



# International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour

## IPEC



## Human Rights, Social Justice and Child Labour

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# Webinar Structure

- Children's right to be free from child labour as a human right
- ILO Conventions and the implications for business
- Recent evidence, experience, trends
- ILO business resources for eliminating child labour
- Working with ILO
  - What is World Day against Child Labour?
  - Working with Child Labour Platform



# The latest figures on child labour...

- **215 million** children involved in child labour
- **115 million** of these children are in hazardous work
- Types: 66% unpaid family work, 21% paid employment, 5% self-employment
- Sectors: 60% agriculture; 26% services; 7% in industry; overwhelmingly informal
- Estimated **7% - 15%** in global supply chains
- New global estimates covering 2008-2012 will be available in 2013



# Child labour - a human rights issue

- Right to Education established in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1946)
- Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work: Based on eight ILO core Conventions and regarded as human rights which all ILO Member States are required to respect, promote and realise:
  - **freedom of association** and the right to **collective bargaining**
  - the elimination of **forced or compulsory labour**,
  - the abolition of **child labour**, and
  - the elimination of **discrimination** in respect of employment and occupation.
- The elimination of child labour will be achieved much more quickly and efficiently when the other rights are also respected.



# Access to basic education

- **67 million** primary aged children are not enrolled in school
- **74 million children** of lower secondary school age are not enrolled in school
- Many children who are enrolled are not attending on a regular basis
- We need a new commitment to education for all children to the minimum age of employment
- We must tackle the barriers and improve access to quality education



# Pre-requisites for social justice

- There need to be essential social services for all (e.g education, health)
- Legal Framework in accordance with ILO Conventions
- Social protection strategies which assist poor families to access essential services
- Decent work for adults so they can choose school not work for their children

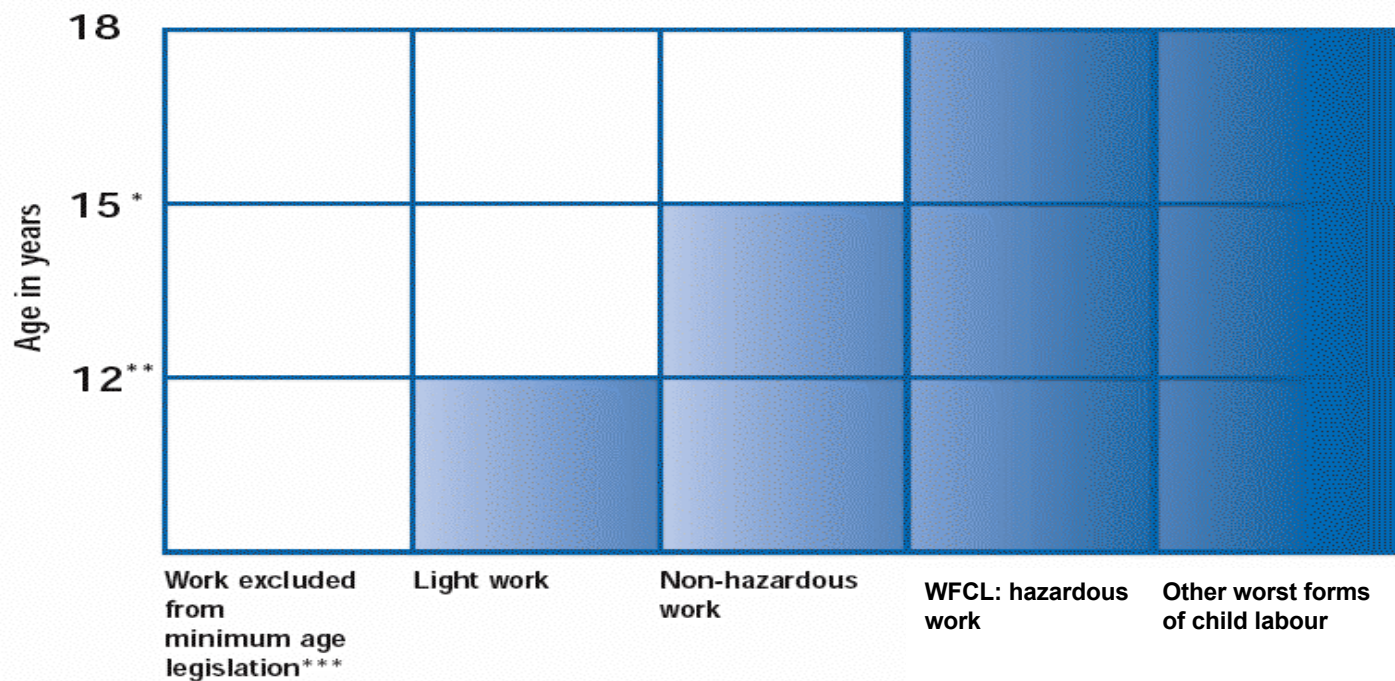


# ILO Conventions on Child Labour

- Minimum Age Convention (No. 138)
  - a minimum age for employment not less than the age of finishing compulsory education
  - In any case not be less than 15 years; for developing countries, initially 14 years (though many have ratified stating 15 years)
  - National laws may permit 13-15 year olds in light work which does not interfere with school attendance, nor harmful to a child's health or development
- Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention (No. 182)
  - Prohibition of the **worst forms of child labour** as a matter of urgency
    - ◆ Slavery or slavery like conditions
    - ◆ Prostitution or pornography
    - ◆ Use of child for illicit activities
    - ◆ Work that harms the health, safety, and morals



# Minimum ages: more than one!



**Shaded area = child labour for abolition**

\* The minimum age for admission to employment or work is determined by national legislation and can be set at 14, 15 or 16 years.

