

All Reference Texts

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child



The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child was adopted by the general assembly of the UN on the 20th of November, 1989. It was created by a group of special representatives of about 30 non-governmental organisations, similar to Le Comité de Solidarité/Trois-Rivières, that work to defend human rights. It is composed of 54 articles describing in detail the individual rights of all humans under the age of 18. In summary, these rights ensure that every child can develop to his or her full capacity without suffering from hunger, poverty, negligence, exploitation, or other forms of injustice.

Through this convention it is hoped that current problems affecting children in disadvantaged countries can be resolved. Some of the problems include child refugees, children and war, the sexual exploitation of children, and all other forms of exploitation. It is hoped that the Convention can be adapted to the situation of all signing countries in order to respond independently to the needs and the cultural and religious values of all children.

When a country signs the Convention, it is responsible for ensuring the respect of the law within its territory. A UN committee of 10 experts then verifies the application of the law. In December of 1991 Canada became the 103rd country to ratify.

Definitions

- **Adoption:** approval by a vote
 - **Convention:** an agreement between countries, synonym of accord and agreement, that binds them within their country to the details of the agreement
 - **Ratify:** to ratify an agreement or a text is to proclaim one's agreement to it. A ratification hence carries an obligation for the signing country, and is the step leading to the application of the agreement's elements.
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The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Simplified)

Article 1: Definition of the child

Every human being less than 18 years of age, unless majority is attained earlier according to the local laws applicable to children.

Article 2: Non discrimination

All rights must be granted to every child without exception. The State must protect the child without exception. The State must protect the child against all forms of discrimination.

Article 3: Best interests of the child

In all actions concerning children, the best interest of the child shall be the primary consideration.

Article 4: Implementation of rights

The State is obligated to ensure that the rights in the Convention are implemented.

Article 5: Parents, family, community rights and responsibilities

The State must respect the parents and the family in their child rearing function.

Article 6: Life, survival and development

The right of the child to life and the state's obligation to ensure the child's survival and development.

Article 7: Name and nationality

The right from birth to a name, to a nationality, and to know and be cared for by his or her parents.

Article 8: Preservation of identity

The obligation of the State to assist the child in reestablishing identity if this has been illegally withdrawn.

Article 9: Non-separation from parents

The right of the child to retain contact with his or her parents in case of separation. If separation is the result of detention, imprisonment, or death, the State shall provide

information to the child or the parents about the whereabouts of the family member.

Article 10: Family reunification

Requests to leave or enter the country for family reunification shall be dealt with in a humane manner. A child has the right to maintain regular contact with both parents when they live in different States.

Article 11: Illicit transfer and kidnapping of children

The State shall combat the kidnapping of children by partners or by third parties.

Article 12: Expression of opinion

The right of the child to express his or her opinion and to have this taken into consideration.

Article 13: Freedom of expression and information

The right to seek, receive and impart information in various forms, including art, print, writing.

Article 14: Freedom of thought, conscience and religion

States must respect the rights and duties of parents to provide direction to the child in accordance with the child's evolving capacities.

Article 15: Freedom of association

The child's right to freedom of association and peaceful assembly.

Article 16: Privacy, honour, reputation

No child shall be subjected to interference of his or her privacy, family, home or correspondence.

Article 17: Access to information and media

The child shall have access to information from a diversity of sources; due attention shall be paid to minorities and guidelines shall be encouraged to protect children from harmful material.

Article 18: Parental responsibility

Both parents have common responsibilities for the upbringing of the child and assistance shall be given to them in the performance of parental responsibilities.

Article 19: Abuse and neglect (within the family or the care of others)

States have the obligation to protect children from all forms of abuse. Social programs and support services shall be made available.

Article 20: Alternative care for children in the absence of parents

The entitlement of the child to alternative care within the scope of national laws, and the obligation of the State to pay due regard to continuity in the child's religious, cultural, linguistic or ethnic background in the provision of alternative care.

Article 21: Adoption

States are to ensure that only authorised bodies carry out adoptions. Inter-country adoption may be considered if national solutions have been exhausted.

Article 22: Refugee children

Special protection is to be given to refugee children. States shall cooperate with international agencies to this end and also to reunite children separated from the families.

Article 23: Disabled children

The right to benefit from special care and education for a fuller life in society.

Article 24: Health care

Access to preventive and curative health care services as well as the gradual abolition of traditional practices harmful to the child.

Article 25: Periodic review

Children who are placed for the purpose of care, protection, or treatment have the right to have the placement reviewed on a regular basis.

