, was held in New Delhi in 2003, and resulted in a declaration calling for greater integration of these twin global objectives and the setting up of an inter-agency task force. The second round table, held in Brasilia in 2004, began to shift attention to practical areas of collaboration, and it was agreed that the ILO would host a working group meeting in June 2005 that would explore the concept of a global task force. At that meeting the agencies agreed to select and disseminate good practices in edu-

61. IPEC: *Investing in every child*, op. cit.

62. See IPEC: *The worldwide movement against child labour*, op. cit.

63. See IPEC: *Combating child labour through education*, op. cit., p. 4.

**Box 3.13.**  
**Working children's movements**

Perhaps the most controversial feature of the worldwide movement in recent years has been the rise of working children's and youth organizations. Working children organizing themselves is not new. In 1899, the newspaper boys of New York took strike action over the demand for more pay. The modern phenomenon emerged in the 1970s in Brazil, India, Peru and West Africa, out of an activist tradition focused on mobilizing the poor. The first international meeting of working children and youth from 32 countries from Africa, Asia and Latin America took place in 1996 in Kundapur, India.<sup>1</sup> Subsequent meetings were held in Dakar, Senegal, in 1998 and in Berlin in 2004.

1. See the Kundapur Declaration of ten principles in P. Miljeteig: *Creating partnerships with working children and youth*, Social Protection Discussion Paper No. 0021 (Washington, DC, World Bank, Aug. 2000), p. 20.

cation and child labour and develop model training workshops on policy development and reform. The good practices compendium was identified as a key resource for the workshops. The third meeting was held in Beijing in November 2005, and a Global Task Force on Child Labour and Education was set up. As part of the preparations for the third round table a higher goal was set: to get the child labour message into the High-Level Meeting itself and to work towards a concrete proposal to make child labour an indicator in the monitoring mechanism of EFA.

### Children's participation

**340.** There is a growing consensus that children should be viewed as active partners in the worldwide movement. The first Global Report on child labour reflected this. Much of the recent impetus for the inclusion of children as active participants stems from the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and from Convention No. 182. However, much work needs to be done to ensure that children's participation does not become a hollow slogan.

**341.** How best then to operationalize the principle of participation so that it avoids tokenism? This is where the consensus breaks down. In reality, social, economic, political and cultural factors play an important role in setting the limits to children's participation. Although participation is a universal concept and right, the interpretation, meaning and optimal level of achievement are socially and culturally determined.

**342.** Many participation strategies have evolved within the child labour field, including attempts at forming organizations of working children and youth, the Global March,<sup>64</sup> SCREAM, and involvement in rapid assessments as key informants. There are others. UNICEF's *The state of the world's children 2005* gave prominence to the "Young Lives" research project conducted by the Institute of Development Studies in the United Kingdom. Through research in Ethiopia, India, Peru and Viet Nam, the project aims to reveal the links between international and national policies and children's ordinary lives. The project is aimed at understanding what child poverty means and has a strong participatory element using, for example, children's writings about their experiences of poverty, education and child labour.<sup>65</sup> Education is a natural arena for expressing and developing children's participation. The same UNICEF report outlined the impact of the constitutional amendment adopted by Chile in 2003 that guaranteed all children the right to 12 years of free education. Teachers now hold class discussions on child labour and help identify children whose academic performance suffers because of the number of hours they work outside of school.<sup>66</sup> Save the Children has sponsored consultations in countries such as Honduras and Viet Nam that have enabled children to make valuable contributions to policies, including PRSPs.<sup>67</sup>

**343.** The Mekong Children's Forum created an enabling environment for children's voices to be heard (see box 3.14). In the future development of children's participation, it is important to be guided by certain key principles.

64. See the Children's Declaration adopted at the First Children's World Congress on Child Labour and Education held in Florence from 10 to 13 May 2004; the Second Children's World Congress on Child Labour and Education was held in New Delhi from 4 to 8 September 2005.

65. UNICEF: *The state of the world's children 2005: Childhood under threat* (New York, 2004), p. 34.

66. *ibid.*, p. 92.

67. *ibid.*, p. 17.

