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**INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE**  
**INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMME ON THE ELIMINATION OF CHILD LABOUR**  
**IPEC**

**Action against Child Labour: Lessons and Strategic  
Priorities for the Future**

**A Synthesis Report**



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October 1997, Geneva

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### Annex 1 IPEC's key characteristics

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## 1. Introduction

1. The ILO's International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) was launched following a substantial financial contribution in late 1991 from the Government of Germany, for an initial period of five years. Belgium joined the programme since 1992. In 1995 Germany pledged additional substantial resources, a major contribution was received from Spain, and Australia, France, Norway and the United States started to support the Programme.

2. ILO-IPEC became operational in late 1992 when six countries, Brazil, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Thailand and Turkey signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the ILO, followed by five countries in 1994-95, Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines and the United Republic of Tanzania.

3. In 1996-97 ILO-IPEC expanded rapidly. A total number of 29 participating countries have signed an MOU on child labour with the ILO and a total number of 16 donors have committed resources to IPEC. Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Costa Rica, Egypt, El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, Sri Lanka and Venezuela joined in 1996, followed by Benin, Cambodia, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Honduras and Senegal in 1997. Preparatory activities are underway in Burkina Faso, Madagascar, Senegal, in the Arab States, in Central Asia, in China, Mongolia and Vietnam in Asia, in Central and Eastern Europe, and in Colombia, Mexico, Paraguay and Uruguay in Latin America. In 1996, Canada, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Italy and Denmark joined the programme, followed by the United Kingdom, the European Commission, the Social Partner initiative by ILO constituents from Italy and Switzerland in 1997. Other countries such as Austria, Finland and Sweden have also expressed their interest in joining the Programme. It should be pointed out however, that though the number of donors has increased to 16, the fact is that the contributions are uneven and IPEC continues to rely on the generous contributions of the two largest donors, the Governments of Germany and Spain.

4. This synthesis report outlines the highlights of ILO-IPEC in 1996-97. The summary on the main lessons learned and the strategies for the future include a brief overview of the extent and magnitude of the problem, followed by an explanation of the ILO-IPEC response and its main achievements, ILO-IPEC's core strategies, namely the promotion and application of international instruments and direct action, and the strategic priorities for the future. Chapter 3 analyses action at the national level, especially multi-sectoral strategies, action against the most intolerable forms of child labour, the role of the programme partners and the implications of mainstreaming child labour concerns in future programme development. Chapter 4 describes the IPEC's contribution towards the worldwide movement on child labour. An overview of the future strategies in the areas of programme development and evaluation is given in chapter 5, followed by an explanation on the Programme's management and coordination structure in chapter 6. Finally the key characteristics of ILO-IPEC are given in Annex 1 for readers who are new to the Programme.

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## 2. Lessons learned and future strategies: a summary

### 2.1 The problem

5. Child labour continues to persist and is one of the most serious violations of children's rights in the world today. These rights are clearly stipulated in the ILO Conventions concerning child labour and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

6. According to a recent ILO estimate, the number of working children worldwide aged between 5 and 14 years is around 250 million, of which at least 120 million are working full time and are involved in work that is hazardous and exploitative. Africa has the highest incidence of child labour, some 40 per cent. The figure for Asia and Latin America is about 20 per cent. In absolute figures, Asia has the largest figures in terms of child labour. About 61 per cent of child labourers in the world are in Asia, while 32 per cent are in Africa and 7 per cent are in Latin America<sup>1</sup>.

7. Child labour still exists in industrialized countries. In Southern European countries, a large number of children are to be found in paid employment, especially in activities of a seasonal nature, street trading, small workshops or working at home. The problem has resurfaced in Central and Eastern European countries as a result of the difficulties faced by large sectors of the population, caused by the transition from a centrally planned economy to a market economy.

8. Many children are made to work at a very early age. This is particularly so in rural areas, where it is not unusual for children to start working at the age of 5 or 6 years of age. Although most economically active children are in the 10 to 14 years age group, the proportion of those under 10 years is far from negligible.

9. What is especially serious is that many millions of child workers are found working in dangerous occupations and industries and sectors exposed to serious health and safety hazards. These may stem from the nature of the work or from poor working conditions. Because they are physically immature, children are more vulnerable to the effects of arduous work and exposure to dangerous chemical substances. These children are not physically suited to long hours of strenuous and monotonous work and they suffer the effects of fatigue more than adults. It is known that the impact of labour on such children can have an effect on their intellectual development. Although many working children combine work and school, most of them do not have educational opportunities.

10. The most vulnerable child labourers are those exploited in slavery conditions and forced labour systems, the most common of which is debt bondage, whereby children work to pay off a debt or other obligations incurred by the family. There are also less formal types of child slavery and forced labour by which rural children are lured to the city with the false promises of work. Here, they may be led into domestic service or sweatshops. Worse still, they may become victims of commercial sexual exploitation and are subject to cross-border trafficking. Children are also being used in drug trafficking in the major cities of Asia and Latin America and are victims of drug trafficking organized by criminal networks.

### 2.2. The Response

11. The ILO's International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour came to be launched in 1992, in order to assist member countries to find solutions to the child labour problem. The programme is now operational in more than 30 countries worldwide.

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<sup>1</sup> ILO, *CHILD LABOUR: Targeting the intolerable*, Geneva, International Labour Office, 1996.

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12. The *aim* is to work towards the progressive elimination of child labour by strengthening national capacities to address the child labour problem, and by creating a worldwide movement to combat it.

13. The *priority target groups* are bonded child labourers, children in hazardous working conditions and occupations and children who are particularly vulnerable, i.e. very young working children (below 12 years of age), and working girls.

14. The political will and commitment of individual governments to address child labour, in cooperation with employers' and workers' organizations, other NGOs and relevant parties in society such as universities and the media, is the starting point for ILO-IPEC action. The concept of sustainability is built-in from the outset by way of an emphasis on in-country 'ownership'. Support is given to partner organizations to develop and implement measures which aim at *preventing* child labour, *withdrawing* children from hazardous work and providing them with *alternatives*. A phased and *multi-sectoral strategy* is applied consisting of the following steps:

- *motivating* a broad alliance of partners to acknowledge and to act against child labour;
- carrying out a *situational analysis*;
- assisting with the development and implementation of national *policies*;
- *strengthening* existing organizations and setting up *institutional mechanisms*;
- creating *awareness* nationwide, in communities and workplaces;
- promoting the *development* and *application* of *protective legislation*;
- supporting *direct action*;
- *replicating* and *expanding* successful projects; and
- *mainstreaming* child labour issues into socio-economic policies, programmes and budgets.

#### What has been achieved by ILO-IPEC?

15. At the *international level*, ILO-IPEC has helped put child labour high on the world developmental agenda. Within the short span of five years, the ILO has become the key UN agency to which member states turn to for advice and assistance on child labour. There is renewed interest in the promotion of international labour standards, i.e. ratification of ILO Convention No. 138 and support for the proposed new standards on the most intolerable forms of child labour. A succession of international conferences is focusing worldwide attention on the problem. ILO-IPEC provided technical support to the Amsterdam Child Labour Conference (Amsterdam, February 1997): the Preparatory Regional Consultations in Brasilia, Lahore and Pretoria, and the International Conference on Child Labour (Oslo, October 1997). Other international organizations have begun to give attention and devote resources to the issue of child labour.

16. At the *country level*, political commitment and a broad social alliance mobilized in most ILO-IPEC participating countries have resulted in enhanced interest and action. Many countries have defined their national priorities and are implementing national programmes of action. Some countries have started investing financial and human resources to address the root causes of child labour and implement direct action and advocacy programmes in order to achieve the goal. These resources are far more than those provided by ILO-IPEC. New participating countries are moving from awareness-raising and sensitization into comprehensive programmes in order to create change concerning the lives of working children. Tailor-made approaches and other innovative approaches have been developed to deal with the problem in every country.

17. Due to the fact that child labour is an issue common to many countries, action at national level has to be reinforced by programmes at *sub-regional or regional level*. A number of regional or interregional projects which started in 1995 were successfully completed this biennium, such as the development of a programme of action on commercial agriculture in Anglophone Africa and a study on child labour in the manufacturing industries in South-East Asia. The two major outputs of the Interregional project on the

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mobilization of teachers, educators and their organizations, a resource kit and a synthesis report on child labour and education, will be completed by the end of 1997. A number of new sub-regional and regional programmes have also been launched in 1996-97, for example on child trafficking in Asian countries and a regional information system on child labour in Latin America (SIRTI - Sistema de Informacion Regional sobre Trabajo Infantil).

18. ILO-IPEC has provided substantive technical input to the development of policies and programmes of important regional bodies. These include the adoption of the Arusha recommendations on child labour adopted by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in April 1997; the Cartagena de Indias Declaration, adopted at the ministerial tripartite First Latin-American Meeting on Child Labour of 20 countries in Latin America in May 1997; the child labour resolutions adopted by the Council of Europe in June 1997; and the Declaration adopted by the Joint Parliamentary Committee of MERCOSUR in September 1997. Several regional consultations were also organized with ILO-IPEC support by workers' and employers' organizations as well as NGOs in Africa, Asia and Latin America. These have resulted in the adoption of common policies and frameworks for action against child labour at the country, sub-regional and regional level. Two major regional meetings among ASEAN and African countries are under preparation for 1998.

19. *Dependable data* is necessary for the formulation of national child labour policies and action programmes. The ILO has taken the lead in developing methodological approaches for conducting child labour surveys at national level, which have been tested in several countries over the last five years. In response to requests by many more countries, data collection and analysis will be carried out on a wider scale in the future by ILO-IPEC and the ILO Bureau of Statistics through the Statistical Information and Monitoring Programme on Child Labour (SIMPOC), a mechanism to monitor the child labour situation and the implementation of child labour policies and programmes. Currently, analysis of existing information is being carried out at sub-regional level in South East Asia and at regional level in Latin America.

20. *Research* as well as *evaluation* are providing the analytical basis for a continuation or an adjustment of methods and appropriate strategies to meet changing needs. Action research on education and child labour was carried out in 13 countries. Its outcome provides guidance for the educational interventions in the prevention of child labour and withdrawal of children from hazardous and exploitative work. A country programme evaluation took place in India and a seven-country analysis on national efforts to combat child labour will be completed in 1998. Its outcome will be used for further in-country policy and programme development. In addition, it will be a basis for the development of a 'best practice' guide for policy makers on child labour; an attempt to share country experience worldwide.

21. ILO-IPEC-supported *action programmes* in the participating countries are increasingly focusing on *the most intolerable forms of child labour*. In 1996-97, about two-thirds of all ILO-IPEC action programmes were related to working children engaged in hazardous work and working conditions, 20 per cent to forced labour and about 15 per cent to other forms of child labour. While children under 12 years and the age group of 12-14 years old accounted for 37 per cent and 38 per cent respectively, a not insignificant share of 25 per cent of programmes was devoted to children above the age of 14 years. Boys and girls were equally covered, with a slight bias towards urban areas and the informal sector. By economic sector, expenditure was shared between programmes in the services sector (37 per cent), manufacturing (33 per cent) and agriculture (39 per cent). By types of intervention there has been a significant shift from direct action with children in the early 1990s towards a broader balance between direct action (32 per cent), awareness-raising (30 per cent), institutional and policy development (21 per cent), and programme development, research and evaluation (17 per cent).

22. All these initiatives indicate that ILO-IPEC is expanding, and producing groundbreaking and pioneering work in research, policy and programme development, advocacy, revision of legislation, statistical data gathering and monitoring, non-formal education and pre-vocational training.

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### **2.3 IPEC's strategies: international instruments and direct action**

23. ILO-IPEC draws strength from its close linkages with the ILO normative framework on child labour and its orientation to country priorities for the elimination of child labour. The ILO Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138) and Minimum Age Recommendation, 1973 (No. 146), are milestones in defining internationally accepted policy guidelines for application by individual member States. The establishment of ILO-IPEC gave the ILO an operational arm to assist in formulating national policies in line with ILO standards and to build national capacities to combat child labour. ILO-IPEC has drawn strength and inspiration not only from the ILO Conventions but also from the universal work of the United Nations, with which it shares a relationship of vigorous interaction. It promotes the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and takes into account in the formulation of its activities, the Programme of Action for the Elimination of the Exploitation of Child Labour adopted by the Commission on Human Rights.

24. ILO-IPEC's core approach is to concentrate on strategic elements which are vital to achieving the long-term sustainable impact on the elimination of child labour in participating countries. These include: a focus on in-country ownership, sustainable action, the mainstreaming of child labour concerns in national socio-economic developmental policy; priority for the prevention and abolition of the most intolerable forms of child labour, including the provision of viable alternatives for the social and economic integration of the most vulnerable children and their families; and a broad alliance of partners, making use of multi-sectoral integrated interventions.

25. In this unity of purpose and its common elements, ILO-IPEC action allows for a diversity of approaches and interventions, taking into consideration specific in-country needs and priorities and identifying custom-made solutions. It is now widely accepted that child labour cannot be solved in isolation and must be tackled in a comprehensive manner through policies and programmes which focus on:

- ▶ national policy-making and integrated programme development, aimed particularly at target groups demanding priority attention;
- ▶ legislative reform and the strengthening of law enforcement;
- ▶ research, data collection and analysis, and awareness raising; and
- ▶ mobilization of a broad social alliance of all the partners; governments, employers' and workers' organizations, NGOs, academic institutions, the mass media and other professional associations; assisting them to carry out demonstration projects in order to develop successful models and strategies.

26. At the country level, these general policy guidelines are adapted with a certain flexibility to meet specific national needs and requirements. To this effect, ILO-IPEC has provided support ranging from data collection and research to technical advice and capacity building. In many participating countries, national plans of action on child labour have now been formulated and their implementation is on the way.

### **2.4 Responding to new challenges and strategic priorities for the future**

27. ILO-IPEC now faces a crucial challenge; its very success has brought to the Programme a much greater demand for its services and increased pressure on limited resources. In the coming years, ILO-IPEC will continue to focus its action on the most intolerable forms of child labour. It will concentrate on consolidating existing experience in order to mainstream child labour concerns into national development policies and programmes. ILO-IPEC will analyse the impact of its action and assist countries to develop capacity in monitoring the problem, collecting and analysing data and measuring progress made towards the elimination of child labour. It will support the worldwide campaign against child labour in close partnership with other key actors.

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## Focus on the Intolerable Forms of Child Labour

28. In 1996, the ILO took the lead in issuing a global call for priority action on intolerable forms of child labour with the publication of its landmark report 'Child Labour: Targeting the intolerable'. The response has been extensively positive. New international labour standards on this subject in the form of a proposed Convention and Recommendation are scheduled for the first discussion at next year's session of the International Labour Conference with a view to their adoption in 1999. The proposed objective of the new standards is the immediate elimination of the following intolerable practices, worldwide:

- ▶ Activities that are contrary to fundamental human rights: bonded child labour, children working under conditions of slave-like practices; children in prostitution; the use of children in drug trafficking or the production of pornography.
- ▶ Activities that expose children to particularly grave hazards to their safety and health such as work with chemicals, dangerous tools and machines, or work involving heavy loads and complex tasks.
- ▶ Activities that are performed under hazardous working conditions and environments.
- ▶ Total prohibition of work by very young children and special protection for girls.

29. It is the ILO's hope that these new standards will promote a dynamic forward advance in the global child labour campaign; it is an expectation of the international community that the practical application of these new standards will bring a new lease of liberty to millions of children in situations of extreme risk.

30. The new standards will complement and reinforce the existing ILO Conventions. The most important of these are Convention No. 138, which sets the minimum age for admission to employment in all sectors of economic activity; and the ILO Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29), applicable with regard to certain brutal forms of child labour such as bondage, prostitution, slavery and slavery-like practices.

