



Employment of Children

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The law on the employment of children was significantly amended from 4 August 1998, and further relatively minor changes were made from 7 June 2000 and 11 October 2000. Library Research Paper 98/18 on the *Employment of Children Bill 1997/98*, dated 3 February 1998, contains details of the law on the employment of children as it was at that time and of the *EC Directive on the Protection of Young People at Work, 94/33/EC*. This note summarises the UK law as it now stands and outlines the recommendations of the Better Regulation Taskforce in their 2003 report on the regulation of child employment. There is also a brief outline of the international problem of child labour.

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1 The legal framework

1.1 Overview

The term ‘child’ is defined, by section 558 of the *Education Act 1996*, for the purpose of any enactment relating to the prohibition or regulation of the employment of children or young persons, as anyone not over compulsory school age. A child may not legally leave school until the last Friday in June of the school year during which they reach the age of 16.¹ A school year runs from 1 September to 31 August.

The position of children in employment is regulated by a complex net of national laws as well as local bye-laws. The main pieces of primary legislation are the *Children and Young Persons Act 1933* (in Scotland the *Children and Young Persons (Scotland) Act 1937*), combined with the *Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974*. The *Health and Safety (Training for Employment) Regulations 1990*, SI No 1380 extended those provisions to a person undergoing relevant training even if they are not technically an employee.

¹ *Education Act 1996*, s 8; DfEE Circular 11/97, *School Leaving date for 16 Year Olds*

On 4 August 1998 the *Children (Protection at Work) Regulations 1998*, SI No. 276 came into force implementing *EC Directive on Protection of Young People at Work*.² The Directive (94/33/EC) was adopted in June 1994 and provides that in general children may not be employed until they are aged at least 15, reduced to 14 for light work. There are further exceptions “for the purposes of performance in cultural, artistic, sports or advertising activities”. The 1998 regulations increased from 13 to 14 the age at which a child may be employed in any work with exception of children employed in “light work” or by their parent or guardian in light agricultural or horticultural work on an occasional basis.³

The UK had derogations or “opt outs” from some of the EC Directive’s provisions (one of which imposed a weekly 12-hour limit on term-time work by children). The opt outs expired on 22 June 2000. The Labour Government decided not to pursue an extension of the opt outs and imposed the 12-hour limit from 11 October 2000.⁴

The Labour Government was also committed to ratifying the International Labour Organisation (ILO) *Convention No 138 on the Minimum Age for Admission to Employment*.⁵ To do this, they had to raise to 13 the minimum age at which children could be authorised by local authority byelaws to be employed in light agricultural or horticultural work. This was achieved from 7 June 2000 by the *Children (Protection at Work) Regulations 2000*, SI No.1333.

An inter-departmental review announced on 11 December 1997. Its terms of reference were to:

1. consider the present arrangements for protecting children in relation to employment including regulatory arrangements, levels of protection and enforcement;
2. examine any research or other evidence it considers necessary from any source including interested organisations and individuals;
3. make any necessary investigations;
4. draw up any proposals necessary to ensure that children's health, safety, welfare and development is strictly protected and that they are shielded from exploitation;
5. report jointly to relevant Ministers at the Department of Health and the Department of Trade and Industry by the end of 1998.⁶

The review report was never published. The following written answer from 16 October 2003 gives an explanation:

Child Employment

Dr. Evan Harris: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will place in the Library a copy of the report of the review of Child Employment Procedures carried out in response to the Private Member's Bill proposed by the hon. Member for Gravesham in February 1998. [129055]

Margaret Hodge: The report of the Review of Child Employment Law was completed in 1999. Since that time we have taken action to address issues raised by the Review and in the light of these changes, and with the passage of time, it would no longer be

² Directive 94/33/EC

³ Full text of regulations: <http://www.hmso.gov.uk/si/si1998/19980276.htm>

⁴ *Children (Protection at Work) (No 2) Regulations 2000*, SI No. 2548. The decision not to pursue the opt-outs was announced on 14 June 2000, HC Deb, c 659W

⁵ See, for example, Paul Boateng's speech during the debate on the second reading of the *Employment of Children Bill 1997-98*, HC Deb 13 February 1998, c 727

⁶ Department of Health press release, 11 December 1997, *Review of child employment law announced by Paul Boateng*

appropriate to publish the report. However, the Better Regulation Task Force has announced that it is to undertake a study into the regulation of the employment of children and their findings will be published on completion. The Task Force hopes to make recommendations on the regulation of the employment of children that will:

- help to protect children from exploitation;
- assist employers to meet their obligations; and
- encourage proportionate enforcement.

I am pleased to sponsor this study.⁷

1.2 Children and Young Persons Act 1933, as amended

The general law on the employment of children under school leaving age is contained in the *Children and Young Persons Act 1933*, as amended, most recently by the *Children (Protection at Work) Regulations 1998*, SI No 276, the *Children (Protection at Work) Regulations 2000*, SI No 1333 and the *Children (Protection at Work) (No 2) Regulations 2000*, SI No 2548. Section 18 of the 1933 Act, in its current form, provides that:

(1) Subject to the provisions of this section and of any byelaws made thereunder no child shall be employed—

- (a) so long as he is under the age of fourteen years;
- (aa) to do any work other than light work;
- (b) before the close of school hours on any day on which he is required to attend school; or
- (c) before seven o'clock in the morning or after seven o'clock in the evening on any day; or
- (d) for more than two hours on any day on which he is required to attend school;
- (da) for more than twelve hours in any week in which he is required to attend school; or
- (e) for more than two hours on any Sunday; or
- [(f) repealed]
- (g) for more than eight hours or, if he is under the age of fifteen years, for more than five hours in any day—
 - (i) on which he is not required to attend school, and
 - (ii) which is not a Sunday; or
- (h) for more than thirty-five hours or, if he is under the age of fifteen years, for more than twenty-five hours in any week in which he is not required to attend school; or
- (i) for more than four hours in any day without a rest break of one hour; or

⁷ HC Deb 16 October 2003 c330W

(j) at any time in a year unless at that time he has had, or could still have, during a period in the year in which he is not required to attend school, at least two consecutive weeks without employment.

