



Global March Against Child Labour
International Conference on Child Labour in Agriculture
Washington DC, USA
July 28-30, 2012

FRAMEWORK OF ACTION

This International Conference on Child Labour in Agriculture (28-30 July 2012, Washington D.C., U.S.A.):

- organised by the Global March Against Child Labour;
- and attended by 156 participants from governments, intergovernmental agencies, trade unions, teacher organisations, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), agriculture producers organisations (hereafter referred to as APOs), cooperatives, multi-stakeholder initiatives and corporations from over 39 countries.

RECOGNISES THAT a strong and sustained worldwide movement against child labour is essential to attain the elimination of child labour and in particular of the worst forms of child labour by 2016 (as required by The Hague Roadmap adopted in 2010), in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the relevant ILO Conventions.

FURTHER RECOGNISES that all children have to be protected from all forms of violence and abuse. Children are the subject of rights and any action that is oriented to eliminate child labour in agriculture should include their voices, opinions and promote their participation.

NOTES THAT:

- 60 per cent of all child labour takes place in agriculture i.e. over 129 million girls and boys aged between 5 and 17 years working in agriculture many of them in hazardous work;
- child labour in agriculture occurs in both developed and developing countries, and is related to rural poverty and the precarious situation of families in rural communities;
- agriculture remains a sector in which limited progress has been made to address child labour and where programmes are under-developed, especially in respect of hazardous child labour, forced and bonded labour, child trafficking, small-scale agriculture, neglected sub-sectors and local value chains;
- children in rural areas can undertake multiple types of work in the rural economy.

ALSO RECOGNISES THAT agriculture is a sector with significant decent work deficits in particular:

- agricultural workers, both self-employed and hired, are often denied their core rights to belong to and be represented by a trade union;
- labour legislation sometimes excludes or has lower requirements for agricultural workers;
- agriculture is one of the three most dangerous sectors to work in and the sector with the highest rate of fatal accidents;
- many millions of workers are migrant, seasonal or temporary workers in extremely precarious situations and as such are frequently victims of forced labour;
- there is a need to develop and implement integrated policies that address the root causes of child labour in agriculture.

WELCOMES the contributions towards the elimination of child labour in agriculture from:

- trade unions both through direct actions against child labour and through the promotion of decent work for adults and youth and sustainable livelihoods;
- NGOs by combating child labour including its worst forms in agriculture, creating awareness, community mobilisation and promotion of all children's rights;
- governments through speedy ratification of the ILO's child labour conventions, policies and promotion of various child protection programmes;
- intergovernmental organisations in advancing labour rights and child rights, creation of knowledge and its management and strengthening social dialogue;
- multi-stakeholder initiatives by promoting trade union, civil society and business collaboration;
- employer organisations and businesses in creating awareness on the issue of child labour in agriculture.

NOTES the importance of harnessing the untapped potential of APOs and cooperatives to combat child labour in agriculture.

FURTHER RECOGNISES that the following are integral to ensuring the elimination of child labour:

- a conducive legislative environment and policy framework;
- protection of child rights;
- universal free quality basic public education;
- decent employment and decent wages and work for adult workers;
- food security, the right to food and sustainable rural livelihoods;
- the rights of workers to organise and to bargain collectively in free, independent trade unions;
- the rights of farmers to form their own independent organisations;

- gender equality, social inclusion and non-discrimination;
- good safety and health laws and their enforcement;
- adequately resourced and funded labour inspection.

