

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON CHILD LABOUR

Q: Is child labour declining?

Yes, child labour is declining. We estimate that the global number of child labourers in the age group 5-17 decreased from 246 million in 2000 to 218 million in 2004. This amounts to a decrease of 11%.

Child labour has also declined in relative terms. The percentage of child labourers among the 5-17 year-old children in the world went down from 16% in 2000 to 14% in 2004. In this general decline of children's work, the younger and more vulnerable are the children and the more hazardous the work, the greater the decline.

By region, the fastest progress in reducing the number of working children is being made in Latin America and the Caribbean (proportions on a par with some developed and transition countries). Least progress has been made in sub-Saharan Africa. [For more questions on the child labour trends, please see below under "Questions on the New Numbers and Trends".]

Q: What are the challenges in eliminating child labour?

There is a need for greater national ownership, supported by employers' and workers' organizations, and backed up by a more vibrant worldwide movement to create the environment in which technical tools and frameworks are put to optimum use.

The elimination of child labour needs to be mainstreamed into key development and human rights frameworks, such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRSs).

At national level many countries are ready to deal with child labour, but international financial support for that commitment is lacking. It should be more widely accepted that it makes economic sense for the international community to support national efforts to combat child labour.

The elimination of child labour has to be placed on the international development agenda for Sub-Saharan Africa in particular

Other challenges include HIV/AIDS, links with youth employment, and the growth of the informal economy where much of the world's child labour, particularly its worst forms, is found.

What is the ILO going to do against child labour from now on?

The Global Report tells us that the elimination of child labour is within our reach. In particular, it suggests setting global goals and targets that:

- all worst forms of child labour be eliminated by 2016, and
- that all countries design and put in place appropriate time-bound measures for this by 2008.

Over the next four years the ILO will strengthen its efforts to develop coherent and comprehensive approaches to abolishing child labour. The action plan rests on three pillars:

- supporting national responses to child labour, in particular, through effective mainstreaming in national development and policy frameworks;
- deepening and strengthening the worldwide movement against child labour; and
- promoting further integration of child labour concerns within overall ILO priorities, which make Decent Work a global goal.

II. GENERAL QUESTIONS CONCERNING THE REPORT

What made child labour decrease in the past 4 years?

The ILO's work is one major factor. Clearly there has been progress related to ILO standards as reflected in the rapid ratification of both the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182) and the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138), together with advances in other international treaties relating to children's rights (such as the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and its two Optional Protocols). These commitments are combined with the intensive focus on concrete action and awareness-raising through the ILO's largest technical cooperation programme, IPEC (International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour). Finally, many others have joined ILO's call for reinvigorated action. All these elements together have had worked to reduce child labour.

Have ILO Conventions had an impact on this decline?

Yes, they have. Because there has been such a large number of ratifications over the last four years, we had the opportunity in drawing up this report to look at a remarkably high number of first reports following ratification of both major child labour Conventions, Nos. 138 and 182. Many countries reported action to implement the Conventions at the national level - outlined in the body of the report - shortly before or after ratifying the Conventions (see Figure 1.5. in the Report: Action reported under Conventions Nos. 138 and 182 since 1999).

For instance, many countries have recently adopted new laws or revised existing ones to prohibit and punish exploitation of children in hazardous work, child trafficking and prostitution or pornography, though progress is slower in such issues as the use of children in illicit activities. We are also aware that a number of countries have informed the ILO that they will ratify these Conventions once they amend their laws or adopt new policies, and in the past many have gone on to ratify them after taking these steps. Also, ILO Convention No. 138 on Minimum Age in particular has had a very strong influence on national labour legislation on the minimum working age, even in countries that have not yet ratified it.

Q: What technical assistance has the ILO provided to countries in the implementation of the Child Labour Conventions?

The global report also takes stock of ILO's work for helping the implementation of the Child Labour Conventions through IPEC, which has been active for 14 years now. IPEC remains the leading international programme dedicated to child labour elimination and the largest programme of its kind globally. IPEC has been promoting the policy choices that make the difference. Our impact in individual countries is reflected in the achievements amongst the most successful ones, such as Brazil, Tanzania, Turkey and Thailand, just to name a few.

