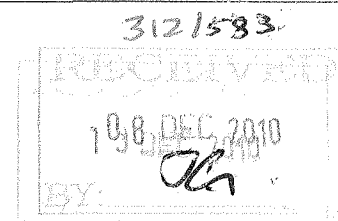




THE HON DR CRAIG EMERSON MP

MINISTER FOR TRADE

The Hon John Murphy MP
Chair
Standing Committee on Petitions
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600



25 NOV 2010

John
Dear Mr Murphy

I am responding to the letter of 25 May 2010 from the previous Chair of the Standing Committee on Petitions, Mrs Julia Irwin, to the then Minister for Trade, the Hon Simon Crean MP, conveying the petition on cocoa products involving child labour. I apologise for the delay in responding.

The Australian Government is gravely concerned about the exploitation of children, including all forms of child labour. Australia is working hard to combat such practices, including through the United Nations and the International Labour Organisation (ILO).

As the petition notes, Australia has ratified ILO convention 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour (1999). Australia has also ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), and its two Optional Protocols. These treaties establish internationally recognised standards against which child protection can be measured and scrutinised globally.

The ILO has set a target of universal ratification of Convention 182 by 2016 and has redoubled its efforts to meet this deadline.

Australia will continue to encourage Member States to commit to the protection and promotion of children's rights through the ratification of this and other international human rights instruments, including the CRC. In May 2010 Australia also participated in The Hague Global Child Labour conference which adopted a 'Roadmap' for eliminating the worst forms of child labour by 2016.

Through our aid program, Australia also supports the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in preventing child labour by reducing the debt burden of poor families and by providing better access to primary education for children around the world. In 2009-10 Australia contributed \$19.6 million to support UNICEF's work to protect children globally, including from child labour. This makes us the 10th largest contributor to UNICEF's budget.

The Government supports the voluntary labelling of products by industry, confirming that imported goods have been produced free from child exploitation. This helps to increase public awareness of the issue and encourages customers to make informed choices.

The Government sees the various activities undertaken through the United Nations, and the ILO, as the most effective means to achieve the outcomes on child labour that we all seek.

Yours sincerely

Craig Emerson