(2) A local authority may make byelaws with respect to the employment of children, and any such byelaws may distinguish between children of different ages and sexes and between different localities, trades, occupations and circumstances, and may contain provisions—

(a) authorising—

(i) the employment on an occasional basis of children aged thirteen years (notwithstanding anything in paragraph (a) of the last foregoing subsection) by their parents or guardians in light agricultural work;

(ia) the employment of children aged thirteen notwithstanding anything in paragraph (a) of the last foregoing subsection) in categories of light work specified in the byelaw;

(ii) the employment of children (notwithstanding anything in paragraph (a) of the last foregoing subsection) for not more than one hour before the commencement of school hours on any day on which they are required to attend school;

(b) prohibiting absolutely the employment of children in any specified occupation;

(c) prescribing—

(i) the age below which children are not to be employed;

(ii) the numbers of hours in each day, or in each week, for which, and the times of a day at which, they may be employed;

(iii) the intervals to be allowed to them for meals and rest;

(iv) the holidays or half-holidays to be allowed to them;

(v) any other conditions to be observed in relation to their employment;

so, however, that no such byelaws shall modify the restrictions contained in the last foregoing subsection save in so far as is expressly permitted by paragraph (a) of this subsection, and any restriction contained in any such byelaws shall have effect in addition to the said restrictions.

(2A) In this section—

"light work" means work which, on account of the inherent nature of the tasks which it involves and the particular conditions under which they are performed—

(a) is not likely to be harmful to the safety, health or development of children; and

(b) is not such as to be harmful to their attendance at school or to their participation in work experience in accordance with section 560 of the Education Act 1996, or their capacity to benefit from the instruction received or, as the case may be, the experience gained;

"week" means any period of seven consecutive days; and

"year", except in expressions of age, means a period of twelve months beginning with 1st January."

(3) Nothing in this section, or in any byelaw made under this section, shall prevent a child from doing anything—

(a) under the authority of a licence granted under this Part of this Act; or

(b) in a case where by virtue of section 37(3) of the Children and Young Persons Act 1963 no licence under that section is required for him to do it.⁸

Section 21 of the 1933 Act, as amended, provides that if a child is employed in contravention of section 18 or any byelaws made under it, the employer and any other person (other than the child employed) to whose act or default the contravention is attributable shall be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level 3 on the standard scale (currently £1,000).

1.3 Model Byelaws

In April 1998, the Department of Health issued new model byelaws for local authorities.⁹ These contain a "permitted list" of occupations in which children aged 13 may be employed and a prohibited list of employments in which no child of any age may be employed. The model byelaws also allow children to be employed for up to an hour before school on any day on which they are required to attend school; children to work from age 10 for their parents in light agriculture and horticulture;¹⁰ and licensed children aged 14 and over to work in street trading under the direct supervision of their parents.¹¹ They also lay down a procedure for obtaining employment permits.

The Explanatory Notes on the Model Byelaws make it clear that none of these provisions are mandatory, "but it is expected that local authorities will wish to continue to permit children to e.g. deliver newspapers before school, and to require an employment permit to be obtained".

The model "permitted list" would allow children aged 13 to be employed in light work in:

- (a) agricultural or horticultural work;
- (b) delivery of newspapers, journals and other printed material, and collecting payment for same, subject to the provisions of byelaw 3(i);¹²
- (c) shop work, including shelf stacking;
- (d) hairdressing salons;
- (e) office work;
- (f) car washing by hand in a private residential setting;
- (g) in a cafe or restaurant;
- (h) in riding stables; and
- (i) domestic work in hotels and other establishments offering accommodation.

The model prohibited list would prevent children of any age being employed:

- (a) in a cinema, theatre, discotheque, dance hall or night club, except in connection with a performance given entirely by children;²

⁸ Section 37(3) of the 1963 Act is concerned with occasional public performances by children

⁹ Letter from Department of Health, 15 April 1998, *Employment of Children*

¹⁰ The minimum age has now been raised to 13 under SI 2000/1333

¹¹ SI 2000/1333 introduced a requirement that any bye-laws allowing street trading by children must include provisions determining the hours and days and the places at which street trading may be undertaken

¹² this permits collection of money under the supervision of an adult

² This does not prevent children taking part in performances under the provisions of a licence granted in accordance with the Children and Young Persons Act 1963, and the associated Regulations.

- (b) to sell or deliver alcohol, except in sealed containers;
- (c) to deliver milk;
- (d) to deliver fuel oils;
- (e) in a commercial kitchen;
- (f) to collect or sort refuse;
- (g) in any work which is more than three metres above ground level or, in the case of internal work, more than three metres above floor level;
- (h) in employment involving harmful exposure to physical, biological or chemical agents;
- (i) to collect money or to sell or canvass door to door, except under the supervision of an adult;
- (j) in work involving exposure to adult material or in situations which are for this reason otherwise unsuitable for children;
- (k) in telephone sales;
- (l) in any slaughterhouse or in that part of any butcher's shop or other premises connected with the killing of livestock, butchery, or the preparation of carcasses or meat for sale;
- (m) as an attendant or assistant in a fairground or amusement arcade or in any other premises used for the purpose of public amusement by means of automatic machines, games of chance or skill or similar devices;
- (n) in the personal care of residents of any residential care home or nursing home unless under the supervision of a responsible adult.

The model procedure for obtaining employment permits is:

9. Within one week of employing a child, the employer must send to the authority written notification stating:

- (a) his own name and address;
- (b) the name, address and date of birth of the child;
- (c) the hours and days on which the child is to be employed, the occupation in which the child is to be employed, details of the task involved and, if different from (a) above, the place of employment;
- (d) a statement of the child's fitness to work, and of approval for the child to be employed, completed by the child's parent;
- (e) details of the school at which the child is a registered pupil; and
- (f) a statement to the effect that an appropriate risk assessment has been carried out by the employer.

10. Where, on receipt of a notification, the local authority is satisfied that:

- (a) the proposed employment is lawful;
- (b) the child's health, welfare or ability to take full advantage of his education would not be jeopardised; and
- (c) the child is fit to undertake the work for which he is to be employed,

it will issue the child with an employment permit.

11. Before issuing an employment permit a local authority may require a child to have a medical examination.

12. The employment permit will state:

- (a) the name, address and date of birth of the child;
- (b) the hours and days on which the child is to be employed, the occupation in which the child is to be employed, details of the task involved and the place of employment;

13. A child may be employed only in accordance with the details shown on his employment permit.

14. A local authority may amend a child's employment permit from time to time on the application of an employer.

15. The local authority may at any time revoke a child's employment permit if it has reasonable grounds to believe—

(a) that the child is being unlawfully employed, or

(b) that his health, welfare or ability to take advantage of his education are suffering or likely to suffer as a result of the employment.

16. A child must produce his employment permit for inspection when required to do so by an authorised officer of the authority or a police officer.

Many local authorities publish the relevant byelaws and legislation on their websites.

