



Latin American and Caribbean Subregional Conference / Workshop: Business against Child Labor: Tools for action

**Unión Industrial Argentina – UIA,
Buenos Aires, 7 and 8 October, 2008**

Introduction

The ILO estimates that 218 million girls and boys work as child labourers in the world today. They work as a consequence of their families' poverty and because adequate and affordable schooling is not available and because social norms deem it to be acceptable. At the same time, child labour persists not only because children supply their work in the supply chain, but also because plantations, farms, factories, businesses and households generate a demand for such labour. The successful elimination of child labour worldwide requires, among other things, efforts to tackle simultaneously this complex set of supply and demand factors.

ILO constituents (governments, employers' and workers' organizations) have been instrumental in the promotion of fundamental principles and rights at work, and in particular, with regard to the elimination of child labour both at the national and international levels. Although governments are the main driving force behind the fight against child labour, employers' organizations and trade unions can and do play a key role. Employers can refuse to hire children, or, if child labour already occurs, they can be active agents to promote its elimination. In the case of adolescents of working age, they can reduce the risk from hazards at the workplace. Employers' organizations are also well placed to create public awareness and influence national policies with regard to children and youth.

Under the ILO-Norway Framework Agreement the ILO-Bureau for Employers Activities (ACT/EMP) has been working closely with the ILO's program IPEC in the global fight against child labour. Several regional and interregional activities have been organized in recent years aimed at enhancing the capacity and participation of employers in national efforts to combat child labour and particularly its worst forms.

ACT/EMP also works closely with the International Organisation of Employers (IOE), which promotes initiatives and interests of employers in the international fora, thus also in the ILO. The IOE is strongly committed with the eradication of child labour and adopted a Resolution (1996) and position paper (2005) to this effect.

More recently ACT/EMP and the IOE developed a set of Guides to help Employers on their task towards eliminating Child Labour. The three guides, which were translated into Spanish in early 2008, have been designed to help businesses and their organizations understand and take action against child labour. The guides provide ideas, guidance and examples for the prevention of child labour, the withdrawal of children from work and the protection of young workers from hazardous conditions.

In order to disseminate the guides to the business community, they will be launched at the proposed Regional Conference in Argentina, which will bring together employer representatives and resource persons from Latin American and the Caribbean. The Conference will also provide the opportunity for employers to exchange information and experiences on good business practices in tackling child labour and supply chain issues. (See Objectives of Conference below)

Background

To promote decent work it is necessary to adopt policies that include the objective of progressively eliminating child labor. The ILO's Hemispheric Agenda, which was submitted for consideration to the tripartite constituency during the Sixteenth ILO Regional Americas Meeting which took place in Brasilia in 2006, sets the followings goals:

1. Eliminate the worst forms of child labor in the Americas by 2015;
2. Eliminate child labor completely in the Americas by 2020.

To achieve these goals, governments, workers' and employers' organizations have to work together, as proclaimed in the Brasilia Declaration adopted jointly in 2006 by the IOE, CIOSL/ORIT, and CLAT on the Immediate action to eliminate the worst forms of child labour in the Americas.

In 2000, the Secretary General of the United Nations convened the business community to adhere to the principles of the Global Compact which include the eradication of child labor. Since then, many have joined. The Global Compact has now over 4,000 participants around the world.

For example, the Global Compact was launched in Argentina four years ago, and since then, over 280 enterprises have joined. The Global Compact in Argentina promotes training activities among its members and constitutes a "good practice" database of successful Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives. According to the latest report presented by the Global Compact at its World Summit held in Geneva, the Argentinean network is the third largest in the world, considering the number of enterprises that have adhered to the 10 principles. Work done by the agencies involved in the Global Compact in Argentina (UNDP, ECLAC, and ILO), has consisted since its launch in 2004, in the promotion of dialogue among stakeholders (government, enterprises and civil society) and a knowledge network to exchange information.

Also, in 2007 a new grouping emerged called the Argentinean Enterprise Network against child. The purpose of the Network is to create, support, and provide technical assistance to programs, plans and projects for the prevention and eradication of child labor. With the support of UNICEF and ILO, the Network, which is currently composed of 60 leading enterprises, has adopted a Work Plan for 2008 to join efforts, financial resources, share information in order to enhance the effectiveness of their action in the area of Corporate Social Responsibility.

Objectives of the Latin American and Caribbean Subregional Conference / Workshop

The objectives are:

- Strengthen the capacities of employers' organizations, enterprises that have joined the Global Compact, and Argentinean Network of Enterprises against Child Labor, through training in the use of the Employers' Guides to eradicate child labor;
- Promote a subregional exchange of information on good business practices against child labor and to showcase success stories of companies promoting the eradication of child labor, particularly in Argentina;
- Address the matter of supply-chains, to encourage businesses to take action to raise awareness among their suppliers, regarding the human cost of child labor as well as its negative economic and social consequences.

