

ILO/JAPAN ASIAN REGIONAL HIGH-LEVEL MEETING ON

**CHILD
LABOUR**

JAKARTA, INDONESIA 8-10 MARCH 2000

PROCEEDINGS



INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE

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Foreword

The Asian Regional High-Level Meeting on Child Labour (8-10 March 2000) was convened in Jakarta less than nine months after the unanimous adoption, at the 87th International Labour Conference in Geneva, of the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182). A reflection of the international community's determination to save children from certain intolerable forms of child labour, the Convention had already become the object of a campaign to secure ratifications by all ILO member States.

In hindsight, the Jakarta meeting appears to have set the momentum in Asia and the Pacific for timely ratification of Convention 182. At the opening session in the State Palace, the President of Indonesia personally signed the instruments of ratification, making Indonesia the first Asian country to ratify all eight "fundamental" ILO Conventions. The signing also made Indonesia the first country in Asia and the tenth in the world to ratify Convention 182. As noted by the ILO's Executive Director for Standards and Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, Indonesia's ratification was a significant boost to the campaign, whose scope and strategy was explained to participants by the Director of the ILO's InFocus Programme on Child Labour.

The meeting also heard technical presentations on efforts to root out child labour in Asia, on labour inspection and workplace monitoring and on the growing scourge of trafficking in children and women. Representatives from other organizations – intergovernmental, financial and non-governmental alike – broadened the perspective through particularly insightful contributions. Their presence underlined the ILO's conviction that the fight against child labour could succeed if the tripartite partners worked together with allies from a broad spectrum of society.

As the number of ratifying States in our region grows, I believe that the Jakarta meeting, whose proceedings are recorded hereafter, will be counted as a turning-point in the struggle against child labour in general and its worst forms as an immediate priority.

Yasuyuki Nodera

ILO Regional Director (Asia and the Pacific)

Proceedings

ILO-Japan Asian High-Level Meeting on Child Labour (Jakarta, March 2000)

1. The ILO-Japan Asian High-Level Meeting on Child Labour was held in Jakarta, Indonesia from 8 to 10 March 2000.

2. The High-Level Meeting was attended by 42 participants from 15 countries. They included 15 Government representatives from various ministries as well as 14 Employers' representatives and 15 Workers' representatives. One resource person, 14 observers and nine ILO officials also followed the debate.

3. The High-Level Meeting comprised five technical sessions as well as presentations of country papers and country plans of action.

Opening session

4. The Indonesian President, Mr. Abdurrahman Wahid, opened the meeting by signing the instrument of ratification of the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182).

5. Indonesian Manpower Minister, Bomer Pasaribu observed that Indonesia had ratified all eight of the ILO's core Conventions. This had been accomplished as part of the new Government's political reforms in the field of employment, in which fundamental principles and rights at work were protected.

6. Supported by technical assistance from the ILO, Indonesia was preparing action plans for the elimination of child labour.

7. Mr. Kari Tapiola, ILO Executive Director for standards and fundamental principles and rights at work, declared it an honour to witness Indonesia's ratification of Convention 182 and hoped that many more countries would sign in the near future. The ILO would encourage those who were nearing ratification to consider similar public signings to help raise public awareness.

8. The ratification of Convention 182 was an encouraging sign that the Indonesian Government wished to establish fundamental principles and rights at work. Indonesia had now become the first country in Asia, and the sixth in the world, to ratify all eight core Conventions of the ILO.

9. Ten countries had ratified Convention 182. Brazil, Ireland, the United States, Malawi, Slovakia, Tunisia, the Seychelles, Finland, Botswana and now Indonesia. This was an encouraging response to what the Director-General of the ILO had called a global common cause.

10. The ILO expected many other governments to follow suit and that swift ratification would take place in countries where the process was already underway, as in the Philippines and Nepal.

11. IPEC, the largest programme in the world on the elimination of child labour linked 90 countries, including 20 donors, in a broad alliance against the exploitation of children's rights to education and personal development. The programme had achieved many results during the nearly ten years it had been operational and was growing all the time in size and importance.

12. In developing countries alone, 250 million children were forced to work. The basic reason for this was insufficient development and this would not be remedied overnight or through legislation alone. The importance of Convention 182 in this context was that it encouraged the fight against child labour, increased awareness of the problem and also prioritized necessary action.

13. Convention 182 acknowledged that it would take time to eradicate all forms of child labour and that this would come about only with sustainable development and free compulsory basic education for all. But there were forms of exploitation so bad that poverty could not warrant allowing them to continue.

14. Even among the poorest of the poor, children, and particularly girls, should not be kept in bondage or forced into prostitution or other indecent commercial aims, or into hazardous jobs that stunted their development or endangered their lives.

15. Once the worst forms of child labour had been tackled, the wider problem would seem more manageable and there would be greater confidence in broad-based action by governments, employers, trade unions and civil society.

16. Labour standards and technical cooperation went together and there was a need for a combination of political will, public awareness, and the right methodology.

17. Indonesia had provided an opportunity to examine the implementation of core labour standards in general. The ratification of all the fundamental Conventions

had followed a simple but effective pattern, developed through mutual cooperation.

18. There were three requirements for the implementation of core labour standards: (a) the political will to proceed with ratification; (b) the ILO's mobilization of expertise and resources; and (c) support through national tripartite cooperation.

19. In looking at fundamental principles and rights at work, the ILO had concluded that follow-up action in a country had to reflect prevailing circumstances there. Although these rights were universal, their practical application had to be adapted to the country in question.

20. Ms. Mitsuko Horiuchi, ILO Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific, acknowledged the commitment made by the President and the Government of Indonesia to the promotion and protection of human rights at work.

21. The issue of child labour was particularly pressing in Asia, where some 22 per cent of children were at work. Child labour robbed children of the right to education and deprived society of promising citizens for the future.

22. Girl children were particularly vulnerable as they were often the first to be removed from school in times of hardship and were then sold or trafficked. This reflected a belief that it was not worth investing in their futures.

23. IPEC recognized how complex the problem of child labour was. The programme had taken children out of work but had also given them schooling and offered their families alternative sources of income. It had brought together governments, employers, workers and NGOs to fight child labour and such partnerships were an integral part of its work.

24. Ratification of Convention 182 alone was not enough: the implementation of its provisions was vital. Although there had been progress, there was no room for complacency, and in many areas the challenge was growing. It was hoped that Indonesia's example would serve as a guide for all countries.

25. Mr. Hideaki Domichi, Japanese Ambassador to Indonesia, noted that Indonesia had experienced a dramatic drop in real income and a rise in absolute poverty following the financial crisis. The impact on the most socially vulnerable people had been severe. The number of street and working children had probably increased and general conditions concerning child labour had worsened.

26. In response, the Indonesian Government had taken a series of measures in cooperation with international organizations and donors, such as the creation of new jobs in labour-intensive industries and the provision of assistance to small and medium-sized enterprises.

Technical session (a)

Ratification of the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999

(No. 182): A worldwide campaign

27. The director of the ILO's InFocus programme on child labour (Mr. Frans Roselaers) stated that the ratification campaign had to include the introduction of national policies and legislation. It targeted key players, including government officials, inter-governmental organizations, employers' and workers' organizations, NGOs and the news media. These were all groups that could assist the campaign and their participation would considerably raise levels of public awareness.

28. Ten countries worldwide had already ratified Convention 182, including Indonesia, and two dozen more were expected to ratify shortly. There had been positive, broad-based debate and member States had demonstrated a real desire to contribute to this global cause.

29. The start-up phase had seen the establishment by IPEC of the Ratification Campaign Team and its infrastructure. The team had gathered information to facilitate campaign targeting in countries where ratification was a prospect and had also produced advocacy materials and provided assistance to IPEC offices on national ratification campaign initiatives. The team had focused its efforts on 34 key events.

30. The second phase would run until the end of the year 2000 and involve the distribution of 20,000 copies of the main campaign leaflet in English, French and Spanish; the identification of a further 50-100 key events; the building of a significant profile within the national and international media; and the launching of an International Support Committee made up of VIPs.

31. The third phase would run throughout 2001. The effectiveness of campaign strategies would be reviewed and an exchange of information between national campaigners would bring the best strategies to the fore. National targets would also be reviewed and a further 50-100 events would be chosen for special attention. By this

point, campaign materials would be available in French, Spanish and, hopefully, in other widely used languages.

32. Campaign materials had to “speak” to a multi-cultural audience and propose positive solutions to the problems highlighted. They also needed to be visually impressive and consistent in style to strengthen the campaign’s professional image, impact and cost effectiveness.

33. Consistent campaign content had to be based on IPEC case studies and best practices and should highlight successes and human-interest stories. The social partners had all helped create materials that addressed the problems in different countries in accessible ways.

34. No form of publicity could be ruled out. Written materials, street theatre, radio, television and travelling puppet shows had already been used and the Campaign Team was producing a series of short videos with subtitles in many different languages. Portable exhibits had also been developed and would be made available for constituents’ use.

35. The Internet was another cost-effective and popular medium. IPEC was working with experts from Asia to update its website and make it a more useful campaign resource. Interactive CD-Roms, though more costly, were being used effectively.

36. The response to this campaign had been encouraging and the ILO believed it could make serious inroads into eliminating the worst forms of child labour. Asia was at the forefront of the campaign and it was hoped that the pioneering work already being done there would be imitated worldwide.

37. The long-term aim of the ILO was the universal eradication of child labour and it was hoped that Convention 182 would match the success of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. A shorter-term objective was to achieve ratification by half of the ILO’s member States in two years. In addition, it was important not only to press for ratification but also to support country efforts to implement the Convention.

38. Mr. Tapiola stressed that success depended not only on the ILO, but also on governments. The African Heads of State, which constituted one-third of the ILO’s membership, had already pledged to ratify Convention 182 by June 2001. Some member States from the Americas had made the same pledge and several European

countries had also committed themselves. Countries in the Asia Pacific region had not yet had a meeting at which they could announce their intentions, but the situation was very positive.

39. Mr. Roselaers added that the number of countries having ratified the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138) had doubled to over 80 since 1995. No country had ratified all the ILO Conventions but ratification of ILO Conventions was not as easy as other international treaties. For example, 67 countries had ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child on the day of its adoption, but this was impossible with an ILO Convention because of the requirement for extensive consultation and tripartite agreement.

40. Mr. Tapiola acknowledged that, in some countries, structures for the eradication of child labour were not in place. The question of ratification in these circumstances had been considered in discussions with the Indonesian Government prior to ratification of Convention 182 and the Government had decided to proceed with ratification on the understanding that implementing structures would be developed and that social dialogue and national cooperation would be brought in.

