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SURVEY ON THE NEEDS OF CHILDREN

REPORT BY THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANISATION

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. In recent years, the ILO has been seeking to define with more precision and in more practical terms the needs of children and young persons in the less developed countries viewed from the standpoint of the ILO's particular field of responsibility.
2. In order to gain more knowledge of these needs and to consult the governments, employers' and workers' organizations in regard to them, and as to the priorities to be accorded to meeting them, the Director-General placed the problems of Youth and Work before the 44th session of International Labour Conference in June 1960. His report on this subject^{1/} drew special attention to the problems of children and young people in the less developed countries: problems relating, inter alia, to education, vocational guidance and vocational training; occupational opportunity, employment and unemployment; conditions of work; safety and health; and social security.
3. This report served as the basis for a comprehensive debate on youth needs and problems at the 1960 session of the International Labour Conference. Government, employer and worker delegates from the great majority of the less developed countries told the Conference of the urgency of their youth problems, of the special efforts being made to deal with them and of the great need for assistance to help provide their children and young persons with a minimum of shelter, clothing, health care, education, preparation for work, employment opportunity and suitable working conditions and to help protect them from exploitation.

^{1/} International Labour Conference, 44th Session, Report I (Part I), Report of the Director-General. Part I: Youth and Work (Geneva, 1960).

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4. Several priority areas of child and youth needs of particular concern to the ILO emerged clearly from this discussion: (1) the need for social security protection for the child and his family; (2) the need for employment opportunity and suitable work; (3) the need for a good preparation for work; for education, vocational guidance and vocational training for suitable future work; (4) the need for protection from exploitation and from unnecessary health risks; and (5) the need for opportunities for further development.

5. The Director-General's report on "Youth and work" and the Conference discussion on it^{2/} provide a useful guide to the needs of children and young persons from the point of view of the ILO. An ILO Panel of Consultants on the Problems of Young Workers, with members reflecting the views and experience of governments, employers' and workers' organizations and youth and youth-serving organizations, is being set up to advise and assist the ILO in co-operation with other agencies as appropriate, to meet the youth problems which fall to its special responsibility and to intensify its youth programme to meet more effectively the special needs of children and young persons in the newly industrializing areas of the world.

II. SCOPE OF THE PROBLEM

6. Over-all estimates suggest that between 1955 and 1970 there may be an increase of nearly a third in the world's child population (5 to 14 years of age); this means little short of 200 million more children. Significantly, too, the rate of increase in the child population is very high in Africa, South

^{2/} A summary of the Conference discussion is available for consultation in the files of the UNICEF secretariat. Copies of the summary have also been made available to the members of the Executive Board.

America and Asia (36-46 per cent). The world's youth population (15 to 19 years of age) is also expected to increase by about a third. In the less developed regions the number of children aged 5 to 14 years is likely to expand proportionately more than the number of young persons aged 15 to 19. As the Director-General's report on "Youth and Work" emphasized, the world demographic situation as it concerns youth is dominated by the demographic weight of the less industrialized but industrializing areas. By 1970 some three-fourths of the world's children and young people will be living and working in Africa, Asia and South America, the great bulk of them in Asia.

7. The essential task is to see what these seemingly abstract figures mean in relation to the site, scope and character of child and youth needs in the world of today and tomorrow and what can be done to help to meet them, nationally and internationally, in the many areas of economic and social policy which combine to foster a healthy atmosphere for the growth and development of children and of the often neglected part of the youth population - the adolescents.

8. So far as the ILO is concerned, the two basic needs are to keep children out of premature employment and to protect young workers in employment.^{3/}

III. THE LABOUR FORCE FRAMEWORK

9. As noted above, three-fourths of the world's children and young people are going to seek their livelihood in the less industrialized areas of the world, where for the most part, employment opportunities for youth are changing and growing but in most cases not rapidly enough.

^{3/} Clearly the precise age at which a person ceases to be "a child" and begins to be an adolescent "young person" is a flexible one and depends to some extent on national and local circumstances. The ILO usually confines the word "children" to those below the minimum legal age for admission to employment (14 years as a rule in international standards and in much national legislation) and uses the terms "young persons" or "young workers" to cover those over this age. In this paper no clear distinction is drawn except where this seems necessary from the standpoint of the sense of a particular passage.

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10. Child labour remains a problem: a problem in relation to many factors affecting family income and family needs and the ability and willingness of society to do without the work of little children. Millions of children are now at work who should be at school or at play. In some countries working children make up well over 10 per cent of the total labour force. The concern of the ILO with this important and urgent problem is indicated in section IV below. It is imperative to find some way of breaking the vicious circle which enlists young children's services in the process of family survival and economic development.

11. The main area of activity of the ILO is with the development and protection of young persons preparing for and entering work life: with their protection as young children, with their vocational guidance and training as growing children, with their placement in work as young persons, and with their further training, protection, development and welfare on the job as the youngest group of wage-earners.