Q: Does the decline in child labour mean that the problem has become less worrying over the past four years?

It would be far too premature to say that. The numbers of economically active children are declining. The high percentage of reduction in the number of children in hazardous work encourages even greater efforts to tackle this type of child labour. But child labour in all its forms is still alarmingly high in most parts of the world. These numbers really call for a redoubling of our efforts to capitalize on these trends and to reinforce it where our measures are having an effect. These measures - and other innovative approaches - should be extended to areas where the situation is not showing clear improvements, e.g., Sub-Saharan Africa.

Q: Can child labour be eliminated? If so, by when? What is the basis for that forecast?

Yes, child labour can be eliminated. We are setting a goal in this report of ending the worst forms of child labour in ten years, by 2016. To achieve this, countries have to design and put in place appropriate time-bound measures. The evidence in the reports indicates that we can do it. It may take longer to eliminate all child labour, but with the application of the right kinds of policies this can happen in the foreseeable future. The quantitative decline in child labour during the last 4 years as shown in the Report is just one example of the grounds for hope. The end of child labour is within reach.

Q: How many children have been withdrawn from child labour during the last 4 years?

The decline noted in the Global Report is not only children who have been withdrawn - it also reflects the children who have been prevented from falling into child labour, and other factors including population dynamics. We do not have a figure on the children who have been withdrawn through the efforts of all the organizations working for this purpose. While IPEC has reached a very large number of children - around 5 million children have benefited directly or indirectly from IPEC's work - the real impact of ILO/IPEC's work should be measured in what countries have become capable of achieving with its technical support and guidance.

Q: How much does it cost to rescue a child from child labour?

That would depend on the circumstances in individual cases. For the sake of illustration, ILO-IPEC undertook an economic study of the costs and benefits of eliminating child labour (published in 2004) estimating that globally the cost would be \$760 billion over a 20-year period. The major elements of costs are the supply of education to those children and compensation for their lost income. However, the benefits of eliminating child labour are calculated to be over \$4 trillion, in the form of the improved education level of the population as well as better health. The benefits would therefore exceed the costs by nearly 6 to 1

Q: What is the importance of economic growth in efforts to combat child labour? Are there any links with globalization?

The market for child labour is constantly evolving, in the context of globalization, and due to demographic and attitudinal change. This is, in part, what makes it such a difficult problem to eliminate. Progress in eliminating child labour is slower in countries/regions where economic progress has lagged behind. However, there are many causes of child labour. A key message of the report is also that, while economic growth is important, it is not enough. Economic growth does not automatically lead to the disappearance of child labour, just as economic stagnation does not automatically mean that child labour will increase. Countries that combine economic growth with the right policy mix, focusing on equity, human rights and a concern for factors that contribute to child labour, make more rapid progress in tackling the problem. Globalization has also brought about increased concern among consumers over goods that may be produced by child labour, and puts pressure on producers as well as governments to take action. So globalization with a human face makes a difference.

Q: How do countries succeed in eliminating child labour?

There is no easy and simple answer to this question. Countries combat child labour by adopting the right kinds of policies, not just by waiting until they have already achieved economic

development. Economic progress helps, but it is not enough on its own. An indispensable step is ensuring the availability of schooling and making sure that all children can attend without discrimination.

It is also important to increase employment opportunities for adults, focusing on those most likely to send their children to work

Law also makes a great contribution: reviewing relevant laws to prohibit and punish abuses, and ensuring that laws are applied in practice.

The elimination of child labour must be mainstreamed into key development and human rights frameworks. Of particular concern is how to position child labour concerns within the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and the Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRSs) linked to them.

Q: What is the Time-bound Programme (TBP) approach?

The TBPs - IPEC's flagship approach - have demonstrated that at national level many countries are ready to deal with child labour as part of their overall development agenda - but monetary support for that commitment is lacking. Influential players such as the Planning Bureau or Ministry of Finance have a big say in allocating resources, but unless their global interlocutors - the Breton Woods institutions and key donors - are on the same wavelength this is not going to happen. A reinvigorated worldwide campaign is therefore not just about raising awareness but also about providing evidence that child labour is not just morally wrong, but that is also makes economic sense to eliminate it..