1.4 Child Actors

The primary legislation governing the employment of children in entertainment is the *Children and Young Persons Act 1963* (CYPA 1963). Under section 40(1) of the Act, it is a criminal offence for a parent or guardian to allow a child to take part in specified types of performance (in general this means public performances) without a licence, or for any person to cause or procure a child to do. If the child is under 14, section 38 provides that special rules apply to the grant of such a licence, restricting the nature of the part to a performance which “is wholly or mainly musical and either the nature of the performance is also wholly or mainly musical or the performance consists only of opera and ballet”. Section 37(4) provides that licences are granted subject to such “restrictions and conditions as the Secretary of State may by regulations made by statutory instrument prescribe”.

The detailed rules are contained in the *Children (Performances) Regulations 1968* SI No.1728. These were amended by the *Children (Performances) (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 1998* SI No.1678 and the *Children (Performances) (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations 2000* SI No.2384. The regulations cover matters such as maximum number of performances per week, the earliest and latest hours at the place of performance and the maximum time spent at the place of performance. Amendments to ensure that child models are covered by the rules were made with effect from 4 August 1998 by regulation 12 of the *Children (Protection at Work) Regulations 1998*, SI No.276.

Other rules in the 1933 Act make it a separate offence to take a child abroad for similar purposes. Section 25(1) of the 1933 Act makes it an offence to allow or cause a child to go abroad for the purpose of “singing, playing, performing, or being exhibited, for profit” without a police magistrates’ licence.

The law distinguishes between performances of a “dangerous nature” and performances in which a child’s “life or limbs are endangered”. No child under 12 may train for any performance of a “dangerous nature”.

1.5 Other Legislation

The “prohibited list” only relates to occupations which might constitute “light work”. Many more occupations or specific tasks are prohibited by other legislation, including:

- The *Employment of Women, Children and Young Persons Act 1920*, which prohibits the employment of children in any “industrial undertaking”, including mines and quarries, manufacturing industry, construction and the transport of passengers or goods by road, rail or inland waterway (section 1(1));

- The *Agriculture (Safety, Health and Welfare Provisions) Act 1956*, under which it is an offence to cause or permit a child to ride on or drive a vehicle, machine or agricultural implement (section 7);
- The *Offices, Shops and Railway Premises Act 1963*, which provides that no young person may clean machinery if to do so would expose him to risk of injury (section 18);
- The *Betting, Gaming and Lotteries Act 1963*, which prohibits the employment of persons under 18 in effecting any betting transaction or in a licensed betting office (section 21);
- The *Licensing Act 1964*, which prohibits the employment of children in the bar of licensed premises (section 170) and the *Licensing (Occasional Permission) Act 1983*, which prohibits any person under 18 from selling or serving alcohol in premises authorised under the Act (paragraph 5(1) of the Schedule);
- The *Merchant Shipping Act 1970*, by virtue of which no person under minimum school leaving age may be employed on a ship registered in the UK, except as permitted by Regulations made under the Act (section 51); and
- The *Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992*, which prohibit children from handling any heavy load which is likely to cause injury to them.
- The *Prevention of Accidents to Children in Agriculture Regulations 1998 SI No.3262* prohibit the riding by a child on certain classes of vehicle or machine used in agricultural operations. They revoke the *Agriculture (Avoidance of Accidents to Children) Regulations 1958/366* which contained similar provisions.

1.6 Agricultural Wages Order

Agricultural workers are covered by the National Minimum Wage. In addition, the Agricultural Wages Board for England and Wales issues an agricultural wages order each year.¹³ This contains a number of provisions fixing minimum terms of employment and defines various categories of worker and the rates of pay applicable to each category. These have usually been set at rates above the NMW.

The *Agricultural Wages Order* sets minimum rates of pay for children of compulsory school age, employed in agriculture and who are classed as Grade 1 workers (since October 2008 £2.87 per hour; £4.31 per hour overtime).¹⁴ Night work rates are not specified for children as they cannot be lawfully employed to undertake night work as defined in the Order.¹⁵ The current Agricultural Wages Order can be viewed online including details of enforcement and complaints procedures.¹⁶ There is an Agricultural Wages Helpline: 0845 0000134.

¹³ *Agricultural Wages Act 1948*, section 3

¹⁴ [Agricultural Wages Order 2008](#), page 52

¹⁵ The 2008 Order also notes on page 23 that: "Young Workers - Users of this Order will wish to be aware that Regulation 12(4) in the Working Time Regulations 1998 requires a worker aged 15-17 to be given a rest break of 30 minutes where the worker's daily working time is more than four and a half hours. Under section 18 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1933, as amended by the Children (Protection at Work) Regulations 1998, no child who is permitted to work, and who is of compulsory school age, shall be employed for more than 4 hours in any day without a rest break of 1 hour."

¹⁶ DEFRA, [Agricultural Wages Order](#)

1.7 Better Regulation Taskforce Report

The Better Regulation Task Force (BRTF) has conducted a study into the regulation of child employment. A BRTF press release in October 2003 quoted the Chairman (David Arculus) who outlined of the nature of the study:

"It is great experience for children and young people to take on a part time job. But it is important that a child's first experience of the world of work is a positive one. It can help to build confidence and provide a sense of independence. However the laws which govern this area are many and complex, and we would like to find out if children are aware of their rights, if employers are aware of their responsibilities, and if the legislation is actually achieving what it set out to do."

The BRTF report was published on 11 February 2004. The findings and recommendations were summarised in a press release:¹⁷

Task Force calls for overhaul of Child Employment Law

The Better Regulation Task Force today published its report "The Regulation of Child Employment" and called on the Government to make child employment regulations fit for the 21st century.

David Arculus, Chairman of the Better Regulation Task Force said, "Despite the world of work going through enormous changes in the last 70 years, the law on child employment has not kept pace, and is still rooted in the Children and Young Persons Act 1933. Piecemeal change and a plethora of byelaws have left the situation confusing for employers, parents and children. The law needs to be consolidated and accompanied by simple guidance that can be used by children, parents and employers. This will clarify exactly when and where children are allowed to work."

"The reality is, that at any given time between 1.1 and 1.7 million schoolchildren have a part-time job. Yet it is estimated that over 90% of them do not have a work permit, which renders their work illegal. It's hardly an encouraging introduction to the world of work. We recommend that the permit scheme is replaced by a system of employer registration."

Mr Arculus continued, "Ultimately, we would like to see a reduction in bureaucracy, but not in the protection offered to children. If employers are more aware of their obligations and simple, best practice guidance is made available to help them to do so, then this will enhance the protection of children at work."

