



### Representations to trade partners

Since children represent a major labour source for some exporting countries of the South, there is a connection between international trade agreements (NAFTA, WTO, etc.) and child labour. Adding social clauses to these agreements would undoubtedly promote protection of children, but states are very reluctant to do this. Nevertheless, requests for these clauses have led to parallel agreements relating directly to social conditions. From a perspective of political realism and in light of the current situation, we propose:

- 1) Canada should provide specific assistance to states wishing to implement the legal obligations flowing from their ratification of these agreements on social conditions;
- 2) the Government should support the specific programs and actions of NGOs seeking to implement local alternatives to child labour;
- 3) official development assistance projects of a commercial nature should be assessed as regards protection of children and it is suggested for that purpose that an analytical grid be developed for the impact of these projects on child labour and exploitation of children.

### Adopting standards

Protecting children requires that existing international agreements be strengthened and broadened, and also that mechanisms be adopted within Canada. More specifically, we propose:

- 1) Canada should resume its consideration of International Labour Organization Convention 138 (on minimum age of workers), should invite the provinces to participate in this effort, and should ratify this document;

- 2) The government should continue its joint initiative with the Canadian Manufacturers' and Exporters' Alliance to develop a code of ethics to protect children, should promote adoption of a measure of this type by other parties, and should publicize this initiative at the appropriate time.

### 3. Conclusion on child labour

To sum up, Canada must help states that wish to protect children. Instead of adopting an accusatory attitude, it must respond effectively to local institutions that seek its support. Through this positive approach, it will avoid the pitfalls of paternalism and protectionism while advancing the cause of children. Canada's foreign policy will thus continue its tradition of generosity and concern for social justice.

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