

ILO/Japan Asian Regional Meeting on
Monitoring Child Labour at the Workplace
Dhaka, Bangladesh, 24-26 October 2000

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Foreword

The ILO/Japan Asian Regional Meeting on Monitoring Child Labour at the Workplace provided an opportunity for 16 countries in the Region to share their knowledge and experience of monitoring child labour with a view to developing monitoring expertise where it can be most effective.

A region stricken by widespread poverty, Asia cannot eradicate child labour overnight. In any event the countries that sent their experts to Dhaka are committed to putting an immediate end to the most extreme forms of abuse as targeted by the ILO's Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182).

The informal sector, where most child labour takes place, presents particular difficulties for monitoring because most of its workers are hidden from view and therefore beyond the reach of existing legislation and protection machinery.

For monitoring programmes to succeed under such circumstances, they must have the support of all stakeholders, among them community leaders, NGOs and the ILO's tripartite constituents. As the Meeting demonstrated, when those stakeholders pool their energy and resources as in Bangladesh's garment industry, the results can be dazzling.

Of course, monitoring alone will not solve the problems of child labour. Children and their families need alternatives that only education, training and micro-credit schemes can offer.

Like the Dhaka meeting itself, this record of the proceedings will, I hope, advance our thinking, stimulate discussion and strengthen the efforts of governments, employers and workers in our Region to eliminate child labour.

Yasuyuki Nodera
ILO Regional Director (Asia and the Pacific)

**Report of the ILO-Japan Asian Regional Meeting
on Monitoring Child Labour at the Workplace
(Dhaka, 24-26 October 2000)**

1. The ILO-Japan Asian Regional Meeting on Monitoring Child Labour at the Workplace was held in Dhaka, Bangladesh from 24 to 26 October 2000.

2. The Regional Meeting was attended by 50 participants from 16 countries. They included 18 Government representatives from various ministries as well as 18 Employers' representatives and 14 Workers' representatives. Also present were one observer and nine ILO officials.

3. The Regional Meeting comprised seven technical sessions as well as discussions by tripartite working groups and presentations of country papers and country plans of action.

Opening session

4. Opening the meeting, Mr. M.A. Mannan, Minister for Labour and Employment of the Government of Bangladesh, said that child labour was a highly sensitive issue for a region with the highest concentration of the world's poorest people and which employed over 60 per cent of the world's nearly 250 million child labourers between 5 and 14 years of age, with many of them engaged in intolerable forms of work.

5. Although child labour might seem to be the result of poverty, this should not be used to explain all types of child employment because culturally derived attitudes and values also played a part.

6. Bangladesh was one of the poorest and most densely populated countries in the world. According to official statistics, the present size of the labour force was about 56 million. Out of the 31 million children aged 5-11, an estimated 6.3 million were working children.

7. Child labour existed in almost all sectors of the economy. However, the Government was making all possible efforts to tackle the problem in a pragmatic and socially responsible way.

8. At the national and local level, the Government encouraged all agencies concerned, including employers' and workers' organizations, non-governmental organizations, the media and local communities, to cooperate in the fight against the exploitation of children. Attention was drawn to the need to raise awareness regarding the gravity of the problem.

9. Bangladesh supported all the core areas for cooperation among South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation states, and the protection of children was one. In 1996 the Rawalpindi Resolution was adopted with the aim of eliminating child labour by 2010, and intolerable forms of child labour by 2000.

10. The Minister underscored multidimensional efforts to resolve the problem of child labour over time and said it could be handled more effectively if the international community, especially international organizations, extended their active support and cooperation to governments.

11. Mr. Frans Roselaers, Director of the InFocus Programme on Child Labour, ILO Geneva, said that the regional meeting was designed to allow countries to benefit from common experiences in order to deal effectively with child labour. He praised the commitment of national governments to fighting the problem.

12. He added that the International Programme for the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) now involved a global alliance of over 100 countries, with a total of 25 donor countries.

13. Monitoring and inspection of child labour at the workplace was very important for combating child labour, and he recognized the contributions made in this regard by the countries of South Asia. He called for sensible, sustainable solutions for the children as well as their families, and for the help of the ILO, other UN organizations, governments, employers, workers and civil society to achieve this. Emphasizing that children's futures should not be destroyed forcing them to work, he said that the problem of child labour in the Asian region could be overcome if international organizations extended meaningful cooperation.

14. Ms. Mitsuko Horiuchi, ILO Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific, cited the Preamble to the ILO's Constitution, referring to the protection of children and young persons. She said that the ILO, as one of the oldest organizations in the UN had pursued these aims since 1919. She noted and paid tribute to the ILO's tripartite partners for their tireless efforts to end the social evil of child labour.

15. In developing countries alone, 250 million children aged between 5 and 14 years old were now working. More than 60 per cent of those children (153 million) lived in Asia.

16. Effective monitoring at the workplace was essential because it would show where and how children were working. It would show how well programmes and interventions were functioning and would serve as an active deterrent.

17. Monitoring efforts required linkage to other key elements. There was also a need for education and supervision of school attendance. Vocational training was also important, especially for older children. Families needed alternative sources of income so that their children could go to school.

18. Child labour and poverty were intertwined. Poverty produced child labour, and child labour led to poverty. To break the cycle, there was a need for economic empowerment and a change in established attitudes and practices. It was also necessary to convince parents - who may once have been child labourers themselves - that education was important.

19. The ILO Regional Director emphasized the need for awareness campaigns to reach parents who might feel that their children did not need to learn to read or write.

20. Monitoring has to be consistent, thorough, carefully planned and diligently carried out. It must be supported by everyone: governments, employers, workers, parents, NGOs and the wider community.

21. As an example of success, she cited a 1994 undertaking by the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), the ILO and UNICEF. In 1995, child labour at BGMEA factories stood at around 40 per cent. By the middle of 2000, it was less than 5 per cent. A continuous programme of unannounced visits to check workplaces and school attendance was a key factor in this reduction. So was the role of the BGMEA, which had convinced most of its members to cooperate and take part in monitoring.

22. The monitors aimed to win confidence. They verified compliance, and then focused on advising manufacturers on how to reach their goals, while outlining the benefits of the programme.

23. The success of the work had attracted international attention and had helped shape efforts in other countries. In Sialkot, Pakistan, efforts to end the use of child labour in the soccer ball manufacturing industry had been modelled on the work done in Bangladesh. Other ILO work in the region - targeting child labour in the fishing and footwear industries in Thailand, Indonesia and the Philippines - had also drawn on the lessons learnt in Bangladesh.

24. But Bangladesh had not become complacent. ILO-IPEC had launched a new project in October 2000: Preventing and Eliminating the Worst Forms of Child Labour in Selected Formal and Informal Sectors. This had received funding of US\$6 million from the US Department of Labour.

25. Most of the hazardous forms of child labour were in the informal sector. The new project targeted children working in hazardous occupations and under the most intolerable conditions in both the formal and informal sectors. These children worked in the *beedi* (handmade cigarettes) industry, construction, leather tanneries, match factories and in domestic service. The project aimed to remove 30,000 children from hazardous work, to keep 15,000 younger siblings out of the labour market, and to help 15,000 adult family members improve their income.

26. Taken together, the informal and agricultural sectors accounted for the vast majority of child labour. These children were very often the most at risk but also the hardest to reach as they could be isolated or even hidden. A workplace and community monitoring system would play a key part in the project's operation.

27. In the Philippines, IPEC was supporting the Visayan Forum NGO in reaching out to child domestic workers. It helped them leave abusive working conditions, reunited them with their families, took care of their basic needs and helped them support one another. In India, a state-level, community-based approach was also being used to target the informal sector.

28. The Regional Director urged participants to speed up ratification of the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182). The Convention would come into force in November 2000. Ratification sent out a clear message that the worst forms of child labour were intolerable.

29. Mr. Sirajul Islam, Secretary of the Ministry of Labour and Employment, said that the Government of Bangladesh considered child labour a priority and had taken initiatives to ratify Convention 182. He expressed the hope that this would be done by the end of the year. Prior to ratification the Government needed recommendations from employers and workers.

30. Acknowledging that child labour was a complex socio-economic problem, he traced it to mass poverty, rapid population growth, natural hazards, a lack of access to primary education and a lack of awareness.

31. He listed four categories of child labour: work in hazardous situations, night work, domestic work and child prostitution. Special attention had to be paid to children working during the night, in private households and in prostitution.

32. The elimination of child labour in the garment sector in Bangladesh was a model for other countries.

33. Mr. Kenji Tsunekawa, Director of the International Labour Affairs Division, Ministry of Labour, Government of Japan, drew the attention of participants to the IPEC programme that had begun under a decade ago with support from donors and cooperation from European countries. There were many useful lessons from the examples of the countries where it was in operation.

34. Education was the primary factor in the elimination of child labour. Poverty alleviation and community and local support were also important. To be successful a programme to eliminate child labour needed initiatives from international organizations and national governments, as well as cooperation from non-governmental organizations.

Technical sessions

The Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182)

35. Ms. Horiuchi chaired the first technical session, during which ILO experts (Mr. Frans Roselaers and Mr. Wahidur Rahman) detailed recent developments centering on Convention 182 and on the state of child labour in the region.

36. Mr. Roselaers underlined the need for multiple approaches to the elimination of child labour on the grounds that it was a complex problem, intricately related to a host of social and economic factors, including poverty and under-development. He maintained that certain forms of child labour should not be tolerated by any society.

37. He mentioned the need for a legal framework to set a boundary beyond which children should not be allowed to work under any circumstances; an efficient tool to monitor all formal and non-formal workplaces to make sure that children were not involved in work beyond the limits set by the legal framework and that they were not involved in the worst forms of child labour; and a set of intervention strategies to address the causes of the problem and identify the factors that would contribute to its ultimate elimination.

38. An estimated 60 million or more children were engaged in the worst forms of child labour worldwide and Convention 182 had set a standard applicable to all persons under 18. The instrument was designed to guide all governments to take immediate measures to ban such practices as child slave labour and bondage, the exploitation of children in prostitution or pornography and their use in armed conflicts, in the production and trafficking of drugs and in all forms of hazardous work.

39. Convention 182 called for the enactment and enforcement of laws and for monitoring and reporting on progress made. In addition, the Convention provided a framework for global action and called for international cooperation and assistance.

40. An efficient system of workplace monitoring was crucial: legal instruments alone were not enough; their implementation needed detailed information about children working at different workplaces under various conditions.

41. The active cooperation of governments, employers, workers, NGOs and civil society in general would greatly assist the workplace monitoring. Governmental labour inspection systems remained confined to the formal sector and could not protect working children in the informal sector, where they remained vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. The time had come to extend labour inspection to the informal sector and to involve employers, workers, NGOs and other elements of civil society in a specially designed workplace monitoring system.

42. Convention 182 had been ratified by an unprecedented 38 countries and an additional 30 countries had ratified the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138) since the beginning of 1999. Several dozen other countries were well advanced in parliamentary procedures leading up to the ratification of either or both Conventions and universal ratification could be achieved within the near future.

