Eliminating the Worst Forms of Child Labour in Asia and the Pacific

Towards 2016:

Progress made towards the elimination goal

and Proposed strategies

Dr June Kane AM
for ILO Regional Office, Bangkok
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1. OUTLINE AND PROJECTION OF CHILD LABOUR AND CHILDREN AT RISK OF CHILD LABOUR IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC 2006-2016

The ILO *Global Report on Child Labour*[1] reported in 2006 that the number of children in labour globally fell by 11 per cent between 2000 and 2004, with the number of children in hazardous work showing an even sharper decline – a 33 per cent fall in the 5-14 year age group and a 26 per cent fall in the number of 5-17 year-olds in hazardous labour. On the back of these statistics, and taking other indicators and trends into account, the Report concluded that eliminating the worst forms of child labour can be achieved by 2016 if effort is sustained.

1.1 Children in economic activity and child labour in Asia and the Pacific– the state of play

The picture is not so rosy in Asia and the Pacific, however, where there has been slower progress. The number of 5-14 year-olds working in the region fell by a little over 6 per cent, from 127.3 million in 2000 to 122.3 million in 2004. Additionally, the report points to large numbers of children between the ages of 5 and 14 in hazardous labour (6.2 million) and unconditional worst forms (6.6 million).[2]

These absolute numbers should also be taken in the context of a declining child population in the region that contributed to an extremely small decrease (0.6 per cent) in the *rate* of children between the ages of 5 and 14 in economic activity, from 19.4 per cent to 18.8 per cent – the smallest decrease globally. This percentage is well behind Latin America and the Caribbean (10 per cent) and even sub-Saharan Africa (2.2 per cent).

The *2007 State of the World's Children* (SOWC) report indicators for 1999-2005 put the percentage of children aged 5 – 14 in child labour in South Asia at 12 per cent boys, 15 per cent girls; for East Asia and the Pacific, SOWC reports 11 per cent boys and 10 per cent girls (this excludes China) in this age group in child labour. It is worth noting that the gender ratio of children in labour under the age of

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1 ILO: *The end of child labour: Within reach*, Global Report under the Follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, Geneva, 2006

2 The categories used in this paper are the same as those used in the Global Reports: 'economic activity' is a broad concept encompassing most productive activities undertaken by children, whether for the market or not, paid or unpaid, for a few hours o r full-time, on a casual or regular basis, legal or illegal. It does not include chores in the child's own household (often called 'helping hands') or school-based activities. Child labour is a narrower definition, excluding children over the age of 12 working only a few hours a week in permitted light work, and those aged 15 and above (ie generally above the minimum legal age for work) whose work is not 'hazardous', ie detrimental to a child's safety, health or morals. The worst forms of child labour are as defined in ILO Convention No.182 (1999).

14 is roughly equal but between the ages of 14 and 17, available data indicate that more boys are involved (57 per cent) in hazardous work or unconditional worst forms of child labour.

Percentages aside, these figures in any case represent an enormous absolute number of children in labour, including the worst forms, in Asia and the Pacific, and the challenge of making a real dent in these numbers and moving solidly towards the fundamental goal of abolishing all forms of child labour and the worst form by 2016 remains a significant challenge for the region.

Children in Asia and the Pacific have long been exploited in agriculture, manufacturing and domestic services, as well as construction, fisheries, hawking and other street-based activities. The commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC), considered an unconditional worst form of child labour, also remains a problem in the region. Trafficking of children into various forms of exploitation has become widespread in the past decade and is inextricably linked to increased migratory flows and in recent years a regime of fear for national security that has seen controls on migration become tighter. The recruitment of children as soldiers, couriers, servants or in other roles allied to the militia is also of concern, as armed conflict in some countries of the region continues or has re-emerged. And despite efforts to tackle drug abuse, dealing and trafficking in Asia and the Pacific, the market for illicit drugs is thriving and children are regularly exploited as drug dealers or couriers. A number of high profile cases of young Australians being sentenced to harsh punishments in Indonesia in recent years has highlighted the fact that this particular worst form of child labour affects children and particularly adolescents in the developed countries of the region too.

The situation is particularly severe in South Asia, which has approximately three-quarters of all the children in child labour in Asia and the Pacific. In 2002/3, Bangladesh alone recorded almost five million working children, some 15 per cent of all children in the 5-14 age group.[3] By far the majority of child labourers work in the informal sector, in agriculture or in the services sector. Child domestic labour remains a major destination for girls entering child labour in South Asia and is a significant factor in child trafficking across the subregion. Trafficking of girls into the commercial sex sector in India also remains a challenge.

The general welfare of children in South Asia also continues to give rise to concern: child malnutrition indicators are disturbingly high in Bangladesh and Nepal, for example, where 48 per cent of children are undernourished. The figure is almost as high in India. Bangladesh is also struggling to reach poverty reduction targets, leaving children vulnerable. In 2003, the largest number of child deaths globally was in India (2.3 million), with Pakistan (481,000) in third place after China. Overall, South Asia is the poorest performing subregion in Asia and the Pacific, with six out of 10

3 Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, *2nd National Child Labour Survey*, Dhaka, 2003.

countries off track for more than one third of the indicators measuring progress towards achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

There are no official statistics on child labour in the Pacific Island countries (PICs), where ILO-IPEC became operational only in late 2006, but the number of children not enrolled in school in the PICs is significant, and the child who is not in school is very often in some form of economic activity. Reports suggest that child labour is most prevalent in Papua New Guinea, where children are reported to be in child domestic labour and exploited in markets, hotels, subsistence agriculture, and coffee and tea plantations. Commercial sexual exploitation of children is also reported in several of the PICs (Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands), although sexual abuse/incest is reported to be a bigger problem.

There are cases of CSEC linked to tourism in Samoa – where tourism is expanding (25 per cent of GDP in 2005, and 88,000 visitors in 2001) -- and Vanuatu (50,000 visitors in 1997 and expansion of tourism a government priority), and the rise of HIV/AIDS among young people in Kiribati and the Solomon Islands indicates premature and perhaps forced sexual activity. There are also reports of young girls being exploited by crew members of foreign vessels visiting Kiribati and Tonga.

Some known hazardous sectors in the PICs are: agriculture, mining, fishing, construction, small-scale workshops and manufacturing. Agriculture, mining and construction are the three most hazardous types of work, with a high incidence of injury, death and work-related illnesses.

The US Department of Labor's 2006 annual report on the worst forms of child labour reported children working in agriculture, the informal sector, family businesses and on the streets in Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Samoa and Timor-Leste. Timor-Leste was also reported to have a problem of domestic (rural – Dili) child trafficking into sexual exploitation. In Papua New Guinea there are reported cases of children being trafficked into domestic labour and being subjected to debt bondage as housekeepers or nannies.

The situation may be serious still, but the news for Asia and the Pacific is not all bad. There is broad consensus on the imperative of continuing efforts to eliminate child labour, especially the worst forms, and as Section 2 of this paper demonstrates, in some areas there has been progress on which to build.

