

Mr. Michael Levitt, M.P.
Chair
Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs
and International Development
House of Commons
Ottawa ON K1A 0A6

Dear Mr. Levitt:

I am pleased to respond on behalf of the Government of Canada to the Report of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development entitled: “A Call to Action: Ending the Use of all Forms of Child Labour in Supply Chains” tabled on October 15, 2018.

The report focuses on the fight against child labour and its eradication from global supply chains, particularly those entering Canada. The report also touches upon the worst forms of child labour, calling for the elimination of forced labour, human trafficking and slavery-like practices in its various nefarious forms.

Apart from being an affront to human dignity, forced and child labour is symptomatic of economic and social dysfunction. While the protection of children’s rights has improved dramatically over the past 25 years, child labour nevertheless continues to deprive millions of children of their childhood, their potential, and their dignity. Efforts to eliminate child labour face persistent challenges due to chronic poverty, and the concentration of child labour in the informal economy.

Today, I take the opportunity to present the Government of Canada’s response to the committee’s important and ground-setting report. The government is engaging on this issue through a number of policies and programs. It has fully reviewed the findings of the committee’s report and will aim to achieve the goals it has identified. The government welcomes the report as an added impetus to work more comprehensively across the federal government and in partnership with domestic and international stakeholders to address the challenge of ending child labour in supply chains.

Gender inequality and poverty are the root causes and drivers of child and forced labour and the impacts of this human rights violation or abuse have differential consequences for women and men, girls and boys. The government is proud to proclaim itself feminist. Women’s and girls’ rights are human rights and these rights are at the core of our foreign policy. Canada’s Feminist International Assistance Policy puts women’s empowerment and gender equality at the very heart of our work to eradicate poverty. As part of this policy, we are working to ensure that we promote and protect human rights, advance gender equality and refocus our support on the poorest and most vulnerable

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so that we can end the exploitative practices of forced and child labour. Our investments in building quality and gender-responsive education and child protection systems is critical to ensuring that children have nurturing and protective environments where they can learn and develop to their full potential. The government recognizes the importance of working comprehensively to tackle the complex root causes that give rise to child and forced labour. The means to do so are multiple and include supporting women's economic empowerment; greater advocacy and business oversight; promoting responsible business conduct transparency and supplier diversity in value chains; and coordinating peace and security measures—all leading to effective poverty reduction. This also includes promoting human rights, strengthening law enforcement and justice systems, as well as investigative capacities, and sharing of information on child labour and forced labour with international partners.

These efforts to end child labour must be matched, in the meantime, with approaches to help eliminate child labour in global supply chains and from the supply chains of Canadian companies. We are taking action to do this. We are standing with other countries on the global stage to make this a priority and working at the federal level to address it through the negotiation of inclusive and comprehensive trade agreements, revisions to our procurement policies, and by building the capacity of Canadian business to implement tools and guidance on responsible business conduct. We are learning from the experiences and practices in other jurisdictions so that we can take appropriate measures in Canada to strengthen these efforts.

In summary, the Government of Canada will apply its existing platforms, networks, multilateral and bilateral tools to combat child and forced labour in supply chains involving Canada. We will further seize opportunities for advocacy and programming, where possible, to contribute to the global effort to address this issue and will begin a process in 2019 to consult on possible supply chain legislation.

The Government of Canada takes this opportunity to thank the members of the committee for their work in preparing this report and welcomes their continued interest in Canadian engagement in this worthy cause.

Sincerely,

The Honourable Marie-Claude Bibeau, P.C., M.P.

c.c. The Honourable Patty Hajdu, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour

Enclosures

Full Government of Canada Response to the Nineteenth Report of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development, “A Call to Action: Ending the Use of All Forms of Child Labour in Supply Chains”

INTRODUCTION

The Government of Canada has carefully reviewed the Report of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development and thanks its members for the opportunity to participate in the hearings leading up to the tabling of this report. The Government of Canada appreciates that the committee and its Subcommittee on International Human Rights have devoted considerable attention to this important issue. It also thanks the witnesses for their expert testimony which has helped provide a fuller picture of the challenges and opportunities to eliminate child labour in supply chains.

The committee’s Subcommittee on International Human Rights examined the human rights impact of child labour on children and society, and provided recommendations to the Government of Canada that would lead to the elimination of child labour from global supply chains. The committee’s report, tabled on October 15, 2018, made seven broad recommendations for how the federal government can contribute to eliminating child labour and forced labour through a government-wide approach that includes providing international assistance to support work on ending child labour, including its root causes and drivers, and support to education, skills development and access to justice; and addressing child labour in free trade negotiations and procurement policies; promoting responsible businesses practices; and developing more robust legislative and policy initiatives.