Simon Petch, who chaired this study, said, "It is absolutely right that there are limits on when children may work. For example, no-one is allowed to work until they are 13, or for more than 12 hours per week during term time. These are important parameters. But the current restriction of a maximum two hours work on a Sunday is out of step with reality. Allowing more choice on when children can work, within the weekly limit, still allows families to make the decision about whether to work on a Sunday."

Mr Petch went on, "We undertook this study at a time when children's services are high on the political agenda. We hope that the Government will respond positively to our recommendations."

Notes to editors

Full list of recommendations

¹⁷ BRTF Press Release 11 February 2004

1. The Department for Education and Skills should commence work on consolidating child employment legislation by September 2004.
2. By February 2005, the Department for Education and Skills should consult on moving to a system of regulation in which employers register with their local authority as an employer of school-age children, rather than applying for a permit for each child employee.
3. By February 2005, the Department for Education and Skills should consult on allowing children to work for more than two hours on a Sunday.
4. Following consolidation of the law, the Department for Education and Skills, working closely with local authorities, should produce simple, best practice guidance on the law which can be used by local authorities, employers, children and parents.
5. Guidance to local authorities on the role of Director of Children's Services should provide for Directors to have local authority functions relating to child employment as part of their remit.

2 Child Labour

2.1 Background

Defining the child labour problem

A textbook on Child Labour by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) offers a definition of what the child labour problem actually means:

Not all work done by children should be classified as child labour that is to be targeted for elimination. Children's or adolescents' participation in work that does not affect their health and personal development or interfere with their schooling, is generally regarded as being something positive. This includes activities such as helping their parents around the home, assisting in a family business or earning pocket money outside school hours and during school holidays. These kinds of activities contribute to children's development and to the welfare of their families; they provide them with skills and experience, and help to prepare them to be productive members of society during their adult life.

The term "child labour" is often defined as work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity, and that is harmful to physical and mental development. It refers to work that:

- is mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful to children; and
- interferes with their schooling:
 1. by depriving them of the opportunity to attend school;
 2. by obliging them to leave school prematurely; or
 3. by requiring them to attempt to combine school attendance with excessively long and heavy work.

In its most extreme forms, child labour involves children being enslaved, separated from their families, exposed to serious hazards and illnesses and/or left to fend for themselves on the streets of large cities – often at a very early age.

Whether or not particular forms of “work” can be called “child labour” depends on the child’s age, the type and hours of work performed, the conditions under which it is performed and the objectives pursued by individual countries. The answer varies from country to country, as well as among sectors within countries.¹⁸

The ILO website highlights several sectors where the problem of child labour is prevalent: agriculture; armed conflict (child soldiers); commercial sexual exploitation of children; domestic labour; mining and quarrying; and trafficking of children.¹⁹

The ILO estimates that the largest child labour sector is agriculture; that seventy per cent of working children are in some form agriculture - over 132 million girls and boys aged 5-14 years old. The website details the problem in agriculture further:

While great progress has been made in many countries in reducing hazardous child labour in other sectors, a number of factors have made agricultural child labour a particularly difficult one to tackle. These are:

Large numbers of children are involved in all types of undertakings ranging from small- and medium-sized family farms, to large farms, plantations, and agro-industrial complexes. Historically, child labour, either as part of “family teams” or as individual workers, has played a significant part in employment in plantations and commercial agriculture around the world. Girl child labour in agriculture forms a significant part of the workforce. Key gender issues include how girls combine work in agriculture with domestic chores, resulting in reduced educational opportunities for them.

Children around the world become farm labourers at an early age. Most statistical surveys only cover child workers aged 10 and above. However, many children begin work at an even earlier age. Rural children, in particular girls, tend to begin work young, at 5, 6 or 7 years of age. In some countries, children under 10 are estimated to account for 20 per cent of child labour in rural areas.

The work that children perform in agriculture is often invisible and unacknowledged because they assist their parents or relatives on the family farm or they undertake piecework or work under a quota system on larger farms or plantations, often as part of migrant worker families.

Agriculture is historically and traditionally an under-regulated sector in many countries. This means that child labour laws – if they exist – are often less stringent in agricultural industries than in other industries. In some countries, adult and child workers in agriculture are not covered by or are exempt from safety and health laws covering other categories of adult workers. Children, for example, are generally allowed to operate machinery and drive tractors at a younger age in agriculture than in other sectors.²⁰

In Parliament, recent concerns have focussed on child labour in agriculture (particularly the cocoa industry) and the textiles industry, as highlighted by two recent PQs:

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development pursuant to the answer of 18 June 2008, *Official Report*, column 1036W, on cocoa: children, if he will make it his policy to seek a prohibition on the sale in the UK of chocolate made with cocoa farmed by trafficked children. [216359]

¹⁸ ILO, [Child Labour](#), 2004, p16

¹⁹ ILO, [Child labour by sector](#) [on 21 November 2008]

²⁰ ILO, [Agriculture](#) [on 21 November 2008]

Mr. Malik: The Department for International Development (DFID) strongly condemns the use of trafficked labour in the production of cocoa and other industries. However, we believe the best way to raise labour standards is through capacity building and co-operation, and encouragement of business and governments, rather than trying to impose restrictions on trade. Ultimately, it is for individual governments to set and enforce their own labour standards, to protect workers in their own countries and provide a 'level playing field' for companies.

DFID supports a range of initiatives to reduce the vulnerability of children to trafficking and to support fair and ethical supply chains for the chocolate and other industries. This includes promoting the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises which set down the employment standards that the Government expect UK companies to implement in their supply chains. It also includes supporting the Fairtrade Foundation and the Ethical Trading Initiative which requires its corporate members to adopt the ETI Base Code which includes not using child labour.²¹

and

Mr. MacDougall: To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform what steps his Department is taking to prevent imports of (a) cotton and (b) clothing which have been produced by child labour in Uzbekistan. [203810]

Mr. Thomas [*holding answer 7 May 2008*]: The UK remains concerned, about allegations of the use of child labour in the cotton sector in Uzbekistan. The UK has raised its concerns through the EU and has discussed the issue with the Uzbek Government. The EU welcomed Uzbekistan's signing of the International Labour Organisation Convention on the Worst Forms of Child Labour earlier this year and has urged Uzbekistan to implement effectively its international obligations in this regard.

The UK Government continue to call on businesses to look at their supply chains and take appropriate action if they find evidence that goods has been produced using child labour.

