

# MINI ACTION GUIDE

ITUC - International Trade Union Confederation  
June 2008



## Child labour

## Definition of child labour

The Article 1 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child defines a child as anyone below the age of 18.

“Child labour” is often defined as work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity, and that is harmful to physical and mental development.

### **It refers to work that:**

- is mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful to children  
and/or
- interferes with their schooling by: depriving them of the opportunity to attend school, obliging them to leave school prematurely or requiring them to attempt to combine school attendance with excessively long and heavy work.

Whether or not particular forms of “work” can be called “child labour” depends on the child’s age, the type and hours of work performed, the conditions under which the work is performed and the objectives pursued by individual. The answer varies from country to country, as well as among sectors within countries.

## Forms of child labour

Child labour exists in many forms. Sometimes it can be easily observed; sometimes it is hidden from your view. Here is a list of different forms of child labour that includes some of the most

widespread forms and some of the worst forms. However, this is not a complete list of all existing forms.

**Domestic work:** Very common and sometimes seen as acceptable, it happens in the family home or outside the home. When domestic work is outside the home, children – almost always girls – work very long hours, have no chance to go to school and are isolated from their family and friends.

**Agricultural work:** A lot of working children are found in agriculture. They often work on the family farm or with the whole family, as a unit, for an employer.

**Work in industries:** This work can be regular or casual, legal or illegal, as part of the family or by the child on his own for an employer. It includes carpet weaving, gemstone polishing, making garments, chemicals, glassware, fireworks, matches or a range of other products. These tasks expose the children to hazardous chemicals that can lead to poisoning, respiratory and skin diseases, radiant heat, fire and explosions, eyesight and hearing damage cuts, burns and even death.

**Work in mines and quarries:** Child labour is used in small-scale mines in many countries. They work long hours without adequate protection and training. Child miners suffer from physical strain, fatigue and disorders of the muscular and skeletal systems.

**Slavery and forced labour:** It is most commonly found in rural areas. It is also frequently linked to the oppression of ethnic minorities and indigenous peoples. Children are often also drawn into armed conflict, forced to be soldiers or to work for armed forces.



**Prostitution and child trafficking:** It is one of the worst forms of child labour. The dangers faced by children are extreme and range from moral corruption to sexually transmitted diseases to death.

**Work in the informal economy:** This includes a whole range of activities such as shoe cleaning, begging, pulling rickshaws, selling newspapers, or collecting rubbish. Some forms are very easily observed while others are hidden from public view. Activities often take place on the streets but also include domestic work.

## A few facts on child labour

According to estimates from the International Labour Organisation (ILO) published in 2006, there were 218 million child labourers aged 5-17 years in 2004.

The number in hazardous work, which accounts for the bulk of the worst forms of child labour, was said to be 126 million in 2004.

Sixty-nine per cent of working children are involved in agriculture compared with only 9 per cent in industry.

The Asia-Pacific region accounts for the largest number of child labourers with 122 million, followed by sub-Saharan Africa (49.3 million) and Latin America and the Caribbean (5.7 million). With 26 per cent, the proportion of children engaged in economic activities in sub-Saharan Africa is currently the highest of any region in the world. Child labour can also be found in industrial countries.

However, for the first time the ILO was also able to note a positive trend with an 11 per cent decrease of working children in the age group 5-17 between 2000 to 2004 and a particular reduction of

children's involvement in hazardous work (26 per cent decrease). Overall, Latin America and the Caribbean saw the greatest decline in children's work.

The estimated cost of the elimination of child labour is US\$760 billion over a 20-year period, but the estimated benefit in terms of better education and health is over US\$4 trillion. The economic benefits would therefore outweigh the costs by nearly six to one, not to mention the huge social benefits to be gained.

## **Why is child labour a trade union issue?**

Trade unions have a responsibility to society and workers in general to ensure that labour standards and legislation are respected by all employers at all levels.

The basic foundations of trade unionism are the principles of solidarity and social justice. Furthermore, workers' organisations have a long tradition of defending human rights and workers' rights. Child labour violates both children's and adults' rights.

Working children represent an abundant and easily exploited source of cheap labour and contribute to the decline of wages. Hence, child labour leads to the weakening of trade unions' ability to negotiate improvements in workers' wages and conditions. In addition, child labour increases adult and, moreover, youth unemployment, since children may be doing the same work at lower wages. With the child deprived of education and the adult deprived of work, child labour jeopardises both adults' and children's future.