Combating child labour, especially the worst forms, is one of the priorities of the National Plan of Action on Decent Work (NPADW) in the region and the need to step up the combat against child labour was acknowledged by the tripartite constituents at the Asian regional conference (September 2006) and tripartite consultations in Jakarta (July 2006) and Lahore (November 2006). It is clear,

however, that countries in the region have translated this acknowledgement into decisive action to varying degrees and that some are moving ahead faster than others.

1.2 Future child labourers? – projections of children at risk

Recent projections[4] of the numbers of children potentially vulnerable to entering or already being in child labour in Asia and the Pacific, using the proxy of non-enrolment in primary and lower secondary school, suggest that although there will be fewer children vulnerable to child labour by 2016, some 81 million children will still be out of school and therefore at risk.

[4] Huyn, P and Kapsos, S: *Child vulnerability projection model: Methodology and data* (draft), ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, June 2007.

Table 1: Projected number of children not enrolled in primary/lower secondary school (region)		
1996	**2006**	**2016**
157,307,000	122,718,000	81,276,000

Table 2: Projected number of children not enrolled in primary/lower secondary school (subregions) in 2016	
East Asia	9,120,000
South-East Asia/Pacific	12,707,000
South Asia	59,260,000
Developed economies in the region	189,000

The largest projected fall by 2016 in the absolute number of children not enrolled or attending primary/lower secondary school is in East Asia – a fall of some 55 per cent over 2006 figures. This may reflect the substantial decline in extreme poverty rates in this subregion in the past two decades, since improved family income can be expected to spin off into increased school enrolment and smaller family size, both of which lower a child's vulnerability to entering labour prematurely. Since this projected fall followed a worrying increase in the non-enrolment rate in primary school in East Asia between 1999 and 2005 (see Table 4 below), this underlines even more the positive impact of economic growth on school enrolment, enough to reverse the trend.

Poverty rates in South-East Asia and South Asia also declined, although a number of countries in the region will not, on current trends, achieve MDG Goal 1 targets.

Table 3: Extreme poverty – Families living on less than US$1 a day

MDG 1: Halve between 1990 and 2015 the proportion of people whose income is less than $1 a day*

	1990	**1999**	**2004**	**Trend**	
East Asia	33.0	17.8	9.9	↓	Steep decline
South-East Asia	20.8	8.9	6.5	↓	Decline slowing
South Asia	41.1	33.4	29.5	↓	Steady decline

** Source: The Millennium Development Goals Report, 2007*[5]

The countries reported to be having the most difficulty in reaching MDG Goal 1 targets in the region are: Bangladesh, Lao PDR and Mongolia. Korea (DPR) is faring badly in progress towards the second target under this goal of halving the proportion of people who suffer from hunger; 48 per cent of children in Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Nepal are under-nourished, and 47 per cent in India.[6]

Additionally, it is important to note that the decline in extreme poverty in East Asia has been accompanied by rising inequality as measured by the percentage share of the poorest quintile in national consumption, from 7.1 per cent in 1990 to 4.5 per cent in 2004. This reflects a widening gap between the educated/skilled population that is able to take advantage of growth in the services-led labour market and the less/uneducated/unskilled population that is unable to benefit from economic growth. The inequality figure was steady for South-East Asia (no figure available for South Asia).

This leads to the inevitable conclusion that education is the key that unlocks the door to benefiting from economic growth, investment and labour market response to globalization. Recognizing and harnessing this results in the 'virtuous cycle' that East Asia is now enjoying: a more educated, skilled workforce able to respond to increased demand for skilled workers, engendering increased off-shore investment in services, promoting economic growth that encourages and facilitates enrolment in education.

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5 The MDG process of reporting classifies countries into the following regions: **Eastern Asia**: China, Hong Kong, Macao, Korea PDR, Korea (Republic of), Mongolia; **South Asia**: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka; **South-East Asia**: Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Viet Nam; **Oceania**: American Samoa, Cook Islands, Fiji, French Polynesia, Guam, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federal States of), Nauru, Niue, New Caledonia, Northern Mariana Islands, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu; **Developed countries** (of which, in this region): Australia, Japan, New Zealand. The MDG region **Western Asia** comprises the Arab states of the Gulf and Middle East plus Israel and Cyprus. Since these countries are not part of the UN-designated 'Asia and the Pacific' regional commission, they are not included in this paper.

6 The MDG Progress Report 2007 does not give figures for Oceania in relation to MDG Goal 1.

Table 4: Total enrolment ratio in primary education ***MDG 2: Achieve universal primary education***			
	1990/91	**1998/99**	**2004/5**
East Asia	99	99	91
South-East Asia	94	92	94
South Asia	74	81	90
Oceania	75	81	78

Countries in the region with the highest numbers of children not enrolled in primary/lower secondary school in 2006 were India, Pakistan and China, as well as the PICs (less than 50 per cent of the population in the seven ILO Member States had attained primary education in 2007, with a low of 25 per cent in the Solomon Islands). Other countries with more than three million children not enrolled in school were: Bangladesh, Indonesia, Afghanistan, Viet Nam and Myanmar. It is important also, however, to take into consideration, in addition to these absolute numbers, the percentage of the school-aged population not enrolled in school since, when this is taken into account, Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Myanmar are shown to have a more serious non-enrolment problem than China, where the high absolute number represents in fact only 1 per cent of the school-age population:

Table 5: Primary school-age population not enrolled in school		
	Absolute number (millions) (2006)	**Percentage* (2000-2005)**
India	47.2	24
Pakistan	21.2	44
China	19.9	1
Bangladesh	6.3	16
Indonesia	6.1	6
Afghanistan	4.1	47
Viet Nam	3.1	6

Myanmar	3.0	16

* *Source: State of the World's Children, 2007*

Afghanistan, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Papua New Guinea and Timor-Leste are currently unlikely to achieve MDG Goal 2 targets by 2015.

1.3 Youth unemployment

Closely linked to low educational levels and child labour is the problem of youth unemployment, which the 2007 MDG Progress Report identifies as a 'pervasive obstacle' to achieving the MDGs for Asia and the Pacific.

Youth unemployment and child labour overlap at the point where unemployed young people between the ages of 15 and 18 may accept work out of desperation and find themselves in hazardous work or the worst forms of child labour. If young people are to find decent work when they reach working age, they must have the necessary skills to equip them for the workforce, both vocational and the basic skills of reading and writing. Children who have missed out on schooling because they have entered child labour are ill equipped and less likely to find decent work when they reach the legal working age. They may remain in exploitative labour or, more likely, will be replaced by younger children who can be more easily exploited, and will join the ranks of unemployed youth. Child labour is thus a contributing factor to youth unemployment.

Conversely, youth unemployment contributes to vulnerability to child labour when children and their families reject education and training because they see there is little chance of remunerative work once the child reaches the minimum working age. They will trade the uncertainty of future income for the immediate returns they gain from sending a child to work. This shortsighted view contributes to child labour, perpetuates youth and adult unemployment and reinforces the vicious cycle of poverty.

Globally, the number of unemployed young people grew from 74 million to 86 million in 2006. This represents almost half of the 195 million unemployed people in the world, although a more telling figure is the rate of unemployment, which stood at 4.4 per cent for adults but 13.6 per cent for young people.

