

Avenues for Combatting Exploitive Child Labour

Canada has placed children's human rights high on its foreign policy list. The areas of focus have included combatting exploitive child labour, stopping sexual exploitation of children and the use of "child soldiers", and re-integrating affected children into society (including assuring appropriate educational and work opportunities). Hon. Lloyd Axworthy outlined in 1996 three areas where Canada was deploying development assistance to overcome problems of child labour: access to primary education, with particular attention to girls; improving the status, role and economic security of women as equal partners in development (thus promoting the well-being of children) and support for good governance (so that governments can advance social development goals in partnership with civil society, and enforce existing laws and regulations governing the employment of children). Canada has supported a number of projects that specifically help children who are most vulnerable under systems of child labour. Among other initiatives, Canada also contributes to the ILO International Program for the Elimination of Child Labour. The ILO has been pushing for a new international convention on child labour, and Canada has been supportive.

Q.1 Assuming that you are aware of Canada's efforts to combat exploitive genres of child labour, are there additional policy elements or steps that you would recommend for Canada in this field?

Q.2 Should Canada take an even stronger role in working towards an international convention on child labour?

Q.3 Are there components of the draft ILO convention that Roundtable participants want to underscore as being worthy of special support or needful of strong revision?

Q.4 Is this an area in which Canada is (or should be) showing the kind of world leadership it has displayed with respect to the banning of anti-personnel land mines?

Q.5 Are there other areas of children's rights that you wish to address in Roundtable discussions?

World Health Organization (WHO)

The WHO explicitly refers to the right to health as a focus of its objectives, and has worked to find reliable indicators of gradual achievement of a country's obligations with respect to the right to health. The Organization's constitution refers to the enjoyment of the highest standards of health as a fundamental right of each human being.

Q.1 Should Canada adopt the WHO approach in supporting health-related programs in ODA, by judging plans and outcomes through the lens of "the right to health", including health care and preventive health?

Q.2 Assuming that you know salient details of WHO programs and of Canada's efforts in the domain of the right to health, are there additional policy elements or steps that you would