There is no legal requirement for goods to bear marks indicating its origin. As such, it would be difficult for the Government to establish a blanket ban on imports of Uzbek cotton and clothing. Similarly, products manufactured using Uzbek cotton in a third country would legitimately bear the country of manufacture as the country of origin.²²

The International Labour Organisation's (ILO) International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) was created in 1992 with the overall goal of the progressive elimination of child labour. The aim is to strengthen the capacity of countries to deal with the problem and to promote a worldwide movement to combat child labour.²³ A 2007 report by the ILO summarises the history of the movement against child labour:

The worldwide movement against child labour has its roots in national movements that emerged in the first industrial nations during the early 19th century. Broad social alliances were forged in Britain, Germany, and the USA to campaign against child labour abuses. From the 1860s, the labour movement took up the issue of child labour at the international level, ensuring that it became the centrepiece of the International Labour Organization (ILO) at its inception in 1919.

²¹ HC Deb 9 July 2008 c1719W

²² HC Deb 2 Jun 2008 c783W

²³ ILO-IPEC website, [The Programme](#) [on 18 November]

The work of the ILO in its first 60 years did not lead to a new international movement against child labour. This did not yet represent a conscious objective, and setting standards – the staple work of the ILO – had relatively little impact with regard to child labour. An actual movement, as such, first emerged in the 1980s, when a much broader response to child labour started to develop at *all* levels. New actors, particularly non-governmental organizations (NGOs), began to work with the ILO on this issue. And with them came new perspectives. For the first time, a broad alliance at all levels – local, national, regional, and global – became a real prospect.

This growing movement did not begin to gain momentum until the mid- 1990s. The convergence of concerns with human rights, and child rights as part of that, with responses to intensified globalization, propelled child labour up the international agenda, bringing it unprecedented attention. A number of indicators pointed to this surge in the worldwide movement:

- There was an explosion in the academic literature on child labour and in mass media coverage of the issue.
- Aside from the ILO, other international institutions, in particular UNICEF, the World Bank, and the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, more vigorously took up the issue.
- The worldwide movement was also grounded by the commitment of thousands of concerned individuals and groups as part of a dynamic civil society response.
- Furthermore, child labour became a focus of consumer groups and the growing corporate social responsibility movement.
- Finally, and most critically, governments in both the North and the South moved from apathy and denial to positive engagement with the problem including through the mobilization of resources to tackle the problem.²⁴

According to the latest estimates available from the ILO there were 218 million child labourers aged 5-17 years in 2004.²⁵ The priority target for the IPEC programme is the “worst forms of child labour”, which is defined in the *ILO Convention on the worst forms of child labour, 1999* (No. 182) as:

- (a) all forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery, such as the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage and serfdom and forced or compulsory labour, including forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict;
- (b) the use, procuring or offering of a child for prostitution, for the production of pornography or for pornographic performances;
- (c) the use, procuring or offering of a child for illicit activities, in particular for the production and trafficking of drugs as defined in the relevant international treaties;
- (d) work which, by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children.²⁶

The IPEC website summarises the scale of the programme’s operation:

²⁴ ILO [Worldwide Movement against Child Labour: Progress and Future Directions](#), 2007, p1-2

²⁵ ILO, [Worldwide Movement against Child Labour: Progress and Future Directions](#), 2007, p2-3

²⁶ ILO, [Convention concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour](#), no 182, article 3

IPEC currently has operations in 88 countries, with an annual expenditure on technical cooperation projects that reached over US\$74 million in 2006. It is the largest programme of its kind globally and the biggest single operational programme of the ILO.

The number and range of IPEC's partners have expanded over the years and now include employers' and workers' organizations, other international and government agencies, private businesses, community-based organizations, NGOs, the media, parliamentarians, the judiciary, universities, religious groups and, of course, children and their families.²⁷

A 2008 ILO report on *Child Labour Statistics* explains how there has been a recent "sea change" in attitudes towards combating child labour problems:

As was pointed out by the Director-General in the ILO's Global Report on child labour in 2006, there has in recent years been a sea change in attitudes towards child labour. The sense of hopelessness and resignation that previously prevailed on the subject; the feeling that, regrettable though it is, there is little that can be done to prevent or eliminate child labour as it is so deeply rooted in poverty and cultural attitudes: these have been replaced by a worldwide consciousness that it is today not only possible but also urgently necessary to eradicate at least the most unacceptable forms of child labour within a short time frame rather than in some indefinite future, and to set in motion an irreversible process leading to the total elimination of the scourge of all forms of child labour. Programmes of action have been launched in many countries to this end, and the international community has mobilized significant efforts and resources – most notably in the framework of the ILO's International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) – to support national programmes.²⁸

Another report examines the "challenges to come" for the ILO in addressing child labour problems:

The challenge for the new millennium is to convert the recent surge in international interest in the problem of child labour into a sustained, coherent, and effective effort on behalf of working children. This report focuses on international action. This is not to imply that national action is unimportant – quite the contrary. The emphasis instead reflects the fact that the greatest deficits in terms of commitment and coherence currently lie at the global level.

What is still lacking is an international climate and architecture conducive to supporting action on behalf of working children and their families at the local and national levels, where it most matters. Of course, the relationship between the international and the national levels of the worldwide movement works both ways – action at the national level informs international policy and action, which in turn helps to support national efforts against child labour. The levels of the movement are interactive, and ought to be mutually reinforcing. The operation of this process remains far from optimal, however, as the report makes clear.²⁹

2.2 International legal standards and limits

There are a number of international conventions aimed at combating child labour. A few of the main ones are set out here.

²⁷ ILO-IPEC website, [The Programme](#) [on 18 November]

²⁸ ILO [Report III Child labour statistics](#) prepared for the 18th International Conference of Labour Statisticians, October 2008

²⁹ ILO [Worldwide Movement against Child Labour: Progress and Future Directions](#), 2007, p3-4

The ILO Convention No. 138 on *the Minimum Age for Admission to Employment and Work 1973* sets the age at which children can legally be employed or otherwise work. The main principles of this convention are set out in on the IPEC website:³⁰

	The minimum age at which children can start work.	Possible exceptions for developing countries
<p>Hazardous work Any work which is likely to jeopardize children’s physical, mental or moral health, safety or morals should not be done by anyone under the age of 18.</p>	18 (16 under strict conditions)	18 (16 under strict conditions)
<p>Basic Minimum Age The minimum age for work should not be below the age for finishing compulsory schooling, which is generally 15.</p>	15	14
<p>Light work Children between the ages of 13 and 15 years old may do light work, as long as it does not threaten their health and safety, or hinder their education or vocational orientation and training.</p>	13-15	12-14

The ILO Convention No. 182 on *the Worst Forms of Child Labour*, 1999 was established to strengthen existing Conventions on child labour. The ILO explains that this convention “helped to focus the international spotlight on the urgency of action to eliminate as a priority, worst forms of child labour without losing the long term goal of the effective elimination of all child labour.”³¹