Table 6: Youth unemployment rate

MDG 8: In cooperation with developing countries, develop and implement strategies for decent and productive work for youth

	1996	**2006**
East Asia	7	7
South-East Asia	10	18
South Asia	10	11
Oceania	7	7

Across the region, the problem of youth unemployment remains either stable or is growing. Nowhere is it receding. In the PICs, there has been rapid growth in the youth population. About 20 per cent of the total population of the PICs (7.8 million people) is aged between 15 and 24 (1.6 million, 53 per cent female). There are 2.4 million 10-24 year-olds. With the present rate of population growth (2.5 – 2.9 per cent), it is estimated that the population in the PICs will double in the next 28 years.

All the PICs additionally have high under-employment rates, particularly for young people. The number of people seeking to enter the labour market each year in Fiji, for example, – approximately 17,000 -- far outnumbers available new jobs. Most of the new labour market entrants, moreover, some 14,000 each year, are school leavers who have not learned the kinds of skills they need to compete for scarce employment opportunities. Ironically, some employment sectors face serious challenges finding workers, primarily because those who do have appropriate skills are also in demand elsewhere in the region, including in Australia and New Zealand.

The two sectors facing most skills shortages in Fiji are construction and tourism. The expanding tourism sector lacks both middle-level managers and skilled workers and also people for lower-skilled positions as bar workers, waiters and housekeepers. These are sectors in which children are often found in child labour and the coincidence of high supply of school leavers and non-enrolled children and unmet demand in this sector rings alarm bells. In Kiribati, limited prospects for waged employment mean that young people increasingly will have to seek work in the informal sector where, again, supply outstrips demand; and in Timor-Leste, 15,000 young people entering the labour market each year cannot be accommodated in gainful employment – a problem that is likely to increase along with the rapidly expanding population.

The challenge of addressing the lack of opportunities for young people has been identified in the UNDAF in Samoa, Papua New Guinea and Fiji (curriculum for employment), and ILO is nominated

as the lead agency for this sub-section. By and large, however, agencies and donors active in the region emphasize basic primary education: UNICEF in the Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and Kiribati; AusAid in Fiji, Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, Samoa and Vanuatu; NZAID in Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu and JICS across the region. The ADB is working in the region on labour legislation, skills development and youth employment.

Table 7 below shows the estimated vulnerable child population for individual countries in 2016, based on estimates of school non-enrolment. On the basis of these figures, Afghanistan, the Solomon Islands and Timor-Leste are the countries where the vulnerable child population is projected to increase. Papua New Guinea remains on the borderline.

Table 7: Estimated vulnerable child population ('000s), 2006 - 2016

	2006	2016	Projected change (%) (2006-2016)
Afghanistan	4,132	4,687	13.4
Australia	212	159	-25.0
Bangladesh	6,274	5,576	-11.1
Brunei Darussalam	5	5	-13.7
Cambodia	797	573	-28.1
China	19,946	8,979	-55.0
Fiji	15	11	-30.1
Hong Kong (China)	74	40	-46.3
India	47,177	32,706	-30.7
Indonesia	6,121	3,873	-36.7
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	1,383	876	-36.6
Japan	12	9	-22.1
Korea (Republic of)	146	58	-60.6
Lao PDR	385	242	-37.3
Macao (China)	7	2	-72.5
Malaysia	501	346	-30.9
Maldives	19	12	-38.1
Mongolia	75	41	-44.8
Myanmar	3,044	1,667	-45.2
Nepal	2,062	1,810	-12.2
New Zealand	25	21	-16.4
Pakistan	21,140	13,332	-36.9
Papua New Guinea	776	773	-0.4
Philippines	2,833	1,961	-30.8
Solomon Islands	51	54	6.6
Sri Lanka	419	262	-37.5
Thailand	1,886	1,394	-26.1
Timor-Leste	99	126	26.5
Vietnam	3,101	1,682	-45.7

Source: Huyn, P and Kapsos, S: Child vulnerability projection model: Methodology and data (draft) (edited)

1.4 Warning bells

In addition to the projections on the numbers of children potentially at risk of entering child labour in 2016, a number of other factors need to be taken into account in coming years if efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labour, and ultimately all child labour, in Asia and the Pacific are not to be sidelined.

Increased migration

Migration for labour in Asia and the Pacific is reported to have "acquired an unprecedented scale, diversity and significance"[7] in recent years. A report from the Global Commission on International Migration notes that, although some nations in the region still dismiss labour migration as a temporary, passing phenomenon, it is in fact an "established structural feature" of the region. Despite this, the report notes, much of the work of governments in the region to develop international migration policies has "not been informed by high quality research relating to the causes and effects of migration".

Between 1995 and 2005, there was an exponential increase in the movement of Asians out of the region but also between Asian countries. The UN estimated in 2002 that 50 million of the 175 million people worldwide living outside the country they were born in are in Asia. However, this does not take account of undocumented or otherwise irregular migrants. The report notes also that a major cause of increased migration is not, as many would consider, poverty and desperation pushing people to move but rather the fact that many people in the region have been lifted out of extreme poverty and, as education levels have also increased, have had reason to aspire to better work and life chances.

It is also important to remember that the most mobile population is aged 15 to 24 and it not coincidence that increased migration in Asia has coincided with what has been called 'the Asian Youth Bulge' – a marked increase in the youth population from the 1980s onwards. By 2020 the youth population is projected to have continued to grow, although at a slower rate, and to comprise just under 16 per cent of the population.

This is of considerable importance in considerations of child labour and, especially, child trafficking. Those seeking to exploit cheap labour in a situation of increasing supply are likely to look to the younger end of the youth spectrum and choose 15 year olds on the move, effectively transforming their migration into trafficking. Emphasizing 'safe migration' as explored through the TICW project

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7 Hugo, G: *Migration in the Asia-Pacific Region*, Paper prepared for the Policy Analysis and Research programme of the UN Global Commission on International Migration, September 2005.

and other destination-side programme options will be important, as will enhancing partnerships with workers' and employers' organizations.

The flow of labour across national borders is projected to be a veritable flood in the PICs, both out-migration as well as within countries. In general, however, migration in the PICs has been characterised by movement of semi-skilled workers or those with military training (that permits work as a security guard). On this basis, there has been less out-migration from Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu.

Although there are few wholly reliable figures on the numbers of children being trafficked in the region, cross-border trafficking, like migration for work, is reported to be on the rise. Children from Lao PDR, Cambodia and Myanmar continue to cross into Thailand; children from Nepal are exploited in India; children from Indonesia and Myanmar are in labour in Malaysia. It will be important to learn the lessons gathered over the past decade and fine-tune responses to prevent child trafficking over the next decade.

The informal economy

While most workers in developed economies are in waged and salaried employment, the overwhelming majority in the developing economies of South Asia and, to a lesser extent in Asia and the Pacific in general, work in the informal economy or as contributing family workers. This leaves them more vulnerable to economic risk and gives them little access to social or labour protections to mitigate this risk. Women are particularly likely to be working in the informal sector or in family-based business, and this is in itself a vulnerability factor for child labour, since out-of-school children are likely to accompany their mothers – for example while she sells smallgoods on the street or performs cleaning duties – and then 'join in' the work.

