

**NATIONAL REPORT ON CHILD LABOUR
IN THE
WEST BANK AND GAZA STRIP**

Mervat Rishmawi



International Labour Office Geneva

**International Programme on the Elimination
of Child Labour
(IPEC)**

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Contents

	<i>Page</i>
I. Acknowledgements	1
II. Summary of report	3
A. Introduction	3
B. Findings	3
C. Recommendations	4
III. Nature and extent of the problem	6
A. Trends in the extent and distribution of child labour	6
1. General overview and context	6
2. Statistics on working children	9
B. Characteristics of child labour	11
C. Causes of child labour	18
IV. Government policies	20
A. Legislation and enforcement	20
1. Ratification of international and regional instruments	20
2. National legislation and mechanisms of inspection	21
B. Educational achievements and policy	24
1. Educational achievements	24
2. Cost of education	26
3. Educational policies	26
V. Targeted programmes	28
VI. Conclusions and recommendations	30

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II. Summary of report

A. Introduction

Child labour is not a new phenomenon in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. However, the phenomenon started to become more visible lately, especially since there has been increasing attention to children's rights in general. Various actors in the community, including official bodies of the Palestinian Authority, NGOs and United Nations specialized agencies, are engaging in projects and plans. This is gaining special momentum after the latest political developments in the country following the signing of the Palestinian-Israeli agreements, which, *inter alia*, resulted in establishing Palestinian legislative and executive authorities. Planning is now very essential and timely, particularly because Palestinians will soon be adopting new legislation, and will draw up and implement plans for the economy, the labour market, education, development, etc. It is essential to start now to identify the needs in relation to child labour in order to translate these needs into programmes and projects in the near future. However, thus far, there is very little literature and research on the subject. Therefore, this report is essential to identify the extent and nature of the phenomenon of child labour in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

The International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) of the International Labour Organization (ILO) decided to commission this national report on child labour in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip. The report aims at giving an overview of the situation based on the existing documentation, programmes and plans of the relevant actors. The report will hopefully be used to assess the extent to which child labour is a problem that would need to be addressed as an immediate priority by the Palestinian Authority, employers' and workers' organizations and other NGOs, and to prepare a programme of action accordingly.

The information used in this report was collected through interviews with the relevant persons in Palestinian ministries, workers' trade unions, and chambers of commerce who represent the employers in the country. Visits were also carried out to organizations, particularly human rights and children's rights organizations. Discussions with a number of working children were conducted. Finally, the report relied on research of published material, including newspaper articles, on the subject available in local libraries, and on taking notes from field observations.

The main quantitative findings of this report are based on three main resources. Firstly, the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics conducted the first ever survey on child labour and issued its findings in May 1996. The Palestine Section of Defence for Children International (DCI/PS) also conducted fieldwork and analytical research on conditions of working children in the West Bank. Primary findings of this research were made available for use in this report. Finally, similar field research was conducted by UNICEF in the Gaza Strip, and its findings were also made available for use in this report.

B. Findings

Child labour is mainly a result of the bad economic situation prevailing in the country. This is combined with the restrictions that were imposed by the Israeli occupation authorities on education and the lack of proper mechanisms of inspection of education and labour, and finally the lack of effective implementation of the relevant legislation. Some children also leave school because they feel that they are doing poorly at school, or because of corporal punishment that is sometimes practised in schools. A number of children left schools and joined the labour market during the years of the uprising due to the continuous prolonged closures of educational institutions that were imposed by the Israeli occupation authorities.

The current bad economic situation results from the systematic policies of the Israeli authorities all through the years of the occupation to suppress any possibility for the development

of the Palestinian economy. Particularly, the economy is affected by the closure and measures of restriction of movement that are imposed by the Israeli authorities. The total closure that has often been imposed on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip by the Israeli authorities seem to have increased dramatically after the peace process, rather than vanishing or at least decreasing. It has been estimated that the closure and prohibition of entry of adult Palestinian workers into Israel and East Jerusalem led to a loss of wages of adult Palestinians to the tune of US\$6 million per day during May 1994 and February 1996. During this period, the closure was imposed 23 times, amounting to a total of 333 days. As a consequence, about 44 per cent of the 300 children (8-15 years) interviewed by UNICEF in various parts of the Gaza Strip were forced into work to make up for the lost family income during that period. If the high unemployment rates rise further due to closures, the incidence of child labour could further increase. The current unemployment rates vary between 17 and 33 per cent in the Gaza Strip, and 11 to 30 per cent in the West Bank, depending on the extent of number of permits granted to adult Palestinian workers in Israel.

Several labour laws apply in each of the West Bank, East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip. There are some inconsistencies between these laws, and between them and the educational system. Throughout the years of Israeli occupation, the inspection system was highly ineffective in relation to child work and labour. As a result, children sometimes work in extremely hazardous occupations and under hazardous conditions, in clear violation of the law. Children as young as 8 years work as long as 12 hours per day. Children are also often subjected to physical and emotional abuse, and often work without minimum health and safety conditions. Their wages are considerably less than the wages of adult workers, amounting to half of the wages of adult workers in some cases. At the same time, the work of children seems to contribute considerably to their own survival and to that of their families. Children, in some cases, seek to work in Israel under very vulnerable conditions. They suffer from the daily fear of being harassed by Israeli soldiers and police. They are abused by their Israeli employers and are sometimes not paid their wages at all.

There is no organization in the country which takes the task of monitoring working children. This possibly reflects the relatively low level of awareness and attention to working children. The culture is also not against child labour. It can even be said that the culture encourages child labour, or is at least tolerant of it.

The work of the female child is still considerably invisible. Female children often are subcontracted to work at home in sewing and knitting. They also work in the agriculture sector, usually in family undertakings. These sectors are usually left outside the scope of the mandate of research on the subject. The female child receives little attention in the society in general, and working girls seem to receive less attention. Most of the available information on child labour totally neglected to allude to the situation and status of working girls.

There are no adequate data on the number of working children, conditions of their work, and patterns of work. The available data is highly insufficient. It is also not gender sensitive. There is almost nothing on the work of children inside Israel. There is therefore a need for more thorough studies on the subject. There are also no studies on the effects of work on children's health, psychology, education, mental growth and other aspects. Such studies are a prerequisite for adopting appropriate programmes.

C. Recommendations

- It is difficult to call for the immediate elimination of child labour in the West Bank, including Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip. What needs to be done is to identify ways to develop the educational level and the professional skills of those working children. There is also a need for schemes that give financial assistance to needy families, which in turn should contribute to decreasing the occurrence of child labour.

- The elimination of child labour can only be achieved when children are not forced to work for financial reasons. It is therefore essential that programmes for the development of the economy and for poverty alleviation are discussed, adopted and implemented immediately.
- Children that are particularly vulnerable need to gain priority in policy planning. This includes very young children, children working long hours, the female child, and children working in hazardous occupations like construction, and work with chemicals or work that involves high temperatures. While the Palestinian authority cannot take measures from its side to stop the work of children in Israel, since this is outside its jurisdiction, these children should gain priority in policy-making. They are working under particularly hazardous conditions. Research on their status and conditions should be carried out.
- The mechanisms which are currently used to implement the law, including labour inspection, are highly inefficient. There needs to be better training for labour inspectors, and more policy-oriented planning of inspection. There also needs to be coordination between the educational system and the Ministry of Labour.
- The society in general seems to be not adequately aware or alerted to the occurrence of child labour, and that it is often detrimental not only to the children and families concerned, but to the country as a whole. Child labour is a clear obstacle in the face of investment in human resources in the future. An extensive awareness-raising campaign needs to be carried out for the population groups at risk, the group that is a potential user of child labour, and for the society as a whole.
- There is a need for further cooperation between the various main actors, particularly the Palestinian Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Education, and Ministry of Social Welfare, for the designing and implementation of programmes related to child labour. Cooperation between labour and educational inspectors needs to be developed. The labour inspectorate itself needs to be further strengthened and enhanced. The Palestinian Ministry of Labour should be more actively involved in the National Plan of Action on Children and the "Agenda for Social Renewal". Some more detailed programmes on child labour should be adopted and implemented within the Ministry of Labour and with the Agenda for Social Renewal. The Ministry of Labour should be the principal bearer for planning and implementation of programmes in this field.
- The provisions of the draft Palestinian labour law that are related to children need to be reviewed. Articles should be added to the draft law to regulate apprenticeship. No working child should be left outside the mandate of the labour law. Particularly, children who work in agriculture, as servants, and in family undertakings should be subject to the protection and supervision of the law, rather than being excluded from it as the proposition is now in the draft. The review of the draft law should involve relevant and concerned NGOs and UN agencies.
- The current data available through the surveys of the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics should, in relation to labour in general and to child labour in particular, be reviewed in order to identify the gaps and problems in it to design a new base for data collection. The collection of data on various aspects of child labour should be enhanced immediately.

III. Nature and extent of the problem

The population of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip reached 2,535,000 in 1996; of these, 963,000 live in the Gaza Strip.¹ Palestinian society is distinguished by the fact that it is largely a youthful society, in which 46.9 per cent of the population are less than 15 years old.² The labour force participation rate reached 39 per cent in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip (40.6 per cent in the West Bank alone and 35.4 in the Gaza Strip).³ A considerable number of the population living in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip are refugees.⁴ It is estimated that 64 per cent of the population of the Gaza Strip are refugees, while in the West Bank 27 per cent are refugees. The percentage of refugees in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip as a whole is 40 per cent.⁵

A. Trends in the extent and distribution of child labour

1. General overview and context

Child labour in Palestine has to be viewed and discussed in the context of the particular situation whereby the West Bank, including East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip, has been under Israeli occupation since 1967. This has an effect on many aspects that relate to the topic of this paper, including: the economic situation, the applicable laws, mechanisms of supervising the implementation of the provisions of the law and, finally, possibilities of adopting other support programmes and mechanisms to eliminate child labour.