Strong trade unions in the workplace and in the community, and good education systems, are the most effective means to ensure



that children in those workplaces and communities will not face exploitation: it is a proven fact that where adult workers are denied the right to organize and to bargain collectively for decent wages and conditions, children are more likely to be found at work and that where adults workers rights are properly respected, as enshrined in the ILO core conventions, household incomes are higher and the children are far more likely to be in school than at work.

Trade unions are in a unique position to combat child labour, as they have access to large numbers of adult workers and their families and they are able to communicate the importance of promoting children's education and protecting children from work hazards and from starting to work too early. At the workplace, they can put pressure on the management and ensure the gradual elimination of child labour.

With child labour crossing international borders and occurring in all sections of society, a concerted approach by multiple partners on international, national, and local levels is needed to effectively tackle the problem. Trade unions have a natural place in this multi-level governance and multi-partnership approach. As a strong pressure group, trade unions have a role to play in collective bargaining and in social mobilisation efforts at the national, regional and international level. Within the ILO tripartite structure, they can negotiate with employers and governments for the elimination of child labour or other relevant measures.

It is also in the interest of trade unions to help create a social climate which will contribute to the elimination of child labour. By ensuring that child labour is eradicated, unions provide a great service to society and enhance their own profile, membership potential and political standing.

## Importance of education to combat child labour

The most recent international data on education enrolment shows that 72 million children of primary school age are not enrolled in school, but there are also many children who are enrolled but who do not attend regularly or who drop out.

Good quality education and training is necessary for children if they are to acquire the skills necessary to succeed in the labour market; such education and training is also important to economically and socially excluded children and youth so that they can lift themselves out of poverty. Wherever children miss out on education, poverty will continue from one generation to the next.

With the Millennium Development Goals, the United Nations set targets to ensure that by 2015 all children complete a full course of primary education and that there is gender parity in education. These targets will not be met unless the factors that generate child labour and prevent poor families from sending children to school are addressed.

Some of the main education-related policy options to tackle child labour include the following:

- providing free, public and compulsory education to encourage parents to send children to school and reduce the dropout rate;
- removing barriers to girls' education (and in some places, barriers to boys' education), addressing the underrepresentation of girls in education, changing



traditional thinking that may prevent girls from attending schools, making the ambience of schools more welcoming to girls and providing women teachers, who can act as role models;

- reducing direct and indirect costs of schooling, as poor families often cannot afford school fees and other related costs;
- ensuring that children have access to a school and a safe, quality learning environment
- tackling the worldwide shortage of teachers and ensuring a properly trained and professional teaching force;
- creating financial incentives to encourage families to send their children to school;
- providing transitional education for children and youth who have missed out on formal schooling; and
- ensuring that economic policies and poverty reduction strategies give proper attention to getting children into school and creating decent work for adults.

Improving the access to a free and compulsory education is a major step, but it is also important that the education and the teaching provided are of sufficient quality to ensure that children remain in school and to ensure positive learning outcomes. If parents and children do not feel that education is useful and relevant, it reduces the chances that they will send children to school, and children will instead enter the labour market at an early age. Unfortunately, education too often takes place in crowded classrooms with too few textbooks, insufficient instructional time and very often poorly paid and/or unqualified teachers.

Public provision of quality training for teachers and in-service development, the improvement of the status of the teaching

profession and addressing the shortage of teachers are critical to achieve the EFA goals by 2015.

The ITUC works closely with the Global Union Federation Education International for promotion of compulsory education, universal access and free and quality education for all through publicly-funded and publicly-regulated systems of education. EI is actively working on a comprehensive campaign against child labour that is designed to encourage the active participation of all affiliates and to produce measurable results. In this arena, EI also cooperates closely with the other Global Union Federations, the ILO, and NGOs such as the Global March Against Child Labour and Stop Child Labour Coalition.

Furthermore, EI is a core member of the Global Task Force on Child Labour and Education For All together with the ILO, UNESCO, UNICEF, UNDP, the World Bank and, along with the ITUC, the Global March against Child Labour. The Global Task Force seeks to mobilize political will and momentum towards mainstreaming the issue of child labour in national and international policy frameworks contributing to the EFA objectives.

For EI, prevention is one of the main strategies against child labour. Getting children into school and keeping them in it is the best way to keep them away from work. Reducing the number of children who drop out of school and go to work, as well as attracting and retaining current and former working children and those at risk, are areas where teachers and teacher unions are best equipped to intervene.