43. Listing the strong support that the ILO had received from other UN agencies, especially UNICEF, which was collaborating with the ILO in the worldwide ratification campaign, he said that many more countries had requested the ILO's assistance with the practical application of the above Conventions. Some 70 developing countries were now working with IPEC to deal with the child labour problem. IPEC's experience over the past eight years showed that the problem could be effectively reduced, or even eliminated.

44. Previous successes in getting child workers out of factories or workshops and into schools, with accompanying measures to improve employment and income for parents and to prevent siblings from ending up in child labour, showed that results can only be achieved by forging broad-based partnerships and by ensuring national ownership of programs.

45. He appealed to the region's member-states and to other agencies in the UN system, as well as the Bretton Woods Organizations, to support new ILO programmes and approaches.

46. Mr. Jose M. Espanol, Jr. (Philippines) announced that the President of the Philippines had ratified Convention 182 in May, and on that on 16 October, the Senate, the body authorized to ratify treaties and conventions, had passed unanimously a resolution concurring with the ratification.

47. Ms. Tsedev Unurtsetseg (Mongolia) told the meeting that the Mongolian Parliament had ratified Convention 182 on 7 October. The Convention was then submitted to the President.

48. Ms. Hong Nguyen Thi Dieu (Viet Nam) said that all relevant organizations were already working on ratification and that ministries would soon submit their recommendations to the Government. She expressed the hope that the Convention would be ratified by the end of that year or by the beginning of the next.

49. Ms. Horiuchi said the ILO would open its Viet Nam office by the beginning of next year. She expressed the hope that with the ratification of C182 there would be good scope to work there.

50. Mr. Sita Ram Uprety (Nepal) announced that the Convention had been before the Nepali Parliament since before the last summer session, but due to a heavy schedule and unavoidable delays it had not been ratified. The Nepali Parliament was expected to ratify the Convention some time in March, during its winter session.

51. Mr. Anil Kapoor (India) said that the Convention had been discussed by the Standing Labour Committee in the Ministry of Labour and then in the Indian Labour Conference. He said they were hopeful of being able to place it before Parliament by the end of the year.

52. Mr. Roslee Sabaruddin Abu (Malaysia) said his Government had made recommendations related to the worst forms of child labour on 13 September.

53. Ms. Horiuchi said that Asia's progress on ratification was an encouraging sign from the region.

General overview of child labour in Asia

54. Mr. Wahidur Rahman said that, according to ILO estimates, 22 per cent of the children in Asia aged between 5 and 14 years (150 million out of a world total of 250 million) were in economic activity. This was proportionately the highest number in the world.

55. Referring to country-level data available for 12 countries, he said the numbers of working children were 0.62 million in Cambodia, 2.15 million in Indonesia, 5,200 in Mongolia, 3.7 million in the Philippines, 2.2 million in Thailand, 2.8 million in Viet Nam, 6.3 million in Bangladesh, 11.28 million in India, 1.7 million in Nepal, 3.3 million in Pakistan and 230,000 in Sri Lanka. No data were available for Afghanistan, Bhutan, China, Fiji, Iran, Korea, Malaysia or Myanmar.

56. The ILO representative, however, pointed out that the available data were not comparable across countries as there were differing standards for what constituted child labour, age-brackets ranging from 5-14 years to 13-19 years.

57. He said that in most cases data were based on conservative estimates and according to NGO estimates the number of child labourers in the 12 countries was more than 76 million.

58. In Asia, children were engaged in many occupations of which 64 were categorized as hazardous. The ILO representative described the plight of young girls engaged in prostitution and children involved in military activity, the production and trafficking of drugs, deep-sea fishing, polishing gems and cutting diamonds (which caused terrible sickness and blindness), work in metal workshops, bonded labour, working with potentially fatal flames, crushing stones (and, often, their own limbs), and hazardous construction work.

59. Many other forms of child labour in Asia included: the production of fire crackers, *beedi* cigarettes, carpets, glass bangles, locks and matches; slate mining and manufacturing; other mining and quarrying; tanning and leather processing; and labour in the brassware industry and electroplating workshops.

60. He said it was true that most countries in Asia were underdeveloped and had a high prevalence of poverty, which was one of the causes of child labour. But this should not be an excuse to allow children to take part in extremely abusive and hazardous work that harmed them physically, socially, mentally and morally. In addition, since poverty was not the sole cause of child labour in Asia, much more than poverty alleviation was needed.

61. Referring to the ILO-IPEC experience in Asia over the past nine years, he said that there was clear evidence of a need for workplace monitoring alongside such strategies as the withdrawal of children from work; the rehabilitation, education and skills training; and addressing poverty at the family level.

62. In Asia, child labour was not at all monitored in the informal sector, where the majority of abusive and hazardous forms of child labour existed, and there was a need for monitoring child labour at the workplace in both the formal and informal sectors. Without simultaneous monitoring, there was a danger that abusive practices in the formal sector would simply shift to the informal sector.

63. There was a valid argument that child labour was a monumental problem, that governments did not have sufficient resources to address this problem overnight and that, therefore, immediate attention should be paid to the worst forms of child labour. Without monitoring, though, it was impossible to identify where the greatest hazards lay.

64. The ILO was experimenting with different strategies. It had started with small projects addressing 500 families (or 2000 children) but was now implementing larger programmes. In Bangladesh, there would be two special projects to address the problems of some 50,000 children over the next three years.

65. An additional reason for monitoring came from the experience of the BGMEA factories. The BGMEA had initially identified 10,000 children and withdrawn them from work. But during the last four to five years, the ILO further identified another 27,000 children, demonstrating that after the first 10,000 cases had been identified and withdrawn, employers were enlisting more children.

66. Monitoring would discourage the employment of children for fear of punishment and/or social stigma. Monitoring would also alert employers to abuses faced by their child employees. In a worst case scenario, if the ILO, the World Bank and concerned governments did not have enough resources to eliminate the worst forms of labour in both the formal and the informal sector, monitoring would at least reduce levels of abuse.

67. Monitoring would also help countries keep an eye on overall trends in child labour: whether the problem was increasing or decreasing or moving from rural to urban areas or the formal to the informal sector and vice versa. Monitoring was necessary for strategic planning.

68. Ms. Horiuchi recognized the difficulty of getting figures for the actual number of children engaged in child labour because most of the worst forms were hidden, in both the formal and informal sectors.

69. Regarding non-economic causes of child labour, Mr. Rahman reported that the Dholai Khal region of Bangladesh had been found to have thousands of workshops in 1995 among them 20,000 children targeted by the ILO. Parents had said they were sending children to work with lead and grinding machines and to electroplating, brassware and other kinds of workshops that could better be termed prison cells.

70. Most of the parents had asked what they would get in the long run if they sent their children to school for five years, and whether their children would find employment after that. It was clear the parents did not understand the value of education. It was also a serious problem in some countries that education had not paid off.

71. Parents believed that if they sent their children to workshops for three years they would become skilled workers. After three years a boy would get a good salary (5,000-10,000 taka per month). Their children might even become shop owners.

72. Government statistics from another, unnamed country showed that around 90 per cent of children were enrolling for primary education. However, according to World Bank statistics, 45 per cent of them dropped out before finishing grade five. Therefore, 50-55 per cent of children were out of schools and became child labourers.

73. The ILO expert expressly left out the names of some countries to avoid giving the impression of apportioning blame and in the interests of dialogue.

74. The ILO and UNICEF were seeking an acceptable definition of child labour. The number of child labourers in India had been placed at 11 million; but NGOs put the figure at between 44 million and 100 million depending on the definition used. In Bangladesh, the number of child labourers was put at 6.3 million. However, in that study children who worked but also attended school were not counted. Furthermore, each country had its own definition of child labour, and there were wide variations among definitions. In one country the age bracket of 13-19 was used.

75. If there was a clear definition of child labour, some kinds of work that did not affect childhood development and were not considered hazardous might be excluded. Two to three hours of work a day, combined with school attendance, was perhaps acceptable in the absence of welfare services in a given country.

76. Concerning child labour in agriculture and other informal sectors, the ILO had some figures for some countries, but there was no figure for the whole of Asia. In many countries there were no data. It was incumbent upon individual countries to obtain these figures rather than on the ILO, which could only give technical assistance.

77. Ms. Horiuchi said that there were no easy answers. Convention 182 did not ask countries to eradicate child labour immediately, but asked them to take immediate action to eradicate it gradually. The Declaration adopted at the ILO's International Labour Conference in 1998 urged the ILO to provide technical assistance in doing this.

78. The ILO was also engaged in awareness raising and used photos and videos for the purpose, but it was difficult to show just how the problem was.

79. The ILO did have a loose definition of child labour, but it was not universal and not wholly clear. It was up to the participants to decide whether or not to use data based on such a definition.

Country papers

80. The presentation of country papers was chaired by Ms. Ying Chen (China).

Bangladesh

81. Mr. Latifur Rahman (Bangladesh) explained that there was no definite age limit to define child labour in Bangladesh. He cited nine laws related to different sectors that set different minimum ages for admission to work. The minimum age set by the laws varied from 12 years under the Shops and Establishments Act, 1965 to 18 years under the Road Transport Workers Ordinance, 1961. However, a labour code drafted by the Government had prescribed a uniform minimum age of 14 years. The code was under review by a high level committee.

82. A total of 102 inspectors from the Department of Inspection of Factories and Establishments, under the Ministry of Labour and Employment, were entrusted with the responsibility to inspect more than 180,000 factories and establishments. The inspectors (general, medical and engineering) had the power to institute criminal cases against violators of the law in the formal sector. The laws, however, did not have enough teeth and the penalties prescribed (fines of US\$5-10) were inadequate deterrents. The process of prosecution was also very time consuming and it was difficult to punish offenders.

83. The informal sector, where 96 per cent of the approximately 6.3 million child labourers were engaged, was not covered by the law. Child workers in the sector thus remained outside the labour inspection system and without any protection. He stressed the need for the enactment of new laws to take care of this inadequacy.

84. The Compulsory Primary Education Act fined parents US\$4 for failing to send children to schools. In addition, there was a mass education programme aimed at freeing urban working children from the limitations of illiteracy. A tripartite consultative council headed by the Minister for Labour and Employment was looking after the child

labour issue. A national consensus had already been reached to ratify Convention 182, and it was now in the process of being ratified.

85. He observed that children in Bangladesh were working because of poverty. In recent years the extent of child labour had decreased because of the successful implementation of the child labour elimination programme in the garment industry. Measures to prohibit child labour might worsen the situation unless the poverty issue was also taken care of.

Cambodia

86. Mr. Ravuth Ouk (Cambodia) told the meeting that in Cambodia child labour was found more in rural areas than in urban areas. A vast majority of labourers were either unpaid family workers or own-account workers. Three per cent of child workers between 10-13 years of age were wage employees, as were 9 per cent of child workers between 14-17 years of age.

87. He said that 86 per cent of working children aged 14-17 years and 92 per cent of those aged 10-13 years worked in agriculture, forestry or fishing. Trade and manufacturing together accounted for another 7-11 per cent of child workers in the country.

88. Quoting from the findings of a 1999 nationally representative household survey, he said that the incidence of child labour had fallen between 1997 and 1999 only among children aged 10-13 years. There was virtually no change in the incidence of child labour among those aged 14-17 years.