**Box 3.14.**

**Making history: The Mekong Children's Forum**

Stories told by the victims of human trafficking have helped bring about radical change in the way governments and the public view the trade in human beings, especially children and women in the Greater Mekong Subregion. But until recently, these stories of trafficked children have not led to them having a direct say in the type and form of action taken.

This need for child participation and consultation in the field of human trafficking led to the launch of the Voices of Children initiative in early 2004. Jointly sponsored by the ILO and Save the Children UK, Voices of Children advocates on behalf of vulnerable children to ensure their voices are heard, their views and recommendations considered and, ultimately, works to secure children a permanent place at the policy-making table in the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS).

The first major activity under Voices of Children was a series of national and provincial children's forums in August and September 2004. These national/provincial forums were organized in Cambodia, China (joint forum for Yunnan and Guangxi provinces), Lao People's Democratic Republic, Thailand (northern provinces only) and Viet Nam. The children who participated in these forums were given the opportunity to share their views and knowledge on human trafficking and discuss their suggestions with ministers and senior government officials. National media were also invited to present the children's recommendations and dialogue with officials to the public at large.

Five young delegates from each of these national forums were selected by their peers to attend a subregional children's forum held in Bangkok from 11 to 17 October 2004. Together the young delegates created a set of 43 recommendations to combat trafficking, reflecting the insights and aspirations of the hundreds of children from the subregion who had been part of the process directly and indirectly. The recommendations were presented to ministers and senior officials from all the five countries during a special session of the Mekong Children's Forum on 15 October 2004. The young delegates also staged a public performance on trafficking. Both the national and subregional forums attracted significant media attention. Child-led advocacy and awareness raising, whether through mass media or their own action, was identified as a key follow-up, as was the desire for more children's forums at all levels in the future.

Source: ILO/Save the Children UK: *Making history – People, process and participation: Mekong Children's Forum on Human Trafficking* (Bangkok, 2005).

*Principles for creating partnerships*

**344.** First of all, there is the challenge of establishing a climate where the principle of listening to children's views and opinions is integrated and accepted. Effective channels must be created to facilitate this that are consistent with local traditions and perceptions. To participate meaningfully, children need information about the reasons and the consequences of what they are doing, and the social skills for decision-making, debate and action. The CRC makes it clear that in all matters one needs to take into consideration the evolving capacities of the child – that the involvement of children must be conditional on their possibilities of participating. Expectations must be realistic. Furthermore, participation must be optional – it can never be forced upon children and youth. In order to give more meaning to the idea of

partnership it is important to distinguish between the various levels, from local to global.<sup>68</sup> Despite media-grabbing international events,<sup>69</sup> the most important level is local: this is the level where the vast majority of working children and youth may have a chance to exert their influence.

*Ways forward*

**345.** A number of next steps can be articulated to develop further children's participation in child labour efforts.<sup>70</sup>

**346.** A first step is to undertake a more systematic compilation and analysis of existing experience and to disseminate it widely. A future research agenda needs to look at, among other things, children's capacity for participation; the results and impact of working chil-

68. See P. Miljeteig: *Creating partnerships with working children and youth*, op. cit.

69. The children's forum at the Special Session of the General Assembly on Children offers one model of responsibly involving children in international meetings.

70. P. Miljeteig: *Creating partnerships with working children and youth*, op. cit., pp. 37-40.

dren's participation; and mechanisms that facilitate and complicate children's participation.

**347.** There is a need to reach out to organizations of working children and youth. For example, the ICFTU has launched a campaign to make trade unions more sensitive to the needs of young workers aged between 14 and 18, and to include them more actively among their membership. Efforts should be made to explore how trade unions could serve as effective tools for those young workers who are eligible, having reached the legal minimum age. This is also linked to the youth employment agenda explored above.

**348.** More could and should be done to involve children appropriately in child labour programmes at the field level. Here the Global March, Save the Children Alliance, UNICEF and IPEC could share experience and develop more comprehensive approaches. This experience can also be used by the various agencies to act as advocates for children's participation and also to promote their inclusion in child labour advocacy efforts.

**349.** Another important target is lawmakers and decision-makers at various levels. As agencies lobby to mainstream child labour into national development frameworks and into budget discussions (as part of the child-friendly concept) children's voices need to be heard as part of that process.