The United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (CRC) was adopted in 1989 and entered into force in 1990. Article 43 of the CRC provides for the establishment of a Committee on the Rights of the Child to which signatory States report on the measures they have adopted which give effect to the rights of the Convention. The 2007 ILO report explains further:

The CRC affirmed the right of all children to education (Article 28) and to protection from economic exploitation (Article 32). Although the Convention contains little detail on child labour, several other Articles have some relevance to the subject. Article 19 refers to protection from physical or mental violence, injury or abuse; Article 24 to health; Article 30 to minorities; and Article 38 to children in armed conflict. Additionally, there are the “general principles” that inform the Convention, particularly Article 2 regarding non-discrimination; Article 3, on the best interests of the child; Article 6, on

³⁰ ILO-IPEC website, [ILO Conventions on child labour](#) [on 18 November]

³¹ ILO-IPEC website, [ILO Conventions on child labour](#) [on 18 November]

the right to life, survival and development; and not least, Article 12, regarding the views of the child. Finally, Article 43 established a Committee on the Rights of the Child to monitor progress made by state Parties in implementing the Convention. UNICEF was given a special role in supporting the work of the Committee.³²

A report by a UNESCO organisation called “Right to Education” examined various limits contained in national laws in light of the convention and found that children’s right to education is under threat from early marriage, child labour and imprisonment.³³ States have not adapted their legislation in favour of the right to education, and they do not have agreed standards for the transition from childhood to adulthood either internationally or nationally. In the same country, it is not rare to find that children are legally obliged to go to school until they are 14 or 15 years old but a different law allows them to work at an earlier age or to be married at the age of 12 or to be criminally responsible from the age of 7. With regard to employment the report outlines the following facts, summarised in a UNESCO press release of 20 April 2004:

The report, launched on the occasion of Education for All Week (April 19-25 2004), found that there is no compulsory education in at least 25 States, of which ten are in sub-Saharan Africa, six in East Asia and the Pacific, four in the Arab States, three in South and West Asia and two in Latin America and the Caribbean. Only 45 of 158 nations surveyed have equalized the school-leaving age and the minimum age for employment. In 36 countries, children can be employed full-time while they are still obliged to be in full-time education. At the other end of the scale, children in another 21 countries must wait at least a year, and sometimes three, after completing compulsory education, before they can legally work.

“The goals of universal education and elimination of child labour are inextricably linked,” stresses the report. “Free and compulsory education of good quality secured until the minimum age for entry to employment is a critical factor in the struggle against economic exploitation of children, while child labour is a fundamental obstacle to the development and implementation of compulsory education strategies.”³⁴

The report contains detailed tables of the minimum age thresholds in the laws of different countries for child employment, marriage and criminal responsibility.

2.3 ILO estimates

The International Labour Organisation statistics are most often quoted by organisations working in this area. IPEC collates and publishes the statistics on child labour. The figures do not cover children who provide labour in their own households.³⁵

The ILO published its first global estimate of 250 million child workers in 1996. Since then public opinion worldwide has helped mobilize governments and civil society groups into action against child labour. In 2001, a major research project to provide new global estimates was undertaken by the Statistical Information and Monitoring Programme on Child Labour (SIMPOC). The results of this research were published in April 2002 in the report *Every child counts – New global estimates on child labour*.³⁶ An IPEC fact sheet summarised these as follows:

³² ILO [Worldwide Movement against Child Labour: Progress and Future Directions](#), 2007, p18

³³ Right to Education, [Removing obstacles in the way of the right to education](#), 2001

³⁴ UNESCO [At what age are school children employed, married and taken to court?](#) 20 April 2004

³⁵ Bjerne Grimsrud, [Millennium Development Goals and Child Labour](#), October 2003, page 6

³⁶ ILO-IPEC *Every Child Counts New Global Estimates on Child Labour*, April 2002

ILO estimates of child labour worldwide

According to estimates released in April 2002 in *Every child counts: New global estimates on child labour* (Geneva, ILO), there were some 352 million children aged 5 to 17 engaged in some form of economic activity in the world in 2000, including 211 million in the age group from 5 to 14 years. The Asia-Pacific region has the largest number of child workers in the 5-14 age category at 127.3 million. It is followed by Sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean with 48 million and 17.4 million, respectively.

“Economic activity” encompasses most productive activities of children: it includes both work that is permissible under the ILO child labour Conventions and that which is not. “Child labour”, however, is a narrower concept: it excludes the activities of children 12 years and older who are working only a few hours a week in permitted light work and those of children 15 years and above whose work is not classified as “hazardous.” ILO action targets the elimination of child labour as defined in the ILO Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138) and the ILO Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182) and not all economic activities of children. IPEC’s research identified an estimated:

- 246 million children in child labour aged 5 to 17 years, of which 186 million were below the age of 15 and 110 million below the age of 12;
- 171 million child labourers working in hazardous situations or conditions of which 111 million children were below 15 years of age;
- roughly 8.4 million children child labourers involved in the unconditional worst forms of child labour listed in ILO Convention No.182, Article 3, including forced and bonded labour (5.7 million), armed conflict (0.3 million), prostitution and pornography (1.8 million), and illicit activities (0.6 million);
- at least 1.2 million of child labourers were also victims of trafficking.

On average, more boys (132 million) are involved in child labour than girls (113 million) and boys outnumber girls in hazardous work across all age groups. In relative terms, nearly three-quarters of boys in child labour (95.7 million) were in hazardous situations, compared with about two-thirds of girls in child labour (74.8 million).³⁷

A further report published in 2002 entitled *A Future without Child Labour: Global Report under the Follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work* stressed the difficulty of gathering comprehensive statistics in this area and outlined that one child in every eight in the world is believed to be engaged in the worst forms of child labour:

Some 180 million children aged 5-17 (or 73 per cent of all child labourers) are now believed to be engaged in the worst forms of child labour, comprising hazardous work and the unconditional worst forms of child labour. This amounts to one child in every eight in the world. Of the some 171 million children engaged in hazardous work, nearly two-thirds are under 15 and therefore require immediate withdrawal from this work and rehabilitation from its effects. While 67 million children in the 5-14 age group are engaged in non hazardous child labour that they should not be undertaking by virtue of their age, many more children (111 million) are involved in work that actually jeopardizes their well-being. Among older children aged 15-17 years (who are above the minimum age for employment), the estimates indicate that 59 million are involved

³⁷ ILO-IPEC *Every Child Counts New Global Estimates on Child Labour*, April 2002

in hazardous work. This represents an alarming 42 per cent of all working children in this age group.