89. The Cambodian Constitution provided that the state should protect the rights of children as stipulated in UNICEF's Convention on the Rights of the Child; in particular, the right to life, education, protection during wartime and protection from economic and sexual exploitation.

90. A new labour code set the minimum age for admission to employment at 15 years of age. It stipulated that children aged 12-15 could be engaged in light work provided it was not hazardous to their health and psychological development and did not affect their school attendance or participation in vocational training programmes.

91. Labour legislation provided for the inspection of establishments to ensure adherence to legislative provisions regarding health, working conditions and safety.

92. The absence of a clear definition of light work, an imperfect understanding of labour law among employers in general and a shortage of labour inspectors to carry out regular inspection in certain small-scale industries, however, limited the impact of legislation.

93. A Child Labour Unit, together with relevant departments of the Ministry of Social Affairs, Labour, Vocational Training and Youth Rehabilitation, was working with technical support from the ILO and IPEC on the development of new labour inspection forms to ensure the effectiveness of child labour inspection in the informal sector.

94. A computer database on child labour based on reports of labour inspections had been established to monitor the child labour situation in some specific industries. In the first ten months of the year 2000, 840 inspections had been made in garment factories and 14 in brick-making factories, hotels and other establishments.

95. The Cambodian Government, through the national steering committee on child labour, had collaborated with NGOs, workers' associations and community groups in developing and implementing national programmes to address child labour in rural areas. However, there was a need to strengthen the capacity of labour inspectors and social workers; to establish child labour networks; to raise awareness among families, employers and working children about the labour law; and to enact additional laws to improve the existing mechanism of inspection.

China

96. Mr. Mohui Jiang (China) recalled that his country had ratified Convention 138 in December 1998, and declared that the minimum age for admission to employment was 16 years, one year higher than the Convention's prescribed standard. China was now working hard to ratify Convention 182.

97. The Labour Law, 1995 and the Regulations on Labour Inspection, 1993 provided for child labour monitoring., while other laws such as the Compulsory Education Law, 1986; the Regulations on Prohibition of Child Labour, 1991; the Protection of Minors Law, 1991; and the Criminal Law, 1997 prohibited child labour. Punishment for the adoption, sale or use of children for prostitution could be the death penalty.

98. Under the labour inspection system, instituted in the early 1990s, inspection agencies had been set up at provincial, city and country levels. By the end of 1999, there were about 3,100 labour and social security inspection agencies across the nation with a total number of 400,000 full-time and part-time inspectors.

99. Regular inspection, investigation upon exposure, specialized inspection and annual inspection were among the major measures for monitoring child labour. Labour inspection agencies had hotlines and provided exposure boxes to receive complaints.

100. He said that a nation-wide inspection on the use of child labour conducted in 1992 by the Ministry of Labour found no child labour in state firms and urban collective firms. Most non-state businesses had regulated systems of recruitment and

attached importance to the prohibition of child labour. Only a few private firms and individual businesses were found to have any child labourers at all, and even then the number of children involved was limited.

101. Trade unions at various levels also helped enforce the law. Union inspectors had proved very useful for child labour monitoring and inspection. Enterprises with trade unions were not found to use child labour.

102. Local level leaders were responsible for education and poverty alleviation programmes that also helped keep levels of child labour low. A 1995-96 United States study found no use of child labour.

India

103. Mr. Anil Kapoor (India) informed the meeting that the National Agenda for Governance (1998) included measures to be taken to eliminate child labour. Indian national policy on child labour passed in 1987 envisaged a legislative action plan, the collaboration of general development programmes for benefiting children wherever possible and project-based action plans in areas with high concentrations of child labourers engaged in wage/quasi-wage employment.

104. Quoting from the Constitution, he said employment of children below the age of 14 years was forbidden in any factory, mine or any other hazardous work. The Constitution also provided for free and compulsory education for all children up to the age of 14. With regard to correctly identifying a child's age, it was mandatory for parents to register all births with municipal authorities.

105. Under the 1988 National Child Labour Project, voluntary agencies in India were given financial assistance by the Ministry of Labour that covered as much as 75 per cent of project costs to rehabilitate working children. Up to October 2000, 92 projects had been sanctioned covering 190,000 children in ten states and 72 voluntary agencies were still being assisted.

106. The Child Labour (Prohibition & Regulation) Act, 1986 prohibited employment of children in certain occupations and processes. Both the central and state governments were authorized to enforce the Act. In practice, though, establishments were divided between them. The central Government was responsible for enforcement of labour statutes in areas like railways, mines and plantations. State governments took responsibility for other industries but also had offices at different levels and access to all establishments including factories, plantations, agricultural fields and construction sites.

107. In 1996, the Supreme Court of India had directed the central and all state governments to eradicate child labour as quickly as possible. This directive was being pursued in earnest.

Indonesia

108. Mrs Zulmiar Yanri (Indonesia) observed that child labour was sometimes regarded as a culturally acceptable way of introducing children to work and of making them obedient and dedicated to their family. Whenever children were abused at the workplace and employed for profit only, this line of reasoning broke down, however.

109. According to the national labour force survey of 1997, the total number of working children in the age group of 10-14 years was 1.6 million. But Mr. Wahidur Rahman's figure of 2.15 million might be correct due to the recent economic crisis.

110. Indonesia's first priority was to protect children from hazardous working conditions that were harmful to their physical, mental or social growth. Indonesia was the first country in South-east Asia to ratify Convention 182. It had also enacted a law to enforce the provisions of the Convention, and was formulating regulations in this regard.

111. The Government had decided to eliminate hazardous working conditions as a first priority without neglecting other intolerable forms of child labour. It had identified 17 types of activity as hazardous for working children. A National Action Committee consisting of representatives of government institutions, NGOs and employers' and workers' organizations had developed an action plan with the following aims: to prohibit and eliminate hazardous working conditions immediately; to provide appropriate protection for children engaged in light work; and to increase the income of families with working children, enabling them to provide appropriately for the development of their children.

112. Strategies to achieve the aims of the action plan were as follows: empowering civil society and related institutions; harmonizing inter-sectoral programmes; and improving institutional capability through technical cooperation with international and national agencies.

113. Intervention programmes included a national campaign to increase awareness; the development of regulations and policy; the improvement of institutional capacity; the removal of working children from hazardous working conditions; the provision of education for working children; the development of a monitoring system; surveys to improve programmes; and the enforcement of law.

Lao People's Democratic Republic

114. Mr. Souchanh Phommachack (Lao PDR) said that his Government gave priority to the welfare of children and was making a full commitment to combat child labour. In January, the Lao PDR had joined IPEC and, more recently, had set up a national steering committee.

115. The Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare had consulted relevant organizations, notably trade unions and the national chamber of commerce and industry,

and was collecting information on child labour. So far Lao PDR had not found any establishment that employed child labour but, as a developing country, could not guarantee its complete absence.

116. The Lao PDR had yet to ratify Conventions 138 and 182, but the basic rights of Lao children were set out in the Constitution and were protected by other laws. The Labour Law prohibited forced labour and the employment of workers under the age of 14. However, the law did not have specific regulations concerning family enterprises or subsistence farming - a substantial part of the country's economic activity. Labour inspection services were limited by budget constraints, inadequate means of transport, lack of trained personnel and implementation power.

Japan

117. Ms. Harumi Araki (Japan) cited laws in her country that prohibited the work of those under 18 in specific jobs considered dangerous and harmful, including "underground labour".

118. Legal mechanisms regarding child labour inspection and monitoring at the workplace included official workplace inspections by labour-standards inspectors; the reporting of violations to the inspectors; and requests for attendance by inspectors from employers or workers.

119. The Labour Standards Law covered all persons in work, but since the problem of child labour did not exist, there was no national programme of action to introduce feasible workplace monitoring. Some child labour had existed after the Second World War, but since then the economy had matured and the problem disappeared. Japan had ratified Convention 138 in recognition of the value of promoting an international effort to abolish child labour.

120. Economic development was not the only factor that had contributed to the disappearance of child labour. Education had been made compulsory in Japan more than a hundred years ago. In the past, poor families had not been able not send children to schools, but local community schools had extended assistance to such families. Social norms were also important in pressuring families to educate their children and in promoting group identity and the right social values for economic development.

121. As for the informal sector, in enterprises owned by families, children helped their parents, but they also had enough time to go to school. This could not be called child labour.

Malaysia

122. Mr. Roslee Sabaruddin Abu (Malaysia) said that the laws and policies of his country did not condone extreme forms of child labour and necessary legal protection

was provided for any children employed at workplaces. The Labour Department kept a watchful eye on the employment of young persons.

123. He said that during the past five years, employers had been prosecuted and convicted for various offences under the Children and Young Persons (Employment) Act, 1966. The Labour Department's efforts were complemented by other departments and NGOs.

124. The Government of Malaysia also offered free compulsory basic education up to the lower secondary level, which meant 15 years of compulsory education for all children. This system effectively kept children out of work. The presence of more than 1 million foreign workers in Malaysia demonstrated that employers avoided using child labour at all costs.

125. Mr. Gerard Sankar (Malaysia) said that there was no child labour in Malaysia. The Children and Young Persons (Employment) Act, 1966 and the compulsory education programme ensured that children were not given employment. What is more, there was no real informal sector now in Malaysia, not even in agriculture, where businesses had been mechanized and were listed as public companies.

Mongolia

126. Ms. Tsedev Unurtsetseg (Mongolia) said child labour had only recently become an issue in her country, which was undergoing transition to a market economy. Mongolia did not yet have a coherent policy on child labour.

127. Since a large portion of the population was unemployed, employment of children might be insignificant. However, a growing number of children were engaged in the informal sector, particularly in street trading and household work.

128. Quoting official data, she said that her country had some 5,200 working children, among them approximately 50 female prostitutes. In Mongolian rural households, children aged 3-5 would play with their siblings, but would also be given the responsibility of looking after a stock of sheep, goats or cows. Once over 5 years old, they were able to take care of livestock independently. The children also collected cattle droppings for burning and helped their mothers in household activities like fetching water or processing milk.

129. The Mongolian Parliament had ratified the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention in October 2000. Legal review of national legislation relating to child labour had been carried out under the ILO-IPEC national programme. Amendments to relevant laws were underway to reflect the provisions of the Convention.

130. Mongolian labour law had provisions regarding the employment of minors, minimum age, working hours, vacation and penalties for violators. However, implementation of the labour law was limited to the formal sector alone.

131. The State Labour and Social Welfare Inspection Agency, under the Ministry of Social Welfare and Labour, had more than 80 labour and hygiene inspectors for the whole country, but their workload made it difficult to reach the informal sector. The legal framework for inspectors to regulate child labour in the informal sector was inadequate. Labour inspectors had limited skills and were poorly equipped.

132. The Government was considering improvement of the legal framework for labour inspectors to monitor the informal sector as well. The Government also encouraged the involvement of employers and trade unions in monitoring child labour and welcomed their increased awareness of the issue.