41. The traditional view was that ratification was the final stage of the process and that conditions for implementation should already be in place. However, it was in line with the promotional nature of the international labour standards system that, if the prospects for implementation were good, ratification should go ahead. In such circumstances, the first report to the supervisory mechanism of the ILO would have to include an explanation of the background circumstances to ratification and the progress that had been made since. However, it would not be possible to proceed with ratification if a country faced legal or constitutional impediments or where tripartite agreement could not be reached.

42. An Employers' representative welcomed the progressive approach to eradication that the ILO had suggested and emphasized that the quality of eradication was more important than the number of ratifications. He also felt that the "hysteria" that had been directed against certain industries employing child labour, for example the Pakistani carpet industry, had been counter-productive.

Special addresses

The Cambodian situation

43. Mr. Ith Sam Heng, the Cambodian Minister of Social Affairs, Labour, Vocational Training and Youth Rehabilitation, said that a 1996 survey undertaken in Cambodia had found that around 600,000 or 17 per cent of children of 5-15 years of age were in work, mostly in the informal sector.

44. Only 25 per cent of working children could combine work with schooling. Primary and secondary schools were free and children were obliged to attend school for nine years, but poverty forced children into work. Girls were also forced or tricked into prostitution.

45. Article 48 of the Constitution of Cambodia stipulated that the State should protect children's rights as detailed in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. To that end, Article 177 of the Labour Law set the minimum age for wage employment at 15 years. The minimum age for any kind of employment that, by its nature, could be hazardous to the health, safety or morality of an adolescent was 18 years.

46. Cambodia had ratified Convention 138 on 19 July 1999. Recently, a report on Convention 182 had been submitted to the competent authorities for consideration with a view to its ratification. Besides this, Cambodia had:

- (i) created a National Council for Children to discuss and coordinate activities related to child issues in Cambodia;
- (ii) adopted a law on the suppression of kidnapping, trafficking and the exploitation of people;
- (iii) signed a Memorandum of Understanding with IPEC for a five-year programme to eliminate child labour by establishing a Child Labour Unit attached to the Ministry of Social Affairs, Labour, Vocational Training and Youth Rehabilitation.

47. A number of other international organizations and NGOs, among them UNICEF, the UNDP, UNHCR and OXFAM, had also actively contributed to realizing Cambodia's objectives. Recently, the United States had agreed to provide US\$1 million to eliminate child labour in several regions and occupations such as salt-panning, rubber planting and fishing.

Pakistan's National Plan of Action

48. Mr. Yousaf Kamal, Secretary of Labour, Pakistan, explained that after the formation of an IPEC National Steering Committee in 1994 and a number of surveys of child labour in 1996, a taskforce had been set up to formulate national policy.

49. Despite changes in the country's Government, the political will to eradicate the worst forms of child labour had been consistent. Pakistan had passed many acts dealing with child labour over the last 70 years and was a signatory to five ILO Conventions and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Nonetheless, political will needed to be backed by further improvements in the legal and constitutional framework.

50. Approximately one-third of children of compulsory school age (more than 12 million) were not attending school. Of these, 3 million were economically active, with nearly 2 million of these in the Punjab region and over 1 million in NWFP. Eighty-nine per cent were in urban areas. Over 70 per cent were unpaid family helpers.

51. Pakistan's national policy had the following objectives:

- the immediate eradication of the worst forms of child labour;
- the progressive elimination of child labour from all sectors of employment;
- the establishment of regular monitoring and inspection systems to supervise the implementation of the National Action Plan;
- the prevention of entry into the labour market of underage children by offering educational alternatives; and
- the ensuring of at least primary education and skills training for targeted children.

52. Short-term strategies focused upon awareness building and community mobilization, the establishment of a monitoring and evaluation system, the provision of special protection for the most vulnerable and the withdrawal of children from exploitative labour in order of priority. Medium-term goals included the training of the inspection services, the building of institutional capacity, the development of educational and training systems for victims and universal attendance at primary

school. Long-term aims were full implementation of the law and the empowerment of families through training, the provision of economic opportunities and the expansion of social safety nets.

53. The Ministry of Labour was responsible for legislation, policy development, awareness raising and liaison with international bodies. The Ministry also provided a forum for the exchange of information between interested agencies and was continually monitoring and analyzing the situation. Other ministries played a role in specific areas, such as education, social welfare and health, but the Labour and Manpower Department was the focal point and had established special resource centres to coordinate activities under the Action Plan.

54. Regular meetings were held with other departments, workers' and employers' organizations and NGOs to ensure and evaluate their involvement. All of these groups collaborated closely and were involved in many projects including advocacy and awareness building, rehabilitation and the provision of education. IPEC provided technical support, some financial support and advice.

55. Regular reports were given to the Federal Government on the status of implementation and considerable progress had already been achieved. All those involved in the formal monitoring of child labour had undergone training and 20 IPEC projects were already under way.

56. Mr. Kamal confirmed that Pakistan was presently considering the ratification of Convention 182.

Technical session (b)

Labour inspection and child labour

57. An ILO expert (Mr. W. von Richtofen) enlarged on the recommendations of a September meeting of experts on Labour Inspection and Child Labour.

58. Labour inspection had been a powerful tool in the drive for social protection since the nineteenth century. But its effectiveness had been hobbled somewhat over the years.

59. According to ILO estimates some 250 million children between the ages of 5 and 14 were working full or part time. Almost half of these were working all day, 365 days a year.

60. It had to be recognized that children were often involved in light work as part of their socialization, perhaps learning skills for later involvement in a family business. This work could give rise to problems but did not generally qualify as child labour. Child labour referred to those children who were denied education, worked long hours for low wages, were often separated from their families and worked in conditions that restricted or impaired their development. This was in violation of international law and, often, national legislation.

61. Legal obligations notwithstanding, many countries withheld political support for labour inspection. It was estimated that the cost to a country in accidents at work, illnesses, absenteeism, exploitation, industrial conflict and the like was 5 per cent of GDP. However, in many developing countries, less than 0.1 per cent of the national budget was spent on the whole labour administration system, with only a fraction of that going towards labour inspection.

62. Political will was not just about financial resourcing. It was also about providing a policy framework and a legal base for labour inspection. This needed to be transparent. Inconsistencies with other laws, such as variances in the minimum age and confusing definitions, had to be eliminated. The responsibility of individual government departments needed to be clarified.

63. The commitment to eliminating child labour had to be firmly established in national laws and policy. This had to be matched by a properly resourced and trained labour inspectorate since labour legislation without labour inspection was but an exercise in ethics, not a binding social discipline. Legislation itself had to be clear about the rights, powers and duties of labour inspectors empowering them to enter and search premises while specifying any limitations on that power. In this way, alone could employers, employees, children and their families, outside agencies and the community at large understand the function of inspectors.

64. An inspector's right to enter workplaces had to include domestic workplaces. Strong legal penalties had to be imposed to fend off intimidation from third parties and senior officials.

65. Labour inspectors should also have a role in the prosecution of offenders and be recognized as part of a network concerned with law enforcement, which should also include the office of the state prosecutor, judges and police. Therefore, inspectors needed training in how to investigate complaints, conduct enquiries, initiate prosecutions and give evidence.

66. A labour inspectorate had to be efficient and trusted in the professional performance of its duties. Staff had to be trained in law and commerce, as well as the measures to protect workers and children in particular. They also had to be able to maintain confidential records, collect statistics and provide analyses and reports. Inspectors needed social and communication skills to interact with workers and employers to gain their cooperation in upholding the law and to liaise with other agencies, officials and technical personnel. They also needed conciliation skills and sensitivity.

67. Labour inspectors should enjoy special status, recognition, respect and support at the political level to be as effective as possible.

68. Inspectors dealt with a myriad of labour issues. It was essential that their training should emphasize the real need to eradicate the worst forms of child labour.

69. An inspection service had to work to a clear national enforcement policy that emphasized prevention-oriented methods, balancing advisory and supervisory elements with broader longer-term monitoring techniques and starting with birth registration and school attendance records. Employers should be urged, first and foremost, to comply with the law.

70. Clear strategies were also necessary to prioritize work in situations hazardous to minors, to define clear objectives for intervention and to cover all types of workplaces. It was sometimes said that the labour inspection system was not competent to deal with the informal sector. However, it had to target the informal sector too, albeit with different strategies.

71. There was no established rule as to how inspection routines should approach child labour. It could be investigated as part of general labour inspections or in a dedicated way. Inspections might focus on specific campaigns or national action programmes or on sectors of industry or specific industrial processes. The important thing was to ensure that locating the worst forms of child labour remained a priority.

72. When problems had been identified by an inspector or reported by the public, special visits might be needed. An integrated approach to inspection might make each visit more cost effective as a number of labour regulations could be monitored simultaneously, but this would require a higher level of competency on the part of inspectors if problems were not to go unnoticed. Follow-up visits might be

essential where corrective action had been required of the employer. Failure to follow through on visits would undermine a service's effectiveness.

73. Labour inspection necessitated cooperation with all ministries concerned with safety and welfare and with local authorities, which could provide invaluable local information on child labour. Working with NGOs, concerned employers' and workers' organizations and other interested groups helped to identify abuse, gain access for inspections and bring about change. Cooperation with the police and other parts of the judicial system was of particular value.

74. The five most common problems were: (a) finding and gaining access to premises; (b) lack of understanding of an inspectors' role; (c) violence against inspectors; (d) lack of children's cooperation; and (e) age verification.

75. It was often the case that resistance appeared to come from the child. This could be genuine, based upon mistrust and misunderstandings about the role of inspectors. It could also be related to ignorance of the harmful effects of the work or lack of education. Children could be worried about family finances or the reaction from their community or their family if they were seen to complain. Girls could be inhibited by having to talk to a male inspector.

76. Inspectors had to be flexible and able to persuade others of the positive effects of their work. They might also need to be more imaginative in their questioning. For example, if a child was lying about his or her age, an inspector could ask how old he or she was when a particular event happened.

77. Direct threats of violence had to be counteracted by a strong and clear policy to criminalize such behaviour as an obstruction of justice. All over the world, labour inspectors were facing regular threats, both verbal and physical.

78. Applying sanctions for child labour offences was a very complicated issue that required consideration for the families affected. Inspection without enforcement and enforcement without the application of effective legal sanctions would not reduce the incidence of child labour. Unless laws were seen to be vigorously enforced, good employers would become resentful of the competitive disadvantages they perceived in employing only adult workers.

79. Sanctions would have to be used occasionally. Where appropriate, they should be applied swiftly and with full political support. Their use should also be

publicized to warn bad employers and encourage good ones. Sanctions would also reinforce the message to society as a whole that the exploitation of child labour, particularly its worst forms, was not to be tolerated.