Teachers' involvement in child labour monitoring can also make a difference. In the schools, teachers interact daily with child workers, ex-workers and children at risk. They normally have wide access to children and their parents in the communities, which allows them to

identify working children who are not attending school regularly or who are not attending at all. Recognizing the sectors or forms of child labour in the communities, and discussing with parents and local and national authorities the situation in the schools, are the key actions in a monitoring system to which teachers can contribute significantly.

Girls, more often than boys, are left out of the educational system and thus are more vulnerable to recruitment into the work force. In addition, girls are expected to do domestic work in their homes, thus presenting them with a kind of double jeopardy. Therefore, specific attention ought to be granted to the needs of girls in actions against child labour. Likewise, children belonging to ethnic and minority groups are usually more likely to suffer discrimination and marginalization, which implies that their rights, and in particular their right to education, are not protected. EI believes that special efforts should be mustered to ensure that ethnic and minority groups are not forgotten.

The provision of education in rural areas is also an important issue of concern. Lack of schools, problems of retaining teachers in those areas, lack of accessible education for children, poor rates of rural school attendance, and lower standards of educational performance and achievement are subjects that need to be urgently addressed. This is of particular importance, as 80% of child labour worldwide takes place in agriculture, thus in rural areas.

Although EI strongly believes that worst forms of child labour should be eliminated as a matter of urgency, the long term goal remains to progressively eradicate all forms of child labour.

**CENTRAL RAILWAY MAZDOOR**  
**AFFILIATED TO AIRF & HMS**  
**SECUNDERABAD.**



For more information about the role of education to combat child labour, please visit Education International website <http://www.ei-ie.org/childlabour> or download the IPEC booklet “Combating child labour through education” on the IPEC website <http://www.ilo.org/ipecinfo/product/viewProduct.do?productId=7850>.

## **Role of the ILO and the core labour standards**

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) is a tripartite body created in 1919 bringing together governments, employers’ and workers’ organisations.. It is devoted to advancing opportunities for women and men to obtain decent and productive work in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity. Its main aims are to promote rights at work, encourage decent employment opportunities, enhance social protection and strengthen dialogue in handling work-related issues.

The ILO adopts conventions that become binding international treaties after their ratification by the member states. National governments and employers’ and workers’ organisations agree on international relevant minimum standards at work. International labour standards are an illustration of these international tripartite agreements.

Based on the ratification of conventions, the ILO has a system of supervision and reporting to ensure that member countries respect the international labour standards. In addition, parties can bring complaints on standard violations to the ILO.

The ILO declared eight of its conventions as fundamental to workers’ rights worldwide:

1. Convention 29 - Forced Labour Convention, 1930;
2. Convention 87 - Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948;
3. Convention 98 - Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949;
4. Convention 100 - Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951;
5. Convention 105 - Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957;
6. Convention 111 - Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958;
7. Convention 138 - Minimum Age Convention, 1973;
8. Convention 182 - Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999.



These conventions safeguard workers' rights as a condition for a society where social justice and social peace can be secured. The full text of these conventions is available on the ILO website: <http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/english/index.htm>

The ILO Conventions and Recommendations are one of the most important tools available in the fight against child labour. The most recent and comprehensive ILO standards on child labour are the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No.138), and its accompanying Recommendation (No.146), and the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No.182) and its accompanying Recommendation (No.190).

## **ILO Convention No. 138 on the Minimum Age for Admission to Employment and Work, 1973**

The objective of Convention No.138 is the effective abolition of child labour, whilst Recommendation No.146 provides the broad framework and essential policy measures for both the prevention and elimination of the problem.

Convention 138 requires ratifying States to pursue a national policy to ensure the effective abolition of child labour and to progressively raise the minimum age for employment or work. The Convention is a flexible instrument setting various minimum ages depending on the type of work and level of development of the country concerned. There are several clauses allowing exceptions, such as the possibility to exclude limited categories like family undertakings or the exclusion of some kinds of work carried out in the framework of education or training.

The first principle of the Convention is that the minimum age should



not be less than the age for completing compulsory schooling, and in no event less than age 15, and that the minimum age should be progressively raised to a level consistent with the fullest physical and mental development of young persons. However a member country whose economy and educational facilities are insufficiently developed may under certain conditions initially specify a minimum age of 14 years.