A note on the applicable laws⁶

The West Bank, including East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip, fell under Israeli occupation on 5 June 1967. About three weeks after its occupation, East Jerusalem was annexed by Israel. Accordingly, Israel started to implement Israeli law in the annexed city. On the other hand, the Israeli authorities declared when they occupied the West Bank and the Gaza Strip that the law that is applied in each of the two areas is that which was applicable before the occupation unless it is amended by Israeli military orders.

The law that was applicable in the West Bank before the Israeli occupation is different from the law that was applicable in the Gaza Strip. This goes back to the historical period at the beginning of this century when all Palestine was under the Ottoman rule, then under the British mandate which ruled the country until 1948. Both the Ottoman and British passed laws onto the

¹ The statistics are as of mid-year. See Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), 1996: *The demographic survey of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip: Preliminary report*, Ramallah, Palestine, pp. 167-168.

² *ibid.*

³ Palestine Central Bureau of Statistics, 1996. *Labour force survey: Main findings (Sep.-Oct. 1995) round*. Labour Force Survey Report Series (No. 1), Ramallah, Palestine, p. 21.

⁴ Refugees are Palestinians who fled their homes, villages and towns during the 1948 war. They sought shelter in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and the neighbouring Arab countries, particularly Lebanon, Syria and Jordan. Since then, a considerable percentage of refugees have been living in refugee camps administered by a specialized agency, UNRWA, set up by the United Nations for that purpose. Palestinian refugees have not been allowed to return since 1948.

⁵ PCBS, *The demographic survey*, p. 31.

⁶ For more details on the history of legislation in Palestine, see Anis L. Kassim: "Legal systems and developments in Palestine", in *The Palestine Yearbook of International Law*, Vol. 1 (1984), pp. 19-35.

area, with the British amending most of the previously applicable Ottoman laws. In 1948, the State of Israel was declared on part of Palestine. The West Bank, including East Jerusalem, was put under Jordanian rule, and the Gaza Strip was put under Egyptian administration. Jordan annexed the West Bank and East Jerusalem and passed its law onto it. Egypt, on the other hand, declared the Gaza Strip an entity of Palestine with independent legislative, executive and judicial authorities. Jordan has witnessed a wide legislative boom since the 1950s, replacing almost all the previously applicable Ottoman and British laws. On the other hand, in 1962, a Palestinian legislative council was established in the Gaza Strip and adopted few pieces of legislation until 1967.

This brief note on the history of the legislation in the country shows that there are different sets of laws that apply in each of the areas under the mandate of this report. The West Bank has mainly Jordanian law, few British and less Ottoman laws, and approximately 1,600 Israeli military orders applicable to it. The Gaza Strip has mainly British laws, few Egyptian orders, few Palestinian laws, more than 1,100 Israeli military orders, in addition to very few Ottoman laws applicable to it. East Jerusalem has mainly Israeli laws applied in it.

The Palestinian National Authority was established as a result of signing agreements that resulted from the negotiations between the Israelis and the Palestinians, particularly the "Gaza Jericho Agreement: the Agreement on Preparatory Transfer of Power and Responsibilities", signed on 29 August 1994; and the "Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip" (known as Oslo II), signed on 28 September 1995. According to article I of Oslo II, Israel transferred to the Palestinian Authority powers and responsibilities in civil affairs. These are assumed in accordance with the Protocol concerning Civil Affairs, attached to the agreement as annex III. A Palestinian Council was established according to Chapter 1 of Oslo II. The members of the Council were elected directly by the people in the first free elections that took place in the country on 20 January 1996. The Palestinian Council has the power to legislate on civil affairs that were transferred to the Palestinian National Authority, including the areas of labour, social welfare and education.

A note on the economy

The Palestinian economy has been systematically subjected to Israeli laws, policies and practices that lead to its current situation where it can be described as fragile, weak and highly dependent. Several UN bodies have often expressed their concern at the Israeli policies in relation to the economy of the occupied territories. The ILO itself has repeatedly commented on restrictions on the development of the Palestinian economy. It has stated in the past that the Palestinian economy is subject to massive constraints and almost totally dependent on what is in the interest of Israel.¹ It very clearly summarizes the situation as follows:

Israel is firmly in control of the keys of production and income: capital, labour, land and water, knowledge and skills. Over the years the Israeli authorities have facilitated the employment in Israel of ever larger numbers of Palestinian workers.

²

Until today, the economy of the occupied territories remains fragile, underdeveloped and fragmented, dependent and subject to massive Israeli constraints, and suffers from severe instability.³ The policy of imposing closures is one of the main ways through which Israel affects the Palestinian economy. The closure was strictly imposed by Israel at the beginning of the Gulf

¹ *Report of the ILO Director-General, Appendices (Vol. 2)*, International Labour Conference, 78th Session, 1991, ILO, Geneva, paras. 21 and 22, p. 8.

² *ibid.*

³ See *Report of the ILO Director-General* for the following years: 1993, para. 26, p. 10; 1994, para. 21, p. 9; 1995, paras. 36-38, p. 10; and 1996, para. 24, p. 8, and para. 55, p. 21.

War in January 1991, and then has been further tightened since March 1993. The imposition of the closure prohibits Palestinians from entering Israel and East Jerusalem. It has been a requirement since 1967 that Palestinians wishing to work in Israel should do so through the Israeli employment offices which grant special permits for that. The closure adds to this another requirement of obtaining an entry permit into Israel. Since 1991, even these entry and work permits have very often been cancelled or suspended. Each time this happens, Palestinians lose the wages and income brought from Palestinians' work in Israel, and from the general exchange of goods within the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, between them, and across the borders. It is estimated that approximately 46,450 Palestinians are issued permits to work in Israel and Israeli settlements.¹ In 1990, before the curfew and the closure that was imposed on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip in the wake of the Gulf War, at least 36 per cent of the Palestinian labour force was working in Israel.² Several Palestinian sources consider the figure to be conservative and that the actual dependency of Palestinians on work inside Israel was higher.

It is therefore highly difficult to understand the problems that the Palestinian labour market faces using the normal measures of unemployment rates. The rate of unemployment changes dramatically from day to day whenever an unexpected closure is imposed. It is estimated that since May 1994, the day of the transfer of powers to the Palestinian authorities in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, the losses of the Palestinian economy from the closure has reached, at 28 February 1996, about US\$726 million, which is larger than what was donated thus far to the Palestinian authorities by donor countries. It is also estimated that the closure was imposed 23 times by Israel since the entry of the Palestinian authorities, totalling 333 days. That is, the closure was imposed an average of six days every month. Losses of the wages of Palestinians working in Israel reaches approximately US\$6 million daily.³

According to the first survey carried out by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics on labour, the rate of unemployment in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip in September-October 1995 reached 18.3 per cent (13.9 per cent in the West Bank and 29.4 in the Gaza Strip).⁴ Further, the unemployment rate currently varies between 17 to 33 per cent in Gaza, and 11 to 30 per cent in the West Bank, depending on how much Palestinians have access to work in Israel.⁵ UNSCO states that the unemployment rate at the middle of 1996 stands at 29.2 per cent, which is an increase of 57.8 per cent from the end of 1995. This increase is attributed largely to the prolonged closure that was imposed by Israel on 25 February 1996.⁶ Underemployment, defined as work for less than 35 hours per week, stands at 20.7 per cent in the West Bank and 22 per cent in the Gaza Strip. Finally, labour force participation in the West Bank is 40.6 per cent and in the Gaza Strip is 35.4 per cent.⁷

One of the main conclusions from the study of UNICEF on children in the Gaza Strip is that because of the closure, and because of the resulting bad economic situation, children have been driven to work.⁸ The study shows that 44 per cent of the interviewed children started to work

¹ Figures from the Palestinian Ministry of Labour cited in *Economic and social conditions in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, Quarterly report*, Autumn 1996, UN Office of the Special Coordinator in the Occupied Territories (UNSCO), Gaza, 29 Oct. 1996, p. 21.

² *ILO Report for 1992*, para. 40, p. 17.

³ Report by the Palestinian Ministry of Labour cited in *Al-Quds Arabic Daily*, 28 Feb. 1996.

⁴ PCBS: *Labour force survey*, p. 23.

⁵ *ILO Report of 1996* (Arabic), para. 74, p. 29.

⁶ UNSCO: *Quarterly report*, p. 12.

⁷ PCBS: *Labour force survey*, p. 21.

⁸ See Dr. Fadel Abu-Hein: *Working children in the Gaza Strip*, UNICEF, draft of 31 July 1996, p. 4. The study is not yet published.

during the period when there was a complete closure imposed on the Gaza Strip and there was no access for adults to work in Israel.¹ It is thus believed that one of the main factors that lead children to work is the unstable and deteriorating economic and employment situation.

The author of this report believes that children are employed while adult workers are not, both in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, and in Israel, apparently because employers prefer children as they constitute a much cheaper and less protected labour pool. Children do not need entry and work permits to Israel as they are not allowed to work there anyway. Employers, therefore, find less trouble in employing these children in terms of having to obtain the proper permits. They are, however, under the continuous risk of search and harassment by Israeli security officers, who consider them illegally staying in Israel.