* * * * *

Buenos Aires, August, 2008

**Latin American and Caribbean Subregional Conference / Workshop
Business against child labor:
Tools for action**

**Unión Industrial Argentina – UIA,
Buenos Aires, 7 and 8 October, 2008**

DRAFT PROGRAM: CONFERENCE

| Tuesday 20 May 2008 | |
|---------------------|---|
| 09:00 - 09:30 | Registration of participants |
| 09:30-10:00 | Inauguration Javier González Olaechea, ILO Director in Argentina Nils Haugstveit, Norwegian Ambassador in Argentina Daniel Funes de Rioja, Executive Vice chairman of the International Organisation of Employers (IOE) |
| 10:00 – 10:45 | Master Conference “Private Sector and Child Labor in Argentina: Government’s perspective“ Carlos Tomada, Ministry of Employment and Social Security of Argentina |
| 10:45-11:00 | Coffee break |
| 11:00-12:00 | General situation of Child Labor in Latin America and the Caribbean Speakers: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Guillermo Dema, IPEC Coordinator for Central America, Mexico, Dominican Republic, and Haiti.▪ Manuel García, IPEC Coordinator for South America Moderator: Andrés Yurén, ACT/EMP Santiago 15 minutes each speaker and 30 minutes discussion |
| 12:00-13:00 | CSR and Child labor: international perspective Speakers: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Deborah France-Massin, Deputy Director, ACT/EMP Geneva: “ILO employers and Child Labour”▪ Bárbara León, IOE (Geneva): “Business international position on child labor”▪ Flavio Fuertes, Focal point for the UN Global Compact in Argentina: “The Global Compact” Moderator: María de Jesús Silva, IPEC, Chile 10 minutes each and 30 minutes discussion |

13:00-14:30

Lunch

15:00 - 16:30

Panel and discussion on business fight against child labor in South America

Case Study of **Fundación Abrinq** (Brazil)

- Paulina Dobud - Programa Pro-niño de **Telefónica M3viles** (Chile)
- Argentinean Network against child labor - "**Programa Porvenir**", experiences from the tobacco industry, (Argentina)
- Global Compact in Argentina - **ArgentiLemon** (Tucuman's lemon export industry - Argentina)

Moderator: Gustavo Ponce, ILO (Argentina)

15 minutes each presentation and 30 minutes Q&A session

16:30 – 16:45

Coffee break

16:45-18:15

Panel y discussion on business fight against child labor in Central America and Andean countries

Case Study of **BAMA Group** (Norway), Magne Svartbekk., Head of the CSR program in Latin America

- Mynor Maldonado (Executive Director) y Luz de Mackenney (Member of the Board), **Fundación de la Caficultura para el Desarrollo (FUNCAFE)** y **Asociación Nacional del Caf3 (ANACAFE)**: "Corporate Social Responsibility and Child Labor: action taken by the Guatemalan Coffee producers"
- Bjorn Jakobsen (President), **Reforestation Group International S.A.** "Enterprise strategies to eliminate hazardous work for adolescent workers and rural female workers: road map to develop CSR in Costa Rica"
- Consejo Hondureño de la Empresa Privada COHEP: "Business program to promote "**children to children coaching**: Tutors and Scholars"
- Business case from Ecuador

Moderator: Bernardo Puentes, IPEC, Paraguay

15 minutes each presentation and 45 minutes Q&A session

DRAFT PROGRAM: WORKSHOP

Wednesday, 8 October 2008

| | |
|----------------------|--|
| 9:00 - 9:15 | Welcome and Workshop's working rules and dynamics Anne-Brit Nippierd and Gustavo Ponce |
| 9:15 - 10:15 | Presentation of Employers Guides against Child Labor Presentation: Anne-Brit Nippierd (ACT/EMP Geneva 10 minutes) Tripartite comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Daniel Funes de Rioja, Employer member of the ILO GB▪ Gerardo Martínez, Workers member of the ILO GB▪ Pilar Rey Méndez, Chairperson, National Commission for Child Labor Eradication (CONAETI) |
| 10:15 - 10:30 | Coffee break |
| 10:30 - 12:30 | Group discussions Group discussion 1: How can we improve information exchange concerning business good practices on fight against child labor? Facilitator: Bárbara León, OIE Group discussion 2: Supply chains: challenges and opportunities, how can enterprises promote the elimination of child labor within their scope of action? Facilitator: Renato Mendes, IPEC, Brasil Group discussion 3: What should employers and their organizations request from their national governments to have an effective fight against child labor? Facilitator: Bernardo Puentes, IPEC, Paraguay Group discussion 4: What can the ILO do to support employers and their organizations to strengthen their fight against child labor? Facilitator: María de Jesús Silva, IPEC, Chile |
| 12:30 - 13:30 | Presentation in Plenary of Group discussions' outcome 10 minutes each reporter and 20 minutes for Q&A |
| 13:30 - 14:00 | Closing Juan Carlos Lascurain, President of Union Industrial Argentina (UIA) Deborah France-Massin, Deputy Director, ACT/EMP Geneva Javier González Olaechea, Director of ILO Buenos Aires |

* * * * *

Buenos Aires, September, 2008