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CHILD LABOUR IN COTTON

A briefing



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Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work Branch (FUNDAMENTALS)

International Labour Organization (ILO)

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OVERVIEW

Cotton is one of the most important and widely produced crops in the world. It covers 2.3% of the world's arable land and is grown in many different environmental, socio-economic and climatic conditions and contexts. Although cotton is grown by approximately 75 countries in the world global production is concentrated in developing countries, dominated by India and China. For many of these countries cotton production is central to economic growth, contributing to foreign exchange earnings and gross domestic product. As a key global cash crop, cotton provides income for the millions of farmers who produce it worldwide, as well as providing a source of livelihoods for many more involved in its production.

Cotton is cultivated on a wide range of production systems globally, from large mechanized systems, with relatively little labour input to small family farms where cotton is hand-picked, and these largely determine the different characteristics of employment and labour intensity. In Africa, which produces 6% of all global cotton, and supports the livelihoods of approximately 20 million people, production is dominated by smallholders.

As is common in the production of many cash crops heavily demanding of labour, child labour can be a significant problem for cotton production, with examples ranging from under age seasonal harvest work to forced and trafficked labour. Child labour in cotton production is also characterized by a high number of incidences of children working in hazardous conditions in activities such as pesticide application and the use of dangerous machinery. This constitutes a major risk for the many companies who have cotton in their products, as traceability along the supply chain is often difficult. Cotton is one of the most heavily traded commodities and the supply chain is long, fragmented and often opaque.

In addition to the risks of child labour, there are a number of questions about the long term sustainability of cotton production, and the challenges which are associated with it. These include ensuring viable livelihoods for smallholder producers, as well as environmentally and ecologically sound production practices. While problems associated with cotton production are context specific and there is no 'one-size-fits- all'

solution to the challenges facing the industry, a number of initiatives have developed over the last decade. These testify to the importance of sustainability to the sector as well as the willingness of companies to work together in a pre-competitive forum to share insights and develop solutions.

SECTION 1

The global cotton sector

1

1.1 Global production and trade

Cotton production has played a major role in the global economy since its industrialisation in the late 1790s.¹ It is the most used textile fibre in the world and in its form as cotton lint, provides the raw material for 40-50% of all textiles (apparel, home textiles, etc).² As cotton seed, it is used in the feed and oil industries. At its peak in the 1990s the consumption of cotton grew to well over 40% of the world's fibre consumption but due to the development and consumption of new synthetic fibres it now accounts for a third of all global fibre demand.³

Cotton production generates an estimated USD 51.4 billion annually in raw product, and is grown on 2.3% of the world's arable land, one of the most significant crops in terms of land use after food grains and soybeans.⁴

In 2014-2015, (based on USDA statistics), the total global production of cotton amounted to 25.89 million metric tons,⁵ a slight decline from the year before. While cotton is grown in more than 75 countries, cotton production is highly concentrated only in a few countries, as **Chart 1** shows. The top 5 cotton producing countries are China, India, US, Pakistan and Brazil and account for approximately 78% of world output with the top two, China (producing 6.53 million metric tons) and India (6.42), together responsible for almost 50% of the world's total production volume.⁶

1 Cotton was industrialized after the invention of the mechanical cotton gin in 1793, which allowed for the efficient extraction of cottonseed from its fibre.

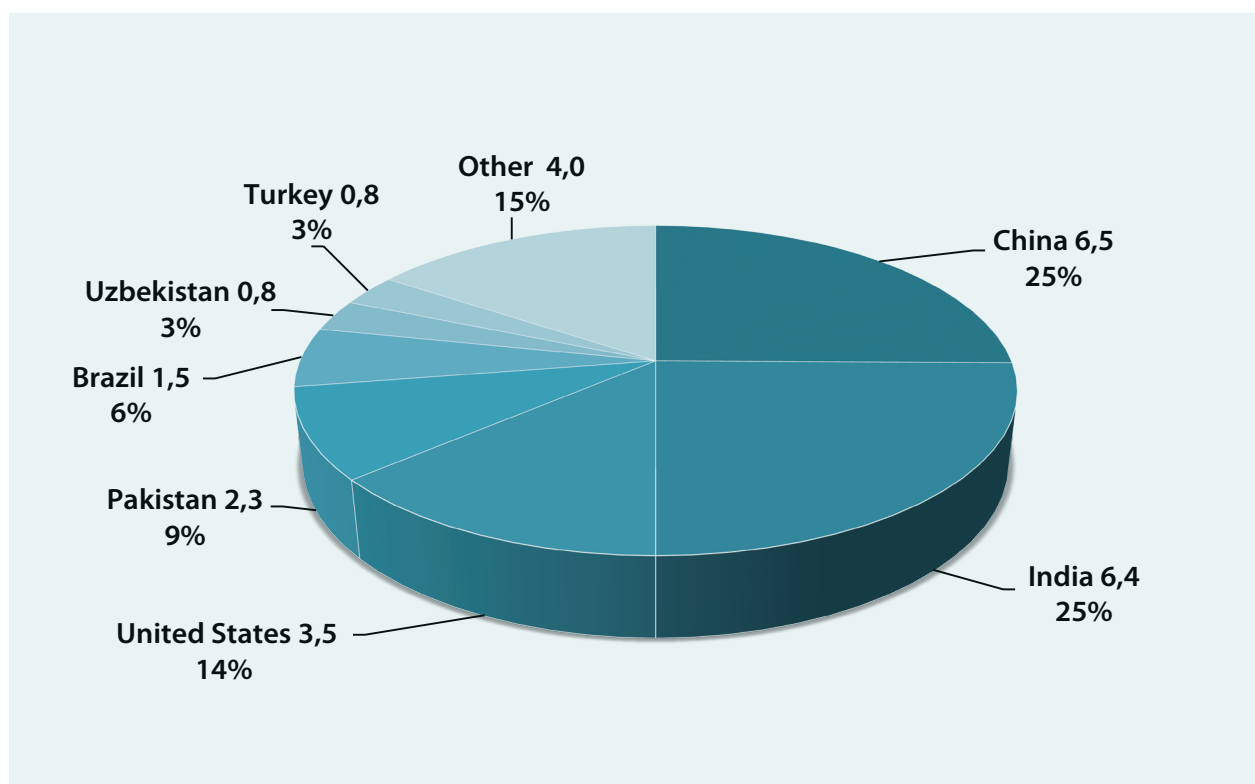
2 World Wildlife Fund, (2009), Commodity Fact Sheet: Cotton, https://assets.wwf.ch/downloads/factsheet_cotton.pdf - Accessed 4/12/15.

3 U.S. Department of Agriculture, USDA, Foreign agricultural service, (2012).

4 FAO & ICAC, (2015), Measuring sustainability in cotton farming systems; towards a guidance framework.

5 U.S. Department of Agriculture, USDA, Foreign agricultural service, November 2015.

6 Calculated from **Table 1**.

Chart 1: Cotton production by country in million metric tons, 2014-2015⁷**Table 1: Top cotton producing countries by domestic consumption, imports and exports in million metric tons, 2014-2015⁸**

PRODUCTION		CONSUMPTION		IMPORTS		EXPORTS	
1. China	6.53	1.China	7.18	1. China	1.80	1. U.S.	2.44
2. India	6.42	2. India	5.33	2. Bangladesh	1.17	2. India	0.91
3. U.S.	3.55	3. Pakistan	2.30	3. Vietnam	0.95	3. Brazil	0.85
4. Pakistan	2.30	4. Turkey	1.39	4. Turkey	0.80	4. Uzbekistan	0.53
5. Brazil	1.52	5. Bangladesh	1.19	5. Indonesia	0.76	5. Australia	0.52
6. Uzbekistan	0.84	6. Vietnam	0.88	6. Thailand	0.32	6. Burkina F	0.26
7. Turkey	0.69	7. U.S.	0.77	7. S.Korea	0.28	7. Mali	0.16
8. Other	4.00	8. Other	4.97	8. Other	1.71	8. Other	2.02
Total	25.89		24.05		7.82		7.72

⁷ Data calculated from : Cotton World Supply, Use and Trade, Foreign Agricultural service USDA, 2015.

⁸ Ibid.

About one-third of world cotton production is traded internationally. The United States is the biggest exporter, a position it has held for over the last five years and before that back since 1834.⁹ The US accounted for almost a third (32%) of the global export market, followed by India, Brazil, Uzbekistan and Australia.¹⁰ The expanding textile industry in Asia has led to it becoming the leading importing region and the largest 4 importers are China, India, Pakistan and Turkey.

China is a significant actor in the global cotton economy as the world's largest producer, importer and consumer (see [Table 1](#)). Its position as the world's largest importer has developed over the last decade but is likely to change over the next few years as the government decides to release some of its large national reserve of stockpiled cotton, which it has built up since 2011 when introduced a reserve policy.¹¹ The decreased demand from China has seen world cotton exports on the whole decrease and they are predicted to decrease further, which has implications for all exporting regions.¹²

1.2 The importance of cotton to economic development

Although world cotton production is dominated by a handful of countries, cotton plays a major role in the economic development of many of the countries which produce it. In these countries, cotton exports are a vital contribution to export revenues, tax income and as a share of GDP. Cotton production generates cash income for an estimated 100 million farmers. When including family labour, hired labour and workers in ancillary services such as transportation, ginning, baling and storage, over 250 million people are involved in the cotton sector.¹³

Within the Africa region, cotton is particularly important and is the third largest generator of export revenues, after coffee and cacao. Many African countries (37 out of the 53) either produce or export cotton,¹⁴ which is described by UNCTAD as 'vital' for the economies of at least 28 of these countries.¹⁵ Here cotton is almost exclusively by produced by smallholders and hand-picked ; up to 20 million people depend on cotton directly or indirectly for their livelihoods. In Sub Saharan Africa (SSA), which produces 10-13% of global cotton production, cotton accounts for between 35-75% of export earnings of its cotton producing countries. In Africa's main exporting countries of Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad and Mali around two thirds of cotton is produced by households

9 ITC, (2007) Cotton Exporter's guide; See www.cottonguide.org/cotton-guide/the-world-cotton-market/the-importance-of-cotton-in-world-trade/?menuID=3502 (accessed on 25 November 2015).

10 Ibid.

11 www.thecropsite.com/reports/?id=5145#sthash.2M0fU1QL.dpuf.

12 FAO/ICAC, (2015), Measuring sustainability in cotton farming systems: Towards a guidance framework, pg. 9.

13 Ibid., page 5.

14 ITC, (2007), www.cottonguide.org/cotton-guide/the-world-cotton-market/the-importance-of-cotton-in-world-trade/?menuID=3502 (accessed on 25 November 2015).