12. The scope of the task, particularly in relation to the less developed countries, is suggested by the fact that everywhere the great bulk of the children enter or seek to enter the labour force at the early age of 12, 13 or 14 (if they have not been working much earlier) and from then on are a regular permanent part of the labour force: experiencing all the vicissitudes of its evolution, confronted with all the physically and mentally cramping demands of its daily and weekly schedule, exposed to all the risks of over-fatigue and exploitation which remain common in both the less industrialized and the more rapidly industrializing countries of the world.

13. Children and young people make up a fifth to a fourth and even a third of the total labour force in many of the industrializing countries. Young people between 15 and 19 make up 20 per cent of the total labour force in the United Arab Republic (Egyptian region) and far higher percentages in many of the less developed countries of Asia and Africa. If to this percentage is added the percentage of children from 5 to 14 years of age also working in the labour force, the percentage of the youth population in the total labour force is even higher. The protection of these millions upon millions of children and young

persons is essential, and their development as the future adult workers and citizens of newly emerging societies is a matter of concern to all. It is an urgent task of social policy to find some way of promoting the welfare of these millions of children and young persons who are working in the labour force long before they have reached any kind of maturity, to find ways and means not only of protecting them from exploitation but also of developing their capacities in relation to existing and prospective employment openings.

14. This task is the more difficult because of the changing occupational and social structure in which most of these youngsters are coming to maturity. At the present time, in all the less developed countries there is a heavy concentration of children and young workers in the agricultural sector, a very sizable percentage in urban-oriented service activities and a growing but still relatively smaller percentage in the industrial sector. This pattern of occupational activity for youth is changing gradually under the impact of industrialization. New problems arise for children and young people in relation to preparation for work and work itself. Rural-urban migration is increasing, too, and youth pressures on urban employment opportunities are increasing proportionately.

15. A basic and all-important feature of the situation in many of the less developed countries is "manpower surplus", which obviously includes a very high percentage of "youth surplus". In countries where employment opportunities do not keep pace with population growth and economic development lags far behind social demand, unemployment among young people during their formative years poses a serious long-term problem. Children and young people are left without work, without schools, without vocational training, without any form of constructive occupation, without any opportunity of development. According to an Indian sample survey covering urban areas the general unemployment rate was 7 per cent but the rate for the 16-17-year-olds and for the 18-21-year-olds was above 20 per cent. Rather similar results emerged from a survey in British Guiana. As a large fraction of the total labour force in less developed countries consists of young workers, these relatively very high unemployment rates among youth emphasize that a large proportion of all the unemployed in these countries are young people. In Cuba in 1956 - 1957 over 20 per cent of the unemployed were

under 20 years of age, in British Guiana in 1956 over 40 per cent were under 21, and in India in 1955 more than 55 per cent of all unemployed in rural areas were in the 16-21-year-old age group and more than 40 per cent in urban areas. Under-employment is also widespread and commonly outweighs in importance full-time employment opportunities.

16. It is clear from the preceding

- (a) That the great bulk of the problems of youth and work lie in the under-developed regions where there is as yet a great insufficiency of employment opportunity: hence the basic need for a rising level of employment opportunity in these countries, particularly in the non-agricultural sector, an evolution dependent in large part on the progression of economic development;
- (b) That in all of these countries there is an equally urgent need to advise and train children and young persons in relation to available employment opportunities and to reorient education and training facilities in the light of the changing pattern of economic opportunity;
- (c) That in the transition to industrialization and urbanization there is a great need for strengthening the structure of social protection for children and young workers in order to prevent these youngest earners, who constitute such a large fraction of the total work force in all the less developed countries, from becoming the willy-nilly victims of the transition and suffering exploitation injurious to their health and welfare and to the future economic growth and social development of their countries; and
- (d) That there is a need for providing special protection to mothers in employment, both before and after the birth of their babies, and for making provision for the care of infants and pre-school-age children during the mothers' working hours.

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IV. THE NEED FOR PROTECTING YOUNG CHILDREN
FROM ECONOMIC EXPLOITATION

17. As the Declaration of the Rights of the Child stipulates, one of the basic needs of the child is for protection against premature employment. "The child should not be admitted to employment before an appropriate minimum age." Hence, any programme to meet the needs of children must include suitable measures to ensure that children shall not be forced to earn their living at too early an age, without adequate education and training, in unskilled jobs with no future prospects. Measures to prohibit the employment of children before a prescribed minimum age serve a double purpose: they protect the child from physical effort or exposure to work risks which might affect his or her health and they allow the child to devote his or her full energies to education and growth.

18. The principle of prohibiting child labour is almost universally accepted. It is incorporated in the Constitutions of a number of countries which have adopted new or revised Constitutions in recent years-- for example Brazil, El Salvador, Honduras and India. The prescription of a minimum age for admission to employment is one of the basic provisions of the Labour Codes of the various countries and there are few countries which do not have some kind of legislative provision relative to the employment of children, if not in all occupations, at least in larger-scale factory employment. The legal age of admission to employment varies from country to country (usually between 12 and 16 years of age). In the less developed countries, the minimum age is generally between 12 (as in most of the Near and Middle East countries) and 14 (as in a number of Latin American countries). In a good many Latin American countries, however, children are admitted to work under the age of 14, in particular for "light work", if certain educational requirements have been fulfilled, and, as a rule, if the child's earnings are needed to increase the family income (for example in Argentina, Guatemala, Panama and Peru). In general, minimum age regulations are less abundant as regards employment in agriculture than in other branches of work. Minimum age regulations applying to agriculture are particularly scarce in the developing countries of Africa, the Near and Middle East and Asia, or cover only

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large undertakings such as plantations (for example in India). For the many children working on family farms, no minimum age regulations are applicable.

