

been established to monitor the compliance of parties. The Committee reviews the reports submitted regularly by each party with a view to identifying areas for improvement.

Several other international declarations, while not specifically addressing children, set out fundamental human rights for all persons. These include: the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the Slavery Convention and the Supplementary Convention concerning Slavery. Together, these international instruments prohibit the holding of anyone, including children, in servitude or in slavery.

ILO Instruments

The International Labour Organization (ILO) has approached child labour not as an explicit set of human rights or violation of rights, but as an age threshold issue. Through ILO Convention 138, concerning Minimum Age for Admission to Employment, an effort was made to prohibit child labour below the age of fifteen (with some exceptions for thirteen and fourteen year olds). But a large number of countries have not ratified Convention 138 because it is considered too complex to fully apply and does not distinguish between exploitative and non-exploitative child labour. Canada has not ratified it because some provinces allow employment that is beneficial to children below the ILO age threshold.

In the ILO, generally countries that have not ratified a convention are not subject to review, with the exception of periodic surveys on general topics.² This, however, is changing and the ILO is currently embarking upon a complex process of identifying options and considering proposals on a range of monitoring and supervisory mechanisms for ILO conventions and other ILO instruments. A good first step is that the ILO Governing Body has adopted a proposal to apply a "fast track" version of its constitution's article 19 reporting procedures to several conventions, including Convention 138. Under the fast track, starting in 1997, the ILO, on a rotational basis, will require nonratifying members to submit reports on the implementation of, and

² An important exception to this is that the Constitution of the ILO requires that all members accept the principle that the freedom of expression and of association are essential to sustained progress. In addition to the regular supervision, a special body, the tripartite Committee of Freedom of Association of the Governing Body, examines complaints on alleged violations of the ILO freedom of association Conventions. Complaints, and the subsequent examination, may be raised against countries that have not ratified the freedom of association Conventions.