The main principles of the Convention concerning the minimum age of admission to employment and work are as follows:

	<b>The minimum age at which children can start work</b>	<b>Possible exceptions for developing countries</b>
<p><b>Hazardous work</b> Any work which is likely to jeopardize children's physical, mental or moral health, safety or morals should not be done by anyone under the age of 18.</p>	<p><b>18</b> <b>(16 under strict conditions)</b></p>	<p><b>18</b> <b>(16 under strict conditions)</b></p>
<p><b>Basic Minimum Age</b> The minimum age for work should not be below the age for finishing compulsory schooling, which is generally 15.</p>	<p><b>15</b></p>	<p><b>14</b></p>

<p><b>Light work</b> Children between the ages of 13 and 15 years old may do light work as long as it does not threaten their health and safety or hinder their education or vocational orientation and training.</p>	<p><b>13-15</b></p>	<p><b>12-14</b></p>
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## **ILO Convention No. 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour, 1999**

The Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention was adopted by the ILO in 1999 as the ILO Convention No. 182.

By ratifying this Convention, States commit themselves to taking immediate action to prohibit and eliminate the worst forms of child labour. The Convention is enjoying the fastest pace of ratifications in the ILO's history.

Convention 182 calls for focusing the international spotlight on the urgency of action to eliminate, as a priority, the worst forms of child labour without losing the long term goal of the effective elimination of all child labour. Consequently, the Convention No.182 did not revise or replace Convention No.138 – it complements it.

Convention 182 defines the worst forms of child labour as:

(a) all forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery, such as sale and trafficking of children, bonded and forced labour and forced recruitment in armed conflict;

- (b) commercial sexual exploitation of children, including prostitution and pornography;
- (c) children used by adults in the commission of crime and illicit activities, including the production and trafficking of drugs;
- (d) work likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children.

The Convention leaves it to national governments to determine the exact types of work to be prohibited as hazardous work under item (d). This should be done after consultation with employers' and workers' organisations and taking into consideration relevant international standards.

The ILO also adopted the Worst Forms of Child Labour Recommendation No. 190 in 1999. This recommendation contains, among others, guidance on the types of hazards that should be considered for inclusion within a country-based definition of the worst types of hazards faced by children at work.

According to the Recommendation No. 190, special consideration should be given to:

- (a) work which exposes children to physical, psychological or sexual abuse;
- (b) work underground, under water, at dangerous heights or in confined spaces;
- (c) work with dangerous machinery, equipment and tools, or which involves the manual handling or transport of heavy loads;
- (d) work in an unhealthy environment which may, for example, expose children to hazardous substances, agents or processes, or to temperatures, noise levels, or vibrations damaging to their health;
- (e) work under particularly difficult conditions such as work for long hours or during the night or work where the child is unreasonably

confined to the premises of the employer.

Amongst other measures, the Convention states that members shall, taking into account the importance of education in eliminating child labour, take effective and time-bound measures to ensure access to free basic education, and wherever possible and appropriate, vocational training, for all children removed from the worst forms of child labour. The Recommendation also recommends that programmes of action should be specifically geared to helping younger children, girls and the hidden work situations in which girls are at special risk, as well as other groups of children with special vulnerabilities or needs.

## **Other relevant international conventions**

The ILO Convention No 29 on Forced Labour (1930) is another key convention in protecting children against some of the worst forms of exploitation and is also one of the most fundamental and widely ratified Conventions of the ILO.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, adopted in 1989, seeks to protect a wide range of children's rights, including the right to education and the right to be protected from economic exploitation. Article 32 of the Convention states that the child has the right to be protected from work that threatens his or her health, education or development and that States shall set minimum ages for employment and regulate working conditions.

## ITUC Programme on Child Labour

As stated in its programme of work, the ITUC is committed to carrying forward the historic struggle of the international trade union movement to eliminate child labour and to ensure that every child can go to school and that every adult worker enjoys decent wages. It rejects arguments that child labour is inevitable, economically beneficial, socially acceptable or to the advantage of the children concerned and their families.

The ITUC is mandated to campaign against child labour in all its manifestations and with proper regard to all its causes and ramifications:

- in the informal as well as the formal economy;
- through universal public provision of free, compulsory, quality education and family income support;
- by building public awareness and commitment;
- by campaigning for ratification of ILO Conventions 138 and 182 and their respect by employers including in their supply chains;
- by promoting close linkage between action against child labour and actions for respect for the other core labour standards;
- by cooperating with the ILO, IPEC, and, where appropriate, other UN agencies and institutions such as UNICEF;
- by promoting the implementation of trade union development cooperation activities that support the objective of eliminating child labour;
- by maintaining pressure on international organisations to ensure that trade, economic and financial policies support the elimination of child labour instead of pushing children

- out of school and into work;
- by participating in research activities on child labour and related issues, with due attention to the gender dimension; and
- by linking trade union activities against child labour with those in favour of decent jobs for young people.