2. Statistics on working children

The percentages and figures provided in this report are mainly derived from three main sources:

- (a) A survey conducted by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) on all working persons above the age of 12. From the general employment survey, a report on child labour for the ages of 12-16 years all over the West Bank, including East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip, was compiled. This is the first survey of its kind. The survey relied on a random sample of 7,600 families, covering the period September-October 1995. It is not clear if the information was collected from the children themselves or from other members of their families.²
- (b) A survey by the Palestine Section of Defence for Children International (DCI/PS) of working children under the age of 18. The survey covered 532 children from all over the West Bank, including Jerusalem. The information was obtained from the children directly. The complete results of the survey are not published yet, but the preliminary results were made available for use in this report. Some of the preliminary results were specified to children aged 15 or under.
- (c) A study conducted by UNICEF on working children in the Gaza Strip. The survey covered 300 male children aged 8-15 years in various areas of the Gaza Strip. The information was obtained from the children themselves. The results of the study were made available for use in this report.³

UNSCO, on the basis of information from PCBS, estimates that the child labour force comprises 18,490 persons. Of these, 10,520 (or 56.9 per cent) are fully employed, 4,495 (or 24.3 per cent) are underemployed, and 3,475 (or 18.8 per cent) are unemployed.⁴ However, that information is based on a sample survey, rather than a complete blanket survey of children. The sample survey has some problems, including not adequately covering some invisible sectors of working children like girls. Further, the PCBS survey covered only children aged 12-16. However, it is very well known that there is a considerably high number of child labourers who are under the age of 12. Therefore, the author of this report believes that there are no clear statistics on the exact number of working children, including figures on children aged 15 years or under. However, the figures cited above can be used as indicators on the extent of the problem.

¹ UNICEF: *Working children in the Gaza Strip*, p. 23.

² For full information of the survey, see Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics: *Labour force survey (Sep.-Oct. 1995) round. Child labour (ages 12-16 years), Main findings*, Ramallah, Palestine, Apr. 1996.

³ See UNICEF: "Working children in the Gaza Strip". Study not yet published.

⁴ UNSCO: *Quarterly report*, p. 32.

According to the survey by the PCBS on working children aged 12-16 years old, the labour force participation of children of that age group forms 6.6 per cent, with the same percentage in each of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.¹ Of these, 16.8 per cent were unemployed during the reference week but were actively looking for a job, 24.3 per cent are underemployed, and 56.4 per cent are fully employed.²

The percentage of male child labour force participation, according to the statistics, stands at 11.5 per cent of the population of that age group, while the percentage of female participation stands at 1.3 per cent.³ However, that is not an accurate reflection of the reality of female child labour. The labour of a female child is often more invisible than that of a male child. In addition to her traditional work in household duties such as helping in cleaning and cooking, she also does some productive labour such as in embroidery, sewing, and in farming and agriculture. It is very common that such work is paid but is carried out within the household or is in family undertakings. In some other cases, girls do carry out paid employment in enterprises outside the home. It is not clear if the data available covered all these patterns as well.

The preliminary findings of the DCI/PS study show that about 52 per cent of the working children interviewed by the organization in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, are aged 15 years or younger.⁴ The UNICEF study shows that 4 per cent of the interviewed working children in the Gaza Strip were aged 8-10 years, 53 per cent were 11-13 years, and 42 per cent were aged 14-15 years.⁵

The actual employment status of these children, as shown in table 1 below, reflects that there is a high percentage of male children who are unemployed but are actively looking for work.

Table 1. Population aged 12-16 years by labour force status and sex

Sex	Outside labour force (per cent)	Labour force (per cent)			Total
		Full employment	Underemployment	Unemployment	
Males	88.5	55.0	25.5	19.5	11.5
Females	98.7	76.4	12.0	11.6	1.3
Total	93.4	56.9	24.3	18.8	6.6

Source: PCBS: *Child labour (ages 12-16 years)*, table 2, p. 22.

The table shows that the actual full employment of the female child labour force participant is higher than the actual full employment of the working male child labour force participant. It seems that the male child faces the same unemployment problems as the male adult. Further, the

¹ PCBS: *Child labour (ages 12-16 years)*, table 1, p. 21. There is no clear definition in the survey of labour force participation. However, the survey defines on page 16 the labour force as: "The economically active population (labour force) consists of all persons 15 years and above who are either employed or underemployed". The author of this report assumes that the same definition is used for child labour force participation but for ages 12-16 rather than 15 as in the earlier definition.

² *ibid.*, p. 17.

³ *ibid.*, table 2, p. 22.

⁴ The results of the DCI/PS research are not yet published. The organization is currently preparing its descriptive and analytical report of its findings and will publish that soon.

⁵ UNICEF: *Working children in the Gaza Strip*, p. 6.

rate of underemployment of male working children is almost double the rate of that of the female child. The rate of the underemployed male child is generally high (25.5 per cent).

B. Characteristics of child labour

The highest percentage of child labour, according to geographic distribution, is in the main towns of the West Bank and Gaza (7.2 per cent), then come villages (6.5 per cent), followed by refugee camps (5.2 per cent).¹ The details of the information available from the West Bank show that in the north of the West Bank (Nablus, Jenin and Tulkarem areas), the percentage of child labour is 7 per cent, while it is 6.7 per cent in the south of the West Bank (Bethlehem and Hebron areas), and 6.1 per cent in the central area (Jerusalem and Ramallah areas).²

Children principally work in the services sector (45.1 per cent), less in quarrying and manufacturing (26.8 per cent), and finally, the least percentage work in agriculture, hunting and fishing (28.1 per cent). However, the distribution of child labour according to the main industries above is not the same in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. In the Gaza Strip, a much higher percentage of children work in services (55.7 per cent), while it is only 39.8 per cent in the West Bank. On the other hand, more children in the West Bank work in agriculture and hunting (31.8 per cent) than those who work in agriculture and fishing in the Gaza Strip (20.8 per cent).³ There are no clear data on the distribution of child labour in the main industries by sex. Such information will be very valuable to assess whether there are differences of patterns of employment between girls and boys.

The available information shows that there is no uniform pattern of an industry or occupation that is primarily occupied by children. Rather, it is clear that the patterns differ from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, or between rural areas, urban areas and refugee camps. The following table shows the distribution of working children by occupation and place of work.

Table 2. Employed persons 12-16 years of age in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip by occupation and place of work

Occupation	Total	Israel and settlements	Camp	Village	City
Services, shop and market workers	13.4	7.1	16.8	9.8	16.3
Skilled agricultural and fishery workers	22.7	7.4	25.3	52.2	8.6
Craft and related trade workers	28.3	21.2	41.8	8.8	39.5
Elementary occupation and others	31.8	60.8	16.1	22.7	33.2
Other occupations	3.8	3.5	0	6.6	2.4
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Source: PCBS: *Child labour (ages 12-16 years)*, table 7, p. 27.

¹ PCBS: *Child labour (ages 12-16 years)*, table 3, p. 23.

² *ibid.*, table 1, p. 21.

³ *ibid.*, table 6, p. 26.

The information above reflects that children in the villages mainly work in agriculture (52.2 per cent), while in the cities they work mainly either in crafts and other related trade work (39.5 per cent), or in elementary occupations (33.2 per cent). Most working children in the refugee camps are engaged in crafts and other related trade work (41.8 per cent).¹ It is also interesting to note that more children from refugee camps work in agriculture (25.3 per cent) than children in the cities (8.6 per cent). There is no agricultural land in refugee camps; it is most likely that these children work in the nearby villages or agricultural land. It seems that the higher availability of occupations in industries and services in the cities leads children to work more in these fields, while in the rural areas work is mainly concentrated in agriculture.

The information does not include relevant statistics divided by gender. Such information, if available, would be valuable to detect whether there are differences in employment patterns and occupations between girls and boys. It is particularly important to see if girls are concentrated in certain occupations, which are particularly female dominant, and the same for boys. It is, for example, expected that certain occupations are almost totally dominated by boys, including work in construction, car mechanics and carpentry. It is also expected that sewing, knitting and embroidery is almost totally dominated by girls. The gender division is not clear in sectors like agriculture and services. Such detailed information will be essential for designing relevant policies in the future.

It is also clear from the table that the vast majority of Palestinian children working in Israel are employed in elementary occupations. Child labour in Israel is becoming an increasing phenomenon. There are no statistics available at all on the exact number of children who work in Israel or on the conditions of their work. However, the available documentation and reports reflect that this happens in considerable numbers.² These children are employed illegally, and their work is even more unprotected than that of adult Palestinian workers. There are also no clear indications as to whether Palestinian child labour in Israel has been affected by the measures of restrictions of movement that Israel imposes. During the closure, adult workers are absolutely prohibited to reach their work because their permits are suspended or cancelled. However, Palestinian children do not need permits to enter Israel, since permits are granted only to people above the age of 16. It is therefore possible that there is an increase in child labour in Israel to make up for the lost wages from the work of adults in Israel.

However, children's work in Israel is slightly dangerous. There are often stopped by Israeli soldiers and police and are asked for their permits, and are often subsequently harassed. The survey carried out by DCI/PS of working children, including children under the age of 15, indicates in the preliminary findings that children working in Israel have to face constantly the fear of being stopped by soldiers at checkpoints, or being caught by the police if the workplace where they are employed gets raided. They also clearly fear losing their jobs since they are totally unprotected and do not receive benefits.³ Some concerned researchers indicated that they are particularly concerned that children working in Israel are being subjected to sexual abuse and exploitation, and are being used for drug-trafficking without the child's knowledge. This is particularly so in border areas and in the northern area of the West Bank. There are no studies or reports on this. However, it is a concern that was repeatedly reiterated.

¹ This has to be seen in the light of the fact that the vast majority of the refugee camps are adjacent to the main towns in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Very few of them are in the rural areas.

² See, for example: "Horrible abuse of Palestinian children in the Israeli labour market", in *Al-Aalam*, 5 Mar. 1996, p. 60 (Arabic); *Effects of the economic situation on the Palestinian child in the occupied territories: A field work*, Dr. Hazim Shunnar and Dr. Atef Alawneh, Nablus, 1989.

³ Preliminary findings to be published in a forthcoming report on child labour by DCI/PS.