15 UNCTAD, (2011), Commodities at a glance: Special issue on cotton, page 6.

considered poor or near-poor.¹⁶

Within Latin America, cotton production has a long history and grows within a wide variety of ecosystems and in almost every country. The main cotton producers in Latin America are Brazil, Mexico, Argentina and Colombia. Many of the economies of Central Asian Republics are also very dependent on cotton exports, and the main producers within the region are Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. The main cotton producers in Europe are Turkey and Greece.¹⁷

16 ODI, (2009), Aid for Trade in the Agricultural sector: A comparative case study of three cotton sector projects, page 2.

17 US department of Agriculture, (2014), IndexMundi. <http://www.indexmundi.com/agriculture/?commodity=cotton>.

SECTION 2

Cotton production and the cotton value chain

2

2.1 Global cotton production systems and labour characteristics

Cotton grows within a wide range of climatic conditions and agricultural systems, needing a minimum of 600mm of water per year to grow successfully, either from natural rainfall or from irrigation. Irrigated cotton accounts for approximately 73% of global production¹⁸ and almost all cotton production in Africa and India is rain fed.

As **Table 2** illustrates, cotton is cultivated at a variety of scales – from 0.5 hectare family plots to commercial plantations covering hundreds of thousands of hectares. In Brazil, Australia and the United States which have the largest average farm sizes, cotton farmers invest heavily in machinery to work their large farms. These farms employ only a small fraction of the global cotton labour force and account for around one quarter of total cotton-planted area. In most developing countries, and for almost all of Africa, cotton is typically produced on small family based farms of around 1 hectare, where it is hand-picked, with intensive use of labour at harvest times. The majority of these farms practice a mix of commercial and subsistence farming.

In China, where the average farm size is 0,5 hectares, intensive farming techniques and a high dependence on labour has been crucial in supporting it to become the largest cotton producer in the world. However, with rapid urbanization increasing numbers of people are moving to the cities leaving mainly women, children and elderly people to engage with agriculture.¹⁹

The vast majority of instances of child labour is in smallholder and medium-scale production in non-mechanised cotton cultivation.

2.2 The global cotton value chain

Cotton is one of the most heavily traded agricultural commodities and the cotton value chain is long, complex and often opaque. Hence, tracing the exact origin of cotton can pose a difficult problem to companies wishing to address labour conditions down to farm level. As **Diagram 1** shows, there are 5 main stages between the farmer who produces the plant and the final retail item. The first stage begins with ‘Production,’ which includes cultivation

¹⁸ FAO/ICAC, (2015), Measuring sustainability in cotton farming systems: Towards a guidance framework, page 15.

¹⁹ Jianlong, Dai & Hezhong Dong, (2014), Intensive cotton farming technologies in China: Achievements, challenges and countermeasures; Field Crops Research, Volume 155, page 99-110.

and harvesting and is followed by 'Ginning' where the cotton lint is separated from the cotton seed. The next stage is 'Trading' where the cotton is often bought and sold many times before it reaches the 'Manufacturing' stage where the final item is made. The last stage is 'Distribution' where the item is transported to retail outlets. These various stages of the production process are often located in different countries and with value unevenly distributed between them.

Table 2: Global cotton production systems and labour characteristics²⁰

	PRODUCTION SYSTEM	AVERAGE FARM SIZE	LABOUR CHARACTERISTICS
USA	Mechanised	144.3 ha	"Fixed" (contract), seasonal & specialized workforce
Australia	Mechanised	600 ha	Fixed" (contract), seasonal & specialized workforce
Latin America (excl. Brazil)	Small-medium farms	14.1 ha	"Fixed" (contract) & seasonal workforce
Brazil	Mechanised (cerrado), ²¹ Small-medium & Small family farms	2000 ha (cerrado)	"Fixed" workforce (contract), seasonal workforce & specialized workforce
Sub-Saharan Africa	Family farms	1.0 ha	Family, community & seasonal labour
China	Agglomeration of micro-smallholdings	0.5 ha	n/a
India	Family farms, some larger farms	2.8 ha	Family & seasonal labour
Pakistan	Family farms, some larger farms	1.9 ha	Family & seasonal labour
Western Asia (incl Turkey, Syria)	Small-medium & part-mechanised	88 ha	Family / seasonal labour (GAP/Anatolia - Turkey)
Central Asia / CIS	Coop. & private farms	8.3 ha	"Fixed" workforce (contract), seasonal workforce

In terms of marketing, the farmer sells the cotton either through a producer organisation such as a cooperative or straight to ginners' agents or traders. This is then sold to a gin (which is either parastatal or privately owned), before being sold to local spinners and local textiles if it staying in the domestic market, or through international traders to the export market and then again onto textile manufacturers/yarn fabric and lastly onto the final manufacturing stage.²²

The chain evolves in response to the changing patterns of labour costs and the technological development of participating countries. The location of cotton cultivation is determined by climatic and soil conditions and for the large part occurs in developing countries. Ginning almost always occurs within the growing country. The cotton is then traded with substantial

²⁰ Source: ERGON, (2008), Literature Review and Research Evaluation relating to Social Impacts of Global Cotton Production for ICAC Expert Panel on Social, Environmental and economic Performance of Cotton, (SEEP), page 29.

²¹ The Cerrado stretches across nearly 1.2 million square miles of Brazil.

²² Abbott, P. (2013), Cocoa and cotton commodity chains in West Africa; policy and institutional roles for smallholder market participation, in: Rebuilding West Africa's food potential, A Elbehri, (ed.), FAO/IFAD, page 264.

domestic and cross border trading, with manufacturing taking place in many countries. Given the lack of specific trading data and the lack of commercial contact up and down the value chain, most retailers have difficulty tracing their purchased cotton beyond the manufacturer.

The payment received by the farmer for the cotton grown amounts to a very small part of the cost of the final retail product. Value is accumulated as cotton moves through the chain and incurs manufacturing costs. The total value added, (from farm to retail), is several times the value of cotton at the production stage. On average, the retail price of a pair of jeans in 2010 in the United States was 12 times the value of the cotton lint used in its production; the corresponding ratios for t-shirts, polo shirts and woven shirts exceeded 27.²³

2.3 Types of cotton

There are 3 main types of cotton produced: conventional cotton, GM or biotech cotton, and organic cotton.

Conventional cotton is particularly vulnerable to a large number of pests and traditional production relies heavily on the use of agro-chemicals for pest control.

GM (genetically modified) cotton is developed from bio technology and is attractive to farmers as it produces a higher yield than conventionally grown cotton and negates the need to use fertilizer, in most contexts. *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Bt), is a gene inserted into cotton which then causes the cotton, BT cotton, to create a natural insecticide, providing 'built-in' protection from certain insect categories. Over three quarters of annual global cotton production is now genetically modified with at least 12 countries producing biotech cotton commercially.²⁴

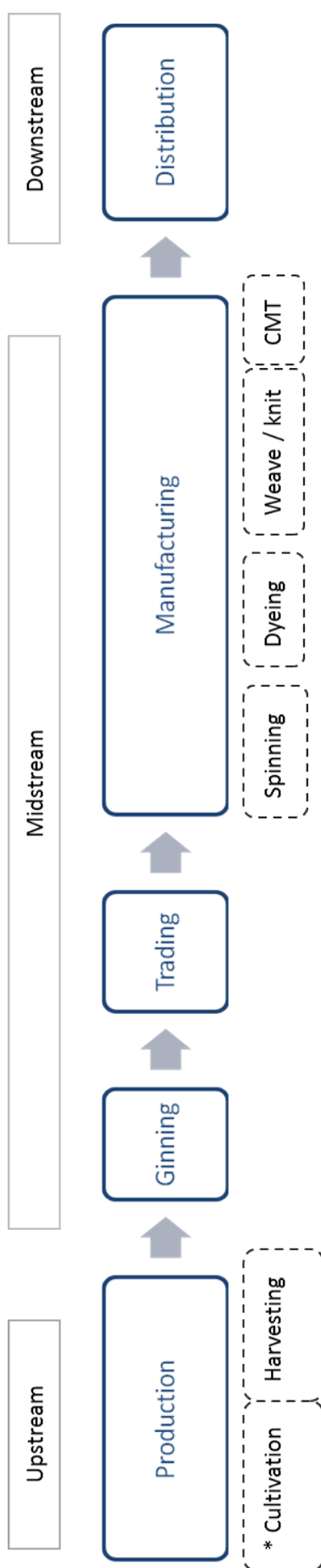
Organic cotton is cotton grown without the use of chemical fertilisers or pesticides. Crop rotation is used to stop the development of cotton pests. For a garment to be termed 'organic' 95% or more of its composition must be made up of certified organic fibre. Organic cotton has expanded rapidly but makes up only 1% of the total world output (ref). India is the largest producer of organic cotton producing 74% of the world's global production. After 3 years of steady decline, 2014 saw a 10% growth in overall organic cotton production.²⁵

Cotton can further be characterized by its grade, colour, length and character which differs by geography and cultivation process.

23 J Devine, J and Plastina, (2011), Pass through analysis of cotton prices, first cited, ICAC/ FAO, (2015), Measuring sustainability in cotton farming systems, page 7.

24 Since 2011/2012 there are 12 countries are producing biotec cotton commercially Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Burkina Faso, China, Colombia, India, Mexico, Myanmar, Pakistan, South Africa and the United States in ICAC, (2012), Cotton: Review of the world situation, International cotton advisory committee, Vol 65, page 6.

25 Textile Exchange, (2014), Organic cotton market report, See: http://www.textileexchange.org/upload/TE_OCMR_2014_Overview.pdf, accessed 29/11/15.

Diagram 1: The cotton value chain²⁶

Cotton production starts with the sowing of the cotton seeds in ploughed fields. The cotton plant takes about 5 months from germination to boll maturation.	Cotton can be picked manually or mechanically. The quality of the cotton will suffer if unripe, damaged, or dirty fibres are mixed with the crop; if foreign matter such as plastic from harvesting bags or packaging material, and hair is mixed in with the cotton fibre; or if the cotton is stored in damp places	Ginning is the process of separating the cotton lint from the cotton seed. The 'ginner' is the operator who cleans and presses the cotton. Cotton seed can be used for oil production or as fodder for nutrition or as fodder for livestock. Ginning is usually carried out in the countries where the cotton is produced.	Trading target is to secure quality supply/ demand through better relationships with producers and retailers.	Spinning involves transforming the cotton lint fibres into yarn, including cleaning, blending, twisting together of fibres and final coiling of yarn.	Dyeing may be applied to loose cotton fibre, yarn, cloth, or made garments.	Cotton yarn is transformed into cloth by weaving or knitting.	'Cut, Trim, Make' Corresponds to the final step of textile manufacturing to produce a final product.	
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²⁶ Ergon Associates (2012), Paper on child labour in cotton cultivation (for IPEC, unpublished).