The ITUC is working with NGOs that share its objectives, analyses and approach to child labour, that prioritise elimination of the worst forms of child labour, and that target the specific forms of exploitation of girls and of boys.

The ITUC is mainstreaming the child labour issue in most of its areas of work. To have an overview of the ITUC's current actions and activities related to child labour, please go to the "What can you do?" section.

For more information, please visit the ITUC website:

<http://www.ituc-csi.org>

## **Role of Global Unions**

The ITUC works closely with the Global Union Federations (GUFs), the international organisations of trade unions in different sector, and combating child labour is one of the main areas for this cooperation. Each of the GUFs is active against child labour in the sectors it covers, and numerous projects to support removal of children from child labour and their rehabilitation and education are supported by GUFs. Along with this, the work of GUFs and their national member organisations to promote and defend decent work for adult workers means better incomes for adults in the household, thus reducing the economic pressures which keep children out of school and in the

workforce. For more information, see the Global Unions website:  
<http://www.global-unions.org>

## **Role of the ILO International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC)**

The International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) is a programme that the International Labour Organization has been running since 1992. It is the ILO's biggest single operational programme. IPEC's aim is the progressive elimination of child labour by strengthening national capacities to address child labour problems and by promoting a worldwide movement to combat it.

IPEC is responsible for assisting countries to take immediate action to prohibit and eliminate the worst forms of child labour as well as monitoring progress. Its priority target groups are children in the worst forms of child labour, with a specific focus on children who are particularly vulnerable, such as very young working children and girls at work.

The political will and commitment of individual governments to address child labour, in cooperation with employers' and workers' organisations, other non-governmental organisations and relevant parties in society, is the starting point for IPEC action. IPEC support is given to partner organisations to develop and implement measures which aim at preventing child labour, withdrawing children from hazardous work and providing alternatives, and improving the working conditions as a transitional measure towards the elimination of child labour.

The IPEC's partners include employers' and workers' organisations but also other international and government agencies, companies, NGOs, media, parliamentarians...



In the past two years the ILO IPEC programme has had operations in 88 countries and has provided services to directly assist almost 430,000 children who are either involved in or at risk of child labour. For more information, please visit the IPEC website:

<http://www.ilo.org/ipec>

## Global March Against Child Labour

The Global March Against Child Labour is a worldwide movement that aims to protect and promote the rights of all children, especially the right to receive a free, meaningful education and to be free from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be harmful to the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development. The ITUC, Education International and many national trade unions are involved in the Global March.

The Global March movement began with a worldwide march where thousands of people marched together against child labour. The march, which started on January 1998, brought together trade unions, NGOs, teachers, children and individuals, touched every continent, built immense awareness and led to high level of participation. This march finally culminated at the 1998 ILO Conference in Geneva, Switzerland. The voice and opinions of the marchers were considered and reflected in the draft of the ILO Convention against the worst forms of child labour. The following year, the Convention was debated a second time and then unanimously adopted at the ILO Conference.

The ILO Conventions 138 and 182, the UN Convention on Rights of the Child and the Right to free and compulsory education of good quality for all children form the base of the movement's work. The Global March is also trying to eliminate child labour by

questioning, attacking and changing the systems that compel children to work at the international, regional and national levels.

The partners of the Global March movement form an extensive network around the world, bringing together policies and actions for a unified response to the elimination of child labour as well as supporting Education For All and poverty alleviation.

For more information, please visit the Global March website:  
<http://www.globalmarch.org>

## Stop Child Labour Campaign

The Stop Child Labour campaign is an awareness raising campaign that seeks to eliminate child labour through the provision of full-time formal education.

The Stop Child Labour campaign is based on four guiding principles:

- Child labour is the denial of a child's right to education.
- Child labour is unacceptable.
- Governments, international organisations and corporate bodies must ensure that they do not perpetuate child labour.
- Core labour standards must be respected and enforced to effectively eliminate child labour.