### Global child labour debates

**350.** One result of a more vigorous worldwide movement from the mid-1990s was a growing pluralism of thought around child labour concerning concepts, causation and responses. At one level this diversity was a positive (and inevitable) feature of the worldwide movement. On the other hand there was the ever-present danger of factionalism, which impedes progress towards global consensus and concerted action against child labour. There were points during the last decade when the worldwide movement, particularly at international level, appeared badly polarized, particularly between elements of the NGO community (that contested whether ILO minimum age standards were in children's best interests) and the international agencies. Then, with the adoption of Convention No. 182 in 1999, forces tipped towards a growing potential for accommodating diversity within unity. That said, it would be wrong to conclude that the tensions of the 1990s have all disappeared. Disagreements over the meaning and role of children's participation and the balance to be struck between action against the worst forms and all forms of child labour still mark the relationship between some international NGOs and the ILO.

**351.** Another tension resulted from a false opposition between human rights approaches and those focused on seeing child labour as part of the wider development debate. Historically, these elements have always been combined in the global struggle against child labour – they are two pathways to a common goal. Indeed, there is a growing global consensus on the need for rights-based development, which can encompass both approaches.

### A stronger but still fragmented worldwide movement

**352.** The worldwide movement is stronger today than a decade ago. The widespread denial of the child labour problem is over. There are more actors and activities at all levels of the movement, from local to global. And there has been a quantum leap in resources for the ILO to support its constituents in their efforts against child labour. There has been a growing consensus concerning priorities (the worst forms), on the importance of education, and the link between child labour and wider debates regarding inequality, discrimination and economic development. There has been a deepening of our understanding reflected in a growing technical maturity. The worldwide movement is concentrating on these big picture issues, trying to position child labour within the major contemporary social and economic global debates. However, the global picture is still one of diffuse efforts among a multiplicity of actors and across issues. Part of the momentum generated at the end of the 1990s appears to have stalled.

### Steps towards strengthening the worldwide movement

**353.** It is therefore important to take several steps towards revitalizing and strengthening the worldwide movement against child labour. The first step is to engage governments more forcefully in a commitment to its elimination. As seen in the section of this report on the results of ratification of Conventions Nos. 138 and 182, there have been commitments to policy, legislation and other practical measures at the national level; but this vital issue is still not accorded as high a priority as it deserves by national policy-makers and in national budgets.

**354.** Second, the ILO's own social partners need to deepen and widen their commitment to the elimination of child labour. Many employers' organizations

and trade unions have taken laudable steps – but many others have not taken up the challenge owing to concerns over capacity and, in the case of many trade unions, survival itself.

**355.** Third, the public needs to be made more aware of the dangers and costs of child labour, and of the benefits to families and societies of taking the necessary steps to eliminate it. All the actors of the worldwide movement can participate in such campaigns, and in doing so can benefit from the growing support for their activities.

**356.** Fourth, the ILO itself needs to continue to promote this issue internally, to mainstream this

objective more thoroughly in all its relevant programmes, and to increase its advocacy role on this issue with other development partners. It also needs to work with the development community to erase the differences in approach mentioned above, which are distractions from a common goal.

**357.** Finally, the other intergovernmental development organizations need to be encouraged to strengthen the place of the elimination of child labour in their priorities. As discussed above, the extent to which child labour perpetuates poverty strongly argues for its inclusion within the PRSPs and other development frameworks.





## PART IV

# Towards a global action plan

### Proposed action plan

**358.** The first Global Report on child labour set out a three-pillar approach to strengthening ILO support to national stakeholders in their efforts to abolish child labour, particularly its worst forms. The three pillars were:

- reinforcing the work of IPEC (in the areas of advocacy, research and policy, and technical cooperation);
- mainstreaming the effective abolition of child labour in the Decent Work Agenda; and
- forging closer partnerships within the worldwide movement against child labour.

**359.** Using this framework, the first Global Report on child labour put forward a wide-ranging set of suggestions (some 36 in all) under the action plan. Part II of this year's Report reviewed the considerable progress that has been made in relation to this extensive agenda, albeit unevenly over the three pillars. This framework was further elaborated in the follow-up paper discussed by the Governing Body in November 2002, which adopted the action plan.