By 2006, the service sector, which includes subsistence street trade activities, for example, had overtaken agriculture as the main sector of employment, although agriculture remains the major employer in South Asia, South-East Asia and the Pacific. Most of the PICs are characterized by large informal and subsistence sectors which are resistant to commercialization and productivity growth. The disempowerment of informal sector workers because land, infrastructure, finance and, importantly, business skills and learning remain in the hands of employers, inevitably contributes to a cycle of poverty, low education and dependency.

The informal economy remains not only an area which is particularly open to exploitation and child labour but which also is difficult to document, regulate and police. There is an urgent need to develop better understanding of the various sectors in the informal economy and of models of how

these can be regulated. In Papua New Guinea, for example, the last decade has seen a series of initiatives to raise the status of the informal sector and provide a framework for its development.

Climate change

Not systematically considered until now in projections of social development issues, is the phenomenon of climate change. The MDG Progress Report notes, however, that climate change is likely to impact seriously on achievement of the MDGs and must be integrated into development plans, and perhaps nowhere is this so true as in Asia and Pacific, where in the past decade climate change has considerably impacted upon people's ability to secure a livelihood, including in the developed countries of the region.

Australia is a good example of the links between climate change and the world of work. In many parts of the country but especially in the north east, which is largely agricultural, severe drought has persisted for almost a decade and has seen the wholesale failure of many small- to medium-scale holdings. As the drought has continued and, in many cases, become more severe, landholders who diversified from crops to livestock have faced new challenges as food stocks for their animals have become too expensive. Many farms have closed down. Those that attempt to continue have had to lay off workers and in recent times Australian trade unions have begun to report that children of farming families are working the land in the place of paid staff. Although these children still attend school, there has been to date no thorough investigation of the conditions under which they work and whether they are protected from chemicals such as fertilizers or whether they operate heavy equipment.

Other manifestations of the region's changing climate include floods, bushfires, shorter or longer growing seasons, changes in arable land patterns, and at first seemingly unrelated phenomena such as power shortages that result from increased load on heating or cooling appliances. These affect not only agriculture but small and large enterprises, with challenges that are both economic and also related, in the case of flooding for example, to displacement of the labour force or loss of property. The disastrous outcomes of climate change threaten the livelihoods not only of businesses but of communities, increasing the vulnerability of families and the children involved. In addition to rural areas of Australia, other countries where climate change has already had a significant impact are Bangladesh and China, both of which have experienced severe flooding in recent years. In the PICs, the incidence of tropical cyclones and other severe weather incidents has increased.

There is undoubtedly a need for a more in-depth study on the potential impact of climate change on vulnerability to child labour in Asia and the Pacific. Until more information is available, a 'watching

brief' is necessary with specific attention focused on the impact of climate change on children's vulnerability and any increase in school drop-out and/or premature entry into labour or the transformation of light work alongside the family into child labour, potentially hazardous.

Conflict, civil unrest and terrorism

Another watching brief on the largely unpredictable is necessary so that the impact of any conflict or civil unrest can be quickly factored in to the incidence of child labour in the region. In addition to necessary 'crisis response' actions, it is important to consider the longer-term results of conflict and civil unrest on children and their vulnerability.

The use of children as soldiers, porters, sex providers and general helpers for militias is a worst form of child labour. However conflict and civil unrest have much wider implications for children, ranging from displacement or breakdown of the family structure to destruction of infrastructure including schools, and the broader impact on the economy and on businesses at many levels. These disruptions in both the social fabric and the world of enterprise can see supply and demand of workers change considerably in a short time and children's labour can easily become a 'solution' to these challenges.

Sri Lanka, Nepal, the Philippines, Samoa and Timor-Leste have all seen various levels of conflict or civil unrest within the past few years.

The child labour outcomes of terrorism may not be so obvious. Since the so-called 'War on Terror' began, however, the world as a whole has seen a steady restricting or re-regulating of migration, especially in countries where those fleeing from countries such as Afghanistan and Iraq have attempted to enter as asylum seekers. At the same time, ILO-IPEC has been promoting understanding of the importance of keeping legitimate migration channels open and accessible as a necessary element of anti-trafficking action. Any terrorist events in the region that are seen as linked to 'outside' elements – newly arrived migrants or refugees, minority populations or simply tourists or temporary visitors – are likely to refuel the debate on migration/people movement and increase the likelihood of borders closing or becoming more difficult to cross legally. The fall-out on clandestine people movement and trafficking would potentially be significant.

2. PROGRESS MADE TOWARDS THE ELIMINATION GOALS

Since the turn of this century, there has been considerable effort to move towards the elimination of the worst forms of child labour and towards MDG, education and poverty reduction goals. A strong global movement against child labour has been forged and the issue remains firmly on the global agenda and a topic of international interest. The elimination of child labour is certainly not a 'lost cause' in Asia and the Pacific.

2.1 Ratification of ILO conventions and national frameworks

Since the 2005 report on progress in Asia and the Pacific,[8] two more countries – Pakistan and Singapore – have ratified the ILO Minimum Age Convention (No.138) and three countries – Australia, Cambodia and Vanuatu -- have ratified the ILO Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention (No.182).

A review of the actions taken in direct response to these instruments, however, shows that there is still more to do to fully implement the Convention:

Table 8: Action taken in relation to adherence to C.138 and 182

Areas where most action taken	**Areas where some action taken**	***Almost no action taken***
Plans of action	Prohibition of prostitution	Withdrawal and rehabilitation
Time-bound measures	Determine hazardous work	Legislation on pornography
Legislation on trafficking	Prevention of CL	National CL policy formulated
Prohibition of hazardous work	Attention to most at-risk	Measures for universal basic education
Monitoring mechanisms	Legislation on illicit activities	Minimum working age legislation
		Legislation on slavery
		Legislation on forced or bonded labour
		Legislation on child soldiers

8 Kane, J: *Combating child labour n Asia and the Pacific: Progress and challenges*, ILO, Bangkok 2005. Note that the analysis contained in the 2005 report, and the conclusions, remain valid but are not repeated here.

		Definition and regulation of light work
		Special attention to girls

In Asia and the Pacific, several countries have now put in place national plans of action (NPA) against child labour or the worst forms. Some countries – Cambodia, Indonesia, Philippines -- are in the second phase of implementation of their NPAs. Eight countries in the region have or are in the process of developing time-bound programmes (TBP) for the elimination of child labour: Bangladesh, Cambodia, Indonesia, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan and Philippines.