The international community has been active on this issue. Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) target 8.7 calls on member states to take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, including the unlawful recruitment of child soldiers, and by 2025 end child labour in all its forms. Child labour violates the human rights of children; deprives them of their childhood, their potential and their dignity, and is harmful to their physical and mental development. Action on child labour has been a long-standing priority for the international community. This includes eliminating the worst forms of child labour as an urgent priority. Canada encourages all governments to ratify and implement the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the International Labour Organization (ILO) Minimum Age Convention and the ILO Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention.

Canada is a long-standing champion of the rights of children. Canada is already taking action to end child labour in supply chains by working across a number of federal government departments and agencies on initiatives that address the practice and its root causes in developing countries and by engaging with other governments, the private sector, civil society and other stakeholders to implement domestic and international initiatives and explore options to enhance measures to end child labour in supply chains. Canada’s Feminist International Assistance Policy and inclusive approach to trade are reinforcing the federal government’s domestic efforts to promote responsible business conduct in supply chains, including in public procurement policies.

On the international stage, Canada has recently made numerous commitments to work together with other countries to address this issue with urgency. For example, in September 2017 on the margins of the UN General Assembly, Canada joined the non-legally-binding United Kingdom-led “Call to Action to end Forced Labour, Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking” that included commitments to eradicate forced labour, human trafficking, and the worst forms of child labour from our economies (both formal and informal) by developing regulatory or policy frameworks, as appropriate, and working with business to eliminate such practices from global supply chains. Canada also pledged to combat forced labour and child labour in the context of global supply chains and labour provisions in trade agreements at the IV Global Conference on Child Labour in Buenos Aires in November 2017.

Most recently, as part of Canada’s presidency of the Group of Seven (G7), Canada hosted a meeting of the G7 Security Ministers during which ministers made several commitments to the fight against trafficking in persons. These include working with the private sector, civil society and other stakeholders to eliminate trafficking in persons, forced labour, child labour and all forms of slavery, including modern slavery, from G7 economies, by developing legislative, regulatory or policy frameworks, as appropriate; and strengthening procurement practices to eliminate trafficking in persons, forced labour, child labour and slavery from global supply chains and work to build a culture of consumer awareness. Likewise, in September 2018, G20 Labour and Employment Ministers endorsed the G20 Strategy to eradicate child labour, forced labour, human trafficking and modern slavery in the world of work.

The Government of Canada broadly agrees with the recommendations of the committee’s report. It proposes to consider them within the wider policy, advocacy and programming actions that the Government of Canada is undertaking across a number of departments. This response provides a comprehensive overview of the government’s policy, advocacy and programming tools, both domestic and international, that help eliminate child labour in global supply chains. The government response also recognizes the importance of working in partnership with multilateral organizations, industry, civil society, developing countries, and other governments to eliminate all forms of child labour. Within Canada the response makes note of the importance of collaborating with businesses, civil society and provincial and territorial governments and will begin to consult in 2019 on possible legislation. The government recognizes the work being done in other jurisdictions through legislative reforms and is actively studying their effectiveness and feasibility for Canadian contexts.

Recommendation 1 – Prioritizing the Elimination of Child Labour and Forced Labour in Canada’s International Assistance

RESPONSE: The Government of Canada generally agrees with this recommendation.

Canada’s Feminist International Assistance Policy puts women and girls at the heart of its efforts, because we believe that advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls is the most effective way to eliminate poverty, create lasting peace, and achieve sustainable development. The policy outlines an integrated and comprehensive framework for programming with the aim to alleviate poverty and promote gender equality. While child labour is not explicitly targeted through the policy, it adopts a human rights-based approach. This framework allows the Government to address the recommendation by supporting programming that advances the human

rights of all children, such as on ending child labour, including the worst forms of child labour and addressing the root causes and drivers. The approach to addressing child labour has been three-pronged: 1) investing in standalone initiatives that aim to prevent and protect children from exploitative child labour; 2) strengthening gender-responsive education and child protection systems; and 3) supporting activities to reduce poverty and vulnerability of individuals, families and communities in developing countries including through women's economic empowerment; supporting micro, small and medium enterprises; building climate resilience; and supporting initiatives on social protection and decent work for all.