Workplace monitoring to combat the worst forms of child labour

80. An ILO expert (Mr. Antero Vahapassi) noted that workplace monitoring was a powerful tool for securing transparency and credibility in child labour projects. It was a component of a number of ongoing projects in the region and substantial experience had already been gained in two important projects: the Child Labour Verification and Monitoring System in Garment Factories programme in Bangladesh and the Elimination of Child Labour in the Soccer Ball Industry project in Sialkot, Pakistan.

81. The basic elements of IPEC's prevention and monitoring programmes were: (a) ensuring cooperation and active participation among workers' and employers' organizations, district and other government departments and NGOs; (b) assessing child labour in industrial estates; (c) helping employers set up internal monitoring systems; (d) operating credible external monitoring teams; (e) zoning areas for visits; (f) establishing databases; and (g) creating linkages to social protection components.

82. Survey statistics could provide invaluable information on child labour but much could also be extrapolated from information provided by participating employers. Such information included the location of local production centres and production figures. External monitoring teams could complement and extend the work done by internal monitors or could follow product groups or processes involving several employers.

83. Both the Bangladesh and the Pakistan projects had benefited from strong external pressure to stop the use of child labour because they involved exports that had become highly controversial abroad. These were such poor countries that child labour had grown in importance just as the industries concerned had become essential economic lifelines. This had helped develop a significant level of cooperation between the employers and inspection teams.

84. There had also been differences between the two programmes. The Sialkot project had been operating in the informal sector, the work being carried out at home, or at newly created stitching centres, rather than in factories, as in Bangladesh. It had therefore been necessary to monitor the transfer of production from homes to stitching centres. Certain cultural circumstances had also been different: Bangladeshi women

were used to working outside the home whereas Pakistani women were not. What is more, monitors had been given access to educational facilities in Bangladesh.

85. Monitoring in Pakistan had been more time-consuming and complex. More than 1,000 stitching centres had to be monitored at five-weekly intervals; area-based monitoring covered over 1,000 villages. Visits had been unannounced and randomly selected each morning. Monitors had worked in pairs, usually one male and one female. Efforts were facilitated by the fact that manufacturers representing 80 per cent of total production had joined the project voluntarily.

86. The success of the Sialkot project could be judged, inter alia, by its success in eliminating child labour from all stitching centres by 31 October 1999. As many as 185 non-formal schools had been established and the country's ailing soccer ball industry, which employed 20,000 families, had been saved. The Bangladesh project had reduced child labour from 43 per cent to 2.5 per cent in its 2,300 participating factories. UNICEF had established 341 schools, and a total of 1.4 million workplaces and US\$4 billion worth of trade had been saved.

87. Four other projects were already operational in Asia involving workplace monitoring. The Surgical Instruments Industry Project in Sialkot (Pakistan) involved approximately 400 factories, whose subcontractors relied on child labour in their 2,000 workshops. It was estimated that between 5,000 and 7,000 children under the age of 14 might be concerned. After conducting a preliminary survey, ILO monitoring teams would make random, unannounced visits to workshops and schools that were being established.

88. The Carpet Weaving Project in Punjab Province, targeted Pakistan's largest cottage industry, one whose trade value approached US\$172 million. An estimated 20,000 to 30,000 children under 14 years of age were concerned. The project would operate in two districts and monitor about 8,000 children and 2,000 younger siblings and their families. Teams of monitors would begin monitoring two to three months after the establishment of a social protection programme and would carry out inspections village by village. Social protection undertakings would include non-formal education centres, pre-vocational training centres and income-generation activities.

89. The Subregional Project on the Footwear Sector in Thailand, Indonesia and the Philippines was aimed at informal footwear producers, most of them families, in

these countries. The ILO would appoint four monitors and a team leader in each country who would carry out monitoring in collaboration with government inspectors. There would also be related social protection activities.

90. The Subregional Project on the Fishing Sector in Indonesia and the Philippines would focus on children involved in hazardous forms of fishing, in particular, jermal offshore fishing in Indonesia and *paaling* fishing in the Philippines. Monitoring would rely on support from government agencies responsible for enforcement and would cover remote recruitment areas, far from fishing locations. The programme would include social protection measures, income-generation activities and awareness raising.

91. The following needs had been identified:

- cooperation and collaboration between employers/manufacturers, workers' organizations, district administrations and other governmental departments;
- the clarification of concepts of child labour and child work from the beginning of the project;
- the provision of assistance to participating employers wishing to set up internal monitoring systems;
- the identification of the industrial sector, or area of concern, and the definition of what could be effectively monitored with respect to the number of visits needed and expenses involved;
- the operation of an external monitoring team, involving ILO project staff;
- the transparency, credibility, professionalism and confidentiality in the identification and zoning of areas for visits;
- a monitoring database; and
- linkages to the social-protection components of the programme.

92. Mr. Vahapassi stated that, as yet, there was no ongoing project for domestic workers, although this was an area in which efforts were being made to gather information. However, it was important to make sure that certain types of

part-time, traditional family work, which were allowed under Convention 138, did not interfere with schooling and were not hazardous.

93. In the past, monitoring had been limited to registered work units but the ILO now had projects that were undertaking area-based monitoring.

94. It was true that industries producing goods for export had been easier to enlist in the fight against child labour than other less structured industries. One ambition of the ILO's subregional project for the fishing and footwear industries was to broaden efforts to combat child labour into other sectors.

95. Mr. von Richtofen expressed surprise at a suggestion that inspections relating to child labour might be carried out separately from labour inspections. Most employers were unhappy to have a variety of inspectors visiting for different purposes and the prevailing trend was to bring all inspections under one banner.

96. Although child labour was a social problem, it was also unlawful, just as failing to carry insurance or obtain trading licenses. Where there was child labour there were always other labour problems, such as health and safety breaches, and those had to be dealt with for the sake of all workers.

97. Inadequate or unclear laws on child labour needed to be reinforced and made more transparent to facilitate enforcement by labour inspectors.

98. Ms. Kelles-Vitanen, an observer from the Asian Development Bank (ADB), observed that the reason why child labour laws were often so complex was that child labour arose in a complex cultural and social environment. She also drew attention to the gender aspect of child labour. A disproportionate number of girl children in the region were not registered at schools. This was a reflection of the attitude against investing in girls' futures, which could be hidden behind statistics on child labour.

Trafficking in children and women in Asia: A regional overview

99. Ms. Karen Tumlin, a resource person from the Asian Research Centre for Migration in the Institute of Asian Studies at Chulalongkorn University (Thailand), said that trafficking was generally, although not exclusively, defined as the recruitment and potentially the transportation of persons within and across borders by use of deception, force or coercion, and was often a precursor to labour exploitation. This had to be

distinguished from voluntary labour migration and was broader than the commercial sex industry.

100. Her research drew on secondary information and conversations with regional experts in 11 countries in South and South-East Asia.

101. It remained extremely difficult to estimate the incidence of child trafficking. For example, government statistics in Bangladesh suggested that between 1993 and 1997 over 13,320 children had been victims of trafficking, whereas UNICEF held that some 4,500 children were trafficked from Bangladesh to Pakistan annually. There were similar disparities in statistics for other countries. This was partly because statistics did not always distinguish between adults and children and between voluntary migrants and forced migrants. It was also because of the covert nature of the trade. Therefore, statistics had to be viewed with caution. They could however give a sense of the massive scale of the problem.

102. It was also clear that the problem was growing. Children were trafficked for many reasons. The sex industry, including both prostitution and pornography was the most salient. Bonded labour (e.g. for domestic work) and begging gangs were also magnets for trafficking.

103. The profiles of child victims and the reasons for their involvement were strikingly similar across the region. The two commonest traits were low levels of education and rural origins. Changes were being seen in the average age “confirmed” prostitutes working in “known” establishments in Thailand showed a 20 per cent increase in the number of child prostitutes from 1996 to 1999, a period when the total rise in prostitution was only 3 per cent. The trafficking of boys was also increasing.

104. The literature had pointed to children from ethnic minority backgrounds being more vulnerable, but recent research suggested that this might not be the case and that rural children might have benefited from the protection offered by their smaller, more watchful communities.

105. There were both “push” and “pull” factors to account for children’s entry into trafficking and these could arise from individual/family or societal circumstances. Factors relating to the individual/family were poverty, lack of education, dysfunctional home lives, personal problems, a history of sexual abuse and the lure of “easy money”. Societal factors included a lack of income-generating activities, cultural values and traditions, the pecuniary value of virginity, the demand for young girls in the sex

industry, weak law enforcement, the profitability of the trade and the general impact of globalization.

106. Trafficking involved deception, corruption and collusion between recruiters, traffickers, employers and, often, certain law enforcement agencies. The deception began with the child being lured, usually by somebody familiar and trusted, into leaving home. The parents were often paid in advance for releasing the child, not understanding that the child would be bonded against repayment of a “loan” they were unlikely ever to be able to repay.

107. Trafficking took place in spite of all the international, regional, subregional and national conventions and laws against it. Though not without some positive effect, legislation should be strengthened and refined to treat children as victims rather than offenders, to provide child-friendly legal fora, to provide stronger penalties and mandatory jail terms for offenders and to address the related issue of money laundering.

108. There had to be increased coordination between the key players concerned with trafficking and increased awareness of the importance of the problem, so that everyone worked to the same end. Some laws were difficult to enforce because they failed to adequately define trafficking. In addition, essential cross-border agreements and extradition treaties were often not in place and attention needed to be given to streamlining the lengthy legal processes involved in returning victims to their home countries.

109. There had recently been some effective government initiatives in the areas of prevention, protection and the removal, healing, return and reintegration of victims. Prevention work had included raising community awareness of the risks associated with child labour and promoting alternative income-generating and educational opportunities. Further work had included the use of best practices in the dissemination of information by translating materials into local languages; using former victims for outreach work; providing skills useful to children, matching training to prospective employment areas; and designing programmes to allow children recreation time. Unfortunately, programmes such as these were generally limited to large urban centres.

110. Comprehensive policies were lacking in the areas of protection and removal of victims. The essential link between removal, healing and reintegration of the child was rarely made and children were often rescued before a plan for their shelter, recovery and return had been created. Best practices included giving special training to police

officers and establishing women's and children's desks at police stations. Profitable collaboration had also taken place between NGOs and law enforcement agencies.

111. Following rescue, the healing of victims was essential to successful reintegration, but this was difficult and time-consuming. Services were scarce throughout the region. Best practices incorporated psychological, job training and educational services at children's centres, but there were few such services geared to trafficked children in Asia and the Pacific. There was also a need for health-care services. Former victims and their families and communities needed intensive casework, both before and after reintroduction, to come to terms with traumatic experiences.