SECTION 3

Child labour in cotton production

3

Child labour in agriculture and in hazardous work is a reality in many developing and developed countries. Worldwide, an estimated 168 million children are engaged in child labour, more than half of them (85 million) in hazardous work. Over two-thirds (68 per cent) of children in child labour perform unpaid work alongside their parents or in family enterprises. Agriculture accounts for the majority of child labour, with 59% (or 98 million) between 5-17 years working in this sector.²⁷ Agriculture is also a significant employer of migrant child labour, who are particularly vulnerable to exploitation.²⁸

3.1 Definition of child labour and the legislative context

Many children work on family cotton farms helping out their families during busy harvest times and not all of this work is child labour. Whether or not work performed by children is defined as child labour depends on the child's age, the type of work, the hours of work and the conditions under which it is performed. It can also depend on whether or not national labour legislation of the country involved applies or not to family farming.

Child Labour is defined in the two ILO Conventions on child labour: the ILO Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138) and the ILO Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention (No. 182). Under the Convention No. 138, States must specify a minimum age for employment under which no child should work. The general minimum age for work should not be less than 15 years, with light work permitted from the age of 13. In countries with insufficiently developed economies and education systems, those ages may be set, provisionally, at 14 and 12 respectively. But there are no variations for worst forms of child labour: no child under 18 should be engaged in a worst form of child labour: hazardous work; forced labour; commercial sexual exploitation; or illicit activities. It is also important that the minimum school leaving age and the minimum age for full-time work are the same.

Hazardous work

ILO Convention No. 182 defines hazardous work as any work which, by its nature or the

²⁷ ILO, (2013), Marking progress against child labour, Global estimates and trends 2000-2012.

²⁸ IOM, (2013), Migrant children in child labour: a vulnerable group in need of attention, Children on the move.

circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of the child.²⁹

Both ILO Conventions (No. 138 and No. 182) provide for a general prohibition of hazardous work for all persons under 18 years. However, they leave to the discretion of member States the determination of such types of work by national laws or regulations, after consultation with employers' and workers' organizations, and to identify where they exist.³⁰ Once determined as a result of these consultations, the types of work that are designated hazardous for children are recorded in what is commonly known as the "Hazardous work list" or the "Hazardous child labour list" (HCL list).

The ILO Worst Forms of Child Labour Recommendation, 1999 (No. 190) gives some indication regarding the types of work that should be prohibited and therefore, the types of work that should be included in the hazardous work list.

In agriculture, some activities which may be characterised as 'hazardous' are:

- Application of and exposure to agro-chemicals, and pesticides in particular
- Use of dangerous machinery or tools, such as machetes
- Carrying heavy loads

(For a list of typical tasks, hazards and health risks of children working in crop production see Table B.2 in the [Annex B](#).)

Forced labour³¹

As defined in ILO Convention No. 182, the worst forms of child labour also comprise "all forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery, such as the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage and serfdom and forced or compulsory labour", which is relevant to cotton production. As many examples show, children's participation in cotton farming may also relate to forms of indebtedness such as bondage or trafficking. Underlying factors contributing to forced/bonded labour include:

- Involvement of unregulated recruitment intermediaries (e.g. West Africa, Brazil)
- Bondage due to the property relations between a landowner and a tenant farmer

²⁹ "The phrase "likely to jeopardise the health" (Convention No. 138) or "likely to harm the health" (Convention No. 182) or "likely to be hazardous" (CRC) is significant. It means that it is not necessary to prove through research or other means that the work will definitely result in illness or injury or some other negative consequence but, instead, that there is a substantial threat of its doing so." Children and hazardous work, what we know and what we need to do, IPEC, (2011), page 5.

³⁰ See, Convention No. 138, op. cit., Article 3(2): "The types of employment or work to which paragraph 1 of this Article applies shall be determined by national laws or regulations or by the competent authority, after consultation with the organisations of employers and workers concerned, where such exist"; and, Convention No. 182, op. cit., Article 4(2): "The types of work referred to under paragraph 3(d) shall be determined by national laws or regulations or by the competent authority, after consultation with the organisations of employers and workers concerned, taking into consideration relevant international standards, in particular Paragraph 3 and 4 of the Worst Forms of Child Labour Recommendation, 1999."

³¹ In 2014, the ILO adopted a Protocol and a recommendation which supplements the existing Forced Labour Convention, 1930, No. 29, by providing specific guidance on effective measures to be taken to eliminate all forms of forced labour.

(e.g. Pakistan); or a relationship of indebtedness (e.g. India) which are then passed on to the child.

Forced child labour may also occur in cotton-producing nations where the government has a key role in the cotton sector, and cotton is seen as a 'strategic crop'. In CIS countries a history of state-led mobilisation of labour, has had particularly problematic implications for forced child labour, although there is evidence that this is now changing.

Many countries have their own legislation regarding children and employment set in national law. These are mostly based on the ILO Convention No. 138 (which 168 countries have ratified) and Convention No. 182 (which 180 countries have ratified). However, in many countries the reality is that the legislative frameworks are not adequately enforced and child labour remains prevalent. As mentioned above, national labour legislation does not always apply to family farming.

Whereas there is clear consensus in member state transposition of Convention No. 182 with regard to agro-chemicals (see examples from West Africa in Table B.1 in [Annex B](#)), only a minority of cotton-producing states have officially identified cotton picking as a hazardous task,³² unsuitable for children below the age of 18.

3.2 Cotton cultivation and related tasks

Cotton growing is hard work and with non-mechanised production, the cultivation of cotton can be highly labour intensive. An absence of technical equipment, entails a significant labour requirement especially during the most labour-intensive phases of the cultivation cycle (see [Diagram 2](#)). First there is land preparation and planting the cotton seeds which in countries like Burkina Faso is done using manual or ox-drawn implements.

The cotton seed starts to flower cotton 1-2 months after planting and will bloom for several weeks or months provided the conditions are favourable. After flowering the inner part of the flower develops into a fruit called the 'cotton boll', (2-3cm wide). During this time the plant will need irrigating, where the crop is not rain fed, hand weeding and thinning. Pesticide application for weed disease and insect control also occurs at this stage. It takes about 2 months from the blooming of the flower to the opening of the bolls when they burst open to reveal soft masses of fibres. These fibres are then picked mechanically or by hand. Manual picking is very labour intensive. Once the cotton is picked it is transported to a cotton 'gin' where the cotton fibres (Lint) are separated from the cotton seeds. By weight, seed cotton is composed of roughly one-third cotton lint and two-thirds cottonseed. The cotton lint is then compacted in bales and stored before it is later turned into yarn. It takes around six months from planting to harvesting of

³² Such as Brazil and Uzbekistan.

cotton.

In non- or low-mechanised farming systems there is also a series of other on- and off-farm tasks which require labour: stick-picking, tip-cutting, as well as transport, storage and handling. This means that even micro-/ family smallholders are obliged to find external labour inputs for certain key processes, particularly harvesting. In many cases that extra labour is in the form of children, either helping out their families or as part of migrant agricultural labour or in some cases, trafficked from within or across borders, with some children as young as 5 years old. In some countries such as India, the tasks performed are differentiated by gender, age and ethnic group.

3.3 Conditions of cotton production for children

Cotton growing requires hard work encompassing a range of hazardous activities and circumstances and health and safety risks. For example children work closely with toxic pesticides in many countries where there is often insufficient legislation, information and regulations on application, further increasing their risk of exposure. Significant health problems, short and long term, are linked to pesticides³³ including acute poisoning that can result from accidental ingestion.³⁴

Many children engaged in cotton related activities work long hours, significantly above the limit set by national legislation and may receive little or no pay. In many cases this work is at the expense of their education. Children may work in extreme temperatures, without sufficient food and rest and in conditions which can seriously impact upon their physical and psychological development.

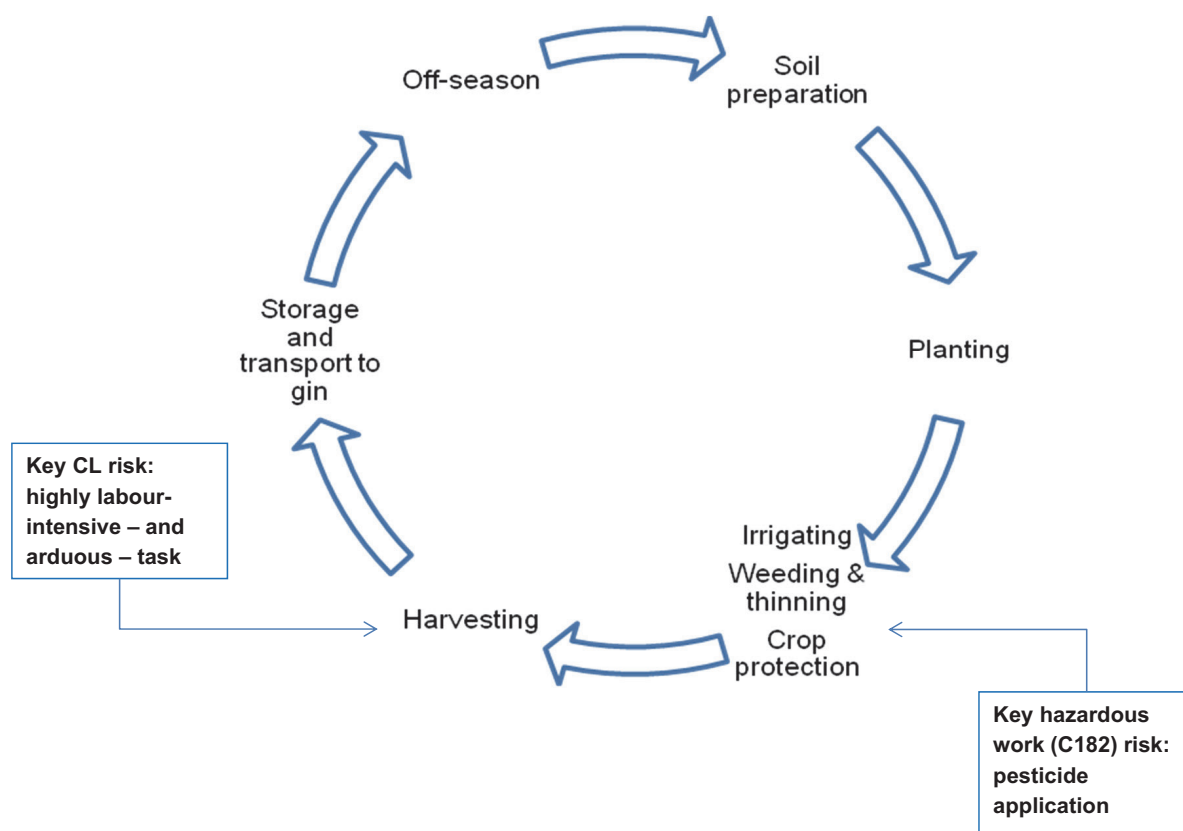
The use of child labour to meet a high labour demand, is exacerbated by weak legal enforcement, socio-cultural norms, challenges in ensuring participation in education,³⁵ as well as the low profit margins of small producers which hinder the hiring, in conditions of decent work, of adult workers and youth above the relevant minimum age. The problem of child labour is further exacerbated by reports of state mandated quotas of up to 50kg per day where punished if they do not meet them. This practice has previously been reported in Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and China.³⁶