Conference participants therefore COMMIT to renewed action to end child labour, particularly in agriculture, and CALL UPON the following stakeholders to commit to key actions;

The Global March Against Child Labour

To strengthen the worldwide movement against child labour, this Conference CALLS ON the Global March through its trade union representatives and civil society partners and members to commit to:

- strengthening its partners' and members' capacities to tackle child labour in agriculture in their communities/countries/regions in particular, and all forms of child labour in general and promoting coordination and cooperation of all parties engaged in combating child labour in agriculture, including with national social partners' organisations;
- complementing the existing work with trade unions by working more closely with the International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Association (IUF) and Education International (EI) on elimination of child labour and improved rural education;
- identifying and initiating dialogue with APOs and cooperatives in selected countries to tackle child labour on smallholder farms;
- engaging with campaigns and organisations advocating for the right to food to include child labour elimination as a key indicator of the right to food;
- initiating media and social media contacts to support campaigns and advocacy and to become actively engaged in publicising both advances and obstacles in tackling child labour in agriculture;
- advocating with government and inter-governmental organisations for greater investment in education, especially universal free quality basic public education in rural communities, with special focus on girls;
- work more closely with the International Partnership for Cooperation on Child Labour in Agriculture (<http://www.fao-ilo.org/fao-ilo-child/international-partnership>);
- actively pursue the implementation of this Framework of Action.

Trade unions

Trade unions act as a first line of defence against child labour and abusive labour practices in their businesses, workplaces and communities. They represent a critical force in the fight to end exploitation of children by ensuring that adults earn decent wages and that allow them to send their children to school, and that adult and young workers have decent conditions of work.

This Conference therefore CALLS UPON trade unions, in particular the IUF and its affiliates to:

- increase activities to ensure that multi-national enterprises (MNEs) in IUF sectors commit to and work on elimination of child labour in their supply chains including, where appropriate, commitments to elimination of child labour in collective bargaining agreements and international framework agreements;
- negotiate for better childcare provision both public and in the workplace;
- work for improved occupational safety and health (OSH) for all in agriculture, including through campaigns for the ratification and implementation of ILO Convention 184 on safety and health in agriculture. For children above the minimum legal age of employment in their country, this would help to transform hazardous child labour into decent youth employment;
- negotiate to expand the remit of legally required joint worker-employer OSH committees to cover the contract farmers in company supply chains, including for the systematic training of farmers on OSH and in particular on how to conduct risk assessments;
- support the use of innovative OSH outreach programmes e.g. roving safety representatives, to address child labour in rural communities;
- advocate for properly resourced, effective labour inspection in agriculture;
- participate in monitoring the incidence of child labour in agriculture including through collective agreements and engagement in the development and implementation of community based child labour monitoring systems;
- fulfil their mandate in tripartite mechanisms which oversee the implementation of national policy;
- combat precarious work, outsourcing and piece-rate payments.

Companies and multinational enterprises

Companies (local and national) and multinational enterprises have the prime responsibility to control rigorously their agricultural workplaces and supply chains to ensure that child labour is not used.

This conference CALLS on companies and MNEs to:

- commit to eliminating child labour in their agricultural workplaces and supply chains and to ensure that their business practices meet that purpose;
- respect freedom of association and the effective right to collective bargaining;
- fulfil their legal obligations to have safe and healthy workplaces which would transform hazardous child labour into decent youth employment;
- where there are legally required joint worker-employer workplace safety and health committees, plantation/farming companies should fulfil their due diligence obligations in their agricultural supply chains by expanding the role of their workplace health and safety committees to help the companies' contract farmers and their workers to stop using child labour;

- for children above the minimum age for employment, help transform hazardous child labour into decent youth employment;
- support the systematic training of farmers, and personnel in APOs and cooperatives in the enterprises' supply chains, on basic occupational safety and health risk assessment techniques.

Non-government organisations (NGOs)

Ranging from global networks with pan-regional presence to national/local NGOs, NGOs with their wide networks and/or grassroots reach are rightly placed to tackle the problem of child labour at both the policy and ground level.

This Conference therefore CALLS upon NGOs to:

- increase their contributions in creating, updating and implementing national hazardous work lists in regards to agriculture, in collaboration with trade unions and employers' organisations;
- advocate for realising the right of all children to universal free quality basic public education, as well as related and underlying rights, including birth registration;
- participate in monitoring the incidence of child labour in agriculture, particularly the hardest-to-reach categories such as girls, indigenous, migrant, trafficked and forced child labourers, and assist in their withdrawal, rehabilitation and education;
- advocate for systematic training of farmers and personnel in APOs and cooperatives, on basic occupational safety and health risk assessment techniques;
- advocate more systematic involvement of agricultural extension officers and their networks in the elimination of child labour;
- promote partnerships with the trade unions, employers, agricultural producers and cooperatives, as well as with businesses at all levels of the supply chains
- advocate for solutions to family poverty by working with families and rural communities.