Article 26: Social security

The child's right to social security.

Article 27: Standard of living

Parental responsibility to provide adequate living conditions for the child's development even when one of the parents is living in a country other than the child's place of residence.

Article 28: Education

The right to free primary education, the availability of vocational education, and the need for measures to reducedrop-out rates.

Article 29: Aims of education

Education should foster development of the child's personality and talents, preparation for a responsible adult life, respect for human rights, and cultural and national values of the child's country and that of others.

Article 30: Children of minorities and indigenous children

The right of the child belonging to a minority or indigenous group to enjoy his or her culture, to practise his or her own language.

Article 31: Play and recreation

The right of children to play, and to participate in recreational, cultural, and artistic activities.

Article 32: Economic exploitation

The right of the child to protection against harmful forms of work and exploitation.

Article 33: Narcotic and psychotic substances

Protection of the child against the use of narcotic and psychotic substances and against the utilisation of the child in their production and distribution.

Article 34: Sexual exploitation

Protection of the child against sexual exploitation including prostitution and pornography.

Article 35: Abduction, sale and trafficking

State obligation to prevent the abduction, the sale, and the trafficking of children.

Article 36: Other forms of exploitation

The State is obligated to protect children from other forms of exploitation such as economic exploitation.

Article 37: Torture, capital punishment, deprivation of liberty

Obligation of the State with regards to children in detention.

Article 38: Armed conflicts

Children under 15 years are not to take a direct part in hostilities. No recruitment of children under 15.

Article 39: Recovery and reintegration

State obligations for the education and social reintegration of child victims of exploitation, torture or armed conflicts.

Article 40: Juvenile justice

Treatment of children accused of infringing the penal law shall promote the child's sense of dignity.

Article 41: The right to the most favorable protection

The law most favorable to children, either this law or the local laws of the country in question, are the ones that must be applied.

Article 42: Dissemination of the Convention

The state's duty to make the convention known to adults and children.

Article 43-54: Implementation

These paragraphs provide for a Committee on the Rights of the Child to oversee implementation of the Convention.

What is Child Exploitation?

Article 32 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child states that children have the right to be protected against economic exploitation and work that implies risk. The term **exploitation** in the convention means to take advantage of someone.



Child labour can be qualified as exploitation when:

- The child works full time at a premature age
- The child must assume heavy responsibilities
- The child is not fairly paid for his/her work
- The work robs the child of his/her dignity and self-esteem



Work that implies risk is that which requires the child to perform dangerous or hazardous tasks.

Work is said to imply risk when:

- It puts the child's health and development at risk
- It causes too much physical or emotional stress
- It does not allow time for the child to attend school or it tires the child to the degree that he/she cannot study
- It does not allow the child the time to rest or to play

Common Forms of Child Labour

Child labour is a global problem, affecting industrialized countries as well as developing ones. Current estimates claim that at least 250 million children between the ages of 5 and 14 are forced to work, and that at least half of them are obliged to work full time.

Child labour comes in many forms, which are placed in seven categories:

- Domestic work
 - Servitude
 - Sexual exploitation for economic gain
 - Work in industry or plantations
 - Work in the street
 - Family work
 - Military work
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Domestic Work

Domestic workers have a lot to do, including washing clothes, cleaning, and caring for children. Many domestic child workers sleep in the homes of their employers, and often on the floor. They are frequently required to work long hours, and many are denied access to education. These children are the most vulnerable and the most exploited, but also the most difficult to protect, since their working conditions depend entirely on their employer. Many suffer sexual and physical abuse.



Sexual exploitation for economic gain

Due to the secrecy of child sexual exploitation, reliable statistics about this multi-billion dollar industry are not easy to find. Non-Governmental Organisations, however, estimate that at least a million young girls are captured or forced into this type of exploitation and slavery each year around the world. Boys are also often targeted. Prostitution networks exist everywhere, though perhaps the most important region is Asia.

Physical and psychological harm make this type of exploitation extremely serious for children. Daily risks include HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases, unwanted pregnancies, drug addictions, and respiratory disease.

Servitude



The most common form of modern slavery is debt servitude. Poor families trade their child or children for money to property owners or businessmen, who use the extra hands in various trades, such as construction, textiles, and agricultural plantations. The child's labour is rarely paid, and the servitude often lasts through generations.

Military work

Drafting children for the army has been practiced for centuries by many civilizations, but is nowadays considered a form of slavery, since the drafts are often mandatory. The UN claims that 300,000 youth under the age of 18 have participated or still do, in the 30 or so regional conflicts during the last few decades. They are recruited by the national army or by militias in the case of civil wars. They risk their lives, and are often beaten or killed if they attempt to escape.