Q: What is the link between child labour and education?

Universal availability of education is crucial for eliminating child labour. Since 2003, an inter-agency group combining ILO, UNESCO, the World Bank, and the Global March Against Child Labour, and more recently UNICEF, has met annually, which has led to the establishment of a Global Task Group on child labour at the Beijing Education for All (EFA) High Level Meeting in November 2005. This breakthrough is largely due to intensive lobbying and increasing evidence that child labour is an obstacle to the achievement of EFA.

Q: What are the remaining challenges then to really reach the goal of ending child labour?

Many challenges remain. While there has never before been such a high level of acknowledgement of the problem, there is a need for greater national ownership of these efforts, supported by employers' and workers' organizations. A more vibrant worldwide movement can help to put technical tools and frameworks to optimum use. Also, successful small-scale projects to eliminate child labour have to be taken to a national scale to have a real impact.

Other challenges include HIV/AIDS, links with youth employment and most importantly the situation in Sub-Saharan Africa which remains the greatest challenge to the development community - the region least on track to reach the MDGs. The region has the highest incidence of working children and has made the least progress in coping with its child labour problem, due in part to its staggering population growth, where the population doubles every generation.

Q: The report calls for a reinvigorated worldwide movement. Does that mean the ILO alone cannot eradicate child labour?

The ILO cannot do it alone. In the first instance we need to underline that child labour can only be eradicated by the countries themselves. ILO and other actors can only facilitate the process. The ILO has a leading role to play, and it has relative advantages - such as the fact that not only governments but also both business and labour are an integral part of the ILO. The ILO also has unique tools by combining legal standards with operational experience.

But there are many others who have a vital and necessary role. Besides the ILO and its immediate partners (governments, and employers' and workers' organizations), the concerted effort of a number of key players is required at international and local levels including inter-governmental organizations, especially financial institutions, NGOs, academics, artists, and communities. Also indispensable is the active involvement of children and young people. Other international organizations are doing a great deal - but we are saying that the elimination of child labour must be integrated as a goal in international development frameworks.

The report shows that employers' and workers' organizations at the national and international levels are doing a great deal to eliminate child labour - and they can do much more still. Non-governmental organizations are also indispensable in this fight, and are often invaluable partners where they join forces with others.

In order to strengthen the worldwide movement to combat child labour the International Labour Organization developed the Global Campaign to Raise Awareness and Understanding on Child Labour and in 2002 established the World Day against Child Labour (WDAKL) to be observed on 12 June. The celebration of the WDAKL in many parts of the world helps to spread the message that child labour remains a widespread, serious and urgent socio-economic problem and that the international community must do more to combat it.

Q: There is a global concern over youth employment. In this regard, why not let children start working earlier?

Both child labour and youth unemployment are receiving increasing interest recently and need to be tackled together to achieve decent work based on a life-cycle approach. The ILO does not advocate eliminating all work by children - its Conventions and programmes make it clear that entry into work by children has to be under carefully controlled conditions that prevent child labour - i.e., unacceptable forms of children's work that hinder their education and healthy development. This is the link between eliminating child labour which must be prohibit-

ed, and promoting the entry into work of young people at the appropriate time and under the right circumstances. Education and training is the channel that links the two issues and offers a comprehensive solution.

III. QUESTIONS ON THE NEW NUMBERS AND TRENDS

Q: Are there also fewer children in the worst forms of child labour?

Yes, the number of children in the worst forms of child labour has declined. Hazardous work - which is estimated to involve by far the largest number of children among the worst forms of child labour - has declined even more rapidly than child labour as a whole. In concrete terms, the number of children engaged in hazardous work has dropped from 170m in 2000 to 126m in 2004. This is a decline of about 25%. For the younger children (age group 5-14) the decline in hazardous work was even steeper - by 33 %.

Children in the unconditional worst forms, such as forced labour, prostitution and those used in armed conflict, were estimated to number about 8 million in the year 2000. No updated estimates are available for this group.