Building on the human rights-based approach, Global Affairs Canada will develop guidance for addressing impacts on child rights in international assistance programming, including how to integrate child rights and protection across all programming. This will include targeted work on child labour addressing regions where progress has stalled and key sectors including agriculture, garment industry and natural resource management where rates of child labour are particularly high. This guidance will align with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child including, upholding their rights to life, survival and development; promoting child participation; considering the best interests of the child and assessing risks and mitigation strategies to protect children from all forms of violence and abuse.

Global Affairs Canada is supporting a number of international assistance projects and engaged in global policy initiatives that specifically work toward the elimination of child labour addressing a range of issues including domestic labour, child trafficking and sexual exploitation, labour rights, youth employment and child rights and protection. Canada is supporting the ILO's work with respect to the progressive elimination of child labour worldwide, with the eradication of the worst forms as an urgent priority. The ILO works to achieve this through country-based programs which promote policy reform; building institutional capacity and putting in place concrete measures to end child labour; and through awareness-raising and mobilization intended to change social attitudes and promote ratification and effective implementation of ILO child labour conventions. Canada also works with multi-stakeholder initiatives that promote human rights and responsible business conduct. This includes support and dissemination of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) due diligence guidance documents that aim, among others, to identify, prevent and respond to child and forced labour in the minerals and garment supply chains. Likewise, Canada engages with organizations including the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, the International Fund for Agricultural Development and the World Food Programme to take action to eliminate child labour in food systems.

The forced recruitment of child soldiers is identified in the ILO Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention. Canada is a long-standing advocate for the rights of children affected by armed conflict and supports programming to prevent the forced recruitment and use of child soldiers in conflict and to demobilize and rehabilitate former child soldiers. Most recently, Canada worked with international partners to spearhead the development of the Vancouver Principles on Peacekeeping and the Prevention of the Recruitment and Use of Child Soldiers (Vancouver Principles), a set of non-binding pledges aimed at preventing the recruitment and use of child soldiers in the context of UN peacekeeping, which have already been endorsed by 68 member states. Efforts are currently underway to develop implementation guidance.

The majority of Canada's international assistance programming focuses on addressing the poverty and gender inequality that are the root causes and drivers of child labour and other harmful practices including child, early and forced marriage. Canada aims to enhance the capacity of states, parents and communities to build protective and nurturing environments for children, including transforming harmful norms, values and practices, which support or tolerate violence against children. This child protection systems approach is critical for ensuring that children removed from situations of exploitative work and their families have viable, safe alternatives. Canada has invested in development projects and humanitarian assistance to refugees and forcibly displaced populations, which contribute to countering some of the conditions that enable their economic exploitation. These projects have supported millions of women, men and children by providing decent work and livelihood opportunities, food security, better access to finance, vocational training and healthcare, all of which contribute to keep children out of child labour.

The Government of Canada has made numerous commitments to ensure that international assistance activities uphold international human rights standards. For example, the *Official Development Assistance Accountability Act*, requires that all Official Development Assistance (ODA) programming is consistent with international human rights standards by assuring that for all projects, due diligence is exercised to avoid undermining human rights in the country or community. Likewise, FinDev Canada, Canada's development finance institution (DFI), has a code of conduct and policies in place which commit to respecting human rights and specifically cite child labour and forced labour as grounds for excluding businesses from receiving support from FinDev Canada. Canada has joined other donors to declare zero tolerance and take measures to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation and abuse in the aid sector, notably, championing the issue at the G7 Development Ministers' Meeting, culminating in the Whistler Declaration on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in International Assistance.

Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy is supported by results frameworks and metrics which already provide mechanisms to support evidence-based programming on child labour and the root causes of child labour. These include outcomes and indicators that align with the SDG indicators on preventing and responding to violence, especially sexual and gender-based violence; women's economic empowerment; social protection; education and skills development; child rights; and access to justice. For example, Global Affairs Canada currently collects age and sex-disaggregated data from programming on the following:

- number of children that complete primary and secondary education and the number of graduates of demand driven technical and vocational training;
- percentage of total entrepreneurs, micro, small and medium enterprises, farmers connected to responsible value chains, markets and/or trade opportunities and the number of individuals accessing social protection programs;
- the percentage of targeted organizations that represent or advocate for the rights of women, children, marginalized groups or at-risk populations; and
- the number of people with increased access to gender-sensitive formal or informal justice services.

Recommendation 2 – Improving Access to Quality Education for Children and Adults

RESPONSE: The Government of Canada agrees with this recommendation.