UNICEF claims that children are often recruited because they are impressionable, sensitive to authority, and less likely to desert the army. They are able to perform many auxiliary tasks, and light arms have made them useful in the front lines. Girls are also used, often serving as sexual slaves.

Work in Industry or Plantations

All around the world children work in appalling conditions in factories and plantations, whether it be making bricks by hand in Peru and Colombia, or working with leather in Naples, Italy.



Family work

The most common occupation of children is still working for the family, including agricultural and household chores. Although helping with chores can give a child a sense of value, these chores are often quite demanding and the hours long. This work can easily prevent the child's development and success at school.

Work in the street

The street can be dangerous and cruel, threatening even the lives of these children who could be polishing shoes, cleaning or guarding cars, carrying packages, selling flowers or knick-knacks, or collecting recyclables to sell. They work for their own survival, or that of their family, and can find a multitude of ways to make a bit of money. Most will return home in the evening, often in the slums.



The Origins of this Phenomenon



The growing poverty that affects society is to blame. Children are condemned to spending their developing years working for the survival of their family, and school is often inaccessible. Children are occasionally traded or put into servitude by indebted families in trade for small amounts of money.

Globalization, which is ever more present in conversations, is not unaware of child exploitation. Multinationals search for docile

and able workers to maintain their profit margins, and children are rarely found in unions or in social rights movements. The textile industry in Bangladesh is a good example: the child who produces a shirt there receives a mere 1/600 of the sale price in the US.

Education is one of the best solutions, and every local initiative to enhance access to education carries hope. Children must be given the right to an education, and to health and justice, so that each child can say “When I get older, I’ll be alive!”

Source: Unicef and the World: Daily Section.

Translated from: BOUDREAULT, Marco. *Le travail des enfants dans des condtions indécentes*. Le Nouvelliste, Comité de Solidarité Tiers-Monde, Trois-Rivières, December 1, 1997

Where are Children Exploited?



The *International Labour Office* estimates that more than 250 million children work currently around the world, of which 61% are in Asia, 32% in Africa, and 7% in Latin America. Although this practice is less common in North America, children are not immune to such practices.

In **Canada**, child labour exists as well in areas such as newspaper delivery, bagging groceries, cooking, and working tills. The practice is

frequent in rural Quebec where youth less than 14 years of age are paid less than minimum wage. For example, youth under 14 account for close to half of the 600 workers in the strawberry fields of the Lanaudière region. The sale of chocolate also employs thousands of youth, giving them a dollar or so for every bar sold going door to door. Some companies promise a minimum of \$100 a day of profit.

In **Latin America**, 17.5 million children work to survive, of which 60% are found agriculture. Beyond family farms, however, large agricultural operations also utilise child labour. Throughout the continent one can find children working on plantations growing sugar, coffee, tobacco, and rubber. According to the International Labour Office, the structured economic sector doesn't employ more than 10% of working children. These children are found on construction sites and brickyards, and in the manufacturing industry, which like agriculture is largely dedicated to producing products for export.

- In the **Dominican Republic**, many young agricultural workers are imported from Haiti.
- In **Colombia**, between 800,000 and 3 million child labourers work in domains such as the flower export industry that was developed in the nineties. Coal mines, many of which are not officially approved and therefore unlicensed, employ children between the ages of 7 and 10 years. These children, referred

to as “mole children”, crawl in narrow and poorly lit mine shafts, often without helmets nor personal protection equipment, in exhausting conditions.

- Estimates state that between 7 and 12 million child labourers can be found in **Brazil**, of which 3 million work in agriculture. Sugar cane plantations employ approximately 60,000, which constitutes a quarter of the sector’s employees. Children are also employed to operate wood kilns, and are often subjected to 12 hour work days under armed surveillance. Children caught trying to escape are often violently reprimanded, which can even lead to death. Thousands of children are employed in shoe production in small workshops around Sao Paulo, and children working under armed surveillance have also been found in a brewery in the state of Mato Grosso do Sul. Nine thousand children also work around Santa Cruz in the growing of sisal, a fiber used to make rope and twine.
- In **Haiti**, 200,000 domestic workers, of which three-quarters are girls, often work as many as 18 hours a day. The phenomena of “restaveks” has increased with colonisation. Social inequality and poverty have led poorer families to offer their children to financially wealthy, urban families. They hope for a better life for their children, but to the host families, the “restaveks” have little importance. They are often beaten and excluded from the family, and often are not allowed to eat the same food. Estimates state that one of every five Haitian domestic workers suffer poor treatment, including sexual abuse.