19. Despite the general progress made in setting a legal minimum age for employment, much remains to be done to protect children from premature employment, particularly in the non-industrial sectors. As already emphasized, over the greater part of the world children who should be at school or at play are at work. Millions of young children are working long hours, sometimes even from the age of seven or eight. It is estimated that working children make up some 2 - 10 per cent of the total labour force in much of Latin America and in some Asian countries, and in certain countries of the Middle East and elsewhere more than 10 per cent. Children work in every sector of economic activity - quarries, mines, factories of all sizes, fields and offices. In rural areas they work in agriculture from an early age and in agricultural off-seasons in cottage industries, for instance in the coir industry. In urban areas they often work in such activities as rug-making, tobacco-processing and toy-making and in various kinds of services and itinerant trades, many of which are of an unhealthy or morally injurious character. The work is generally relatively unskilled (except for finger dexterity), repetitive, dull and monotonous, physically cramping and mentally stultifying.

20. The ILO Conventions setting minimum age standards for industry bind 43 countries, showing general progress in this sector, but the Convention establishing standards for admission to employment in non-industrial undertakings binds only nine States though it was adopted nearly a quarter of a century ago. The position in the agricultural sector is even worse and it has not been possible up to the present to develop any international minimum age standards for this sector, in which the great bulk of the world's children are employed from a very early age.

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21. It must be emphasized that in many of the less developed countries there are serious practical obstacles to the abolition of child labour. One of these is that a law prohibiting child labour may actually do more harm than good if there are no schools and no provision for compulsory education up to the minimum age fixed for entry into employment. The ILO Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations, in reporting on the application of the Minimum Age (Industry) Conventions in 1960^{4/} drew attention to this fact:

"Obviously no legislation on the protection of the work of children can be really effective unless there are provisions extending the normal period of compulsory schooling, up to the age at which the child is allowed to enter employment. In addition, provisions concerning compulsory schooling, provided that they are properly enforced, help to prevent premature admission to employment and may also, to a certain extent, have the same effect as special provisions fixing a minimum age for admission to types of employment not covered by the general regulations."

This has long been recognized and the resolution on the Protection of Children and Young Workers adopted by the International Labour Conference in 1945, which supplements the existing Conventions on the subject of minimum age of admission to work, stressed that "the gradual raising of the minimum age should be accompanied at each successive stage by simultaneous measures for....organizing compulsory school attendance until at least the same age". The raising of the

^{4/} See International Labour Conference, 44th Session, Report III(Part IV), Report of the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations. Part III: Protection of Young Workers in Industry (Geneva, 1960).

compulsory school-leaving age depends in its turn on a number of factors such as the availability of funds for expansion of schools, of funds and materials for constructing and equipping the schools and of trained teachers and other staff required. In the less developed countries of Asia, Africa and the Middle East, where compulsory schooling for all primary school-age children is just being introduced or is still in the planning stage, bottle-necks caused by the extreme shortage of public funds and of teachers are even more serious.

22. Another practical obstacle is the difficulty of administration and enforcement, particularly in the non-industrial sector. All the less developed countries face serious problems in the enforcement area and have not been able to expand their services of labour administration to the extent required. Where, for administrative and enforcement reasons, a minimum age for employment applies only in the large-scale factory sector and in the transport and mines sector, not only are children in other sectors left unprotected but more of them are found at work in these other sectors simply because they are not allowed to work in the "organized" sectors where, by and large, conditions of work are better than in agriculture, domestic service, street trading, handicrafts and small-scale industries.

23. A third obstacle is that in most of the less developed countries the average working-class family just does not earn enough to maintain the children at school for more than a few years and as soon as the children are "useful" as producers or helpers they have to go to work to help supplement the family income. The pittance they earn is an indispensable contribution to family survival; and in some cases children's earnings constitute a sizable percentage of total family income (exceptionally between 5 and 10 per cent of the total). It must be recognized that establishing a minimum age of employment alone will not eliminate child labour in conditions of extreme poverty.

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24. These practical obstacles to prohibiting all children under a certain age from taking up remunerative employment should not deter action to establish and enforce a realistic minimum age of admission to employment in every country and to extend its coverage and advance the standards as economic and social conditions permit. Action in this sense is an important and urgent aspect of the protection of children. Specifically, in many of the less developed countries there is a practical need to survey the child labour situation, to review the character, content and coverage of the legislation or regulations governing the admission of children to employment and to assist both in the development of more adequate enforcement procedures and in the detection of the various practical obstacles to further progress.