Example: The TBP in Cambodia

The *Cambodian National Plan of Action on the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour: A Time-Bound Approach (2004-2008)* is a good example of how TBPs are instrumental in focusing efforts to eliminate child labour and building a critical mass that sustains these efforts and keeps the issue on the national agenda. A mid-term evaluation of the process noted that: "A combined campaign through the TBP is proving effective. Draft national plans of action to combat the worst forms of child labour have been completed. Equally important is the mobilization of line ministries, workers' and employers' organizations and civil society to support implementation of national policies. The TBP's practical assistance and advocacy helped the government to ratify the international labour conventions on the elimination of child labour, and has helped translate these commitments into law through *prakas* (ministerial decrees) on hazardous child labour and on light work permitted for children below the legal minimum age." Strengths of the TBP include:

- Good plans and structure,
- Mobilized social partners,
- Government commitment,
- An improved knowledge base,
- Useful lessons and good practices, for example the outsourcing of vocational training that helped to build links with local businesses; *prakas* that empower provincial levels to act while a law is before Parliament but not yet adopted; and the value of child labour monitoring

The TBP also helps to identify outstanding challenges:

- The need to influence public attitudes towards child labour and engender behaviour change,

- The importance of putting in place real/acceptable alternatives for children and their families,
- The vital need for good quality, relevant, accessible education and also vocational/transitional training.

An important element of NPAs/TBPs is the setting of national targets: the Philippines, for example, has set a target of reducing child labour from 2.4 million children to 600,000 by 2016; in Indonesia, child labour and youth employment are two of four priorities in the Tripartite Action Plan on Decent Work 2002-2005; Viet Nam has set targets to eliminate child labour in hazardous work, domestic labour and construction by 2010 and in mining by 2015; and Cambodia aims to halve the number of children in child labour from 16.5 per cent of the child population to 8 per cent by 2015.

Translating plans and strategies into concrete actions is a vital step in moving towards the elimination goals, and a number of countries in the region have illustrated how it is possible to translate national policy into action. The Government of India, for example, included child labour elimination strategies developed by ILO-IPEC's INDUS project into national initiatives. The Indian Planning Commission's Report on the 11th Five-Year Plan (2007-2012) recommended replicating several initiatives piloted by the INDUS project in the National Child Labour Programme. These included expanding the child labour programme to cover 14 to 17 year-olds and upscaling the INDUS vocational training model to cater to their needs; adopting beneficiary tracking systems; and, at state level, replicating the concept of state resource cells in all Indian states and State Action Plans for the elimination of child labour. These recommendations were backed up with a request for an increased budget allocation, including US$108 million for vocational training to combat youth unemployment over the five years of the plan.

In Indonesia, one of the most important achievements of the National Action Plan for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour was the formulation of indicators that are used to measure progress against the objectives that have been set. These indicators are used to help all those involved in implementing the plan, including social partners and NGOs, to see where the priorities lie and where progress is being made. The collaboration of these groups, as well as higher education institutes, community organizations and various arms of governments, have allowed a broad range of activities to be implemented in line with the national goals. In the first phase of the plan, many of the activities focused on promoting understanding of the issue of child labour and encouraging communities to pay more attention to child labourers. Some of the actions focused on developing policies and the infrastructure needed to carry them forward, and some actions aimed to remove

children from the worst forms of child labour, particularly by providing educational or skills training programmes. The plan underlines the importance of keeping a balance between 'upstream' actions such as the development of policy and 'downstream' activities that provide direct services to children. In reviewing progress at the end of the first phase of the plan, the National Action Committee on the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour also identified outstanding challenges and priority areas for action in the next phase. These included socio-political factors such as the ongoing process of decentralization and the cultural and economic obstacles that are difficult to overcome, as well as the geography of Indonesia, which comprises 17,000 islands.

2.2 Lessons learned

No plans, actions or good intentions, though, result in tangible outcomes for children if national budgets do not have a discreet and adequate allocation for child labour outputs. In this region, 12 countries have allocated funds in the national budget for child labour and made the worst forms of child labour a priority in the national development policy and Decent Work Agenda.

In relation to the important goal of improving the accessibility of education for all children, China, Malaysia and Thailand have made progress in providing basic education up to the age of 15, and there has been progress in the access of girls to education in Cambodia, China, Indonesia, the Philippines and Thailand.

Out of these efforts, a solid and extremely valuable set of lessons learned and good practice is building. These often remain, however, un-learned lessons because of the tyranny of distance and language. Much more has to be done to bring lessons together, analyse them thoroughly and make sure they are actively built in to new plans. The box below includes some 'new' lessons that are of particular importance because they relate to actions that are traditionally a component of child labour elimination programmes.

Example: Some 'new' lessons learned

Planning NFE interventions

Non-formal education (NFE) is a regular component of actions that aim to withdraw children from situations of child labour and reintegrate or introduce them to school. The theory behind this is that children who have dropped out of schooling or who have never enrolled in school have some 'catching up' to do in order to be able to make a smooth transition into formal education. Frequently, also, it is not possible to remove children all together from child labour since the necessary family or financial support is not in place to allow that to happen. A half-way stage is to

leave the child in a situation of labour (although not if it is a worst form of child labour), improve the conditions to eliminate any form or likelihood of hazard, and provide NFE so that the child can begin the path to withdrawal from child labour. It is important to underline that leaving a child in a situation of child labour should always be seen as a temporary/transitional phase.

A recent independent evaluation of an ILO-IPEC project to prevent and eliminate selected worst forms of child labour in the informal economy in Dhaka, Bangladesh, concluded that NFE is less transitional than is often assumed. In the Dhaka project, most of the children who received NFE continued to be in child labour and never progressed into school. Of course eventually the children would reach the minimum working age and so, by definition, no longer be considered to be in child labour, however this passive 'wait and see' approach is not in the best interests of the child and is certainly not an appropriate means to move towards eliminating child labour itself.

The evaluation recommended that it is vital that, when NFE is programmed, that plans are also put in place to promote the transition of the child out of child labour. Some possible options suggested were vocational training alongside NFE, as well as accelerated family support programmes to actively influence the factors that had led to the child entering child labour. This is an important lesson for Asia and the Pacific, given the few post-primary educational options that exist in the region and high youth unemployment.

Target members of the same household simultaneously for greater impact

An independent evaluation of ILO-IPEC's project to support the Philippines TBP process noted that efforts using external research teams to establish a master list of potential priority beneficiaries of actions under the TBP were not as successful as they might have been because the list did not include household finances as a criterion of vulnerability. As a result, some families were targeted for projects promoting and facilitating school enrolment and others were targeted for income-generation and microfinance interventions.

The evaluation concluded that, for maximum impact, it is important to target members of the same household simultaneously for education services and strengthening of incomes. In this way, the vulnerability of the child within the context of family vulnerability is addressed and the family's ability to support the child going to school is enhanced.

It is worth adding that awareness-raising actions targeted at all members of the family at the same time are a valuable addition to education and income programmes and that this holistic approach to programming is one of the most important lessons to have come out of the ILO-IPEC subregional trafficking project TICW.

In addition to the lessons that emerge from coordinated, comprehensive TBP/NPA processes, the scope and comprehensive nature of such processes allow the development of new and innovative initiatives. The box below contains just two examples of programme components that have been shown to be effective and could be considered across the region.

Example: Innovative project components

'Central hubs' for the community

A number of initiatives across the region have developed, albeit in different forms, 'hubs' that have become a focus within the communities where they have been established and have subsequently therefore become a resource for other actions.

