

**For immediate release**  
20 May, 1997

### **ILO-EU to assist Pakistan on action against abusive child labour**

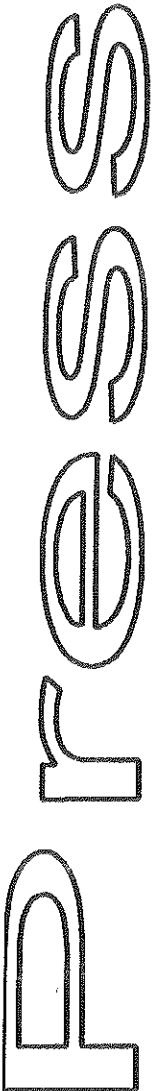
The European Commission, the Government of Pakistan and the ILO have just finalized an agreement to support the fight against bonded/child labour, which is a particularly abusive form of child labour and is found under different guises in many parts of the world. This will be the first comprehensive, nation-wide programme to address this most exploitative form of child labour through concerted action by governmental and non-governmental agencies in Pakistan. It will serve as a model for replication in Pakistan and other countries aiming to come to grips with this complex problem.

With support of the ILO's International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) and the European Commission, the programme will raise awareness on exploitative and hazardous child/bonded labour practices in society; increase the capacity of the government machinery, employers' and workers' organisations and NGOs to withdraw children from bondage and prevent children from entering it.

The total cost of the two-year programme amounts to US\$2.2 million, equivalent to about Pak Rupees 88 million. The European Commission contributes over US\$1.2 million in grant aid under the European Community budget. The Government of Pakistan will donate more than US\$650,000 through Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal. The ILO contributes US\$200,000. UNICEF will provide in-kind assistance in the form of school furniture and educational materials.

The programme has a three-pronged approach:

- (1) establishing 18 Community Education and Action (CEA) Centres, throughout the country and in urban and rural areas, for rehabilitating children in specific economic sectors and occupations with a high incidence of child/bonded labour; to withdraw a selected number of them from this type of work; to prevent their younger siblings from entering it and to provide them and their families with viable alternatives; and to mobilize communities in the combat against child/bonded labour through intensive awareness-raising and advocacy;
- (2) strengthening the capacity of the Directorate of Labour Welfare in the four provinces to raise awareness and mobilize provincial and district administrations, employers (owners and managers), young and adult workers and Vigilance Committees set up under the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1992; to monitor workplaces to withdraw bonded children



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from exploitative and hazardous work; and to ensure that these workplaces become child/bonded labour free; and

- (3) strengthening the capacity of the Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal (PBM); the Provincial Commissions for Child Welfare and Development (PCCWD) and the provincial/district PBM offices; and the Bunyad Literacy Community Council, the Child Abuse Committee of the Pakistan Paediatric Association and the Pakistan Human Rights Commission to provide an integrated package of support services to ex-bonded labour through community action.



# Press

For immediate release  
12 January 1997

## **ILO PROGRAMME TO ASSIST IN ELIMINATING “HAZARDOUS AND EXPLOITATIVE” CHILD LABOUR IN SIALKOT**

ISLAMABAD (ILO News) – The International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) has been asked to develop a new programme to eliminate “hazardous and exploitative” child labour in Sialkot, a football and surgical instrument manufacturing town in the North-east of Punjab province in Pakistan.

The programme is being initiated at the request of the National Steering Committee on Child Labour in Pakistan following two studies carried out in Sialkot by the Centre for Improvement of Working Conditions and Environment, Directorate of Labour Welfare, Punjab in 1996 under the IPEC.

Such manufacturing plays an important role in the economy of Pakistan. In 1995-1996 the value of football exports amounted to Rs. 1,265 million (approximately 20 million balls per year) and Rs. 1,466 million in surgical instruments. In 1993-1994 football exports were worth Rs. 3,164 million (around 35 million balls) due to increased demand of the World Cup football tournament.

The new programme will:

- \* Mobilise agencies in the public and private sectors to combat child labour by providing a multi-sectoral package of support services geared at preventing child labour;
- \* Assist in the withdrawal of children from work in selected villages, to become “child labour free”;
- \* Provide alternatives to such children and their families for demonstration purposes; and,
- \* Enhance public and private sector capacity to address child labour programmes.



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The package of support services will consist of a combination of direct action with the children, families, employers, subcontractors and young adult workers; capacity building among governmental departments, employers' organisations, the non-governmental community and community-based organisations; and, awareness-raising among the above groups and the residents of Sialkot.

Below are highlights of the 1996 study:

Children are mainly involved in the stitching of footballs and the filing of surgical instruments, the most labour intensive and time consuming phase in the manufacturing process. This work is subcontracted to villages around Sialkot. Footballs are often stitched at home or in local stitching centres, while filing and grinding of surgical instruments is done in small workshops. No children were found in the main factories of both industries.

Football stitching is done by men, women, boys and girls although relatively more males are involved, while the filing of instruments is done exclusively by child and adult males.

It is estimated that 7,000 child workers (5 to 14 years old) were involved in football stitching on a regular and full-time basis (17 per cent of the workforce in football stitching) with an additional large number of children involved on a part-time basis outside of school hours. In workshops manufacturing surgical instruments, the total number of full-time child workers is estimated at around 31 per cent of the workforce (7,700 children). Six per cent of these children were involved in grinding and polishing which are hazardous due to high metal dust levels.

More than nine out of 10 working children are 10 to 14 years old. The youngest working children were 7 to 8 years old, while the average age was just over 12 years. The average age of starting work was 10 years.



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The literacy and schooling rate among children who stitch footballs was relatively high, as compared to prevailing rates in the rest of Pakistan. Of 270 child workers interviewed, 87 per cent were literate, 57 per cent still attended school, 31 per cent had dropped out and 13 per cent had never gone to school.