25. Another approach is through action to raise family levels of living and so alleviate the family poverty which drives parents to enlist the services of their children from an early age. The fixing and enforcement of minimum wages is one step in this direction. Efforts to raise the skills and productivity of the bread-winner are further steps in the same direction. For instance, the raising of productivity in agriculture is one of the basic steps: the whole gamut of policies pursued to this end is one of the main ways by which family income can be raised and children kept out of employment. Moreover, as part of their social security arrangements, a number of countries, including Iran, Lebanon, Morocco, Tunisia, the African countries of the French Community, Cambodia, Congo (capital: Leopoldville), Guinea, Laos, the Republic of Viet-Nam, Argentina, Bolivia, Chile and Uruguay, pay allowances in respect of children in families of at least a specified size. These family allowances or children's allowances are highly

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important in helping to ensure the healthy nurture of children and do something to reduce the gap in living standards between children in large and those in small families. They help to prevent child labour and undoubtedly have a beneficial influence on school attendance and on a child's opportunity to learn a skill.^{5/}

26. In addition, social security schemes have the task of providing a substitute income for the family when, for one reason or another beyond his or her own control, the breadwinner is not receiving his or her usual earnings. Social security schemes provide benefits, frequently through social insurance, to replace earnings lost on account of sickness, injury or unemployment. In some schemes benefits take account of family responsibilities: this is particularly necessary in those less developed countries where large families are the rule. In most of the less advanced countries, however, the protection of family income in the contingencies involving loss of earnings to which all workers are exposed is very slight and fragmentary if it exists at all.

27. Measures to raise the level of family income and to maintain family income are an essential part of the protection of children from premature employment and from other types of economic exploitation. They are also essential to family security and to the stability of the family unit and thus to the welfare of children and young persons. Hence everything that can be done to raise family levels of living and to maintain family income in emergencies and in particular to extend and improve children's allowances will be a really substantial and practical contribution to child welfare and well-being and to the progressive elimination of child labour.

^{5/} Various other measures may be taken to promote children's health and widen their educational and vocational opportunities. Meals may be provided for school children, low-cost clothing made available to workers with large families and tax rebates authorized in respect of dependent children. These measures are useful supplements to the children's allowances provided under family allowance schemes.

V. THE NEED FOR GUIDANCE AND FOR TRAINING
CHILDREN FOR SUITABLE FUTURE EMPLOYMENT

28. Another basic need of children is for help in finding and preparing for work and for assistance in avoiding the pitfalls of the dead-end employments so prevalent in the less developed countries. Equipped with little in the way of education, and forced by family poverty to find some way of earning a living, the child has a particularly great need for vocational guidance and for training for work life.

29. Few things are more important for a child than the kind of early education and vocational training he receives. However, today little more than one-half of the world's children attend some sort of school and in most cases the education provided is far from satisfactory either quantitatively or qualitatively. The number of children who benefit from a good preparation for work through systematic vocational training is even more limited. Yet the provision to children of the skills they will require in their future working life is a task of paramount importance and of particular magnitude in the economically less developed countries, where illiteracy and the lack of educational and training opportunities are major problems.

30. In almost all the newly industrializing countries substantial progress has been made during the last decade in developing general, vocational and technical education and training facilities; and in a number of Latin American countries (as in Colombia and Brazil), in certain Asian countries (as in Burma, India and Ceylon), and in some African and Middle Eastern countries (as in Ghana and the UAR), a special effort has been made to expand and improve youth training services and to provide vocational instructors and training equipment. But action to develop vocational training opportunities for youth on a scale commensurate with the needs of children and young persons and with the needs for skill in relation to economic growth and technological and social change is far from adequate.

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In many of the under-developed countries less than 5 per cent of the total youth population is undergoing apprenticeship or any other form of systematic vocational or technical training. And even where the percentage is higher, in many cases those in training are being trained in badly equipped workshops or centres or schools, with poor instruction geared to out-of-date curricula. Where apprenticeship is not regulated, so-called apprentices often do not receive any kind of vocational training and are particularly exposed to the risk of serious exploitation.

31. Vocational training facilities for young people **have** to be developed in the light of the general economic evolution in different parts of the country so as to contribute to a balanced development of the urban and rural sectors. In view of the increase of industrialization and the general shortage of skill, more and better training facilities should be provided for industrial work, also with a view to improving the status of manual work and combating the over-estimation of non-manual work prevailing in many of the less developed countries.

32. Special training facilities are also needed for the young people from rural areas drifting to the towns in search of better employment and living conditions but without any kind of vocational preparation or even general education and therefore exposed to unemployment or exploitation. This is a rather urgent need in many less developed countries at the present time.

33. Moreover, the great masses of young people in the rural areas are in particular need of more and better training facilities so that the level of skill in agriculture and in other rural occupations may be improved, the level of productivity increased, and surplus agricultural workers trained for non-farm employment. In view of the lack of formal education facilities, the development of systems of out-of-school education, particularly extension-type-services covering both technical and more general subjects, including home economics, is of particular importance. Training programmes should also include instruction in the repair, maintenance and operation of agricultural and forestry machinery and training in supplementary or alternative occupations such as rural handicrafts and small-scale industries.