31. ILO-IPEC is giving increasing attention to this challenge by launching a Programme of Action against the most intolerable forms of child labour (AMIC). On the national and regional level, efforts to deal with the more extreme forms of child labour are accelerating. Some of the target groups that have received more attention are children in prostitution, victims of trafficking, child domestic workers, children in agriculture, in fishing operations, in mining and in hazardous manufacturing industries. A common problem in all countries is that there are very few public programmes or specialized NGOs that deal with the intolerable forms of child labour, which are often hidden and invisible. Efforts to develop methodologies and institutional capacity to address invisible forms of child labour will continue to be an important aspect of ILO-IPEC in the coming biennium.

## Mainstreaming of child labour concerns in national development policy and programmes

32. Child labour will be solved only if its root causes are systematically addressed through socio-economic development policies and national programmes of action. The mainstreaming of child labour issues therefore is one of many primary concerns of ILO-IPEC. Efforts will be made to ensure that child labour remains high on the national and international agenda and that policies, programmes and institutional processes are put into place on a continuing basis until child labour is effectively eliminated or, at least, significant inroads are made.

33. It is important that the ILO-IPEC-supported initiatives fit into the overall national development and child labour policies and plans of action and that effective coordination mechanisms exist to implement these policies and plans. At this stage, where most national and action programmes are still in progress, only preliminary observations concerning the success or failure of mainstreaming are possible. Monitoring and evaluation will therefore be intensified.

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## Programme development, monitoring and evaluation

34. The effective elimination of child labour in any given country requires a programmatic approach, involving a wide variety of parties working together towards policy reforms and social changes which will result in the elimination of child labour. This is a lengthy process and requires expertise in many technical fields. Several countries are moving towards a strategic, coherent approach while new programmes have just begun in a number of countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

35. Thanks to the Office's work, there is considerable interest, reflected for example at the Amsterdam Child Labour Conference in February 1997 and the Oslo International Conference on Child Labour in October 1997, on the need for a strategic approach and time-bound plans for the elimination of the most intolerable forms of child labour. For ILO-IPEC this means that its technical assistance will have a renewed focus towards a well defined and coherent programme to sharpen national policy and programme, targeting the intolerable, reinforcing capacity building of partner organizations and implementing selected direct action programmes for demonstration purposes. In the next biennium further country programme evaluations as well as thematic evaluations will be carried out on a systematic basis in order to identify successful approaches and avoid common bottlenecks. The lessons learned will be widely disseminated at national, regional and international level.

## ILO-IPEC in the Worldwide Movement

36. Recognizing the complementary roles among all actors in the public sector and the civil society, ILO-IPEC has extended its collaboration to a wide range of organizations, i.e. key governmental bodies, workers' and employers' organizations, international and national NGOs, the media and universities.

37. Global efforts to solve the child labour problem and the expansion and deepening of ILO-IPEC activities in various areas has led to a much greater interaction with UN agencies and other international organizations. The long existing collaboration with UNICEF has been strengthened by the signing of a 'Letter of Intent' on 8 October 1996, which set the broad parameters for ILO/UNICEF cooperation on key issues such as policy development, research and field operation. Similarly, ILO-IPEC continues its close collaboration with the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child.

38. In the coming years, ILO-IPEC will actively disseminate information based on its practical experience and share its technical expertise on child labour with other international agencies and UN organizations. In addition, it will coordinate its global child labour campaigns in order to mobilize international support and action in close partnership with all key actors in this field.

## **2.5 Conclusion**

39. Five years of field experience have yielded many positive results. ILO-IPEC is recognized as the foremost operational instrument in the campaign which has placed child labour very high on the agenda of the international community. The policies and strategies pioneered by ILO-IPEC have been widely accepted and its operational methodologies applied. ILO-IPEC is a significant factor in the growth of support for the new focus on intolerable forms of child labour to be spearheaded by the proposed standards to be adopted in 1999.

40. This is a good beginning, but the task remains immense. The campaign for the elimination of child labour is a long-term undertaking. ILO-IPEC remains a vital agent to run the distance we have yet to cover and deliver the long-term quality service that is required by its member States.

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### 3. Action at the national level

41. The international debate on child labour has been received with mixed reaction, in particular in the countries where child labour remains a contentious issue. However, a consensus is emerging that child labour is an issue of international concern requiring global action. The international community can contribute in many positive ways, for example by reinforcing international legal instruments, by sensitizing public opinion in industrialized countries and developing countries, and by making a greater contribution through technical cooperation efforts to combat child labour and its underlying causes. *But, in the final analysis, child labour is, and will remain, primarily a national responsibility and, therefore, the responsibility of national governments and societies.* The problem of child labour is overwhelming and, in the long term, it can only be solved from within the countries themselves.

#### 3.1 Broad based multi-sectoral action

42. Until a few years ago child labour was viewed with a mixture of indifference, apathy and even cynicism. This was in part due to ignorance. Child labour was so widely practiced for many generations that it was accepted as part of the natural order of things. This situation has changed dramatically. Policy makers and practitioners in government, employers' and workers' organizations and NGOs are now looking at new and practical ways to deal with the problem. In the countries where ILO-IPEC is operational, the Programme has helped to advance thinking about the specific child labour problems faced in any given country and about adequate means of responding to these. It has motivated and supported the partners involved to take action, forged ties between them and facilitated concrete joint action. Through its work at the country level, IPEC has directly contributed to efforts to deal with the problem and has built up a wide body of experience showing that more can be done and needs to be done.

43. If governments are to tackle the problem of child labour effectively, *action is required on several fronts.* Empirical data is necessary so that informed decisions can be made and priorities established. An enabling political environment and a broad social movement against the practice are equally important. Legislation is indispensable since it provides the legal basis for efforts to address the issue. Still, child labour is a complex problem for which there are no easy solutions. If interventions are confined to the demand side (at the enterprise level), for example, by boycotting or banning child labour, but do nothing about supply, the overall situation of the children may worsen (i.e. they may seek alternative employment in more undesirable occupations). On the other hand, if the conditions of child labour in the enterprise are improved (reduce exploitation, provide wages, etc.) the supply of child labour may increase. This suggests that interventions need to be made on all fronts and that no single type of intervention is sufficient in itself. It is exactly this type of broad based multi-sectoral action that ILO-IPEC is promoting.

#### Improving the Knowledge Base

44. The ILO Bureau of Statistics has undoubtedly taken the lead in developing methodological approaches for conducting child labour sample surveys at national level. ILO's pioneering work began in the development and rigorous testing of the survey methodology in four countries (Ghana, India, Indonesia and Senegal). Since then, ILO-IPEC statistical initiatives have been similarly and successfully completed in many IPEC participating countries, for example in Bangladesh, Cambodia, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines and Turkey.

45. The impact and value of these statistical surveys have been immediate and tangible. For so long, the paucity of data on child labour has contributed to the somewhat emotional debate on the subject which either downgraded the magnitude of the problem, or on the other hand, exaggerated its dimensions. National surveys have provided a broad picture of the situation of working children and have highlighted the various hazards and risks to which they are exposed. For planning and setting priorities, the surveys have contributed in identifying areas of highest concentration of child labour and pinpointed the sectors and occupations where

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children are exposed to the greatest risk. While statistical sample surveys have their limitations, the methodologies are considered more trustworthy by policy-makers and have therefore been taken more seriously. As a result, the surveys have also served as an important tool for advocacy and lobbying for greater services for working children.

### **Dependable data for effective action**

ILO estimates put the worldwide number of working children at a staggering 250 million, of which at least 120 million between the ages of 5 and 14 years are working full time. Much higher than early estimates, the figures are the outcome of improved methods of data collection being pioneered by the ILO. They underline two basic facts: firstly, the magnitude of the challenge facing the international campaign against child labour is far greater than was earlier realized, and secondly, a correspondingly stronger emphases on data collection and analysis is required.

The National Survey of Child Labour in the Philippines is an example of ILO-IPEC assistance to develop a dependable database for the implementation of a dynamic policy and national programme of action on child labour. The 1995 National Survey illustrates how a national statistical programme can be successfully used as an important tool for advocacy. To effectively reach all levels of policy making and programme development in the country, the survey results were presented at national, regional and district level and brought a lot of attention to the areas with the highest incidence of working children. These efforts have galvanized renewed activities among government, employers' and workers' organizations and other civic and social groups to produce action where it is lacking and sustain energies where activities have been initiated.

The survey results have become an important and valuable input to the ongoing revision of the Philippine Plan of Action for Children and the new proposed National Development Plan for Children. In several of the country's regions action has started on pinpointing the children in the more hazardous forms of work. The National Statistics Office (NSO) is committed to continuing to provide a statistical database for planning in the various regions. The NSO's regional representatives now participate in the Regional Committees on Child Labour to support local initiatives in data gathering. It will implement a second round of the survey, using a shortened version of the module on working children ensuring the continuity of the statistical series well beyond 1995.

46. The value and success of the statistical initiative have created a demand for similar endeavours. Some twenty countries have indicated interest in cooperating with ILO-IPEC on dependable data collection. Surveys for Nepal, Sri Lanka, China, Mongolia and South Africa are currently on the drawing board. *In 1997, IPEC has, with an initial grant from the Government of the Netherlands and resources from the ILO Regular Budget for Technical Cooperation, developed and launched the Statistical Information and Monitoring Programme on Child Labour (SIMPOC). SIMPOC will provide countries with tools and mechanisms to collect and to analyse quantitative and qualitative child labour data, and information on relevant legislation, education and organizations working on the child labour issue and their programmes. It will appraise the child labour problem in about 25 countries. This will serve as a basis for setting priorities and monitoring programmes and for the preparation of a regular trend report on child labour at the global level. The Amsterdam Child Labour Conference has endorsed the SIMPOC initiative, and donor countries have expressed interest in supporting its implementation.*

47. For the purpose of identifying children in dangerous, exploitative and often clandestine work, specialized empirical studies are required. Several such studies have been conducted with IPEC support. Many of them follow aspects of the Rapid Assessment methodology that was previously developed and tested by IPEC in cooperation with UNICEF. Empirical investigations of specific forms of child labour include

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surveys on hazardous child work in Bangladesh, situation analyses in Guatemala and Panama and specific child labour probes in Kerala and Bhopal in India, and in Pakistan.

Awareness raising and social mobilization

48. The fight against child labour concerns everyone. The importance of awareness raising as a vital component on any programme on child labour is now widely recognized. In all IPEC participating countries, campaigns against child labour target policy makers, employers and workers, the public, the community, the parents and the children themselves.

49. Awareness raising at all levels of society against the negative consequences of child labour and the need to invest in the future of the children concerned has been a key element in changing people's perceptions as well as moulding their responses to the problem. National media campaigns are effective in reaching a broader-based audience and raise national consciousness on the seriousness of the problem. IPEC's support to media efforts, implemented by governments, private and non-governmental organizations, include the production and development of documentaries on child labour, educational and information dissemination activities, production of educational and advocacy materials on child labour, usually in the form of print and media releases, posters, banners, etc. The national campaigns have broadened as a tri-media effort involving television, print and radio. Information officers, journalists as well as feature editors have been sensitized to child labour and are increasingly more independently investigating, analysing, and reporting hazardous child labour as part of their professional responsibilities. These have been important in raising consciousness among policy makers, programme planners, local government executives and the general public. Much of the increased domestic pressure for action on child labour can be attributed to a general larger awareness within countries of issues of working children.

50. Efforts have strengthened at the provincial and community level, directly involving provincial authorities, local community leaders, parents, teachers, and also working children themselves. In several places, this has brought about the organization of local mechanisms that can undertake action and provide resources and services on action against child labour. These councils or committees perform community-watch functions. They also provide vital information on working children, for example the incidence of trafficking and active recruitment of child workers. The committees have also been able to tap local government resources for working children, such as for scholarships and support for para-teachers in non-formal education interventions.

**Social Mobilization:            The Example of the National Forum for the Prevention and Eradication of Child Labour, Brazil**

In Brazil, an important step in the elimination of child labour was taken with the establishment of the National Forum for the Prevention and Eradication of Child Labour. The Forum, coordinated by the Ministry of Labour, is composed of 36 institutions, representing the federal government, employers' and workers' organizations and NGOs. The Forum's mandate is to exchange views and experience, create a broad social alliance and secure the base of support for policy and programme implementation.

The Forum has been playing an important role in the synthesis of action and mobilization of various social forces capable of intervening in risky situations, by allocating their own technical and financial resources for the implementation of projects, in the areas of education, health, social assistance and income generation.

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The Forum sets priorities for interventions in risk areas and economic activities (charcoal, sisal, sugarcane), promotes the elaboration and negotiation of multi-sectoral programmes, coordinates efforts and integrates policies and programmes at the federal, state and municipal level. Social mobilization is important for the implementation of Integrated Action Programmes and coordinated action among government and civil society is promoted by the institutionalization of state, regional and municipal commissions, responsible for the development and monitoring of these programmes.

51. More than ever, IPEC action programmes have incorporated awareness raising components by directly addressing parents and working children. These awareness raising activities are primarily based on information on children's rights, the protection of working children, the importance of education and their entitlements under national law. These activities have catalyzed action by the working children and their families in obtaining better government services. The effectiveness of these interventions has also crystallized the value of having stronger participation of programme beneficiaries in the planning and design of interventions.

52. *A positive trend is noticeable in the growing alliance and collaborative work among key players in the campaign – government departments, employers' and workers' organizations and NGOs.* These alliances have been strengthened within the sectors (among NGOs, for example) and cross-sectoral (unions and employers' associations working with NGOs and government organizations). There is much diversity in approaches but there are core agreements on essential principles that are able to transcend, sometimes uneasily, organizational and territorial considerations. These basic principles consist of: reaffirmation and promotion of the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child and the ILO Conventions governing child labour; adherence to the principle that childhood is a time for education and socialization; and the demand that any given country's developmental programme should give first priority to children.

53. The creation of the broad social alliances has been helped by the numerous fora, events, discussions, consultations that have been arranged as part of many IPEC action programmes. *Partner Meetings* and progress reviews have been important in bringing together diverse organizations to review jointly their programmes against child labour, identify the means of cooperation, decide on a division of duties, appreciate each other's strengths, and assist in areas of weaknesses. There have also been more opportunities to rally action from among different partners, whether these are for policy reform, the ratification of the ILO conventions, or joint mass activities, as in the forthcoming Global March on Child Labour.

#### Setting National priorities

54. Given its magnitude and complexity, child labour needs to be tackled on all fronts: economic, legal, social, educational and cultural. As resources to deal with the problem of child labour are limited, it is therefore of utmost importance to make the best use of financial and human resources accessible. An important starting point for action is the development of national policy frameworks for action. Depending on individual country situations, many IPEC countries have adopted and updated national policies of programmes of action on child labour in recent years. These national plans and programmes of action cover a general situation analysis of child labour in the country concerned, the legal and constitutional mandates, a determination of the priority target groups of children and an outline of the broad fields and forms of action required of participating organizations. Where possible, the policies and plans of action are placed in the context of national development and social policies that attack the larger problems of poverty, education, and developmental progress. Experience shows that a participatory approach in formulating a policy framework, based on sound information and involving all concerned parties, can be a good consensus-building exercise on what the real problems, priorities and appropriate interventions are. As such, these can be a new start for mobilizing broad public support.

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55. In the development and implementation of strategic action plans ILO-IPEC is faced with a variety of situations in the participating countries. Some countries had already established a policy and accompanying plan of action against child labour in existence, before they joined the Programme. In those countries ILO-IPEC is one among many actors providing assistance in tackling the problem, and ILO-IPEC's aim then is to support specific initiatives, based upon the countries' needs and requests. These may vary and do not have to complement each other. The most important criteria for supporting such initiatives is whether they fit into the overall country policy and programme.