Nepal

133. Mr. Sita Ram Uprety quoted from a recent study conducted by Tribhuvan University which reported out of 6.23 million 5-14 year-old children in Nepal, 1.7 million were economically active. About 95 per cent of the economically active children in rural areas performed agricultural work. An NGO estimate placed 7,665 children in the service sector (hotels and restaurants), 10,652 in domestic work, 2,500 in brick factories and 1,500 in rag picking in Kathmandu.

134. The Child Labour (Prohibition & Regulation) Act, 2000 prohibited the employment of children under 14 years old and specified penalties for violators. An employer willing to employ a child should have the prior consent of the Labour Office, or of the child's parents or guardians. Prior to this, the establishment should obtain a certificate of fitness for the child to be employed. Working time for children was limited to six hours a day.

135. The Labour office might be made aware of legal violations through its own inspections, or through complaints from police, parents or guardians of the child, the Village Development Committee, established trade unions or from NGOs organized for the protection of children. Monitoring child labour at the workplace in Nepal faced constraints, however, including a lack of the required personnel, parental unwillingness to disclose the ages of their children, a lack of rehabilitation centres, a lack of social awareness and weak enforcement of the law. The Government was striving to increase public support.

136. A section at the Ministry of Labour and Transport Management dealt with the worst forms of child labour. The responsibility to monitor also lay with this section, as did the power to recommend action from the Labour Office against violators.

137. However, labour laws did not cover home-based workers making carpets, *beedi* cigarettes, art and gift items inter alia. A recent study revealed serious exploitation, although there was a growing recognition of the issue.

138. In 2000, the Government had abolished bonded labour in five districts, freeing members of 15,152 families.

Pakistan

139. Mr. Ghulam Sarwar Khero (Pakistan) said that child labour was concentrated in the informal sector. Young boys associated with small machine shops and workshops worked mainly to learn specific skills that would enable them to earn at least a basic wage in the future.

140. It was difficult to monitor establishments with four to five child labourers, but working conditions and hours were not within prescribed standards. These establishments were mostly situated at bazaars. News of an inspector's arrival in one establishment quickly spread to others, from where child labourers were immediately removed. Owner-employers took inspectors to task for arriving during business hours, refused to cooperate and even forced them to leave. Frequently members of the same family or relatives of the owner, child workers were also reluctant to provide information.

141. With this in mind, the Government had decided to raise general awareness of the issue and mobilize community support. Measures taken by the Directorate of Labour in the province of Sindh included:

- (a) awareness raising seminars, workshops and community functions;
- (b) the translation of relevant national laws, ILO Conventions and Recommendations into Urdu and local languages;
- (c) the involvement of families, parents and members of civil society such as workers, employers, civil servants, NGOs, Imams, teachers and lawyers;
- (d) the use of persuasion, motivation and facilitation in place of more traditional policing attitudes, with prosecution as a last resort;
- (e) training for all inspectors with an emphasis on a psychological approach;
- (f) the establishment of schools-cum-training centres.

Philippines

142. Mr. Jose M. Espanol, Jr. (Philippines) said that the campaign against child labour in his country involved a concerted effort from the Government, trade unions, employers' groups, non-governmental organizations and international welfare and social development institutions. Communities, parents and children themselves were active participants.

143. Referring to the Labour Code and a number of other laws for safeguarding children against exploitation, he said that the employment of children below 15 years was prohibited. The Senate approved the President's signing of Convention 182 on 16 October 2000.

144. The Department of Labour and Employment kept a list of work considered hazardous for persons below 18. However, certain gaps existed in national legislation and policy implementation. They included: (a) difficulties in the enforcement and implementation of laws; (b) a lack of mechanisms for workplace monitoring in the informal sector; and (c) a lack of understanding among some stakeholders about existing laws and working conditions.

145. A broad-based child labour network was carrying out specific initiatives on workplace monitoring. The Employers' Confederation of the Philippines was implementing a corporate code of conduct and promoting firms free of child labour nationwide.

146. The Informal Sector Coalition of the Philippines, a national coalition of 540 non-governmental and people's organizations, worked to protect the rights of women and child workers by bringing together people's organizations, trade unions and key government agencies to set up strict monitoring mechanisms in both the formal and informal sectors.

147. Due to budget constraints, the Philippines had a shortage of labour inspectors; but it had flexible working arrangements, whereby inspectors could be shared across regions. Estimates showed that there were about 3.7 million children at work.

Sri Lanka

148. Ms. A.J.M. Chandrawathie Abeysinghe (Sri Lanka) said that out of 5.6 million children, 3.1 million were between 5 and 14 years of age. Quoting from the findings of a recent survey, she said that 475,000 children of this age group were in some form of economic activity. About 449,000 of these attended schools while engaging in some form of economic activity. Some 25,000 of these children engaged in economic activity but did not go to school.

149. From December 1999, the employment of any child under 14 in domestic service had been prohibited. A 1956 Act on women, young persons and children had earlier enabled the employment of children above the age of 12 as domestic workers.

150. In 1993, Sri Lanka adopted the UN Charter on The Rights of the Child. State policy now focused its attention on widening the scope of offences labelled as child abuse. The National Child Protection Authority, established under an Act passed in 1998, had the power to enter and search premises where it had reasons to believe child abuse was occurring.

151. Sri Lanka had joined IPEC in 1997. To facilitate the campaign against child labour the Government placed an emphasis on the expansion of education and other basic services. Education was free from kindergarten to university. The Government also supplied free school books, school uniforms and mid-day meals. The Compulsory School Education Regulation, 1997 was monitored to ensure its implementation.

152. The Women and Children Affairs division of the Department of Labour worked in collaboration with the Department of Probation and Child Care Services to enforce child labour laws. The police department had enhanced its inspection scheme. A Women and Children Desk at each police station referred complaints to the above departments.

153. Sri Lanka ratified the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29), in 1950, and its ratification of Convention 138 was registered in February 2000. The social partners were all in favour of ratifying Convention No.182.

Thailand

154. Mrs Benjamas Prachankhadee (Thailand) observed that the Labour Protection Act, 1998 provided for monitoring child labour. However the law did not apply to government administrations and state enterprises and covered only the formal sector, although it did empower the Minister for Labour and Social Welfare to issue regulations for the informal sector in respect of agriculture, marine fishing, cargo handling at sea ports, home-based work and transportation. Ministerial regulations to protect agricultural workers were also under consideration.

155. Under the present system of monitoring child labour at the workplace, a labour inspector had the power to start legal proceedings for employment of a child under 15 years or exploitation or detention of an employee under the age of 18. Certain other laws contained provisions against child labour in the informal sector. They included:

- (a) The Prevention and Suppression of Prostitution Act, 1996
- (b) The Prevention and Suppression of the Trafficking in Women and Children Act, 1997
- (c) The Beggar Control Act, 1941
- (d) The Penal Code
- (e) The Drugs Act, 1979

156. Police officers and officers of the Department of Public Welfare and of the Office of Narcotics Control worked as inspectors to enforce these laws. Initiatives had been taken by the Ministry of Labour and Social welfare to train inspectors.

157. The Labour Protection Act extended protection to child domestic workers against sexual harassment, and on issues like payment of wages and paid annual leave.

158. There had been no research study to identify the extent of child labour in the informal sector, but there were some mechanisms to raise awareness of child labour problems, to allow networking between the Government and NGOs, employers' and workers' organizations, academic institutions, the media and international organizations, and to involve local communities.

159. Convention 182 was acceptable to the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare and would be forwarded to Parliament for ratification after the new elections.

Viet Nam

160. Ms. Hong Nguyen Thi Dieu informed the meeting that children's work was widespread in Viet Nam and widely accepted as both normal and good for the children, their families and the community. In rural areas, children had become an important component of the labour force because of the seasonal nature of agriculture.

161. She said that under the centrally planned economy, before the introduction of economic reforms in 1986, child labour had not existed in Viet Nam. It had surfaced after the transformation to a market economy. Rapid economic development between 1986 and 1996 in the private sector along with limited managerial capacity had allowed a number of problems to occur.

162. However, no in-depth research on child labour had been conducted nor was there a uniform concept of child labour, or a body of official data. Child labour did not, in any event, exist in the formal sector.

163. Inspectors of the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Welfare were responsible for labour inspection. Trade unions also had committees from the district up to the central level. However, the existing legislative system was not realistic for workplace monitoring because of the diversity of the work in which children were engaged. Viet Nam needed a strong and responsive monitoring system, and action would be taken this year toward that end. There should be a national action plan and enforcement of the labour code should be improved. At present there were only 30 inspectors for 63 provinces, which meant that each inspector was responsible for two provinces.

Field visit briefing

164. The Chief Technical Adviser of the BGMEA-IPEC Project in Dhaka, Mr. Christian von Mitzlaff, briefed participants on the BGMEA-ILO-UNICEF Child Labour Monitoring Project.

165. The volume of garment exports, Bangladesh's primary export, had risen rapidly from US\$1 million in 1970 to US\$4.9 billion in 1999. They accounted for 12.5 per cent of total exports in 1985, but 76 per cent in 1999. The number of workplaces had risen from 50 factories in 1983 to 3,000 factories and the number of workers from 10,000 to 1.5 million - 85 per cent of them female.

166. The child labour situation had raised international concern in the early 1990s and led to the Harkins Bill initiative that would have ended the export of ready-made garments to the USA. Fearing the passage of that bill, manufacturers had dismissed thousands of children from the factories in 1994.

167. In response, the ILO and UNICEF had negotiated with the BGMEA to find ways to eliminate child labour in garment factories, to keep new children from joining the workforce and to offer child workers education and economically viable alternatives to work.

168. As a result the BGMEA, the ILO and UNICEF had signed a first Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on 4 July 1995 calling for a comprehensive solution involving the withdrawal of children from the workplace and their enrolment in learning centres. To be offered were a specially designed curriculum for ex-working children, partial compensation for loss of income (a stipend for regular attendance at learning centres), skills training (pre-vocational) with job placement options and social assistance for families (micro-credit).

169. A system had been set up to monitor compliance with the MoU. The monitoring teams had consisted of two ILO monitors, one BGMEA monitor and one government labour inspector who had made unannounced visits to some 3,000 BGMEA factories.

170. Factories were classified according to three categories: A (cooperative and with an established record of avoiding child labour); B (cooperative and child labour free but with some irregularities during the last three visits); and C (factories using child labour).

171. Industrial areas had been divided into zones; each team had been assigned a particular zone and was rotated on a regular basis. A random selection had been made of factory categories and visit-frequencies. Monitored data had been stored in a database that generated weekly reports automatically.

172. The monitoring teams had visited BGMEA member-factories to verify compliance with the MoU and filed daily reports. They had conducted visits in a polite and supportive manner, had determined the age of labourers and had informed employers, children and parents about the objectives of the project and the education programme. The teams verified attendance records at learning centres and the disbursement of stipends to students and treated all information gathered in monitoring visits as confidential.

173. These measures led to a radical decrease in the use of child labour in BGMEA factories - from 43 per cent of factories to less than 5 per cent; i.e. the withdrawal of over 27,000 children.

174. The experience showed that child labour issues could be effectively addressed through a sector-wide approach, implemented through the collaborative efforts of the private sector and governmental and international organizations. To keep track of children, they should be given identification numbers when found at the workplace.