In short, the emerging picture is that children's work is declining and that the more harmful the work and the more vulnerable the children the faster the decline. Of course the problem is still unacceptably large, even though there has been progress.

Q: Are child labour trends the same in all regions?

The percentage of working children among the child population has declined in all regions of the world. The reduction has been most significant in Latin America and the Caribbean, where activity rates among 5-14 year olds have fallen to about one-third of their previous level in 2000 (16% of children in the region were working in 2000, and this has decreased to 5% in 2004). Also in absolute terms, Latin America ranks first in reducing the participation of children in work. The region had almost 12m fewer child workers in 2004 than four years earlier (over 17m Latin American children were working in 2000, and this has decreased to fewer than 6 m in 2004).

At the other end of the scale we find Sub-Saharan Africa, where the number of working children under the age of 15 slightly increased, as continued high population growth offset the declining incidence. Sub-Saharan Africa now has close to 50m child workers (more than 25% of African children are at work). This is a million more than four years earlier. Even though the number of 50m is still short of the 122m working children (aged 5-14) in the Asian-Pacific region, the number of working children in Asia has decreased by 5m during the last four years and less than 20 % of Asian children are now at work. The Global Report dedicated a section specifically to child labour and Africa's future.

Q: Do these figures tally with education and poverty trends in the concerned regions?

There is a clear link between child labour developments and trends in children's education, but the extent varies between countries and regions. Experience shows, for instance, that appropriate investment in primary and lower secondary education significantly decreases children's work participation rates. In Latin America and the Caribbean, 95 per cent of all primary school-age children are now in school. The region has also made great strides towards increasing secondary schooling in the last few years. In contrast, Sub-Saharan Africa has the highest prevalence of primary school-age children out of school. In Eastern and Southern Africa every third child misses out on primary school. In West and Central Africa this is true for almost half the children. [Source of the figures: UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2005, "Children Out of School. Measuring Exclusion from Primary Education"]

Links between child labour and household poverty rates are somewhat more complex, especially in the short run. There is clear evidence, however, that sustained poverty alleviation efforts lead to reduced child labour rates, and that child labour elimination helps fight the cycle of poverty.

Q: Does child labour affect mostly girls or boys?

Both girls and boys are affected, often at a very young age. For instance, we estimate that 53m girls below the age of 12 are already working. Twenty million among them are in hazardous work. Generally, though, there are more boys than girls working, especially in hazardous jobs and among older children ages 15-17. But remember that this concerns "economic activity" (which is the statistical term encompassing most productive work), and that many girls tend to engage more than boys in so-called "non-economic" activities (i.e. household chores within their own household) and do so even more as they get older. Consequently, girls' work in their own family homes might not be counted as child labour but can still be a serious obstacle to girls' education, for instance.

Q: Are the trends different for boys and girls?

The overall decline of child labour participation seems somewhat faster among boys than girls. However, gender differences remain small.

Q: Is child labour a problem only for poor countries?

No. Child labour, including its worst forms, also exists in industrialized countries, though the number of children working in these countries is smaller. We estimated that in 2000 there were about 2.5m children under the age of 15 at work in developed economies. Available data

sources have not allowed us to update this estimate, however. We can thus not provide a trend for this group of countries.

Q: In which sectors is most child labour found?

Almost 7 out of 10 working children are in the agricultural sector, most often on small-scale family holdings, but also in commercial agricultural plantations. This is compared to 22% in services and 9% in industry, including mining, construction and manufacturing.

Many aspects of work in agriculture - for example, use of poisonous chemicals or inappropriate or dangerous equipment, long hours - can be extremely hazardous. And hazardous agricultural work for children is not limited to developing countries. ILO information shows that this is also an issue for industrialized countries, where the agricultural sector often accounts for the largest number of occupational fatalities of those under 18.

Media coverage has focused public attention on certain groups of child labourers, such as street children, those in export-oriented manufacturing and in commercial sexual exploitation by foreign tourists. These groups are of serious concern, but they are numerically in the minority.

Q: Will the decline in child labour continue?