The employment of Palestinian children in Israel is in violation of the Israeli labour law which prohibits the employment of children who have not attained the age of 15, or who are still liable to compulsory education.¹

The UNICEF study gives more specific details of the types of work that children are engaged in in the Gaza Strip. The distribution of activities of the work that children interviewed are engaged in is as follows:

Agriculture	4 per cent
Market stall	20 per cent
Car mechanic	30 per cent
Blacksmith	10 per cent
Plumber	4 per cent
Construction	8 per cent
Newspaper selling	6 per cent
Street vendor	4 per cent
Commercial store	8 per cent
Labourer (other)	4 per cent
Carpenter	4 per cent
Tailor	4 per cent

However, the information above has to be read with caution. The draft of the UNICEF study does not give a division of the interviewed children according to sex. There is no evidence in the report that there were any girls among the interviewed children, and, if there were, the percentage of the total. Most of the work activities described above are typically carried out by male children, such as carpentry, construction, newspaper selling, plumbing, blacksmith and car mechanics. The UNICEF study, therefore, does not provide any information on the work of girls in the Gaza Strip.

The author of the report noticed an acute increase in child labour during summer, when there is summer vacation of schools. During that period, children work very long hours, which can extend in the case of street vendors from the morning hours to as late as midnight. Children who are street vendors in Ramallah, which is known as a centre for leisure and is a summer resort, and Gaza City, stay up selling in the streets during summer periods to as late as midnight. This is particularly so around parks and restaurants, in the main shopping area in the centre of the towns, and at the beach in Gaza City.

Further, it seems that the closure and the political situation have created some new patterns of child labour. For example, field observations accumulated during the preparation of this report show clearly that there is a large number of children who work as street vendors around the Israeli checkpoints.² This is noticeably so on the Ramallah-Jerusalem checkpoint and Eretz checkpoint between the Gaza Strip and Israel.

Further, another odd practice of child labour exists in the Gaza Strip. There, there are some streets where no Palestinian is allowed to drive while alone in the car. This condition is imposed by Israel as it believes that this reduces the number of potential "suicide bombers", who usually tend to carry out their suicide operations while driving alone in their cars. Due to this, a new practice developed where children stand on these streets and provide their service to ride with

¹ See article 2(a) of Israeli Youth Labour Law, 5713-1953.

² These are checkpoints put by Israel on the main border points between the West Bank and Gaza on the one hand, and Israel and Jerusalem, on the other.

drivers who are alone in their cars from one end of the street to the other. Such service is offered for a small amount of money.¹

The table below shows the distribution of work-hours in the normal times of the year according to occupations.

Table 3. Employed persons aged 12-16 in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip by weekly work-hours and occupation

Occupation	Number of weekly hours			
	Total	+ 35	34-15	14-1
Services, shops and market workers	100	87.1	5.2	7.7
Agricultural and fishery workers	100	40.3	40.3	19.4
Craft and related trade workers	100	81.5	14.8	3.7
Elementary occupations	100	65.9	22.5	11.6
Other occupations	100	73.0	0	27.0
Total	100	67.8	21.1	11.1

Source: PCBS: *Child labour (ages 12-16 years)*, table 11, p. 31. This survey was conducted during the months of September and October, i.e. after the end of the summer period.

The above table shows that the vast majority of children work more than 35 hours per week. The maximum working hours allowed for children aged 14-16 under applicable labour laws is 36 hours per week (see section below). The statistics also show that 79.3 per cent of employed persons aged 12-16 in mining, quarrying and manufacturing work more than 35 hours per week; 77.1 per cent of children working in services and other branches work more than 35 hours; and 41.2 per cent of working children in agriculture, hunting and fishing work more than 35 hours.² It is alarming that children working in the fields of mining, quarrying and manufacturing, particularly strenuous and hazardous work, work very long hours. There is detailed information on the work-hours and other conditions of work divided by sub-categories of occupations and industries. It is essential to know the work conditions of some occupations which are potentially hazardous or strenuous. This includes work as car mechanics, carpentry, work in some food industries that entails working with boiling liquids, and some textile and footwear production that involves inhaling fumes and working with glue.

According to DCI/PS, approximately 45 per cent of the total interviewed children who work full time work at least nine hours per day, 16 per cent of full-time workers work at least 11 hours, and 11.6 per cent work 12 hours or more. The initial findings also show that 55 per cent of those who work 11 hours or more are aged 15 years or younger. The UNICEF study indicates that 60 per cent of the interviewed children work 5-10 hours per day, and 28 per cent work 11-13 hours per day.³ The information above shows that there is not much accurate information on the working hours of children. However, the information indicates clearly that long working hours are definitely a problem that children often have to endure. This is particularly so for younger children.

¹ This information is based on a field report by Mr. Marwan Shihada, who assisted the author of this report in the field work in the Gaza Strip.

² PCBS: *Child labour (ages 12-16 years)*, table 10, p. 30.

³ UNICEF: *Working children in the Gaza Strip*, table 6, p. 9.

It is even more alarming to find that children work very long hours and receive minute wages per week in comparison with the degree of effort that they put into the work. The following two tables show clearly that children work almost as long as adult workers but receive almost half of their wages. It is not clear from the available information if the difference in wages is contributed to the kind of tasks that are carried out at the job and the degree of skill that the worker has. However, even if that is the case, it cannot explain the very large difference in wages as exists in the current situation.

Table 4. Average weekly hours, average monthly days and average daily wage in NIS for employed 12-16 year olds in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip

Industry	Average daily wage (NIS) *	Average monthly days	Average weekly hours
Agriculture, hunting, forestry and fishing	29.0	14.2	26.3
Mining, quarrying and manufacturing	30.8	20.2	43.9
Services and other branches	21.9	21.8	40.1
Total	25.7	20.2	43.7

* US\$1 equals at least NIS3.15 on average for 1996.

Source: PCBS: *Child labour (ages 12-16 years)*, table 12, p. 32.

In comparison, the following table shows the figures for exactly the same indicators for workers aged 15 or above.

Table 5. Average weekly work-hours, average monthly workdays and average daily wage in NIS for employees (15 years of age and above)

Industry	Average daily wage (NIS)	Average monthly days	Average weekly hours
Agriculture, hunting, forestry and fishing	38.1	16.8	35.9
Mining, quarrying and manufacturing	50.1	20.8	43.2
Services and other branches	62.4	23.7	42.9

Source: PCBS, derived from *Labour force survey*, table 22, p. 78.

Theses two tables show that child labourers earn almost half of what adult workers earn, although, on average, they work similar numbers of hours and days. The following conclusions can be drawn from these tables.

1. Table 4 shows that employed children in mining and quarrying, and in services, work considerably long hours per week (43.9 and 40.1 respectively). This is alarming since work in these sectors can be very strenuous and possibly hazardous.
2. Adult workers employed in mining, quarrying and manufacturing, and in services, work slightly longer hours per week and more days per month in comparison with child labourers. However, they receive considerably higher wages. Children receive an average of NIS30.8

per day for work in mining, quarrying and manufacturing, while adult workers receive an average of NIS50.1 per day. Also, children earn an average daily wage of NIS21.9 for work in services, while adult workers earn almost three times that much, their average daily wage in services being NIS62.4.

The above information does not include any data specified by sex. In fact, it seems that the information ignores some patterns that are specific to girls. Sometimes girls carry out work that they can undertake at home. This includes knitting, sewing, embroidery work, and some food processing such as drying and preparing jams, sweets and pickles. In many such situations the girls will be helping their mothers who are subcontracted to carry out that work, or who produce privately and sell their products in the local market. In some other cases, the girls carry out the work themselves, and sell their products to local shops or are contracted to do the work and sell it for community organizations. This is particularly so in knitting, sewing and embroidery work.

There are no clear studies on night work for children. However, the DCI/PS study indicates that about 9.5 per cent of all interviewed children work at least some hours at night. More than half of these are aged 15 years or younger.

Many of the work activities occupied by children are strenuous. For example, children's work in construction would often involve carrying heavy buckets of sand, or carrying large stones. Also, work as car mechanics involves strenuous work. Children often work in hazardous occupations or conditions. Children who work in quarrying inhale large quantities of dust. The Secretary-General of the Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions, Mr. Shaher Sa'id stated that he is very alarmed by the fact that children work in hazardous and strenuous jobs. He cited the example of children in the Nablus area working in the industry of producing sweets, for which Nablus is very famous. Mr. Sa'id emphasized that children work very closely to boiling sugar syrups.¹ The DCI/PS study shows that about 14.5 per cent of the total interviewed children reported being injured on the job. Many occupations in which children work pertain to risks. This includes street children, labourers in construction and car mechanics.²

There is no available information on the degree of the general availability of health and safety mechanisms in the workplaces, and the particular availability of these to children. Observations from the field research done for this report clearly show that there is hardly any safety equipment, clothes, masks, gloves, etc., used in the workplace. Labour inspectors seem insufficiently trained to identify the status of availability of such safety measures.

The DCI/PS study also shows that about 20 per cent of the interviewed children aged 15 or younger stated that their employers subjected them to physical and/or emotional violence or abuse. What is particularly alarming is that 68 per cent of those who reported being subjected to physical and/or emotional violence are 15 years of age or younger.³ According to UNICEF, 10 per cent of the children interviewed stated that they have been beaten by their employer.⁴ This should be read with caution since a number of the children interviewed in these two samples are self-employed.

One of the important aspects of the characteristics of child labour is related to how the wages earned by the child are spent. In the first place, many of the working children are not paid wages because they work in family undertakings. The table below shows the division according to place of work.

¹ This was stated in an interview conducted by the author of this report with Mr. Sa'id in his offices in Nablus.

² Preliminary findings to be published in a forthcoming report on child labour by DCI/PS.

³ *ibid.*

⁴ UNICEF: *Working children in the Gaza Strip*, table 16, p. 13.