34. The improvement of vocational training arrangements for children and young people entering the rural handicrafts and small-scale industries sectors must also be given high priority, particularly in the less developed countries

where the bulk of the youth population will enter these occupational areas. Until training opportunities are broadened, the outlook for the children and young people concerned and for the future improvement of living standards in these countries is far from encouraging. There is ample scope for action aimed at the development of all these various types of badly needed youth training facilities as determined by the prior assessment of needs as well as of research and demonstration centres and of institutes for the training of teaching personnel.

35. Greater attention needs to be given also to widening the opportunities available to girls for access to vocational training at all levels. If half of the youth population is left behind in the development process, not only will the national economies suffer a grievous loss, but economic, social and cultural development will fail to proceed at a balanced rate. Women exert an influence which cannot be over-estimated on the future generation as well as on the society of today, and if they are deprived of learning opportunities they can only retard the evolution of their communities. The vocational and professional training of girls in all sectors of economic activity is also important in its own right to meet needs arising with economic development (e.g. for social assistants, nurses and teachers as well as for skilled and semi-skilled workers in many industrial and commercial occupations) and also as a means of helping girls to learn to supplement family income (e.g. by acquiring handicraft or cottage industry or other rural skills).

36. On the whole, in respect of both boys and girls, the present situation as regards youth training is extremely disquieting. This draws special attention to an area of unmet need closely linked with the educational area of need (at both the primary and secondary school levels). Children need general education as a foundation for vocational training; but they also need vocational training as a foundation for work. The expansion and improvement of youth training facilities, and suitable measures to make it possible for children and young people to take full advantage of the opportunities available therefore seem to be priority areas of need, both from the standpoint of child and youth development and from the standpoint of skill development in relation to economic and social progress.

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37. Training has to be geared to the opportunities becoming available for young people and a careful analysis of the specific fields in which employment opportunities are likely to arise is thus an essential aspect of arrangements for advising and training young people. As a result of the rapidly-shifting employment picture, the need for realistic vocational guidance beginning at an early age is becoming more widely recognized; and more and more countries are becoming conscious of the importance of meeting this need as a necessary supplement to the action they are taking to develop their educational and training system.

38. Vocational guidance is a means of relating youth abilities and skills to the ever-changing needs of national economic and social development. It is a means of providing children and young people and their parents with the information they need to make the best use of their capacities within the realities of the employment situation and trend. When education and training services are expanded, and guidance of youth left out of account, the result too often is misdirection of education and training in terms of employment openings and frustration of youth unable to find jobs. Vocational guidance, bringing awareness of occupational realities, can help to orient education and training along lines that are in keeping with development needs in all fields of endeavour.

39. The emphasis is on realistic vocational advice because the problem of adapting educational opportunities and vocational training to the employment possibilities of the national economy is particularly acute in some countries of the economically developing regions of the world, where the principal employment opportunities are still in the rural sector. In many of these countries, education tends to concentrate on cultural rather than practical or technical subjects, and a high social prestige clings to all sorts of clerical and white-collar occupations, while manual labour is looked upon with distaste. As a result, large numbers of "educated" young people are produced who do not wish to take the available manual jobs and who are unable on the other hand, through lack of facilities or talent to pursue their training to reach a higher level of technical competence where manpower shortages exist. These young people tend to drift into urban centres in the hope of finding a suitable job, preferably in a government office. Unemployment among them is frequent and prolonged and they

are lost to productive work unless active re-orientation and re-training measures are undertaken. This over-concentration of youth in non-manual occupations is an urgent problem for which a solution must be found. Vocational guidance is an important avenue of approach and a means of helping to change social attitudes towards work.

40. This draws attention to the need, particularly emphasized during the International Labour Conference discussion of youth and work, to take systematic measures to instil in young people from the earliest years a sense of respect for work and particularly for "manual work". A more realistic appreciation of the value of work of all kinds, and of the contribution of each type of work to society, can do much to overcome misguided occupational choices and to make for a better equilibrium between the demand for and the supply of young entrants in the different sectors. Measures to raise the status and prestige of manual occupations are often necessary complements to the provision of sound vocational guidance and advice, based on a genuine recognition, by all concerned, of the value of all kinds of work, including types of work in popular disrepute or the subject of particular social prejudice.

41. In the great majority of the less developed countries, little or nothing exists in the way of vocational guidance. Only a tiny fraction of the world's youth has access to guidance services. Limited steps have been taken in a few of the industrializing countries (as in India, Ceylon, Peru) to develop youth guidance, but everywhere action is in the early stages.

42. It may be hoped that something can be done to improve the situation as a matter of urgency, more particularly in view of the close interrelationship between the education, training and placement of youth. Often, by establishing a pilot demonstration vocational guidance centre, interest can be aroused, results achieved on a limited basis and key staff trained for the gradual dissemination of facilities over wider areas or to wider groups of children and young persons.