We certainly hope so, but it is too early to be sure. This is the first time the ILO has been in a position to present a reliable analysis of the trends in child labour data. The current data flow will from now on allow us to analyse trends on a regular basis. The next estimates are planned to be published in 2010.

IV. QUESTIONS ON THE ESTIMATES - CONCEPTS AND METHODOLOGY:

Q: How did the ILO count child labour?

Not all work by children (i.e., girls and boys under 18 years of age) is child labour to be abolished. The statistical definition of "child labour" underlying the ILO estimates includes all working (economically active) children under 15 years of age. These estimates were fine-tuned by excluding (i) those who are under five years old and (ii) those between 12 and 14 years old who spend less than 14 hours a week on their jobs (light work), unless their activities or occupations are hazardous by nature or circumstance (for instance, mining and construction were considered as inherently hazardous). Added to this result are 15-17 year old children in the worst forms of child labour, primarily hazardous work. Children in this age group who work in

non-hazardous conditions are not included in the estimate of child labour, as it is permissible according to ILO Conventions for them to work, unless the work is hazardous or otherwise falls within the worst forms.

This definition is based on the ILO Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No.138) and the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No.182). Convention No.138 represents the most comprehensive and authoritative international definition of minimum age levels for admission to employment or work. It stipulates that ratifying States fix a minimum age for admission to employment or work and it defines a range of minimum ages below which no child should be allowed to perform different kinds of work: for instance, the minimum age for entry to employment or work is generally 15 but can be 14; the age admission to light work is 2 years younger - it accordingly varies between 12 and 13. The exact list of occupations or work processes that are considered hazardous to health, safety and morals and prohibited for girls and boys under 18 has to be decided after consulting employers and trade unions in each country, so that can vary as well.

For the purposes of our global estimates, a single set of cut-off criteria was used for all countries. Taking international standards into account, efforts were made wherever possible to use the average level or criteria prevailing in national legislation. The choice of one set of criteria for this estimate was intended purely for the purpose of obtaining cross-nationally comparative figures. By no means are the chosen criteria intended to replace, revise or call into question current international labour standards or national provisions in force in each country.

Note that the ILO is in the process of developing draft international statistical standards on measuring child labour, to be submitted to and debated at the next International Conference of Labour Statisticians, to take place in 2008.

Q: Did the estimate cover all girls and boys below 18 years of age?

Yes, as far as hazardous and other worst forms of child labour are concerned. However as explained above, this does not mean that all work carried out by those under 18 was counted as "child labour". The concepts and criteria used for the purpose of this estimation are based as closely as possible on international labour standards, especially ILO Conventions Nos. 138 (on minimum age) and 182 (on the worst forms of child labour).

Q: Why does the regional breakdown of working children cover only the age group 5-14 years old?

Economic activity data underlying the regional break-down of working children do not allow us to distinguish between permissible light work by children, child labour to be abolished and hazardous work by children. Among younger children, economic activity rates can be taken as a proxy for the extent of child labour. Note that globally close to 9 out of 10 working children ages 5 to 14 are in child labour. Among older children ages 15-17, the rate drops to around 40 per cent. Economic activity rates thus cannot be used as a child labour gauge for this age group.

Q: Did the ILO carry out a headcount of all children affected by child labour?

The new child labour numbers are not based on a headcount - in other words, the ILO did not go round the world counting working children. The figures are an estimate derived from a globally representative sample of 60 datasets from 43 countries. Trend analysis was facilitated by extrapolating from a matched sample of countries having carried out two or more child labour surveys. Details pertaining to the estimation and extrapolation methodologies are to be found in a technical publication accompanying the Global Report, entitled "Global Child Labour Trends 2000-2004" ..

Q: What survey sources did the ILO use?

A mix of surveys was used and data derived from them appropriately harmonized. Survey sources included the ILO's SIMPOC surveys, the World Bank's LSMS surveys, Unicef's MICS surveys, and national labour force surveys.

Q: How can it be a “global” figure? My country (or country X) has never undertaken a child labour survey?