56. National policies and programmes of action are usually subject to political change, external interventions and changes in government infrastructures which lead to a wavering of the national commitment to the elimination of child labour. Thus, *the strategic process of eliminating child labour is not straightforward; positive trends need to be constantly reinforced and individual interventions often have to be restarted or repeated.* The challenge to IPEC is linking the plan to direct action that can better attend to the needs of the working children, and to ensure that targets are met.

#### Development of suitable and appropriate legislation and strengthening of enforcement

57. One of the most important tools available to the ILO for improving legislation and practice of its member states in the combat of child labour is the adoption and supervision of international labour Conventions and Recommendations. In undertaking promotional work on the ratification of the ILO conventions, the first important hurdle is overcoming the resistance of many policy-makers. Questions regarding the necessity of ratification are intense when either (a) the country had already ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and/or (b) their national legislation already includes the minimum age of entry to employment. The initial resistance may also be due to a recognition of the country's inadequate legislation and enforcement mechanisms. Technical advisory services, tripartite consultations and advocacy efforts of programme partners often play a part in facilitating the ratification process. Ratification, and the process leading to it, have a number of obvious advantages. It is a concrete manifestation of the country's political commitment to take affirmative action on child labour. The process provides considerable awareness not only on Convention No. 138 but also on the forthcoming new standards on the most intolerable forms of child labour. The move for ratification may also provide a rallying point for IPEC partners and create a climate of confidence for advocacy and collaborative action. Of course, the work does not cease with ratification. The most important test lies in how the country meets its commitments and responsibilities under the Convention and the effective use of the supervisory machinery by ILO's tripartite partners.

#### **Law Enforcement: Labour inspectors working against child labour**

In Southeast Asia a major programme on specialized training for labour inspectors (Thailand, Indonesia, and the Philippines) - launched at the sub-regional level - provided training for a core team of trainers on child labour inspection and resulted in national training programmes and concrete action in these countries. The training courses, based on a manual for improved labour inspection, developed by the ILO, combined awareness-raising of labour inspectors with very practical training, intended to increase their capacity for resolving problems related to child labour. Hazardous and dangerous conditions for working children received special attention in these programmes. The strategy advocated by the programmes in regard to child labour gives primary emphasis to persuasion and collaboration rather than punitive action, but, calls for firm action for cases in which children are employed in explicitly hazardous or exploitative occupations. There are clearly positive signs as a result of these training programmes. Specifically there is: recognition by trained labour inspectors that child labour is a problem and that it needs to be addressed systematically; increased understanding, knowledge and commitment by labour inspectors to locate and handle child labour problems

effectively; and in some cases operational guidelines to facilitate application of appropriate principles and standards related to child labour in day-to-day field inspection were formulated to go beyond 'just' those who had been trained.

In Turkey a similar, comprehensive initiative with labour inspectors, showed positive results. The Programme was carried out in two stages, with the active participation of labour inspectors from seven regions in the country, covered by different regional directorates. A total of 738 work places with 1.717 working children, 578 foremen and 712 employers were interviewed. The programme covered the footwear, textile, clothing, metal, light industry, wood (furnishing), restaurants and other service industries. In total, more than 700 labour inspectors were trained. Results are emerging: the awareness of inspectors in relation to child labour issues has been raised; the Ministry of Labour and the inspectors have begun to review the traditional approaches currently adopted in respect to child labour issues; inspectors now recognize that they have the power and authority to generate responses to the problem from within the workplace by mobilizing all those involved and concerned with the situation.

58. Legislation has definitely been the single most important response of governments to the problem of child labour. More often than not, IPEC participating countries have had a long tradition in formulating legal standards that provide protection for working children. Although insufficient on its own, legislation can be a powerful instrument to combat child labour. Ideally, national law represents the ideals and goals of a compassionate citizenry. When carefully crafted, child labour legislation can serve as a deterrent to the economic exploitation of children; it can serve as a basis for both preventive and punitive action against violators and offenders. The bad press that national legal frameworks have received from child labour advocates more often lies in the poor enforcement of the law and the inadequacies of the justice system rather than the law itself.

59. While the majority of IPEC efforts in participating countries have focused on improving the enforcement of laws on child labour, there have been some initiatives in the area of legislative reform. This may be in the form of promulgating a juvenile code that consolidates and harmonizes disparate laws affecting children, as has happened in Latin America. There have also been successful efforts in expanding the coverage of the law and raising penalties for offenders - as has taken place in the case of certain forms of child labour, child prostitution and trafficking of children. The Supreme Court of India recently passed an historic judgement on compensatory payments by employers to children working in hazardous industries. In several countries, there are discussions about enlarging the scope of the law to cover the informal sector, strengthening labour inspections and other forms of enforcement, and setting up specific judicial bodies to hear cases on child abuse, including child labour.

60. There are many reasons why enforcement of the law is ineffective. The sheer magnitude of the number of working children and the lack of resources for effective monitoring and proactive application (such as labour inspections, for example) pose a major obstacle. Often, also the enforcement of child labour legislation is not given sufficient priority. This is especially true where public attitudes towards child labour are ambivalent. But in many cases, officials may simply not be familiar with current provisions for working children, particularly in remote, rural areas. If they do, they are not in a position to enforce them effectively due to the tremendous constraints they face.

61. There is a broad array of interventions that IPEC has supported in improving the enforcement of law in participating countries. From the perspective of prevention, there are a number of simple effective measures: firstly, a compilation and translation of relevant acts and regulations into local languages and dialects (in Pakistan and Thailand for example); the training of labour inspectors to provide guidance to employers on how to comply with the law and to inspect workplaces; para-legal education for community groups and other voluntary groups; and legal services to child labour victims. These action programmes have

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proven the value of collaborative alliances among the government (police, prosecutors, and judges), NGOs, trade unions, committed communities and citizens in improving law enforcement. Other effective measures which have shown promise are focused campaigns at community level where parents and children are made aware of their rights and where community watch programmes have emerged.

62. *One of the more important contributions of IPEC to the global and national campaigns lies in enhancing the role of labour inspections in action against child labour.* Labour inspectors can play a major role, as they are among the very few public officials with the legal mandate to enter establishments at will in order to ensure compliance with labour law. As a result, they are in a position to advise and provide guidance to employers. IPEC efforts have centered in specialized training for labour inspectors in most participating countries.

63. The effectiveness and impact of these training sessions are still modest. The reporting of cases of child labour as a result of labour inspections has been noted, the number of administrative settlements and compensatory payments to child labour victims have moderately increased; yet in both instances, the number of children assisted seem too few to create significant change. However, some labour inspectors have gone beyond the responsibilities of their position in order to disseminate information on child labour; many more in collaboration with trade unions and NGOs have participated in the rescue of severely exploited children. While the numbers seem small, these are positive indications that, with the proper motivation and an appropriate political climate, much could be accomplished in this area.

64. The value of these small positive signs has to be assessed in the face of the difficult odds against labour inspectors. There is a real problem of accessibility to children in exploitative and hazardous working conditions. Making the children working in hazardous conditions visible through case studies and campaigns is desirable. There is however, a large difference between identifying individual cases of child labour exploitation in order to expose the problem and dealing with the problem in a systematic way. Although labour inspectors may have been sensitized about the problem, they have no control over the political and/or social environment in which they operate. It is hard for labour inspectors to single out child labour abuses only in work places where other labour regulations are being ignored. Cooperation with other partners in society is crucial. In the cases where progress has been made, this has been due, to a large extent, to collaborative endeavours with local communities, including NGOs.

### Education and Training

65. Educational interventions constitute one of the most effective instruments for the prevention of child labour and the withdrawal of children from hazardous work. Experience shows that schooling children are less likely to be in full time employment. On the contrary, children with no access to education have little alternative but to enter the labour market and often perform work that is dangerous and exploitative.

66. There are many reasons why children are not in school but in the workplace; basic education in most countries is not free and in most developing countries schooling is not available for all children; where schools are available, the quality of education is poor and the content may not be relevant; in situations where education is not affordable or parents see no value in education, families send children to work rather than to school. This particularly affects children in poverty, and those belonging to culturally and socially disadvantaged groups. As a result, they become the victims of child labour exploitation.

67. Education as well as pre-vocational training clearly help to prevent and reduce child labour. Children with basic education and skills have better chances in the labour market; they are aware of their rights and are less likely to accept hazardous and exploitative work or working conditions. For working children, educational opportunities could wean them from work and help them to find better alternatives. IPEC-supported efforts to eliminate child labour show that education is an important means for improving social status, bringing down gender barriers and breaking out of the vicious cycle of poverty by offering

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prospects for gainful employment.

68. For education to play its part in the elimination of child labour, countries need to make a major effort to develop an integrated policy and plan of action for the provision of quality education that is relevant, accessible and free for all children. Child labour concerns should be explicitly addressed and integrated into such policies and programmes for action. Transitional education has to be provided to those who are already in the workplace to wean them from hazardous work and to equip them with practical knowledge and skills. Transitional education should consist of an integrated package of general education, life skills and practical skills training. It should aim at mainstreaming the younger children into formal education and vocational training systems. However, options should also be provided for older children who are not able to continue formal education and training in order that they do not re-enter the labour market as unskilled workers. They require para-skill training (relatively short term, low cost and light vocational training) in a broad array of employable skills and career counselling. Non-formal education is suitable for working children because it accommodates children of different ages and educational attainments and provides flexible school timing and holidays. The curriculum and methods of teaching are also meant to be designed to meet the special needs of children. However, it cannot be denied that in the system which exists in practice, much of the teaching methods consists of learning by rote. Furthermore, a uniform non-formal education is seen to be an answer to all types of out-of-school children. Working children have diverse work experiences and exposure to life and also have different expectations about the immediate and future benefits from education.

#### **Education: a key to prevention**

IPEC experience shows that apart from general improvements in the education system, special measures are often necessary for working children who are more difficult to reach and exposed to a high risk of exploitation. Some of the critical ones are mentioned below:

There is a high incidence of migration among children of Srisaket province in Thailand to the cities in search of jobs. From 1993 onwards a small IPEC-supported project promoted the active participation of teachers and the local community in preventing child labour. Materials about child labour for use by teachers and by children in the classroom were developed to inform and teach children about the effects of child labour on their health and safety and about existing laws applicable to them. Child labour 'corners' (or exhibits) were set-up in school libraries and other parts of the school. Teachers also recognized the need to work with parents who made the decisions about the children's schooling or work. As a result of this experience the Thai Ministry of Education has developed and integrated a child labour module into the primary school curriculum.

Special promotional activities will also be undertaken by the Ministry in provinces where there is a high incidence of child labour and school drop-out rates. Now millions of children will benefit from the programme for many years to come.

Fe y Alegria (Faith and Joy Integral Popular Education Movement Association) is a church-affiliated network of education projects recently associated with IPEC work in Peru. The educational programmes (in the Andean region and in Amazonian forest Areas) provide integral education based on a flexible curriculum for children from poor families. Children aged 5 to 16 who are at risk of school failure or for dropping out of school are targeted. The programme provides a wide range of educational activities which emphasize practical life and work skills that help the children to prepare for work, including environmental education. Secondary school students have the option of focusing on basic vocational skills. The programme which is reaching 56,000 children was able to achieve a student retention level which is considerably higher than the national average.

In 1986 the Ministry of Labour in India decided to adopt a holistic approach to address child labour in the country. A national child labour policy where the removal of children from hazardous work and enrolling them in special schools was an important component was formulated. In 1992 the ILO Child Labour Action and Support (CLASP) project became operational with the aim of enhancing the central government's implementation capacity. The project has been extremely effective in the field of education: educational materials were produced in Hindi and English, became very popular in the special schools and gained acceptance by the Ministry of Education; 210 teachers of special schools from 8 different NCLPs were trained in innovative teaching methods and 28 persons were trained as teachers' trainers; and links were established with the formal education system. The CLASP methodology is now being introduced in Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka.

The provision of vocational training as a valid tool to rehabilitate and withdraw or prevent children from entering the labour force at a premature age has always been highly debated. There are questions about the ability of young children to absorb the sometimes highly technical inputs. A small action programme in West Java, Indonesia, has demonstrated however that it can be an effective tool. The local branch of one of the oldest Muslim-based community service organizations, Muhammadiyah at Weleri, has long made effective use of evening prayers as an important forum in which to deliver motivation and ideas for development in the community. As one of the first partners of IPEC in Indonesia, this community service organization implemented a vocational training programme for working children, some of which were employed in extremely hazardous occupations. The project was considered unusually successful by the community local government and evaluators. What led to this success? In the first instance the high quality and marketability of the skills provided was essential. But, what really made the difference was that the project connected from the start with important partners. Good contacts with the Municipal Office of the Department of Manpower made it possible for them to earn official recognition for their prevocational training and certificates of the Department for their 'graduates'. Partnerships were similarly established and maintained with the Department of Education for their non-formal education programme. Local leaders at both sub-district and district levels were regularly informed about progress and volunteer workers/trainers were recruited from within the community. Partnerships were developed with the private sector to obtain raw material for the vocational training activities. In the end the project was selected by the Education Department as one of the best basic education equivalency programmes.

69. Educators, teachers, trainers and their organizations play a key role in combating child labour. Millions of teachers, educators and trainers are actively involved in educational and training activities not only within government education settings but also under the umbrella of NGOs, communities, employers' and workers' organizations. They can influence education and training policies and programmes, raise awareness on the importance of education and training as alternatives to child labour, mobilize communities against hazardous and exploitative practices and implement tailor-made educational programmes for (ex-) working children. Often school centres are the nucleus where relevant action can be taken and there is a need to define a paradigm of services, complemented with income generating projects in order to supplement family incomes.

70. A global report on education and child labour, presenting existing experiences and scope for future action on child labour through education is being produced by IPEC on the basis of action research conducted in 13 countries during 1995-1996, in collaboration with UNESCO, UNICEF and Education International. A child labour resource kit was developed as a tool for teachers, educators, and their organizations, in collaboration with other actors, i.e. NGOs, workers' and employers' organizations. A review of pre-vocational training of IPEC-supported programmes in five Asian countries will be completed by the end of 1997. As a follow-up ILO-IPEC will implement action programmes in cooperation with national and international partner organizations, focusing on social mobilization and awareness campaigns on the importance of quality education as an alternative to child labour; strengthening of national policies

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on education and inclusion of child labour concerns therein; improvement of formal education systems to prevent child labour and attract/retain (ex-) working children, and improvement of transitional education/training for (ex-) working children.

71. In short, the lessons that are emerging underscores the importance of the following points: social mobilization and awareness campaigns at all levels are essential; national policies on education need to be strengthened in general and need to address child labour concerns; formal education systems require improvements to prevent child labour and attract/retain (ex-) working children; transitional, non-formal education is often required to successfully re-integrate (ex-) working children; and linkages with and mainstreaming into formal education or training is a concern that has to be built-in from the start.

72. The implementation of the above educational and training strategies will be a major step forward in tackling child labour but will not be enough. The worst forms of child labour abuse take place among the children of the most vulnerable socio-economic groups in society. It is reasonable to assume that children will continue to be sent to work as long as societies condone child labour and families do not have a decent income. *Therefore, interventions in education need to be accompanied by interventions that aim at changing attitudes in society and addressing the survival needs of families.* Educational and training strategies will continue to be an integral part of the multi-pronged attack against child labour along with awareness-raising, law enforcement, income generation, and employment promotion for adults and social safety nets for families prone to resort to child labour.