**360.** This second Global Report builds on the same framework in a more focused way. It starts from the recognition that national agencies and institutions have to take the lead in child labour elimination efforts. The action plan proposed here calls for time-bound targets to meet the goal of eliminating the worst forms of child labour – and eventually all its forms – and identifies various means by which the ILO can support this process.

**361.** As was seen in Part I, there has been a significant reduction in child labour over the last four years. While the extent of the ILO's contribution to this reduction may be difficult to assess, the approaches it has promoted have clearly been a major factor. There

has been an unprecedented success in ratification of the ILO child labour Conventions over this period. Many important advances have been made over the last four years in reinforcing the work of IPEC and its partners at the national level.

**362.** The Time-Bound Programme (TBP) approach, introduced in 2001, crystallized IPEC's experience of ten years into a comprehensive and integrated set of interventions operating at two levels, combining the earlier focus on direct action aimed at prevention, withdrawal and rehabilitation of children affected by the worst forms of child labour with steadily increasing emphasis on creating an enabling policy environment for sustainable elimination of child labour. In the process, many lessons have been learned on how impact at the country level can be further reinforced. The time is ripe to apply this concept to a variety of child labour contexts, such as sectors, target groups and different support modalities.

**363.** One important lesson is that more could have been accomplished at the national level if a more conducive international policy environment had prevailed. Building a stronger global alliance against child labour involving employers' organizations and trade unions, international organizations and civil society is an important means of reinforcing impact at country level.

**364.** Another lesson relates to the opportunities that could have been exploited to take better advantage of the decent work country programme (DWCP) as the framework for ILO action at the country level.

**365.** Responding to these concerns is all the more imperative in the light of the evolving nature of United Nations system development cooperation, at both national (for example, United Nations Development

Assistance Framework) and international levels (for example, MDGs), and the changing preferences of some donors with regard to the modalities of their support. Both place a premium on integrated programme approaches as compared to project-oriented work, as well as on efficient and effective division of labour among international agencies. There has also been an increased focus on the rights-based approach to development, which is consistent with ILO approaches in this area.

**366.** The ILO has provided leadership at the national level, particularly through IPEC's increasing presence on the ground. But practical experience shows that IPEC's impact can now be enhanced only if the international environment that influences its

national partners is supportive. The most pressing challenge ahead is strengthening the worldwide movement as the principal catalyst for more effective mainstreaming of child labour concerns at the national level, where the battle against child labour is waged and must be won. In addition, ILO efforts at country level may be further enhanced by better integration of related interventions, including child labour interventions, through the DWCP.

**367.** The world has made remarkable strides in recent years towards universal ratification of the ILO child labour Conventions. Giant strides towards the full implementation of these Conventions everywhere should be the hallmark of the next few years.

## Global goal and targets

**368.** The action plan proposes that the International Labour Organization and its member States continue to pursue the goal of the effective abolition of child labour by committing themselves to *the elimination of all worst forms of child labour by 2016*. To this effect, all member States would, in accordance with Convention No. 182, design and put in place *appropriate time-bound measures by the end of 2008*. The target of eliminating the worst forms of child labour by 2016 is an

attainable one, based on the child labour trends highlighted in Part I of this Report. Furthermore, it would parallel and contribute to both the MDGs and the effective abolition of *all* forms of child labour, which is the fundamental goal of the ILO.

**369.** The proposed action plan is aimed at defining the role of the Office in assisting member States and the world community in pursuing the above objective, which, as the Report has shown, is within reach.

## Specific action for the ILO

**370.** In pursuit of the above, the ILO will, over the next four years, strengthen its efforts to develop coherent and comprehensive approaches to abolishing child labour worldwide. The proposed action plan rests on three pillars:

1. supporting national responses to child labour, in particular through more effective mainstreaming of child labour concerns in national development and policy frameworks;
2. deepening and strengthening the worldwide movement as a catalyst; and
3. promoting further integration of child labour concerns within overall ILO priorities.

**371.** In pursuing this action plan two important points need to be borne in mind. The first is that, for the ILO to be *the* centre of excellence on knowledge on child labour, all three pillars will have to be backed up by solid research, particularly in regard to the relationship between child labour and other relevant aspects, such as education, population growth, national employment and poverty reduction. This is indispensable for successful mainstreaming and should involve not only the Office, but also partner research institutes in member States. The ILO will help build/strengthen research capacity at national level and promote networking among research institutions.