Africa is the continent most affected by this phenomena, with approximately 40% of children working, equal to 80 million children according to the International Labour Office. Most of this work is for family subsistence, and 37% of young girls perform domestic work, the highest proportion in the world. Additionally, many rural youth move to the cities where the informal work sector is well developed. They go to earn money for their families, and occupy many roles such as shoe polishers and peddlers.

- According to UNICEF, **Kenya** is home to 200,000 domestic child labourers, and **Benin** 400,000. Another 100,000 young children from Benin work domestically in **Nigeria**, and children from **Mali** and **Benin** also work in **Cote-d’Ivoire** and **Gabon**.
- Twelve million children work in **Nigeria**, the most populated country in Africa. The trading of children as slaves is also present.
- In **South Africa**, there are 400,000 child labourers, several thousand of which work in orchards.
- In 1993, the capital of **Senegal** housed 88,000 domestic child labourers. The average family has six children that are considered an essential service to complete household chores. Work hours are long, tasks are demanding, and children work six or seven days a week. Contracts for domestic workers are extremely rare, and employers may fire the children at the slightest error or for such events as a pregnancy.

The Consequences of Child Labour

We propose that the most significant consequence of child labour is the perpetuity of a vicious circle of poverty. One out of every four children in the world is condemned to life as a poor worker with little training.

According to the International Labour Office (ILO), 80% of the 250 million child labourers have neither holidays nor free time, and as many as 50% suffer intolerable working conditions, such as unsanitary locales, harsh treatment, or excessive demands.



The problems include the following:

- Chemicals used in textile, footwear, and jewellery industries, as well as in agriculture are **harmful toxins**, especially for young children who are still developing.
- Children who scavenge for food and for things to sell often suffer from **skin disease** and other illnesses caused by poor hygiene. They ingest rotting food, and often handle hazardous garbage. They risk acquiring **tetanus** from cuts, diseases from rats, and **skeletal abnormalities** due to heavy lifting.
- The agricultural, fishing, and forestry industries, according to the ILO, account for 70% of accidents and illnesses amongst active children.
- In the leather industry in India and Egypt, children's feet and hands are continually in contact with chemicals such as ammonia and dyes, and poor air circulation also exacerbates the exposure to such chemicals.

- Children working with glass blowing and foundries spend their youth beside hot furnaces, moulds, and liquid metals and glass, often without any protection.
- In the process of producing matches and fireworks, many children suffer burns, **poisoning, respiratory problems, and even death**. Squatting for hours at work also provokes joint problems and bone deformities.
- In brick manufacturing in Latin America, children aged 5 and 6 have been employed to carry loads of bricks on their backs or heads. Falls, lower back pain, and fractures are recurring problems where children push wheelbarrows, mix mortar, and climb ladders and scaffolding.
- Lung problems are frequent in children working in bristle and wool mills in Asia.
- Working with poor lighting results in damaged eyesight.
- Work in mines exposes children to hazardous dust, explosive gases, mine shafts that collapse, and lung disease such as silicosis and tuberculosis.
- Sexually exploited children suffer beatings, cigarette burns, and malnutrition. The rate of infection from **sexually transmitted diseases** is high, and life spans can be drastically reduced. **Unwanted pregnancies** are also frequent.
- Young soldiers risk their lives and often severe handicaps as well as psychological trauma.
- The destruction of children's self-esteem can lead to self-destructive habits such as drugs and suicide.



“If children are the future, and they are dieing, there is no more future.”

Organisations Helping Children

Various organizations exist to improve the standard of living for the world's children. Here are a few, about which we invite you to learn more by visiting their web sites.

- [The United Nations \(UN\)](#)
- [United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund \(UNICEF\)](#)
- [International Labour Office \(ILO\)](#)
- [World Health Organisation \(WHO\)](#)
- [International Young Christian Workers \(IYCW\)](#)
- [Canadian International Development Agency \(CIDA\)](#)
- [Health and Work Safety Commission \(CSST\)](#)
- [Save the Children Canada](#)
- [The Solidarity Committee of Trois-Rivières \(CS\TR\)](#)



The United Nations
[Website](#)

Established in 1945, the UN is a centre for international law concerning all problems that humanity faces, and consists of more than 30 different organizations who promote human rights, environmental protection, development, and fight against poverty and illness.

