

***Minutes of the UN Global Compact Labour Working Group Meeting
Knowledge Sharing and Charting a Future Course of the Child Labour Platform***

Held at the International Labour Organization, Geneva, Switzerland

Tuesday, 17th April 2012

Introduction

The UN Global Compact Labour Working Group (LWG) - met at the International Labour Organization (ILO) in Geneva, Switzerland on 17th April, 2012 to discuss the adoption of the Child Labour Platform ("Platform", or CLP) as a new workstream of the LWG. The LWG is co-chaired by Brent Wilton, Acting Secretary General of the International Organisation of Employers (IOE), and Philip Jennings, Secretary General of UNI Global Union. The Child Labour Platform, a multi-stakeholder initiative with start-up funding from the Dutch Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment in 2011, worked towards eliminating child labour in five key sectors; cocoa, cotton/seeds, garments, mining and tourism. This meeting marked the transfer of the Platform to the LWG from its start-up phase under IDH - The Sustainable Trade Initiative - and the UN Global Compact. The objectives of the meeting were to:

- transfer the CLP to the LWG of the UN Global Compact
- discuss the ways forward for the CLP within this new construct

Key Decisions & Action Points

There was general agreement among the participating companies that the CLP should be continued and function as a workstream of the LWG.

The following next steps were agreed:

- circulation of the meeting minutes to all participants together with the request to provide any further input for the new Terms of Reference (TOR) for the CLP
- new draft TOR of the CLP will be shared with all participants by end of May for comment
- webinar on World Day Against Child Labour 12 June
- finalization of the Good Practice Notes developed in the first stage of the Platform for posting on the Global Compact website as soon as possible
- further outreach on the CLP by the GC among its 7000 participating companies to bring the CLP to scale.
- development of a detailed workplan on the basis of the agreed TOR together with targets and budget indication for the next years. This workplan will be put forward for further discussion with the participating companies by end of 2012.

Opening Session

The co-chairs of the LWG welcomed the participants: members of the existing CLP and companies and others attending for the first time. They provided an overview of the Global Compact Labour Working Group as well as of the role of their respective organizations in combating child labour. Brent Wilton indicated that the IOE, as the only globally recognized organisation representing the interest of employers in all social and labour matters, has long been engaged in the struggle against child labour. He welcomed the CLP as an important opportunity for further engagement in this area. He indicated that in order to move forward the chairs of the LWG were keen to hear from the participants how this Platform could have added value for them, provide a forum to share good practices and most importantly achieve concrete results on the ground. On this last point he underlined the importance of local engagement by for example the contribution the CLP could make to existing projects by national employers' organizations or by the ILO's International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) in the different countries around the world. In this way, CSR initiatives by companies stand a better chance of becoming sustainable in the long run and part of the national business community.

Philip Jennings described the ways in which global unions can work jointly with multinational enterprises to ensure respect for workers rights such as the abolition of child labour and promote constructive industrial relations, including through international framework agreements. He indicated that the unions were very willing to further engage with companies and he strongly pleaded for concrete actions on the ground on the elimination of child labour by the companies involved in the CLP.

Simon Steyne (ILO-International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour – (IPEC)) welcomed the feedback that the current members of the Platform had provided on the experience of the first phase of the CLP as well as the advice formulated by the former Steering Committee in moving forward with the CLP.¹ He indicated that this guidance was very valuable and that IPEC would be pleased to provide technical support to the CLP. Based on the extensive experience that the ILO and IPEC have built up over the years in the fight against child labour, IPEC can indeed share important lessons learned on what is needed, namely an integrated approach that addresses the root causes of child labour, including inadequate public provision of education and lack of decent work for adults and young workers. He also welcomed the opportunity to further engage with the companies to make a real difference on the ground.

Ursula Wynhoven, General Counsel of the Global Compact Office, provided an overview of how the Global Compact stands ready to support the platform. She drew attention to the UNGC's extensive network of 7,000 businesses committed to the Ten Principles as well as the outreach and advocacy capabilities of the UNGC. She also mentioned learning and dialogue methodologies and platforms that could be used. She confirmed the Global

¹ Both documents are attached to these minutes

Compact's commitment to support the LWG and ILO to help the CLP achieve its full potential, including through the GC local networks around the world.