**372.** The second point concerns the need for a special emphasis on Africa, which, as the analysis in this Report demonstrates, is where the least progress has been made. To this end, IPEC proposes to devote a larger proportion of its efforts to this continent.

### Supporting national responses to child labour

**373.** Comprehensive action against child labour requires a multiplicity of interventions at policy and programme levels and different degrees of involvement and support from a range of institutions. The information detailed above indicates that a focus on policy approaches, and dedication to upgrading successful pilot programmes to the national level, are the most effective.

**374.** However, this has to be allied to a strategic vision. The Report has highlighted important gaps that need to be addressed – Africa is one, but there are others, particularly responses to child labour in agriculture, bonded and forced labour (highlighted by the analysis of member States' reports submitted to the Committee of Experts on the Application of

Conventions and Recommendations), child domestic labour and the special plight of girls.

**375.** Through its role as a repository of knowledge and building on its years of experience with interventions across a range of countries and types of child labour, the ILO is in a position to provide crucial technical support to member States and national partners to develop strategic approaches to the problem. Major emphasis will be put on strengthening capacities and instruments at the national level as appropriate. Direct action in the form of targeted interventions would receive less emphasis and be limited to very specific situations, such as those involving certain worst forms of child labour for which the knowledge base is not yet adequately developed. Specific elements of ILO action in support of national action will include:

- *Further development of the Time-Bound Programme (TBP) approach.* Expanding the TBP approach to provide policy advice and support to a broader range of countries at levels commensurate with needs. This will include the review of current experience with TBPs and related frameworks at the national and international levels for the purpose of enhancing mainstreaming, cooperation and resource mobilization. In addition, applying the TBP approach to economic sectors, which has already begun in small-scale mining – here agricultural sectors offer potential for further elaboration of global time-bound initiatives.
- *Mainstreaming.* Building experience, technical tools and capacity within the ILO's DWCPs to provide more active support to countries in their efforts to mainstream child labour concerns in national development and policy frameworks, including human rights frameworks. Among these are the MDGs, the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs), the Education for All (EFA) initiative and youth employment national action plans. Such support would entail working closely with key national institutions with strategic access to these initiatives.
- *Development of knowledge, tools and capacity.* Major activities under this heading would include:
  - building and strengthening appropriate statistical and analytical capacity for data collection and improvement of the knowledge base on child labour and its evolution;
  - building and strengthening analytical capacity to provide policy advice to countries on institutional development, legislative changes and

- targeting of policies and programmes for child labour and other policy-level interventions;
- developing and supporting the application of methodologies to measure the child labour impact of interventions and policies with a view to identifying those with more effective and more rapid results. This would call for the use of child labour indicators in relevant policy and programme frameworks and processes such as the MDGs, PRSPs and sectoral policies and plans;
- supporting national efforts, including those promoted by employers' organizations and trade unions, to review and adapt good practices and proven interventions as part of comprehensive efforts; and
- developing and mainstreaming child labour monitoring mechanisms, especially at the local level.
- *Resource mobilization.* Assisting countries in leveraging national and international resources and efforts for child labour, including through demonstrating how a range of social and economic interventions are part of eliminating child labour.

### Deepening and strengthening the worldwide movement

376. The unprecedented surge in the awareness of child labour in the 1990s has been accompanied by growing international attention to poverty and development that has found concrete expression in the MDGs, concern with the plight of Africa, and links with security issues. Maintaining international attention on child labour and translating it into concrete global support for action at the country level call for new approaches to the worldwide movement that would emphasize, inter alia, accumulation of evidence to demonstrate that child labour is an impediment to development that can be eliminated, and that its elimination is a precondition for achieving the goals espoused by the international community, in particular the MDGs.

### Enhancing the capacity of the social partners

377. Employers' and workers' organizations are central to an effective global campaign against child labour. This was true in the past and is equally true today. Their vertically integrated structures give them a unique capacity to connect the global with the local. Few, if any, other organizations have such far-reaching networks. Involving the social partners more intensely and strategically against child labour is a clear priority for the ILO, but how best to increase their capacity to participate, both at the national and international levels, is less clear.