33 Some symptoms of acute pesticide poisoning include: burning eyes, difficulty breathing, dizziness, excess sweating, headache, runny nose, skin rashes, blurred vision, muscle cramps, twitching of eyelids, vomiting, loss of consciousness and seizure in: International Journal of Environmental Health, (2005), Vol 11, page 225.

34 It is also common for contamination from pesticides to occur in circumstances of family farms where families live and work in cramped conditions and there is no separate storage space. See: Where does your T-shirt grow? Susanna Ruskin, Guardian, 9th August 2014.

35 Or where school calendars are modified to allow children's participation in harvesting – as in NE Brazil, Egypt, and most CIS states.

36 Cited by World Vision Australia, Forced and Child Labour in the Cotton Industry, (2012), quoting International Labour Rights Forum and Tajikistan Social Institute for Youth and Civilization (2007), Labour Conditions in the Tajikistan Cotton Industry. See: <https://campaign.worldvision.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/Forced-and-child-labour-in-the-cotton-industry-fact-sheet.pdf> Accessed, 29/11/15.

Diagram 2: Overview of tasks in the cotton cultivation cycle³⁷

3.4 Overview of tasks related to child labour in cotton production

Depending on context, children are reported to be most involved in:

- **Manual harvesting** – All regions (although mechanisation is gaining ground as mentioned above). **Hand-picking** is arduous work plucking the bolls from the plant, separating cotton from the bolls and drying the cotton. This work is often associated with long hours, repetitive tasks, difficult climatic conditions and low wages based on piece-rates and high quotas. There is often poor accommodation for migrant and casual labour and significant health and safety risks (in terms of heavy lifting, chemical residue, snake bites, injuries from contact with dangerous machinery). In some contexts, children may also be required to pack and load (raw) seed cotton.³⁸
- **Crop protection** – Pesticide application is hazardous work and therefore is a worst form of child labour, subject to a minimum age of 18 years. However, pesticide handling and application is reported to be undertaken by children in Pakistan, Turkey and sub-Saharan West Africa. Exposure to harmful toxins during application of pesticides is the key risk, exacerbated by a lack of training and guidance and personal protective

³⁷ Better Cotton and Decent Work: Activities, impacts and lessons learned, Executive Summary, 2013, Ergon, page 2.

³⁸ Ergon Associates (2012), Paper on child labour in cotton cultivation (for IPEC, unpublished).

equipment (PPE) for adult workers – and the widespread impracticality of PPE in semi-tropical climates. Where children are not involved in application they are often still exposed to the negative impacts as they often return to the field after spraying. The long term negative impact of pesticides upon children's health is still not fully known.³⁹ There are also reports that children in Egypt are employed in cotton-worm removal.⁴⁰

- **Weeding** – Children are reported to be engaged in weeding (and thinning), in almost all countries where child labour is identified; depending on circumstances, this may be non-arduous work or light work, which does not interfere with school attendance and achievement. One reason for the use of children for this task is that workers have to bend down for long periods of time and adults cannot work in such a position for a long time.⁴¹
- **Irrigation** – In non-rain fed cultivation, such as in India and Pakistan, where there is very little water irrigation infrastructure manual irrigation is a key task. Children are reported to be engaged in carrying water and watering fields in both India and Pakistan.⁴²
- **Ginning** – Children often work in ginning factories without protective clothes or masks, where the air is contaminated with white cotton dust, and this often causes respiratory problems. Children spread cotton on platforms, throw cotton into machines and push the bales out of the factory. They also remove cotton seed. Ginning is characterised by a high level of accidents and injuries.⁴³
- **Hybridization**⁴⁴ – The emasculation and cross pollination of the cotton seeds is done manually and often by children. It is incredibly delicate work removing first the bracts then the petal of the plant with the nail of the thumb without damaging the stigma, style or ovary. Very often pre-pubescent girls are used for this task in India.⁴⁵

This preliminary identification of task allocation and activities undertaken is important in developing and understanding of the significant potential for child labour, including hazardous child labour, – in cotton cultivation as is the age of the children. However, given the paucity of primary data, and the inaccessibility of target populations, it is

39 For more research on the impact of pesticides on children in crop production see IPEC (2011) Children in hazardous work: what we know and what we need to do, page 22-23.

40 Idem.

41 Idem.

42 Idem.

43 See Prayas Centre for Labour Research and Action, (2012), Investigating the incidence of child labor in cotton ginning factories of Gujarat.

44 Hybrid cotton seed cultivation is particularly labour intensive requiring 2,200 labour days per acre per crop year, of which 90%, 2000 days are taken up by manual cottonseed cross pollination. FLA report: Monitoring and remediation on cotton seed farms in India. 2004, page 8.

45 EJF, (2007), The Children behind our cotton, page 5 and Dr D. Ventateswarlu, (2015), Cotton's forgotten children: Child labour and below minimum wages in hybrid cottonseed production in India.

often difficult to assert with confidence the precise age categories of children working in cotton cultivation.

3.5 Factors contributing to child labour

There are a number of economic and socio-cultural factors contributing to child labour in cotton production and these differ between countries and in some cases, within countries.

Supply side factors

Poverty

Of all the reasons determining whether or not children work, poverty (as a supply and demand factor), emerges as the most compelling one, particularly in rural areas where there is weak labour market and structural unemployment, labour migration of adult household members, large families and a low level of education. Poor households spend the bulk of their income on food and the work children do is often critical to their survival.

Cotton cultivation is a vital source of income to some of the world's poorest countries but smallholder cotton farming remains a low-productivity, labour intensive practice with small operating margins. Cost competitiveness therefore widely derives from labour cost savings. As ICAC notes, for instance, "African franc zone cotton producers rely on unpaid family labour."⁴⁶

Social norms

Social and cultural norms influence the institutional context in which child labour occurs, by making child work either acceptable or unacceptable, as does the lack of awareness within communities about its negative consequences. Children are often expected to follow in their parents' footsteps and are frequently summoned to "help" other members of the family, often at a young age. In the context of cotton, several socio-cultural dynamics are relevant:

- Agricultural 'education through work' (*l'éducation par le travail*) is considered in many cotton producer communities, not least in sub-Saharan Africa., i.e. where the children learn a trade. While major steps have been taken in developing 'school gardens' and other approaches which transmit practical agricultural knowledge in an educational setting there remains a significant challenge in delineating appropriate boundaries for both education and (unpaid) employment.

⁴⁶ Ergon Associates (2012), Paper on child labour in cotton cultivation (for IPEC, unpublished)..

- Historical traditions of, and networks for, ‘sending’ children (*enfants confiés*) – within the (often very) extended family for employment, or for (religious) education – are closely connected to the dynamics which give rise to forms of child trafficking for commercial exploitation on cotton farms in West Africa.
- In some CIS states, the slogan of “collective work for the collective good” has been invoked as grounds for coercive labour practices in cotton harvesting in which state enforces all citizens (including children) to work. In this regard significant progress has been made in combating child labour in Uzbekistan, although the ILO supervisory bodies remain concerned about coercion in the deployment of adult labour.⁴⁷

Migration

Studies conducted in Turkey, West Africa, India, Pakistan and Kazakhstan indicate that (internal and cross-border) labour migration often leads children to the cotton fields. In the cotton-growing areas in south-eastern Turkey, for instance, many children of migrant farm workers work alongside their parents, moving with them from their home villages according to crop cycles. Migrant workers are vulnerable to abuse and child migrants more so.⁴⁸

The volume of migrant child labor can be very large in agriculture with estimates of as many as 240,000 migrant child laborers working in seasonal cotton harvesting in Turkey and 416,460 migrant children work in hybrid cottonseed farms in India.⁴⁹

Barriers to education

The availability, accessibility and affordability of basic education are closely related to child labour, and this is also the case in cotton-producing communities, many of which are situated in remote rural areas. Basic education is not free in all countries and is not always available for all children. In situations where education is not affordable or parents see no value in education, children are sent to work, rather than to school.⁵⁰ In addition, the appropriateness of school term schedules may be modified in order to accommodate the labour demands of the cotton cycle such as in Brazil and former Republics.

Weak legislative environment

While the majority of countries have ratified the Conventions relating to child labour, (see earlier), they are often inadequately applied or enforced in many cotton producing

47 Ergon Associates (2012), Paper on child labour in cotton cultivation (for IPEC, unpublished).

48 Idem.

49 See: B Gulcubuk et al, (2003), Worst Forms of Child Labor in the Agriculture Sector: Children in Cotton Harvesting in Karatas, Adana and D. Venkateswarlu (2007) Child bondage continues in Indian cotton supply chain.

50 UN briefing website ref: <http://www.un.org/en/globalissues/briefingpapers/childlabour>.

countries and a weak legislative environment further exacerbates the situation of child labour.

Demand side factors

Cheap and compliant labour

Many employers prefer to hire children simply because they are cheaper than their adult counterparts. Children are often paid less than adults (or unpaid) and have weaker negotiating power as well as being often perceived as more docile workers.

The literature suggests that it is common for families to engage in sub-contracting – including of children – where work is paid at piece-rates, as is the case for the majority of tasks in the cotton cycle, and harvesting in particular. The implications of piece-work for child labour in cotton-growing have been explored in depth by ILO India,⁵¹ noting that piece-rate contracts made with individual labourers have an adverse social impact because children may also accompany the parent to boost the parent's income.

