

significant challenge for the ILO, as past conventions have tended to be general in nature as noted above. Equally challenging, and again not the normal ILO practice, an exploitation convention would require a comprehensive monitoring mechanism. Such a mechanism would need to be more than governments reporting on their practices, and would likely require an enhanced investigative capacity within the ILO.

Nonetheless, multilateral initiatives have limits. Most importantly, it must be recognized that the real instruments to combat child labour are within national/domestic jurisdiction. Multilateral efforts can support national efforts but it is domestic policy choices that will in the end determine how children are employed. As long as there are strong economic incentives, or the need to work for survival, even the most progressive domestic legislation that seeks to regulate child labour is unlikely to prove effective. The history of the developed countries has been one of economic and social development, paralleled by fewer onerous child labour practices. A recent case in Taiwan suggests that developing countries may follow a similar development pattern, legislation is not enough, and trade sanctions may bring more harm than good. A study focusing on Taiwan concluded that the "success of Chinese Taipei in eliminating child labour has not only been through legislation, but also more importantly through a free education system and decentralized industrial development."¹⁵

Of the non-domestic instruments available, multilateral and unilateral development assistance offer the greatest promise in addressing the negative aspects of child labour.¹⁶ Canada's aid policy, set out in the 1995 foreign policy review Canada in the World is based on the understanding that an effective development assistance program begins with the recognition that development is a complex process and that a number of conditions must be met before it takes permanent root.¹⁷ Canada's aid objective is "to support sustainable development in developing countries, in order to reduce poverty and to contribute to a more secure, equitable and

¹⁵ Ping-Lung Hsin, "Elimination of Child Labour in Chinese Taipei" Chung-Hua Institution for Economic Research, Chinese Taipei, in a paper prepared for the OECD-DNMEs Workshop 3-4 October 1996. p.7.

¹⁶ In respect to child labour, other multilateral or international (bilateral or unilateral) instruments that may influence trade and investment include: product-labelling mechanisms that identify items as being free of child labour; codes of conduct on investment and working conditions for multinational enterprises; and codes of conduct for commercial imports.

¹⁷ Government of Canada, Canada in the World, 1995.