378. In the case of trade unions, the question of how to promote their involvement is still under discussion. Experience on the ground has given rise to the concept of the division of labour between sectoral unions and the national trade union centres to which they are affiliated. Sectoral unions are well placed to act on specific forms of child labour that appear in their areas of work, while national centres are better positioned for policy dialogue with the government and the employers. At a higher level, the Global Union Federations (GUFs) are strategically placed to provide support to national trade union efforts and to influence global debates concerning child labour, development and human rights.

379. In the case of employers' organizations and the private sector, IPEC is continuing to support employers' associations directly while at the same time encouraging companies to play a supportive role wherever possible. This will be backed up by continued encouragement of sector-wide initiatives and added emphasis on corporate social responsibility. The ILO will assist member States who want to help national companies to develop codes of conduct, for example on how to eliminate child labour in the supply chain, and with direct support to vocational training.

### High-level advocacy on global development and human rights frameworks

380. The analysis of PRSPs in this Report, and the fact that major reports and commitments on poverty and development often fail to make any significant reference to child labour, should give everyone in the worldwide movement pause for sober reflection.<sup>1</sup>

1. For some recent examples, see World Bank: *World Development Report 2006: Equity and development* (Washington, DC, 2005); Commission for Africa: *Our Common Interest: Report of the Commission for Africa* (London, 2005); J. Sachs: *The end of poverty: How we can make it happen in our lifetime* (Penguin Books Ltd., 2005). An example of the contrary is the outcome document of the Millennium+5 Summit held in New York in September 2005, which refers explicitly to several key ILO concerns, notably the worst forms of child labour (United Nations General Assembly: *2005 World Summit Outcome*, 15 Sep. 2005, para. 47)

The ILO's advocacy efforts need greater strategic targeting so that child labour is registered within both the dominant development frameworks, such as the MDGs and PRSPs, and within appropriate human rights mechanisms. Although the growing number of examples of successful integration of child labour elimination within PRSPs is encouraging, this trend needs continuous reinforcing through policy support from the international financial institutions (IFIs) at the global level.

**381.** One successful example is the series of round tables on education for all and the elimination of child labour held at the annual meetings of the EFA High-Level Group, which made an important breakthrough in better connecting these twin global goals. The concept, inaugurated at New Delhi in 2003, has provided a forum for UNESCO, the ILO, UNICEF and the World Bank to come together (with the Global March) to discuss policy and practice in integrating child labour and education concerns. Encouraged by the call of the United Nations Secretary-General for more solid inter-agency frameworks to achieve EFA, the ILO promoted the establishment of a Global Task Force on Child Labour and Education.

**382.** Among other measures that the ILO will pursue are:

- Including a child labour indicator in monitoring systems of the MDGs, PRSPs, and EFA, among other development-related policy frameworks.
- Promoting the incorporation of child labour in the IMF/World Bank's sourcebook that helps guide the preparation of PRSPs in participating countries.<sup>2</sup>
- Strengthening the human rights impact of other bilateral and external assistance frameworks, including strengthening reporting mechanisms and instruments to assess their impact on human rights, more particularly on child labour.
- Preparing a technical report and draft resolution for the 18th International Conference of Labour Statisticians in 2008 suggesting an operational statistical definition of child labour that may be universally applied for measurement and programme intervention purposes.
- Strengthening advocacy on neglected worst forms of child labour such as child domestic labour.
- Lobbying to place child labour on regional agendas, such as that of the European Union, in a more coherent fashion.
- Promoting dialogue and collaboration at the international level:

- *Within the United Nations family.* The ILO and UNICEF are the key international actors on child labour within the United Nations system, and their complementary strengths should be more optimally deployed for the benefit of the worldwide movement. The Heads of Agency of both organizations signed a Letter of Intent in 1996 aimed at improving collaboration on this issue. It has taken a long time to make this partnership operational. In addition, experience on the ground has shown great potential for collaboration with other multilateral organizations, in particular UNESCO, the World Food Programme (WFP), the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the international financial institutions.
- *Regional institutions.* There are important opportunities with the regional development banks (for example, the Asian Development Bank's Social Protection Strategy adopted in 2001) and with the European Union to develop a more coherent and consistent position on child labour.
- *With international NGOs.* Some of the conceptual and policy differences that emerged between the ILO and some elements of the NGO community stemmed from segregated activities and a lack of regular dialogue. Means should be found for identifying common ground and establishing a regular dialogue on child labour. This dialogue would also need a special focus on defining good practice in children's participation.
- *An international review conference.* The International Conference against Child Labour held in Oslo in October 1997 was the highest-level meeting ever held on child labour, and built on the Amsterdam Child Labour Conference held earlier in the year. The Oslo conference, co-sponsored by the Government of Norway, the ILO and UNICEF, attracted 350 delegates, including ministers of development cooperation, labour, social welfare and justice from 40 industrialized and developing countries, as well as leaders of trade unions and employers' organizations, NGOs, United Nations agencies and other multilateral organizations. To assess progress in international efforts against child labour since Oslo, a similar high-level meeting could be held to help refocus and re-energize the worldwide

2. F. Klugman (ed.): *A Sourcebook for Poverty Reduction Strategies* (Washington, DC, World Bank, 2002)

movement. The meeting would give particular attention to integrating child labour elimination into global education, development and human rights frameworks and to reviewing the impact of Convention No. 182.

### Further integration of child labour within overall ILO priorities

**383.** This Report has revealed that, although important progress has been made over the last four years in mainstreaming the effective abolition of child labour across the ILO's work, there are still important gaps. Indeed, having a dedicated programme on such a scale may paradoxically work against making child labour elimination everybody's business.

**384.** Child labour provides a good entry point into the Decent Work Agenda. Good examples of better integration of child labour concerns into ILO's overall agenda have emerged both at the country level (in Indonesia, for instance) and at headquarters, for example through the joint development of guidelines on how core ILO expertise may be used in addressing child labour. Further mainstreaming efforts are suggested below.

### Decent work country programmes

**385.** The DWCPs will be the ILO's main delivery vehicle at the country level in the coming years. They therefore provide the principal entry point for the more effective mainstreaming of child labour concerns within the overall priorities of the ILO. To this end, the Office will have to concentrate its efforts on two fronts. In the first instance, IPEC needs to analyse more intensively the conceptual links between child labour, on the one hand, and such other concerns as education, poverty and youth employment, on the other, as part of the life-cycle approach of the Decent Work Agenda. Although child labour is seen as a useful entry point for the ILO, too little is known of how IPEC projects can be used to build the broader national Decent Work Agenda. Strategies and project

design formulas that bring in other parts of the ILO's work more explicitly are needed to establish hooks for follow-up project proposals that build on child labour projects. Proposed new designs that lay out clear entry strategies for other areas of ILO work should be developed and circulated. Secondly, from an operational perspective, IPEC will need to review its technical cooperation and donor funding modalities to facilitate integration and synergy with the DWCPs. Decentralizing the control and management of child labour projects allows better mainstreaming of child labour elimination into the overall country programme framework. Integrating single programmes with other technical programmes and policy advice at national level will become even more important with decent work country programming.

### Youth employment

**386.** A comprehensive programme of work should be developed on the linkages between child labour and youth employment as a follow-up to the resolution concerning youth employment adopted by the 93rd Session of the International Labour Conference in 2005.

### Integrating the results of ILO supervision into the technical cooperation agenda

**387.** As pointed out in Part I of this Report, the work of the ILO supervisory bodies – most notably the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations – provides an instructive overview regarding areas of high activity by member States and those where more action is required. While this should guide countries in setting their priorities, the ILO's supervisory work should also help give direction to the technical cooperation agenda of the Organization. In order to ensure greater coherence between technical cooperation and normative action in the field of child labour, regular coordination exercises will be held, bringing together the parts of the Office active in these two areas.

## Summing up

**388.** ILO action on the abolition of child labour has intensified over the last four years and significant advances have been made since the first Global Report on the subject. The challenge of the next four years will be for the ILO to work in a more focused and stra-

tegic way to act as the catalyst of a re-energized global alliance in support of national action to abolish child labour. This transformation in approach to global leadership will ensure that the ILO will contribute more effectively to consigning child labour to history.