Technical requirements

The 'nimble fingers' myth is particularly relevant to cottonseed production, where employers claim that the tasks of cross-pollination, emasculation and hand-pollination are best undertaken by pre-pubescent, female children, as is the case in India.⁵² Likewise there are a number of other tasks such as weeding where the perception is that children's small hands and bodies are better. These tasks then become regarded as children's responsibilities.

⁵¹ ILO, (2006), Labour and financial markets from the employers' perspective - The case of Ranga Reddy District in Andhra Pradesh.

⁵² Ergon Associates (2012), Paper on child labour in cotton cultivation (for IPEC, unpublished).



SECTION 4

Child labour in context: Key sustainability challenges in cotton

4

“Sustainability and cotton” is a complex topic including concerns around pesticide and water use, forced and child labour, farmer suicides, GMOS and the negative impact of subsidies. Given the wide variance of cultivation systems and growing contexts for the same crop, some of these issues can only be addressed locally, through approaches which are context specific.⁵³ However, it is worth noting that the main social, economic and environmental concerns which dominate the discussion can have global repercussions for the industry as a whole.

4.1 Sustainability challenges

Sustainable incomes and livelihoods for smallholder farmers

- Cotton-growing is a high risk activity with low margins of profit for many producers and is greatly affected by climatic conditions, as well as being subject to volatility of international cotton prices.⁵⁴ Creating sustainable livelihoods for many smallholder farmers and workers in developing countries remains a significant challenge for the industry. Distortions in the global cotton market caused by subsidy regimes in developed countries (particularly the US), and increasing low-cost cotton production in other developing countries (especially Brazil) can cause significant price fluctuations on the global cotton market. In West Africa, these challenges have been compounded by the appreciation of the CFA (which is linked to the euro) against the US dollar.⁵⁵
- Subsidies and international pricing policies: Cotton producing countries that subsidize their domestic industry, including the USA, China, Greece, Spain, Turkey, Brazil, Mexico, Egypt and India, increase or support production within their own country. This has a negative impact on average international cotton prices and market price. Where there is a high reliance on cotton production for livelihoods distortions in cotton prices can increase levels of poverty significantly in cotton growing regions.⁵⁶

⁵³ International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) and the international institute for environment and development (IIED) (2011), The State of Sustainability Initiatives Review: Standards and the Green Economy, page 187.

⁵⁴ Ergon Associates (2012), Paper on child labour in cotton cultivation (for IPEC, unpublished).

⁵⁵ See: ODI, 2009, Aid for Trade in the agricultural sector: A comparative case study of three cotton sector projects.

⁵⁶ For example, when world cotton prices declined by 40% during 2001-2002, rural poverty in cotton- growing regions of Benin increased by 8% percent. See: Minot, N. & L. Daniels (2002), Impact of global cotton markets on rural poverty in Benin, paper prepared for the World Bank.

- Cotton farming is frequently input-intensive. In developing countries, inputs may be expensive and/or unreliable, and many farmers are dependent on ‘middle-men’ for both input and credit.⁵⁷ Indebtedness is a real risk due to: high input costs; crop failure; delayed/no payment from the purchaser and unaffordable rates of interest.⁵⁸ Repeated indebtedness gives rise to a “debt trap” where the farmer seeks more credit –to continue cultivation in order to service the original debt and can lead to high levels of farmer suicide as well as forms of debt bondage for children.⁵⁹ For many farmer suicides in India the rising costs of GM cotton seeds, fertilisers and insecticides as well as declining yields have all been blamed for indebtedness.

Knowledge, information, market price, and infrastructure

- In some places (e.g. West Africa) access to credit per se is not the central issue: rather, key issues are access to sound information about appropriate input use, the cost/availability of inputs, and as mentioned above, market price. (Revenues derived from market prices perceived by most stakeholders to be key factor in sustainability of West African cotton).
- Cotton-farming is knowledge-intensive. In some producer countries, extension systems are in crisis or non-existent. Elsewhere this role has been fully or partially assumed by the private sector.⁶⁰
- Rural cotton cultivation relies on infrastructure in order to reach markets. These can be weak and/or in disarray.

Environmental sustainability: Negative impacts on the ecosystem and the worker

The use of pesticides is a serious hazard for cotton production and a major sustainability challenge for the industry. More pesticides are used on cotton per unit than on any other crop, (as cotton is highly susceptible to pests such as cotton bollworm), causing concerns about the amount used as well as its application. In 2010, a SEEP study found that a relatively high proportion of the pesticides used in cotton are highly hazardous pesticides (HHPs), which, according to FAO criteria, should be considered for phasing out.⁶¹ Given that there is often poor regulation and information regarding spraying and that many farmers in developing countries do not have access even to basic safety equipment such as gloves and glasses respirators, it is no surprise that child and adult

57 In most developing countries, there are very limited credit options for smallholders – such as the ginner/parastatal (West Africa), input retailers, ‘traders’ (South Asia), and ‘futures companies’ (Tajikistan).

58 Ergon Associates (2012), Paper on child labour in cotton cultivation (for IPEC, unpublished).

59 For a fuller analysis of the problems of credit and debt affecting cotton smallholders see: Social and economic impacts of cotton production: Final report to the BCI Steering committee (2006), Ergon Associates, Page 16.

60 Ergon Associates (2012), Paper on child labour in cotton cultivation (for IPEC, unpublished).

61 FAO/ ICAC (2015) Measuring sustainability in cotton farming systems: Towards a guidance framework, pg. 7.

illnesses and deaths from pesticide poisoning are not infrequent.⁶²

In many developing countries producers perceive the economic sustainability (viability) of cotton cultivation to be more important than its environmental or social sustainability, despite evident linkages between them, which has major implications for trying to change bad practice.

Climate change

The impact of climate change on agriculture and cotton production is likely to be negative and although cotton is a relatively 'hardy' plant it is likely to suffer from the predicted rising temperatures, decreased soil moisture and more extreme weather events and flooding.⁶³ Food security concerns are likely to be exacerbated possibly leading to different land use priorities.

4.2 Key initiatives and networks on cotton production

The cotton supply chain is complex and finding a solution for some of these sustainability challenges will require action by a number of actors including, companies and retailers. However, the potential of adopting sustainable production practices is significant, improving the overall quality and security of supply, and can also serve to build the fibre's competitiveness on global markets.⁶⁴

In response to the challenges facing the industry a number of key initiatives, networks and standards have formed over the last decade, aimed at creating more sustainable cotton supply chains. There is now a clear consensus on the need for increased social and environmental accountability as evidenced by the presence and support of key industry stakeholders and governments.⁶⁵ As the initiatives show, substantial progress has been made over the last decade in increasing the amount of certifiable cotton. However, as a result there remain challenges in verifying the compliance of the hundreds of thousands of farms producing certified cotton and in evaluating the actual impact on child labour which has been achieved.

62 "Illnesses from pesticides occur in several ways. Before applying pesticides, farmers must generally mix: chemicals with water, leading to direct skin contact. Then farmers apply these pesticides using back- pack sprayers that frequently leak. Most farmers do not have access to protective gear during application; few farmers wear the recommended respirators, goggles, gloves, boots, or long sleeves in the hot tropical sun. This puts farmers at risk of either inhaling or coming into skin or eye contact with pesticides. Another risk of pesticide poisoning exists after application. When used in the developed world, there are strict rules about entering fields after pesticide application. In Africa, no signs are put out to warn those who might enter a field that it has just been treated." W. Moseley and L Gray, (2008), *Hanging by a thread: Cotton, Globalization and poverty in Africa*.

63 International Trade Centre, *Cotton and climate change: Impacts and options to mitigate and adapt*, (2011).

64 IISD & IIED, (2014) *The state of sustainability initiatives review: Standards and the green economy*, page 205.

65 Ibid, page 205.

Better Cotton Initiative

The Better Cotton Initiative (BCI), based in Geneva, is a multi-stakeholder initiative comprising 648 members, made up of producer organizations, ginners, traders, NGOs, retailers, brands, suppliers, manufacturers and associate members. It functions as a product certification programme, and is now present in 20 countries, having witnessed impressive growth over the last few years. Its target is mainstream market transformation and currently (2015) accounts for 7.6% of total global cotton production. It aims to increase this to 30% by 2020.⁶⁶ In 2014, an estimated 1.2 million farmers participated in BCI's programme, (up 79% from 2013).⁶⁷

The aim of the initiative is to improve cotton growing conditions and productive capacity for smallholder farmers, based on developing standards on sustainable cotton production (the Better Cotton Standard, BCS). BCS is based on economic, environmental and social criteria and adapted to farm size. Capacity building is core to the BCI approach with a number of projects offering technical support to smallholder farmers. The projects are funded with grants from brands and retailers, with match funding provided by various international donor organisations.⁶⁸

To be licensed to grow Better Cotton, farmers must first reach a set of Minimum Requirements (defined standards for pesticide use, water management, decent work, record keeping, etc.), as well as achieving continuing progress on a wider sustainability indicators. Compliance is verified primarily by annual self-assessments that the farmers report which is then followed by second party credibility checks (carried out by BCI or partners) and independent third party verification on a sample of farms.

There is an increasing focus on traceability and in order to demonstrate that BCI cotton is grown according to standards, all training, auditing and certification which takes place must accompany the cotton bale from farmer to ginner to spinner to weaver or knitter. The development of a traceability system in 2014 aims to close the gap between the spinners and the retailers and allows fabric mills to track the better cotton. Ginners are obliged to track (physically segregate) the cotton and produce bales of lint using only Better Cotton.

BCI operates 'business to business' and is significant in helping many major retailers achieve the goals they set regarding sustainable production. For example IKEA (a founding member of BCI) reached its target of sourcing 100% of its cotton from sustainable sources in September 2015,⁶⁹ which amounts to approximately 0.7% of the

66 BCI, (2014), Harvest report, page 1. Available at: <http://bettercotton.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/FINAL-HARVEST-REPORT-2014-updated-2pg1.pdf>.