Education is a catalyst to improving human dignity and a means through which all other rights are realized. As noted in the report, education and skills development can play a critical role in combination with other strategies in helping to prevent child labour. Education is a powerful tool for the empowerment of individuals, families, and nations and a portal through which economic, political and social progress takes place. Education is the mechanism used to know and exercise rights, transform harmful social norms and behaviours and address unequal power relations, develop critical thinking skills, tolerance and appreciation of diversity, foster peace and security, and raise awareness about climate change and environmental sustainability. Yet despite major progress globally on access to education and reducing the number of out-of-school children, significant challenges remain in access, learning, quality, equity, governance and financing, especially in crisis, fragile and conflict-affected situations.

Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy identifies education as a core element of its Human Dignity Action Area, applying a feminist and human rights-based approach to education and lifelong learning that leads to improved outcomes among marginalized groups. Canada's efforts align with the global implementation of Agenda 2030 including SDG 4 (Quality Education and Lifelong Learning for All); SDG 5 (Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women and Girls); and SDG 8 (Sustainable Economic Growth, Employment and Decent Work for All). It is a key element of the integrated strategy outlined in recommendation one. Specifically the policy aims to improving gender-responsive quality education from pre-primary to end of secondary, particularly for girls and marginalized groups in developing countries, including in crisis, fragile and conflict-affected situations and increasing access to quality skills development for youth and adults, particularly for adolescent girls and women.

Canada's approach to education in developing countries contributes to a vision where every child, regardless of circumstance or identity, is able to enrol in and complete primary and secondary education in a safe, secure and respectful environment, and where youth and adults can develop the skills they need to succeed in life. Within this context programming includes elements that target the most vulnerable and marginalized populations and aims to address physical, cultural and economic barriers in schools and community environments that keep children out of school or force them to leave early. This includes programming that supports formal and non-formal education, community-based schooling and that provides educational opportunities for out-of-school children.

In 2018, Canada took a leadership role in advancing quality education in developing countries, especially for girls, adolescent girls and women. Canada made important commitments to education including announcing a \$180M replenishment of the Global Partnership for Education and spearheaded an historic G7 investment of \$3.8 billion in education for girls and women in conflict and crisis settings, of which Canada committed \$400M. In June 2018, G7 leaders adopted the Charlevoix Declaration on Quality Education for Girls, Adolescent Girls, and Women in Developing Countries.

Recommendation 3 – Supporting Law Enforcement and Judicial Systems

RESPONSE: The Government of Canada generally agrees with this recommendation.

Approximately four billion people worldwide do not have access to protections guaranteed by law. Sometimes formal legal systems are not able to cope with the demands of their citizens, nor are they accessible to people in local communities. In many countries, the rule of law is weak. Laws may exist, but they are often not enforced, or apply only to some and not to others. Laws may also intentionally or inadvertently reinforce gender discrimination. Such situations can encourage child labour.

To tackle this problem, Global Affairs Canada's International Assistance programming is oriented toward advancing Inclusive Governance as one of six action areas outlined within the Feminist International Assistance Policy, with a view to promoting good governance and fostering societies where individuals, the state, civil society and the private sector interact to make decisions and allocate resources – nationally and locally – in collaborative ways that improve people's human rights and equality, particularly among the most marginalized and most vulnerable in all their diversity. This includes efforts to expand equitable access to fair justice and law enforcement services that serve to advance the human rights of the poorest and most marginalized people, particularly women, children and youth, including promoting their right to participate and have a voice in matters that affect them. To this end, programming may seek to, for example: improve the gender-responsiveness of justice and law enforcement institutions by building the capacity of state and non-state actors to reform laws, and strengthen the judiciary, police, prisons, juvenile justice, etc.; ensure justice services reach people in their communities by building the capacity of state and non-state actors to extend inclusive and gender-responsive formal and informal justice services to under-served regions; and, increase awareness of existing laws and legal services by the poorest, and most marginalized, and most vulnerable people, particularly women, children, and youth.

In addition, the Anti-Crime Capacity Building Program (ACCBP) of Global Affairs Canada also offers support to certain States in responding to situations of a criminal nature. The ACCBP is designed to address transnational security threats with the objective of enhancing the capacity of key beneficiary States and government entities to prevent and respond to threats posed by international criminal activity. The ACCBP also administers the Canadian annual voluntary contributions to the Organization of American States (OAS) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), which both work on countering trafficking in persons, which could include child trafficking for the purpose of forced labour.