For more information, please visit the Stop Child Labour campaign website: <http://www.stopchildlabour.eu>



## Eliminating Child Labour in Tobacco-growing (ECLT) Foundation

The ECLT Foundation is an initiative, bringing together representatives of trade unions, tobacco growers and corporate sector, that is supported by the International Labour Organisation (ILO).

It aims to combat the use of child labour in the tobacco-growing sector so that children are provided with an upbringing that gives them the best chance in all aspects of life.

The ECLT Foundation has the following principles:

- Children have the right to schooling, a normal family life and a safe and healthy childhood.
- Children under the minimum legal age or under the age recognised by the relevant ILO Conventions should not be employed in the growing of the tobacco leaf, nor should they be employed in any production related to tobacco.
- Because many tobacco enterprises are family-run, it may be possible that children take part in small tasks as part of family life. This must not extend to potentially hazardous tasks and must not interfere with the child's educational development, including school attendance.

The ECLT Foundation members are committed to supporting local initiatives, sharing best practices and working with all relevant stakeholders to eliminate child labour in tobacco growing.

For more information, please visit the ECLT Foundation website:

<http://www.eclt.org>



## International Cocoa Initiative (ICI)

The International Cocoa Initiative (ICI) is a partnership between trade unions, NGOs, cocoa processors and the major chocolate brands. The ICI is dedicated to ensuring no child is exploited in the growing of cocoa and is committed to ending child and forced labour in the sector.

Seventy-five percent of the world's cocoa is grown on small family farms in West Africa, with most of the time the whole family working together – particularly during harvest.

The ICI is governed by a foundation board that provides oversight of the ICI, its strategy and funding and takes the necessary decisions to promote and achieve the ICI objectives.

The ICI is trying to change the way cocoa is grown and help to create a different way of life for cocoa-growers and their children by developing and working with initiatives guided by local cocoa-growing communities and by providing practical tools. ICI pilot projects are currently operated in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire.

For more information, please visit the ICI website:

<http://www.cocoainitiative.org>

## Run the Child Labour Checklist

Below is a 12-point checklist. You can use the results to get an idea about how your own country is doing when it comes to child labour. (This may seem more obvious if you are working in a developing country than in an industrialised one, but even the industrialised countries have issues to tackle, such as the informal economy, trafficking or trade union rights.)

In your country:

1 Does every woman and man have the opportunity to obtain work that enables them and their families to live a decent life?

2 Does every child go to school? Do you think the school system is a good quality system?

3 Which child labour conventions have been ratified and implemented by your country?

4 Do national laws and regulations in your country reflect the provisions of ILO Conventions and Recommendations?

5 Can everyone join a union as they please? Are trade unions free to perform their work without outside interference and without restrictions on organising, bargaining and striking?

6 Do trade unions and employers' organisations engage in social dialogue in your country, and are they involved in tripartite discussions with the government and other authorities on matters relevant to them?

Does your country support the work of the International Labour Organisation on combating child labour? 7

Is your country involved in cooperation with IPEC? 8

Is there a Memorandum of Understanding between your government and IPEC? 9

Does your country support further the combat against child labour within the scope of regional (for example, in the EU, African Union, ASEAN or Mercosur) and global governance (not least the United Nations system)? 10

Does your country prioritise child labour in its development cooperation, including when allocating development aid? 11

Does your country include the child labour issue in its trade policy, including by supporting the integration of the respect of Core Labour Standards in trade agreements? 12

## What can you do?

### **Participate in the World Day for Decent Work**

On October 7 2008, the trade union movement is organizing a World Day for Decent Work (WDDW). This is an unparalleled opportunity for trade unions and organisations interested in Decent Work all around the world to join a broad global mobilisation involving a large number of people and a wide range of activities.

There are three themes that you can connect your activities to on the World Day itself:

- rights at work
- solidarity
- ending poverty and inequality

Each of these themes can easily be linked with child labour and should fit into your existing child labour activities.

For more information on the World Day for Decent Work, you can look at the ITUC website, where we will post all news about the WDDW. If you want to be added to the updates via email or just want to have more information, please send an email to: [wddw@ituc-csi.org](mailto:wddw@ituc-csi.org)

## **Participate in the World Day Against Child Labour**

In 2002, the International Labour Organization (ILO) launched the first World Day Against Child Labour, as a way to highlight the worldwide movement to eliminate child labour.

The World Day Against Child Labour is celebrated every year, on 12th June. It provides an opportunity to gain the support of governments, employers and workers' organisations, civil society and others for the campaign against child labour.