112. There was more work to be done, but the political appeared to exist. More attention had to be given to the trafficking of children for purposes other than prostitution and to the trafficking of boys. Law enforcement had to be improved. Increased coordination between the agencies involved was essential, as was greater international cooperation, notably in regard to extradition treaties. More careful research was also needed so that future action could be planned on the basis of reliable information.

113. Discussion then focused on the role of the ILO in relation to the trafficking of children for prostitution: could this be regarded as child labour? It was agreed that prostitution did not follow the usual employment model in the formal sector but there were similar examples in the informal sector. Many children were bonded by the debt of a "loan" paid to their parents by traffickers. This situation also arose in the formal sector. It was noted that news reports sometimes suggested that parents had consented to their child being trafficked for this purpose. However, the small studies carried out had shown that parents almost never understood what they were agreeing to and they did not know of the conditions their children would face.

114. In some communities it was accepted, and sometimes expected, that children would find work away from home and there was a reliance on the money they sent back to their families. However, this did not mean there was an acceptance of children working as prostitutes. There was a significant difference between voluntary economic migration and trafficking.

115. Trafficking could take place within and across national boundaries and the media played a role in drawing children in by glorifying the opportunities of life in the cities and in richer countries.

116. Ms. Kelles- Vitanen pointed out that child trafficking was a regional problem that required subregional approaches. It was important to know where trafficked children were going to and from, but monitoring this across national boundaries was difficult.

117. Ms. Tumlin suggested that, while it was possible to do small-scale research examining movements across part of one border or activity in a specific city or area, wider studies might not give a sufficiently detailed and reliable picture.

118. On so complex an issue, it was significant that the ILO did not work in isolation and had increased its cooperation with other agencies including the Asian Development Bank, UNICEF and the World Bank. All had been contributing to programmes on poverty alleviation, employment creation, enterprise development and child labour, which were plainly interlinked.

Eliminating the worst forms of child labour in Asia

119. An ILO expert (Ms. Claudia Coenjaerts) recalled that since the launch of IPEC in 1992, it had evolved into a partnership of nearly 90 countries. In Asia, IPEC had Memoranda of Understanding with 11 countries and a less-formal agreement in two more. The aim of IPEC was the progressive elimination of the worst forms of child labour, and Conventions 138 and 182 set out the policy framework.

120. Convention 182 identified the worst forms of child labour, but each country, after consultation with employers' and workers' organizations and other interested parties, had to decide which of these to treat as a matter of priority.

121. IPEC sought to balance prevention work against the need to rescue children from child labour situations. Prevention was the best and most cost-effective option. Rescue involved different alliances, such as with the police or local communities and the various services involved in reintegration. Whenever there had been abuses of basic human rights there could be no grace period.

122. IPEC's country programmes built on broad-based partnerships that contributed to sustainability and emphasized in-country ownership. This work included situation analyses, formulating and implementing national policy, awareness raising, building capacity, law enforcement, mainstreaming of child labour policies and direct assistance to children and their families. A second approach was sector/industry-oriented programmes, such as those in Pakistan.

123. Many countries already had national policies relating to child labour. These should be the umbrellas under which work proceeded. However, many would need refining to define a specific approach to the worst forms of child labour. A child labour policy should form part of a network of interlinking and interrelated policies such as those covering poverty alleviation, education (including non-formal education), skills training, AIDS and drug relief. It should also include a definite timeframe and be set within a legal framework in line with ILO standards.

124. Data collection provided the knowledge basis for planning and implementation. It was therefore important that the methodology for research was adequate and that it was appropriately targeted (whether at a geographical zone or identified vulnerable groupings). In some cases rapid assessments might be essential as a first step.

125. People would not commit themselves to eradicating the worst forms of child labour unless they were aware of what the worst forms of child labour were and what effects they had. Awareness raising was not a matter of handing out leaflets; it meant changing, fundamentally, the way people thought about child labour, and challenging attitudes to cultural and gender issues. Communities had to be engaged in a dialogue and had to see the need for change. They had to have an interest in achieving a positive outcome.

126. Community participation was the only path to ownership of an issue and therefore to sustainable outcomes. This meant participation at every stage of planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. There needed to be decentralized decision-making wherever possible with stepped-up local capacity.

127. The enforcement of laws against child labour and the prioritization of existing and new child labour policies went hand-in-hand with reinforced public awareness of the importance of the issues.

128. Assistance could take many forms and should come in a carefully designed, integrated package of measures to ensure that children did not become victims of or return to the worst forms of child labour. These should include education, social and economic empowerment for families, and rehabilitation and accommodation according to the needs of children, their families and communities. It was not difficult to design attractive packages of intervention for those targeted; it was more difficult to fund them on a long-term basis.

129. In some cases it might be necessary to directly compensate people for lost income, but this involved risks including the long-term cost of such measures, the possibility of encouraging dependence and the difficulty of ensuring that the target group actually reaped the benefits. A balance had to be struck between the necessity of such steps and the risk of the falling short of the mark.

130. Previous projects had shown that intervention had to be carefully planned with help from children, parents and teachers. It had to give children the usable skills and a relevant curriculum and had to respond to the problems of children who had been out of school for a long time. Additional educational support might be needed, along with counselling and social assistance.

131. Many countries' action plans focused on income-generation activities. The social and economic empowerment of families and communities was clearly vital for the prevention and eradication of child labour. However, this was a huge task and it was important to identify the most vulnerable groups and target them first. Government programmes should work to provide social safety nets.

132. Successful rehabilitation of victims might require the provision of professional social and psychological help, particularly where the worst forms of child labour were concerned. These methods could also facilitate local participation and ownership and reinforce the capacity of the community. However, a Western approach to such problems should not be imposed where there might be other local/cultural approaches that offered better chances of success.

133. Isolated initiatives did not work. A coherent policy was required with scheduled plans of action and a mechanism to oversee implementation against the background of a strong legal framework. ILO standards could form the basis of that framework. Good situation analyses were also necessary to enable accurate targeting.

134. Prevention was more cost effective and preferable to later removal and rehabilitation. However, where removal was necessary, children had to be given relevant alternatives and any economic incentives/activities offered to families and communities had to be sustainable within a broader strategy. Awareness raising had to be an integral part of all interventions.

135. Perhaps most importantly, popular participation in identifying problems and in designing and implementing solution-oriented activities was the greatest guarantee of success.

136. Mr. Jose M. Espanol, Jr. (Philippines) stated that cooperation with IPEC had resulted in positive action in his country, with funding assured by a three-year grant targeting the worst forms of child labour. One of these forms involved hazardous work in small mines. Dialogue had confirmed that parents did not want their children to do this type of labour but there was no economic alternative. Therefore, a new project would include the provision of relevant training for the children. Employers had agreed to give those children withdrawn from this work priority for vacancies when they reached the legal age for work.

137. Mr. Zoilo de la Cruz (Philippines) felt that projects had to offer immediate financial assistance to families to enable them to survive without relying on their children's income. This should be in the form of capital to start small businesses. Children (particularly girls) would not leave their communities if there were a way of surviving and economic hope for the future.

138. Mr. Victor Karunan, an observer from Save the Children UK, agreed that Conventions 138 and 182 provided a legal framework from the labour perspective but argued that child labour was not just a labour problem. Other instruments also dealt with this issue and the matter required the collaboration of all interested agencies as well as the involvement of local people and existing local resources.

139. Ms. Coenjaerts referred to some small IPEC initiatives involving economic empowerment through the provision of loans or credits for businesses. It was important that communities were involved in identifying their own problems and needs and that this information was fed into action plans from the bottom to the top.

140. Mr. Roselaers confirmed that the ILO could not intervene during armed conflict but that it did offer help to children who had been involved in such situations.

Global March presentation: What after the Global March?

141. Ms. Ma Cecilia Oebanda, an observer from Child Workers in Asia, explained that The Global March Against Child Labour had been the first and most important campaign of its kind against child labour. It had contributed to the adoption of Convention 182 by the ILO and had succeeded in raising awareness in the 112 countries involved. It had begun with a physical march, but the work had continued beyond that.

142. In 1999, the General Assembly of the movement had agreed a threefold

agenda for the next three years: (a) to intensify the campaign for wider ratification of Convention 182 and to monitor progress; (b) to work for free compulsory education; and (c) to address the broader issues connected with child labour.

143. The Global March had proved the power of partnership and cooperation and had been able to transcend official mandates, historical and policy differences and biases. It focused on the needs and rights of children who were paying the price of a poverty they had not created.

Panel discussion

144. Ms. Laura Skolnik, an observer from the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), described how, in 1998, ESCAP had begun a project on the prevention of commercial sexual exploitation and sexual abuse in 12 countries in the region. The organization had carried out research into the health needs and the availability of health services for victims of sexual exploitation and found common traits among them. Almost all had suffered some form of prior sexual abuse, they generally came from dysfunctional family backgrounds and they had low levels of education, literacy and self-esteem.

145. Throughout the region there were almost no services to meet victims' psychological, physical and social needs, except those provided by NGOs. Therefore, training was needed for health and social workers from both NGOs and governments, especially in the area of reintegrating victims.

146. ESCAP had implemented training programmes for NGO and government workers that had included education on psychosocial development, medical problems, risk-identification and case management. Workers needed to know how to keep track of a file when there was multi-agency involvement and how to ensure necessary community action was taken.

147. Mr. Yoshiteru Uramoto, Senior Programme Officer, Planning and Advocacy, UNICEF, observed that, since the link between child labour and education was so strong, UNICEF was focusing in some countries on ensuring access to education.

148. UNICEF helped support the national protection system in Indonesia, working with communities to prevent child labour and assisting in lobbying for improvements in services. At the regional level, UNICEF worked with IPEC on child labour and with other organizations on child trafficking. The challenge ahead was how

to get all parties working together to serve the best interests of the child in the most productive way.

149. As children did not have a trade union, UNICEF had tried to build an organization that would speak on their behalf, involving a network of NGOs, governments, the press and social interest groups. In addition, they had set up a telephone hotline and network to help investigate abuses and were involved in extensive advocacy work.

150. There was a lot of child labour in the world, but not all of it was exploitative. Countries had to decide what was unacceptable, and then expose this to the world.

151. Ms. Kelles-Vitanen advised that there had to be economic and social development to complement ratifications of Convention 182 and that governments had to have the will to implement change. Child labour was a broad-based problem that must be tackled on all levels. The ADB's prime objective was poverty reduction, with the emphasis on economic growth and social development.

152. As a result of discussions with governments in the region, the ADB was one of the first to have a "good governance" policy. It believed that sound economic management encouraged a sound private sector economy and enforcement of environmentally friendly and transparent laws.