Over eight million children worldwide are trapped in the unconditional worst forms of child labour. However, as the Report warns, this figure must be treated with great caution given the extreme difficulty of gathering data on these hidden and illegal activities.

Thus, despite the increasing commitment and efforts by governments, the social partners and civil society to tackle child labour, the problem remains on a massive scale. Phenomena such as trafficking in children and increasing labour migration mean that all countries – developing, transition and developed alike – are affected to a greater or lesser extent by child labour. The figure for children engaged in hazardous work is considerably higher than was previously thought. The Report proposes that the time has come for the number and proportion of child labourers in a country's child population, particularly those engaged in the worst forms of child labour, to be considered as key indicators of economic and social development.³⁸

The latest ILO figures are given in the 2007 report, the *Worldwide Movement against Child Labour: Progress and Future Directions*, which summarises the current scale of the problem:

Scale of the child labour problem. According to new estimates from the ILO published in 2006 there were 218 million child labourers aged 5-17 years in 2004. The number in hazardous work, which accounts for the bulk of the worst forms of child labour (WFCL) was 126 million in 2004. Most working children (69 per cent) are involved in agriculture compared with only 9 per cent in industry. The Asian-Pacific region accounts for the largest number of child workers – 122 million in total, followed by Sub-Saharan Africa (49.3 million) and Latin America and the Caribbean (5.7 million).

However, for the first time the ILO was also able to note a positive trend with 20 million fewer working children in the 5-14 year core age group from 2000 to 2004 and a particular reduction of children's involvement in hazardous work. Overall, Latin America and the Caribbean saw the greatest decline in children's work. Though this is welcome good news, the child labour problem persists on a very large scale.³⁹

2.4 Progress

2000-2004

As part of broader efforts to develop effective and long-term solutions to child labour, ILO, UNICEF and the World Bank launched the interagency research project, *Understanding Children's Work*, in December 2000.⁴⁰ The website contains the most recent statistics on child labour for different countries, as well as providing access to various reports and surveys. There are also details about research projects which have not yet reported.

An ILO document published in January 2004 gives an update on progress.⁴¹ The document gives a useful summary of the situation at that time:

1.1 CHILD LABOUR UPDATE: AN EVOLVING PROBLEM

³⁸ ILO *A future without child labour: Global Report under the Follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work*, 2002

³⁹ ILO, *Worldwide Movement against Child Labour: Progress and Future Directions*, 2007, p2-3

⁴⁰ Website: [Understanding Children's Work](#) [on 18 November 2008]

⁴¹ *IPEC action against child labour 2002-2003: Progress and future priorities*, January 2004: http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/ipec/publ/download/implementation_2003_en.pdf

It is often noted that child labour is both a massive and complex problem. Not only that, but the nature of child labour is in many respects an evolving problem and presents a formidable challenge, as seen over the last few years. Areas of the world, such as Central and Eastern Europe and some Central Asian countries,⁴² which in the past were generally not considered to have the problem are now experiencing an upsurge of the worst forms of child labour (WFCL).⁴³ In other parts of the world, it has been discovered that hazardous child labour is more common than previously thought. While to some extent this reflects more precise measurement and greater awareness about the issue, it is also the result of evolving socio-economic realities affecting the demand and supply for child labour.

Amongst those involved in the combat against child labour, the critical focus now extends beyond dealing with the demand for cheap, docile child workers to reversing the growth of the worst forms, such as commercial sexual exploitation children, child trafficking, use of children in armed conflicts or drug trafficking, and hazardous child labour. Global information and other networks, which have worked wonders in spreading the message in favour of children's rights and in linking up like-minded activists, policy-makers and researchers, also work to the advantage of traffickers, militia recruiters, and child exploitation rings.

Not only demand, but the supply of young children put to work is also increasing in certain areas of the world. This is being fuelled in part by the global HIV/AIDS epidemic, which has increased the numbers of young people needing to support themselves or their families. It is also caused by continued weaknesses in the world economy and growing income disparities in a number of countries that bring about an increase in children looking for work in the streets. Among the first order of challenges for IPEC will be to stem the tide of the WFCL through the development of better tools and strategies to assess, eliminate, monitor and prevent it.

Figures on child labour released by the International Labour Office (ILO) in June 2002 reaffirmed, on the one hand, the dire situation that millions of children are trapped in worldwide and, on the other hand, the acute necessity to continue all endeavours to end child labour, focusing on its worst forms as a matter of urgency.

2004-2006

In 2006 the ILO published the report [*The end of child labour: Within reach*](#). The report detailed how international political support has been "essential" to the recent reduction in child labour numbers. It also stressed how progress has been made by linking child labour with education goals:

International political support has been essential.

The elimination of child labour was not explicitly included in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) set in 2000, but achieving universal primary education was. In addition, one of the MDG targets included a call to develop decent and productive work for youth. Both are important elements of any strategy to eliminate child labour. The global commitment to tackle these challenges in an integrated way was expanded in September 2005, when the World Summit of more than 150 Heads of State and Government stated in the United Nations:

⁴² IPEC: *Rapid Assessment Survey on Trafficking in children in Romania for labour and sexual exploitation*, (Draft), (Geneva, ILO, 2003); and National Report on the phenomenon of trafficking in children for sexual exploitation and labour in Moldova (Draft), (Geneva, ILO, 2003).

⁴³ For types of child labour comprising the worst forms, refer to *International Labour Convention on the Worst Forms of Child Labour*, 1999 (No. 182).

We strongly support fair globalization and resolve to make the goals of full and productive employment and decent work for all, including for women and young people, a central objective of our relevant national and international policies as well as our national development strategies, including poverty reduction strategies, as part of our efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. These measures should also encompass the elimination of the worst forms of child labour, as defined in International Labour Organization Convention No. 182, and forced labour. We also resolve to ensure full respect for the fundamental principles and rights at work.

We have made substantial progress in connecting the fight against child labour with education. The international financial institutions and other United Nations agencies are pursuing the link between child labour, poverty reduction and Education For All. After the 2005 World Summit, the link with employment must now become much more of a common priority.