Branches of the UN define global practice with regards to the security and efficiency of air and sea transport and telecommunications. They work for consumer protection, intellectual property rights, and they coordinate radio frequencies. The UN leads international campaigns against drug trafficking and terrorism, and aids refugees. Water quality, food production, development loans, and economic stability are also issues that concern the UN, which includes some well known bodies such as UNICEF, UNESCO, and the International Labour Organization.



United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund

[Website](#)

Created in 1946, UNICEF, under the General Assembly, is given the task to defend children's rights, to help provide their essential needs, and to promote their full development. The UNICEF administration in New York also has 125 offices around the world, and 8 regional offices.



International Labour Office

[Website](#)

Created in 1919 by the Treaty of Versailles, the ILO survived the disappearance of the League of Nations and became in 1946 the first specialized institution of the United Nations. The organization's goal is to promote social justice and especially the respect for the rights of workers.

The ILO develops conventions and international recommendations that define minimum standards in the workplace such as the freedom to form unions, the right to organize and to collective agreement, the abolition of forced labour, and equality in opportunity and treatment. The organization also provides technical assistance in many domains such as professional training, employment policy, labour administration, employment rights and professional relations, working conditions, and labour statistics.

The ILO encourages the formation of independent organizations of employers and workers, and facilitates their growth through training and advice. At the heart of the UN, this body is unique in that employers and workers participate at an equal level with governments.



The World Health Organisation [Website](#)

The WHO is the UN agency responsible for coordinating health services in an international context. Established since 1948, this organisation's headquarters are in Geneva, Switzerland, where an annual World Health Assembly occurs in May of every year. The WHO is one organisation of the UN whose success is renowned.

The ultimate goal of the WHO is to achieve health coverage and prevention at a global level, where health is defined as physical, mental, and social well-being.



International Young Christian Workers [Website](#)

This movement of young catholic workers was founded in 1925 on the goal of constructing a new society based on solidarity, justice, equality, and peace.

Hence, the organisation seeks to improve working conditions, to provide housing for all, and to give access to potable water and transport. They also organise campaigns against unemployment, layoffs, and discrimination.



The Canadian International Development Agency [Website](#)

CIDA is a government organisation that assists sustainable development projects in hopes of reducing poverty and contributing to more prosperous and just world.

Canada is one of the most active countries in the promotion of children's rights. In 1990, Canada was co-president of the World Summit for Children, and played a key role in negotiations that led to the signing of the UN Convention of Children's Rights. Adopted in 1989, this convention made the world aware of the importance of protecting and promoting children's interests and rights.

In June 2001, the organisation launched the CIDA Action Plan for the protection of children who are in need of special protection in order to promote strategic dialog and programs related to children's rights.



Health and Work Safety Commission

[Website](#)

The government of Quebec has delegated health and work safety to this organisation, whose goals are quite varied but include the prevention of work-related injuries while also acting as the public insurer of employees and employers, and also the enhancement of workplace safety. The CSST compensates injured workers and ensures that they receive proper medical care and for those that have suffered permanent injuries, that they can find meaningful work.



Save the Children Canada

[Website](#)

This organisation works for children's rights both internationally and within Canada, with the goal of improving their living standards by defending their rights. Save the Children is non-political, non-denominational, and is devoted to long term community development through partnership with youth, government, and international organisations.

Save the Children focuses its efforts currently on 90 projects in these 10 countries: Canada, India, Kenya, Nicaragua, Haiti, Burkina Faso, Peru, Bolivia, Ethiopia, and Mali. The organisation belongs to the International Save the Children Alliance, whose members in 29 countries and projects in over 100 countries make it the most important international movement for children.



The Solidarity Committee of Trois-Rivières

[Website](#)

The CSTM organises educational and informative activities, campaigns, and cooperative projects contributing to developing solidarity between people here and in developing countries. This NGO contributes to awareness building through educational lesson plans and various activities.

Proposed Actions

Not only is child labour often dangerous, but exploitative conditions are a violation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. For the sake of children all possible measures should be taken to eliminate these practices. Work opportunities for adults must also be expanded to help those families who depend upon the salaries of their children.

The causes of child labour are complex and include factors such as poverty, economic exploitation, and the cultural environment. To resolve the problem, a variety of measures and partner organizations are needed.