67 Ibid, page 6.

68 See BCI website; <http://bettercotton.org/about-bci/qa/how-is-bci-funded>.

69 IKEA website: http://www.ikea.com/gb/en/about_ikea/newsitem/IKEA-first-major-retailer-to-use-100-percent-cotton.

world's cotton supply.⁷⁰

With regard to labour rights, Decent Work standards are included as part of the BCS and cover non-discrimination, freedom of association, child labour, and forced labour, (Including the prohibition of trafficking). Before a BCI programme begins Initial scoping studies are undertaken by a third party. The BCI approach is 'holistic' and where there is a problem of child labour this will be addressed as part of a community approach, working with local partners. However, there are little publically available examples of where this has taken place apart from Pakistan, where awareness raising on child labour was undertaken with communities. Before 2011, 92% per cent of Better Cotton was produced in Brazil, Pakistan and India dominated by larger estates in Brazil and Pakistan (almost exclusively in the case of Brazil) where arguably there is a lower incidence of child labour than in other smaller cultivation sites. Since then it has expanded to include significantly more African production.

Cotton made in Africa

Founded in 2005 Cotton Made in Africa, (CmiA) was initiated by the Aid for trade Foundation (AbTF) and is based in Hamberg. CMiA, is a multi stakeholder sustainability initiative and has as its partners, 20 retailers/ fashion brands and 30 mills. It is operational in 10 countries in Sub Saharan Africa and aims to improve the living standards and income of African smallholder cotton farmers through increased yield and sound ecological and environmental practices.⁷¹

CmiA work with African farmers, operating on between 1-3 hectares, who adopt and implement CMiA social and environmental standards. The emphasis is on supporting the farmers to make progress towards achieving these. CmiA's initial approval is based on self-declaration followed by a third-party verification audit every two years. Like Better Cotton, it is also difficult to evaluate the progress made towards the standards or to what extent child labour is a problem and how it is being addressed. A distinctive red market label, 'Cotton made in Africa' is used to indicate compliance. Retail partners do not pay any premium prices for CmiA cotton, instead they pay a license fee end to use the label and then integrate CmiA into their supply chains.

According to an interview with the Director, farmers who grow their cotton according to CmiA criteria generate around 20% increased yields. On top of that CmiA cotton ensures timely and transparent payment, pre-financing of inputs and fair working conditions in the gins. The initiative operates 'business to consumer' connecting smallholder cotton farmer to international markets by promoting the sustainability features of their cotton. Around 25% of all cotton from SSA is CmiA cotton.⁷²

⁷⁰ IKEA (2014), Sustainability Report, page 31.

⁷¹ See: <http://www.cottonmadeinafrica.org/en/about-us/the-initiative> (accessed 20/11/15).

⁷² Interview Bremen Cotton Exchange with Christian Barthel, CmiA Director Supply Chain Management, 22/10/15 at: <http://>

Like BCI, CMiA also runs a number of co-financed Community Projects that support the development of rural cotton growing. These are organized as public-private partnerships and conducted and financed in cooperation with the active involvement of retail partners, government organizations involved in development cooperation, local cotton companies and smallholder farmers.⁷³

CmiA social standards are based on the ILO core labor standards and child labour is included with reference to Conventions No. 138 and No. 182, (as well as Freedom of Association and Collective Bargaining), and the initiative has a website dedicated to its position on child labour.⁷⁴ CmiA has 10 'Exclusion criteria for members, one of which is child labour although there is no data as to how this is being applied to farms nor what happens when a member farm is found to employ children. The prohibited use of genetically modified seeds and a range of highly toxic pesticides is also included.⁷⁵ A main focus of CmiA's work in 2014 was to develop measures to prevent child labour as well as to distinguish between what constitutes "the unacceptable hazardous work of child labour and the tasks that children are allowed to do to help their parents, while still attending school."⁷⁶

Since 2011, CMiA and BCI have developed a partnership which allows CMiA to sell its product as Better Cotton as well in return for access to BCI's markets. Both initiatives share common goals of improving the livelihoods of cotton farmers, as well as making cotton production more sustainable and one major outcome of this partnership is that sustainable cotton has now "reached the mass market and is no longer a niche product."⁷⁷ However, as previously mentioned, evaluating compliance to labour standards is difficult within both initiatives given that it is primarily undertaken by means of self-assessment by the farmer.

Fair trade cotton programme

FairTrade cotton was started in 2004, with the first payment of minimum prices to farmers in country by the Fairtrade foundation, (FTF).⁷⁸ Fairtrade is a sustainability standard, as well as a social movement which offers better trading conditions and a stable income to marginalized producers and workers in developing countries.⁷⁹ A fairtrade sourcing

www.cottonmadeinafrica.org/en/news/1058-cmia-promoting-vertical-integration-in-the-textile-chain.

73 "All Community Projects aim to give immediate and tangible "payback" to CmiA farmers for their efforts to comply with CmiA criteria and thus build the value proposition of the CmiA label. Retail partners appreciate the possibility that these projects offer with regards to communicating their commitment for CmiA to their customer base." The North-South Institute, (2013), Models for Trade-Related Private Sector Partnerships for Development, page 29.

74 See: <http://www.cottonmadeinafrica.org/en/projects/cmia-against-child-labour>.

75 CMiA, (2013), Aggregated verification report, page 6.

76 See: <http://www.cottonmadeinafrica.org/en/english-docs/cmia-standard-1/verification-reports/80-aggregated-verification-report-2013-1/file> page 6.

77 June 2014, Christopher Kaut, managing director of AbTF, 'Confidence and trust essential to collaboration between sustainable cotton organisations', on ISEAL website; <http://www.isealalliance.org/online-community/blogs/confidence-and-trust-essential-to-collaboration-between-sustainable-cotton-organisation>.

78 The Fairtrade standard originated from the natural growth of a series of independent national initiatives, while since 1994 the Fairtrade Labeling Organizations International (FLO), renamed Fairtrade International in 2012, has been the international standard setting umbrella organization.

79 See: What fairtrade does? <http://www.fairtrade.org.uk/en/what-is-fairtrade/what-fairtrade-does> Accessed 20/11/15.

program was developed for cotton in 2013 by FTF who work with cotton farmers who own small family farms and (primarily) who are organized into cooperatives or organisations which are democratically governed. These organisations are certified by FTF against Fair trade producer standards for small producers (SPOs).

The programme aims to scale up the volume of FT cotton produced, as well as providing a flexible means by which companies can purchase it. Companies can either work with FTF to produce items which are 100% fairtrade (and thus traceable from the shelf to the farm, and certified by the FLO CERT)⁸⁰ or they can commit to sourcing a certain amount of cotton on fairtrade terms, which they mix with other cotton / fibres, thus allowing them to buy more fairtrade in bulk. There are currently 26 fairtrade certified cotton producer organisations working with 60,000 farmers across nine countries – Benin, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Egypt, India, Kyrgyzstan, Mali, Nicaragua and Senegal, to acquire a fairtrade certification mark.⁸¹

The programme guarantees that participating farmers receive the security of a minimum price for their cotton, which covers the average costs of sustainable production, plus a fairtrade premium which is paid to their producer organisations. There is no market guarantee. The premiums are used for social and economic investments such as education and health services, processing equipment and loans to members of the cotton cooperatives. The farmers receive an even higher price if their cotton is organic, (approximately 60% of all FT cotton is also organic),⁸² which in some countries can be higher than the state price.

The Fairtrade standard comprises a set of environmental, social and economic requirements for production, and trade. Labour standards include: Child labour and child protection (2.3) for small holder producer organisations and, (in more detail), for hired labour. In terms of impact, a 2011 study on Fair Trade in Mali, Senegal, Cameroon and India stated that there were, 'inconclusive findings on the impact of Fairtrade on child labour, but at minimum there has been a sensitisation of producer group leaders and male farmers.'⁸³ In 2011 there was a widely publicized exposé of child labour found in fair trade and organic cotton producing in farms Burkina Faso sourced by Victoria's Secret which testifies to the ongoing difficulties of monitoring compliance.⁸⁴

Cotton Connect, was set up by Textile Exchange, C&A, and the Shell Foundation. It is a social purpose enterprise which works with retailers based on a sustainable cotton

80 FLO-CERT is an independent certification company which certifies the trade and monitors the cotton all the way from the farm to the final retail product.

81 Fairtrade Foundation, (2015), Commodity briefing : Cotton.

82 The FT cotton program ; <http://www.fairtrade.net/fsp-cotton-mark.html>.

83 Fairtrade cotton: Assessing impact in Mali, Sengal, Cameroon and India: A summary report, (2011), V. Nelson, NRI and S. Smith, IDS, page 6.

84 'Victoria's Secret revealed in child picking Burkina Faso cotton,' Cam Simpson, December 15, 2011, Bloomberg Markets at: <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2011-12-15/victoria-s-secret-revealed-in-child-picking-burkina-faso-cotton>. Accessed 4/12/15.

programme, REEL. Reel is not a set of standards but works with companies to develop strategies throughout their supply chain based on sustainability targets to meet sourcing objectives. This could be the inclusion of FairTrade/ Organic/ Better Cotton. CottonConnect works with up to 80,000 farmers annually, predominantly in India and China and has as its goal the cultivation of one million acres of sustainable cotton by 2015.

To conclude, the massive variance in cotton production systems, as well as the divergent range of challenges and the long and opaque supply chain mean that achieving large scale progress in addressing sustainability is particularly difficult. However, as noted by one research report, pre-competitive collaboration between corporate actors, as witnessed in initiatives such as BC, along with institutional support, remain essential in order to pursue improvements of social and environmental issues needed in relation to the cotton industry.⁸⁵

4.3. Highlights of recent ILO work on child labour in cotton

- **In 2015, a new South-South cooperation project for the promotion of decent work in cotton-producing countries in Africa and Latin America has been launched by the ILO with Brazilian funding.** This project covers 5 cotton-producing countries, three in Africa: Mali, Mozambique and Tanzania; and two in Latin America: Paraguay and Peru. The project will conduct decent work assessment in the cotton-production chain and develop work plans based on the experience and knowledge that can be provided by both Brazil and the ILO. The project aims at help improving working conditions in the sector, including key issues such as efforts to eradicate forced labour and child labour. Special attention will also be given to the way in which global supply chains operate in the cotton industry, which is a key to addressing the challenges of decent work.⁸⁶
- **Uzbekistan** - Following the ILO supervisory bodies' comments on the application of Convention No. 182 in Uzbekistan and on child labour in the cotton harvest, in December 2012 the ILO Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations (CEACR) urged the government to accept an observer mission to assess the implementation of this Convention. Joint ILO-Uzbek monitoring of child labour in the cotton harvest was carried out in September-October 2013. In 2014, the Government and social partners of Uzbekistan and the ILO signed a Decent Work Country Programme for 2014-2016, which includes a child labour component. The ILO was involved in the September-October 2014 monitoring of the cotton harvest. This

⁸⁵ Opijnen, Marjon van (CREM) & Joris Oldenziel, (SOMO), (2011), Responsible supply chain management, Potential success factors and challenges for addressing prevailing human rights and challenges for addressing prevailing human rights and other CSR issues in supply chains of EU-based companies.

