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The International Labour Organization (ILO), The International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations (IUF), and the Elimination of Child Labour in Tobacco Growing Foundation (ECLT Foundation) congratulate the Government of Malawi and the Malawian employer and trade union organisations for their continued and renewed commitment to ending child labour in agriculture, and the Ministry of Labour of Malawi for successfully launching a process of discussion and exchange amongst representatives of Government, enterprises, trade unions and civil society groups to address child labour in agriculture.

The three organizations were proud to support the Government of Malawi in hosting the Malawi National Conference on Child Labour in Agriculture, which took place in Lilongwe, 4 to 6 September 2012. The conference drew more than 300 participants and 40 children including former child labourers and was the largest ever conference to discuss a labour issue in Malawi. Participants worked through stimulating discussions, presentations, and consensus-building documents to produce a framework to shape the agriculture component of the Child Labour National Action Plan for Malawi by 2016.

Opening the Conference, President Joyce Banda called for more concerted multi-stakeholder efforts, noting that the Government alone could not win the war against the use of child labour in agriculture in Malawi.

The outcomes document which was approved at the end of the conference calls on the Government to enact a Tenancy Bill compliant with international labour standards and increase expenditure on education and labour law enforcement; on industry to promote better wages and prices for workers and farmers in agricultural value chains; on trade unions to strengthen their organisations in the agricultural sector and in policy dialogue; and on the development community to increase support for the efforts of the Malawian Government, employers, trade unions and civil society organisations. It also recognizes the importance of integrated approaches to tackling child labour and of community-based child labour monitoring systems.

The ECLT, the ILO and the IUF echo the call in the Conference Outcome Document for the development community to support the efforts of the Malawian Government and social partners to promote workers', children's, and other human rights. The three organizations also call on the agro-business and the tobacco industry in particular to increase rapidly the financial support for projects and for the development of integrated national policy and service provision aimed at eliminating child labour from commercial agriculture in Malawi.