Session 1. History and Mandate of the Child Labour Platform

Jos Huber, Dutch Ministry of Social Welfare, recalled that one of the conclusions of the Global Conference on Child Labour (The Hague, May 2010) was the recognition that the exchange of experiences and knowledge between companies could contribute to the acceleration of efforts to eliminate child labour in international supply chains. With funding provided by the Dutch Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment for the initial start-up, the CLP was set up by the Sustainable Trade Initiative (IDH) jointly with the Global Compact and with ad hoc technical guidance provided by ILO-IPEC. The CLP's Steering Committee formulated the Platform's objectives and IDH coordinated the Platform's activities in this first phase of the Platform.² The initial focus of the Platform was the development of Good Practice Notes in a selected number of sectors but with the understanding that each Good Practice would include more than one sector. These are currently under review by the chairs of the LWG. The initial output of the Platform was a booklet detailing business practices and lessons learnt in approaches to addressing child labour in the supply chain.

In order to bring the CLP to scale and to fully benefit from the extensive experience of ILO and IPEC as the largest international programme on the elimination of child labour, it was proposed at the end of 2011 that the CLP move to the Global Compact Labour Working Group.

Session 2. UN Global Compact Labour Principles and the ILO's engagement with business on social policy and child labour elimination

Githa Roelans of the ILO's Multinational Enterprises Programme provided an introduction to the ILO especially for those companies participating for the first time. She highlighted the specific characteristics of the ILO (UN specialized agency dealing with the world of work, Decent Work agenda, only tripartite UN organization with governments, employers and workers' organizations in its governance structure and adopting international labour standards) and introduced the *Tripartite Declaration of Principles Concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy* (the [MNE Declaration](#)). This Declaration forms the basis for the ILO's engagement with the private sector on decent work with the aim to maximize the positive contribution business can make to socio economic development. She also highlighted the collaboration with the Global Compact on joint awareness-raising and capacity building activities on the Labour Principles³, including through the [ILO Helpdesk for](#)

² See intro of the doc attached "Advice of the Child Labour Platform Steering Committee 2010-2011 to UN Global Compact and ILO on the continuation of the Child Labour Platform in 2012 and beyond."

³ [The UN Global Compact Labour Principles. A Guide for Business](#)

[Business](#)⁴ which is geared to provide speedy and user-friendly guidance on how to apply principles of international labour standards in business operations. Other relevant initiatives are in the field of expert assistance service, webinars on labour topics and support for meetings of the LWG.

Benjamin Smith from IPEC introduced IPEC's work, based on the two key conventions related to child labour (ILO Convention No. 138 on Minimum Age (1973) and ILO Convention No. 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour (1999)). He also explained IPEC's direct engagement with businesses through its advisory role in a number of multi-stakeholder initiatives addressing child labour and specific public-private partnerships. He indicated that an integrated approach covering the provision of basic social protection and improvements of the working conditions of adults have been most successful in rendering redundant the need to use child labour. As such IPEC works closely together with many other departments in the ILO including the bureaus for workers' and employers' activities, in order to create synergies for the effective and lasting elimination of child labour. He briefly introduced the project that ILO and IOE recently initiated to produce a cross-sector, global guidance tool, based on ILO Conventions and applying the due diligence concept of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, to enhance the understanding of companies of the impact of their business operations on child labour, including in their supply chains, and of effective remediation when needed.

Discussions following these morning sessions covered a wide range of topics: the merits of working with examples and structures at the national level; tackling the root causes of child labour; the empowerment of women and adolescent girls; the merits of a sectoral approach as a complement to individual supply chain initiatives; working with cooperative NGOs in tripartite-plus settings at the national level; and helping companies with government engagement.

Session 3. Panel presentations and discussion on action against child labour

The panel consisted of representatives from Mars Inc., Telefónica Foundation, the International Union of Food Workers (IUF) and UNI Global Union. The session provided an opportunity to discuss company approaches and activities and the role of unions in undertaking action against child labour activities.

Jeff Morgan of Mars Inc. presented the company's activities in the Soubré region of Côte d'Ivoire⁵. Mars recognises the problem of static or decreasing cocoa yields in the region, exacerbated *inter alia* by isolation; poor infrastructure; dire poverty; and low levels of education. The "Vision for Change" programme includes efforts to boost farmer incomes through support for improved productivity, as well as supporting improved education infrastructure and quality and community empowerment, including support for child labour monitoring systems. Mars has set a target that by 2020 all of its cocoa supply will be

⁴ <http://www.ilo.org/business> and assistance@ilo.org

⁵ Côte d'Ivoire contributes 34% of global cocoa production (LMC International).

produced in a sustainable manner, but it is also supporting a holistic approach to development in the whole sector. Certification systems may in themselves be inadequate, but Mars is interested in working with the ILO on strong child labour monitoring systems with the government.