153. The ADB did not target child labour through particular projects but integrated its concern in all its work. For example, it provided financial assistance to two projects in Thailand and another in China upon condition that child labour was not used.

154. General development created employment and encouraged the private sector to develop jobs that would help alleviate poverty. It also led to land reforms. However, many parents were illiterate and had low skills and it was difficult to create jobs for them without training.

155. The problem of child labour was a social one that could not be blamed on employers alone. Abuses also took place in households.

156. In response to a direct proposal that the World Bank and the ADB should write off debts upon condition that the money was used by countries for social expenditure, Ms. Kelles-Vitanen stated that initiatives had already been taken, mainly

in Latin America. In Asia, only Viet Nam and the Lao PDR were involved and they were already eligible for the “soft loan window”. Unfortunately, governments were not always willing to apply for these arrangements for fear of undermining market confidence. Furthermore, 50 per cent of loans were given for social, humanitarian or environmental purposes.

157. Mr. Karunan (Save the Children UK) explained that his organization worked in 50 countries and its mission statement was based upon the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. It had prioritized work under Convention 182 in this region. It had been working with governments for some time and was now starting to work with trade unions and the private sector.

158. Child labour was a complex problem that needed a broad partnership between organizations. All work had to be sensitive to local practices, cultures and contexts. Save the Children saw itself as in partnership with children and families. Work on child labour needed to address the difficulties of cross-border problems. Above all it had to be remembered that trafficking was a crime and should be dealt with as such.

159. Save the Children sought the immediate ratification of Convention 182, together with the establishment of national mechanisms for implementation. This required a clear strategy, planning, monitoring and evaluation of work, which should observe best practices. Social capital needed to be strengthened and the capacity of the community had to be increased. There had to be social mobilization from the bottom up to demand ratification and implementation of Convention 182.

160. At the policy level, Save the Children had established an Ethical Trade Initiative, which recommended ethical trade practices and encouraged accountability in the corporate sector. At the practical level, it was working in Mongolia, the Philippines and Viet Nam to build children’s capacity; to gather, check and analyze statistics relating to children and child labour; and to suggest suitable alternatives. In Viet Nam, this included a photo project where children took photographs of their workplaces. The organization was also helping to train government officials at border crossings to identify and deal with trafficking problems, and was providing legal assistance to prosecute paedophiles operating across national boundaries.

161. Countries should be aware that it was not possible for all aspects of child labour to be dealt with immediately, so the worst forms had to be prioritized for immediate elimination.

162. Save the Children had taken a decision at the beginning of the Global March that involvement was a decision for its national offices – bearing in mind that Save the Children was an alliance of over 30 independent groups. The consensus at the time had been that the Global March was ideologically driven and was promoting the total abolition of all forms of child labour. There had been some countries that did not agree with that focus due to concern that immediately abolishing all work for children, not just the worst forms, could have severe consequences for them and their families. Negotiations failed to resolve differences.

163. It was acceptable for children to undertake light work that was not harmful to their development and did not interfere with study. Problems arose when the work was hazardous or harmful to a child's development or education. Communities needed a viable social alternative to the worst forms of child labour.

164. Mr. Ch'ng Hoon, an observer from the ICFTU-APRO¹, expressed his discomfort at discussing so serious a social problem in a luxurious hotel. Poverty was a major cause of child labour. If workers were paid a proper salary, they would be able to send their children to school and the children would not have to work.

165. The ICFTU would aggressively pursue the ratification of Convention 182, but any ratification had to be backed up by the political will to implement the Convention.

166. Examples of work undertaken by the ICFTU included working with Japanese affiliates to start 20 schools in rural communities, two projects on bonded child labour in Pakistan and the opening of four schools in India. Other schools had also been opened by smaller affiliates in Delhi. Despite this, the ICFTU believed that the provision of schooling should be the task of governments.

167. Ms. Maria Zaldarriaga (Philippines) stated that the Employers' Confederation of the Philippines supported Convention 182 and had undertaken work in awareness raising, produced a video, run workshops and seminars among employers, conducted consultation meetings and set up a web page. The Confederation was also part of a network involving the media, the Government and NGOs, helping to design practical action programmes. These initiatives included the notion of "child-friendly firms", which, among other criteria, would have to provide training opportunities.

168. The Confederation also intended to strengthen mechanisms for social dialogue, identify children at risk, create monitoring mechanisms and design

¹ International Confederation of Free Trade Unions – Asia Pacific Regional Organisation

programmes for action. National mechanisms were needed and the ILO's help would be required.

169. Mr. James Tumbuan, an observer from World Vision International, insisted that any approach had to address poverty while raising public awareness of children's problems. It should not be forgotten that children's income was a lifeline for many families. The children themselves had to understand their own vulnerability so that they could reduce their exposure to risks. In Jakarta, World Vision was providing schooling and a food-for-work programmes to bring children into shelters.

170. Ms. Oebanda, an observer from Child Workers in Asia, described how her organization worked with NGOs and governments in 15 countries, had played a significant role in advocacy on child labour and had been a catalyst for social change. The organization's current programme aimed to strengthen links with governments, other NGOs and trade unions. Child domestic workers, bonded child labourers and trafficked and migrant child labourers were priority groups.

171. With IPEC funding, child workers in Asia had framed a bill of rights for domestic workers living away from home. It had also provided direct services, such as temporary shelters, telephone hotlines and a return-to-school programme with a flexible schedule allowing for some work. These measures reached 5,000 children.

172. Ratification of Convention 182 had to be followed by action programmes. This was a Convention for the people and they had to be involved in its implementation.

173. Ms. Ma Vicenta P. de Guzman, an observer from the Brotherhood of Asian Trade Unionists (BATU), noted that the Brotherhood was composed of 14 national workers' organizations and trade unions from 11 countries. It worked to overcome differences between NGOs, trade unions, employers' organizations, governments and children in order to achieve cooperation, openness and a sense of shared responsibility among all parties.

174. The fundamental principles of the Brotherhood were human dignity, dignified work, social justice and development. It continually assessed and changed society and had taken part in the Global March and a global programme for human rights and international standards with other regional organizations and international trade federations.

175. The so-called BATU-NORM programme had been established in Asia in

1994 to teach trade unionists to use international conventions as catalysts for change. Its goals were the promotion of children's rights through advice, information and education; the protection of children's rights through legal action; and social integration through the development of skills and micro-enterprises.

176. The programme was divided into three phases: (a) awareness building; (b) the improvement of standards and practices; and (c) putting policies on the worst forms of child labour into action. Booklets in four languages, posters and stickers had been distributed.

177. An example of the Brotherhood's work was with children employed in unlicensed tourist and port industries. The organization had assisted families to move their businesses and had organized cooperatives and alternative work.

178. Mr. Samuel Lieberman, an observer from the World Bank, pointed out that the Bank had a global child labour programme and was investing in projects in Brazil and jointly funding a project on access to education in Indonesia

179. The ratification of Convention 182 without social progress would have little meaning. Child labour had to be seen as a social problem and not just a problem of employers or other individual groups.

180. Mr. A.W.D.D. Seneviratne (Sri Lanka) suggested that it might be possible for employers who were offering training or education opportunities to workers to extend their assistance to the workers' families. He thought the ILO could look at this and provide some kind of certification similar to the Child Friendly Firms initiative.

Country presentations

Bangladesh

181. Bangladesh recognized the need for the effective abolition of child labour.

182. Government practice regarding international labour standards was to elicit comment from concerned government ministries, agencies, employers' and workers' organizations as well as the Tripartite Consultative Council. International standards were then considered by the Parliamentary Standing Committee for the Ministry of Labour and Employment.

183. A copy of Convention 182 had been sent to all concerned parties. After comments were received, the Convention would be put to the Tripartite Consultative Council and the Parliamentary Committee for discussion. The results of this discussion would be communicated to the ILO in due course.

184. Bangladesh's priorities for future action were as follows:

- expediting the process of ratification for Convention 182;
- updating the situation analysis and conducting sectoral studies;
- formulating child labour policy;
- institutional development;
- awareness raising;
- non-formal education and skills development;
- economic empowerment; and
- rehabilitation of working children.

Cambodia

185. Cambodia had already ratified seven fundamental ILO Conventions and was preparing to ratify Convention 182.

186. The Cambodian National Council for Children had endorsed a five-year plan against the trafficking and exploitation of children. It had also put into practice a US-funded project to combat child labour.

187. Further action would include developing a national policy to prevent child labour, building institutional capacity and developing social welfare and protection structures.

China

188. China regarded the problem of child labour as a serious issue and recognized the following priorities:

- awareness raising among families and civil society;
- poverty reduction, for which two projects had already been instigated;
- better enforcement of compulsory education, especially in rural areas;
- strengthening partnerships with social, legal and economic partners and NGOs;
- building social safety nets; and
- monitoring and inspection, to be ensured by labour inspectorates, social partners, families and children themselves.

189. China would also hold a tripartite meeting to establish a suitable framework for future work; launch a publicity campaign to mobilize the general public; hold national and international seminars with tripartite members and international experts; and make a comparative study of national laws and Convention 182.

India

190. India was committed to the elimination of child labour, particularly its worst forms. However, necessary consultation with state governments could take time.

191. A proposal would be placed before the parliament to frame specific laws for the worst forms of child labour and the Government would undertake steps to bring existing legislation into line with Convention 182. The Government would also consider certain forms of child labour as criminal offences and conduct research to identify industries where the worst forms of child labour existed.

192. A number of programmes against child labour were already in operation but were hampered by a lack of monitoring. Consequently, the Government would establish mechanisms for monitoring and law enforcement.

193. Other specific programmes would include: (a) awareness-building, training and enlisting the cooperation of the community, NGOs, employers, workers, government officials and society at large; (b) income generation and poverty alleviation for adults and the establishment of facilities for vocational training, combined with primary and secondary education; and (c) programmes for girls at special risk. All of these would be planned so as to ensure the sustainability of activities and there would be a tripartite meeting and annual review.

Indonesia

194. Indonesia would address the following priorities in relation to Convention 182:

- enforcing the law against companies employing child labour;
- establishing tripartite mechanisms for implementing child labour regulations;
- beginning work on a child labour database; and
- creating a child labour unit to handle child labour problems.

195. Furthermore, seminars would be organized to identify the best ways to eliminate child labour, and information about Convention 182 would be publicized by the mass media, employers' and workers' organizations, NGOs and universities. Together with NGOs, employers' and workers' organizations would provide scholarships for child labourers.