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A model vocational guidance centre can meet many youth needs for friendly advice in job and community adjustment; it can also serve as a youth centre for meeting other youth needs - placement, recreation, good food at low cost and accommodation for incoming young "migrants" - and generate the kind of atmosphere that makes all problems of youth adjustment easier to solve. The demonstration and training value of such a centre are readily apparent. The establishment and maintenance of such a centre need not be a costly undertaking and the real services it could render to youngsters are manifold. This is an area of action which would repay experimentation.

43. Young people also need help in finding work. It is desirable that special youth placement arrangements should be made within the general employment service so that staff may acquire experience in working with young persons and information regarding particular youth needs and problems may be assembled. In view of the scarcity or inadequacy in most developing countries of vocational guidance and employment services both for adults and young people, the work of certain other public and private bodies, such as school authorities, welfare services and organizations, workers' and employers' organizations which often exercise certain functions of youth guidance and placement, should be encouraged as a supplementary means of giving young workers a chance to engage in employment suited to their aptitudes and needs.

44. In conclusion, it may be useful to stress once again the links which bind together action in the education, guidance and training of youth and to emphasize the fact that action in one area alone is of little use. A sustained and co-ordinated effort to expand and improve opportunities and arrangements in each area if necessary if children's needs for obtaining a good foundation for work and for finding their way into suitable employment openings are to be met.

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VI. THE NEED FOR PROTECTING YOUNG WORKERS, FOR
DEVELOPING THEIR CAPACITIES AND FOR PROMOTING
THEIR WELFARE

45. A whole series of the needs of children ^{6/} relate to their needs as workers. These needs are particularly vast and urgent when it is remembered that the great majority of the world's children still enter employment at a very early age with little education and training, with little or no means of defending themselves against exploitation or risks, and with many basic needs of all kinds as growing young people. Working children and young persons need protection from over-work and from over-fatigue; they need protection from unhealthy or dangerous work or work injurious to their morales; they need, at the same time, opportunities for learning and development on the job; and they need opportunities for relaxation and recreation.

Need for rest

46. The need for rest is important for growing children and adolescents. Limitations on hours of work and the prohibition of night work are therefore essential elements in the structure of social protection for youth at work.

47. In recent years the trend towards the reduction of hours of work for all workers has been accompanied by a tendency towards the provision of preferential treatment for young workers. In the United Arab Republic, for example, the new law establishing a 48-hour week and 8-hour day provides that young persons under fifteen cannot be employed for more than six hours a day. In many countries, as in Brazil, Iran, Iraq, Libya and Yugoslavia, steps have been taken to ban or to strengthen restrictions on overtime for young workers under a specified age.

48. Measures have also been taken in a number of industrializing countries to tighten the regulations prohibiting night work for young persons and to improve their enforcement. Most countries have legal provisions barring the employment of young workers (generally under 18) during certain specified hours of the night and usually prescribing a minimum over-all length of night rest for young workers. The standards in the ILO Conventions are twelve and eleven hours respectively, but in many countries these standards have not been attained even for young

^{6/} Hence, of course, the reference is to "children" up to the age of 18.

workers in industry. For instance, the standards set for the non-industrial sector have been ratified by only thirteen countries.

49. Provision of a minimum consecutive period of weekly rest for young workers is also an important element in their protection from fatigue. Legal measures to ensure an uninterrupted weekly rest of not less than 36 (in some cases 48) hours for young persons have been taken in a number of countries. But in the newly industrializing countries much remains to be done to attain this standard, to extend its coverage (e.g. to youth in agriculture) and to enforce its application. Moreover, in a number of cases even a 24-hour period of weekly rest does not exist; there is no weekly rest.

50. While much has been done, in the less developed countries as well as elsewhere, to ensure young people protection from long hours and from work at night, much remains to be done. In many of the less developed countries, there is still an acute need to give greater attention to the actual hours worked by children and young people and to take realistic steps to ensure that they shall work reasonable hours and shall not be employed at night. There are still many gaps in the protection afforded. Standards of protection are still non-existent in some countries and territories. In others they exist but are not generally applied in practice. In most cases, both law and practice tend to be less good or non-existent in the non-industrial sector. Children and young persons in agriculture, in particular, are often left outside the net of social protection, as regards hours of work as well as in other respects. Young people under 16 are often found to be working sixty hours or so a week and this, not surprisingly, has a detrimental effect on their health and general development. In urban areas, the impact of long hours on health and development is apt to be even more unfavourable by reason of the rather less healthy conditions in which such work is generally carried out in the less advanced countries.

51. More specifically, action is needed to limit the daily and weekly hours of young workers at night and to assure them a minimum period of night rest, and to fix for young workers a minimum period of uninterrupted weekly rest. These needs have day-to-day importance and urgency for working children and young workers in all the less developed countries.

