

## Child Labour in Africa

### SOME KEY DATA ON CHILD LABOUR IN THE REGION

- The ILO has recently estimated that some 217.7 million children ages 5 to 17 are engaged in child labour around the world. Of these, some 126.3 million are caught in the worst forms of child labour.
- Roughly 122.3 million children are economically active in Asia and the Pacific, 49.3 million in Sub-Saharan Africa, 5.7 million in Latin America and the Caribbean, and 13.4 million in other regions.
- Among working children ages 5 to 14 in the world, 69% are employed in the agricultural sector, 9% are employed in the industrial sector and the remaining 22% are employed in the services sector.
- Sub-Saharan Africa has the greatest incidence of economically active children: 26.4 percent of children ages 5 to 14 in the region are at work.
- In Africa, an estimated 50,000 children are in prostitution and pornography.
- Some 120,000 children under the age of 18 are thought to have been coerced into taking up arms as child soldiers, or military porters, messengers, cooks or sex slaves in Africa.
- Results from the Ghana National Child Labour Survey (IPEC-SIMPOC, 2001) indicate that 0.75 million or 27.6% of males, ages 5-14, work and 0.66 million or 26.3% of females, of the same age group, work resulting in 1.41 million or 27% of all children, ages 5 to 14, working.
- The Government of Kenya has recently reported that 1.9 million children, between the ages of 5-17, are working children. Only 3.2% of these children have attained a secondary school education and 12.7% have no formal schooling at all.
- Results from the Malawi National Child Labour (IPEC-SIMPOC, 2002) indicate that 0.39 million or 25.4% of males, ages 5-14, work and 0.34 million or 21.3% of females, of the same age group, work resulting in 0.73 million or 23.3% of all children, ages 5-14, working.
- Among the estimated 13, 4 million children aged between 5 and 17 years in South Africa in 1999, the extent of work-related activity was at least 36%.

- It is estimated that, in Tanzania mainland, there were 11,965,146 children ages 5-17, accounting for 36.7% of the projected national population of 32.6 million. Majority of these children (79.0%) live in the rural areas (2000/2001 integrated labour force and child labour survey)
- According to the Government of Zambia, there are some 595,000 child workers in Zambia. Of these, 58% are 14 or younger and, thus, ineligible for any form of employment under the Employment of Young Persons Act.
- In Zimbabwe, 26, 3% (1,225,868) of the children were involved in some economic activity of one nature or another.

## **STRATEGIES**

IPEC's strategies in Africa contribute to the ILO's priorities for the region, particularly poverty reduction, through mainstreaming of decent work in PRSPs and other poverty reduction programmes. The ILO priorities list children and youth as being most vulnerable. The IPEC programme targets some of the poorest among these groups. IPEC's work in Africa focuses on much needed capacity building, the strengthening of an Africa-wide movement against child labour and the provision of alternatives for children and their families. Large-scale national time-bound programmes and multi-country programmes targeting specific WFCL have become important foci of IPEC's work in this region.

A new regional strategy has been developed for West and Central Africa concentrating on vocational training and apprenticeships as tools to combat child labour. Efforts also continue to encourage further ratifications of Conventions No. 182 and No. 138 and to assist member States to fulfil their obligations under these. On 12 June 2005, the governments and social partners of seven African countries (out of 14 countries globally) signed the Call to Action to commit their countries to eliminate child labour in the mines and quarries.

In the context of widespread and extreme poverty, families depend on children's income to help pay for basic needs, even survival. In addition, the widespread devastation caused by the HIV/AIDS pandemic, recurrent food crises and political unrest and conflict clearly exacerbate the problem.

There are still knowledge gaps on the magnitude and nature of the problem in Africa, although numerous WFCL are known to exist in many countries. Of particular concern are child trafficking, the use of children in armed conflict, mining, hazardous work in agriculture, commercial sexual exploitation and domestic labour. Children trapped in bondage and slavery have been reported in some areas.

## **IPEC PROJECTS ACTIVE 2004-05**

TBP Support Projects - 6: Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, Senegal, South Africa, and Tanzania

Country Programmes - 6: Burkina Faso, Benin, Mali, Morocco, Niger, and Togo

SIMPOC National Surveys - 7: Completed: Lesotho, Malawi, Uganda; Ongoing: Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Senegal

### **Regional projects focusing on children in specific worst forms: 6**

- Armed conflict - Phase 1: (Burundi, Congo, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Rwanda)
- Trafficking in children - Phases 1 & 2 (Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Gabon, Ghana, Mali, Nigeria and Togo)
- Cocoa/commercial agriculture in West and Central Africa (Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea and Nigeria)
- Commercial agriculture in eastern and southern Africa (Kenya, Malawi, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia). (Completed 2005)
- Child domestic labour (Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia)
- Prevention and Elimination of Child Labour in Mining in West Africa (Burkina Faso, Niger) (starting 2005)

### **Other regional projects: 4**

- Regional capacity building (Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Uganda and Zambia, with some activities in Ethiopia, Malawi, South Africa and Tanzania)
- Regional project on skills training and vocational education (Ghana, Kenya, Tanzania)
- Regional project on vocational training and apprenticeship (Benin, Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, Togo, Madagascar, Morocco, Senegal)
- Sub-regional project on combating HIV/AIDS and child labour in Sub-Saharan Africa (pilot projects in Uganda and Zambia)

### **Country sectoral or area-based projects focusing on children in specific worst forms: 1**

- Morocco: Worst forms of child labour in rural areas