Lao People's Democratic Republic

196. A Memorandum of Understanding had already been signed with IPEC and the Lao PDR would set up a National Steering Committee and organize a workshop on the worst forms of child labour for the Committee's members and high-level officials. In collaboration with IPEC, a programme of assistance would be established that would focus on the following:

- capacity building for tripartite partners;
- mass media dissemination of information on the worst forms of child labour for employers, workers, local administrators and parents,

- data gathering to determine which of the worst forms of child labour existed in the Lao PDR;
- evaluation of the IPEC programme;
- putting a proposal before the National Assembly to ratify Convention 182; and
- amending existing laws and enforcement mechanisms.

Malaysia

197. Malaysia held a tripartite consultation meeting in January 2000 at which the social partners agreed that Malaysia should be able to ratify Convention 182. The tripartite National Labour Advisory Council could oversee implementation and the country would take steps to rationalize other regulations concerning the legal definition of childhood.

198. The tripartite constituents would recommend ratification to the competent authority.

Mongolia

199. Mongolia's action plan involved:

- conducting a survey to identify the worst forms of child labour;
- organizing workshops and meetings for the adoption of a recommendation on ratification of Convention 182;
- organizing a campaign of awareness building activities; and
- submitting the Convention to the legislative body for ratification.

200. A tripartite agreement on ratification was to be in place by the end of 2000 and there would be lobbying for immediate ratification.

201. Mongolia would also follow Convention 182 in new legislation and would introduce a National Action Programme for the elimination of the worst forms of child labour and a pilot project on such issues as child prostitution and work in the informal sector.

Nepal

202. A tripartite body had already recommended ratification of Convention 182 and a proposal had been submitted to parliament, which could ratify the Convention as early as its next session.

203. Nepal would focus on fighting the trafficking of girl children and bonded child labour. To this end, it would:

- carry out extensive research so that action could be directed at vulnerable communities and the roots of the problem;
- bring together various agencies under one umbrella;
- mobilize resources to free bonded child labourers and prevent trafficking in girl children;
- make inter-country agreements to prevent the cross-border trafficking of girl children;
- strengthen laws and fix responsibilities for inspection;
- provide for the physical, social and emotional welfare of rescued children;
- publicize the magnitude and prevalence of the worst forms of child labour;
- prioritize the economic development of identified vulnerable communities;
and
- formulate national policy and a programme to address the issue as a whole.

Pakistan

204. Action in Pakistan had to come from within if it was to be sustainable. It also needed to provide maximum direct assistance to the child and family and minimize expenditure on consultants. Parents needed job creation and income generation opportunities to provide them with decent wages, health services and housing.

205. There was already a programme in three districts to provide universal primary education. Pakistan set up 18 operational centres and 33 rehabilitation centres and there were monitoring mechanisms that reported to meetings at the federal, provincial and national levels.

206. The task of rationalizing laws had already been assigned to the Labour Laws Committee, which hoped to complete its work in July 2000.

207. Pakistan's future priorities were:

- development of a multi-sectoral approach, with strong integration between government and non-governmental groups to withdraw children from the worst forms of child labour without delay and provide rehabilitation services;
- identification of the nature, location and extent of the problem; and
- formulation of projects to optimize the allocation of manpower and resources through tripartite and community involvement.

The Philippines

208. The Philippines' priorities included:

- ratifying Convention 182 (scheduled for signature by the President on Labour Day 2000) and enhancing national mechanisms to monitor and implement it;
- establishing institutional/social infrastructure and aligning national legislation;
- strengthening implementation structures such as the National Council on Child Labour and its downstream components, including multi-partite and multi-sectoral agencies;
- improving the occupational health and safety of workers;
- providing incentives for employers, such as the Child-Friendly Firms scheme;
- following up on the Beijing Platform by implementing the Magna Carta for Household Helpers;

- strengthening trade union vigilance against child labour;
- forming an action programme for all identified sectors;
- strengthening mechanisms for social dialogue and continuing work with social partners and civil society; and
- taking steps towards greater social integration that addressed pedagogical, physical and psychological needs.

Sri Lanka

209. The Government of Sri Lanka had decided to move towards ratification of Convention 182 and had begun consulting social partners, NGOs and concerned government ministries and departments. Responses had so far been encouraging.

210. Priorities included:

- ensuring that the police department, the Attorney-General and others prosecute offences against children, notably their use in drug trafficking and other illicit activities;
- strengthening enforcement machinery within the Department of Labour and the police department to protect children employed in work of a hazardous nature;
- awareness campaigns for civil society and the tourist trade;
- poverty-alleviation programmes and self-employment projects;
- compulsory education regulations, more scholarships and the provision of free textbooks, school uniforms and midday meals;
- rehabilitation programmes for victims of abuse;
- implementing employer/trade union child-friendly programmes.
- a pension scheme and private sector social safety net;

- forming a national plan of action; and
- collaborating with line agencies.

Thailand

211. Responsibility for the worst forms of child labour was shared among ten ministries and covered by 50 laws. But child labour required the involvement of NGOs, children and communities. There were already 68,000 labour and welfare committee members operating around the country and these would be joined by 10,000 graduates, who would provide training and information.

212. Thailand intended to develop awareness raising, law enforcement, capacity building and access to education.

213. A technical taskforce would be formed to examine the legal requirements of Convention 182 with respect to the situation in Thailand.

214. The addition of a social and labour component to five-year plans would be suggested. An extensive database would be created. Legislation would be amended to comply with Convention 182.

Viet Nam

215. Viet Nam's priorities were: to identify and denounce the worst forms of child labour; to prevent the engagement of children in the worst forms of child labour; and to remove working children from the worst forms of child labour and reintegrate them in society.

216. Target groups would be identified and appropriate support measures would be developed. Public awareness would be raised and relevant implementation and monitoring mechanisms would be established alongside a poverty-alleviation programme and an employment-creation programme.

217. An official statement on the worst forms of child labour would serve to develop a national action plan that would incorporate:

- situation analyses and a database on child labour;

- review of existing policies on child labour;
- law and policy enforcement;
- the coordination of activities, monitoring and evaluation; and
- the integration of child labour issues into social and economic development programmes, annual and five-year development plans and agriculture and rural development plans.

Closing session

218. On behalf of the Government group, Mr. Espanol, Jr. (Philippines) hoped that what had been said at the meeting would feed into national legislation and help to establish institutional and social infrastructure to ensure a child-friendly environment in the future. That child labour was multi-dimensional had become obvious, and it was essential for everyone to work together to eradicate the worst forms.

219. Taking account of their different levels of economic development, countries could be expected ratify Convention 182 at different times. What was important was to work together to create an environment where investment reaped a fair return, workers were assured a decent income and humane working conditions and children could enjoy their childhoods.

220. On behalf of the Employers' group, Mr. Liew Shou Kong (Malaysia) agreed that the meeting had established in everyone's mind that there were many dimensions to child labour. The employers energetically favoured ratification of Convention 182 and would do their utmost to see that it was implemented. Elimination of the worst forms of child labour was a common cause, and it was a good cause. As a multi-dimensional, multi-sectoral problem, the worst forms had to be tackled through the combined efforts of a wide range of players. Community-based undertakings and projects targeting the informal sector would be important. In the end, each individual country could usefully pledge to work to eradicate child labour in Asia.

221. On behalf of the Workers' group Mr. M. Zahoor Awan (Pakistan) stressed that child labour, as a form of exploitation, was incompatible with development. Excessive profits for the few and low standards for the masses would never resolve social problems. There was never any justification for depriving workers, and their children, of the opportunity to realize their potential. It was unacceptable that in the year 2000 with

global wealth on the rise, one fifth of the world's population did not have enough to eat and a quarter had to endure conditions of poverty. International human rights instruments, particularly the new Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), held the promise of a better world, and it was important to ensure compliance with them.

222. Mr. Roselaers observed that prospects for ratification of Convention 182 in the region were good and many member States were preparing realistic plans depending on the individual circumstances in their countries.

223. It was clear that child labour was a multi-dimensional and multi-sectoral problem and country plans of action had reflected that complexity by giving due weight to poverty alleviation, employment creation, education, advocacy, legislative consequences analysis, training, capacity building and enforcement. Each area of work complimented the other and all parties would have to share their knowledge, experience and skills. IPEC took note of a general call for more data, understanding and focus, which it would strive to deliver.

224. In order to accomplish the work set out in the country plans of action, considerable effort and resources would be needed. The ILO pledged to do its utmost to enlist the support of donors, who were showing a strong interest and belief in the programmes being formulated.

225. Tackling the worst forms of child labour was a formidable task but one that was both essential and possible. Progress had been made in Jakarta, and the ILO itself would make good use the information it had gained.

226. Ms. Horiuchi, ILO Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific, expressed her thanks to all who had contributed to the success of the meeting.

227. As the conference had opened on International Women's Day it was appropriate to give special thought to female victims of child labour in Asia. Girls were especially exposed to trafficking.

228. Indonesia had already ratified Convention 182; the Lao PDR, Malaysia, Mongolia and Sri Lanka had all made a commitment to begin the process of ratification; Nepal had established a timetable towards ratification. All member States were encouraged to move toward ratification because it was universally agreed that the worst forms of child labour were unacceptable.

229. Some issues had been raised by all countries, among them data collection, multi-sectoral work, sustainability and the formation of working partnerships. The ILO would support the social partners in addressing these issues and continue to promote with all the means of its disposal the eradication of the worst forms of child labour.