Capacity-building assistance through the ACCBP is delivered by Canadian government departments and agencies as well as through partnerships with international organizations, close allies and non-governmental organizations. Capacity-building assistance has proved to be a flexible, responsive, and cost-effective way to address criminal threats in source and transit countries before they impact Canadian interests. Human trafficking is one of seven ACCBP thematic priorities.

For example, the ACCBP currently funds a security sector reform initiative with the Department of Justice Canada which uses a phased approach to strengthening youth justice policy development and program design in Mexico. The ACCBP also funded a project with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to increase the Philippines and Malaysia's law enforcement capability to counter human trafficking and migrant smuggling. This included training on investigative techniques from an Internet Child Exploitation course to provide investigators with the knowledge, tools and resources required to apply appropriate laws to successfully investigate and prosecute offences related to human trafficking.

Recommendation 4 – Including Discussion of Child Labour and Forced Labour in all Free Trade Negotiations

RESPONSE: The Government of Canada agrees with this recommendation.

The Government of Canada already seeks to negotiate comprehensive and enforceable labour obligations in free trade agreements (FTAs), as well as rigorous dispute settlement mechanisms that can lead to trade sanctions for non-compliance, including in the Canada–United States–Mexico Agreement (CUSMA). The labour chapters and labour cooperation agreements in Canada's FTAs typically include strong commitments to prohibit forced labour and child labour, including measures to eliminate all forms of forced or compulsory labour, to abolish child labour, and to prohibit the worst forms of child labour.

In support of FTA negotiations, Canada monitors and fosters compliance amongst its partner countries of their labour obligations, including those related to forced labour and child labour. Through Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC)—Labour Program, Canada provides technical assistance to support capacity building in developing partner countries. Since 2006, ESDC—Labour Program has funded bilateral or regional technical assistance projects in direct support of existing and future agreements. These projects enable Canada to engage with its trading partners in a constructive way to address concerns, and more fully comply with their labour obligations.

Recommendation 5 – Building Capacity of Canadian Businesses to Monitor their Supply Chains

RESPONSE: The Government of Canada generally agrees with this recommendation.

The Government of Canada has taken a multi-pronged approach toward eliminating the use of child labour in global supply chains, including participation in international fora, such as the OECD, the ILO, G7 and G20. The Government of Canada expects Canadian companies sourcing abroad to actively identify, prevent and mitigate negative human rights impacts in alignment with internationally recognized guidance including the UN Guiding Principles for Business and Human Rights and the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises.

To date, measures designed to provide tools or guidance to firms include the creation of a Corporate Social Responsibility Toolkit (CSR) that includes a section on sustainable purchasing, as well as the publication of a Corporate Social Responsibility Implementation Guide for Canadian Business, providing practical advice to companies. The latter contains information on: how to build a business case for carrying out CSR initiatives; how to develop and implement a CSR strategy; and how to measure performance.

Canada encourages Canadian companies to implement responsible business practices that take into account children's rights and child labour impacts. As a complement to the internationally-recognized responsible business conduct (RBC) standards and guidelines endorsed in Canada's updated CSR Strategy for the extractive sector abroad, the Government of Canada welcomed in 2014 the Canadian release of the Children's Rights and Business Principles and encourages Canadian companies to use them as a tool for guiding the actions they can take to respect and support children's rights. In support of this, in 2017 the Government of Canada co-chaired a working group with UNICEF Canada and Barrick Gold to create and promote the Child Rights and Security Checklist, designed to help improve respect for children's rights in extractive businesses' security arrangements. In March 2018, the working group released the Child Rights and Security Handbook, an implementation companion of the Checklist. The Government of Canada encourages all Canadian natural resource companies to apply the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights at their operations abroad, especially if they are operating in high-risk areas.

Canada also maintains of a National Contact Point (NCP) for the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises. The NCP assist enterprises and their stakeholders to take appropriate measures to further the effectiveness of the Guidelines by undertaking promotional activities, handling inquiries, and contributing to the resolution of issues that may arise from the alleged non-observance of the Guidelines in specific instances, including responsible supply chain management. The Canadian NCP has provided support to the OECD in the development and dissemination of various guidance documents to help Canadian companies prevent and mitigate risks in supply chain management for the mineral, agriculture and garment sectors. It also collaborated with Global Compact Network Canada (GCNC) to develop a business-friendly handbook to showcase several examples of Canadian businesses implementing the OECD due diligence guidance, whose main role is to further the effectiveness of the Guidelines.

In January 2018, the Government announced the creation of a Canadian Ombudsperson for Responsible Enterprise (CORE) as an additional measure to complement the NCP. Although not specifically focused on supply chains, it is intended that the CORE look at allegations of human rights abuse arising from Canadian business operations abroad in the mining, oil and gas and garment sectors.