### **3.2 Action against the most intolerable forms of child labour**

73. The above-mentioned measures are all prerequisites for successful campaigns against child labour. It is also clear that promoting economic growth, and even more importantly, growth that focuses on the most disadvantaged groups, facilitating their access to productive and adequately paid employment, and affording a minimum of social protection, thus reducing the economic need for child labour, is equally indispensable. The ILO realizes, however, that given the socio-economic situation of some countries and the lack of adequate resources and infrastructure, the complete elimination of child labour is bound to take time. But, there can be no excuse for ignoring flagrant cases of child abuse that are an outright insult to human rights and the dignity of children as individuals.

#### **Intolerable forms of child labour**

There is a growing consensus on the immediate elimination of the following intolerable practices, worldwide:

- activities that are contrary to fundamental human rights, such as bonded labour, children working under conditions of slave-like practices; children in prostitution; the use of children in drug trafficking and/or the production of pornography;
- activities that expose children to particularly grave hazards to their safety and health such as work with chemicals, dangerous tools and machines, or work involving heavy loads and complex tasks;
- activities that are performed under hazardous working conditions and in hazardous working environments, involving the risk of physical violence, sexual harassment, work in isolation or at night, excessive working hours and work under extreme temperatures; and
- total prohibition of work by very young children and special protection for girls.

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74. Action against the most intolerable forms of child labour remains and will continue to be a major area for ILO-IPEC action. This special focus on intolerable forms, articulated forcefully in the landmark ILO publication 'Child Labour: Targeting the intolerable' has struck a responsive chord in international and national circles. The Amsterdam Child Labour Conference, the regional consultations in Lahore, Pretoria and Brasilia in preparation for the International Conference on Child Labour in Oslo have echoed the ILO challenge, and there are many pledges to support the work on the new ILO standards and to start programme implementation in various countries.

#### Highly vulnerable children

75. Health and safety hazards of children can be related to the nature of work, or exposure to hazardous substances and agents, or to poor working conditions. Such hazards are usually physical in nature. Nevertheless, even when the type of work performed by children is not overtly dangerous, the work setting or employment relationship can put both their physical and psychological health in danger. When children work separately from their families and relatives, at the mercy of their employers, they may be subject to rigid discipline, intimidation and physical abuse, against which they cannot defend themselves. Some children are particularly vulnerable to this type of exploitation because of their age and gender, because they live and work on their own or because they belong to socially marginalized groups. Examples of extremely vulnerable categories of children are the very young (below 12 years of age), ethnic minorities, migrant children and, within all these categories, in particular girls.

76. The increased focus on the most intolerable forms of child labour has led to a major expansion of action programmes on these groups of children. IPEC's action against the various intolerable forms of child labour now accounts for two-thirds of its 700 action programmes operational in the participating countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

#### **Child domestic workers: targeting the invisible**

Child domestic service has always been a widespread practice in many countries and may have even worsened in recent years with growing income inequalities and rural poverty. Children as young as six or seven years of age are employed as domestic servants in many countries of the world. These children perform a wide variety of tasks traditionally done by women in the household, such as looking after children, preparing food, house cleaning, washing and ironing and caring for the sick. Sometimes forced to work 15 or 16 hours a day with inadequate food and lodgings, they are at the mercy of their employers, frequently exposed to sexual advances and physical and verbal abuse.

Although children in domestic service are likely to be among the most vulnerable and exploited of all, they are also the most difficult to protect. At the international level, ILO-IPEC-supported Anti-Slavery International to develop a research manual on child domestic workers entitled 'Child domestic workers, a handbook for research and action'. Subregional workshops on the subject have, or are being completed in Africa and Asia. Action programmes at the national level have been carried out in 10 countries so far.

In the Philippines, a particularly successful project is being carried out by the Visayan Forum. The 'Luneta Outreach Activities' or field day, for example, became a popular 'come rain or shine event' and proved to be a useful way to both organize and provide direct services to domestics. The Forum organized various consultations with the domestic themselves, human rights groups/institutions and legal practitioners to map out a common strategy to lobby for the adoption of the proposed Househelper Act. Theatre training was incorporated into the recreational activities and 10 domestics now have a basic knowledge to conceptualize and mount simple role-plays.

An Action Programme in Brazil has been carried out in the municipality of Campos dos Goitacazes, an area from which child workers are recruited for Rio de Janeiro State. Fifty working girls in the 8-13 age group were reached in this pilot project - withdrawn from domestic employment, provided with a subsidy and given formal education and vocational training. Social and cultural activities were also encouraged and medical and dental care was given. In addition, four educators were trained to enhance the sustainability of the project.

In Pakistan, the Working Women Association (WWA), an NGO active in programmes with child workers, has developed a non-formal and skills development programme for child domestics. The centres provide non-formal education for children between the ages of 6 and 14 years, training to enhance their skills, counselling to help build their self-esteem, and regular health check-ups. This NGO is working closely with the community, parents, employers and children in raising their awareness about child labour problems, and more specifically the problems of child domestic work.

In Tanzania, a number of projects have been carried out especially targeting girl domestics. One project of the Tamwa Media Women's Association extended an existing outreach programme to halt violence against women and children to embrace child domestic workers. As part of the project a multi-media awareness campaign was launched which included broadcasting radio programmes, producing and distributing 5,000 pamphlets and 5,000 cartoon booklets, and developing a video and a play for community theatre.

Experience is admittedly still limited and little is known about child domestics, one of the most hidden forms of child labour. Steps have been taken in the right direction to meet the challenge and certain tools and methodologies are beginning to emerge as highlighted above. The alliances and networks being built with associations and partner organizations have proven to be particularly successful in terms of mobilizing community action against this practice. Progress has also been made in putting the issue on the political and legislative agenda.

77. In a number of countries, action against the most intolerable forms of child labour has already gained momentum and is a key element of the IPEC Programme, in others the response is steadily growing. In Asia, the target groups that have received more attention are children in prostitution (Thailand, the Philippines, Nepal), child victims of trafficking (Thailand, the Mekong Basin, Philippines, Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka), child domestic workers (Philippines, Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Kenya, Tanzania and Turkey), children in agriculture (plantation agriculture in the Philippines), children in fishing operations (Indonesia and the Philippines), children in railways (India), fireworks (India, Philippines), brick kilns (India), automobile repair workshops (India, Pakistan), carpets (India, Pakistan, Nepal), glass polishing (Thailand, India), leather tanning (Pakistan, India). India, Pakistan and Nepal have projects targeting bonded child labour. In Latin America, IPEC action programmes include those in child prostitution and sex tourism (Brazil, the Caribbean region, Colombia), involuntary child labour (Brazil), mining (Colombia, Peru), brick works (Peru and Argentina) production markets (Peru), stone chipping (Peru), fireworks (Guatemala), charcoal, sisal and sugarcane (Brazil) and banana plantations (Costa Rica). In Africa, action on intolerable forms of child labour includes programmes for child domestic workers (Kenya and Tanzania); hazardous and exploitative child labour in plantations and commercial agriculture (Kenya and Tanzania); child labour in hazardous workshops and industries (Kenya, Egypt); child labour in the mining sector and quarries (Kenya, Tanzania) and child labour involved in the trafficking of goods (Kenya/Uganda border). Programmes are also being run for children working and living on the streets, and as a separate target group - street working girls, in both Kenya and Tanzania. In Francophone Africa, preparatory work is undertaken on child labour in mining, domestic work and hazardous agriculture (Burkina Faso, Madagascar). Turkey is giving attention to the issue of working girls in domestic service, child prostitution the problems of migrating child workers and child labour in hazardous industries such as metal work and

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leather.

78. The experience in dealing with intolerable forms of child labour has revealed the immense difficulty in translating concern about "the most intolerable forms" into concrete action. There is first of all the problem of *identifying and locating the children* in such situations. While some cases seem clearly evident (dumpsite scavenging, small scale mining, fireworks), many more remain invisible as children are deliberately isolated with little access to information and services. In addition, there are many *ambiguities in defining hazardous and exploitative work*, as these can be culturally and socially defined. In classifying hazards faced by working children, it is important to consider the nature and type of work, environmental factors and working conditions, acute and long term physical and psychological effects on health. What is becoming clear is that there is a continuum of factors which may range from mildly hazardous to life threatening. Although for certain types of work, the situation is straightforward, there are many activities or conditions where interpretations may vary. There are those who would argue, for example, that only some aspects of the work may be hazardous, for example, night time work in the seaports and street vending, or a potential risk, as in vulnerability to physical and sexual abuse, in the case of domestic helpers. Such interpretations have, of course, consequences for the manner and approaches to address the situation. In terms of approaches, Bangladesh and the Philippines have started classifying the work undertaken by children according to their hazardous nature, and a model to identify and assist children at high risk has been developed in Colombia. More effort will be required in this area to clarify these ambiguities. Another problem in starting and implementing programmes directed towards intolerable forms of child labour is *the limited number of potential partner organizations* in the targeted locations. There are relatively few public programmes or specialized NGOs that deal with intolerable work of children. Or, as in the case of domestic helpers, where some organizations may be interested in approaching the problems, these organizations need much more technical advice and support in developing approaches.

79. In addressing intolerable forms of work, the elements of the core ILO-IPEC strategy have proven valid and valuable. Situation analysis, policy formulation, awareness raising and social mobilization, law enforcement, and direct services constitute the main ingredients of the strategy. Action programmes cover the range of interventions from prevention to withdrawal from the most exploitative and hazardous work or working/employment conditions, together with the provision of viable alternatives for the social and economic integration of these very vulnerable groups of working children and their families. Improvement of working or employment conditions is also being carried out as a transitional measure to ensure that children who cannot be withdrawn immediately from work, at least do not work under intolerable conditions.

### Prevention

80. It cannot be stressed enough that ILO-IPEC's goal is not just the removal of individual children (even in large numbers) from work situations. This would be a relatively easy task provided sufficient funds were available, but sustainable and long-term results in the combat against child labour will be achieved only when new generations of children are effectively prevented from entering the labour market.

81. Preventive programmes in many countries are now being replicated and expanded. Small-scale initiatives where one organization, often an NGO or a local district committee, works in one locality to prevent children at risk from entering hazardous work are now being replicated in several countries. Wider geographical areas are covered through coordinated action by a number of partners in the private and public sphere at both the policy and the implementation level.

82. Advocacy for special government services to prevent children from engaging in intolerable work has been effective. In several countries, there have been interesting and creative ways of outreach programmes for the so-called 'invisible' children working in intolerable situations, from community watch, self-help groups and telephone hotlines. More and more, affected families and working children are being involved in planning and implementing the forms of the interventions. Capacity building, especially for law

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enforcers, labour inspectors, social workers and non-governmental organizations have also focused greater attention and action on working children.

### **Prevention of child prostitution: from community action to a provincial plan in North Thailand**

In the Northern provinces of Thailand, the prevention of child labour and children in prostitution is no longer the battle of one or two small NGOs, but a joint effort by all concerned. Children, parents, teachers, local government bodies and NGOs all joined hands in a concerted effort against the recruitment of young girls for prostitution and other forms of child labour. ILO-IPEC has been part of this effort since the beginning of its operation in Thailand in 1992.

During 1992-1997, ILO-IPEC extended support to the NGO, Daughter's Education Programme (DEP). DEP's aims are to prevent child prostitution and child labour by providing shelter and alternative education to girls at high risk of exploitation. These include children from families in extreme poverty, often with debts, children of tribal communities, children from broken homes and children of drug addicted parents. Alternative education provided by the DEP is a combination of formal and non formal education and basic skills training. The experience of DEP is that lack of education and abject poverty among rural and tribal communities, makes young girls in the North easy targets for traffickers.

The DEP experience is very valuable. However the problem is too complex for the DEP to handle it alone. The mobilization of other actors in the field was therefore a crucial strategy.

#### **Mobilization of key actors**

During the second phase of the programme in the North of Thailand, (1995-1997) ILO-IPEC provided technical support to NGOs, local governments, and facilitated coordination between such key actors.

Action by NGOs - Because NGOs play an important role in monitoring the problem at community level, IPEC-supported DEP and similar NGOs to carry out campaigns and educational and vocational training programmes aimed at preventing children from being lured into prostitution.

The role of youth - Over the years the beneficiaries, particularly from DEP, have been trained to become defenders of their own rights. They travel to villages with puppet shows, drama performances and exhibitions which disseminate information against child trafficking, prostitution and other exploitative forms of child labour. Communities, parents and children are informed about dangers and risks, as well as alternatives to exploitative child labour. The entire village is thus mobilized to fight against prostitution and to search for better opportunities for their children.

Teachers & schools - Primary school teachers and school authorities have been mobilized to function as campaigners against the problem. Teachers have been trained to identify girls at high risk of trafficking and to conduct face-to-face campaigns with parents and children in order to encourage them to explore options, i.e. educational opportunities for children instead of sending them to work. Those at high risk have been provided with opportunities to continue their secondary level education at boarding schools and subsequently to continue their vocational training.

It was realized that merely supplying educational opportunities, did not solve the problem unless the curriculum was relevant to their needs and provided them with appropriate skills in the labour market.

The Ministry of Education's project for girls at risk (Sema Pattana Cheevit Project) sought the support of IPEC to conduct a 'needs and educational interest' appraisal of these girls in order to re-design the basic educational curriculum at secondary school level. As a result, the children in these schools now receive meaningful and relevant education.

Coordinating and networking - While promoting the roles of the various key actors, the programme also called for greater cooperation between them. A working group was set up, including representatives of provincial academic institutions, schools, provincial labour and welfare offices and NGOs. The working group met on a regular basis to review progress, examine the obstacles and devise strategies to overcome them. In addition, through this coordination mechanism, a study on child labour, child trafficking and children in prostitution was conducted at the provincial level.

#### Towards sustainable action: a provincial plan of action

As a result of these various activities in the North of Thailand, the Governors of Chiang Mai and Chiang Rai, with support from IPEC, are now preparing a provincial programme of action to fight against the problem at the provincial level. The plan will be implemented under the leadership of the Governor's Office and will further mobilize all actors involved, government, NGOs and communities.

#### Withdrawal, rehabilitation and protection

83. Given the difficulty of bringing about an end to all child labour immediately, the Programme has been giving increasing attention to the *abolition of the most intolerable forms of child labour*. Over the past year, progress has been made, in particular, with recognizing and addressing child prostitution and trafficking and child labour in manufacturing industries and in agriculture, but progress in combating other forms of abusive child labour - in particular, child bondage - continues to be slow.

#### **Child Bondage**

Those who think that slavery belongs to the past are mistaken. Still, today one is able to count the victims of slavery in tens of millions. Certain forms of slavery are traditional. Even more distressing, however, is that new forms of slavery are coming into existence, such as debt bondage. ILO-IPEC has taken child bondage as one of its top priorities and is supporting various action programmes in different countries. ILO-IPEC's approach in addressing the problem can be best illustrated in the following example.

Although slavery was abolished in Nepal in 1925, the Kamaiya system of bonded labour is widespread in the western district of the country. Under the Kamaiya system a Tharu (indigenous person) enters into a year's contract of employment for himself and his family which is, in effect, a form of slavery. The remuneration received is inadequate to meet even basic needs. As a result families are obliged to take a loan which they can never repay. The loans accumulate and pass from one generation to another. IPEC has supported three NGOs to implement action programmes in three districts in western Nepal in order to create awareness among the Kamaiyas about human rights, alleviate their conditions and ensure that children are freed from work and receive education. Community meetings and street plays have been organized. Two NGOs, the Rural Reconstruction Nepal and the Informal Sector Service Centre (INSEC) have provided over 500 Kamaiya children with non-formal education and have enrolled most of them in government schools. Kamaiya awareness groups and support committees have subsequently been set up

at the district level through community meetings. The Kamaiyas recently held a conference and established 'the Kamaiya Liberation Forum', which is affiliated to a national trade union organization (GEFONT). The movement is gathering strength and the Kamaiyas are no longer in a state of passive resignation to their fate. A recent contribution from the Italian social partners' initiative will allow ILO-IPEC, in collaboration with UNICEF, to take this initiative a step further. A study will be carried out to analyse the socio-economic factors contributing to the prevalence of the Kamaiya system and to formulate a comprehensive package of services.

