

## NEW ILO REPORT FINDS GLOBAL NUMBER OF CHILD LABOURERS FALLS. Asia Pacific sees the greatest decline but still has the largest numbers.

For immediate release

### Colombo (ILO News):

A new report by the International Labour Organization (ILO) has found that the global number of child labourers has declined by one third since 2000, with the largest absolute decline in the Asia Pacific region.

Between 2000 and 2012 the number of child labourers (aged 5-17) worldwide fell from 246 million to 168 million. The decline has been greatest in the last four years (2008-2012), the period covered by the new report. In these years the global number of child labourers fell from 215 million to 168 million and in Asia Pacific the number fell from 114 million to about 78 million.

However, in absolute terms Asia Pacific still has more child labourers than any other region of the world, because of the overall size of the population.

When looked at in percentage terms the new figures mean that, globally, almost 11 per cent of children in the world are still in child labour. In Asia Pacific it is 9.3 per cent (compared to 13.3 per cent in 2008) which is still higher than Latin America and the Caribbean (8.8 per cent) and the Middle East and North Africa (8.4 per cent) regions. The worst region is Sub-Saharan Africa with 21.4 per cent (equivalent to 59 million child labourers).

The largest number of children still in hazardous work (work that directly endangers their health, safety and moral development) was also found in Asia Pacific - 33.9 million out of a global total of 85 million.

The report, "Marking progress against child labour: Global estimates and trends 2000-2012", is the fourth of its kind. It analyses the period 2008-2012 and compares the new global and regional estimates with the previous ones for 2000, 2004 and 2008.

However the report cautions that, despite this progress, the 2016 target date set by the international community for the elimination of the worst forms of child labour will not be met, and to do so in the foreseeable future "is going to require a substantial acceleration of efforts at all levels".

"We are moving in the right direction but progress is still too slow. If we are serious about ending the scourge of child labour in the foreseeable future, then we need a substantial stepping-up of efforts at all levels. There are 168 million good reasons to do so," said ILO Director-General Guy Ryder.



**Other findings of the report:**

The incidence of child labour is highest in poorer countries but middle-income countries have the largest numbers of child labourers. This makes clear that income and poverty are not the only reasons for child labour.

Child labour among girls has fallen by 40 per cent since 2000, compared to 25 per cent for boys.

The forms of child labour are changing. Agriculture remains the largest important sector (98 million children, or 59 per cent globally), but there are increasing numbers in services (currently 54 million or 32 per cent) and industry (12 million or 7.2 per cent) – mostly in the informal economy.

The new figures come in the lead-up to the Third Global Conference on Child Labour, which will be hosted by the Government of Brazil in Brasilia next month.

To achieve more progress the report says that more action is needed in four areas; legislation and enforcement, education and skills development, better social protection, and more decent work opportunities for young people. There is also a need for more work on age and gender-specific responses, and in the services and manufacturing sectors.

“The Asia region has made great progress in reducing child labour, thanks to an impressive amount of hard work and political and social commitment,” said Yoshiteru Uramoto, Regional Director of the ILO’s Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific. “But the job is not done and the last steps will be tough. An invigorated and aggressive drive is needed to finally consign child labour to the history books and let the children of Asia Pacific fulfil their potential.”

Mr. Donglin LI, ILO Country Director for Sri Lanka and the Maldives welcomed the report release and highlighted that Sri Lanka has made much progress in fighting against child labour. It has ratified ILO’s 8 core conventions including the C138 and C182. Sri Lanka has determined a list of 51 hazardous forms of child labour. Sri Lanka has also developed a Road Map to achieve zero tolerance for the worst forms of child labour by 2016 and the district of Ratnapura has initiated the declaration of a time-bound programme to make it a Child Labour Free Zone by 2016 at least. He stated that Sri Lanka needs to keep up the momentum and make more concerted efforts in future.

