

Pakistan – Human Rights and Child Labour

QUESTION

What is Canada doing about the child labour problem in Pakistan?

SUGGESTED REPLY

- Child labour is a complex issue, rooted largely in poverty, but also influenced by culture and traditional social practices.
- Canada views the economic exploitation of children as a violation of basic human rights, which outrages the instincts of fairness and decency shared by Canadians. Canada has been a leader internationally in encouraging countries to adopt the standards set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- Easy solutions such as trade enforcement measures can do more harm than good to those people we want to help. Simply putting children out of work is not the solution; there must be alternatives for ensuring their education, care, and the income of their families. We believe that open markets and better labour standards are complementary and reinforce each other.
- Canada is working hard in the International Labour Organization (ILO) to enhance core labour standards. In particular, we are actively developing a new convention on eliminating exploitation of child workers. This convention is expected to be introduced by 1999.
- Pakistan, and other South Asian nations, have agreed to eliminate child labour by 2010.