Agricultural Producers Organisations (APOs)

By working to promote farmers' welfare through farmer friendly practices and policies, APOs have a key role to play in making agriculture a sustainable and child labour free occupation for farmers, especially smallholders.

RECOGNISING the lack of systematic involvement of APOs to date in combating child labour,

conference participants:

COMMIT to strengthening their dialogue and cooperation with APOs to help them combat child labour in agriculture and stimulate the outreach, and development of APOs where they are non-existent;

CALL on Global March to promote systematic dialogue and cooperate with APOs and their national, regional and international bodies to eliminate child labour in agriculture.

Cooperatives

With activities being guided by membership-driven, cooperative and not-for-profit values, agricultural cooperatives serve as natural allies in the global movement against child labour. Cooperatives and the cooperative movement have an important, but as yet unharnessed, role to play in the elimination of child labour worldwide.

This Conference therefore CALLS on the cooperative movement to promote systematic dialogue and cooperate with agricultural cooperatives and their national, regional and international bodies to eliminate child labour in agriculture, and encourage democratic cooperativism as an important vehicle to achieve this.

Intergovernmental organisations, agencies and programmes

With a vast global reach and resources, intergovernmental organisations and agencies can significantly contribute to the action against child labour in agriculture by providing technical expertise on development matters, conducting research, and mobilising financial resources among other things.

This conference URGES intergovernmental organisations, agencies and programmes to:

- focus their efforts, and strengthen their cooperation, to combat child labour in agriculture, also by including it as an objective for any relevant support or lending;
- provide and harmonise technical and financial assistance to support efforts to end child labour in agriculture;
- improve research, data collection, documentation and knowledge management on child labour in agriculture in collaboration with governments, research institutions, trade unions, employers and civil society;
- promote inter-sectoral and inter-agency dialogue and cooperation to converge policies and programmes for elimination of child labour, promotion of education for all, the right to food and food security and overall poverty reduction.

Governments

Governments have an obligation to guarantee human rights, including fundamental rights at work, and therefore have primary responsibility in eliminating child labour by applying and enforcing national legislation, including agricultural and rural development policies. Governments should mainstream child labour elimination as an explicit objective in all relevant policies, ensure adequate technical and financial support and resources in their implementation, and enlist support from donor countries and development agencies, including by promoting South-South cooperation.

This Conference URGES governments to strengthen their efforts to eliminate child labour in agriculture by:

- guaranteeing access to universal free quality basic public education for all children, on the basis of effective birth registration, focusing in particular on the hardest-to-reach, including the children of migrants and seasonal workers;
- increasing efforts to overcome the gender and urban/rural gap in education;
- fully involving trade unions, employers' organisations, and NGOs in their activities to eliminate child labour in agriculture, particular in the national hazardous work lists;
- strengthening national legislation on child labour in agriculture as well as its application and enforcement;
- promoting the introduction of a national Social Protection Floor, especially for rural and farmer families, as a comprehensive social policy approach promoting integrated strategies for providing access to social services and income security for all;
- ensure effective labour inspection in agriculture, with special focus on child labour elimination, and ratify ILO Convention 129;
- providing financial assistance to combat child labour proportionate to the size and location of the problem of child labour in agriculture;
- collaborate with the social partners and other relevant stakeholders in removing the barriers which rural women face;
- addressing the structural causes of child labour in agriculture, by promoting sustainable agriculture and child labour sensitive agricultural and rural development policies and instruments.

The Global March Against Child Labour CALLS ON all parties referred to in this document to take full account of its content in their preparations for the Global Child Labour Conference to be held in Brazil in 2013.