Generally, girls had lower literacy and enrolment rates than boys. Among 208 boys manufacturing surgical instruments, 77 per cent had attended school, but the majority had dropped out, mostly during primary grades, while 23 per cent had never attended school.

Educational facilities were found to be in a state of neglect and dilapidation. Many schools had no roof and children sat outside under the trees. The major reasons for dropping out were lack of interest in education due to uninteresting curricula, unsympathetic teachers and an uncomfortable school environment.

Average monthly earnings for children skilled at football stitching amounted to Rs. 886. Skilled child workers manufacturing surgical instruments received an average monthly wage of Rs. 1,300. (For comparative purposes, the minimum wage set by the Government for adult unskilled workers is Rs. 1,650 per month.)

The children's daily working hours were found to be 8 to 9 hours in football stitching and 8 hours in surgical instrument manufacturing.

In 12 per cent of the cases, parents had taken an advance equivalent to two to three months average earnings. Child bondage is not considered to be prevalent in these two sectors.

Children grinding and polishing instruments were involved in work which is clearly dangerous to them. The other children did not face any major safety and health problems and reported only minor injuries caused by the needles in stitching and abrasions during filing.

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9 October 1996

## *Government presents results of ILO-assisted national child labour survey*

The phenomenon of children working in industry, agriculture and the services sectors in Pakistan would not come as a surprise. No region of the world is entirely free of child labour. Reliable statistics on child labour have been rare mainly because commonly-used census and survey techniques do not normally capture the true extent and nature of child labour. Therefore, the International Labour Organisation's Bureau of Statistics developed new methodologies which were tested in Ghana, India, Indonesia, and Senegal in 1992-93 and have now been further tested in Turkey, the Philippines and Pakistan. In Pakistan, a National Child Labour Survey was conducted by the Government under the ILO's International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) and the results were presented today at a National Symposium attended by senior government officials at the federal and provincial levels, employers' and workers' organisations, academe and members of the diplomatic corps and international organisations.

The survey, undertaken by the Federal Bureau of Statistics for the Ministry of Labour, Manpower and Overseas Pakistanis, collected comprehensive information on working children between 5-14 years by age, sex, location, occupation and industry; their working conditions (i.e. hours worked, wages received and terms of employment) as well as on the safety and health risks they face at work. It also collected information on the socio-economic characteristics of the children and their families.

Because of the nature of the target group, a special questionnaire was designed, a unique sampling methodology was developed and a special stratification plan formulated. The survey covered rural and urban areas of all the four Provinces - Punjab, Sindh, Northwest Frontier Province and Balochistan.



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### *The magnitude of the problem:*

The survey found 8.3 per cent (i.e. 3.3 million) of the 40 million children aged 5 to 14 years old to be economically active practically on full-time basis. Due to enumeration problems encountered in the provinces of Sindh and Balochistan, this figure is considered to be an under-estimate by about 300,000. If this correction is taken into account, the total number of economically active children would be 3.6 million, representing about 9 per cent of the children between 5-14 years of age.

A majority of the children who work are boys in both rural and urban areas. Of the 3.3 million working children, 73 per cent (2.4 million) are boys and 27 per cent (0.9 million) are girls.

Children's contribution to work in the rural areas is about eight times greater than it is in the urban areas.

In terms of occupations, 71 per cent of the working children in Pakistan work mainly in elementary (unskilled) occupations relating to agriculture, sales and services, mining, construction, manufacturing and transport; and 19 per cent in craft and related trade activities. A great majority of the girls (80 per cent) and boys (68 per cent) work on the farms or in sales and services. Craft and related trade work absorbs the second largest portion of both female and male workers (19 per cent each).

In terms of industrial distribution, 67 per cent are employed in the agricultural sector and 11 per cent in the manufacturing sector, followed by 9 per cent in wholesale and retail trades and 8 per cent in community, social and personal services.

One-third (33 per cent) of the employed children are literate, boys being more educated than girls and urban ones more than rural ones.

Employment status by broad categories indicates that about 70 per



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cent of the working children are working as unpaid family helpers, 23 per cent are employees and 7 per cent are self-employed. In unpaid work the proportion of female working children is higher (78 per cent) than male working children (67 per cent). In paid work, the proportion of male working children (25 per cent) is higher than female working children (17 per cent). Significant urban-rural differentials are observed in the employment status. In rural areas, three-fourths of the working children are working as unpaid family helpers, while in urban areas it is less than one-third.

### *Conditions of work:*

About 46 per cent work more than the normal working hours of 35 hours per week. A good proportion of the children at the national level work 56 hours or more. Boys work longer hours than girls.

Around 7 per cent of working children suffer from illnesses/injuries frequently and 28 per cent occasionally. Most illnesses/injuries (71 per cent) suffered by working children were in agriculture, followed by mining, construction, manufacturing and transport.

*Why do children work?* According to most parents (54 per cent), children work in order to assist in household enterprises. Other reasons given are: to supplement household income (27 per cent); and because no one else is available for household chores (14 per cent).

The household monthly average income of the majority of working children (39 per cent) falls in the category of Rs. 2,501 to Rs 4,000.

This survey provides the most comprehensive baseline information on the magnitude and nature of child labour in Pakistan. Following this survey, ILO-IPEC support to the Government of Pakistan will include the development of a module on child labour that will be attached to the Labour Force Survey on an ongoing basis. This will enable the Government to monitor not only the situation of child





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labour in all its forms, but also the effectiveness of policies and action programmes being implemented in combating child labour.

With the availability of reliable data on child labour, assistance is also foreseen in the development of a comprehensive plan of action on the protection of working children and the elimination of child labour in Pakistan. This survey may also be followed by establishments and workplace surveys in specific industries.