Implementing partners also needed to exchange and process data in a common electronic format compatible with the project data bank.

175. IPEC's comprehensive approach needed to be extended to the wider arena of social assistance and the system of monitoring and verification had to be made sustainable. It was important to increase the capacity of law enforcement bodies and to develop a quality management system enabling factory management to self-monitor compliance with labour and social standards.

176. A second MoU, signed in June 2000, aimed at reinforcing the existing monitoring system, providing social assistance to all ex-working children and addressing labour and social issues in conjunction with workplace monitoring. The Harkins Bill had put child labour on the national agenda. The Bangladeshi case had also been replicated in the soccer ball and then the carpet and surgical-equipment industries in Pakistan.

177. Pre-shipment inspection companies were also entering the arena. Monitoring should cover social issues and not just the safety of products destined for western markets.

Employers' and Workers' statements

178. The Employers' and Workers' Groups each presented a joint statement to a session chaired by Mr. Jose M. Espanol, Jr.

179. On behalf of the group, Mr. M. Fashiur Rahman (Bangladesh) stated that:

- (a) there was a need for urgent action to eliminate child labour, especially its worst forms;
- (b) employers recognized that the success of such action would hinge on its being a total community effort;
- (c) governments could not resolve the problem alone as most child labour cases occurred in the informal sector;
- (d) employers could play a positive role in monitoring child labour provided they first reached an agreement with the community;
- (e) there was a need to raise awareness to motivate employers to cooperate by refusing new child entrants and rehabilitating those who were already at work;
- (f) employers should motivate employees to support their initiatives;
- (g) in conjunction with ILO-IPEC, employers could assist in the collection of reliable data on the magnitude, nature and effects of child labour;
- (h) based on such information, MoUs could be signed to launch comprehensive programmes in selected industries;
- (i) employers should also assist in the design of any programmes or processes to measure progress in eliminating child labour;
- (j) they could assist monitoring efforts by providing adequate access to workplaces and also by redesigning production processes to remove the potential for the employment of children and to reduce hazards in the workplace;

- (k) they could also help develop income-generating opportunities for families affected, and help improve education and vocational training facilities;
- (l) their organizations participating in steering committees on ILO-IPEC projects could give advice concerning appropriate changes.

180. On behalf of the Workers', Ms. Luisa Logan (Philippines) stated that child labour was not only a trade union issue but also a human rights issue. Her group condemned the abuse and exploitation of children at various workplaces.

181. There was a necessity for workplace monitoring especially in the informal sector where an increasing number of adults and children brought together by globalization and other economic trends were working.

182. Trade unions had a significant role to play in workplace monitoring and should:

- (a) look at the kinds of work performed by children, as well as their working conditions, their environment and ages;
- (b) identify not only the violation of labour standards but also the violation of the rights of the child and national legislation;
- (c) Operate at the community level alongside the other stakeholders;
- (d) operate through the establishment of committees for the protection of children and other vulnerable groups of workers.

183. Trade unions would work together with governments, employers, civic groups and relevant international organizations to:

- (a) assist in the enforcement of laws;
- (b) promote the ratification of Conventions 138 and 182;
- (c) help design and implement action programmes to assist working children and their families, to withdraw child labourers from hazardous work and to ensure education and training opportunities for them;
- (d) promote the inclusion of anti-child labour provisions in collective bargaining agreements;
- (e) organize workers in the informal sector while working as watchdogs for the prevention of child labour.

Tripartite panel presentation on child labour inspection

184. Mr. Latifur Rahman declared that there lessons to be learnt from Bangladesh's elimination of child labour from certain industries. The Government of Bangladesh was contemplating framing a child-labour policy and implementing awareness raising activities.

185. He emphasized the importance of mobilizing the media and sensitizing parents, community leaders and policy-makers about the social consequences of

intolerable forms of child labour in the short and medium terms. The development of street drama, audio-visual materials and networks at the community, district, national, regional and international levels was needed. This should improve performance through experience sharing and capacity building.

186. Mr. Fasihul Karim Siddiqi (Pakistan) underlined the need for total commitment from employers to end child labour. In Pakistan, employers had shown a degree of commitment and had worked closely with the ILO to eliminate the worst forms of child labour.

187. The Employers Federation of Pakistan had undertaken three projects in three phases. The first phase concentrated on awareness creation and the translation of ILO Conventions and national legislation into Urdu. In the second phase, centres were established throughout the country to work with employers and parents to monitor child labour. Another development was a joint declaration to show employers' concern about child labour and express their resolve to eliminate it. A standing advisory committee formed by the Government resolved to pursue the elimination of child labour and spelt out preventive and corrective strategies. The leading employers' organizations and workers' associations in Pakistan had joined hands in creating a bilateral council of employers and workers. A skills development council had also been formed by the Government to develop a youth training programme in cooperation with employers.

189. Consumers could refuse goods tarnished with child labour and thereby become an effective pressure group to foster proper child development.

190. Ms. Luisa Logan (Philippines) said that in 1995 her country had been one of IPEC's first partners. Now there were more than five labour groups implementing IPEC programmes.

191. She conceded that labour inspection was difficult, especially when it came to the worst forms of child labour. In the Philippines - and apparently in other countries too - it was inadequate. A total of 250 labour inspectors had to monitor more than 80,000 establishments. In addition, the training of inspectors in how to open labour cases was difficult. There were very few innovative ways of performing labour inspections, which tended to be very technical. Inspectors tended to examine labour standards, compensation, working conditions, health and safety and other practices, but omitted certain critical elements while identifying child labour. There was still a need to prioritize inspection strategies and to withdraw children from hazardous conditions.

192. Due to the limited number of labour inspectors, the informal sector was never reached. The impact of labour inspection on child labour was thus rather slight. The Trade Union Congress of the Philippines had entered into an agreement with the Department of Labour to make local trade unionists part of a team to conduct inspections focusing on labour standards. A project had also been initiated to strengthen local councils for the protection of children. These appeared to be very effective in child labour monitoring in the Philippines.

193. An ILO expert (Mr. Nasir Dogar) said that soccer-ball stitching in Sialkot had decentralized from factories to the homes of workers under economic pressure in the early 1970s. In the process, young children had become involved in large numbers. But in 1997, spurred on by the Federation of International Football Associations, the World Federation of the Sporting Goods Industry, the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and due to initiatives taken by the ILO, UNICEF and Save the Children UK, an agreement had been signed in Atlanta to end the use of child labour in the industry.

194. Workplace monitoring techniques of two types were used: internal (conducted by manufacturers themselves) and external (conducted by an independent team of ILO-IPEC monitors). By September 2000, 78 manufacturers had voluntarily joined the child labour prevention and monitoring programme. They represented over 90 per cent of total export production. The efforts of the Sialkot partnership to address the issue of child labour in an integrated manner had been a success.

195. UNICEF set itself the goal of 100 per cent enrolment of children between 4 and 7 in primary schools. Save the Children UK provided micro-credit and skills training through its partner NGOs. The development of the institutional capabilities of the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry by ILO-IPEC, UNICEF and Save the Children helped it to set up a Child Social Development programme that could be expected to make UK sustainable contributions.

196. Mobilization of the community had been the first priority, with monitoring close behind. Socio-cultural change rather than policing made monitoring effective.

Tripartite presentation and discussion of child labour monitoring in the informal sector

197. Government, Employers' and Workers' participants from India, Indonesia, Nepal and Thailand made formal presentations in a session chaired by the Director of the ILO office in Dhaka.

198. Mr. Anil Kapoor said trade unions had done a remarkable job by starting various institutions, such as the Indian National Trade Union Congress, and had done much good work for mothers as well as children.

199. The Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry and employers' federation organizations in India had also contributed substantially. They had organized the landmark employers' commitment to the elimination of child labour. The involvement in government projects of workers and employers together with that of NGOs supported by the ILO had proved useful.

200. Some employers had initially tried to avoid labour inspections. Now they were educated and India was at a comfortable stage of development. From 1981 to 1991, there had been a remarkable reduction in child labour. An ongoing census, whose results

would be ready in 2001, would show that the number of cases of child labour had fallen to under 5 million from a total of 11 million shown in the last census.

201. The IPEC project had been extended to next December with the assistance of the ILO, and India proposed to reach 50,000 more children. Educational programmes for children in various industries had also increased in number.

202. Ms. Benjamas Prachakhadee said that Thailand's Labour Protection Act, 1998 extended protection to workers in the informal sector, including those in agriculture, fishing and domestic work. However, the system for monitoring child labour in that sector was not yet well established. Since there were no appropriate data on child labour in the informal sector, it was difficult to identify it and formulate appropriate policies and assistance plans.

203. The law entitled domestic workers to wages and six days' annual leave. Employers were prohibited from harassing child domestic workers, for whom there was no minimum age for entry to employment. A domestic worker who also worked as a sales clerk or waitress was classified as an employee and was entitled to all rights and benefits under the labour protection law.

204. Labour inspectors in Thailand had authority to enter the workplace. An employer's house, however, was private property and inspectors could only enter with search warrant and in the presence of a police officer. Labour inspectors might order employers to pay wages in complaints of non-payment. In cases of abuse, the police officer would take charge.

205. The director of the ILO office in Dhaka praised the Thai law as an exemplary piece of legislation for protecting domestic workers.

206. Ms. Pudjiati Aziz (Indonesia) said that despite ratification of Convention 182, child labour remained a serious problem in her country. Many children were not visible as they worked in home industries or as domestic servants. Children often worked long hours at dangerous, exhausting tasks and in unclean working conditions, from mines in Sumatra to construction sites in large cities and the rubbish dumps of Jakarta. Children were often forced by parents to supplement their family income - a problem that had become increasingly apparent since the recent economic crisis.

207. She said that children needed to be protected through preventive measures as well as effective promotional and communication strategies. Preventive measures included deterring parents from forcing their children to work by raising family incomes and savings through government support. The Government also had another important goal to achieve: compulsory nine-year education for all children by the year 2013.

208. The Employers Association of Indonesia had worked with ILO-IPEC since 1994 on a campaign to raise the awareness of employees concerning the problem of child labour.

209. Mr. Buddhi Ram Acharya (Nepal) said that the trade union movement in his country was young but had been concerned with child labour since 1990.

210. He traced two popular currents of thought. One held that child labour would never be eradicated since it was a direct result of poverty; the other believed that the immediate elimination of child labour was possible and that boycotts should be established against countries that used it. Trade unions, however, believed in the progressive elimination of child labour, and for this there were three strategies.

211. The first strategy was preventive: to minimize child labour through education, awareness raising and income generating programmes. The second was functional: to intervene in the worst forms of child labour and then undertake phased projects aimed at transferring child labourers from hazardous to light work. The third strategy was rehabilitative: to liberate children from bonded labour and provide medical assistance for the sick and helpless.

212. In 1995, child labour had been included in the trade union education programme. Trade unions were also working with ILO-IPEC, local authorities and the Government, social workers, specialists and NGOs to assist road sweepers and bonded labourers. Trade union intervention had so far proved successful in reducing cases of child labour.

