

**12 June 2002**

**NEW ZEALAND GOVERNMENT  
SPEECH ON THE GLOBAL REPORT  
A FUTURE WITHOUT CHILD LABOUR**

**Delivered by John Chetwin, Secretary of Labour**

First of all, I would like to say that the New Zealand Minister of Labour, the Honourable Margaret Wilson, has asked me to offer you greetings and express her deep regret that she could not be here at the Conference. I know she would have been particularly keen to participate in the discussion today.

New Zealand is delighted to be able to mark the first World Day against Child Labour and we congratulate the ILO on its leadership of the international campaign against child labour over the last ten years. New Zealand commends the ILO for bringing the problems associated with child labour into the international spotlight, for providing a standard in the form of Convention No. 182, that creates a legal and practical obligation for ratifying States to address the worst form of child labour, and for the phenomenal expansion of the International Programme for the Elimination of Child Labour over the last ten years.

The New Zealand Government is deeply concerned about the exploitation of children and is committed to the promotion and protection of the rights of children. Over the last year, New Zealand has demonstrated its commitment by ratifying the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182) in June 2001. In meeting the practical requirements of the Convention, the Government has established a 12-month workplan of action to secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour in New Zealand.

The Government's planned programme of action includes education campaigns such as a campaign called "Keeping Ourselves Safe" which will profile Convention No. 182 in schools throughout New Zealand.

In ratifying Convention No. 182, New Zealand heralded its international commitment to the effective abolition of child labour. We are now also working towards ratifying the Optional Protocol to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, as well as the Protocol to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organised Crime, to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children.

The New Zealand Government is very pleased to be supporting ILO activity in the Asia/Pacific region and is delighted to be funding the first IPEC programme in the Pacific. The IPEC programme, if approved, will take the form of a subregional training workshop on ratification/implementation and reporting on Conventions Nos. 138 and 182. It would aim to provide practical skills and advice to tripartite delegations from Fiji, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and Samoa. We hope that this will be the first of continuing IPEC programmes in the Pacific.

While New Zealand is actively working at the domestic, regional and international levels to eliminate harmful forms of child labour, we do not believe that all forms of child work are harmful. In New Zealand, there are restrictions on the employment of young persons through education and occupational safety and health legislation. However, there is a long-established practice of employment of children in a range of work including newspaper rounds and fruit picking. We consider that the employment of children in this type of work is not harmful and indeed is socially desirable, since it prepares them for independence and greater responsibility in a way which complements their formal education.

Therefore, we strongly agree with the ILO's acknowledgement in the Global Report that "the term 'child labour' does not encompass all work performed by children under the age of 18". As the Report states, by undertaking work appropriate to their age and level of maturity, children learn essential skills and add to their families and their own well being.

New Zealand is grateful to the ILO for providing an in-depth analysis of global child labour in the Global Report and commends the Office for providing more detail than we have previously seen on the issue. We would, however, caution against sacrificing up-to-date and accurate information for detail. For example, the statistic on adolescent injury rates in construction in New Zealand, in paragraph 99 of the Report, is over ten years old and refers to an unofficial study undertaken in a single New Zealand city. The Report acknowledges “the critical role of good information as a basis for effective action”. We urge the ILO to develop its information resources on child labour and support action to promote effective baseline analysis of child labour.

New Zealand supports the ILO in developing a three-pillar action plan for the effective abolition of child labour. We believe that practical programmes of action tailored to the different circumstances of child labourers are necessary to provide solutions to the exploitation of our young. As the Report acknowledges, these programmes must remain flexible to respond to different and constantly changing circumstances. Projects must be appropriate to the gender, age and culture of the child. Furthermore, as poverty is a major cause of child labour, practical programmes to alleviate poverty must be a major goal for future action.

In conclusion, I would like to assure you of New Zealand’s continuing support for the ILO’s leadership of the protection and promotion of children’s rights through the elimination of all forms of child labour.