ILO-IPEC experience shows that the following steps are important in the campaign against child bondage: to promote the establishment of a coordination mechanism against child bondage with the mandate to conduct research, prepare plans of action, and to monitor the enforcement of decisions taken by the authorities; to support the establishment of local 'vigilance committees' made up of representatives of the principal social actors in society; to create rehabilitation centres for liberated children; to develop, in geographical sectors at risk, small credit schemes; and to launch vigorous information campaigns and sensitize the public.

84. Where the forms of work are clearly 'life threatening' or socially unacceptable, the most immediate recourse is withdrawal, rehabilitation and reintegration into mainstream society. The process of withdrawal of children from their work has ranged from persuasive (such as dialogue with families, the children, employers or law enforcement authorities) to more radical approaches (such as rescue operations). Working children are immediately given medical help, nutritional support, and educational services in the form of scholarships to either formal schools or enrolment in alternative learning modes. Their families are offered incentives including skills training (Nepal), livelihood and income generation (Bangladesh), nutrition and health support. India, Pakistan, Thailand and the Philippines have experiences with the more radical approaches (raids, rescue operations). The experiences point to some dilemmas in implementation. There are concerns over family reunification, where children may have been separated from families, including dysfunctional families, or relocation in other modes of work or way of life, or both. There are real dilemmas over the 'recycling' of withdrawn children, who after disappointment with the alternative offered to them, return to their original or other work situations. There are problems of temporary shelters, intrusive law enforcement - only government agencies have the authority and legal mandate to enforce withdrawal - and there is a need for new modes of cooperation between government and non-governmental partners, including trade unions.

85. In situations where working children may be in less explicit hazardous work conditions, and where immediate withdrawal is not possible as an option, *the alternative recourse - as a transitional measure - has been in interventions related to occupational safety and health, development of technological improvements, skills training for alternative forms of work, and the provision of social services such as legal or medical assistance, health, nutrition and recreation.*

## **Protection and Rehabilitation of Child Carpet Weavers**

The remote villages of Punjab account for 80 per cent of the total Pakistan production of hand-knotted carpets; every sixth house has its own loom. Child labour is rampant, and the carpet weaving industry was under pressure from Western buyers and the Western media for action.

Believing it to be essential to demonstrate what can be done to address the child labour problem, the Pakistan Carpet Manufacturers and Exporters Association (PCMEA), in a partnership with IPEC, selected an established and reliable NGO, the Bunyad Literacy Community Council (BLCC), to implement direct action component of a child labour programme.

The action programme officially started in the early summer of 1995. But for two months, despite its substantial experience in literacy and non-formal education in precisely those rural communities targeted by the IPEC action programme, the BLCC was unable to make progress. The communities would not accept BLCC field workers; discussion on child labour was out of the question and identification of the target groups did not seem to be feasible.

Gradually, however, the BLCC gained acceptance in the Kalokay community in the Sheikhpura district of the Punjab and the model that evolved is known as 'Training and Education for Carpet Weaving Children' (TECC). It is a community-based rehabilitation and prevention programme aimed at raising the awareness of the children, their parents, employers and the community as a whole, encouraging broad participation in the activities offered under the programme including counselling, non-formal education, recreation, health and safety services.

Basic skills in literacy, health and hygiene are provided in classes of two or three hours, training is also given to girls in cutting, sewing, and embroidery and there is a strong emphasis on sport and recreation in view of the long, uncomfortable hours sitting at the weaving looms and also to encourage weaving children to socialize with each other. Families are advised on a range of issues: how best to place their looms, the treatment of cuts and other frequent wounds and the developmental needs of the children. Social workers meet family problems head on, motivate the children and their parents, encourage children not to drop-out from classes and help raise the awareness of the entire community on the consequences of child labour.

After one year and a half, it was clear that the programme had been successfully implanted in two areas. The PCMEA requested further IPEC support in replicating and refining the TECC model in new communities while they took over the financial responsibility for continuing the programme in the first two villages where the TECC started. And there are now plans at the level of the Export Promotion Bureau of the Pakistan Ministry of Commerce and the Child Care Foundation (a Government and PCMEA-supported NGO), of a phased application of the same model to the entire carpet-weaving industry, covering at least 30,000 child workers.

86. Initiatives to withdraw children from work are often sector- or industry-specific. Programmes aim to tackle child labour by focusing on 'hazardous or exploitative occupations', for example, prostitution, commercial agriculture, deep-sea fishing, the carpet industry, the match or textile industry. It often makes sense to start with a sector- or industry-specific approach in situations where there is a concentration of children in specific hazardous or exploitative work. In addition, a positive point of targeting a major sector or industry is that the concerned children, their parents, employers and partner organizations can be relatively easily identified and that the interventions can be tailored to the specific situation in the sector or industry and the needs of the target groups. Moreover, the focus on one sector or industry may be a useful

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entry-point to the larger discussion on child labour in general. Successful measures in tackling child labour in one hazardous occupation may have a multiplier effect that will benefit children working in other dangerous work. This is because as soon as population groups - and eventually whole societies - start focusing on the dangers of premature work of children in one industry, broad discussion of the acceptability and unacceptability of different forms of child labour in general will follow. *However, care has to be taken to ensure that the attempts to remove children from one sector or industry do not push working children into other industries or occupations which may be even more hazardous or exploitative.* In this case the problem of child labour is not solved but has merely shifted to another sector which could prove even more difficult to address. A focus on the elimination of child labour in visible hazardous industries may also discriminate against working girls, because in many of these industries boys predominate, while their sisters toil at home, contributing to family survival.

87. Some problematic areas in the approach of withdrawal and rehabilitation of children have already been mentioned above, but, there are others. There is concern that in focusing on intolerable forms of work, ILO-IPEC and member countries will tend to focus on the more visible and hazardous types of child labour. Since the work of boys is more visible, there is a tendency to place little attention on working girls. This has not happened over the last years, given the increasing number of IPEC action programmes addressing child prostitution and domestic service. Moreover, children in hazardous or exploitative work are certainly not the most visible ones. Many of the work situations in which children are severely exploited are illegal in nature, for example, child prostitution, bondage and trafficking. Such child exploitation is profitable and powerful mechanisms exist to continue the status quo. This is compounded by the fact that groups which could be mobilized against child labour, because they have a mandate to protect children and enforce the relevant child labour legislation, lack the physical infrastructure to do so effectively and have often been co-opted into tolerating child labour exploitation.

88. A further problematic area is the identification of the youngest children. It is relatively easy to add a couple of years to the actual age of a child, and the real age of children is often not known due to the absence of birth records or any other form of registration. Additional problems exist in tackling the problems of working girls. Their work is hidden from view and is often considered to be socially acceptable and related to the overall low status of women in many societies.

89. Nevertheless, substantial progress is being made. There is a growing consensus as to the repugnant character of certain types of exploitative employment relations, such as forced labour, or types of work that are dangerous for children because of the nature of the work, the working environment or the working conditions. Considerable work remains to be done in this field. Sometimes, the hazards are not known and need to be appraised. In other instances, the risks are known but are tacitly accepted by large groups of the population, including the affected groups themselves. It will therefore remain necessary to raise awareness of the hazards involved in certain 'contractual arrangements', and in work or working conditions that harm the physical, emotional, social or intellectual development of children, and to start mobilizing all concerned parties from the community up to the policy level. *Based on the experience gained in the last few years ILO-IPEC must further develop a package of workable interventions to bring about real change in the situation of this section of the population.* Efforts to develop methodologies and institutional capacity to come to grips with invisible forms of child labour will continue to be an important aspect of IPEC in the coming biennium.

### **Working girls**

There are a number of reasons why girls are identified as a priority group within the IPEC strategy. Although many of the IPEC action programmes deal with boys and girls alike, it is known clearly that more action is required in the case of girls because their work is often 'invisible' and their problems and 'survival strategies' are different from those of boys. They also tend to be preferred as workers because they are socialized to be docile and obedient and many of them are 'bonded', i.e. working to repay a loan or debt incurred by their parents. The special situation of girls is evidenced by their lower school enrollments and higher drop-out rate as compared to boys in many parts of the world. Cultural traditions in many parts of the world are such that parents systematically favour the education and development of boys over girls.

IPEC has paid special attention to the problems of girls, in particular, in its action in the field of prostitution and domestic service. The programmes of IPEC dealing with children at risk of being lured into prostitution in Thailand and those dealing with child domestic workers have already been mentioned in this report. IPEC also supports a local NGO called Maiti in Nepal to set up transit homes for girls who are at risk of being trafficked for prostitution. In Brazil two pilot projects are being implemented to prevent children from entering prostitution by providing them with non-formal education and developing income generating activities for their parents. In Kenya, IPEC is supporting a programme for street girls by providing them with safe shelter and alternative forms of employment.

In the future IPEC will continue to promote the situation and status of girls and to address the specific needs of working girls through activities at national, regional and international level.

90. Finally, a positive development of the last two years is that the emphasis on addressing exploitative and hazardous child labour starting with its most intolerable forms has been gaining worldwide acceptance. This is reflected in the resolution on child labour adopted by the International Labour Conference in 1996 and the discussions that took place at the Informal Tripartite Meeting at the Ministerial Level held during the same Conference; at the World Congress on the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (Stockholm, August 1996); as well as in the international Child Labour Conferences in Amsterdam (February 1997) and Oslo (October 1997), organized respectively by the Governments of the Netherlands and Norway. Significant also, is the fact that the ILO's Governing Body requested the Office to include an item on child labour in the agenda of the 1998 Session of the International Labour Conference with a view to adopting new international standards in 1999, designed to ban the most intolerable forms of child labour: forced labour, bonded labour or other slavery-like practices; exploitation of children for prostitution or other illegal sexual practices; the use of children in drug trafficking or the production of pornography; and work which, because of its nature or the condition under which it is usually performed, exposes children to particularly grave hazards to their safety or health or prevents them from attending school normally; with a total prohibition of work by very young children and special protection for girls. It is expected that a Convention of this kind would have a good chance of being ratified by a large number of both industrialized and developing countries and would provide clear guidelines for national, regional and international action, including ILO-IPEC assistance in this field.

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### 3.3 IPEC Partnerships

91. Over the years, governments have assumed the larger share in initiating, developing and implementing programmes against child labour. This commitment and active involvement in efforts to address child labour is crucial as the attitude of governments to the needs and rights of children is decisive for their protection and the promotion of their welfare. However, given the magnitude and complexity of the problem of child labour, action needs to be taken at several fronts. This is only possible through a broad-based partnership of ILO's constituents, other public and private sector agencies and civil society at large.

92. A clearly positive trend in the progress of national action against child labour is the increasing and deepening involvement of a wide realm of other governmental bodies, employers', workers', and non-governmental organizations and other members of civil society. No longer is child labour seen as the sole responsibility of Labour and/or Social Welfare ministries. Other ministries, particularly ministries of education, ministries dealing with youth, the family, information, health and planning commissions are increasingly being involved. More and more, government institutions at the provincial and municipal levels are also being mobilized. Employers' and workers' organizations are also taking action at different levels - in policy and programme development, advocacy and social mobilization and direct services for working children. NGOs continue to contribute their special capabilities in direct action and grassroot services. More and more, communities are taking responsibility in addressing the needs of working children.

93. This trend for a larger sharing of responsibility is reflected in the distribution of IPEC action programmes. In the early 1990s, 53 per cent of IPEC action programmes were implemented by NGOs, a share that dropped to one third in the 1996-97 biennium. The main reason for this has been the increasing commitment of employers' and workers' organizations to the cause of working children and a commensurate increase of IPEC action programmes implemented in cooperation with these organizations. From small beginnings in the early 1990s, employers' and workers' organizations have since developed their capacity to design and implement child labour programmes - which presently account for 5 per cent and 14 per cent respectively of all IPEC action programmes over the 1996-97 period. The projects with the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers' and Exporters' Association (BGMEA) in Bangladesh and the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) in Pakistan are not only among the larger IPEC-supported programmes, but also draw resources from the participating employers' organizations.

#### Employers' Organizations

94. At the international level, the International Organization of Employers (IOE) has become increasingly active in the growing movement to fight hazardous and exploitative child labour. The IOE adopted a Resolution on Child Labour at its June 1996 General Council meeting, calling on its members to raise awareness of the human, economic and social costs of child labour, and to develop policies and action plans to contribute to the international campaign for its elimination. As a follow-up to this resolution, a questionnaire was sent to all IOE member federations to assess the scope of their activities in this area. This questionnaire was the first step in gathering the necessary information for the compilation of an 'Employer Handbook on Child Labour'. The IOE sought information on the many activities which enterprises and business associations are already undertaking in order to combat child labour, including attempts to gather more information, interaction with other groups working on the issue, educational and awareness-raising initiatives, and policy development and implementation.

95. At the national level, employers' organizations and their members are carving out their own crucial roles in the campaign against child labour. Employers' organizations in some countries are actively promoting increased awareness among their own members and the community at large about child labour legislation, the special measures which must be taken to protect young people from hazards in the workplace, and the importance of providing children with educational opportunities. Some employers' organizations in Latin and Central America are opening their vocational training facilities to NGOs which are rehabilitating

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former child labourers and street children.

96. In other countries, sectoral employers' associations have joined forces with the ILO to progressively remove children from specific industries and workplaces. In Bangladesh, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers' and Exporters' Association (BGMEA), the ILO and UNICEF in 1995, with the objective of withdrawing all child workers below 14 years of age from more than 2000 garment factories, and of providing them with a monthly stipend and education. This programme, which also includes a verification and monitoring system to ensure compliance, is largely supported by ILO and UNICEF, with a financial contribution from the BGMEA.

97. Another high profile and concrete example of this type of industry initiative is the recent 'Partners' Agreement' concluded on 14 February 1997 by the ILO, UNICEF, and the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Sialkot (SCCI), Pakistan. This agreement aims at the elimination of child labour in the production of footballs, and contains both a monitoring and verification system and a social protection programme. The programme is now operational with financial support and backing of the local industry and members of the World Federation of the Sporting Goods Industry and the Soccer Industry Council of America.

## The employer response to child labour in Bangladesh

It was an unprecedented call for help. In October 1994, 53 children in the Bangladesh garment industry appealed directly to the ILO and UNICEF. The threat of an American boycott of goods from factories employing children had resulted in mass dismissals, with as many as 50,000 youngsters being thrown on to the streets to fend for themselves.

In less than one year this call gave birth to one of the most innovative ILO-IPEC projects - the phasing out of all child labour in an industry which accounts for two thirds of total Bangladesh export earnings. Such an ambitious project could hardly have been set in motion without the active support of the Bangladesh government and, particularly, the garment manufacturers. Many wanted to rid themselves of child workers as soon as possible to avoid the threat of a potentially ruinous boycott and they had to be convinced by ILO-IPEC that no under age child workers were to be taken off work until appropriate education programmes and other rehabilitation measures were in place.

On 4 July 1995, the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers' and Exporters' Association (BGMEA), signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with UNICEF and the ILO aimed at the elimination of child labour in the garment industry. *This was a historic agreement, because it marked the first time that an entire industry has cooperated so closely to phase out child labour while ensuring that credible alternatives are provided.* Under the MOU, the three parties agreed to: conduct a survey to determine the number of children under 14 years of age working in the garment industry; devise and implement a verification and monitoring system for the garment industry; set up education programmes for the children removed from work in the garment industry; provide compensation to former child workers and their families for part of the loss in income and raise public awareness about child labour and the importance of education.

