



Bureau for Employers' Activities  
International Labour Organization

**AN EMPLOYERS' INITIATIVE  
FOR RATIFICATION OF  
WORST FORMS  
OF CHILD  
LABOUR  
CONVENTION,  
1999 (NO. 182)**

An employers' strategy to secure the rights of children  
in cooperation with



International Organisation of Employers

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## RATIFICATION OF CONVENTION

### *Elimination of extreme forms of child labour*

In the context of a global strategy for economic and social development, issues concerning the rights of children and the effective elimination of child labour have, in recent years, acquired enormous urgency. Acutely aware of the seriousness of the problem, employers have taken major initiatives and joined hands with their other tripartite constituents (governments and workers) of the International Labour Organization's (ILO) 174 member States to develop new and comprehensive standards on the subject.

This concerted approach led the International Labour Conference (ILC) at its 87th Session (1999) to adopt a new Convention (No. 182) on the prohibition and immediate action for the elimination of the worst forms of child labour, supplemented by Recommendation No. 190.<sup>1</sup>

### *Ratification*

The unanimous acceptance of these instruments reflects the universal will and commitment of the three ILO constituents for immediate and comprehensive action on child labour issues, anticipated by the 1996 Resolution of the International Organisation of Employers (IOE) on this subject.<sup>2</sup>

Employers' organizations all over the world can show their concern and commitment by securing ratification by their respective countries of Convention No. 182.

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<sup>1</sup> Available on ILO internet :

<http://ilolex.ilo.ch:1567/scripts/convde.pl?C182>

<http://ilolex.ilo.ch:1567/scripts/convde.pl?R190>

<sup>2</sup> Available on IOE internet: <http://www.ioe-emp.org>

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## FRAMEWORK FOR RATIFICATION

### *Convention No. 182*

Ratifying States are to :

- apply the Convention to children under 18;
- take immediate and effective measures to prohibit and eliminate the worst forms of child labour ;
- designate monitoring mechanisms ;
- adopt programmes of action ;
- ensure effective enforcement, including penal or other sanctions ;
- take all necessary measures to prevent the engagement of children in the worst forms of child labour ;
- provide appropriate assistance for direct removal of children from the worst forms of child labour and for their rehabilitation and social integration ;
- ensure access to free basic education ;
- take account of the special situation of girls ; and
- take steps to assist each other through international cooperation and/or assistance.

### *IOE General Council Resolution of 1996*

Employers' organizations are urged :

- to raise awareness ;
  - to develop policies with a view to eventual elimination of child labour in all sectors ;
  - to translate child labour policies into action plans ;
  - to encourage and work with government authorities to develop and implement effective policies ; and
  - to promote access to basic education and primary health care.
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## PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT

While ratification of the Convention is the desirable objective, programmes can be designed and developed at an early stage to ensure that the provisions of the instruments are put to immediate effect. This can facilitate ratification by governments. Employers can influence such decisions under the tripartite consultations foreseen in the instruments.

Employers' organizations have already taken effective steps to the challenge of child labour by sensitizing their members and developing action plans to eliminate as a priority the worst forms of child labour.

Some of the programmes have been implemented in partnership with the ILO's International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC).<sup>3</sup> IPEC was launched in 1992 and is financed by generous donations from several governments. It is the largest international programme working at both the international and national levels towards the elimination of child labour. The immediate objectives of the IPEC are to improve the capability of ILO member States to design and implement policies and programmes to eliminate child labour progressively, to protect working children, and to heighten the awareness of member States and the international community concerning the dimensions and consequences of child labour and national obligations under international labour standards.

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<sup>3</sup> See IPEC on ILO internet:  
<http://mirror/public/english/90ipec/index.htm>

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## STRATEGIES FOR EMPLOYER ACTION

Initiatives taken by employers to combat child labour benefit enterprises in terms of:

- evidence of their social responsibility;
- improved human resources management and development;
- skills development through vocational training;
- increased productivity and competitiveness;
- eradication of poverty and employment creation;
- enhanced occupational safety and health; and
- better corporate image.



Within these broad-based objectives employers can take the following action:

- secure the rights of children;
- encourage governments to ratify the Convention;
- raise awareness of the human cost of child labour and help identify types of work considered to be harmful to the health, safety or morals of children;
- ensure employers' collective commitment to the elimination of child labour at national, regional and international meetings;
- develop policies and initiate concrete programmes;<sup>4</sup>
- institutionalize the activities by setting up a focal point within the organization, thereby ensuring visibility, commitment and sustainability;
- campaign for policies with conviction and vigour to ensure translation into legislation at the national level which in turn can facilitate ratification, and help design and implement monitoring mechanisms;

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<sup>4</sup> Guidance and examples of employer action can be found in the *IOE/ILO Employers' Handbook on Child Labour: A guide for taking action* - available on IOE internet: <http://www.ioe-emp.org> (Action Programmes/Child Labour)

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- actively participate in IPEC’s national Steering Committees ;
  - cooperate with trade unions and NGOs and, as appropriate, jointly carry out constructive action to transfer children from work into education and training ;
  - survey existing codes of conduct and labelling schemes with a view to providing, on request, assistance in the drafting of model voluntary codes ;
  - ensure sustainability on employers’ commitment to child labour issues ; and
  - document “best practices” which can serve as models for other companies.
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## **INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATION OF EMPLOYERS**

The IOE is the organization with the largest representativity of the private sector in the world and the only body representing the interests of employers at the international level in the social and labour fields. Its present membership comprises some 130 national federations.

The IOE's mission is:

- defending employer interests at the international level, particularly within the ILO;
- promoting free enterprise and its development;
- helping to establish and strengthen employers' organizations at the national level; and
- facilitating the transfer of information and experience to employers' organizations.

*International Organisation of Employers  
26, chemin de Joinville, CH-1216 Cointrin - Geneva*

*Tel: (+41 22) 798 16 16*

*Fax: (+41 22) 798 88 62*

*E-mail: [ioe@ioe-emp.org](mailto:ioe@ioe-emp.org)*

*Website: [http //www.ioe-emp.org](http://www.ioe-emp.org)*





## **BUREAU FOR EMPLOYERS' ACTIVITIES**

The Bureau for Employers' Activities (ACT/EMP) of the International Labour Organization (ILO), which is a specialized unit within the organization, maintains a close relationship with employers' organizations in member States. The Bureau is committed to helping employers' organizations to remain relevant to the needs of their members in conformity with the various labour standards. Its services are available to employers to gain access to ILO information, advice and assistance both from Headquarters in Geneva, and through the ILO's multidisciplinary advisory teams (MDTs) around the world.

The Bureau works closely with the International Organisation of Employers (IOE) as the world body representing employers.

*Bureau for Employers' Activities (ACT/EMP)  
International Labour Office  
4 route des Morillons, CH-1211 Geneva 22, Switzerland  
Fax. (+41 22) 799 89 48  
Telephone. (+41 22) 799 77 48  
E-mail: [actemp@ilo.org](mailto:actemp@ilo.org)  
Web site:  
<http://mirror/public/english/225actem/index.htm>*

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