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Need for health protection

52. The Declaration of the Rights of the Child also emphasizes that the child shall in no case be caused or permitted to engage in any occupation or employment which would prejudice his health or education or interfere with his physical, mental or moral development. While, as noted in the preceding section, protection against premature employment through the fixing of an appropriate minimum age for admission to work is a basic first step, there is a further need, particularly acute in the newly industrializing countries, to take measures to protect young workers from entry into employment which is not suitable for them from a health standpoint and to protect them from premature entry into especially hazardous or unhealthy employment.

53. Very few even of the highly developed countries have been able to establish any programme or procedures for ensuring that children and young people shall be admitted to employment only after they have been found physically fit for the work they will be required to do. This is sometimes done for certain occupations or trades, but only very rarely for all young people entering all forms of economic activity. In the world as a whole the great majority of children enter employment without any consideration by a qualified doctor as to whether it is suitable for them from a health standpoint. Even fewer countries have any system of periodic check-ups for working young people during their formative years of growth - i.e. up to 18 or 21 - in order to make sure their work is proving suitable for them.

54. An indication of the extent of need in this field is provided by the fact that only seventeen and sixteen countries out of the whole ILO membership have been able to ratify the ILO Conventions on medical examination of young persons for industrial and non-industrial work respectively which were adopted fifteen years ago and by the further fact that it has not been possible to develop such standards at all to cover young workers in agriculture.

55. A number of countries, in compliance with ILO standards, have set higher ages for admission to certain types of especially hazardous work (e.g. underground work in coal-mines or work involving the use of certain types of toxic substances) or more generally in lists of occupations which are considered by their nature or by the circumstances in which they are carried on to be dangerous to the health, life or morals of the young persons concerned.^{7/}

56. While health protection is the special domain of WHO the ILO has a particular interest in assuring to young entrants to employment and to young workers minimum safeguards that the work chosen or being performed is suitable from a health point of view. There is a great need for action in this field, particularly in the rapidly industrializing countries. It is clear that progress is hampered by the general shortage of doctors and the resultant inability of countries to provide for the prior examination of all young persons before they take up employment and for their periodic examination at regular intervals. A comprehensive programme for the protection of the health of young workers obviously can only grow up as an integral part of a larger programme to expand a country's medical, health and rehabilitation services. Nevertheless, it would seem possible, as a logical expansion of maternal and child health services and in view of the special needs of growing young workers (especially those entering or in employment at an early age), to give greater priority to the health care and supervision of young workers. At least, for a start, it should be possible to develop health services for young workers in specified employments which are considered to involve special health risks or dangers. The development of more adequate measures for the health protection of working children and adolescents, who during these years of growth are laying the foundations which determine their health for the rest of their lives, is clearly of the greatest importance. In this connexion there is also an urgent need for developing means for the vocational guidance and physical and vocational rehabilitation of handicapped children and young persons.

^{7/} For examples of national law and practice, see International Labour Conference 44th Session, Report III (Part IV) Report of the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations, Part Three: Protection of Young Workers in Industry (Geneva, 1960).

Need for opportunities for vocational development

57. In countries and territories where most children and young persons start work at a very early age and have little or no schooling, there is an urgent need to provide adequate opportunities for further education and vocational training for young workers. This is important not only for the children and young persons concerned but also for the future economic and social life of their countries.

58. So far very little has been done to provide learning and skill development opportunities for employed children and young people, either during their working hours or outside it. The system of releasing youngsters from their work, during working hours and with no reduction of pay, in order to let them attend general education and vocational classes and courses has been initiated in a number of the industrializing countries (e.g. Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Greece, Israel and Venezuela) but is still far too little practised not only in these countries but in the more developed countries as well. Without this system of day release, it is difficult to see any real solution to the problem, for, where hours are long, young people can hardly be expected to continue learning at night, nor in most cases would this be good for their health.

59. There is a real need to come to grips with the practical problems involved in giving employed children and young persons some form of continued opportunities for learning. Much can be done at comparatively little cost to meet the need, at least partially, and to provide opportunities for the further education and training of children and young persons. It is in the period of youth that learning should be acquired, and to deprive youngsters of learning opportunities during those years of development is simply to create new needs for education and training when they have grown to adulthood.

Need for holidays and recreation

60. Annual holidays provide a needed opportunity for relaxation and recreation and are an important aspect of youth protection and development. Generally speaking,

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the principle that young persons should have longer paid annual holidays than adults is becoming more widely accepted. There are a number of countries where young persons have four weeks' annual holidays with pay and a number of others where they have three weeks' holidays. From twenty to twentyfive countries now give longer annual holidays to the young. Recent examples include Iran (18 days for young workers, 12 for adults), Yugoslavia (21 days for workers under 16, and 17 days for the 17-to-18 year-olds, 12 days for adults) and Libya (21 days for young workers under sixteen, 14 for adults).

61. In practice, the situation is far from satisfactory in most of the less developed countries. Young workers in a good many branches of non-industrial activity are not covered by the provisions in force. Some, though legally entitled to holidays, do not manage to enjoy their rights. In a number of countries and territories, it has not yet been found possible to introduce legislation providing for holidays with pay for young workers. Since these are most often the countries and territories where hours of work are long and where overtime is not regulated, the young people concerned are in a most unhappy situation.

