

## News BRIEFS

### CHILD LABOUR: CANADA WELCOMES NEW CONVENTION

Canada has welcomed the reaching of agreement on a new convention prohibiting and eliminating the worst forms of child labour. The convention emerged from the General Conference of the International Labour Organization, a Geneva-based UN Specialized Agency of which Canada is a member.

The purpose of the convention is to protect children against the worst forms of child labour, such as all forms of slavery or similar practices—for instance, the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage, serfdom, and forced or compulsory labour, including forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict. It also prohibits the use, procurement or offering of children for prostitution, for the production of pornography or for pornographic performances, or for illicit activities, such as the production or trafficking of drugs; and it bans work that, by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children.

Foreign Affairs Minister Axworthy said he was particularly pleased that the convention refers specifically to the plight of children in armed conflict—a major concern of Canada's human security agenda.

### HUMAN SECURITY CHALLENGE FOR ASEAN

At meetings of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in late July, Minister Axworthy pressed his counterparts to work toward increasing human security in Asia. The Minister was in Singapore to participate in ASEAN's 6th Regional Forum and 32nd Post-Ministerial Conference.

"Now that we seem to be facing a gradual but steady turnaround on the financial crisis in Asia, it is time to turn our focus to other human security issues that may affect peace and stability in Asia," declared Mr. Axworthy.

After the meetings, the Minister proceeded to Bangkok for a series of discussions with Thai Foreign Minister Surin Pitsuwan and Deputy Prime Minister Bhichai Rattakul. "Thailand recently joined the Lysøen Agreement for joint action on human security issues, and in so doing has become our key partner in the region in advancing this dialogue," said Mr. Axworthy.

### CANADA TO STEP UP FIGHT AGAINST DRUGS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

While in Bangkok, Minister Axworthy announced that Canada is prepared to ease restrictions on contacts with Myanmar in order to join ASEAN and other countries' joint effort in the fight against the production and trafficking of illicit drugs in the region.

"We've had a pretty tough, restrictive policy against any direct contact (with Myanmar). The major problem.... is that any discussion on drugs here has to involve Myanmar. So we agreed that we would be prepared to engage with the Burmese on this matter."

Myanmar is considered one of the world's top suppliers of heroin. It is part of the infamous Golden Triangle (with Laos and Thailand) known for its production of illegal drugs. "Some 90 percent of hard drugs entering Canada come from that region, so we have a direct interest," said Mr. Axworthy. ASEAN's goal is to have the region narcotics-free by 2020.

### SYMPOSIUM ON HUMAN RIGHTS

Along with China and Norway, Canada co-hosted the Second Plurilateral Symposium on Human Rights, held at the end of July in Qingdao, China.

Discussions covered four topics: implementation of the International Covenant on Political and Civil Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Cultural and Social Rights; rights of minorities; labour rights; and freedom of expression. Some 14 countries from the region participated as observers.

Remarked Minister Axworthy, "China's involvement in the Symposium, particularly as co-host, represents progress in mutual efforts to explore and develop initiatives aimed at greater understanding and further implementation of international human rights standards."

### HEMISPHERIC EVENTS

#### PAN AM GAMES

Over 5000 athletes from 42 countries participated in the Pan Am Games in Winnipeg from July 23 to August 8. Pan Am Sports Association President Mario Vazquez Rana described the event as "the best Games ever." Canada certainly had its best Games ever, winning 196 medals. DFAIT's International Cultural Program sponsored a Carnival of the Americas during the Games, featuring the Neville Brothers, First Nations Hoop Dancers, Jane Bunnett and the Spirits of Havana, and Jimmy Cliff. Over 60 000 people enjoyed the performance celebrating the region's cultural diversity.

#### CONFERENCE OF SPOUSES OF HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT OF THE AMERICAS

This year's Spouses' Conference is being held in Ottawa from