⁸⁶ Visit www.ilo.org/americas/sala-de-prensa/WCMS_375309/lang--en/index.htm.

time, the monitoring was carried out by Uzbek monitors, based on the ILO child labour monitoring manual and principles. The ILO provided technical assistance and trained monitors. No cases of child labour were identified among children aged 15 years or younger. For the 16-18 years age group, some cases were identified, but there was some improvement compared to the previous year's monitoring. Uzbekistan agreed to Third Party Monitoring by the ILO of child and forced labour during the 2015 cotton harvest on behalf of five World Bank-supported projects in Uzbekistan. The relevant agreements were reached at roundtables held in Tashkent in March and August 2015 as well as in other meetings between the Uzbek partners, the World Bank and the ILO. The ILO subsequently submitted an assessment to the World Bank in November 2015. The report of the December 2015 session of the CEACR noted the ILO monitoring assessment and made further observations with regards to Conventions No. 182 and No. 105. In response to the ILO assessment, the Government of Uzbekistan agreed in January 2016 an Action Plan for improving labour conditions, employment and social protection of workers in agricultural sector in 2016-2018, which contains specific activities in conjunction with World Bank and ILO activities and financing.

- **Africa** – Regional workshops for the elaboration of training material and for reflection on the experiences of eradicating child labour in the cotton sector in Anglophone and Francophone Africa. The ILO was invited to regional workshops in Zambia and Côte d'Ivoire in 2014 which opened up avenues for collaboration with various partners and companies on this issue.

ANNEXES

Annex A: Key literature relating to child labour in cotton

NB: Where the explanatory text uses the present tense it refers to the situation at the time of publication.

PUBLICATION	KEY FINDINGS
GLOBAL	
List of Goods Produced By Child Labor or Forced Labor, (2014), Department of Labor.	The U.S. Department of Labor's (DOL) List of Goods Produced by Child Labor or Forced Labor, lists cotton as the most common commodity listed identifying child labour in cotton cultivation in 18 countries. http://www.dol.gov/ilab/reports/pdf/TVPPRA_Report2014.pdf
Literature Review and Research Evaluation relating to Social Impacts of Global Cotton Production for ICAC Expert Panel on Social, Environmental and Economic Performance of Cotton (SEEP), (2008), Ergon.	Review for ICAC Expert Panel on Social, Environmental and Economic Performance of Cotton, on the positive and negative 'social impacts' of cotton. Gives overview of legislation regulating children's work and child labour. http://www.icac.org/seep/documents/reports/literature_review_july_2008.pdf
The children behind our cotton, (2007), Environmental Justice Foundation.	The report details the pervasive use of child labour in cotton. It notes the incidence of 'hazardous' child labour and children trapped in debt-bondage. http://ejfoundation.org/report/children-behind-our-cotton
SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA	
"Going to Komienga" A study on child labour migration and trafficking in Burkina Faso's south-eastern cotton sector De Lange, A. ,IREWOC, (2006)	An empirical study of child labour migration and child trafficking. Includes analysis of the demand for child labour and the effectiveness of current interventions to prevent the movement of children. http://www.childtrafficking.com/Docs/lange_d_alb06gtkomienga_061106.pdf
Analyse Complémentaire sur le Travail des Enfants âgés de 5 à 14 ans au Burkina Faso, (2011), Direction de la démographie, Ouagadougou.	Analysis of agricultural child labour in Burkina Faso (with cotton being the most important agricultural crop). www.insd.bf/fr/IMG/Etude_compltaire_travail_enfants_mai_11.pdf

PUBLICATION	KEY FINDINGS
Les déterminants du travail et de la scolarisation des enfants: les enseignements des enquêtes biographiques du Burkina Faso et du Mali, (2007), ILO-IPEC.	Determinants of child labour and schooling: lessons from biographical surveys in Burkina Faso and Mali. http://www.ilo.org/ipecinfo/product/viewProduct.do?productId=5327
Les enfants travailleurs ruraux, (2006) ILO-IPEC, LUTRENA, Benin.	Documentary video produced by LUTRENA, focusing on livelihoods of children involved in trafficking between Benin and Burkina Faso, engaged in cotton cultivation - including pesticide application.
SOUTH AMERICA	
"El Trabajo Infantil en el Agro," Aparicio, S., in El Trabajo Infantil en la Argentina: Análisis y Desafíos para la Política Pública, (2007) ILO.	Highlights the persistence of child labour on family cotton smallholdings in Northeast of Argentina. http://www.trabajo.gob.ar/downloads/biblioteca_libros/trabajo_infantil_argentina.pdf
SETRAB, Fiscalização do MTE retira crianças do trabalho infantil [online] (2011).	While Brazil has witnessed dramatic progress towards eliminating child labour, child labour persists in smallholder cotton cultivation http://amatra-03.jusbrasil.com.br/noticias/2729188/fiscalizacao-do-ministerio-do-trabalho-retira-criancas-do-trabalho-infantil
El Trabajo Infantil en Canindeyu, Paraguay, (2005), ILO, Cooperación Española.	Study of 246 cases of child labour in 2004, in Paraguay, noting that child labourers are most frequently employed in cotton harvesting with many not attending school or attending infrequently. http://white.oit.org.pe/ipec/boletin/documentos/ti_rural_py.pdf
SOUTH EAST ASIA	
Child labour and exploitation in India's cotton fields, June 2015, David Browne.	News report on child labour in cotton in Gujarat noting that 20% of the workforce are children. It reports that many of the workers are dalit or tribal Adivasi and work under conditions of forced labour. http://www.equaltimes.org/child-labour-and-exploitation-in#.VmqWQxEffYU
Cotton's forgotten children: child labour and below minimum wages in hybrid cottonseed production in India, (2015), D. Venkateswarlu, India Committee of the Netherlands.	Based on research of 396 cottonseed farms it notes that the magnitude of child labour, is huge: children under 14 years still account for nearly 25% of the total workforce in cottonseed farms. The response from the seed industry to address the problem is 'minimal'. http://www.indianet.nl/pdf/CottonsForgottenChildren.pdf
Child Bondage Continues in Indian Cotton Supply Chain, (2007), D. Venkateswarlu, India Committee of the Netherlands.	The reports argues that the overall number of children employed in hybrid cottonseed production in India is on the rise. www.laborrights.org/publications/ChildBondageCottonSeedIndia2007.pdf
Child labour in hybrid cottonseed production in Gujarat and Karnataka, (2004), D. Venkateswarlu, India Committee of the Netherlands.	Hybrid cottonseed production in India is highly labour intensive and children are used in most of its operations. The study finds in Gujarat cottonseed farms 34.9% of the total labour force are below 14 years old, a high percentage who are girls. www.laborrights.org/publications/Guj+Karn_cotton%20rpt.pdf

PUBLICATION	KEY FINDINGS
Wages of adolescence: Annual exodus of tribal adolescents from South Rajasthan to Bt Cotton Seed plot of North Gujarat – A case study, (2006), S. Katiyar, Migrant Workers Protection Front.	This study reports that, several thousand tribal children between the ages of 10-14, are brought yearly by contractors to work on the cotton farms of North Gujarat to cross-pollinate cotton seeds and suffer from poor living and working conditions with poor wages. www.migrationindia.org/casestudy/case%20satudy%20-%20sudhir%20katiyar.pdf
The price of childhood: On the link between prices paid to farmers and the use of child labour in cottonseed production in Andhra Pradesh, India ICN, ILRF, EWN, NRW, (2005)	The study first analyses the economics of cotton-seed cultivation and then addresses the cost implications of replacing child labour with adult labour. www.ilrf.org/projects/childlab/Price_of_Childhood_102105.pdf
IPEC – Safety and Health Fact Sheet – Hazardous child labour in agriculture – Cotton, ILO, (2004)	A 2001-2002 survey of 486 children working on 22 farms producing hybrid cotton seeds, shows the majority of whom were aged 6-14 and came from families of lower castes. It also notes the incidence of migrant children, children working in debt bondage.
Seeds of Change – Impact of intervention by Bayer and Monsanto on the elimination of child labour on farms producing hybrid cottonseed in India, (2007) D. Venkateswarlu, DWHH, ICN, EWN NRW, ILRF.	Multinational companies Bayer and Monsanto have started to address the issue of child labour in their cotton seed supply chain. The percentage of children working on their seed farms has dropped but the problem is still far from solved. www.indianet.nl/pdf/seedsofchangefinal.pdf
Review of Child Labour, Education and Poverty Agenda, (2006), India Country Report, Global March, ICCLE.	Child labour in India is widespread. In cotton-seed production, children are made to work long hours, are paid below the minimum wage and are exposed to poisonous pesticides. http://www.globalmarch.org/sites/default/files/India-report.pdf
Contract Farming in India: Impacts on Women and Child Workers, (2003), Singh, S. , IIED Gatekeeper Series 111.	Case studies of hybrid cotton-seed production in Andhra Pradesh, show agriculture is becoming increasingly. Girl child labourers are preferred by employers for their docility, obedience etc with girls aged 6 being employed.
Child labour and trans-national seed companies in hybrid cottonseed production in Andhra Pradesh, 2003, Venkateswarlu, D., India Committee of the Netherland.	The report describes the nature of work, terms and conditions of employment, age composition and socio-economic background of the children employed in cotton-seed farms. It notes the role of companies in perpetuating child labour. www.indianet.nl/Cotton_seeds.doc
Child labour in cotton growing districts of Pakistan, (Oct 2014), Meena Gabeena, Daily News.	News article refers to SCF surveys in cotton growing areas which show the high numbers of children between 5-17 engaged in cotton production. It notes reports of harassment and physical punishment at work. http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/national/29-Oct-2014/child-labour-in-cotton-growing-districts-of-pakistan

