

GENERAL COUNCIL
OF THE
INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATION OF EMPLOYERS
RESOLUTION ON CHILD LABOUR

The General Council of the International Organisation of Employers,

Having met in Geneva on 3 June 1996 for its 73rd ordinary session,

Considering that one of the most disturbing aspects of poverty is the necessity for poor families to rely on the labour of their children,

Considering that, although the problem is complex and requires long-term action for its prevention and progressive elimination, its most intolerable aspects - namely the employment of children in slave-like and bonded conditions and in dangerous work - must be abolished immediately and unconditionally,

Concerned that children without education are denied opportunities to develop their full potential and can constrain the social and economic development of their countries,

Aware that the long-term solution to the problem lies in sustained economic growth leading to social progress, in particular poverty alleviation and universal education,

Noting that, although the solution to the problem requires the active and coordinated involvement of society as a whole, with government playing a critical role through its development plans and special education programmes, the business community has a significant contribution to make,

Noting that, while enterprises and business organisations, along with other groups in society, are concerned about child labour and have adopted policies and taken action to improve the situation of working children, further concerted action is required,

Recognising that the positive actions taken by employers have not been adequately acknowledged and in some cases employers have been subject to unfair accusations,

Noting that simplistic solutions, which can merely throw children out of work without providing alternative means of livelihood for them and their families, often put the children concerned in a worse situation,

Further concerned that attempts to link the issue of working children with international trade and to use it to impose trade sanctions on countries where the problem of child labour exists are counter-productive and jeopardize the welfare of children,

Resolves this 3rd day of June 1996 to:

1. Call on employers and their organisations to:

- a. Raise awareness of the human cost of child labour as well as its negative economic and social consequences.
- b. Put an immediate end to slave-like, bonded and dangerous forms of child labour while developing formal policies with a view to its eventual elimination in all sectors.
- c. Translate child labour policies into action plans at the international, national, industry and enterprise levels.
- d. Implement the plans, taking care to ensure that the situation of the children and their families is improved as a result.
- e. Support activities targeted at working children and their families, such as the establishment of day care centres, schools and training facilities, including training of teachers, and initiate such activities wherever possible.
- f. Encourage and work with local and national government authorities to develop and implement effective policies designed to eliminate child labour.
- g. Promote access to basic education and primary health care, which are crucial to the success of any effort to eliminate child labour.

2. Call on the IOE Executive Committee to:

- a. Create a database on companies and organisations active in combating child labour.
- b. Develop and distribute an Employer Handbook addressing child labour.
- c. Receive periodic reports from the IOE membership on their initiatives and other developments in the area of child labour.
- d. Report to the General Council on an annual basis as to work done in combating child labour.

Geneva, 3 June 1996.