213. Lack of information was one major impediment to the elimination of child labour. Another was lax enforcement of laws. There was a need for the regular exchange of information, coordination, the placing of child labour issues on the agendas for local government bodies and municipalities, and further research. Monitoring in the informal sector was difficult due to a lack of unionization. Community-based teams should be organized to monitor this sector too.

214. An ILO expert (Mr. Antero Vahapassi) explained that, because monitoring was based on voluntary participation, agreements were necessary to formalize monitoring techniques and access to work sites.

215. After describing successful ILO-IPEC projects in Bangladesh and Pakistan, he favoured the replication of those undertakings in the footwear and fishing sectors in Indonesia, the Philippines and Thailand.

216. Monitoring might also target:

- (a) households and verification of their participation in educational activities (non-formal or formal), skills training or pre-vocational training, income generation activities (like micro-credit schemes), less hazardous or safe working operations and health surveys or schemes;
- (b) factories and workshops and their participation in or collaboration with the withdrawal of children (if agreed), information sharing on footwear production

- and its location in the area and guiding and facilitating sub-contractors for the elimination of child labour;
- (c) social protection activities for particular groups, the participation of children in those activities and children's development and achievements.

217. The identification of key players in a project was important. These might not be traditional employers or manufacturers: besides the families themselves, school teachers and older workers had an important role to play.

218. In extremely poor communities, the focus should be on income-generation activities which might include setting up cooperatives, access to micro-credit schemes, organizing activities to empower people in relation to local authorities and providing access to education or skills training. A simplistic withdrawal approach was usually counterproductive in such settings.

219. Concerning the worst forms of child labour, collaboration with enforcement agencies was a precondition for the successful implementation of a project. An approach that relied solely on enforcement was doomed to failure. Combinations of enforcement activities with opportunities for social protection would clearly produce the best results.

220. If labour inspectors were to focus on child labour elimination, they needed to form a special task force trained for sensitive child labour issues. There was also a need for policy on how to collaborate with NGOs.

221. A good and open relationship with local communities was one key to success. In order to build up trust and rapport there was a need to focus on skills training and income-generation activities.

222. The question of what would happen when ILO monitoring teams withdrew from Bangladesh, Nepal or Pakistan was crucial in terms of sustainability. During the first phase in Sialkot, issues of sustainability had not been addressed. Under the current second phase the ILO monitoring team would be replaced by a non-profit private monitoring agency. ILO monitors would be employees of that agency, whose board would consist of people from Government, employers, unions, and different kinds of NGOs and communities. Some financial resources could be collected for monitoring activities and also for maintaining schools, so there was a good chance of sustainability for the project in Sialkot.

Open session on community mechanisms to combat child labour

223. Mr. Reazuddin Ahmed, editor of Dhaka's *Financial Express*, chaired the session on community mechanisms to combat child labour. In his introductory remarks, he said that the ILO was working hard to help national governments to eliminate the worst forms of child labour and that national governments were ratifying Convention 182 and enacting laws in accordance with it. However, child labour could not be eliminated

through enactment and enforcement of laws if the community was not effectively involved in the process.

224. Mr. Muyed Chowdhury, Executive Director (designate) of the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC), underlined the need for the mobilization of civil society and community participation to immediately improve the child labour situation while pursuing efforts to eliminate child labour through socio-economic development.

225. He drew special attention to the plight of street children, who were orphans or products of broken homes. Literacy and vocational training programmes based on BRAC's experience with isolated children and its "earn and learn" programme could be replicated, as could a commendable UNESCO technical education project, along with the work of some orphanage-cum-training centres. In addition, NGOs running micro-credit programmes could put a condition on eligibility for such credit that would depend on not sending children to work.

226. Community organizations could also raise awareness and devise monitoring programmes to ensure compliance with legal provisions. They could identify, through censuses in areas where they had programmes, those who were likely to enter the child labour market and offer them special programmes of literacy and skills training by paying reasonable compensation to their families for possible wage loss till they reached the right age for joining the labour force. Such a programme would, however, require funding.

227. Mr. S.A. Ferdausi, President of the Media Group for Child Rights, said that the problem of child labour should be hit at its source: the community. Child labour was particularly prevalent in rural communities. Natural calamities, like floods, cyclones and riverbank erosion, as well as rapid population growth, precipitated many children's entry into the work force.

228. Local government bodies in the rural areas of Asia, particularly around Bangladesh, should be activated against child labour. The Union Parishads, the municipalities, the local elite, teachers, priests, doctors and other opinion shapers should be vocal in their opposition to child labour and should encourage people not to allow the employment of children. He suggested the formation of anti-child labour committees at the community level made up of members of local bodies, elites and NGOs. Such committees should be integrated with national level committees to undertake awareness-raising programmes. Local government bodies should maintain registers of births and keep a watch on children's movements before they became eligible for employment.

229. Mr. Ferdausi also underlined the need to sensitize the local press, which should take an unwavering stand against child labour.

230. Mr. Ahmed said that in rural areas parents prevented their children from going to school for economic reasons. The food-for-education programme introduced by

the Government was successful because families earned while their children studied at school.

231. Poverty was the root-cause of child labour and its elimination was central. At the same time, communities should organize and strengthen awareness programmes on child rights.

232. Mr. Jose M. Espanol, Jr. reported that programmes to incite parents in the Philippines to send their children back to schools had helped co-operating families. Were international creditors ready to respond to such programmes in the form of debt rebates?

233. In his concluding remarks, Mr. Reazuddin Ahmed suggested that bank loans and other incentives to industry should be linked to the elimination of child labour.

Group work on workplace monitoring and community mechanisms

234. Participants broke into three groups to explore various aspects of monitoring in greater depth. Group 1 was asked to suggest how to incorporate, and focus on, child labour issues in the labour inspection system (Facilitator: Mr. Wahidur Rahman). The task of Group 2 was to identify the role of social partners to promote effective child labour monitoring (Facilitator: Christian von Mitzlaff). Group 3 was to suggest community mechanisms to support the role of employers, workers, NGOs and the media in monitoring child labour at the workplace (Facilitator: Mr. Antero Vahapassi). The groups' reports were submitted in a plenary session.

235. Mr. A.W.D.D. Rajah Seneviratne (Sri Lanka) chaired the group presentation session.

236. Mr. M. Fashiur Rahman declared that Group I believed existing labour legislation sufficiently empowered labour inspectors to deal with child labour issues. In some countries labour inspection was less effective because of insensitivity to local issues.

237. The labour inspection system should be improved by sensitizing labour inspectors to social issues through proper training in monitoring skills. The work of inspectors might be supplemented by a task force assembling representatives of employers, workers, NGOs and the local community.

238. Child labour in the informal sector could be brought within the government inspection system. The focus should initially be to collect information, improve accessibility and assist the informal sector with appropriate incentives to progressively eliminate child labour. The ideal situation would, however, be the elimination of differences between the formal and informal sectors by enlarging the employment sector, following examples from experiences in Malaysia and Indonesia.

239. A combination of inspection and monitoring should involve NGOs, communities, consumers and employers' and workers' organizations with labour inspectors playing the lead role. A new legal instrument would be necessary to cover the informal sector.

240. Rather than hiring additional labour inspectors, inspection and monitoring might be done through the police, employers' and workers' organizations, communities, consumer and religious groups, panchayats and the media. Coordination and mutual supervision were advisable.

241. Ms. Carmelita Caparas (Philippines) explained how group 2 believed governments should perform the functions of policy formulation, strategic planning, monitoring and evaluation. Trade unions should also be involved in these tasks.

242. Employers should be associated with child labour elimination programmes and should implement projects within their businesses.

243. The media should raise public awareness. Lobby groups should also be engaged in social awareness activities and seek to influence the formulation of policy, while institutions (academic and other) should concentrate on influencing policy formulation.

244. Of the remaining partners, NGOs should perform social auditing; social, cultural and other bodies, such as the Rotary and Lions Clubs, should undertake fund-raising and awareness-raising activities. Donors and international organizations should provide technical and financial support for policy and strategy formulation. Local organizations should be engaged in advocacy, monitoring and awareness raising.

245. Mr. Buddhi Ram Acharya (Nepal) presented the recommendations of Group 3 on community mechanisms to support the roles of various groups, stressing that monitoring through community mechanisms was the best way to eliminate child labour.

246. With community mechanisms it was possible to operate at the national, regional, municipal, district, village and local levels. Different partners were needed, and governmental partners, representatives of local government were essential.

247. NGOs, student groups, Rotary and Lions Clubs, women's groups, religious groups and trade unions should make formal arrangements to deal with child labour in the form of MoUs. Employers' organizations and the media should also act as partners through community mechanisms.

248. With the help of community mechanisms it was possible to collect information on workplaces, to safeguard labour rights, to enforce laws and ILO standards, to regulate work, to generate social pressure and popular support and to provide better legislation for domestic workers.

249. In general discussion, Ms. Carmelita Caparas said that although children supposedly above 18 actually looked younger during visits to factories, having them there was a lesser evil than leaving them to loiter on the streets or engage in prostitution. A consensus had emerged that monitoring groups should be strict in enforcing regulations, but a compromise was needed between compliance with the law and more pragmatic efforts to deal with the actual situation.

250. Mr. M. Fashiur Rahman said that monitoring teams could not be that effective, especially as different measures were used to determine the age of children. There was a government guideline for doctors to use in assessing children's ages, but doctors had too much work to cope with this added responsibility.

251. Some employers sometimes tried to claim that children working for them were older than they actually were. However, if a monitoring team decided that a child was below 14, no one challenged its decision. The problem was that only 1.5 million children were in the formal sector, and there was no system to monitor the other 5 million. If the problems of the informal sector were not addressed the situation was unlikely to improve soon.

252. An ILO expert said that the problem of child labour was gigantic in the Asian region. One important lesson, learned in 1994 was that children should not be withdrawn from work without providing alternatives. It was important to ensure compliance with international and national laws, but not at children's expense.

253. Monitoring in Bangladesh's garment sector was due to outside interference. Pressure tactics had worked because the demand to eliminate child labour came from the market place. Such outside interference might not work so well for all sectors. The initiative to eliminate child labour should come from within the country and not be confined to any particular sectors.

Country plans of action

254. Country plans of action were presented in a plenary session chaired by the Director of the ILO office in Dhaka (Ms. Claudia Coenjaerts).

255. Mr. Towhidur Rahman (Bangladesh) presented Bangladesh's action plan and called for immediate ratification of Convention 182. The action plan also included framing a national child labour policy and a situation analysis of child labour at the workplace; strengthening inspections and capacity building for inspectors, workers, NGOs and civil society in general; preventing rural-urban migration and raising public awareness of the need for monitoring committees. There was a need to move child labourers into formal or informal education and skills-development training.

256. Mr. Ravuth Ouk (Cambodia) set out measures to improve the effectiveness and ensure the enforcement of legislation related to the protection of working children in Cambodia under that country's national plan of action:

- (a) promote the ratification of Convention 182;
- (b) review and prepare legislation to protect children in the informal sector and in forced labour;
- (c) increase the number of labour inspectors and build their capacity;
- (d) expand the participation of other partners, from civil society and employers' and workers' associations, in the alleviation of child labour;
- (e) boost the effectiveness of social workers;
- (f) establish a child labour network throughout the country;
- (g) educate families, employers and working children about labour laws and their relevance to child labour; and
- (h) draft additional laws, if necessary.