As a contribution to this effort, ILO-IPEC developed and implemented an experimental monitoring and verification system to remove child workers under the age of 14 years from garment factories and to prevent other children from entering employment in these factories. After conducting a survey to identify the children working in the garment industry, the system successfully withdrew 10,546 children under the age of 14 years from work in garment factories and enrolled them in special education programmes. A system for compensation was also successfully put in place, providing partial financial support to the children and their families for the loss of income in order to prevent the family from hardship and to enable the children to participate in the education programmes (monthly payment of Taka 300 = US \$7.50 per child).

Twenty-eight child labour monitors were carefully selected and trained for the regular inspection of factory sites in Dhaka and Chittagong, and to monitor the school attendance of the children. In the event of infractions, violating manufacturers face a penalty of either a fine of US \$1,000, or, in the case of a repeat violation, a temporary withdrawal of the manufacturers' export license.

Close alliances have been successfully forged between the ILO, the BGMEA, and the Government of Bangladesh. Out of 1314 factories which were inspected between January and April 1997, 12 per cent were found to employ children. This figure is significantly less than the 1995 and 1996 figures, when, respectively, 43 per cent and 34 per cent percent of the factories surveyed were found to employ children.

The BGMEA model is an example of how employers and UN organisations have been able to work together to phase out child labour in an industrial sector, and has demonstrated clearly how children can be phased out from the industry. The involvement of employers and government in monitoring boosted co-operation and is seen as an in-service training for labour inspectors. This action has also saved the country's export sector which currently hires more than 1.3 million workers, mainly female.

**Partners' Agreement: Sialkot, Pakistan**

About 30 million footballs are produced annually in the Sialkot district in Pakistan. Some 35,000 persons are employed by the industry, including women and an estimated 7,000 children. On 14 February 1997, the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce signed a 'Partner's Agreement' with the ILO and UNICEF to gradually eliminate child labour below the age of 14 years in the production of footballs in Sialkot. The ILO is directly responsible for the external monitoring component of the Sialkot programme, and is currently in the process of setting up a system on the ground which uses the same monitoring principles and concepts as in the above project. The ILO is working closely with its partners to ensure the success of the monitoring component and the equally important social protection programme, which aims at providing all the children withdrawn from work with credible alternatives, including educational opportunities. All football stitchers younger than 14 years of age are to be placed in the social protection programme, and a qualified member of the family will be given the opportunity of taking the place of the child worker withdrawn.

98. The All-India Organization of Employers (AIOE) has been working with IPEC over the past two years on an innovative project which examines the work processes and conditions of child labourers in industries which employ repetitive manual operations. Since some of these industries, such as the manufacture of glass items and match boxes, are particularly hazardous to children's health and safety, the AIOE is actively seeking ways in which technological upgrading can help in replacing children by machinery and adult workers who are better suited to perform high skill jobs.

99. While many large scale establishments maintain that their establishments do not hire minors, there is now a greater willingness, among the employers' groups, to review company production and purchasing policies that may indirectly result in the hiring of child workers. For example, the Employers' Confederation of the Philippines (ECOP) is conducting an inquiry into sub-contracting policies, and undertaking advocacy programmes which will assist employers in understanding the legal and social implications of child labour and in taking action in collaboration with other committed groups. A Child Labour Desk has been established for the purpose of enlisting support and champions in the campaign. Employers' involvement will exist in four broad areas: review of current company policies regarding the hiring and use of child labour, especially under sub-contracting arrangements; development of company/industry codes of conduct for child labour; providing support and services and community relations programmes to reach out to priority groups of children; and participation in various tripartite bodies for action on child labour.

100. In Africa, the Association of Tanzania Employers (ATE) has conducted awareness raising and sensitization sessions for plantation owners and managers in the tea, coffee, and sisal estates in the regions of Tanga, Mbeya and Iringa. This programme has been successful in securing voluntary agreements by plantation owners to ban the employment of children below 15 years of age on their respective estates, and to implement specific plans of action to provide educational alternatives to working children. The programme includes the following components:

- promoting primary school enrolment and attendance in and around plantations by building and

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- renovating schools, providing equipment, and employing additional teachers;
  - establishing tenant income for small holder farms in order to increase the incomes of plantation owners and therefore reduce the need for child labour; and
  - introducing income-generating ventures, as well as credit and savings loan groups, for plantation workers.

101. A similar successful initiative has been undertaken by the Federation of Kenya Employers (FKE). The objectives of this programme are to assist the selected companies to formulate and implement policies and an action plan on child labour; to provide technical advice and support to the selected companies who are willing to initiate measures to combat child labour; to identify feasible measures and activities for selected employers in the fight against child labour; and to collaborate with the Government, trade unions, NGOs, and other interested parties in fighting child labour. The main activities which have been carried out under this programme include:

- conducting 40 field visits to selected companies to evaluate the working conditions and hazards faced by working children;
- holding discussions with the management and workers of selected companies to draw up a policy and plan of action;
- preparing an action plan on effective employer interventions to combat child labour;
- establishing a 'Working Children's Welfare Committee' within each selected company to oversee the implementation of the action plan;
- formulating guidelines for these Welfare Committees; and
- conducting follow-up visits to the selected companies.

102. In terms of ensuring sustainability, a child labour unit has been established by the FKE under their Research and Information Department in order to address, on a regular basis, issues pertaining to child labour. A column on child labour has been incorporated into the FKE quarterly newsletter. Employer guidelines on child labour have been issued and the Federation is active in monitoring their application. The FKE monthly meetings include on the agenda a standing item on child labour, in order to ensure that child labour issues are discussed on a regular basis. Resulting from these initiatives, the FKE has identified the need to assist their members in the formulation of internal company policies and action plans on child labour. They are working with each of their members to identify interventions which effectively address their individual situations. They also point to a need for more collaboration and networking with IPEC participating agencies, particularly the workers' organizations and the Ministry of Labour.

103. Employers and their organizations have also been active in the area of child labour in the Americas. For example, in Brazil, the Abrinq Foundation, a non-governmental organization of private sector corporations provides recognition to corporations which do not hire child labour and which source only from third parties who commit themselves to not using child labour. The Abrinq Foundation awards a 'child-friendly seal' for members, which these companies can use in their products and advertising campaigns. In order to use the 'child-friendly seal', companies must agree to carry out the following actions:

- accept a formal commitment not to hire children under the age of 14 - which, according to the Brazilian law, is the minimum age for engagement in professional activities;
- disseminate this commitment through their network of suppliers and customers (contractual clauses); and
- develop and support social programmes for children or professional training programmes for adolescents.

104. The central employers' organizations in Colombia and Peru have adopted resolutions on child labour, pledging the support of their members in the fight to safeguard the rights of children. The employers' organizations in Brazil and Bolivia have also been working closely with NGOs to provide relevant vocational

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training programmes to former child labourers and street children. It is expected that the first Ibero-Meeting of Employers, to be convened in Bolivia in 1998, will mobilize further employer support for the campaign to eliminate child labour in that region.

### Workers' Organizations

105. The participation of workers' organizations in the campaign against child labour has taken a quantum leap, encompassing many different activities: awareness raising and workers' education, solidarity movements targeting specific industries, provision of alternative education for working children, including child labour concerns in collective bargaining agreements (CBA). While initial activities consisted mainly of awareness and sensitization programs for members, the trade unions have deepened the scope of their engagement in other directions. Working closely with other partners, such as government and non-governmental organizations, the trade unions have incorporated child labour in their workers' education programmes; innovated community integration activities for purposes of better detection and surveillance of child labour incidences; undertaken lobbying at both the national and local government levels for policy reform and improved services for child workers; and intensified its advocacy activities.

106. Trade unions have pilot projects in several industrial sectors: the ports, sugar plantations, garment production, farming and fishing. Trade unions have also assisted in several efforts at withdrawing and removing affected children from hazardous work and providing legal services where needed. Institutionally, the trade unions have established a focal point and designated officers for coordinating union activities. In one country, Tanzania, union leaders have succeeded in incorporating child labour restriction clauses in CBAs in selected plantations and mining sites. The existence of systematic coordination and monitoring systems for trade union activities from district level to national level is a strong indicator of the sustainability of these initiatives. It is noted that some unions in the participating countries have difficulty in finalizing action programme proposals and in complying with their financial and progress reports. IPEC is responding to this situation, particularly in the new IPEC participating countries, by assisting the workers' organizations to strengthen their capacity to implement action programmes.

107. Trade unions in the industrialized countries have so far been involved in child labour issues through various campaigns against child labour at national and international level. Recently, the cooperation between the ILO and trade union campaigns has taken a new step forward. The trade union movement in Italy has played a leading role in a fund raising campaign for the fight against child labour. The campaign raised US\$1.8 million and this amount is to be used by ILO-IPEC and UNICEF in Bangladesh, Nepal, and Pakistan on projects for the elimination of child labour. This innovative approach by the Italian trade unions shows what can be achieved by workers' organizations in industrialized countries, in cooperation with the other ILO social partners and it is hoped that this example is emulated in other countries.

#### **Fund raising for child labour by ILO constituents in Italy - a trade union initiative**

A total of US\$1.8 million was collected through a public fund raising campaign in Italy to fight against child labour. This fund raising campaign was organized by the ILO constituents in Italy (Ministry of Labour, employers' organizations, and trade union organizations) together with the Italian national committee for UNICEF.

The Italian trade union movement was particularly active in the fund raising campaign. For the trade unions, this campaign was not an end in itself but a part of their effort to highlight the issue of child labour and draw the attention of the Italian public to the child labour problem which is not solely faced by developing countries but by Italy as well. The trade unions organized a wide variety of activities throughout the campaign including numerous meetings at workplaces; public conferences; a contribution

to the Prime Minister's national plan on childhood; negotiations with the Ministry of Education to put child labour in the school curriculum; posters at workplaces; and articles in union journals. Union members in thousands of workplaces responded with donations. Retired workers also made their donations.

The result of the campaign, launched in February 1966, was announced on 16 April 1997 during a Conference entitled 'Italian working world against child labour' in Rome. The fund is to be used by the ILO-IPEC and UNICEF for activities against child labour in Bangladesh, Nepal, and Pakistan. Trade unions and employers' organizations in these countries are expected to be actively involved in these activities. The programmes to be supported by the Italian fund will target child labour in the garment industry in Bangladesh, children in bonded labour in Nepal, and child labour in surgical instrument manufacturing in Pakistan.

108. At international level, IPEC has intensified consultation and cooperation with the international trade union organizations. It is noted that, in addition to policy formulation and the general awareness campaign, a number of International Trade Secretariats (ITSSs) in different industries are already carrying out activities dealing with working children in cooperation with ILO-IPEC. For example, an affiliate of the International Federation of Building and Wood Workers (IFBWW) has a project to reduce child labour in the brick kilns in India through the provision of education; and an affiliate of the International Textile, Garment, and Leather Workers' Federation (ITGLWF) is implementing a project to help children in the textile industry in Pakistan.

109. To further promote trade union involvement in the activities for the elimination of child labour an Asian regional meeting was organized by the ILO Bureau of Workers' Activities and IPEC for the field representatives of 14 international trade union organizations in Bangkok (July 1997). Participants discussed the role of trade unions in the fight against child labour in Asia and how such a role could be expanded in cooperation with ILO-IPEC. They agreed that child labour is not only a major social issue but one that directly affects the trade union organizations and their members. All unions should have a policy and plan of action on child labour and international trade union organizations should help their affiliates to develop such policies and plans. Awareness raising among the workers should be the first step for any union but more direct action to help working children should also be undertaken. New possibilities of trade union involvement were also discussed in the meeting such as a campaign against child labour in the tourist industry, union activity to deal with child labour in tea plantations and awareness raising among teachers through their unions.

#### **Taking the lead in action against child labour: Workers' Organizations in Latin America**

In South America trade unions from Brazil have been acting to eliminate child labour since 1992. The National Confederation of Agricultural Workers (CONTAG) in Brazil conducted training courses for union leaders on how to incorporate and improve clauses on children's rights, including child labour, in their collective bargaining agreements. Analysis of existing contracts was also conducted with a view to formulating and encouraging insertion of 'child labour' clauses in collective bargaining agreements. In this connection, advice was given to trade union members in 17 states during negotiations of their collective agreements. As a result, CONTAG has succeeded in incorporating child labour issues, including the protection of working children and the elimination of child labour, into collective bargaining agreements. Other trade unions such as CUT, CGT and Força Sindical are following CONTAG's example.

Many clauses relating to child labour prohibit the employment of children under 14 years. These clauses state that employment of minors above 14 years is subject to the principles and provisions of the *Statute of the Child and Adolescent*. Some collective agreements, such as the agreement of coffee plantation workers, specify that there shall be equal remuneration for men, women, and minor workers above 14 years. Certain agreements even include educational provisions for the children of workers. For example, the collective agreement of cane-plantation workers of Pernambuco provides that employers engaging more than 50 workers must guarantee free primary schooling for their children. This obligation can be met by dedicating an area of the plantation for schools. Employers are excepted from this obligation only if there is a school within 1 Km from the work place.

The CUT, in Brazil, has created a National Commission on the Rights of the Child and Adolescent within its Social Policies Secretariat with the aim of coordinating integrated action to protect the rights of the child and adolescent, including the right to be protected from economic exploitation, in cooperation with other unions and entities. It further aims to encourage the creation of similar commissions in its state branches and affiliated trade unions. CUT's social policy also encourages the active participation of its members in the *Forum for the Defence of the Rights of Children and Adolescents* and in the *Council for the Rights of Children and Adolescents*.

In late 1995, IPEC's extension in Latin America began auspiciously with an ILO-IPEC seminar for workers' organizations in Brazil, where the unions have taken a lead role in changing social attitudes on child labour. Under the guidance of the Ibero-American Regional Organization of Workers (ORIT), in Latin America and the Central of Workers (CLAT) and ILO-IPEC, trade union representatives promulgated a landmark document, *'Elements for the settlement of trade unions' actions against child labour'*. This document has created a ripple effect, setting into motion an increasing number of activities undertaken by workers' organizations in most of the Latin American countries. National meetings have been carried out in Argentina (CGT), Venezuela (CTV), and Paraguay (CUT) and in the next months Chilean and Colombian trade unions will implement national consultations and training workshops in order to plan unions' interventions on child labour issues, both on the active partnership in National Plans of Action and on the elaboration of direct intervention projects.

In Central America the trade unions of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua and Panama have hosted national seminars with financial and technical assistance from ILO-IPEC to sensitize trade unionists on child labour. Some of them (Costa Rica and Nicaragua) have agreed on national Plans of Action on child labour for trade unions and established national Trade Unions' National Committees on child labour (Costa Rica). Early next year a subregional meeting will be organized to agree on a subregional Action Plan setting common policies and programmes on the elimination of child labour elimination.

110. For larger involvement of trade unions in this important field, new possibilities of trade union involvement were also discussed in the meeting. A campaign against child labour in the tourist industry, union activity to deal with child labour in the tea plantations, awareness raising among teachers through their unions are some of the ideas discussed. ACTRAV and IPEC will follow up this meeting with individual consultations with the organizations that participated in the meeting as well as discussion at national level.