As explained above, and also in the technical publication "Global Child Labour Trends 2000-2004", the global figure is not a sum of children directly counted or surveyed through one operation. The figures were obtained by global extrapolation of the data from those countries where reliable data are available through surveys.

Q: How did the ILO get information on hazardous work?

Data and trends were derived from a sample of 38 national household surveys from 30 countries. Nineteen surveys formed the basis of the 2004 estimate. Variables taken into account included the age of the child, hours of work, type of activity and characteristics of work performed. The classification was guided by a minimum list of hazardous industries and occupations, derived from national legislation around the world.

Q: Are the new estimates fully comparable to those published four years ago?

Yes, they are. The underlying estimation methodologies were the same. Sample consistency was ensured by data from countries which have carried out repeated child labour relevant surveys.

Q: What are the “unconditional” worst forms of child labour?

They comprise all forms of slavery, child trafficking, debt bondage and other forced labour, including the forcible use of children in armed conflict, as well as the use of children in prostitution or pornography, or in illicit activities such as drug trafficking. These are often crimes under national laws and there is no question of improving the conditions to justify children's engagement. In contrast, hazardous work, which is the other worst form of child labour, depends to a certain extent on the conditions in which the work is performed, and might become permissible for children above the minimum working age by improving safety and health protection.

Q: Why can't the ILO publish trends on the unconditional worst forms of child labour?

The ILO's 2002 estimates of children in the unconditional worst forms of child labour, such as bonded labour, illicit activities or prostitution, were based on a comprehensive secondary data review. Because of the sensitivity of the issues involved, there are hardly any micro-data from stratified sample surveys available. Due to these limitations, a repetition of the 2002 exercise would not have allowed us to assess trends reliably. Note that SIMPOC is currently working on the development of survey instruments to assess the magnitude and characteristics of selected unconditional worst forms of child labour at the national level. New estimates in this area should become available for the next global estimation to be conducted in 2010.

Q: What about the number of child soldiers?

For the same reasons as described above for the unconditional worst forms in general, there are no new figures on the topic. It is estimated that approximately 300,000 children are being used in armed conflict around the world at any given time.

Q: The real problem exists in the area that statistical surveys do not or cannot cover, such as the informal economy, doesn't it?

Our child labour estimates do include work in the informal sector. Data are derived from household surveys, which cover work in registered as well as unregistered businesses, including non-wage labour in small family undertakings. .

Q: Child labour means that the child cannot go to school because of the work, correct?

No, the global estimates are presented without distinguishing whether or not a child is receiving education parallel to the work activities. In other words, the fact of going to school at the

same time was not considered as a reason to exclude him or her from the estimates of "child labour". However, under C.138, light work is to be allowed on condition that it would not hinder the child's attendance and benefiting from education. Since it was not possible to take this criterion into account in the computation, when hours of work were less than 14 hours per week, this was used as a proxy for assuming the acceptable nature of the work for children from age 12. This does not mean that the ILO denies the importance of education. The idea that the minimum age for employment should be linked with the end of compulsory education means that school-age children should be in school and not at work.

V. BASIC BACKGROUND QUESTIONS ABOUT CHILD LABOUR

Q: What is child labour?

Child labour refers to work undertaken by children below the appropriate legal minimum working age. This is based on the ILO Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No.138). Convention No.138 stipulates that ratifying states fix a minimum age for admission to employment or work, and it defines a range of minimum ages below which no child should be allowed to do different kinds of work: for instance, the minimum age for entry to employment or work is generally 15 (but it may be 14 for developing countries); admission to light work may be allowed from 13 (12 for developing countries); and 18 years is the minimum for work considered hazardous to health, safety and morals. In addition, the concept of "child labour" encompasses the worst forms of child labour defined by the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No.182) - explained below.

Q: What are the worst forms of child labour?

There are two distinct forms:

- (i) labour which jeopardizes the physical, mental or moral well-being of a child, known as hazardous work, such as mining, and construction, and occupations or tasks involving heavy machinery or toxic chemicals; and
- (ii) slavery, trafficking, debt bondage and other forms of forced labour; forced recruitment for use in armed conflict; prostitution and pornography; and illicit activities. This sub-group is referred to in the Global Report as the unconditional worst forms of child labour.