257. Ms. Xuemei Wang (China) observed that the Chinese plan of action would involve the following:

- (a) perfecting the legislative system while speeding up the ratification of Convention 182;
- (b) improving law enforcement;
- (c) strengthening labour inspection mechanisms;
- (d) ensuring the full participation of employers' organizations, trade unions and NGOs;
- (e) strengthening work at the community level on child labour monitoring;
- (f) implementing government policies and measures to improve the economic situation in poverty-stricken areas;
- (g) continuing to encourage organizations and individuals to extend targeted support to poor households and poor children.

258. Mr. Naresh Chandra (Fiji) pointed out that child labour was not a major problem in his country although there were signs of it in some industries. To eradicate child labour before it developed the government would:

- (a) maintain constant links with industry and trade unions to ensure that under-age children were not offered employment;
- (b) ensure that schools run by religious organizations had education and awareness programmes on child labour;
- (c) educate HR departments in all organizations about child labour problems;
- (d) use the media to encourage school drop-outs to enroll in vocational training centres;
- (e) request that the ILO make its experience and expertise available for any child labour problems; and
- (f) raise awareness about the seriousness of child labour in some other countries by broadcasting special programmes on national television.

259. Mr. Anil Kapoor (India) said his country was working on both long-term and short-term policies, programmes and strategies aimed at the prevention of child labour and the rehabilitation of victims.

260. Action in the short term would involve the outright withdrawal and rehabilitation of children employed in hazardous industries. In the longer term, the Government would also create an environment that deterred children from entering the labour market.

261. Measures taken to achieve these aims would consist of legislation, strengthening monitoring and enforcement mechanisms, providing support systems for meaningful employment-oriented education, and strengthening programmes aimed at poverty alleviation. Attempts would be made to ensure the mutual cooperation of all interested parties.

262. Mrs Zulmari Yanri (Indonesia) indicated that her country was now completing government regulations for implementing Convention 182. Indonesia had already established a national action committee comprising governmental institutions and the navy whose role was important because of Indonesia's physical geography. The committee had drawn up a national plan of action.

263. The plan called for stronger regulations. After amendments had been brought to existing labour laws, child labour inspectors would be empowered to monitor the informal sector and would receive additional training, along with NGO partners. Monitoring procedures would also be better managed.

264. An MoU would be signed by members of the national action committee, which would set up task forces and ensure the implementation of laws.

265. Mr. Sounchanh Phommachack (Lao PDR) explained that the national action plan for Lao would include:

- (a) steps to identify child labour, ratify ILO Conventions and shape government policy;
- (b) capacity building and training of monitors;
- (c) awareness-raising among officials and the general population; and
- (e) direct intervention to rescue children, establish education centres for them and ensure their subsequent employment.

266. The focus would be on stopping the trafficking of children and women for labour and exploitation. Local government bodies and the media would be enlisted for this.

267. Child labour monitoring would be initiated at the workplace, in rural areas and in the informal sector. Tripartite committees, NGOs and ILO-IPEC programmes would be involved.

268. Mr Gerard Sankar (Malaysia) noted that Malaysia already had a full framework of laws, which were strictly enforced both in the formal and informal sectors. The challenge for the future lay in tightening legal loopholes and monitoring the workplace for infractions. Compulsory education should also be extended from 15 to 17 years.

269. The current tripartite approach to labour relations could be made more effective by the direct inclusion of a large industry group (like the Federation of Malaysian Manufacturers) and service sector groups. The dissemination and sharing of information on labour practices should have wider coverage and the national plan of action should implement ILO Conventions and best practices through human resources management in business.

270. Ms. Tsedev Unurtsetseg (Mongolia) made reference to the MoU signed with the ILO, the start of the IPEC programme and the launch of a national committee on child labour (all of which had taken place in 1999) as well as ratification of Convention 182.

271. She announced that further policies and a plan of action on child labour would be prepared in 2001. Under the plan of action, the national steering committee on child labour would be expanded to include monitoring groups and an IPEC-Government agreement on monitoring child labour would be put into place.

272. The formal sector, where 20 per cent of child labour was employed, would be monitored by the Government, trade unions and employers. The informal sector, where 70 per cent of child labour existed, would be monitored by NGOs and the community. A further 10 per cent of child labourers, engaged in prostitution and other activities, would be monitored by the police and NGOs.

273. Mr. Ghulam Sawrwar Khero (Pakistan) identified the goal of Pakistan's action plan as the strict monitoring of working environments and conditions of work until child labour was eliminated. Opportunities to employ child labour would be reduced to prevent the entry of children into the labour market.

274. In order to achieve these aims, law enforcement would be improved through the training of relevant government ministries, provincial departments and inspectors, as well as through capacity building for employers, unions and NGOs. These groups would then be encouraged to coordinate their efforts.

275. Mr. Jose M. Espanol, Jr. (Philippines) told the meeting that the Philippine plan of action aimed to reduce instances of child labour by at least 10 per cent before the end of 2002. This would be accomplished through workplace monitoring involving partners from all sectors. Planned activities towards this objective included:

- (a) campaigning and lobbying for immediate legislation;

- (b) advertising and implementing Convention 182 and its accompanying Recommendation (No. 190);
- (c) the creation of child labour monitoring councils in the workplace;
- (d) strengthening the commitment of employers to developing codes of conduct with specific provisions against child labour;
- (e) broadening the scope of community groups in monitoring child labour cases;
- (f) enhancing the capacity of labour inspectors through seminars to make them more responsive to children in the workplace.

276. Ms. A.J.M. Chandrawathie Abeysinghe (Sri Lanka) said that her country's plan of action recommended increasing the number of labour inspectors to suit present conditions and providing additional training programmes in collaboration with the ILO and other donors. Also, more progressive legislation should be implemented by Parliament and there should be wide media publicity denouncing offenders and making known the punishments imposed by courts.

277. Ms. Siriwan Romchatthong (Thailand) said that the Thai action plan would:

- (a) improve child labour data systems and carrying out more study and research, especially in the informal sector;
- (b) extend the labour protection law to cover all forms of workers in the informal sector;
- (c) accelerate effective enforcement of the Labour Protection Act;
- (d) spread information on child rights more widely and raise an awareness of child labour problems;
- (e) foster effective networking among the Government, NGOs, employers' and workers' organizations, academic institutions and international organizations to combat child labour;
- (f) involve more local communities in processes designed to solve child labour problems;
- (g) facilitate vocational training and apprenticeships; and
- (h) establish a child-friendly employers' network.

278. Ms. Hong Nguyen Thi Dieu (Viet Nam) said that the Vietnamese action plan would involve women's union networks from the grassroots to the national level for child labour monitoring at the workplace, with technical assistance from labour inspection bodies. Furthermore, national labour legislation on inspections, including child labour monitoring in both the formal and informal sectors, would be finalized.

279. Viet Nam would also seek to increase the quantity and quality of labour inspectors and raise awareness of the benefits to spring from the elimination of child labour. The efforts of tripartite partners, international organizations and NGOs would be mobilized to combat child labour.

280. Ms. Coenjaerts thanked participants for making specific recommendations in the brief presentations of their national plans of action. The countries of the region

were becoming much more precise about the integrated approach to the solution of the problem of child labour than they had been only three years ago.

281. States party to Convention 182 were in a better position to clarify what constituted child labour. Those who had ratified it were expected to decide through tripartite meetings what activities they considered hazardous, since a single model could not be equally applicable to all countries. It should be remembered that the ILO's aim was progressively to eliminate child labour, not child work.

282. Mr. Fashiur Rahman, citing visits to Sikkim, Bhutan and Darjeeling, said that definitions of work and labour must vary from country to country depending on the environment in which children were born and brought up.

283. Mr. Fasihul Karim Siddiqi suggested that an Asian regional action plan on monitoring child labour at the workplace be formulated to follow up on the meeting. If there was no follow-up, momentum might be lost.

284. Ms. Claudia Coenjaerts considered that a regional plan of action could be deliberated in the next meeting because so much of what had been discussed was concrete in nature, even though many issues still remained specific to individual nations and areas. The IPEC technical team would look into this.

285. Mr. Gerald Sarkar, however, expressed concern that resolutions might be made that later proved impractical. Any statement would have to be clear, well articulated and feasible.

286. Mr. Mohui Jiang pointed out that this was a technical meeting and participants were not in a position to make formal commitments. Seminars such as this were included to allow countries to share their experiences. He opposed the adoption of any commitment such as that proposed above.

287. Ms. Claudia Coenjaerts indicated that although each country was free to determine its own position, the meeting was a technical seminar for information-sharing.

288. Mr. Jose M. Espanol, Jr. supported the adoption of a commitment based on the deliberations of the meeting. Chinese participants, however, raised a point of order in opposition.

289. Mr. James Raman (Fiji) urged avoiding any course that might lead to bitterness after three days of deliberations that had helped to develop mutual understanding.

290. Ms. Coenjaerts accepted a suggestion to end the session without framing a regional action plan.

Closing session

291. In the concluding session, chaired by Ms. Coenjaerts, joint statements were made by Government, Employers' and Workers' representatives. Ms. Shahida Azfar, the UNICEF Representative in Bangladesh, gave her organization's perspective on child labour monitoring.

Government statement

292. Mr. Anil Kapoor (India) presented the Government statement, which favoured urgent action against child labour.

293. A special focus should be put on eliminating the worst forms of child labour. The implementation of child labour elimination programmes in each country could only be successful with the cooperation of trade unions, employers, NGOs and related organizations. Governments accepted that, in addition to measures at the government level, such as enforcement of legislation, community awareness, the motivation of employers and the cooperation of parents and social and religious organizations were also necessary to do away with child labour in both the formal and the informal sectors.

Employers' statement

294. Ms. Carmelita Caparas (Philippines) presented the statement of the Employers' group, which saw in the alarming growth of child labour in the region ample grounds for urgent action. Vigorous monitoring could ensure that the progressive elimination of child labour became not just an aspiration but a reality. Employers had an important role to play in bringing this about.

295. The case studies and country papers reflected the extent of child labour, including its worst forms, in the region and highlighted the challenges posed. One of the greatest challenges was overcoming the social partners' limited reach and informal-sector coverage.

296. Community involvement was crucial to the success of child labour monitoring because monitoring was well beyond the reach of governments alone.

297. For employers to contribute to monitoring efforts, there was a need for advance agreements with the community. Such agreements might include parents, manufacturers, operators and, in some cases, even the children themselves. Further awareness-raising activities targeting employers was also called for.

298. Individual employers could encourage their employees to support efforts to eliminate child labour, sensitize subcontractors and suppliers and lead initiatives at the local community level. At the enterprise level, employers could change production

processes to remove the potential employment for children, reduce hazards at workplaces and consider social issues when formulating business plans.

299. Beyond the enterprise level, employers could support efforts to gather reliable data from the formal and informal sectors, boost the performance of local schools, influence curriculum development, provide assistance to or develop income generating activities that allow families to send their children to schools, and provide vocational training.