In addition to direct efforts to oversee practices in its supply chains, Telefónica through its Foundation also takes an approach to sustainably reduce child labour through education in its *Proniño* program in Latin America. Carmen de la Serna of the Telefónica Foundation highlighted that through December 2011, this programme has assisted over 270,000 children attending over 6,000 schools and educational centres supported by Telefónica. Telefónica aims to make a significant contribution to Global Child Labour Conference to be hosted by the Government of Brazil in 2013. This conference marks the midway point between the Global Child Labour Conference of 2010, held in The Hague and the target date for eliminating the Worst Forms of Child Labour, 2016.

Sue Longley of the IUF noted that child labour and lack of respect for workers' rights generally are particularly a problem in the agricultural sector. She provided an overview of the many challenges in this sector (including poverty, legal barriers to freedom of association, isolation, hazardous working conditions) and emphasized the link between child labour and the poverty which many farmers face. She also raised the issue of the lack of capacity to establish child labour monitoring systems (CLMS) in relevant areas. An opportunity for business to support more effective action may lie in the direct contact that the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) has with small farm holdings and the fact that the FAO is part of an international partnership to combat child labour in agriculture, established in 2007 together with ILO, IFAD, CGIAR, IUF, and IFAP. She concluded that more needs to be done to make agriculture an attractive and viable job option for young people, instead of relying on certification schemes as the solution to the problem, which anyhow lack credibility.

Philip Jennings underscored the role of trade unions in ensuring that labour rights, including the elimination of child labour, are respected. He drew attention to another fundamental problem, namely that in most cases companies may have policies in place, but that company practices often fail to meet the standards set by these policies. The answer to these issues therefore needs to be an integrated one through appropriate legislation, labour inspection and meaningful social dialogue between the social partners at national and sectoral level: Global Framework Agreements and collective bargaining agreements in general, can be the beginning of efforts to improve practices.

Governance, objectives and the future of the Child Labour Platform

The LWG Chairs noted that for the CLP to serve its purpose it must be responsive to the needs of its members and add value for them. They therefore thanked the participating companies for the inputs that they had already provided both during the telephone interviews and through the advice formulated by the Steering Committee.

A structured discussion followed on the objectives and activities of the CLP. This included the need to reach out to more companies and seek a more active engagement among GC participants so that the platform indeed attain scale and have a real impact. It was also suggested that practical examples of how the ILO is responding to companies' and workers' call for the elimination of child labour should be shared with CLP members, in order to foster a joint approach to eliminate such a scourge. The issue of resources for the platform was also raised, especially financial resources since the support from the Dutch government is no longer available at this point.

The moderator of the session, ILO-IPEC Director Constance Thomas, outlined the following types of areas in which ILO-IPEC could provide support to the Platform, on the condition that appropriate funding would be available for these services:

- Outreach to additional companies to widen the membership base and promote its sustainability.
- Training and knowledge building on child labour, including through webinars on specific topics or sectors.
- Advisory services.
- Development of tools and guidance materials.
- Projects on the ground in which companies can participate and IPEC can further facilitate dialogue with the government.
- Links with other networks on the elimination of child labour, either managed by IPEC or to which IPEC serves as an advisor.
- Tripartite actor engagement
- Access to up-to-date research and findings, legislative revisions and ongoing project developments on child labour and business.

Participants noted that the CLP offers an open forum for discussion to share experiences and lessons learned among the participants, but that it also needs to move from there and look at how to promote progress/improvement with practical guides. The Platform should be extended to include other sectors. It was also pointed out that as companies need targets in order to stay engaged, the Platform, as a group, would also need to identify specific targets and indicators to measure success. Other concerns included better understanding the role of social auditing and certification and also the opportunities for outreach to small and medium enterprises. The first year's experience demonstrated that the cross-sector approach was much appreciated but that there was also demand to focus very specifically at a sector level. Constance Thomas finally indicated a few upcoming opportunities that could generate more visibility for the CLP as well as involve concretely its members:

- IPEC Steering Committee meeting on 12th June 2012: opportunity to present the Platform and to solicit the interest of approximately 150 governments
- Rio+20 Corporate Sustainability Forum where the LWG session will focus on innovative approaches of the private sector in the realization of the Labour Principles and Sustainable Development. Elimination of Child Labour will be one of the topical areas.
- preparations for the 2013 Global Conference on Child Labour to be held in Brazil (November 2013). The global focus of this conference was emphasized, and it was also noted that IPEC was preparing new global estimates for this conference.

Conclusion and next steps

There was general agreement among the participating companies that the CLP should be continued and function as a workstream of the LWG.

The following next steps were agreed:

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