Q: What is hazardous child labour?

"Hazardous work" is the term used to signify particularly dangerous or unhealthy work, from which all girls and boys under 18 should be protected, even if they have reached the minimum

age to start working. However, the specific types of work falling in this category have to be determined at the national level, by listing such industries, occupations or tasks. This determination must be carried out in each country after tripartite consultation on the issue, taking account of elements such as those enumerated in Paragraph 3 of Recommendation No.190 supplementing Convention No.182.

Is all work by children considered to be child labour?

Not all work performed by children is equivalent to "child labour" for abolition. This is why the global estimates distinguish between children who are economically active (usually called "working children") and children who are engaged in "child labour for abolition" (i.e., in contravention of ILO principles and standards). "Economically active" is a less restricted category and includes also acceptable types of children's work (e.g. light work from 12 years, or work by young people aged 15-17 years in non-hazardous work).

Is all work by children bad?

Not all work performed by children under the age of 18 is necessarily child labour. Millions of young people undertake work, paid or unpaid, that is appropriate for their age and maturity. By doing so, they learn to take responsibility, gain skills, add to their family's or their own income and well-being, and contribute to their countries' economy.

Child labour is the unacceptable form of children's work. It is work that exposes children to harm or exploitation. The ILO is aware of the difficulty in drawing a line between "acceptable" forms of work by children on the one hand, and "child labour for abolition" on the other. The minimum age offers an objective yardstick for this purpose, rather than leaving the assessment to an individual parent or employer. ILO is not arguing that all children under 18 should stop working. Furthermore, certain types of "work" such as household chores in the child's own family, which are generally regarded as acceptable or beneficial, are not included in the concept of "economic activity".

If some types of work are “non-hazardous”, why do we need to eliminate them?

Hazardous work is something that needs to be prohibited even for girls and boys who have attained the general minimum age but are still under 18, because of the risk to their health, safety and morals. The term "non-hazardous" in this context simply signifies that the work is not within this "hazardous" category, and is not light work, either. Therefore, "non-hazardous" should not be taken as the equivalent of "acceptable" work for underage children, or work that is excluded from the minimum age rules. There is a basic assumption that any work (even that categorized "non-hazardous" here) that is carried out by children below the minimum age for

that kind of activity is not good for their development or schooling. One exception to this is "light work" permissible from about 12, on condition that it is not harmful to their development and does not hinder education.

Q: Isn't it true to say that all child labour is forced labour, because children cannot possibly give a legitimate consent to work?

There is a certain truth in that statement, since child labourers are more or less pushed to work for economic, social or other reasons. But there is a big difference between this characteristic of child labour in general and work that is deliberately imposed by force - for instance child bonded labour, or children drafted into armed forces. That is what should really be called forced child labour.

Q: Why does child labour exist? What are the causes of child labour?

No single factor can fully explain its persistence or growth. Child labour is both a cause and a consequence of poverty. Household poverty pushes children into the labour market to earn money to supplement family income, or even as a means of survival for the children themselves. The existence of child labour perpetuates household poverty across generations, slowing economic growth and social development. It prevents children from gaining an education and skills that will lead to an adulthood of decent work opportunities.

However, poverty is far from being the only factor at play. Inequality, lack of education, high dependence on agriculture in the economy as a whole, slow demographic transition, consumerism, as well as traditions and cultural expectation are among factors that play a role in the occurrence of child labour. Age, sex, ethnicity, social class and deprivation interact to affect the type and intensity of work that children perform, as well as whether they work or not. Lack of adequate policies in the country - in particular the absence of available schooling - is a very large factor.

Family decisions concerning child labour are also influenced by the size and structure of the family (e.g., number, sex, age, spacing and birth order of children, presence of elderly or disabled family members, number of adults of working age). Furthermore, the increased numbers of households headed by grandparents, or even by the children themselves (primarily because of HIV/AIDS and armed conflict) means increased pressure on children to work.

