



*even point to children's manual dexterity in certain handcraft trades. On the other hand, those who oppose child labour argue that no moral or socio-economic consideration, including poverty, can warrant this practice. A number of strategies for action have already been considered. These include both positive measures - direct financing for alternative activities for families and children, greater research, raising public awareness, national and international cooperation - and negative measures - boycotting of products made by children, stronger legislation, etc. However, many of these proposals are still at the exploratory stage, either because they are likely to have undesirable results or because there are not enough resources to implement them. The Canadian government's position on this issue clearly reflects this ambiguity, since it is often hard for it to reconcile its economic and material interests with the humanitarian values it advocates on the international stage.*

## 1. Introduction

Many efforts have been made to protect children around the world, especially following the World Summit for Children (1990) and ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. However, much remains to be done and the child labour phenomenon is growing once again.

As indicated by the presenter, Ms. Céline Dauphinais, child labour assumes different forms in each country. It would therefore be wrong to draw general conclusions without taking account of local situations and specific influences where child labour occurs. Before beginning the discussion, it is necessary to distinguish between

exploitation through work, and work without exploitation. Under the guidance of Ms. Gisèle Côté-Harper, QC, the participants formulated recommendations reflecting this complexity. These recommendations are organized under three headings: (1) national and international awareness; (2) representations to trade partners; (3) adopting standards.

## 2. Recommendations

### National and international awareness

Protecting children is a vital issue that can be added to and remain on the political agenda only if it is firmly established in Canadian and international civil society. This requires an effort to raise awareness. We therefore propose:

- 1) on the occasion of Canada's Year of Asia-Pacific, the government should support organization of a conference of NGOs from these regions and their Canadian counterparts, to discuss international protection of children and specifically to combat exploitation of work;
- 2) the Canadian government should intervene with the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child to have it publicize and distribute it on a wider basis the quinquennial reports filed by the signatory states to the Convention on the Rights of the Child;
- 3) Canada should encourage integration into the UN system of the perspective of "the child as a human being", in order to provide greater protection, as happened in the case of women's rights;
- 4) the Government should intervene with Canadian and international NGOs working for human rights, to have their reports include the issue of children.