#### NGOs and other partners

111. An area of great strength in the IPEC programme is the commitment and initiative of participating NGOs. In the start-up activities in the majority of countries, NGOs took the primary role in discovering and denouncing child labour abuses, lobbying and advocating for children's rights and policy reform and providing direct services for working children and their families in communities. The trail that the NGOs pioneered has been significant, as many of the ILO's constituents were at that time, unfamiliar with informal child labour situations

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and community and grassroots organizing. With the expansion of the IPEC programme to include a wider range of partners, their contributions remain critical and valuable. The NGOs have adapted well in more collaborative endeavours with the ILO social partners, and their project sites have been important laboratories for sensitization and orientation on child labour issues.

112. Nevertheless, the role and participation of NGOs in different countries varies depending on political culture and tradition. The quality of NGO involvement also depends on their experience and maturity. In some countries, the heavy participation of the NGOs has been criticized by the ILO social partners who argue that this could to some extent undermine the tripartite character of the ILO. In other places, NGOs have been criticized for their weak administrative and management capacities, leading to questions of sustainability of operations. Their generally weak resource base means that they can only continue to support the children as long as there is internal or external donor assistance. Nevertheless, it has been the experience that the older and more mature NGOs have survived changes in political systems and administration and have effectively worked towards the elimination of hazardous and exploitative child labour.

113. There is a whole range of other members of civil society that have an important contribution to make in the combat of child labour. Teachers, religious and community leaders are important allies. But there are many others, such as the media, universities, members of the parliament, professional associations of health workers, the police, lawyers and so on that have the potential to contribute to efforts aimed at a solution to the problem. During 1996-97 many new social alliances have been formed, such as those among district authorities, parliamentarians and NGO networks; and ILO-IPEC has aimed at bringing together within each country, all relevant partner organizations which share a common interest, whether by location (geographical), by target group of working children (e.g. plantations or services, etc.) or by mode of intervention (e.g. education or law enforcement, etc.).

### **3.4 Mainstreaming: Implications for Programme Development**

114. After years of innovative and broad based experimentation in the field, there is an impetus for consolidating and moving the IPEC strategy into the second strategic phase. This involves mainstreaming of child labour issues into a national policy and programme of action in partner countries and into the policies, programmes and budgets of partner organizations. Substantial progress has been made, but transition from the broad based experimental phase into the more consolidated stage is not simple nor straightforward.

#### **Defining 'mainstreaming'**

Mainstreaming refers to the process wherein the IPEC participating country assumes greater responsibility and accountability for a country-owned and sustainable policy and programme of action on the progressive elimination of child labour. So far ILO-IPEC has identified the following manifestations and indicators of mainstreaming:

- articulation of a high priority to address child labour and its root causes and child rights in national, sectoral and organizational plans;
- creation/designation of responsible, accountable institutions and organizations that will continue to develop, plan, monitor and sustain the momentum of action;
- provision of unified, coherent strategies that link activities and contributions of participating actors;
- allocation of government, private and other technical and financial resources whether corporate, union or international that enable action; and
- presence of strong national pressure within the countries to ensure that the programmes are carried to completion.

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115. In the past five years, ILO-IPEC has been laying the groundwork for successful mainstreaming. While the multiplicity of action programmes in various countries may seem to some as disjointed efforts, ILO-IPEC has, through these programmes, demonstrated what the various elements of a unified campaign against child labour are, thus forming the basis for wider application by motivating the concerned parties to start taking action. ILO-IPEC then assist the partner organizations in taking strategic action, until they have developed and continue to develop the commitment, the competence, the institutional structures and the confidence to sustain such action without external financial support. The issue of mainstreaming is crucial to ILO-IPEC as it is planned to gradually phase out IPEC support to a country as soon as it has the capacity to continue or even enlarge action independently.

116. Experience seems to indicate that while it is relatively easy to achieve the initial task of formulating a national policy and programme of action, the next step of ensuring that good intentions are translated into practice are more difficult. Often, the parties involved do not have a full understanding of the processes nor do they have the commitment required to achieve the long term goal of eliminating abusive child labour. Neither does political commitment automatically lead to the essential steps of gradual policy reform, a change in social attitudes and mainstreaming child labour concerns into national economic and social development programmes and budgets.

117. Different types of efforts towards mainstreaming have been pursued in the various participating countries. The most immediate effort is incorporating this concern in the development and selection of new action programmes. Since 1996, new action programmes have been asked to account for sustainability to ensure that initiatives can be sustained or replicated and to achieve maximum multiplier effects and long-term impact. This means longer time-frames for projects, establishing clear linkages between and among the specified goals, and specifying the activities which could become sustainable on their own after a set time period. When developing new programmes, whether small pilot projects or a new country or sectoral programme, lessons learned and strategies which have proven to be valid are applied. Mobilizing in-country support and resources is also needed. This may be through different modes of financing arrangements in the form of co-financing schemes or counterpart requirements, as has been pursued in some Latin American countries. Some projects, for example for occupational training, provide for self-financing with the understanding that ILO-IPEC will participate for at least three years, after which the implementing agencies will assume the full responsibility. In other action programmes which include income generation activities for families, the families commit themselves to use the income earned to improve their children's welfare.

118. Another promising development have been initiatives aimed to incorporate the issue of child labour into national development plans or country programmes for children. This leads to the greater possibility of mobilizing internal funds to target working children, including referrals to ongoing government programmes in education, poverty alleviation, social protection and health. Substantial progress has been made in pursuing more effective ways of integrating child labour into existing or planned poverty alleviation schemes. In the field of education training modules and curricula focused on working children, developed under IPEC projects, have been adopted and used by government authorities on a wider scale.

119. The greater bulk of efforts, however, is directed towards institutional development and capacity building of IPEC partners as this is likely to improve the success rate of projects in the post-IPEC period. The resources available to deal with the problem of child labour are limited while the problem is immense. It is therefore of utmost importance to make the best use of the financial and human resources accessible. Apart from the Ministries of Labour and a few NGOs that have built up considerable experience in dealing with the target group, many other actors are new in this field. In almost all countries where IPEC is active, training is necessary on child labour problems and possible solutions at policy, management and implementation level. In the field of enforcement, specialized training courses for labour inspectors, police officers, prosecutors and judges turned out to be very useful. Training on techniques to collect statistics is another important area where capacity building is necessary. But, above all what is really important is to immerse partners in practical experience to deal with the problem. Through small action programmes, demonstrating that children can be prevented from entering the work force prematurely or can be withdrawn from hazardous work, partners gain confidence in dealing with the

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problem. Although child labour will not disappear without major efforts in the field of economic and social policy, these pilot programmes remain important on the road to solutions, in particular in the countries where the programme has just started.

120. There is a need to conceive and implement efforts to combat child labour within the framework of a mechanism that promotes, monitors and coordinates the activities of the actors involved. In many countries this capacity does not exist and organizations frequently work in a dispersed way and sometimes in competition with each other. ILO-IPEC has promoted and supported efforts to establish specialized bodies on child labour within partner organizations as well as to establish mechanisms for national coordination.

121. At the policy level the IPEC National Steering Committees (NSCs) have proven to be effective vehicles for uniting old and new partners and developing coherent strategies on child labour. In general, NSCs have continued to play an important role in terms of setting priorities for action, identifying and approving new action programmes and organizing major events on child labour. In some countries, NSCs have gone beyond their original mandate and have played an important role in terms of policy and legislative reform. This was particularly possible in countries where institutional links between the NSC and other relevant policy making authorities have been established.

122. The units on child labour in the Ministry of Labour have increased the visibility of the child labour problem. Their role is likely to expand and more efforts are needed to improve their performance. These child labour units play a very important role in forging a coordinated response from the various departments in the Ministry of Labour to the problem of child labour. This has boosted the role of Ministries of Labour as the lead agency in the field of child labour. There are however a number of tasks, previously handled by these child labour units, for which independent institutions, such as universities, training institutions or other parastatal bodies, may be better suited in most countries.

123. In a few countries, such institutions have become the focal point for carrying out one or more of the following tasks: (1) collection, compilation and dissemination of information on the nature, trends and profile of child labour, the law and its enforcement mechanisms, international instruments, and successful interventions and strategies; (2) provision of training on the formulation, monitoring, implementation and evaluation of child labour projects, including resource mobilization; (3) promotion of interaction between and among government agencies, employers' and workers' organizations and private and non-governmental organizations active in the field of child labour; and (4) monitoring and performance assessments.

124. In conclusion, the importance of paying close attention to mainstreaming and sustainability issues cannot be underlined enough. Programme development is at a crucial stage with new programmes in a number of countries. The extension of MOUs with the 11 'first and second generation' countries<sup>2</sup> also provide the opportunity to set the framework for strategic second phase programmes. These will include: high priority for the replication and expansion of successful approaches and the mainstreaming of child labour concerns into the programmes and budgets of the partner organizations, with an emphasis on evaluations of IPEC programmes to determine areas of strength and weakness, further programme development in new fields where the experience is still limited; documentation, information exchange and promotion of integrated strategies; and provision of a greater role of the National Steering Committees and other focal points in information dissemination, project design, selection, monitoring and evaluation and initiating activities that catalyze successful collaboration.

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<sup>2</sup>The first generation countries: Brazil, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Thailand and Turkey joined IPEC in 1992. The second generation countries: Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines and Tanzania started participating in 1994-95.

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## 4. The worldwide movement

### Worldwide Movement against Child Labour

125. The worldwide call for action against child labour and the expansion of ILO-IPEC activities have required intensive interaction with UN agencies and other international organizations. Since the beginning of its operation, ILO-IPEC has envisaged to contribute to the worldwide movement against child labour as one of its strategies. Action and campaigns at international level in collaboration with various international agencies form a major part of the ILO-IPEC programme.

### Cooperation with UNICEF

126. In October 1996, the ILO and UNICEF signed a 'Letter of Intent' which defined the broad parameters for ILO/UNICEF cooperation. This agreement intends to promote the closer coordination of policies and programmes and the implementation of more joint field programmes and in the organization of major regional meetings, and the Oslo International Conference on Child Labour. Several concrete initiatives took place prior to the signing of the Letter of Intent and since that time, others have taken place. These include the implementation of joint projects in Bangladesh, Pakistan and Nepal; participation in the UNICEF workshop on capacity building. The experience in operationalizing the Letter of Intent varies in different countries and regions. In some countries, particularly in Brazil and the Philippines, child labour issues are jointly reviewed and assessed in unified national coordination committees.

127. While, overall, the relations between both UN agencies are cordial and collaborative, there have been some problems in harmonizing approaches and interventions at the field level. Joint projects have been affected by differences in project design, and technical and financial monitoring and reporting procedures. As there is a tendency to work with the same partners and collaborators in some countries, this has sometimes led to confusion among the partner organizations or resulted in overburdening relatively small organizations with a very rapid expansion of activities. In order to strengthen the partnership, it is important to further clarify the definition of strategies, and areas of comparative advantage and strength. Both agencies still need to learn more about each other's technical competence and programmes and put it to good use in a complementary manner. It is a testimony of the growing collaboration that UNICEF and ILO intend to come up in the coming few months with joint programmes and proposals for financing by major international donors.

### Cooperation with the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

128. The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) adopted by the UN General Assembly, provides a policy framework for the UN system and the international community for the promotion and protection of children's rights. The ILO actively promotes the application of this Convention. The ILO participates in all sessions and working group discussions of the UNCRC Committee, transmits to the Committee relevant information and provides comments on Reports from countries under consideration by the Committee. In addition, ILO-IPEC continues its dialogue and exchange of information with members of the Committee on a regular basis. ILO-IPEC is contributing its field experience to the Committee's Working Group on Children and the Media. In this connection, IPEC provided case studies on the subject, emphasizing the child labour issue in Kenya, the Philippines and Thailand.

129. ILO-IPEC also participated in the 53rd session of the UN Commission on Human Rights held in Geneva in 1997. IPEC will coordinate its country programme with the Plan of Action to strengthen the implementation of the Convention on the Right of the Child. In addition, ILO-IPEC provided inputs to the UN Special Rapporteur on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in the preparation of the report concerning the exploitation of child labour, presented at the 52nd session of the UN General Assembly in New York (October 1997).

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## Networking and coordination at regional and international level

130. ILO-IPEC recognizes the importance of networking and coordination among various organizations at regional and international levels. Several regional and international initiatives have been supported by ILO-IPEC during 1996-1997 such as regional workshops among workers' and employers' organizations in Africa, Latin America and Asia; an international seminar on research methodology on domestic child servants; the publication and dissemination of information on child labour at regional level; the regional consultation against the most intolerable forms of child labour in East and South East Asia; and the regional consultation on domestic child labour in Asia. These activities provide opportunities for organizations working on child labour to discuss specific aspects of the child labour issue which is common among countries, to learn from each others experience and to identify more effective means of action at local, national, regional and international level.

## International campaigns

131. ILO-IPEC continues to support child labour campaigns at international level. For example, IPEC is supporting the initiative of the NGO Group for the Convention on the Rights of the Child (NGO-CRC) to survey the views of NGOs worldwide on intolerable forms of child labour. This is part of the efforts of the NGO-CRC to mobilize NGOs with expertise on the child labour issue to support the preparation of the new ILO standards on the most intolerable forms of child labour and their subsequent implementation.

132. The results of the survey will be summarized in a report which will be used to promote discussion and awareness raising among NGOs themselves and ILO constituents. The report will analyse:

- circumstances in which the work of children should be categorized as unacceptably exploitative and therefore prohibited;
- forms of work and working conditions which should be categorized as so hazardous that these forms of work and working conditions might jeopardize the health, safety and morals of children; and
- those categories of children including very young children and girls which should be regarded as particularly vulnerable.

133. ILO-IPEC extends its technical support to the Global March against Child Labour, which is a joint effort of the civil society, involving 370 organizations in 82 countries. It will be launched in countries in Asia, Africa, Latin America and North Africa during November 1997-June 1998. The Global March will end in Geneva in June 1998. The objectives of the Global March include awareness raising on child labour; urging governments to ratify and enforce laws that protect children and provide them with education; mobilizing greater national and international funding to support education for all children; demanding the immediate elimination of the most exploitative forms of child labour; promoting positive action by employers and consumers; and ensuring the proper rehabilitation of child labourers.

134. ILO-IPEC commits itself to implement the Agenda of Action against commercial sexual exploitation of children, adopted during the World Congress against the Sexual Exploitation of Children in 1996. In addition to the strengthening of on-going action programmes at national level, IPEC will continue to coordinate its work with other international organizations, such as End Child Prostitution and Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes (ECPAT) and the NGO Group for the Convention on the Rights of the Child, including the Focal Point on Sexual Exploitation. ECPAT has invited ILO-IPEC to participate in its executive meetings as a consultant during 1997-1999. ILO-IPEC will be one of the core group members of the Support Group on Sexual Exploitation of Children, composed of the organizers of the Stockholm Congress, Interpol, the Women's Environment and Development Organization, UNHCR, and other academic institutions.

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### International and regional events

135. In 1997, the ILO was actively involved in the organization of many international and regional events on child labour. These include the Amsterdam Child Labour Conference on the most intolerable forms of child labour (February 1997), the Arusha Child Labour Conference of the Organization of African Unity (April 1997), the ministerial tripartite First Latin American Meeting on Child Labour in Cartagena de Indias (May 1997), the Preparatory Regional Consultations on Child Labour in Brasilia, Lahore and Pretoria (July-August 1997) and the International Child Labour Conference in Oslo (October 1997).

136. These events have brought about worldwide awareness on child labour; promotion of the application of various international instruments such as the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the ILO Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138) as well as the preparation of the proposed new international instruments against the most intolerable forms of child labour; and mobilizing national action and international support for the implementation of time-bound programmes against child labour.

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## 5. Programme development and evaluation

137. In 1998-99 ILO-IPEC programme development will focus on the more promising and strategic types of interventions, based on lessons learned from the previous biennia. Experimentation and innovation will remain important, in particular in countries that have just joined the programme or for new forms of child labour about which the experience is still limited.