300. Employers could participate in task forces, along with members of trade unions, NGOs, women's groups, consumer groups and clubs, in order to improve promotional and monitoring efforts. These groups could supplement and even assist in validation efforts made by IPEC projects.

301. In monitoring child labour, employers' organizations could advise appropriate adjustments in project interventions. Employers had a role to play in policy making by recommending changes to laws and government interventions. Employer networks were well-positioned to provide relevant services to enterprises.

302. Employers' organizations should be strengthened by various ILO activities to enable them to carry out their roles more effectively. The development of expertise within employers' organizations could contribute to project sustainability.

Workers' statement

303. Mr. M. Zahoor Awan (Pakistan) expressed the Workers' hope that the country plans of action would be used in a concrete fashion to address the problem of child labour. Conventions 138 and 182 required, *inter alia*, new legislation to tackle the worst forms of child labour.

304. There was a need to address the issue of poverty; but whereas poverty might be a cause of child labour, it was not the only cause. Child labour itself created poverty. While 250 million of the world's children were at work, 500 million adults were unemployed. A number of children were engaged in construction work even for such salubrious projects as the building of an extension of the very hotel at which the ILO chose as a the venue of the meeting. The children earned no more than of 50 cents a day.

305. Just four days' global military expenditure would have been enough to eradicate the whole child labour problem. If military expenditure in Pakistan had been reduced, billions of dollars would have been available to meet the primary education and health care needs of children.

306. Export processing zones were being set up in developing countries, like Pakistan, and multinationals were taking advantage of cheap labour, which was a form of deprivation considering levels of remuneration against levels of work. These companies respected only minimal worker rights. National and international agencies should assess

the human rights sacrifices that labourers had to make for multinational companies. Pleading a need for investment, such companies operated without raising the quality of life of their workers, who had to sacrifice the rights of their children together with their own. Despite a spectacular rise in global income, one-fifth of the world's population still went unfed every night and a quarter were still subject to abject living conditions.

UNICEF statement

307. Ms. Shahida Azfar underlined UNICEF's wish to continue sharing experience, pooling skills and working together for the elimination of child labour.

308. She referred to the landmark MoU signed between UNICEF, the ILO and the BGMEA, under which UNICEF had supported the enrolment of about 10,000 garment factory child workers under 14 years of age in non-formal education centers, and the ILO had managed a well designed monitoring system to ensure child-labour free garment factories.

309. Bangladesh had pioneered many innovative initiatives, which were well known globally, from early work in Comilla on rural development to micro-credit schemes. Oral Rehydration Saline projects were saving millions of lives around the world.

310. The provision of quality basic education for all children was both a sustainable approach to addressing child labour and an end in itself. A lack of income and realistic options was pushing the children of poor families out of school and into work. The pressure on children to work and contribute to household incomes was intense. Micro-studies showed that children contributed as much as 15 per cent of family income.

311. Children in the ILO/UNICEF/BGMEA project were able to stay in schools thanks to a stipend of 300 taka (a little over US\$5) per month. They also received a quality non-formal education from two well-known NGOs, funded by UNICEF. In addition, UNICEF was able to provide skills training to some 1,100 of those children. The ILO had also been providing skills training for those not included under the original project.

312. The ILO/UNICEF/BGMEA project had helped her agency extend basic education to hard-to-reach children, targeting some 350,000 urban working children with non-formal education under a subsequent project.

313. UNICEF hoped to forge vital links with governments, development partners, other UN agencies, employers, communities, families and, not least of all, children themselves to develop sustainable programmes to meet the common objective of putting paid to child labour.

ILO statement

314. The Director of the ILO Area Office at Dhaka spoke on behalf of Ms. Mitsuko Horiuchi, ILO Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific, who regretted being unable to attend as originally planned.

315. Tackling child labour, and in particular the worst forms, could not be done only by law. A successful and sustainable response would have the form of an integrated programme, where attention was paid to the education of the child, poverty alleviation, and income and employment generation, as well as the education of employers and communities, parents and policy makers.

316. One common point that came out of all the country presentations was that child labour was a complex, multi-sectoral problem that required a multi-sectoral response. Collaboration with UNICEF was therefore almost a *sine qua non*.

317. Addressing child labour in an integrated manner was a costly operation and those concerned needed to combine resources and also enlist the assistance of other organizations for planning and implementation, including the United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Development Programme, the World Food Programme, the World Health Organization, the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank.

318. Convention 182 recognized explicitly the need for international cooperation to eradicate the worst forms of child labour. This was an indirect call for collaboration on legislation (for example on trafficking), as well as for financial assistance through IPEC. This call had already garnered widespread support during previous year, and IPEC continued to grow. The challenge was to maintain current levels of achievements. In an interdependent world, donors' resources had to be used wisely and successfully.

319. Thanking representatives for their active cooperation and support during the regional meeting, the Director drew their attention to the fact that the ILO had been a tripartite alliance from the start and that more and more countries were now recognizing the need for such an alliance. She mentioned that the Philippines had set an example by putting together a tripartite task force to complete the preparatory work for ratification of 182.

320. NGOs and other civil society organizations had proved themselves to be important partners in the fight against child labour. This was even more evident when it came to invisible and sometimes illegal child labour - which had presented traditional partners with an enormous challenge.

321. To some extent that challenge was only a reflection of a deeper issue. Trade unions and employers' organizations had been aware for some time of shifting employment patterns and changes in the labour market. Often called the challenge of the new millennium, these changes had been on the agendas of several international

conferences involving trade unions and employers. In the absence of a ready-made model available for periods of profound transformation, innovation had become a tool for survival.

323. The informal sector posed the greatest single challenge to those seeking to eliminate child labour. New ways had to be found to help those to whom monitors had little access.

324. It was important for tripartite groups to get involved in workplace monitoring. The original contention that monitoring should be performed by labour inspectorates had to change. Bangladesh and other countries had shown how effectively the authorities could collaborate with others on workplace monitoring.

325. The Director expressed her appreciation for the contributions of all tripartite constituents and hoped that the meeting had given them new ideas to take home and encouraged them to pursue their difficult tasks, which were essential for the futures of our children.

Annex 1: Programme of the meeting

ILO/Japan Asian Regional Meeting
on
Monitoring Child Labour at the Workplace
(24 - 26 October 2000, Dhaka)

PROGRAMME

Tuesday, 24 October 2000

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|---------------|--|
| 08.30 - 09.00 | Registration |
| 09.00 - 09.50 | Opening session |
| 10.30 - 12:00 | Presentation and discussion chaired by Ms. Mitsuko Horiuchi, ILO Regional Director, Asia-Pacific Region.

Presentation and discussion on The Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), focusing on enforcement and implementation by Mr. Frans Roselaers, Director, InFocus Programme on Child Labour, ILO.

General overview of child labour in Asia by Mr. Wahidur Rahman, Regional Adviser, ILO-IPEC. |
| 12.00 - 12.15 | Statement by Mr. Kenji Tsunekawa, Representative of the Ministry of Labour, Government of Japan, with special reference to labour inspection and child labour. |
| 13.30 - 15.30 | Presentation of country papers: Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Mongolia, Nepal and Pakistan. Chaired by an Employers' participant. |
| 16.00 - 16.45 | Presentation of country papers: Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Viet Nam. Chaired by a Workers' participant. |

16.45 Separate meetings of Employers' and Workers' groups to prepare statements on the monitoring of child labour.

Wednesday, 25 October 2000

08.00 - 08.45 Briefing on the BGMEA-ILO-UNICEF Child Labour Monitoring and Verification Project, Bangladesh by Mr. Christian von Mitzlaff, ILO Chief Technical Adviser.

08.45 - 12.00 Field visit to project sites.

13.00 - 14.00 Presentation and discussion chaired by a Government participant.
Employers' statement (by an Employers' participant).
Workers' statement (by a Workers' participant).

14.00 - 15.00 Tripartite panel presentation and discussion on child labour inspection with Mr. Md Dalil Uddin Mondal, Government of Bangladesh; Mr. Fasihul Karim Siddiqi, Employers' Federation of Pakistan; Ms. Luisa Logan, Trade Union Congress of the Philippines; and one INGO. ILO experience to be presented by Mr. Nasir Dogar, Project Manager, Combating Child Labour in the Soccer Ball Industry in Sialkot.

15.30 - 16.30 Tripartite panel presentation and discussion on child labour monitoring in the informal sector by Mrs. Benjamas Prachankhadee, Government of Thailand; Ms. Pudjiati Azia, Employers' Association of Indonesia; Mr. Buddhi Ram Acharya, General Federation of Nepalese Trade Unions; and one INGO. ILO experience in other Asian countries to be presented by Mr. Antero Vahapassi, Chief Technical Adviser, Programme to Combat Child Labour in the Footwear and Fishing Sectors, South-East Asia. Chaired by Ms. Claudia Coenjaerts, Director, ILO Area Office, Dhaka .

16.30 Open forum on community mechanisms for the elimination of child labour in Asia with representatives from NGOs/INGOs and the media. Chaired by the Editor of Bangladesh's *Financial Express* daily newspaper.

Thursday, 26 October 2000

08.30 - 10.00 Group work to identify strategies for workplace monitoring and to identify and introduce community mechanisms on how to involve other groups in this process.

Group 1: How to incorporate and focus on child labour issues in the labour inspection system. Facilitator: Mr. Wahidur Rahman.

Group 2: Role of social partners to promote effective child labour monitoring. Facilitator: Mr. Christian von Mitzlaff .

Group 3: Community mechanisms to support the role of employers, workers, NGOs and the media in monitoring child labour at the workplace, including the informal sector (focusing on domestic work). Facilitator: Mr. Antero Vahapassi.

11.30 - 12.30 Group work to develop plans of action on child labour monitoring at the workplace.

14.00 - 15.30 Presentation of group work chaired by Ms. Claudia Coenjaerts

16.00 Closing session

Government, Employers' and Workers' statements.

Statement by Ms. Shahida Azfar (UNICEF)

Closing Remarks by Ms. Claudia Coenjaerts

Annex 2: List of participants

Bangladesh

Mr. Latifur Rahman
Deputy Secretary
Ministry of Labour and Employment
Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Bangladesh Secretariat
Dhaka

Mr. M. Fashiur Rahman
Secretary
Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association
Dhaka

Mr. Towhidur Rahman
International Affairs Secretary
Jatiya Sramik Party-JSP
Dhaka

Cambodia

Mr. Ravuth Ouk
Focal Point Assistant of Child Labour Unit
Ministry for Social Affairs, Labour, Vocational
Training and Youth Rehabilitation
Phnom Penh

Mr. Chea Vichea
President
Free Trade Union Workers of the Kingdom of Cambodia
Phnom Penh

Mr Sou Ieng Van
Employer Representative
Garment Manufacturers Association in Cambodia
Phnom Penh

China

Mr. Mohui Jiang
Deputy Director
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Association of Southeast Asian Nations

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Annex 3: Acronyms

BGMEA	Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association
BRAC	Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee
ECOT	Employers' Confederation of Thailand
HR	Human Resources
INGO	International Non-governmental Organization
IPEC	International Programme for the Elimination of Child Labour
LNCCI	Lao National Chamber of Commerce and Industry
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Fund for Education