Table 6. Employed 12-16 year olds in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip by employment status and place of work

Employment status	Total	Camp	Village	City
West Bank and Gaza				
Work for wage	59.6	42.0	36.7	67.8
Unpaid family member	40.4	58.0	63.3	32.2
Total	100	100	100	100
West Bank				
Work for wage	62.8	49.9	32.6	80.0
Unpaid family member	37.2	50.1	67.4	20.0
Total	100	100	100	100
Gaza Strip				
Work for wage	53.4	38.1	56.3	53.9
Unpaid family member	46.6	61.9	43.7	46.1
Total	100	100	100	100

Source: PCBS: *Child labour (ages 12-16 years)*, table 8, p. 28.

The information reflects several important points. In the West Bank, children from villages work mainly in family undertakings (67.4 per cent), while in the Gaza Strip, it is children from refugee camps who mainly work in family undertakings (61.9 per cent). The information also shows that, generally, there is a higher percentage of children working in family undertakings in the Gaza Strip (46.6 per cent) than those in the West Bank (37.2 per cent). However, on average, there is a relatively high percentage of working children in family undertakings in both the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, where it stands at 40.4 per cent.

Generally, the occurrence of children's work in family undertakings is higher than that of adult workers in family undertakings. For the West Bank and the Gaza Strip together, the highest average is in villages where it reaches 63.3 per cent. In the West Bank alone, the highest percentage is in villages where it is as high as 67.4 per cent. In the Gaza Strip the highest percentage of children's work in family undertakings is in refugee camps where it is 61.9 per cent.¹ It is thus alarming that in some areas of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, children's work in family undertakings can reach as high as above 61 per cent. In comparison, the highest percentage for adults working for family members in the West Bank is in villages where it reaches 22.7 per cent, while in the Gaza Strip the highest percentage is 24.0 per cent, also in villages.²

The information in the table, however, is not accurate in terms of representing the percentage of children who work without remuneration. The information suggests that all children working in family businesses are unpaid. This is not true. There is a certain percentage, although

¹ PCBS: *Child labour (ages 12-16 years)*, table 7, p. 28.

² PCBS: *Labour force survey*, table 13, p. 59.

it could be small, of persons who work in family undertakings and are paid wages. The questionnaire used for the survey by PCBS does not include a specific question concerning remuneration for persons who work for family members. The questionnaire is based on the assumption that they are all not paid. Such information would be very valuable, particularly in relation to the future designing of provisions of the Palestinian labour law, as discussed below.

The available data on the work of children in family undertakings is not detailed according to industry and occupation. There is also no information on the conditions of work of these children, including hours of work, wages, and health and safety conditions. All such information is essential to identify the patterns of employment of these children and the conditions under which they work.¹ It is also unfortunate that the information concerning children working in family undertakings is not gender specific. Such information would be very valuable to monitor if there is a larger number of one sex working in family undertakings than the other, and, if that is so, in which occupations and under what conditions of work?

The income of the child is used for supporting the family or for self-reliance. The DCI/PS survey shows that about 34 per cent of the interviewed children indicated that one of the reasons for their work is to cover family expenses for household survival. Another number of children indicated that they work to cover their own expenses, and some said that they work to cover their expenses and for family survival. About 37 per cent of all the children interviewed by DCI/PS stated that they keep less than half of their wages for themselves and give the rest to the family. More than half of those (52 per cent) are aged 15 years or under.² Further, one of the main conclusions of the UNICEF study is that children keep very little of their earnings to themselves, which, by itself, reflects the bad economic situation of the families of these children, which would be a primary reason for their work.³

Further, there are no studies to show the degree to which working children are trained or skilled. It is also not clear if these child labourers carry out functions that need skills, or if their functions are limited to unskilled labour. The general impression of the author of this report is that children are generally unskilled workers, and are employed in jobs which involve assisting adult workers. The information also shows that the level of education of these children is relatively low. In the UNICEF study, it is shown that 66 per cent of the children only have elementary education level, while 34 per cent have preparatory education level.⁴

C. Causes of child labour

As shown above, one of the main causes that is believed to have led to increasing the number of working children is the bad economic situation, especially resulting from the closure and prohibition of work and entry of adult workers into Israel and East Jerusalem. A few years ago, during the Palestinian uprising, which started in December 1987 and ended with the beginning of the peace process, it was clearly indicated that there was a large increase in child labour. This was mainly caused by the economic situation that deteriorated very rapidly during that period, and because of the frequent closure of schools by the Israeli authorities.⁵ The Palestinian Ministry of Labour indicated that one of its main concerns is children who are

¹ There is often a common assumption that conditions of work in family undertakings are normally very good. However, there is no evidence to substantiate this assumption, or the opposite. There are, however, occurrences of cases of physical and emotional abuse and workplace injuries in such situations.

² Preliminary findings of a forthcoming study to be published by DCI/PS.

³ UNICEF: *Working children in the Gaza Strip*, p 24.

⁴ *ibid.*, table 3, p. 7.

⁵ See Dr. Hazim Shunnar and Dr. Atef Alawneh: *The effect of the economic situation on the Palestinian child in the occupied territories.*, Field research, Nablus (1989), pp. 25-33.

currently in the labour force and who had left schools because of the school closure during the uprising.¹ According to the Ministry, these children do not have an adequate level of education, and are primarily unskilled workers.

There are no real objections within the society against child labour. In fact, the opposite might be correct. Child labour is highly invisible in the society in the sense that people do not notice working children, and even when they do, they do not feel that these children should not be working. Children are thus perceived more or less as a natural part of the active labour force. In fact, children are sometimes encouraged to work. This is particularly so for the male child. Work is seen as part of his reaching maturity, and being independent and self-reliant. Girls are also often expected to leave school, learn a simple skill like knitting or sewing, and then work outside home, or help their mothers with household duties. This is seen as part of preparing them for their future role as a housewife and mother.² Girls even help their mothers or other members of the family in subcontracted labour that is carried out at home. This would typically be in textile and garment production. Female child labour in this case would be totally invisible and uncounted.

Finally, the UNICEF study shows that 56 per cent of the interviewed children left school because they were not doing well and were facing difficulties with their studies. An additional 19 per cent left school because they were previously beaten by their teachers, and 13 per cent left school due to pressure by their families on them to work and help the family financially. In summary, the UNICEF study shows that 32 per cent of the children work because of the effect of their families on them, while 68 per cent choose themselves to leave school.³ The above information shows that the inadequacies in the educational system lead to school drop-outs. This is either because of corporal punishment by the teachers, or because children feel that they are not successful, or face difficulty with their school education.⁴

On the basis of the above, children find it relatively easy to enter the labour market. This is particularly so since there is no system of inspection or supervision that restricts children's employment effectively. The labour inspectorate system was rather weak during the period when it was supervised by the Israeli occupation authorities. It was only because of the dedication and commitment of the Palestinian labour inspectors and the employees of the department that work was being carried out. Otherwise, the Israeli occupation authorities had no interest in promoting such mechanisms, which eventually would lead to the development of the economy, human resources and therefore the society as a whole.

¹ During 1993, a total of seven schools were closed in the West Bank, affecting 2,800 students, adding up to 446 days of closure. In the Gaza Strip in 1993, a total of 13 schools were closed affecting 8,601 students and adding up to 261 days. In 1994, a total of 18 schools were closed in the West Bank affecting 8,975 students, totalling 242 days. In the Gaza Strip, nine schools were closed in 1994, affecting 6,626 students, totalling 116 days. For more details on school closure, see *Changing situations and continuing violations*, al-Haq, Ramallah (1995), pp. 66-70. Further, in 1989, all schools in the occupied territories were totally closed for eight months. See: *A nation under siege*, Al-Haq, Ramallah (1989), p. 451.

² See *The changes I see: Reflections of Palestinian adolescent girls*, Proceedings of research and a workshop conducted by DCI/PS.

³ UNICEF: *Working children in the Gaza Strip*, p. 26.

⁴ Corporal punishment is legally prohibited by applicable local law and by instructions and regulations of the Palestinian Ministry of Education.

IV. Government policies

This section has to be read with caution. Due to the political situation that the country went through, and the new changes that are taking place, many aspects of government policies are not clear. Since the Palestinian Authority took responsibility of issues of civil affairs, new policies started to emerge. However, these are not adequately established and completed since the process of adopting Palestinian policies started only very recently. There was no adequate previous infrastructure for managing civil affairs during the period when the Israeli occupation authorities were in control of that. Israel's focus was mainly to impose measures of restrictions on development, and impose excessive force and pressure on the population on the pretext of "security".

A. Legislation and enforcement

It was stated earlier in this report that the law that applies currently in the West Bank, excluding East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip, is primarily non-Palestinian. It was issued by the different occupations and administrations that ruled the country. The law that applies in annexed East Jerusalem is primarily Israeli. A process of law-making is now nascent, which started with the elections of the first Palestinian Legislative Council in January 1996.

1. Ratification of international and regional instruments

The Palestinian Authority is not thus far recognized by the international United Nations system as a government of an independent State. Palestine, accordingly, does not have a standing to ratify international human rights and labour treaties of the United Nations and its specialized agencies. However, in April 1995, President Arafat, in the opening of the workshop to discuss the proposed National Programme for Palestinian Children: Agenda for Social Renewal, declared the commitment of the Palestinian Authority to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child of 1989. Earlier, President Arafat declared on many other occasions the commitment of Palestine to a host of international human rights standards enshrined in international human rights and humanitarian law.

Further, Palestine is a member of the Arab League. It has thus ratified several of the conventions of the Arab Labour Organization. The principal labour conventions that have been ratified in this regard are the Arab labour convention No. 1 on labour standards of 1966, as amended by convention No. 6 of 1976 on the same subject. These were both ratified by Palestine in 1976. According to these conventions, child work for both sexes under the age of 12 is generally prohibited.¹ The two conventions prohibit the employment of children under the age of 15 in industrial undertakings.² Employment of children under the age of 17 in industries that are dangerous, hazardous or harmful to health is also prohibited.³ The new Arab Labour Convention No. 18 of 1996 on child labour has not yet been ratified by Palestine.