138. As the Programme has been operational for several years in the first 11 participating countries and many more countries wish to address their child labour problems, performance and impact assessments of IPEC programmes and interventions have become more and more important. This was reiterated during the IPEC Steering Committee meeting in November 1996. In response, IPEC set in motion different types of evaluations. First of all, seven country reviews are currently being implemented to assess the progress made by countries in combating child labour. The studies look at the impact of action against child labour, including overall ILO-IPEC support to these countries, measured by the extent of changes in social attitudes, the reform of public or corporate policies, the impact of programmes for the prevention of child labour and the withdrawal of children from hazardous or exploitative work and the building of social alliances among all actors. These reviews are country-owned and are currently being finalized by independent national research and evaluation teams in Indonesia, the Philippines and Thailand in Asia, Kenya and the United Republic of Tanzania in Africa, Brazil in Latin America and Turkey in Europe. The lessons drawn from these evaluations will facilitate further in-country policy and programme development and form the basis for the development of a 'best practice' guide for policy makers for use by national authorities, employers' and workers' organizations, other NGOs and partners in early 1998. In addition, a country programme evaluation and programme development mission have been carried out in India, resulting in a consolidated programme for the next biennium. Thematic evaluations on key interventions had been planned for in 1996-97. However, due to the increasing demand for IPEC services and support in the field of programme development, the large portfolio of ongoing programmes and the need to provide inputs to a large number of meetings and conferences, these evaluations had to be postponed, except for a review of pre-vocational training of IPEC-supported programmes in five Asian countries, scheduled for completion by the end of 1997.

139. In the interest of increasing the sustainability of action programmes, monitoring and impact assessments will become an integral part in all action programmes, as well as in the country programmes as a whole in the next biennium. In the future, IPEC will also strengthen institutional capacity in participating countries in undertaking independent evaluations in addition to the internal evaluation systems, currently in place.

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## 6. Management coordination

### IPEC within the ILO structure

140. The ILO network of Regional and Area Offices (ROs and AOs) continues to be heavily involved in IPEC. They promote the policy dialogues with national authorities and provide financial and administrative guidance. In addition, the Multi-Disciplinary Teams (MDTs) which are the main technical resources of the ILO field structure have become increasingly mobilized. Work on child labour is becoming an integral part of the work programmes of the ILO ROs, AOs and MDTs; for example child labour figures prominently in the ILO work programmes in several countries based on the Country Objectives formulated in the context of the ILO Active Partnership Policy. Further practical arrangements to this effect have been set in motion, a trend which will continue in 1998-1999.

141. IPEC continues to function under the auspices of the ILO's Working Conditions and Environment Department. Within the framework of the preparation for major new labour standards on child labour during the International Labour Conferences in 1998-99 this Department prepared a major report on child labour 'Child Labour: Targeting the intolerable' in 1996 explaining what is being done and can be done against it as well as a questionnaire on the proposed new standards for member States. Other headquarters' departments directly involved with child labour include the International Labour Standards Department, the Bureau of Statistics, the Bureau of Public Information, the Bureaux of Employers' and Workers' Activities, the Employment and Training Department, the Social Security Department, the Bureau of Programming and Management, the Finance Department and the Personnel Department.

### Streamlining procedures and decentralization

142. It was evident from the start that an innovative and unique programme as IPEC would pose a number of challenges to existing ILO structures and procedures. The characteristics required for the effective implementation of the Programme, such as flexibility, fast trouble-shooting and problem-solving, grass-root activities, risk-taking and experimenting call for continuous adjustments and fine-tuning within the existing procedures. The measures announced in the IPEC Programme and Budget for 1996-97 to simplify financial and administrative procedures, to decentralize responsibility to the field and to adhere to regular technical cooperation procedures in terms of programming resources have yielded good results.

143. During 1996, a review took place of the mini programme modality by IPEC field and headquarters staff. Mini programmes are small programmes (maximum of US\$3,000) aimed at enabling partner organizations to carry out preparatory activities (surveys, training or meetings) for potential future programmes, awareness-raising activities, and evaluations and audits of IPEC action programmes. The usefulness of this modality was widely acknowledged. Mini programmes enable field staff and partners to respond quickly and flexibly to sudden opportunities and occasions, such as publicity on high-level government statements. The detailed study, including guidelines to use this modality more effectively has been disseminated to the field.

144. Further streamlining of financial and administrative procedures is envisaged during this biennium, for example by extending the financial reporting obligations from three to six months for implementing agencies which have demonstrated that they can comply with the ILO reporting requirements without difficulty.

### IPEC Communication Strategy

145. The role of public relations in promoting ILO-IPEC concerns cannot be underestimated. This is an area where IPEC SRCs and NPCs, ROs, AOs and MDTs have an important role to play. The ILO Bureau of Public Information assists in preparing materials on subjects of interest to local, regional or international audiences and to advise on the most appropriate media channels. It is important to remember the value of sound public relations and communications not only in generating public, political and financial support for the programme by

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making 'lessons learned' known to our partners, but also in the day-to-day functioning of the often delicate and complex partnerships inherent in most IPEC field operations. It should be impressed upon the general public that child labour can and must be solved through joint efforts by the public sector and civil society. Building on studies carried out in 1997, ILO-IPEC will further develop public relations materials for national and international audiences, and pursue a broad based communication strategy.

#### Resource mobilization

146. IPEC has received major contributions from Germany, Spain and an increasing number of other donors have made generous contributions or committed themselves to do so. Resource mobilization so far has been very much a concern of Headquarters, though increasingly, resources have been generated in the field. There is considerable scope for further resource mobilization at country level and field offices can do much to generate resources. Recently, the IPEC country programme for Senegal will be approved by the Dutch Embassy under new decentralization arrangements. A large programme in Pakistan was negotiated with the European Commission in the field and in Brussels. In addition, to seeking direct funding for IPEC programmes, co-funding by several donors and/or resource mobilization for activities directly related to or flanking IPEC programmes should be encouraged.

## 1. IPEC's key characteristics

1. This chapter presents an overview of the main characteristics of the ILO-IPEC strategy on child labour which are considered vital for long-term and sustainable impact on the elimination of child labour in participating countries.

### 1.1 In-country ownership: A process for sustainable action and the mainstreaming of effective interventions

2. ILO-IPEC is geared towards finding national and local solutions which respond to socio-economic realities and needs in the countries concerned. Therefore, particularly at the start of ILO-IPEC within a country, partner organizations are stimulated to develop and implement innovative and experimental initiatives, which may vary from one country to another. Based upon the experience gained through such initiatives, the Programme promotes a systematic, phased and multi-sectoral strategy which runs as a red thread through all programmes at the country, regional and international level. At the start of an ILO-IPEC country programme the process is as follows:

- a) in new partner countries or when addressing 'new' child labour situations, varied, numerous, often small-scale activities are undertaken in a number of programme areas to achieve a *broad mobilization* of partner organizations, and to identify what will work and what does not in countries that are very different in terms of socio-economic development and culture. This is called the '100 flowers bloom approach';
- b) thereafter, the Programme moves from a broad multi-pronged experimental approach to *strategic action* geared to the development and implementation of a national policy and programme of action on child labour in the partner countries and to the mainstreaming of child labour concerns into the policies, programmes and budgets of partner organizations.

3. The necessity of going through this process is not easy to implement, nor is it always understood. There is sometimes a tendency to criticize the wide array of programmes and partners supported during the initial stages of ILO-IPEC work in any given country. The '100 flowers bloom approach' has undoubtedly proved its worth when starting action against child labour in a country. Many new countries choose to start addressing child labour precisely by implementing multiple, diverse, small-scale programmes targeting different groups of working children with a wide array of partners. This is for several reasons. Firstly, child labour is often a sensitive subject and widely conflicting views exist on whether it should be eliminated, or tolerated because it is considered to be part and parcel of the life of those in poverty. Broad, intensive, tailor-made and sustained awareness-raising on child labour exploitation is needed among many population groups so that they become committed to its elimination. Secondly, while some organizations in the public and private sector may be familiar with tackling child labour problems, little experience of the subject normally exists. Training is required but more importantly, organizations build this experience through a process of 'learning by doing'. Last but not least, many micro interventions with specific target groups have been proved to have a powerful demonstration effect. In addition, right from the start of a country programme, ILO-IPEC will continue to stress and support the strengthening of institutional capacity because the wide range of key partner organizations needs to be motivated and capacitated to take action. More importantly, it is essential to build a relation of trust between partner organizations and ILO-IPEC and among the partner organizations themselves. This is crucial to mobilize sustainable action against child labour.

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4. In moving to the second, more strategic phase of the campaign, ILO-IPEC is faced with a variety of situations in the participating countries. A few countries already had a policy and accompanying plan of action against child labour before they joined the Programme. In those countries, ILO-IPEC is one among many actors providing assistance in tackling the problem, and ILO-IPEC's aim then is to support specific initiatives, based upon the countries' needs and requests. In other countries national policies and plans of action have been or are being developed with ILO-IPEC assistance. Some countries wish to develop such policy instruments right at the start. In other countries they are developed gradually and are adopted at a later stage when the country has gained more know-how in tackling its child labour problems.

5. Experience over the past five years demonstrates that it is relatively easy to achieve the initial task of formulating a national policy and a programme of action. However, the next and more difficult step is to ensure that good intentions are transformed into practice. Experience in some countries shows that a declared and published policy and plan of action do not lead automatically to a full understanding by all the parties involved of the processes and the commitment required to achieve the long-term goal of eliminating abusive child labour. Neither does it automatically lead to the essential steps of gradual reform and the mainstreaming of child labour issues into national economic and social development programmes and budgets.

6. While the process of setting in motion strategic action against child labour is not always easy and the progress depends on the motivation, determination and initiative that exists in a country, overall the chances to pursue it are good. Policy support to address child labour concerns is forthcoming in the ILO-IPEC participating countries and is growing in many other countries which in turn wish to become part of the Programme. Several of the ILO-IPEC countries are beginning to mainstream child labour concerns into their programmes and budgets in key areas, such as providing relevant education to groups of children at risk of entering into hazardous or exploitative work, addressing the child labour problem through poverty alleviation programmes, coordinating action by public and private sector organizations. Responsibility is also being decentralized - with corresponding resource allocation to implement measures against child labour - from the national to the provincial, district and local levels; many of the more effective ILO-IPEC programmes are carried out at the decentralized level. In all these instances the responsibility for the programme increasingly lies with the countries themselves. ILO-IPEC only facilitates the process, while ensuring that ILO-IPEC-supported initiatives in these countries fit into the overall national policy and plan of action against child labour and that effective coordination mechanisms exist to implement it.

## **1.2 Emphasis on prevention and the abolition of the most intolerable forms of child labour**

7. Investment in the *prevention* of child labour is the most economical method in the long run. The elimination of even the most intolerable forms of child labour requires resources far beyond those available to ILO-IPEC and its partner organizations because the withdrawal of children from hazardous and exploitative work, the corresponding rehabilitation programmes and the integration of these children and their parents from low-income and otherwise vulnerable populations groups (in terms of caste, gender and ethnic origin) into the 'mainstream' of society are extremely costly. It cannot be stressed enough that ILO-IPEC's goal is not the removal per se of individual children (even in large numbers) from work situations. This would be a relatively easy task providing that sufficient funding were available, but sustainable and long-term results in the combat against child labour will be achieved only when new generations of children are effectively prevented from entering the labour market

8. Prevention, therefore, remains a key component in virtually all programmes. Firstly, extensive awareness-raising takes place among those directly concerned with child labour and in society at large. Secondly, children, parents, employers, adult workers, their support agencies and government administrations are explicitly targeted not only through programmes tailor-made for them but in all programmes, so that children withdrawn from work are not replaced by other children. In these programmes

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a step-by-step approach is being followed, where the provision of information on the risks of premature work for children is followed by increasing the social responsibility of all parties that have the potential to stem child labour. Thirdly, direct action programmes focus not only on individual children but involve the whole family, thereby ensuring that the younger children do not enter premature work in the first place, and that both the situation of boys engaged in visible, hazardous and exploitative labour and that of girls involved in equally abusive but invisible work are addressed simultaneously. Finally, preventive programmes can be successful only if the population groups at risk are provided with viable alternatives and options: affordable education of a decent standard and employable skills training for the children; provision of quality employment for young people ready to enter the job market and for adults responsible for raising children; and provision of social protection for parents not able to engage in productive employment.

9. From the beginning, ILO-IPEC and its partner organizations realized that it would be impossible to bring an end to all child labour immediately. Therefore, the Programme has concentrated on the *abolition of the most intolerable forms of child labour*. While progress has been made, in particular, by recognizing and addressing areas such as child prostitution and trafficking and hazardous and exploitative child labour in manufacturing industries, in domestic service and in agriculture. Much more needs to be done in combating other forms of abusive child labour - in particular, child bondage. The slow pace of progress in these areas is due to a number of factors. Firstly, experience has shown that there is often strong resistance to the immediate initiation of programmes against the most intolerable forms of child labour, because of political and social sensitivity and economic interests. The very existence of these types of child labour is denied and very few partners come forward who can effectively address these problems. In such cases, the strategy has often been to start tackling child labour problems which partners are ready to address, and slowly build up awareness and trust before working together on more intolerable and hidden problems.

10. Many of the work situations in which children are severely exploited are illegal in nature, for example, child prostitution, bondage and trafficking. Such child exploitation is profitable and there are powerful mechanisms which exist to continue the status quo. A further problematic area is the identification of the youngest children. It is relatively easy to add a couple of years to the actual age of a child, and the real age of children is often not known due to the absence of birth records or any other form of registration. Additional problems exist in tackling the problem of working girls. Their work is hidden from view and often considered to be socially acceptable and related to the overall low status of women in many societies.

### **1.3 Work with a broad alliance of partners towards integrated action**

11. Broad-based in-country ownership is assured, first of all, by the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between a Government and the ILO whereby the Government commits itself to address child labour in cooperation and consultation with employers' organizations, workers' organizations, NGOs and other relevant parties in society such as the media and universities. The institutional mechanism provided for in the MOU is the National Steering Committee (NSC) chaired by the Ministry of Labour and consisting of representatives of other key ministries such as education, welfare, justice, health and the agency responsible for development assistance, of employers' and workers' organizations and of NGOs with expertise in tackling child labour or advocating children's rights. In all countries the NSC is responsible for guiding the ILO-IPEC country programme at the policy and programme level. Given that the combat against child labour has become a national priority, several countries have either enlarged the responsibility of the NSC to cover all child labour activities within the country or have set up a complementary body to ensure coordination.

12. Strong cooperation among the various members of the ILO-IPEC National Steering Committees and ILO-IPEC implementing agencies is essential for devising a strategic and cohesive set of interventions. Some of the vital partners in a national effort to eliminate child labour are not traditional ILO partners and

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include, for example, ministries of education, home affairs, youth and women, NGOs, religious organizations, the police or the judiciary. In addition, new forms of cooperation are being forged among the ILO's traditional social partners, other key ministries and private sector organizations, and between central and decentralized administrations. In a climate of high political sensitivity surrounding the issue of child labour, national and international partnerships and interventions sometimes lead to conflict and confrontation. As broad social alliances are crucial for the successful elimination of child labour, close interaction in national fora, planning exercises, immersion activities, and other shared experiences have stimulated interest and fostered partnerships and commitment to the ultimate goal. ILO-IPEC support consists of injecting ideas, facilitating action, collecting information, initiating and disseminating research results, developing methodologies, and creating fora for discussion. However, the set of interventions and the process of intervention have to be devised and implemented by the national partners themselves.