In Bangladesh, 84 Multi-Purpose Centres were established as part of the ILO-IPEC project to prevent and eliminate worst forms of child labour in the informal economy in Dhaka City. The Centres were the hub of the social protection actions of the project, which included NFE, skills development training, micro-credit and income-generating activities and other supplementary services. The community was mobilized around their 'hub' and so there was a knock-on effect in the form of better awareness of the issue.

In Cambodia, the hubs are called Community Learning Centres and are a component of the TBP. As their name suggests, they are primarily venues for NFE classes and 96 of them have been established in target villages in partnership with local communities, using local materials. The Centres host 107 NFE teachers.

In Indonesia, three Children's Creativity Centres were developed as one component of an ILO-IPEC project to combat child labour in the footwear sector. These centres were used as a focal point through which monthly medical check-ups could be provided to the children and, in turn, the popularity of these provided a platform for awareness raising. Additionally, the centre was a visible draw for those wishing to volunteer their services and doctors, nurses and general volunteers came forward to contribute.

The common element among these 'community hubs', regardless of their primary use, is the visibility they give to the issue of child labour in an affected community. They act as a 'rallying point' for the community, bringing them on board the global movement to eliminate child labour in a tangible way. The services provided can be supplemented by additional services and activities and so allows the centres to remain responsive to the community's needs.

An important lesson from the Children's Creativity Centre experience in Indonesia, also, was the importance of securing local government support for the 'hubs'. Although the footwear community in Cibaduyut had not been inspected by government labour inspectors because of limited resources, the local government formed an Occupational Safety and Health Committee to help with inspections and community monitoring. The municipal health office provided free basic health services for child labourers and their families, and the West Java provincial government and Bandung municipality allocated funds in their budgets, the latter specifically for NFE for the children who had been in labour in the footwear sector.

Illustrating how it's done

In the ILO-IPEC project to address child labour in the shoemaking sector in Cibaduyut, Indonesia, two concrete examples were developed of how working conditions can be improved at little cost. The shoemaking sector can be extremely hazardous: children are exposed to glue solvents, toxic chemicals, leather dust, sharp instruments and unsafe electrical installations, and often the workshop is hot and cramped, with the children squatting or sitting cross-legged on the floor.

Without losing sight of the overarching goal of removing children from child labour as soon as possible and preventing children from entering child labour in the first place, two model workshops demonstrating hazard-free workplaces were established as a matter of urgency and promoting general occupational safety and health (OSH) practices. Two existing workshops were modified. The building lay-out, interior and working environment were improved; facilities were provided; lighting and air circulation were modified to create an ergonomic, healthy, safe and comfortable workshop.

To further encourage improvements, the project provided examples on how OSH improvements are directly connected to increased productivity and profits. Study visits were organized to the two model workshops and posters, leaflets and guidelines on OSH management systems were distributed.

Within two years, 72 workshops have adopted new technology based on their visits to the model workshops and discussions with ILO-IPEC monitors.

2.3 At regional/subregional level

At regional/subregional level, there has been little progress in the development of bilateral Memoranda of Understanding, with the emphasis firmly on national action and reporting/sharing of information at subregional levels through grouping such as SAARC and ASEAN. The ASEAN nations adopted a Resolution on the Prevention and Eradication of the Worst Forms of Child

Labour at the 25th General Assembly of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Organization in September 2005.

In the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS), there have been no new bilateral agreements on cross-border trafficking, undoubtedly because of the now well established COMMIT process, which brings together six governments in that subregion in a highly structured system of consultation and joint priority-setting.

Ministerial representatives from Cambodia, China, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam met in Beijing in December 2007 to review achievements of the COMMIT[9] process since 2004. They developed and endorsed a follow-up action plan focusing on policy-making and capacity building in the areas of law enforcement and criminal justice, prevention, protection, and recovery and reintegration of victims of trafficking. They also discussed the importance of sharing experiences and best practices from COMMIT with other forums and regions.

Human trafficking is recognized as a serious and high priority issue in the GMS. Since signing the COMMIT Memorandum of Understanding in October 2004, the six member governments have built on their national anti-trafficking efforts and strengths to form a network of cooperation to stop traffickers and prosecute them, protect victims of trafficking and help them to return safely home, and work to prevent others from sharing the same fate.

The meeting in Beijing was reported as an important step forward that demonstrates how the six governments are translating joint political commitments made at the highest level into concrete action.

The United Nations Inter-Agency Project (UNIAP) based in Bangkok serves as a general secretariat to the COMMIT process and ILO has been an active contributor to UNIAP since its inception. In particular, ILO-IPEC's subregional project to combat trafficking in children and women in the Greater Mekong Subregion (TICW) has been active in sharing lessons with partners through UNIAP and, since 2004, has taken on the task of studying and making recommendations on the role and nature of recruitment agencies in relation to human trafficking.

9 Coordinated Mekong Ministerial Initiative against Trafficking

Example: Anti-trafficking lessons from TICSA and TICW

What happened to trafficked children in Nepal

TICSA, ILO-IPEC's subregional project to combat child trafficking in South Asia, completed its second phase in 2006. A central element of the project was the withdrawal of children from trafficking and their reintegration into family and school life. To attempt to see how successful these efforts had been, ILO-IPEC commissioned a tracer study of beneficiaries of the Action Programme run by Maiti Nepal, a project partner in Nepal.

The study found that many children who had been withdrawn from trafficking at the Nepal/India border by Maiti Nepal and who had been provided with refuge and services had subsequently returned to child labour. The number of children in hazardous work had increased. Why?

The phase between withdrawal and reintegration is crucial. Too often programming focuses on where the children have come from – the trafficking situation – and the immediate services they need to help them to overcome their ordeal (sometimes called 'rehabilitation'). Too often there is no clear plan that takes account of where the child will go next and what the longer-term outcomes for the child will be. As in NFE programming, there is clearly a need for a planned transition programme for each child. The child should not just stay 'in limbo', even if criminal proceedings are in progress and the child may be called to give witness. Above all, the child must not be put to work on behalf of the programme provider, even if that work seems benign and helps to support the child's basic needs. It is vital to prepare trafficked children for education or for a transition to Decent Work.

Providing a viable livelihood

Programmers and implementing organizations have to a large extent learned the lesson that skills taught as part of vocational projects, reintegration or transition initiatives, need to be usable and relevant to the likely employment opportunities available to those participating in them. The tracer study that followed up children who had benefited from TICSA Phase I activities brought to light another important lesson relating to the kinds of skills that are taught.

The tracer study interviewed girls who had learned, as part of their programme, jewellery-making skills. At first glance, these skills might seem useful in a part of the world where beaded jewellery is commonly worn and where the girls' skills are therefore relevant. However, the girls reported that they had not been able to continue making beaded jewellery because they did not have the start-up money or cash flow to buy beads. A simple lesson, but an important one: consider whether the skills being taught can be translated into income-generating activity without requiring start-up or ongoing capital injections.

Prevention of trafficking should not only happen at source

TICW, ILO-IPEC's subregional project to combat trafficking in children and women in the Greater Mekong Subregion, undertook research during its first phase that pointed to clear links between vulnerability to trafficking and the understandable and legitimate desire to find employment and a better life 'elsewhere'. When people are looking to move, or are easily encouraged to do so, or when they migrate to work, they are vulnerable to unscrupulous employers who take advantage of their lack of familiarity with their rights in a new place as well as to traffickers who seek to make a profit from their labour.