Annexes

Annex I: Programme

ILO/Japan Asian Regional High-Level Meeting on Child Labour

(8-10 March 2000, Jakarta)

Wednesday, 8 March 2000

09.00-10.00	Inaugural ceremony (State Palace)
11.15-11.45	Opening session - Remarks by Mr. Tapiola, Executive Director, ILO Geneva - Video presentation - Adoption of the Agenda
11.45-12.30	Convention 182: Worst Forms of Child Labour – the ILO’s ratification campaign and implementation (Mr. F. Roselaers, Director of InFocus Programme on Child Labour, ILO, Geneva)
12.30-12.35	Statement by a high-level delegation from Cambodia
13.30-14.00	Remarks by Mr. Y. Kamal, Secretary of Labour, Pakistan
14.00-15.00	Child Labour and Labour Inspection (Mr. W. von Richthofen, Senior Labour Inspection Specialist, Safe Work, ILO, Geneva) and Workplace Monitoring to Combat Child Labour in Asia (Mr. A. Vahapassi, Senior Expert, ILO-IPEC)
15.30-17.00	Country paper presentations (presented by a Government representative and followed by comments from Employers’ and Workers’ representatives)

Thursday, 9 March 2000

08.00	Field trip
13.30-14.30	Country paper presentations (continued)
14.30-15.15	Trafficking in children and women in Asia: A regional overview (Ms. K.C. Tumlin, Researcher, Chulalongkorn University, Thailand)
15.45-16.30	Eliminating the worst forms of child labour in Asia (Ms. C. Coenjaerts, Subregional Coordinator, ILO-IPEC)
16.30-16.45	Global March presentation: What after the Global March? (Ms. Cecilia Oebanda, Global March)

Friday, 10 March 2000

09.00-11.00	Panel discussion (representatives of ESCAP, UNDP, UNICEF, WB, ADB, SCF-UK, WVI, CWA, ICFTU, BATU - Employers' representative, chaired by Mr. K. Tapiola – Executive Director of standards and fundamental principles and rights at work, ILO, Geneva)
11.30-11.40	Introduction to Group work (Mr. F. Roselaers, Director of InFocus Programme on Child Labour, ILO Geneva)
11.40-13.00	Group work
14.00-15.30	Presentations of Group work (chaired by Mr. F. Roselaers)

15.30-16.30

Closing session (chaired by Ms. M. Horiuchi,
ILO Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific)

Comments by

- representative of Governments
- representative of Employers
- representative of Workers
- remarks by Mr. F. Roselaers

Annex II: Speeches (selected)

Kari Tapiola

**Executive Director for Standards and
Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work
International Labour Office**

The ratification of the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention No. 182 by Indonesia is a logical and encouraging confirmation that the Indonesian democracy, under the wise leadership of his Excellency President Abdurrahman Wahid, wishes to continue on a firm route towards effective implementation of fundamental principles and rights at work, also known as core labour standards.

Indonesia has today become the first country in Asia – and the sixth in the world – to ratify all eight fundamental Conventions of the ILO. It is also the first one to ratify this new Convention for immediate action against the worst forms of child labour.

The fundamental Convention No. 87 on freedom of association was ratified in the summer of 1998. The remaining ones, on forced labour, non-discrimination in employment and occupation and minimum age for employment, were ratified over the next year. The fact that this new Convention is now ratified, less than a year after its unanimous adoption by the International Labour Conference, is, in itself, rare. With this ratification by Indonesia, the new Convention has already ten signatories from all continents.

It is particularly important that the larger countries of the world are getting behind this Convention. It has also been ratified by the United States and Brazil. Other countries as diverse as Ireland, the Seychelles, Tunisia, Slovakia, Botswana and Finland have also already ratified it. In the same way as Indonesia today, they have responded to, what the Director-General of the ILO, Mr. Juan Somavia, has called “a global common cause”. They have pledged immediate action for the elimination of those forms of child labour which amount to abuse and brutal mistreatment, and deprive children of their most basic rights to education, a healthy life, and a promising future.

We also know that many other governments will follow. The information that we have received, in the context of the worldwide ratification campaign on this Convention, is very encouraging. I particularly hope that, in this region, speedy action takes place in countries that have already started the process of ratification, such as the Philippines

and Nepal. Maybe also China and others, who have already ratified the other fundamental child labour Convention, No. 138, on Minimum Age for Employment.

Underlying this normative action is the technical cooperation programme of the ILO, the IPEC programme, which is the largest in the world for the elimination of child labour. It joins together 90 countries, 20 of them donors, in a broad alliance against the practice of depriving children of the most basic rights to education and personal development.

The IPEC programme has achieved many results during the nearly one decade that it has been operational. It has been growing all the time, both in size and importance. The task is daunting. In developing countries alone, 250 million children are forced to work. The basic reason for this, of course, is poverty and the lack of educational opportunities; in short, insufficient development. And this will not be remedied overnight.

Neither will legislative action alone put things in order. Standards for action against child labour are necessary guideposts, but a deep-rooted problem of this size cannot be legislated out of existence. The importance of Convention No. 182 in this context is twofold. Firstly, it is aimed at broad action that increases engagement and awareness of the problem. And secondly, it approaches the problem by underlining what has to be done first in order to gain success.

What Convention No. 182 says is that although it will take time to eradicate all forms of child labour – and in Indonesia, for example, the IPEC programme has been active for already eight years – priorities have to be set for urgent action. Full elimination of child labour calls for a process of sustainable development, with all the resources needed for, in particular, ensuring free compulsory basic education for all. But some forms of child labour are so bad, so unacceptable, that even poverty and lack of development does not justify them.

We should see to it that, even amongst the poorest of the poor, children, and particularly girls, should not be kept in bondage. They should not be forced into prostitution or to serve other indecent commercial aims. They should not have to go into hazardous jobs, which stunt their development for the rest of their life, if indeed they do survive.

Today, on International Women's Day, it is the exploited girl-child and their unhappy mothers whom we should particularly give our thoughts to. The implementation of

Convention No. 182 must pay very special attention to them.

Once we determinedly reach out to the most oppressed groups of children and their families, the wider problem of child labour will also appear more manageable. We no longer have to feel intimidated by it. There will be a growing confidence in broad-based action by governments, employers and trade unions, and the whole civil society, which has to be involved in this common cause.

And this is where standards and technical cooperation have to join hands. We do not eradicate child labour by technical cooperation alone, just as we do not do it simply by passing laws. Projects and programmes show the methodology, and, in a democracy, laws are the expression of political will.

A democratic society needs a healthy combination of political will, public awareness, and the right methodology to tackle problems. Your signature on this important document today, Mr. President, is an eloquent demonstration of this. The presence of the rest of us here today is an expression of our full support for this process.

Indonesia has helped us to deepen our understanding of the methodology of implementing core labour standards in general. The process of ratifying all the fundamental Conventions has followed a simple but effective pattern, developed in the course of our cooperation.

As your labour minister, Mr. Bomer Pasaribu, said at a tripartite conference in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, last December (and I am elaborating a little on his message); there are three things that are important and needed for the implementation of fundamental principles and rights at work. Firstly, there has to be political will to proceed with ratification of the conventions. Secondly, the ILO should channel sufficient resources for their implementation. And thirdly, this must be backed up by national tripartite cooperation; genuine social dialogue.

This is a good guide for the way in which action against child labour, as well as action for implementing the other categories of fundamental principles and rights at work, is to be promoted. This is an important message. I wish to conclude by expressing our pleasure at being able to expect that you, Mr. President, will be able to achieve it, and expand on it, at the International Labour Conference this coming June.

Bomer Pasaribu
Minister of Manpower
Indonesia

Please allow me, on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Indonesia, to extend my warm and sincere welcome to all the delegations and senior executive of the ILO, and all distinguished guests attending the opening session of the Asian Regional High-Level Meeting on Child Labour.

This meeting is held with the full support of the ILO and the Government of Japan, in collaboration with the Department of Manpower of the Republic of Indonesia. The objective of this meeting is to raise awareness of the importance of promoting fundamental principles and rights at work, particularly the prohibition of the worst forms of child labour.

This meeting is particularly important as the follow-up to the ILO Convention No. 182, adopted at the 87th ILO conference last year. The meeting, which is to be held for three days, is attended by high-level tripartite representatives of government, employers' associations and workers' organizations from 15 countries in Asia and the Pacific.

As you have been informed before, on 7 May 1999, Indonesia ratified three ILO conventions, namely No. 105 concerning the abolition of forced labour, No. 111 concerning discrimination in employment and occupations, and 138, concerning minimum age for admission to employment. With this ratification, Indonesia has ratified seven core Conventions. I also feel proud to inform you that, seven days ago, that is on 1 March, parliament adopted a bill on the ratification of Convention No. 182.

This law reform is integrated as part of the political reforms in the field of employment in Indonesia that have been conducted under the new democratic government under the able leadership of President Abdurrahman Wahid, in which the principles of rights at work are protected.

The moment when the President signed this Bill of Ratification, witnessed by the distinguished delegates at this meeting, was a great one, not only for Indonesia, but also for the ILO member countries in Asia and the Pacific. I hope that the signing of this ratification will be a memorable and stimulating event for Indonesia. During this opening ceremony, we are happy to invite children to perform as their way of celebrating the signing of this ratification. With the support of technical assistance from

the ILO, Indonesia is now preparing action plans for the elimination of child labour. It is also worth mentioning that today we are celebrating International Women's day. I believe that the ratification of Convention No. 182 will contribute to the satisfaction of all women.

Before concluding my remarks, let me once again thank Mr. Kari Tapiola, Ms. Horiuchi, Dr. Ahmed and other ILO officials for facilitating this meeting. I should also thank the Government of Japan for its valuable contribution to this meeting. I would particularly like to thank and welcome, His Excellency Mr. Ith Sam Heng, Minister of Social Affairs, Labour, Vocational Training and Youth Rehabilitation of the Kingdom of Cambodia and his delegation for their participation in our "Awareness-raising Workshops" in Yogyakarta and Bali.

Finally, I feel honored to invite Ms. Horiuchi, ILO Regional Director for the Asia Pacific Region, Mr. Kari Tapiola, on behalf of the Director-General of the ILO, Mr. Hideaki Domichi, representative of the Government of Japan, to address this meeting.

Hideaki Domichi
Japanese Ambassador to Indonesia

It is indeed a great honour for me to participate in this auspicious occasion, the opening of the JAPAN/ILO Asian Regional High-Level Meeting on Child Labour, which is graced with the presence of His Excellency the President of the Republic of Indonesia and His Excellency Minister of Manpower. The economic crisis that swept Asia including Indonesia has brought about a serious unemployment problem and deterioration of the Labour condition.

In Indonesia, the unemployment rate has not increased in proportion to the unprecedented drop in GNP, but a dramatic drop in real income and absolute poverty has spread. The impact onto the socially vulnerable people is most severe. Street children and child labour has probably increased and general conditions concerning child labour have worsened.

Faced with these situations, the Indonesian Government has taken a series of measures in cooperation with international organizations and donors, such as the creation of jobs in labour-intensive industries and assistance to the small and medium-sized industries.

In terms of ILO Conventions, Indonesia had ratified seven fundamental Conventions by last year and will today ratify Convention No. 182 concerning the worse forms of child labour.

The meeting, which starts today, will focus on child labour and promote the eradication of child labour in the Asian region. It is particularly significant that the governments and trade unions' and employers' organizations and NGOs in 15 Asian countries getting together.

We would like to pay our deep tribute to Indonesia for taking leadership in holding this meeting and for their ratification of the ILO Conventions. On the part of Japan, we will continue our assistance and cooperation in our common efforts to overcome the effects of the Asian economic crisis. In so doing, we will place more emphasis on support of socially vulnerable people.

At the same time, we take pride in working together intellectually, enlarging international cooperation, to search for and create better solutions to the problems we are now faced with.

In concluding my remarks, I would like to express my sincere hope that this Japan/ILO meeting will be a great success, so that it will contribute to the improvement of welfare and social development in Asia, as well as strengthening further the friendship between Japan and Indonesia.