PUBLICATION	KEY FINDINGS
Analyzing the Impact of Legislation on Child Labor in Pakistan, (2007), Fasih, T. , World Bank, Policy Research Working Paper 4399.	The study recalls that the Employment of Children Act 1991 does not prohibit children's work in the agriculture sector or work in the family business or farm. It finds some evidence that the Act has been effective in reducing the scale of child labour. http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/IW3P/IB/2007/11/14/000158349_2007114115027/Rendered/PDF/wps4399.pdf
CIS, EURASIA AND MENA	
The Uzbek-German Forum for Human Rights Preliminary Report on Forced Labor During Uzbekistan's 2014 Cotton Harvest, (2014), Uzbek-German Forum for Human Rights.	Notes that while the Uzbek Government did not systematically and forcibly mobilize children to harvest cotton in 2014 children were still some mobilized towards the end of the harvest to meet quotas. It reports that schools were not fully operational. www.cottoncampaign.org/uploads/3/9/4/7/39474145/forced-labor-during-uzbekistans-2014-cotton-harvest.pdf en on adults'.
Children Back At Work In Turkmenistan's Cotton Fields, (Oct 2013), O. Hallyev & C. Recknagel, Radio Free Europe, Radio Free Liberty.	News article and video showing children around 10 years old working at the peak of the cotton harvest in Turkmenistan. www.rferl.org/content/cotton-child-labor-turkmenistan/25141281.html
Study on Child Labour on Cotton Plantations in 8 Regions of Azerbaijan, (2005), AzEcoConsulting Group, Baku.	Study on child labour on cotton plantations in 8 regions of Azerbaijan Details the different ways in which children are recruited into cotton growing including the recruitment of 'brigades' of children leased to employers through an intermediary, for seasonal work. www.ilo.org/public/english/dialogue/actemp/downloads/projects/azerbaijan_rapidass_study_cotton_en.pdf
"Working Flat Out the Child Labour Behind Your Egyptian Cotton Sheets." (2008), McDougall, D. , The Observer.	Article on child labour in Egyptian cotton noting that approx. 2.7m children work, with more than 1m hired each year for the cotton harvest, during which they work long hours in 40C heat. www.guardian.co.uk/society/2008/jun/08/childprotection.humanrights
Child Labor in Egypt, 2009, Nadia Itani, Master's thesis, University of Southern Denmark.	Study finds that each year over one million children between 7-12 are hired by Egypt's agricultural cooperatives to take part in cotton pest management. Most are below Egypt's minimum age of twelve for seasonal agricultural work. www.ddrn.dk/filer/forum/File/Child_Labor_in_Egypt.pdf
Child Labor in Tobacco and Cotton Growing in Kazakhstan (2006), Alimbekova, G., and B. Zhussupov, ILO-IPEC.	Children constitute up to 50-60% of the total workforce in cotton fields. Migrant children may amount to up to 70-80% of the total number of working children and are aged from 10 to 16. www.ilo.org/ipecinfo/product/download.do?id=8150&type=document
Monitoring Of Child Labour Use In The Cotton Fields In Tajikistan (2011), Umarov, H, IOM.	Study finds that "large-scale forced use of students in agricultural works, mainly in the cotton harvest, did not take place in Tajikistan in 2010. However, voluntary involvement continues with students working cotton harvest after classes and on the weekends. www.iom.tj/pubs/cotton-eng.pdf

PUBLICATION	KEY FINDINGS
What has changed? Progress in eliminating the use of forced child labour in the cotton harvests of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan (2010), School of Oriental and African Studies; University of London.	Research during the 2009 harvest in Tajikistan concluded that child labour with state involvement (forced child labour), is still used in cotton harvest, less than in neighbouring Uzbekistan. Mostly it was older children (aged 14–18) who were mobilized. www.soas.ac.uk/ccac/centres-publications/file64329.pdf
Labor Conditions in the Tajikistan Cotton Industry, (2007), International Labor Rights Forum (ILRF) and the Tajikistan Social Institute for Youth and Civilization.	Research analyses contracts signed between administrators and students at four universities regarding state mandates for cotton harvesting. It reveals considerable human rights concerns within the cotton industry. It notes state imposed quotas with short production lead times and lack of enforcement of legal rights. www.laborrights.org/sites/default/files/publications-and-resources/Tajikistan_report1007.pdf
Child labour under the worst conditions: child labourers in cotton production in Turkey, (2010), Bulent Gulcubuk, Ankara University. See: African Journal of Agricultural Research Vol. 5(12).	Notes the serious problem of child labour in Turkey. Seasonal agricultural workers take their children with them for work. Children engage in agricultural work inappropriate to their age in order to contribute to the family income. Most of these children are deprived of education due to seasonal work, live far from home for 4 – 7 months a year in tents lacking basic needs.
Baseline survey on worst forms of child labour in the agricultural sector: Children in cotton harvesting in Karatas, Adana, (2003), Gülbuçuk, B. et al.	A study of the effect of children's work in agriculture on education. Regular school attendance for many of migrant seasonal children is not possible, and dropout rates are high. Living and working conditions are arduous and have a negative impact on health. www.ilo.org/ipecinfo/product/download.do?type=document&id=5224
IPEC Highlights (2006) – pg 49-50, Pilot Programme for working children from migrant farm families in Turkey.	Case study of migrant farm child workers who migrate with their parents to the cotton growing areas in the south of the country. The Turkish Ministry of National Education (MONE) implemented an ILO-IPEC programme (2005-07) to address the specific needs of children involved in seasonal agricultural work and its impact on education. www.europarl.europa.eu/hearings/20070417/libe/ilo_en.pdf
Eradicating the worst forms of child labour in Turkey (2004) European Commission, Project Fiche.	A 2003 baseline survey conducted by (IPEC) estimated that there are 1,000,000 children engaged in work in seasonal commercial agricultural work. http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/fiche-projet/turkey/2004/tr-0403.04-eradicating-child-labour.pdf
The curse of cotton: Central Asia's destructive monoculture, (2005), International Crisis Group.	The report highlights that the role of women and young people in Uzbek cotton cultivation. It notes that children as young as 7 work, applying pesticides without protection. It suggests that children are subject to poor nourishment and living conditions, and face corporal punishment should they fail to meet a daily quota. www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=3294&l=1

PUBLICATION	KEY FINDINGS
White Gold: the true cost of cotton, (2005), Environmental Justice Foundation.	The EJP report argues that Uzbek children are used as a labour reserve during cotton harvesting and may miss up to 3 months' education. Children work at the behest of the government. http://www.cottoncampaign.org/uploads/3/9/4/7/39474145/2005_ejf_whitegold.pdf
Further Growth in Uzbek Child Labour, (2004), Institute for War and Peace Reporting.	This article reports on the mobilisation of school children to work in the cotton fields detailing their poor working conditions. The article states that children pick the cotton and spray pesticides by hand. www.iwpr.net/index.php?m=p&o=175887&s=f&apc_state=henfrc175887
Forced Child Labour in Uzbekistan's 2007 Cotton Harvest: Survey Results, (2008), Group of Human Rights Defenders and Journalists of Uzbekistan, Tashkent	The report details the use of forced child labour in Uzbekistan's cotton harvest and suggests that the youngest children engaged in cotton harvesting are 10 years old. Harvesting is paid work - c.US\$1 per day - but most funds earned did not reportedly cover food and clothing expenses.

Annex B: Complementary tables

Table B.1: Definition of hazardous work in legislation in Benin and Burkina Faso

COUNTRY	MINIMUM AGE FOR HAZARDOUS WORK	DEFINITION OF HAZARDOUS WORK AND SOURCE IN LEGISLATION	SPECIFIC PROHIBITION OF USE OF AGRO-CHEMICALS BY MINORS
Benin	18 Arrêté ministériel n° 132	A definition of hazardous work has only recently been introduced in Benin labour law. Ministerial Decree n° 2011-029 was passed on 31 January 2011. The decree divides work into three categories: Light work; Moderately dangerous work; Hazardous work – work with heavy machinery and with chemicals. Hazardous work ('Category 3') is prohibited for children, defined as under 18 years of age. Prior to decree n° 2011-029, Ministerial decree n° 132 of 2000, provided a list of activities which are prohibited for women, pregnant women and young workers	Decree n° 2011-029 restricts explicitly the use of agro-chemicals by workers under the age of 18 in the course of their work. Use of toxic chemicals, and handling of pesticides and fertilizers, is considered 'Category 3', and prohibited for workers under 18. (La Nation, 2011). Ministerial decree n° 132 of 2000 prohibits workers under the age of 16 from being exposed to vessels containing 'liquids, gases, or vapours which are flammable, toxic, harmful or corrosive' (Arts 17 & 20)
Burkina Faso	18 Décret n° 2009-365 of 2009)	Décret n° 2009-365 provides a list of hazardous work which may not be performed by children. [Décret n° 2009-365/PRES/PM/MTSS/MS/MASSN du 28 mai 2009 portant détermination de la liste des travaux dangereux interdits aux enfants au Burkina Faso.]	Concerning agriculture, prohibited activities for under-18s are: Use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides; Use of other dangerous chemicals; Driving tractors or operating other heavy machinery; Underground work (Décret n° 2009-365)

Table B.2: Tasks, hazards and health risks of children in crop production

TASKS	HAZARDS	HEALTH RISKS
Preparation of land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of farm vehicles and heavy machinery • Excessive exposure to noise • Draught animals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accidents with vehicles and machinery • Entanglement or getting dragged into machinery • Hearing loss • Injuries from animals
Application of fertilizers and spraying of chemicals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exposure to pesticides and other toxic chemicals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acute pesticide poisoning • Chronic effects of pesticide exposure (e.g. cancer, neurological damage, respiratory diseases)
Weeding, harvesting and processing of collected crops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of sharp tools (machetes, knives, scythes, sickles) • Exposure to skin irritants contained in crops • Exposure to high levels of organic dust from fields • Contamination from pesticide spray drift, from not observing pesticide re-entry intervals, or from contact with contaminated soil and water 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Injuries from sharp tools • Skin problems (e.g. allergies...) • Allergic respiratory diseases • Pesticide poisoning
Outdoor crop activities (e.g. planting of seedlings)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exposure to extreme weather and solar radiation • Lack of drinking water • Exposure to wild animals and insects (especially without appropriate protective clothing, footwear and shelter) • Attacks from dangerous wild animals and insects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frostbite, sunstroke and other thermal stresses • Skin cancer • Dehydration • Respiratory infections in cold and wet working conditions • Diseases from drinking stagnant or polluted water • Diseases transmitted through insects and wild animals • Cuts, bruises, puncture wounds from thorns
Loading and carrying produce and water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handling of heavy loads • Extended awkward posture • Repeated movements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Musculoskeletal injuries and disorders • Blistered hands and feet • Aches, pains, sprains, strains

Source: FAO (2015) *Handbook for monitoring and evaluation of child labour in agriculture: Measuring the impacts of agricultural and food security programmes on child labour in family-based agriculture*, page 95. Adapted from: IPEC (2011), *Children in hazardous work – What we know, what we need to know*; and FAO (2010), *Child labour prevention in agriculture: Junior Farmer Field and Life School – Facilitator's guide*.

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