A few actions to be taken, according to UNICEF, include the following:

1. **Eliminate child labour in dangerous and exploitive conditions.** Dangerous and exploitive child labour should not be tolerated, especially servitude, sexual exploitation, and any labour that prevents the physical, social, cognitive, emotional, or moral development of the child. National authorities must take action to end these practices.
2. **Establish mandatory and free primary education.** Nations must make primary education free and mandatory according to Article 28 of the convention, and ensure that all children attend school full-time until the end of primary school. They must reserve the necessary funds in existing budgets or from development aid.
3. **Enhance legal protection.** Laws regarding child labour and education must be coherent and mutually supported. National laws must cohere with the Convention on the Rights of the Child as well as the policies of the International Labour Office. These laws must also apply to the often unstructured work on streets, on farms, in homes, and in other areas of domestic work.
4. **Register all births.** All children must be registered upon birth according to Article 7 of the Convention in order to have access to their rights such as education and health care. This action is also necessary so that employers and inspectors can verify the age of workers.
5. **Collect data and maintain a continual surveillance.** Data about child labour is rare; national and international systems must be established to overcome the obstacle and to assemble data and statistics for comparison and progress indicators. Data is especially needed for “invisible” zones including domestic work and servitude. The involvement of local communities and the youth themselves is also important for improving their situation.
6. **Adopt management rules and create purchasing policies.** National and international societies must immediately adopt laws to guarantee that neither them nor their sub-contractors employ children in a manner that is likely to violate their rights. Adjusting purchasing policies to keep in mind the interests of children would also be ideal.



The Myths and Realities of Child Labour

The concern provoked by the issue of child labour is often based on four myths.

First Myth: Child labour is limited to developing countries.

In fact, children throughout industrialized countries work on a regular basis and children are employed everywhere in dangerous jobs. In the U.S., for example, farmers employ children, many of which are ethnic minorities or immigrants. A study in 1990 of Mexican-American children employed in agriculture in the state of New York showed that close to half had worked in fields still wet from pesticides and that more than a third had been directly touched by pesticide spray.

Second Myth: Child labour will never be eliminated as long as poverty exists.

According to UNICEF, child labour involving dangerous conditions can and must be eliminated independently from more general measures to limit poverty. The atmosphere in this regard is already changing, and governments have begun to work towards meeting their agreements outlined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Third Myth: Work for export.

Most children would work like slaves to produce goods to feed stores in wealthy countries. Certainly, for example, soccer balls made by children in Pakistan are used by children in industrialized countries. As a matter of fact, only a small percentage of child workers are employed to produce goods for export, perhaps as few as 5%. The vast majority work informally in the street, on farms, or in homes, far from work inspectors and the curiosity of the media.

Fourth Myth: Sanctions and Boycotts.

A path towards progress, according to this myth, would be for consumers and government to create pressure through sanctions and boycotts. Such measures on an international scale are without doubt useful, but they only affect export industries which employ a very small percentage of child workers. These measures are rather broad tools with long term consequences that risk doing more harm than good to children. UNICEF supports rather a joint strategy to develop local initiatives by offering real alternatives, such as free and mandatory primary education.

Translated from source: MELLAMY, Carol. The Situation of Children in the World. Dec 1996, UNICEF, 36 pages, p. 2-5.

Child Labour Policy in Quebec

Article 1: Applicable Areas

These policies are voluntary, and apply to youth working for one or more employers, with the exception of occasional work such as babysitting, family chores, or grass cutting. This policy recognises a child as a person less than 16 years of age.

Article 2: Age Limit

Employers agree to not employ children less than 13 years of age.

Article 3: Labour Conditions

Employers agree not to cause harm to the health, morality, or development of the child.

Article 4: Minimum Conditions

The employer agrees to conform to the Law of Work Norms when he/she hires youth.

Article 5: Working Hours

The employer agrees to:

- a. not oblige youth less than 16 years of age to work more than 15 hours per week during the school year
- b. respect a limit of 2 hours of paid work per day during school days and 7 hours other days
- c. not employ youth during hours that they are obligated to attend classes
- d. to provide, as much as possible, work that is compatible with the school year and especially exam schedules



Article 6: Working nights

The employer agrees to not employ youth between 9:30 pm and 6:00 am.

Article 7: Health and Security at Work

The employer agrees to:

- a. guarantee working conditions that are appropriate for the youth's age, and exclude any work that can impede their physical and physiological development
- b. take any possible measures to protect the youth against work related accidents and illness
- c. ensure that youth do not undertake any activity that would endanger their security or mental and physical health

Article 8: Protection

This policy must not affect the level of protection already accorded to young workers by other laws.

This policy was created jointly by the Teaching Centre of Quebec and the Management Council of Quebec. September 1996.