Mitsuko Horiuchi
Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific
International Labour Office

I wish you all a very warm welcome to this ILO-Japan Asian Regional High-Level Meeting on Child Labour. Your Excellency, President Wahid, it is both an honour and a pleasure to have you here with us this morning, and we greatly appreciate, Mr. President, your accepting our invitation to inaugurate this meeting. The firm commitment made by you and by your Government to promoting and protecting human rights at work has been clearly demonstrated by your ratification of the ILO's newest Convention, the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182). This makes Indonesia the first country in Asia to ratify this Convention, and only the tenth in the world. Indonesia also becomes the first country in Asia to ratify all of the ILO's core Conventions. And it becomes only the sixth country in the world to achieve this. Mr. President, I offer you, your Government and the people of Indonesia my very sincere congratulations, and I know that everyone here today joins me in this. We begin our deliberations here on a very encouraging note indeed.

We are here to consider one of the most pressing issues that face the world today: the task of eliminating child labour. This is particularly true in Asia. Some 150 million children, 22 per cent of children in Asia, are working. Available data show that the large majority of working children work in hazardous conditions. There are disturbing indications that a most brutal form of child labour – that is commercial and sexual exploitation of children – is on the rise. Child labour robs children of education. Child labour robs countries of the promising citizens of tomorrow. In this globalizing world, people are our greatest asset. We live in a world in which people have never been so important.

Today, 8 March, is also International Women's Day. It is a day that, like the ILO, traces its origins back to the beginning of the twentieth century. I would like to mark the day here today by paying particular attention to the plight of the girl child – a plight listed as one of 12 critical areas of concern by the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing. For, when times are hard and families are desperate, it is the girl child who is likely to be valued less. Who may be taken out of school and put to work. Who may receive the smallest share of rice. Who may be neglected, sold, or even trafficked. Tomorrow, the girl child will be the woman who we expect will hold up half the sky. And, ladies and gentlemen, if the girl child, half our future, can't hold up her half of the sky, that sky will fall, on us.

We all know that ratification of the Convention is an important step, but that alone is not enough. Implementing its provisions is equally important. The ILO's work towards the elimination of child labour offers a good combination of normative and operational activities. The ILO's International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour, known as IPEC, recognizes how complex the problem of child labour is. IPEC has taken children out of work and given them schooling. It also offers their families alternative sources of income. IPEC brings together governments, employers, workers and NGO's to fight child labour. Partnership is the hallmark of IPEC, which is now the world's largest technical cooperation programme, with an alliance of 90 countries. More than 20 donors provide the budget, building a bridge between developed and developing countries. This meeting is part of the programme. I hope that it will offer a forum to strengthen our efforts and strategic actions, and I would like to thank the Government of Japan for the support that has made it possible. IPEC is now operating in 11 countries in Asia. Indonesia was among the first to join the programme, together with India and Thailand, when it began in 1992.

We can see progress. Still there is no room for complacency. Indeed it seems that in many areas, the challenge is growing. It is for working children, in particular the girl child that we come together here this week. It is for these children that I do appeal to you all to ratify Convention No. 182. And it is on behalf of these children and the ILO that I once again extend my warmest congratulations to you, Mr. President, and to your Government, on your ratification of Convention No. 182. Your commitment is enormously encouraging, and will help guide us toward our shared objectives over the coming three days.

Annex III: List of participants

Bangladesh

Mr. Md Sirajul Islam
Secretary
Ministry of Labour and Employment
Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Dhaka

Mr. Benajir Ahmed
Vice President
Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and
Exporters Association (BGMEA)
Dhaka

Mr. Md Shafiul Islam
Office Secretary
Bangladesh Jatiyatabadi Sramik Dal (BJSD)
Dhaka

Cambodia

Mr. Oum Mean
Director-General
Labour and Vocational Training
Ministry for Social Affairs, Labour, Vocational Training and Youth Rehabilitation
Phnom Penh

Ms. Navy Oum
Vice President
Free Trade Union Workers of Cambodia
Phnom Penh

China

Mr. Donglin Li
Director-General
Ministry of Labour and Social Security
Beijing

Mr. Bin Han
Project Director
China Enterprise Confederation
Beijing

Ms. Wang Xuemei
Section Chief
International Liaison Department
All-China Federation of Trade Unions
Beijing

India

Mr. M.A. Hakeem
Secretary-General
Standing Conference of Public Enterprises
New Delhi

Ms. Ruby Srivastava
Research Associate (Child Labour Cell)
Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry
New Delhi

Mr. Mukesh Galav
Chairman
All India Hind Mazdoor Sabha Youth Committee
Western Railway Employees Union
Rajasthan

Mr. R.D. Tripathi
Member, Working Committee of INTUC and
Coordinator, INTUC Child Labour Cell
Bhopal

Indonesia

Mr. Mohd Syaufii Syamsuddin
Director-General of Industrial Relations and Labour Standards
Department of Manpower
Jakarta

Ms. Pudjati Aziz
Vice Chairman of Social Welfare
Employers Association of Indonesia
Jakarta

Ms. Chadidjah Kaluku
Main Treasurer of the Printing, Publishing &
Information Media of All Indonesian Worker Unions
Federasi Serikat Pekerja Seluruh Indonesia
Jakarta

Japan

Mr. Mitsuru Maemura
Labour Inspector, International Labour Affairs Division
Ministry of Labour
Tokyo

Ms. Yachiho Nakada
Japan Federation of Employers' Associations
Tokyo

Ms. Ruri Suzuki
International Policy Division
Japanese Trade Union Confederation
Tokyo

Lao People's Democratic Republic

Mr. Sisouvan Tandavong
Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare
Vientiane

Mr. One-sy Boutsivongsakd
Board of LNCCI
Representative of Employers Organization of Laos
Lao National Chamber of Commerce and Industry
Vientiane

Mr. Outhay Inthathirath
Dept. Chief of Administrative Officer
Lao Federation of Trade Unions
Vientiane

Malaysia

Mr. Mohd Shariff Noorani
Ministry of Human Resources
Kuala Lumpur

Mr. Liew Shou Kong
Vice President
Malaysian Employers' Federation
Kuala Lumpur

Mr. Mohd Shafi Pakiri Mammal
Deputy President
Malaysian Trades Union Congress
Selangor Darul Ehsan

Mongolia

Mr. Dorjkhanda Byambaa
State Secretary

Ministry of Health and Social Welfare
Ulaanbaatar

Mr. Dagdan Jantsan
Vice President
Mongolian Employers' Federation
Ulaanbaatar

Mr. Sukhbaatar Zalmaa
Assistant President
Confederation of Mongolian Trade Unions (CMTU)
Ulaanbaatar

Nepal

Mr. Deep Basnyat
Director-General of Department of Labour
Ministry of Labour
Kathmandu

Mr. Jagdish Prasad Agrawal
Chairperson, Revenue Committee and Member, Employers' Council
Federation of Nepalese Chambers of
Commerce and Industry
Kathmandu

Mr. Indramani Uprety
Member Secretary of Child Labor Department
Nepal Trade Union Congress
Lalitpur

Pakistan

Mr. Yousaf Kamal
Secretary
Ministry of Labour, Manpower and Overseas Pakistanis
Islamabad

Mr. U.R. Usmani
Director (Personnel & Admin)
Singer Pakistan Ltd.
Karachi

Mr. M. Zahoor Awan
Secretary-General
All Pakistan Federation of Labour
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Philippines

Mr. Jose M. Espanol, Jr.
Undersecretary
Department of Labor and Employment
Manila

Ms. Maria Del Carmen S. Zaldarriaga
Vice President for Special Projects
Employers' Confederation of the Philippines
Manila

Mr. Zoilo de la Cruz
TUCP National Treasurer and President
of the National Confederation of Unions in the Sugar Industry in the Philippines
Trade Union Congress of the Philippines
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Sri Lanka

Mr. R.P. Wimalasena
Secretary
Ministry of Labour
Labour Secretariat
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Ms. Meghamali Aluwihare
Industrial Relations Advisor
Employers' Federation of Ceylon
Rajagiriya

Mr. A.W.D.D. Rajah Seneviratne
General-Secretary
Lanka Jathika Estate Workers' Union
Welikada Rajagiriya

Thailand

Mr. Thapabutr Jamasevi
Inspector General
Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare
Bangkok

Ms. Chariya Khanthavit
Executive Director
Employers' Confederation of Thailand
Bangkok

Viet Nam

Mr. Mau Diep Doan
Deputy Director
Department for Labour and Employment Policies
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Observers

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Programme for Human Rights and International Standards
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Ms. Ma Cecilia Oebanda
Chairperson of the Executive Board
Child Workers in Asia, Thailand
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Mr. Henri Roux
Counsellor for Social Affairs, South-East Asia
French Embassy in Singapore
Singapore

Mr. Ch'ng Hoon Hoon
Senior Officer, Youth and Child Labour
International Confederation of Free Trade Unions
Asian and Pacific Regional Organization
Singapore

Mr. Kailash Satyarthi
Chairperson SACCS & Global March
South Asian Coalition on Child Servitude
New Delhi

Mr. Victor Karunan
Regional Development Advisor
Save the Children UK
Bangkok

Mr. Ravi Rajan
UNDP Resident Representative/
UN Resident Coordinator for Indonesia
United Nations Development Programme
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Ms. Laura Skolnik
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Social Development Division
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Ms. Emmy Janssen
Project Officer, Child Protection
UNICEF Indonesia
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Mr. Yoshiteru Uramoto
Senior Programme Officer
Planning and Advocacy
UNICEF Indonesia
Jakarta

Mr. Samuel Lieberman
Sector Coordinator for Human Development
World Bank Office
Jakarta

Mr. James Leslie Tumbuan
National Director
World Vision International
Jakarta

Ms. Wiwiek Setiawati
Department of International Affairs
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
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Resource Person

Ms. Karen C. Tumlin
Researcher, Asian Research Centre for Migration
Institute of Asian Studies
Chulalongkorn University
Bangkok

ILO Participation

Mr. Kari Tapiola
Executive Director for Standards and Fundamental
Principles and Rights at Work
ILO Office
Geneva

Ms. Mitsuko Horiuchi
Regional Director
Asia Pacific Region
Bangkok

Mr. Frans Roselaers
Director, InFocus Programme on Child Labour
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Mr. W. von Richtofen
Senior Labour Inspection Specialist
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Mr. Freek Thomasson
ILO/SEAPAT
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Mr. Alain Pelce
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Ms. Claudia Coenjaerts
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Mr. Antero Vahapassi
CTA, Child Labour in the Footwear and Fishing Sector Project
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Mr. Brian Wenk
Public Information Officer
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