In September 2018, Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC) launched a new Apparel Initiative for clothing and textile suppliers contracting with the Government. The new initiative requires suppliers to self-certify to eight fundamental human and labour rights including freedom from child labour, forced labour, discrimination and abuse, and access to fair wages and safe working conditions.

Recommendation 6 – Advancing Initiatives to Motivate Businesses to Eliminate Child and Forced Labour in their Supply Chains

RESPONSE: The Government of Canada will carefully consider this recommendation as it initiates consultations on possible supply chain legislation and continues to study options in a Canadian context.

The Government of Canada is currently studying the effectiveness of initiatives in other international jurisdictions that seek to motivate businesses to eliminate the use of any form of child labour in their global supply chains. The Government of Canada is engaged in discussions with like-minded nations and in international fora on this topic, including at the ILO, G20, the G7 and the UN. The Government recognizes that bringing about improvements to working conditions in global supply chains is a complex and multi-faceted challenge, and must involve the participation of provinces and territories, industry and civil society, as well as a number of Government of Canada departments. The Government of Canada will initiate consultations in 2019 on possible supply chain legislation.

Recommendation 7 – Examining Canada’s Import Regime and Procurement Policies as Levers to Eliminate the Use of Child Labour

RESPONSE: The Government of Canada agrees with this recommendation.

On November 30, 2018, Canada, the United States and Mexico signed the Canada–United States–Mexico Agreement (CUSMA). Under the CUSMA, the Labour Chapter includes a strong obligation for Parties to ban the import of goods produced by forced labour, including forced or compulsory child labour, and to establish cooperation in that regard. Canada is committed to implementing this obligation, in a manner consistent with its international trade obligations. The prohibition would provide the Government with an additional tool to address forced labour.

The Government of Canada also recognizes the importance of leveraging procurement practices to eliminate the use of child labour within federal procurement supply chains. This is demonstrated by Canada’s recent commitment to the “Principles to Guide Government Action to Combat Human Trafficking in Global Supply Chains” during the September 2018 United Nations General Assembly. These Principles focus on all forms of forced labour within the supply chain, including child labour. Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC) continues to be committed to a number of efforts to combat human trafficking and to protect human rights in federal procurement supply chains.

PSPC has launched a new initiative requiring all suppliers bidding on clothing or textile contracts to certify to a list of eight fundamental human and labour rights, the first of which focuses exclusively on child labour.

Furthermore, PSPC is enhancing the existing Integrity Regime to expand the list of convictions that can lead to debarment, to include Criminal Code offences related to human trafficking of children and adults. Companies and individuals convicted of these offences in the past three years risk being ineligible to contract with the Government for up to ten years. Under the new Integrity Regime, a clause will be incorporated into all Government of Canada contracts requiring suppliers to certify that they have taken all reasonable steps to guard against the use of forced labour within their supply chains. This new Integrity Regime is expected to be rolled out early 2019.

As well, PSPC is examining its Code of Conduct for Procurement, with the goal of ensuring it appropriately captures expected behaviours for suppliers regarding human and labour rights. This committee report will serve to inform and guide PSPC to ensure that the risks and impacts of child labour are sufficiently addressed with the Code of Conduct for Procurement.

These initiatives will be consistent with Canada's international trade obligations.

CONCLUSION

While the protection of child rights has improved drastically since the adoption of the Convention of the Rights of the Child in 1989, far too many children remain vulnerable and experience violence, exploitation and abuse, including child labour. Child labour is a violation of the human rights of children that prevents them from realizing their full potential. Its root causes are poverty, insecurity and inequality. As the work of the committee has ably demonstrated, eradicating child labour from supply chains requires comprehensive approaches across the federal government and in partnership with other governments, civil society, multilateral organizations, and businesses.

Clearly more needs to be done to eliminate child labour in supply chains and there is good momentum in Canada and internationally to take action. Eliminating child labour, including the worst forms of child labour, will remain a priority for Canada. Through our international assistance we will continue to focus on the poorest and most vulnerable and working in the holistic framework outlined in the Feminist International Assistance Policy to promote and protect the rights of children and to address the root causes of child labour, namely gender inequality and poverty. Within Canada we will begin consultations in 2019 on possible supply chain legislation and continue to work across the federal government to enhance policies and practices to eliminate child labour in supply chains and support Canadian businesses to employ responsible business practices and respect for human rights.