Israel, as an occupying power, is considered responsible for implementing the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child to the population of the territory under its

¹ Article 57 in both Conventions Nos. 1 and 6.

² Article 57 in both Conventions Nos. 1 and 6.

³ Article 58 in both Conventions Nos. 1 and 6.

jurisdiction. The West Bank and the Gaza Strip are still technically occupied.¹ However, the detailed legal discussion on the applicability of ILO and United Nations human rights Conventions ratified by Israel to the occupied territories is beyond the scope of the mandate and purpose of this report. It is the aim of this report mainly to define needs and programmes that should be carried out with the branches of the Palestinian Authority and other relevant non-governmental and United Nations actors.

2. National legislation and mechanisms of inspection

The local labour law that is applicable in the West Bank is the Jordanian Labour Law No. 21 of 1960, as amended by Labour Law No. 2 of 1965. The labour law that applies to the Gaza Strip is the Labour Law No. 16 of 1964, which was adopted by the Palestinian Legislative Council for the Gaza Strip that existed at that period. Both laws were amended later by Israeli military orders.

Jordanian Labour Law No. 21 of 1960 (as amended) contains provisions that relate to regular employment of children and others that regulate apprenticeship.² The law repeals all previous labour legislation that was applicable in the country. It excludes from its protection anyone working in agriculture, or as servants, cooks or gardeners, and those working in family undertakings.

The law defines a child as any person under the age of 16. It particularly prohibits the employment of children under the age of 13; and prohibits the employment of children at night or in dangerous jobs. Employment of children between the ages of 13 and 16 is allowed only after a physician certifies that the child is fit for the job in question. The law prohibits employment of children for more than six hours a day, and prohibits the employment of children in more than one workplace. The working week is formed of six working days.

The provisions on apprenticeship state that children between the ages of 13 and 18 can be placed for apprenticeship with an employer above the age of 21 who has never been convicted of crimes against honour or crimes of dishonesty. It adds that unmarried employers are not allowed to take female child workers for apprenticeships.

Israeli Military Order No. 764 issued in the West Bank in 1978 raises the minimum age of employment and apprenticeship to 14 years.

Labour Law No. 16 of 1964 applicable in the Gaza Strip similarly repeals all previous labour legislation.³ The law prohibits the employment of children under the age of 12; and specifies that wages of children above 12 should be given directly to them. It prohibits employment of children under the age of 15 in certain industries specified by regulations unless they have a medical report indicating that they are fit for such jobs. It prohibits the night work of children. It also specifies that working hours for children under 15 should not exceed six hours a day, including one hour of rest. It absolutely prohibits overtime work for children. The section on child labour specifically does not cover workers in agriculture and workers in family industries which employ only members of the family.

¹ On the applicability of human rights treaties ratified by Israel, see Linda Bevis: *Applicability of human rights law to occupied territories: The case of the occupied Palestinian territory*, al-Haq (1994). See also Philip Veerman and Barbara Gross: "Implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in Israel, the West Bank and Gaza", in *The International Journal of Children's Rights* 3, Kluwer Academic Publishers (1995), pp. 295-332.

² Relevant articles are 2, 14, 47 and 48.

³ Relevant articles are 18, and 103-108.

Israeli Military Order No. 584, issued in the Gaza Strip in 1978, again raises the minimum age for work to 14.

There are clearly provisions that are common between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. For example, both laws include provisions that limit work-hours to six hours a day, prohibit night work, require that a physician certifies the fitness of the child to work, and both laws exclude workers in agriculture and family undertakings. There are some important provisions in the law applicable in the Gaza Strip that are not found in the West Bank. Labour Law No. 16 of 1964, applicable in the Gaza Strip, for example, prohibits explicitly overtime work, and requires that wages be paid directly to the working children. On the other hand, the Jordanian labour law applicable in the West Bank includes provisions on apprenticeship, while the labour law applicable in the Gaza Strip does not.

Both employment laws generally contain provisions excluding certain categories or sectors from the protection of the law. A back review of the figures cited earlier in this report shows that this exclusion in fact affects a very large number of child labourers. For example, it was stated earlier that about 40 per cent of working children do so in family undertakings. In some parts of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip this goes up to as high as 63 per cent.¹ Similarly, the statistics show that 22.7 per cent of working children are employed in the agricultural sector.² Therefore, it is clear that the areas that are excluded from the protection of the law are exactly the areas where children tend mostly to work. The exclusion has particular impact on female children, as they tend to work specifically in the areas of housekeeping, agriculture, and family undertakings, which are all excluded from the law. The effect of such omissions, therefore, can be greater on girls.

A Palestinian Legislative Council was elected directly by the people on 20 January 1996. This Council is currently engaged in discussions on the Palestinian Basic Law. No other laws are expected to be adopted before the Basic Law. A draft Palestinian Labour Law has been prepared through the Palestinian Ministry of Labour and went through different stages of discussions and tripartite consultation. It is now in its final form, according to the Ministry of Labour, and it was forwarded to the Ministry of Justice for it to add the relevant provisions on punishment.

The draft Palestinian Labour Law defines a juvenile as any person who has reached 14 years and has not turned 18.³ There is no other definition in the law that relates to children. Employment below the age of 14 is prohibited. Employment of children in dangerous industries, or occupations that are hazardous or harmful to health, is not allowed below the age of 15. The draft law states that the child has to be examined by a doctor before being employed, and to be examined at least once a year while they are employed. The maximum work-hours for a child is six hours a day. The week is six working days. A working child takes four weeks of annual vacation, which is one week more than adult workers. Night work and overtime work for children is explicitly prohibited, and it is also prohibited to employ children in remote areas far from buildings and construction. The law generally excludes workers in undertakings owned by a family member of the first degree. The law also does not apply to children who work as domestic servants.

The applicable and proposed legislations do not guarantee that work does not interfere with the child's education. The minimum level for compulsory education imposed by the Palestinian National Authority is the end of the tenth grade. The average age for that class is 15-16 years. The minimum age for employment, however, is 14. Further, labour inspectors in the Palestinian

¹ See table 6.

² See table 2.

³ The draft used in this respect is a final draft adopted by the Palestinian Ministry of Labour dated May 1996. The relevant articles of the law are 1, 3, 73-81.

Ministry of Labour stated that there is no real coordination between labour inspectors and educational inspectors, particularly in the case of children working illegally while they are of compulsory education age.

There are about 25 labour inspectors in the West Bank, and about 15 in the Gaza Strip. There are no clear data on the number of enterprises and establishments that each inspector is responsible to inspect. However, according to the PCBS, there are 64,490 establishments in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.¹ This is a considerably large burden on each inspector. This is particularly so taking into account that approximately 89 per cent of the workplaces in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip employ one to four workers, about 7.3 per cent employ five to nine workers, and 2.3 per cent employ ten to 19 workers.² Therefore, most of the establishments employ a small number of workers and are scattered all over the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. This makes the task of labour inspection particularly difficult.

Further, labour inspectors are responsible for general inspection, including on child labour. The responsibilities of labour inspectors in relation to child labour and child work is limited to interviewing the child, collecting background information on him/her, referring him/her for medical examination to see if the child is fit for work, and asking about work conditions, including working hours, wages, vacations, weekly rest, night work and overtime work. Inspectors also try to get information on hazardous occupations that children might be employed in. They are also supposed to issue special identification cards to working children above the age of 14.³

Labour inspectors stated that when they find a child being employed while he/she is under the allowed minimum age, the only option they have is to implement the law and instruct the employer to dismiss the child. However, they do not feel comfortable with doing so, particularly when they know that children work mainly because of the bad economic situation, and that there is hardly any other alternative support system that could assist the family. In such cases, labour inspectors tend to ignore the situation, as they stated. Further, labour inspectors generally refrain from transferring cases of violations of the law to the courts, which would usually impose fines. Therefore, because of the bad economic situation, they normally follow up such cases administratively to avoid imposing fines on employers. In fact, some labour inspectors in the West Bank indicated that they have never referred cases to courts. Further, it was stated that on several occasions when employers were caught employing children illegally, these employers alleged that this is so because they did not know that the provisions of the law prohibit such employment of children.

The Inspectorate Division of the Palestinian Ministry of Labour is very interested in finding ways to better monitor child labour. Instructions were given to labour inspectors at the beginning of 1996 by the General Director of the Inspection Department, whereby labour inspectors are requested to particularly monitor the situation of child work and child labour and write detailed reports on their observations. Moreover, new questionnaires of inspection were developed which contain specific questions on child labour and child work. These, the General Director of the Inspection Department stated, should help the Ministry to develop a better idea of and statistics on the status of child labour and child work, and the conditions of the employment of these children. However, it was emphasized that until today the Ministry does not have adequate information on child labour and work, partially because labour inspectors are not adequately trained for this.

¹ See *The establishment census, 1994: Final results*, PCBS, Ramallah, West Bank (Aug. 1995), p. 18.

² Figures derived from op. cit., table 6, p. 163.

³ This information is based on interviews conducted for the purpose of writing this report with the Labour Inspection Division of the Palestinian Ministry of Labour.

Some labour inspectors said that one of the methods that was available to them before September 1996¹ was to order working children to attend a vocational training school once a week. There, children would learn the basic skills of a profession, and have complementary academic classes. Children would normally be paid back their transportation costs, their families would be given food rations from the Department of Social Welfare, and the wages of that sixth day would be paid to the child. However, labour inspectors stated that there are no mechanisms available to them to force employers and/or children to use this method of vocational training. This is mainly because such mechanisms are not prescribed in the local labour law; it is only a method that was developed internally within the labour inspectorate at that time. This method is no longer implemented.

Finally, the Ministry of Labour stated that there is no comprehensive survey or study on the undertakings that employ children, occupations and patterns of work in which children are engaged, conditions of work of the children, and detailed background information on the working children. The Ministry considers the availability of such information to be important for developing programmes to protect working children.

The Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions is highly concerned with the issue of child labour.² The federation stated that there are no collective agreements signed by it or any of the affiliated unions that included provisions related to child labour. However, the federation and its affiliated unions intervened with employers in several cases of employment of children, particularly under hazardous conditions and working hours. This, however, does not happen on a wide and adequate scale, nor in a systematic manner.

There are no employers' federations in the country. The Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip do not have any particular programmes or positions concerning child labour. Their only adopted position is to accept what has been proposed in the draft Palestinian Labour Law. They do not take any steps to prohibit the employment of children illegally in their affiliated enterprises, nor do they encourage such employment.

B. Educational achievements and policy

The repeated closure of schools by the Israeli occupation authorities in the last few years, as stated earlier, has apparently led many children to leave school permanently at that stage and join the labour force. This phenomenon possibly helped to change the society's perception of child labour where the society became more acceptable of it due to the combined factors of the hard economic situation and the closure of schools.

1. Educational achievements

The number of students enrolled at schools for the 1994-95 scholastic year (except for the schools of East Jerusalem) reached a total of 654,697, of those 337,866 are male students and 316,831 are female students.³ The number of schools according to location and gender is as follows:⁴

¹ The date the Palestinian National Authority took over powers and responsibilities related to labour from the Israeli authorities.

² Interviews with the Secretary-General of the Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions and his deputy in the headquarters of the federation in Nablus/the West Bank and in Gaza.

³ Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics and Ministry of Education and Higher Education, 1995: *Education Statistics Yearbook, 1994/1995*, No. 1, Ramallah, West Bank.

⁴ op. cit., table 3.4, p. 48.

Basic education schools:¹

City: total 437 schools, 176 of which are for males, 151 for females, and 110 are coeducational.

Village: total 557 schools, 126 of which are for males, 154 are for females, and 277 are coeducational.

Camp: total 147 schools, 66 of which are for males, 58 are for females, and 23 are coeducational.

Basic and secondary education schools:

City: total 134 schools, 53 of which are for males, 55 are for females, and 26 are coeducational.

Village: total 173 schools, 68 of which are for males, 55 are for females, and 50 are coeducational.

Camp: total two schools, one for males and one coeducational.

Secondary schools only:

City: total 19 schools, 10 of which are for males, five are for females, and four are coeducational.

Village: total two schools, both of which are for males.

Camp: total three schools, one of which is for males and two are for females.

The information above shows generally that there are more schools available for male students than female students. Despite that, the drop-out rates for both sexes is very similar. The statistics show that the total drop-out rate is 2.25 per cent of the total students of both sexes; 2.31 per cent is for male students only, and 2.19 per cent is for female students only. The drop-out rate in government schools alone is 3.33 per cent, while in UNRWA schools it is 2.38 per cent, and in private schools it is as low as 0.33 per cent.² It is alarming to note that drop-out rates are particularly high at certain years of schooling. For example, the drop-out rate for the 1993-94 scholastic year for students in the last grade of compulsory basic education (tenth grade) is very high compared to other classes. This rate reached 9.22 per cent for male students and 8.92 per cent for female students. The actual number of students who thus left schools is 1,460 male students and 1,188 female students.³ These are all potential child labourers, the majority of whom are possibly actually employed now in the labour market. In the ninth grade the drop-out rate reached 4.46 per cent, or 892 male students and 4.75 per cent or 851 female students.⁴ These figure have to be read with caution. They reflect the drop-out rates and not the overall enrolment rates of students compared with the overall population of the specific age-group. Educational specialists are worried that there are no accurate and reliable enrolment rates of students, particularly for the first grade. Such information will be essential to reflect how many children do not enter the educational system in the first place.

The Ministry of Education is currently conducting a survey of children who left schools to see the stages at which they left school, the reasons for leaving school, and the current status of the child. The preliminary findings of the study on the Gaza Strip show clearly that the main reason for boys leaving school is work, while for girls it is early marriage. The information is collected from children themselves, their parents, school principals and teachers. The principal purpose of this survey is to design special education and training programmes for those children.

¹ Basic education refers to the compulsory education period, which now extends to the end of the tenth grade.

² *ibid.*, table 3.43, p. 1,021.

³ *ibid.*

⁴ *ibid.*

There is an average of one teacher for 30 students in government schools; one teacher for 34 students in UNRWA schools; and one teacher for an average of 27 students in private schools. Further, on average, there are 37 students in a classroom at basic education level and an average of 30 students in a classroom at the secondary education level.¹

2. Cost of education

The Palestinian Ministry of Education stated in an interview for this research that there are minor fees for education in government schools. In 1995, the fee was NIS60, which was reduced to NIS50 per year in 1996 for basic education. The rate for secondary education was NIS90, which was reduced to NIS80 per year.² Tuition at UNRWA schools is totally free. They are available only to refugees. Private schools are not subject to any specific tuition fees imposed by the Ministry. Their tuition fees, therefore, vary widely from one school to another. Some of these private schools impose tuition fees as high as approximately US\$1,000 per year. Such schools are mainly concentrated in the Jerusalem, Ramallah, and Bethlehem areas. They are primarily Christian schools (their students are normally both Christians and Muslims). The cost of books is normally very low in government schools, and they are normally free of charge in UNRWA schools. Books in private schools are relatively expensive.

In addition to costs of books and tuition, normally there are no other additional formal costs for education. In many cases, students have to bear costs of transportation, especially if there are no schools in their villages. Transportation is normally not very expensive, but can reach as high as NIS2 a day. This adds to the financial burden on the families of the students. In summary, the formal costs of education are very low in government and UNRWA schools. However, students have to pay additional costs for transportation and meals.

There is no comprehensive system of financial assistance through scholarships to school students to cover all possible relevant costs. However, school principals have the power to exempt students from paying for tuition and books. No figures are available to show how many students were thus exempted from these costs.³ However, it is estimated that such assistance is not wide in scale.

3. Educational policies

During the time Israel was responsible for education in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, school education was divided into three levels: elementary, preparatory and secondary. Primary education extends to grade six; elementary extends to grade nine; and secondary extends to grade 12. When the Palestinian Authority took responsibility for the educational system, they changed this. Compulsory education was extended to grade ten, with the period up to grade ten called basic education. There are no longer any elementary or preparatory education periods. After that, the secondary education period lasts for two years.

There are 13 vocational training centres in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. These were run by the Israeli authorities, and responsibility for them was transferred to the Palestinian National Authority in September 1995. A team of experts from the Palestinian Ministry of Labour evaluated the vocational and technical education and training stream of education as marginal,

¹ PCBS and Ministry of Education and Higher Education: *Education Statistics Yearbook*, Summary results.

² One US\$ equals at least NIS3.15 on average for 1996.

³ Information through an interview for this report with the Ministry of Education/Gaza Office.

highly fragmented and highly inefficient.¹ The major objective behind the establishment of these centres by the Israelis was to offer training to produce semi-skilled workers for occupations that mainly fulfilled the needs of the Israeli labour market.² It is required that students wishing to enrol in all the courses that are offered by these centres be over 16 years of age. They have to have acquired education varying between sixth and tenth grade, depending on the course.³

The Palestinian Ministry of Education is planning to increase the number of schools, particularly to make education more accessible. Special effort is made to make education more accessible for girls. It also plans to develop the resources available at schools, and to develop better methods of monitoring the school system. Some of these programmes have already started.

Additionally, the curriculum used in schools is currently being reviewed by a team of experts. This is carried out by a specialized centre that was established as a consequence of an agreement between the Palestinian Ministry of Education and UNESCO. The team will engage in drafting a new curriculum for schools starting in the 1996-97 scholastic year. This activity is essential since the curriculum that is used at schools is now old and outdated. Most of it goes back to the years before Israeli occupation in 1967.⁴ It does not embody the history and culture of the Palestinian people and philosophies adopted by the Palestinian educators. The system is thus highly alienating for the students.

In summary, many educational experts stated to the author of this report that the quality of education today is much better than it used to be a few years ago. There is a lot being planned for the future, and much of it is pending further development and implementation. Due to the lack of adequate background information and data, the first steps that were carried out were focused around conducting field research, data collection and analytical research. These are seen essential as the basis for any future planning. It is thus expected that the planning that is currently being carried out and discussed will adequately resolve many of the old problems that the educational system faced.

¹ Executive summary: "Meeting the challenge: Vocational training: Current status and future perspectives", Expert team on vocational training, Palestinian Ministry of Labour and Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, June 1996.

² *ibid.*

³ *ibid.*, table 1.11, p. 20.

⁴ For more details on the educational system, see *The national programme for Palestinian children: Agenda for social renewal, Vol. 2: Project profiles*, Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, the Palestinian National Authority (Jan. 1966), pp. 20-63.

V. Targeted programmes

Most of the targeted programmes that are under way or planned are in the direction of improving the situation by providing training and education, in addition to providing legal assistance to working children and their families. These programmes thus do not aim at eliminating child labour, or even removing children from hazardous occupations. There is a considerable degree of coordination and overlapping between the governmental and non-governmental organs responsible for these programmes, and between them and United Nations agencies. The following is a summary of the main programmes that are being developed.

All the active members involved in the programmes below agreed that the first priority is to adopt a Palestinian labour law that would better regulate the employment of children, and to strengthen the mechanisms of implementation and supervision.