2008 activities will focus and raise awareness on "Education: The Right Response to Child Labour".

The role of education is highlighted because access to free and compulsory education for poor children is crucial to reducing child labour. The most recent ILO Global Report noted that the establishment of universal schooling to the age of 14 or 15 has signalled the effective end of child labour in a number of countries.



Join the World Day Against Child Labour and add your voice to the worldwide movement against child labour. For more information, please contact [ipec@ilo.org](mailto:ipec@ilo.org) or visit the IPEC website <http://www.ilo.org/ipec>

## **Contribute to the 12to12 Portal**

The 12to12 Community Portal is a networking platform for various groups working against child labour (workers, employers, youth, NGOs, schools, medias...).

The portal derives its name from June 12th, the World Day Against Child Labour. It aims to create a worldwide network of partners mobilized against child labour and to bring attention to the issue of child labour from June 12th to June 12th, until child labourers are finally given the chance to enjoy their rights as children and one day realize their full potential as the adults that they will become.

The portal has been divided into sections. Take a look at the workers' section to find out more on how you can share your experiences.

To see what trade unions are doing on child labour, or to share your experience and activities as a trade union in the fight against child labour, please register on the 12to12 community portal: <http://www.12to12.org>

After your registration, you will be able to view information added by other organisations as well as share your own information to the community (documents, news, photos, links, websites...).

## **Get involved in the Decent Work agenda**

The elimination of child labour is an important aspect of Decent Work. Child labour not only prevents children from acquiring the skills and education they need for a better future, it also perpetuates poverty and affects national economies. Withdrawing children from child labour, providing them with education and assisting their families with training and employment opportunities contribute directly to creating decent work for adults.

### ***Decent Work, Decent Life Campaign***

The Decent Work Alliance, which consists of the the ITUC, the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC), Solidar, the Global Progressive Forum and Social Alert International, launched the campaign in January 2007 at the World Social Forum.

The campaign aims to place Decent Work at the core of development, economic, trade, financial and social policies at the national, regional and international level.

A specific Decent Work, Decent Life Campaign for Women was launched, on 8<sup>th</sup> March 2008, for the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the International Women's Day.

For more information, please visit the ITUC website or the Decent Work Decent Life website: <http://www.decentwork.org> ,where you also can sign the Decent Work Call to Action.

## **Spread the message and build partnerships**

Trade unions are well placed to influence the attitude of workers families, children and their parents. Raise awareness among your

members and among adult workers through publicity, posters, campaigns, workshops or educational events. Develop child labour modules in your programmes, organise seminars or conference on child labour or use the mass media. You can also join forces and work with others, such as employers' organisations, consumers' organisations, NGOs, child labourers' families, teachers and social workers.

## **Monitor the development of child labour**

Trade unions are well placed to undertake information-gathering and to develop appropriate policies and effective plans to take actions against child labour. Trade unions need to gather detailed information. Collecting local and national data will help to identify where the worst forms of child labour are to be found and will aid in the evaluation of programmes to combat these forms of child labour.

You can for example:

- Collect stories, pictures and other evidence of children engaged in labour.
- Assess the working environment in which children are working.
- Record where child labour is being used.
- Organize or take part in surveys.

## **Use the supervisory machinery of international institutions**

If your country has ratified the ILO conventions, your trade union can use the supervisory mechanisms to pressure your government to take adequate and effective measures:

- Get the copies of reports submitted by your government to the ILO and feel free to send comments on them to the ILO.



- If you think the law and/or practice does not conform to a convention adopted in your country, consider reporting to the ILO and discuss this with the national and/or international organisation to which you are affiliated.

## **Participate in tripartite dialogue**

Tripartite dialogue is central to social stability and to sustainable growth and development. Convention No. 138 and Convention No. 182 are concrete examples of how successful tripartite cooperation can be in the fight against child labour.

Use the tripartite dialogue between trade unions, government and employers to improve the legislation and its enforcement, and to define policies and programmes to combat the worst forms of child labour and to monitor their implementation.

## **Collective bargaining to combat child labour**

Collective bargaining is traditional trade union tool and a way for trade unions to interact with employers. It has served the trade union movement well in improving wages and working conditions, and it has proven to be effective in influencing what occurs in the workplace. That is why collective bargaining must be seen as one of the main trade union strategies to combat child labour.

You can request clauses that exclude the employment of children and use model agreements or codes of conduct developed by national, regional or international organisations.