A child from an impoverished family may not have the option of going to school. A girl may be denied that opportunity because of cultural expectations that she work at home. It is the way in which different causes, at different levels, interact with each other that ultimately determines whether or not an individual child becomes a child labourer.

Experience shows that a combination of economic growth, respect for labour standards, universal education and social protection, together with a better understanding of the needs and rights of children, help to reverse these different causes.

What is the ILO doing to combat child labour?

Action to combat child labour by the Organization is rooted in the international labour standards of the ILO (primarily Conventions Nos. 138 and 182), strengthened by the framework provided by the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, and the practical action carried out in member States.

Promoting child labour standards and supervising their application in countries that ratified them was, for many years, the predominant ILO approach to the problem. Reflecting this work, the legislation of most countries now prohibits certain types of work for persons not having attained a minimum age. The Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, adopted in 1998, cemented the existing tendency to consider the elimination of child labour as one of the four fundamental human rights guaranteed under the ILO Constitution, and helped propel it into the front ranks of the ILO's concerns.

The ILO's International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) was founded in 1992. By December 2005, it was operational in 86 countries, with an annual expenditure on technical cooperation projects that reached over \$70 million in 2005. The number and range of IPEC's partners has also expanded over the years, and now includes government agencies, employers' and workers' organisations, private businesses, community-based organisations, NGOs, the media, parliamentarians, the judiciary, religious groups and, of course, children and their families. It is the biggest single operational programme of the ILO.

Who else is involved in efforts to combat child labour?

The elimination of child labour has become an important concern to many international organisations over the past decade. Aside from work within the ILO's tripartite system, both workers' and employers' organisations have taken their own action concerning child labour. UN-system organisations such as UNICEF have their own child labour programmes, while others such as the WHO, IOM, UNESCO, UNFPA and UNDCCP involve themselves in projects which have a direct impact on child labour.

Many other partners also have an important contribution to make in the fight against child labour: children and their families; international and national non-governmental organizations; community-based organizations; the media; and universities and religious groups. NGOs are particularly active in the field, both on the local level, often in collaborative projects with IPEC, and internationally through their vital role in advocacy.

What is the role of children and young people?

They certainly have an important role to play. For instance, the children's interest and opinion must be taken into consideration for planning the measures of direct assistance to rescue and

rehabilitate child labourers. Young people's voice is also a vital driving force for the worldwide movement.

In 2002, on the first World Day against Child Labour (WDACL), the ILO launched a very special programme, SCREAM - Supporting Children's Rights through Education, the Arts and the Media - which is a community-based education and social mobilization initiative that places emphasis on the use of visual, literary, performing arts and the media. The programme is implemented in both industrialized and developing countries, in formal and non-formal education settings. Its multifaceted approach and flexibility have spurred initiatives in public and private schools and in universities in many faculties of drama, communication and journalism, economics, social studies, education and training. The programme is active among theatre groups, Scout movements and with international NGOs and UN agencies in areas of joint cooperation. The growing interest for SCREAM around the world has led to the promotion of the "I2 to I2 Partnership Initiative". This initiative - partnership for sustainable and global impact - aims to harness the commitment and motivation of ILO's partners as well as young people through a range of joint activities in the build-up towards the WDACL of each forthcoming year, hence I2 to I2.

The ILO counts heavily on youth empowerment and child participation in the fight against child labour. Thousands of children and young people worldwide - from primary to high school and universities - are participating in the global campaign to combat child labour. They are expressing their creativity in music and theatre performances, visual arts and canvases, photo exhibits, seminars, debates, interviews and academic projects that deepen their awareness while contributing to social change. Their initiatives have been incredibly successful in helping themselves and their peers of diverse cultural background learn about how their lives are affected by economic and social development at national and global levels. Deepening their understanding of the fact that a better distribution of wealth brings benefits to all people helps them take responsibility as global citizens. Young people become gradually equipped with awareness and knowledge of unsustainable production and consumption patterns and are hence guided to reinforce the social dimension of globalization within their communities. This develops their capacity for integrated thinking and helps them value having a sense of responsibility, respect and commitment. Education based on capacity building is the effective sustainable investment leading to behavioural changes in present and future generations.