62. Young workers need ample opportunities for recreation, too, and organized recreation facilities promoting physical and mental development. Sports fields and equipment, camping facilities, cinemas, welcoming libraries and social clubs of all kinds, youth canteens etc. can do much to encourage youngsters to grow in mind and body during the formative years of adolescence.

63. In some countries recreation facilities are provided by industry, sometimes in co-operation with the trade unions, in others by the community. In most of the less developed countries, however, few facilities are available and the young workers have very few opportunities for healthy recreation of any kind and no constructive outlets for their energies during their leisure hours.

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VII. THE NEED FOR MATERNITY PROTECTION AND CHILD
CARE SERVICES FOR WORKING MOTHERS

64. The Declaration of the Rights of the Child states that the child shall be entitled to grow and develop in health and that to this end special care and protection shall be provided both to him and to his mother, including adequate pre-natal and post-natal care.

65. For working women, entitlement to maternity leave and maternity benefits is an essential need. The ILO standards provide for a maternity leave before and after child-birth totalling at least 12 weeks and also provide for maternity benefits paid out of social security or other public funds. As a rule, maternity benefits are provided under social security schemes, which also frequently include provision for pre-natal, confinement and post-natal care for women covered by them.

66. Maternity protection along these lines is badly needed to safeguard the health and well-being of mothers and children, but it is rare to find adequate protection in the less developed countries. Some of these countries make legal provision for maternity protection but have not been able to translate the law into general practice. In many cases where maternity protection schemes exist, they cover only limited categories of employed women. A great deal needs to be done to expedite the development of maternity protection for working women and to ensure them, and to make it financially possible for them to enjoy a minimum of rest and care before and after the birth of their babies.

67. There is an increasing tendency for married women with children to work outside their homes. A great many women with young children are forced by economic exigency to remain in or take up paid employment. This area of need can sometimes be covered by family allowances. But in many instances more seems to be required to make it financially possible for mothers of young children to remain at home with their children if they wish to do so. "Motherhood allowances" or children's allowances paid at higher rates in respect of pre-school age children

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can make a tremendous contribution to maternal and child welfare; and the practical possibilities of taking action along these lines need to be explored without delay.

68. Meanwhile, however, there is an immediate practical need to provide for the day-care of infants and young children of mothers working outside their homes. The provision of these facilities is, indeed, an urgent necessity, particularly in the less developed countries now going through a comparatively rapid transformation of social structure.

69. Finally, health care is an important element in social security's contribution towards meeting children's needs. Medical care in case of sickness may be provided for children as for adults under general national health schemes or through sickness insurance schemes which usually include care for the children of the participants among their benefits. Few of the less developed countries have comprehensive health schemes or sickness insurance schemes, and the children's need for medical care is not now being met.

VIII. THE NEED FOR EFFECTIVE ENFORCEMENT OF PROTECTIVE LEGISLATION

70. Legislation concerning young workers such as laws and regulations on the minimum age of admission to employment, medical examination, hours of work and rest periods, weekly rest, night work etc. cannot be effective unless its enforcement is properly ensured. However, in most of the developing countries no effective inspection services yet exist. It is therefore particularly important to further the development of such services and to make its staff aware of the particular problems related to the enforcement of the law concerning children and young persons. It is clear that in the less developed countries the difficulties of enforcement are especially numerous; population and work places are often widely

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dispersed, especially in the rural areas, illiteracy is widespread and employers and workers are often not aware of their respective rights and duties under the law. Birth registration is not fully developed so that no proof of age exists as regards children and young people. Inspection is especially difficult with regard to the smaller workplaces in which such very great numbers of young workers are employed. For all these reasons it is of special importance that the work of the inspection services be supplemented and assisted by such supervisory activities as can be carried out by other governmental services concerned, school authorities, social welfare officers, occupational organizations, and so forth.

IX. CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

71. The preceding sections of this memorandum suggest a number of important areas of child need of special concern to the ILO. The relative priority of these various areas of need, and the relative priority which can be accorded to this group of needs as only one part of the much wider over-all needs of children in all fields, are questions to be answered by the governments and peoples of the countries concerned, with due regard to the welfare and well-being of their youngest learners, earners and citizens.

72. The discussion of youth problems at the fortyfourth session of the International Labour Conference showed a keen and general interest in the specific areas of child need singled out for attention in the preceding sections. It also showed the interrelationship between the meeting of needs in one field and the meeting of needs in another and the consequent need to move ahead in all fields if the positive benefits of action in any one field were to be reaped.

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73. The ILO would welcome an opportunity to make a far greater contribution to the protection and development of children and young persons in the industrializing countries. The International Labour Conference discussion of youth and work was ~~acconvincing~~ ~~demonstration~~ demonstration of the need to intensify programmes and activities directed towards these ends. The ILO would be grateful for any practical suggestions UNICEF may have as to how ILO work could be developed and expanded to fit in constructively with the UNICEF - supported activities in other fields and as to the priorities to be accorded programme evolution in the fields of direct concern to the ILO.

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