If necessary, you can also pressure companies and/or producers to negotiate ethical codes of conducts that state the company's position

on human and workers-rights issues such as child labour, forced labour, freedom of association and non-discrimination at the workplace.

## **Campaign for the ratification and the implementation of the ILO Conventions No. 138 and No. 182**

There are still countries that have not ratified the Conventions 138 and 182, and their ratification is an important step to eradicate the problem. It is also very important that governments go beyond ratification and implement effective laws and programmes.

You will find on the ILO website <http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/> the list of countries that have ratified the conventions.

## **Promote the international labour standards**

As explained earlier in this guide, where the international labour standards are respected, children are far more likely to be in school than at work. Promoting the universal respect of international labour standards is then another way to help tackle child labour not only in your country but also in other countries.

## **Join the Global Trade Union Alliance to Combat Forced Labour and Trafficking**

Forced labour is one of the worst forms of child labour as specified in ILO Convention 182, and more than half of the minimum estimated 12.3 million victims of forced labour worldwide are children. The struggle against forced labour and the fight against child labour go hand in hand,. When combating forced labour you are helping to eradicate child labour and vice versa.

The Global Trade Union Alliance to Combat Forced Labour and Trafficking is led by the International Trade Union Confederation and financially supported by the Special Action Programme to Combat Forced Labour of the International Labour Organisation. It promotes decent work for all and, specifically, geographical and institutional commitment and cooperation to eradicate forced labour and human trafficking, as these are the very antithesis of decent work.

The ITUC is building a network of expert trade unionists committed to the eradication of forced labour and human trafficking and linking the network to organisations, employers, institutions and authorities that share this objective. Join the Alliance and help fight forced child labour. You can find out how to do this by emailing to [forcedlabour@ituc-csi.org](mailto:forcedlabour@ituc-csi.org). Subscribe to the mailing list to keep you informed and check out the Forced Labour page on the ITUC website.

## **Pressure your government for an ILO Convention on Domestic Workers**

Domestic work is one of the most common forms of child labour. The Governing Body of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) decided in March 2008 to include the item “Decent Work for Domestic Workers” on the agenda of the 99th session (2010) of the International Labour Conference.

If your country is represented at the ILO Governing Body, then with your national center, urge your government to support the proposal to draw up an international convention specifically designed to protect domestic workers.

## **e-Campaigning**

Internet and new technologies are fast, easy and affordable ways to promote your actions as well as to broadcast your message to a wider audience. There are hundreds of ways to get your message known; the only requirements are to be creative and to reach people where they are online.

If you have a camera, record videos of your actions and/or a documentary about child labour, put them on Youtube or similar websites.

If you think that you have an interesting video to share, please contact us, and we may put your video on the ITUC Youtube channel.

## **Help others to eradicate child labour**

Child labour may not be a big problem in your own country, but there is always the option of helping some other countries. Help your friends in India or in Democratic Republic of Congo or somewhere else to fight against child labour!

## **Direct support to children**

When it is possible, trade unions and others can provide direct assistance to working children and their parents to help:

- remove children from work;
- rehabilitate child-labourers and get them into school; and
- develop apprenticeships for former child labourers

## **Demonstrate**

Demonstrations, when wisely used, are a very good trade union tool.

- Organise a march against child labour and finish it outside a politically strategic building.
- Use and display banners, flags and other materials in symbolic or strategic places. Your banners can include slogans, signatures, handprints or drawings.
- Organize a child labour information stand in the main shopping street of your city or in other busy public places.

## **Get in touch with your regional or national Global March coordinator**

The Global March Against Child Labour has a presence in more than 140 countries. Coordinating your efforts with the Global March might make them more efficient.

## **Subscribe to the ITUC child labour mailing list**

Keep you informed about what is going on around the issue: send us your name, position and organisation, and you will be added to our child labour mailing list.

## **Report back!**

It is important for us to know what you are doing to tackle child labour, so when you have done something, please report back to us by email to: [childlabour@ituc-csi.org](mailto:childlabour@ituc-csi.org)  
If you have materials such as reports, videos or photos, we will gladly accept them!

## Contact

Please contact us if you have any questions or if you want to know more about the subject:

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Telephone: +32.2.224.02.45

Email: [childlabour@ituc-csi.org](mailto:childlabour@ituc-csi.org)

Other contacts:

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You can also contact your national trade union centre. Contact details about your national trade union centre are available on the ITUC address book <http://www.ituc-csi.org/addressbook> or contact your own trade union.