1. The Agenda for social renewal. The Agenda, which is the national plan of action for Palestinian children, has a special section on child labour. The Agenda is a result of concentrated work for nine months carried out by sectoral working groups formed by the Ministries of Health, Education, Social Affairs, Culture, Youth and Sport, together with the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics. A steering committee was set up to coordinate the follow-up to this Agenda composed of these ministries and representatives of the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Labour, the NGO sector, as well as UNICEF, who all joined the process at a later stage.¹ The Agenda adopts the issue of child labour and deals with it within the context of projects under social affairs. The main purpose that the Agenda sets is to conduct research projects and initiate a policy review based on the results. The plan mentions the two studies by the PCBS and DCI/PS on working children as the main information base. The results used will be used to design programmes which will include, health, educational and legal services for working children, training for social workers and community institutions on school drop-outs and child labour, and to develop a legal framework to regulate child labour practices, according to the Agenda.² The Agenda also adopts a programme for poverty alleviation, with the aim of training two staff members of the Ministry of Social Affairs to existing loan schemes for poverty alleviation, and to convene a task force to develop a poverty alleviation scheme.³ Additionally, the Agenda adopts a project on social services policy, which aims at developing a plan of action for an effective and efficient social services system that enhances the current services provided by the Ministry of Social Affairs to the approximately 23,000 economically deprived families who benefit from the services of the Ministry.⁴ The Agenda also adopts a host of projects in the field of education which aim to provide children's access to schools for the basic educational cycle, through which a set of life-skills will be developed. Special attention is said to be given to technical and vocational training.⁵

2. The Ministry of Labour. The Ministry of Labour is mainly concerned with the issue of child labour from two perspectives. One is to train labour inspectors to monitor the situation of working children. The second is to develop a programme on training for working children who left schools. This programme aims at providing a system for the child to be able to combine work with education. There is now an assessment study being conducted for this purpose in the Ministry by experts who designed a special questionnaire which is used to get information from

¹ *Agenda for social renewal, Vol. 1: Goals and strategy*, pp. a-b.

² *ibid.*, Vol. 2, p. 94.

³ *ibid.*, p. 93.

⁴ *ibid.*, p. 83.

⁵ *ibid.*, Vol. 1, p. b. For details of the projects on education, see *Agenda for social renewal, Vol. 2*, pp. 20-62.

children, their parents and employers about the conditions of work and the occupation that the child would like to learn. The results and analysis will be used later to convince children (and their parents) to leave work and to join special programmes of training where the child would learn a profession and have academic education as well. This programme has not yet been developed and implemented. It is being designed by a committee composed of the Ministry of Labour, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Social Affairs, together with the Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions. Additionally, the analysis that the Ministry carried out of all the vocational training systems is expected to be extremely valuable for the purpose of designing specific programmes for children.

3. The Ministry of Education. There is currently a study being carried out by the Ministry of Education on children who dropped out of school to see what they are doing now, and the reasons for dropping out. This will be used for developing a programme that should help reduce drop-out rates and provide alternative education for children currently outside schools. The current plans and programmes that are under way to reform the educational system, in addition to the rewriting of the school curricula, are all expected to contribute considerably to decreasing the drop-out rates within schools. This will lead to decreasing the occurrence of child labour.

4. DCI/PS. The Palestine Section of Defence of Children International is engaged in a three-year programme on child labour. The programme is in three main stages. The first is being implemented in 1996 whereby the organization will issue a legal and human rights study on child labour on the basis of interviews with 532 children. The second stage will be launched after the report is issued. It will consist of a number of specialized thematic workshops to discuss the findings of the study. The aim of the workshops is to raise awareness on the subject of child labour and the various dimensions related to it, and to involve the relevant partners in discussion for the purpose of identifying areas of priorities that could be adopted in order to deal with a problem. The organization will then publish and disseminate the summaries and results of the workshops. In the third year, DCI/PS will start to train lawyers and paralegals on legal issues related to child labour in preparation for setting up a specialized legal aid office that will provide legal advice and assistance to working children and their families. This is aimed to be established at the end of 1998.

5. The Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions. The PGFTU is concerned about child labour. However, it does not have clear programmes or projects to deal with the issue. The Federation possibly plans to conduct an awareness campaign in 1997 on the issue of child labour. No further details have yet been developed. The Federation further believes that child labour is strongly connected to poverty. Therefore, one of the areas of priority for the PGFTU is to develop better levels of minimum wages and protection of wages. This would help minimize child labour, the PGFTU stated.

6. Others. There are several other organizations, ministries, or individual unions that are concerned with the subject of child labour. UNICEF is expected to make use of the study that it prepared on child labour in the Gaza Strip. The Democracy and Workers' Rights Centre issued, in 1996, a short pamphlet on child labour. The Centre is very concerned with the subject, but it does not thus far have detailed or clear plans on how to deal with it. Many individual trade unions expressed deep concern over child labour and stated that they would like to deal with the subject in the future. However, no clear plans were presented.

VI. Conclusions and recommendations

1. Child labour in Palestine is clearly a product of poverty and the bad economic situation. Therefore, as part of the programmes for dealing with the subject, there should be intensified efforts to provide better work opportunities and conditions for adults who are the parents of these child labourers.

2. It could be very difficult to launch a campaign or engage in programmes to eliminate child labour now. As long as the reasons leading children to work remain unresolved, it is very difficult to call for the immediate elimination of all forms of child labour.

3. Children in hazardous occupations or work under hazardous conditions should be subject to immediate programmes to remove them from such conditions. This includes children working long hours, children working at night, and children working in dangerous occupations such as construction, car mechanics, stone quarrying, and occupations that involve inhalation of fumes or working with chemicals and hot syrups. Particularly vulnerable children need also to be put in the centre of planning and programmes, including very young children and girls.

4. There needs to be more attention to the phenomenon of child work in Israel. Some researchers and institutions reiterated their worry that these children are being subjected to sexual abuse, and are being used for drug trafficking. There needs to be more studies to examine if this is true. Programmes to absorb these children back into the Palestinian community, including the labour market, should be considered.

5. There also needs to be special consideration for street children. A method of regulating their work in streets needs to be developed. This could be through obliging each working child to obtain a special permit for that from the Ministry of Labour. The permits of these children should specify that they are not allowed to be selling in the streets after certain hours, 6 p.m. for example. The permits should also prohibit children from selling certain items, such as cigarettes or alcohol.

6. There should be particular effort and attention to regulate the work of children during the summer period, which witnesses a large explosion of child labour every year. Also, children in the informal sector, which is typically ignored, and pertain to several problems even in relation to adult workers, needs to receive special attention.

7. There is some difference in the patterns of the work of children between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. A more thorough study of these differences and their causes needs to be undertaken to decide if there is a need for special programmes in each area.

8. The provisions of the draft Palestinian law on child labour and work need to be rewritten. For example, there are more children than adults working in family undertakings. They work under severe work conditions. However, their labour is currently totally beyond the protection of the applicable labour law, and the same is proposed in the draft Palestinian Labour Law. This needs to be reconsidered in the draft. Considering that child labour tends generally to be exploited and unprotected, work sectors in which children tend to work more should be subject to special protection rather than being brought outside the protection of the law. This is, for example, the case of work in agriculture, servants, and in family undertakings. Further, new provisions need to be added to the draft law on training and apprenticeship. Such provisions do not exist in the current draft Palestinian Labour Law.

9. The Palestinian Ministry of Labour needs to take a more vigorous approach to child labour. The current programme on child labour listed in the Agenda for social renewal needs to be brought under the supervision and control of the Ministry of Labour, and not solely the Ministry of Social Affairs, as it is currently presented. Further, the currently existing programme in the Agenda is extremely basic and does not touch adequately upon the real needs to tackle the

issue of child labour. Therefore, there needs to be some further discussion and consultation to come up with a more detailed programme of action. The two Ministries of Labour and Social Affairs need to cooperate in the implementation of that. It should be primarily the responsibility of the Ministry of Labour to deal with child labour and child work.

10. There is a particular need to train labour inspectors on specific inspection of child labour. Preferably, there should be specialized child labour inspectors.

11. It is hoped that with the development of the educational system, fewer children would leave school and go to work. This will also depend on developing a mechanism of inspection that would provide an adequate follow-up on each child. In this regard, labour and education inspectors should be better trained and there should be cooperation and coordination between the two inspection systems.

12. The programmes for providing education and vocational training for children who have left school should be a priority. There needs to be an assessment of whether it is better to provide education and training while the child is still working or whether it is better to remove the child from work for a certain period of time. Answers to this would depend on the level of coordination and cooperation between different partners, including the Ministries of Labour, Education and Social Affairs. This would also depend on the availability of programmes of financial assistance and scholarships that would allow children to leave their work for a period of time to receive education.

13. Palestinian society is highly tolerant of child labour. It is not adequately aware that child labour is often detrimental not only to the children and families concerned but to the country as a whole due to the lack of investment in the human resources of the future. There is an immediate need for an extensive awareness-raising campaign for both the population groups at risk of using child labour and for society as a whole.

14. Finally, there is a need for new and thorough statistics on child labour. Some of the available data is based on inaccurate assumptions, as is the case in the assumption that there is always no remuneration for work in family undertakings. Future data and statistics therefore need to be based on thorough research, or at least the identified needed data should be based on well-founded research and observations. The currently available statistics embody a few problems that should be avoided in the future. These include the following:

- Generally, questions on child labour should be answered by the children themselves, or at least there should be a supplementary questionnaire to be answered by the working child.
- Data on working children need to be gender-sensitive. There is clearly a difference in the occupations and conditions of work between girls and boys. However, that needs to be reflected scientifically in order to be studied.
- There is a need for information on conditions of work in family undertakings, including remuneration, hours, health and safety, physical or mental abuse or violence. The information also needs to be gender-specific.
- There is a need for further information concerning children working in Israel or Israeli settlements. Such information is needed to reflect the percentage of children working in Israel to all working children, and to all adults working in Israel. Information needs to be obtained on the main industries and occupations that children are engaged in, conditions of work, including hours, wages, health and safety, physical and psychological abuse or violence.
- There is a need for special attention in surveying the conditions of work of children working as street vendors and in newspaper selling. There is very little information on the conditions of work of these children, including the hours of work, activities carried out by the children, etc.

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- Generally, there is absolutely no information on the age at which children start working and how long they have been in the labour market. There is also a need for information on whether children change jobs regularly within short periods of time or whether they tend to stay working with the same employer for a long period of time.