In its second phase, TICW set out to explore further what this might mean to anti-trafficking programming. It developed, with partners, a number of 'destination-side' interventions that essentially aimed to prevent the exploitative outcomes of migration and so stop migration from becoming trafficking. Workers' and employers' organizations were crucial to this, as understanding of the issues involved were spread through workplaces in destination countries and where employers began developing codes of conduct and systems to target exploitative practices.

At the 'source' end of the migration chain, TICW pioneered an awareness-raising system called 'Travel smart, work smart', which aims to promote potential migrants' understanding of how to migrate safely and look for safe work. The 'Travel smart, work smart' initiative has since been picked up the Government of Thailand and is being piloted in other areas.

Target the vulnerable

It is clear that, for programmes to have the most immediate impact on child trafficking, they must be aimed at protecting the most vulnerable children. Indicators of vulnerability have been developed and are used to identify who these children are. However, vulnerability is not a static state. Vulnerability is not a simple question of poverty, sex, age or education. It is the result of a complex and varied set of factors, some of which are quasi established (sex, family economic status, family size, age), some of which are almost coincidental and unpredictable (trigger factors such as family illness or death, conflict, natural and man-made disasters, economic crisis etc) and, importantly, some of which come into play only in certain circumstances and may or may not result in vulnerability. This is particularly relevant in programmes that include large education components. Education is a protective factor for some children but a vulnerability factor for others who may be prompted to migrate because they have learned more about options and feel empowered to seek them out. The same is true of improved financial status – including through programming such as micro-finance/village banks etc – that can prompt people to think about using their greater resources to migrate. In many ways, there is a continuum of vulnerability; it is not a static state.

Holistic packages mitigate risk

If income-generation initiatives and education raise people's expectations and potentially lead them to consider relocating to find work, then there is a likelihood that their vulnerability to trafficking and labour exploitation will increase. This can be mitigated by packaging income-generation and education actions with awareness raising on safe migration and safe work and other protection actions.

TICW found that this met with some resistance from governments who were anxious to see income generation, in particular, given maximum resources. It is important to underline that income-generation programmes may have effective poverty reduction outcomes but are not, of themselves, anti-trafficking actions. The lesson of comprehensive, holistic packaging of programmes is important in anti-trafficking terms and should be promoted.

3. OUTSTANDING CHALLENGES/OPPORTUNITIES

The examples given in the preceding section are indicative of some of the progress made in the past few years to eliminate the worst forms of child labour (and ultimately all child labour) in Asia and the Pacific region. However, the problem remains significant and progress has to be more than maintained, it needs to be stepped up, especially in countries where goals are not being met.

3.1 Focus moving forward

Looking ahead to 2016, in terms of absolute numbers, India (32.7 m), Pakistan (13.3 m), China (9,0 m), Bangladesh (5.6 m) and Afghanistan (4.7 m) will have a serious non-enrolled children problem. Additionally, Timor-Leste (47.9 per cent), Afghanistan (46.4 per cent), PNG (45.3 per cent) and the Solomon Islands (43.4 per cent) are projected to have the highest shares of non-enrolled children in the school-age population. These are the vulnerable children and, unless actions are taken to get them into school, keep them in school and provide Decent Work for them when they finish their education, they will be the next generation of child labourers and unemployed youth.

In the PICs, youth unemployment is a major challenge and transition from school to work is a crucial area where more work needs to be done and where new solutions need to be found.

Across the region, the countries most likely not to achieve child labour and WFCL elimination targets by 2016 have been identified as: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Timor-Leste (Group 3, see below). More

promising are: China, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Iran, Maldives, Mongolia, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Viet Nam (Group 2, see below).

Some of these areas were identified already in the 2005 Progress Report, however they bear repeating and updating:

Ratification and taking the lead

Ratification of the two principal ILO conventions relating to child labour should be universal across the region. The promotion and realization of standards and fundamental principles and rights at work is an ILO strategic objective but, beyond this, sending a clear signal to all countries in the region that they must honour their commitments is vital. For this, the developed countries of the region need to take a lead.

To date, seven countries in the region have not ratified Convention No.182: Afghanistan, India, Kiribati, Myanmar, Samoa, Solomon Islands and Timor-Leste. Twelve countries have not ratified ILO Convention No.138: Afghanistan, Australia, Bangladesh, India, Iran, Kiribati, Myanmar, New Zealand, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste and Vanuatu. Seven countries have not ratified either of the conventions: Afghanistan, India, Kiribati, Myanmar, Samoa, Solomon Islands and Timor-Leste.

There is a window of opportunity in the next four years to bring Australia into the fold of countries in the region that have ratified both conventions. A new Labor government was elected to office in November 2007 and signalled its intention to work more closely with the international community in a number of areas. The main reason given by Australia for not ratifying Convention No.138 to date has been that a minimum working age has not yet been legislated by all the states and territories of Australia. These all have Labor governments and, for the first time, Labor is now in office at both federal and state/territory levels. Ratifying Convention No.138 should be put firmly on the agenda of the new Rudd government at the earliest opportunity.

Translating commitment into law

Legislation is the key to translating international instruments into binding national blueprints and signalling the norms that a country will live by. This is vital if government commitment is to be seen as clear leadership able to promote attitude and behaviour change on a wider scale. In this respect, it will be important for countries that have achieved significant goals to bring pressure on those that are lagging behind and also to support them with technical expertise and resources as necessary. ILO-IPEC can facilitate this, but for this to happen there has to be effective exchange of information and learning within IPEC and, at a regional level, a harmonized platform of knowledge

and experiences. The potential impact of policies and edicts at central level can easily be dissipated if these are not translated into actions and approaches by every single member of the team at all levels.

Government commitment translated into budget allocation

Many promising initiatives are thwarted because they are not adequately resourced. ILO-IPEC and partners must continue to push for a specific allocation for child labour in national, provincial and local budgets.

Inclusion of child labour/the worst forms in Decent Work Country Programmes

Eight countries -- China, Kiribati, Republic of Korea, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, the Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste and Vanuatu -- have not included child labour in their Decent Work Country Programmes. This should be addressed, since the DCWP is central to the work of both governments and the ILO.

Increased capacity and tools

Numerous evaluations have concluded that building capacity at national and other levels is the most effective way of ensuring mainstreaming of child labour initiatives. It is also a *de facto* means of raising awareness of child labour issues and of engendering attitudinal and behavioural change. ILO-IPEC has been instrumental in a number of countries in focusing on capacity building of line ministries, national child labour structures and other partners. With the production of the ILO-IPEC Anti-trafficking Resource Kit and accompanying training module in early 2008, there is an opportunity to re-visit national capacity building and refresh or repeat it. The high mobility of public service and ministry officials requires regular repeating of training and awareness-raising initiatives.