In short, we have witnessed a sea change in the awareness of child labour across the world, and a broad consensus has emerged on the urgency of eradicating this scourge. Countries are taking on the challenge. There is now widespread agreement on the tools that are needed to do the job. The ILO's labour standards and policy advice have been central to this process. They have guided awareness raising and practical action. We must build on this positive evolution in full consciousness that the task ahead is still enormous.⁴⁴

The report also summarises the ILO's "action plan" for the next four years:

[...] It proposes that the ILO and its member States continue to pursue the goal of the effective abolition of child labour, committing themselves to the elimination of all the worst forms of child labour by 2016, and that they put in place appropriate time-bound measures by the end of 2008. In pursuit of these targets, over the next four years the ILO will strengthen its efforts to develop coherent and comprehensive approaches to abolishing child labour. The proposed action plan rests on three pillars: supporting national responses to child labour, in particular through effective mainstreaming in national development and policy frameworks; deepening and strengthening the worldwide movement; and promoting further integration of child labour concerns within overall ILO priorities regarding decent work as a global goal. This more focused and strategic approach to global leadership will help ensure that the ILO will make a more effective contribution to making child labour history.⁴⁵

2006-date

In February 2008 the ILO published [*IPEC action against child labour 2006-2007: Progress and future priorities*](#). The report summarises recent progress made at regional levels:

At the regional level, progress in **sub-Saharan Africa** towards the elimination of child labour is lagging behind other regions of the world. Political commitment and leadership is critical to enhancing effective action. Since January 2007 and in response to the urgent need to respond to the child labour problem in Africa, IPEC has put in place a special Focus Africa team to plan for an expanded effort in 2008-09. A draft regional action plan for Africa, under discussion with ILO field offices, and a draft Focus Africa work plan will provide the platform for further engagement with constituents, the rest of the ILO and the donor community.

⁴⁴ ILO, [*The end of child labour: Within reach*](#), 2006, executive summary

⁴⁵ ILO, [*The end of child labour: Within reach*](#), 2006, executive summary

Among **Arab States**, increased public awareness and government commitment have broken the silence surrounding child labour and have also allowed for greater transparency in the analysis of statistics. Arab countries participating in IPEC activities are increasingly forthcoming in dealing with the phenomenon as evident in the creation of Child Labour Units at Ministries of Labour, the amendment of legislation, the establishment of National Steering Committees and the development of lists of occupations hazardous to children.

The **Asia and Pacific region** faces a number of challenges: it has the largest number of child labourers in the world, and many of its countries are among the least developed economies. However, during the period 2006-07, the IPEC participating countries made slow but steady progress. Many countries in the region have placed child labour as a priority in the national development policy and the decent work agenda at country level. The next biennium (2008-09) will for the first time see IPEC direct interventions in some countries in the Pacific. New child labour estimates cited by the 2006 Global Report suggest a decline in the number of children working in the transition economies in **Europe and Central Asia**. Yet, there are still areas where child labour is endemic. In Central Asia and the Caucasus, many street children fall victim to the worst forms of child labour and many rural children perform hazardous work in agriculture. The high rate of migration plays a role in weakening social support for children. **Latin America and the Caribbean** saw the largest drop in child labour in recent years. But the challenge is by no means over and a redoubling of efforts is necessary to keep the momentum going. The majority of children in child labour work in hazardous conditions in agriculture, but there are also many thousands of girls and boys working in dangerous sectors such as mining, dumpsites, and so on. Mapping child labour, particularly in its worst forms, remains a challenge in the region. Everywhere, awareness raising must continue to ensure sustained advances in law and practice.⁴⁶

For more detailed information about policy and legislative responses to child labour issues in different countries you may like to see the ILO report, [Modern policy and legislative responses to child labour](#), December 2007.

The February 2008 report on progress and future priorities estimates that the number of children who have benefited from ILO action during 2006-07 (through either preventive measures or support for removal from child labour situations) amounted to almost half a million direct and over 33 million indirect beneficiaries, surpassing the target for the biennium.⁴⁷ It also looks toward future areas of work:

Today, this emerging global consensus embraces the need to:

- Prioritize the worst forms – while not losing sight of the more encompassing goal to eliminate all forms of child labour;
- Respond to the especially vulnerable, including girls;
- Recognize the importance of poverty as a causal factor but not as an excuse for inaction;
- Mainstream child labour into global development and human rights frameworks, particularly Education for All (EFA);
- Prioritize Africa as the greatest development challenge.

⁴⁶ ILO, [IPEC action against child labour 2006-2007: Progress and future priorities](#), February 2008, p10

⁴⁷ ILO, [IPEC action against child labour 2006-2007: Progress and future priorities](#), February 2008, p11

However, many challenges lie ahead. The momentum generated at the end of the 1990s has not been routinely sustained and there is evidence that in recent years the child labour issue has dropped lower on the list of priorities of some key global actors. Ten years after the Oslo Conference it is time to take stock and re-focus on developing a global strategy and a more integrated international effort.

The ILO has a key leadership role to play in re-invigorating the worldwide movement. In November 2006, the Governing Body endorsed an Action Plan 2006-2010 setting out how the ILO will strengthen its efforts in support of the global target of eliminating all the worst forms of child labour by 2016.

A key element of the Action Plan is to deepen and strengthen the worldwide movement as a catalyst for national action. In particular, stress is laid on better targeting of advocacy efforts so that child labour is registered within the dominant development frameworks such as the Millennium Development Goals, Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers and Education for All. This requires an outward looking approach calling for increased dialogue and collaboration with the rest of the UN family, the International Financial Institutions and regional institutions, as well as with the ILO's social partners and international NGOs. An important context for this approach will be progress on UN reform – making child labour elimination and decent work part of “One UN” at the country level.⁴⁸

2.5 Government Action

A PQ from November 2007 sets out action taken by the UK Government to help tackle child labour issues:

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what progress his Department has made in helping (a) reduce and (b) prevent child labour in (i) Asia, (ii) Africa and (iii) Latin America. [165150]

Mr. Malik: DFID is helping to reduce and prevent child labour by tackling the underlying poverty that is at the root of the problem. Our support to national governments enables them to create alternative livelihood opportunities for families and increase access to appropriate, good quality education for all children. In addition DFID is supporting a number of targeted programmes through UN bodies and civil society organisations. Examples include:

i. In Asia we have committed over £5 million to the International Labour Organisation's Elimination of Child Labour Programme in Andhra Pradesh. This is helping children leave work and get into school, along-side supporting new income generating programmes for their parents.

ii. In Africa we are providing £120 million this year to support the Government of Tanzania's National Strategy for Growth and Poverty Reduction in which child labour has been identified as a key poverty challenge. We are working with UNICEF in 13 countries to support orphans and vulnerable children to access education and to protect them from abuse including harmful child labour. We also supported their work to disarm, demobilise and reintegrate former child soldiers.

iii. In Latin America DFID is supporting the work of non-governmental organisations in the region, including over £400,000 to the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA UK) who are helping to reduce the number of working children in Lima, Peru.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ ILO, [IPEC action against child labour 2006-2007: Progress and future priorities](#), February 2008, p78

⁴⁹ HC Deb 20 Nov 2007 c686W