Worst forms of child labour focus

It is important, as efforts to eliminate child labour grow in the region, to ensure that there continues to be a focus on the worst forms and in particular those areas that are reported to be growing. While agriculture and manufacturing remain important sectors employing child labour, child trafficking, drug trafficking/couriering and armed conflict are on the rise. The South-East Asian region also seems to be at an important turning point in attitudes towards child domestic labour, with a number of countries having included it in their TBPs and growing public awareness of child domestic labour as potentially a worst form of child labour. It will be important to grasp this opportunity to work across the region on this issue, including in South Asia, and to continue to build critical mass among regional governments and the public to end this form of child exploitation.

Addressing the informal economy

In all parts of Asia and the Pacific, the informal economy is significant and a major employer of child labour. It will be important that the barriers to addressing the informal economy are broken down if child labour is to be eliminated. Workers' and employers' organizations will be fundamental in this effort and there is perhaps no more obvious candidate for the 'next big push' in ILO-IPEC's work in the region than the mobilization of the tripartite partners to explore what can be done in this area.

Making the links with youth unemployment

In recent years ILO-IPEC has increasingly underlined the causal links between child labour and youth unemployment. This has still to move in a determined way into programming and, given the high rates of youth unemployment in the region and the resultant instability that this can cause, it will be valuable to both plan holistic child labour/youth unemployment initiatives and also engage governments in consideration of these links and the need to act.

Keep a watching brief on climate change, drugs/crime

See above. The next eight years are likely to be crucial in these areas. If it is not already under way, it might be advisable to commission research on the links between climate change and child labour and between the regional drug 'business' and child labour from appropriate climatologists and criminologists.

4. TOWARDS 2016 GOALS

4.1 ILO-IPEC's priorities

The Governing Body of the ILO has set a number of priorities for ILO-IPEC work to eliminate child labour and especially the worst forms in the years leading to the next Global Report on child labour (2007-2010). The analysis in this paper is in line with this and the priorities, listed below, are annotated accordingly:

Facilitate and provide technical and policy support – see numerous points in the body of the paper;

Deepen and strengthen the worldwide movement against child labour – the challenge of influencing public attitudes, rather than simply interest, towards child labour is still daunting in some

parts of the region. The developed countries of the region must take a lead in mobilizing the region as a whole, including through targeted funding.

Undertake solid research and strengthen research capacity at national level, promoting networking among research institutions – this is already an important component of ILO-IPEC projects.

Upgrade successful pilot programmes to national level, especially lessons-learned sharing – this should over the next four years become more active and, importantly, include more synthesis and analysis at a centralized, perhaps subregional level. There is a need for a 'clearing house' approach to the sharing of lessons and experiences that translates available research, studies and surveys, lessons and field experiences into tools for action. Synthesized materials should be translated more regularly into local languages. Also: ***Help develop knowledge and tools.***

Help systems and processes to transfer national programmes and policies to local levels – this is already a component of most ILO-IPEC projects and is a fundamental part of mainstreaming efforts.

Strengthen capacities at national level – see body of text, above.

Involve social partners more intensely and strategically – an ongoing task that features strongly in IPEC programmes already. The change of government in Australia, again, has brought the trade union movement in the country – and in the region – to the forefront of political debate and action. A number of senior trade unionists in Australia have been returned in the House of Representatives and the new Deputy Prime Minister, Julia Gillard, is a renowned labour lawyer and trade unionist. She holds, moreover, the labour portfolio in the new ministry. This may well be a catalyst to new thinking on the role of the social partners in the region.

Greater strategic targeting for advocacy efforts -- especially neglected worst forms of child labour such as child domestic labour, child trafficking, drug trafficking/couriering and armed conflict.

4.2 Member States

Member States are at the forefront of efforts to eliminate child labour. To recall that the ILO Governing Body has called on them to:

- Set time-bound targets to eliminate the worst forms of child labour by 2016, with roadmaps for achieving this in the form of TBP processes, NPAs or similar national strategic plans.

- Set time-bound targets in particular for free and compulsory education of good quality up to the minimum working age.
- Adapt legal frameworks to international standards and draw up a list of hazardous occupations; at the same time, define 'light work' in law.
- Formulate specific programmes and policies to address the worst forms of child labour, paying particular attention to the girl child.
- Integrate child labour in development, social and anti-poverty plans and programmes (MDGs, PRSPs, NPAs, Social Development plans, Decent Work Country Programmes, EFA). Note that to date China, Kiribati, Republic of Korea, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu have not included child labour in their DWCPs.
- Collect and analyse data on child labour.
- Establish credible and comprehensive child labour monitoring.
- Allocate sufficient resources to translate commitments into actions.

4.3 Workers' and employers' organizations

The Governing Body has, additionally, called on the social partners to:

- Set their own targets for the elimination of child labour, especially the worst forms;

recognizing that their efforts are crucial to the effectiveness of the global campaign.

With this in mind, and taking into consideration the level of progress achieved to date in Member States in the region, the following actions will be important in coming years:

Group 1: Countries that have the potential to achieve MDGs and elimination goals by 2016 should:

- Complete ratification;
- Complete translation of international commitments into legislation, especially relating to minimum working age, pornography, slavery/trafficking and child soldiers;
- Define and regulate light work;
- Define list of hazards;
- Ensure that child labour and youth unemployment are an essential element in all relevant development plans including Decent Work Country Programmes;

- Ensure that time-bound targets have been set and, where applicable, reviewed, and that there is a clear, understood and disseminated roadmap in place to achieve them;
- Scale up experiences and good practice gathered to date to national level and, conversely, down to local levels;
- Intensify efforts for nine years' basic education;
- Focus on the transition to work so that children exiting child labour or those completing their schooling do not swell the ranks of unemployed youth but are ready for Decent Work.

Group 2: Countries that are finding it difficult to achieve MDG and elimination goals by 2016 but have taken some steps and should now step up actions, should:

- As above, plus:
- Develop and implement broad campaigns to first improve understanding of child labour, including within government departments, public services, social partners and the public, and second, through revised legislation, implementation of the law and programming, move towards attitudinal and behavioural change. The aim is to build a critical mass that rejects child labour. It will also be important to link these efforts to campaigns on Education for All.
- Develop and/or intensify child labour monitoring.
- Review and adapt good practices from the region and form bilateral partnerships/collaborations with a view to avoiding 'reinventing the wheel' and to speedily implement initiatives that are tried and tested.

Group 3: Countries that are unlikely to achieve MDG and elimination goals by 2016 should:

- As above, plus:
- Ensure that, as a minimum, efforts have been made to map out the child labour problem in the country through reliable data gathering and research that mobilizes all stakeholders;
- Make a concerted effort to identify those sectors/areas where children are in child labour or most at risk.

At subregional/regional levels:

- Push for comprehensive ratification of ILO Conventions Nos. 138 and 182.
- Promote the links between labour migration and trafficking in discourse in COMMIT, ASEAN and SAARC.
- In this regard, develop understanding of the vulnerability of migrant children and the kinds of

programming that can be used at destination to prevent their exploitation.

- Revise action plans based on good practices and lessons learned from all stakeholders (for child trafficking and for sexual exploitation of children in particular, the 2008 3rd World Congress against CSEC will provide a first opportunity to do this).
- Intensify analysis and the sharing of lessons to avoid wasted resources and lack of impact (clearing house effect).

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