\*\* The minimum age at which light work is permissible can be set at 12 or 13 years.

\*\*\* For example, household chores, work in family undertakings and work undertaken as part of education.





# Role of Business in the Fight against Child Labour

- A major force for progress by
  - Providing opportunities for decent work, propelling economic growth
  - Adhering to national and int'l law
  - Paying fair share of taxes
  - Eschewing corruption
- But significant risks persist



# Continuing Challenges....

- How to tackle child labour in supply chains that involve the informal economy, small holdings, household production, piece rate production etc-- and how to demonstrate progress
- How to marry capacity strengthening efforts with compliance programmes and improve their impact on rights
- How to engage effectively with governments to improve enforcement, social service provision, and with workers' and employers' organizations
- How to bring effective community based monitoring models to scale and sustain them



# Continuing Challenges...

- Long term remediation means tackling root causes beyond the lifetime of “projects”
- Private sector voluntary initiatives have had positive impact on working conditions for workers in global supply chains, especially on safety and health
- However, less evidence of impact on “rights-based issues” such as FoA, discrimination, child labour: need for impact evaluation
- Ensuring business practices live up to commitments on child labour and other worker rights



# Possible responses

- **Codes of Conduct**

- Aligned with ILO Conventions?
- Do they extend to supply chain? Below first tier where risk is often greatest?

- **Labelling/certification initiatives**

- Rugmark/Goodweave initiative example
- Sometimes adapt environmental or organic standards, however no way to test a final good for “labour content”
- Sufficient rigor to provide a real assurance?

- **Fairtrade**

- By paying small producers higher prices, can alleviate poverty, a root cause of child labour
- Wage labourers and their children do not necessarily benefit
- How to improve conditions across the board in “regular” commodities



# Possible responses

- **Multistakeholder Initiatives**
  - Companies, trade unions, civil society
  - Industry wide effort, common vision
  - International Cocoa Initiative
  - ECLT
- **Child Labour Platform**
  - ILO, UN Global Compact
  - Cross-sectoral
  - Engaging with government: the missing element to achieve scale?



# Possible responses

- **Changes to business practices**
  - Centralized production: soccer ball stitching
  - Incentives and disincentives: sugar cane in Brazil, El Salvador
  - Rubber plantations in Liberia and collective bargaining



# Child Labour Monitoring Systems

- Regular, repeated visits to worksites, schools
- To identify child labourers, at-risk children and assess conditions in all forms of CL
- Triggers protection, referral to appropriate services
- Follow up to ensure a good outcome and that other children do not take the place of removed children
- Main features
  - Linked to government inspection, services at district and national level
  - Community-based
  - Alliance of partners
  - Companies can play a role but do not replace government functions



# Recent Evidence: Child labour elimination in India

- Marked improvements in Knitwear, Fireworks, Handicrafts, Stone quarries, Brick kilns
- Domestic and export markets
- Government intervention in education, school meals critical, but also sanctions against employers
- Handicrafts: centralization of production for easier monitoring
- Higher urban wages, higher aspirations of parents: education as an elevator
- Rather than projects what is needed are multi-stakeholder programmes to implement existing child labour legislation, involving communities in design/implementation





# Recent Experience: Tackling child labour in cocoa growing communities

- Partnership with 8 companies in chocolate and cocoa industry
- Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire
- Coordination and capacity strengthening around community-based child labour monitoring
- Building exit strategy from outset: national CLMS rolled out in cocoa communities to carry on after project's end
- Integrated, area-based approach to avoid displacement
- Partnerships to improve productivity and livelihoods, organization, OSH
- Initial results: national CLM system tools available; OSH manual developed; 1,600 birth records secured



# Recent Experience: Policy development and mobilization in Malawi

- Partnership with ECLT: largest labour conference in Malawi history
- Tripartite plus National Conference adopts Action Plan against child labour in agriculture-
- Tobacco, sugar, tea and “neglected sectors” of fishing, livestock
- New commitments from Government, industry, employers’ and workers’ organizations, civil society
- At a moment of fundamental market and policy reform, adding a rights based focus to ensure greater efficiencies and productivity benefit the most vulnerable in supply chains: child labourers



# Tools: Step By Step Guide for Employers

- **8 Key Steps** serve as a guiding framework: Each enterprise challenges unique

## **Elements of a child labour strategy**

1. Analysing the situation
2. Designing the strategy (with implementation schedule)
3. Three immediate actions: hiring, hazards and hours
4. Supporting child and household welfare
5. Eliminating the need for child labour in my business
6. Eliminating child labour in the supply chain
7. Using a code of conduct
8. Auditing, monitoring and certification



# Tools: “How to” Guidebook

- Guidebook on **How to do Business with respect for Children’s Right to be free from Child Labour**
- Forthcoming tool that builds upon existing materials
- ILO Conventions, UN Framework on Business and Human Rights, Guiding Principles
- Focus on supply chain due diligence, “knowing and showing”
- Evidence based, practical advice on management systems
- Involving IOE and company assessments



# Positive trends in the business response to child labour (1)

- Increased engagement with government
- Increased use of integrated, areas based approaches
- Increased linkage between support for improved productivity in supply chains and respect for labour rights
- Use of field technicians to raise awareness and train on OSH, support community-based child labour monitoring
- Conversion of child labour to youth employment among 15-17s through protection, OSH



## Positive trends in the business response to child labour (2)

- Increased public commitments to sustainable production
- Increased acceptance that causing, contributing to child labour, or being linked to it through business relationships, is antithetical to sustainable production: changing business culture
- Some consumer demand—but enough to pay for all of the progress needed? Other drivers needed



# How You can help: World Day against Child Labour - June 12

- Since 2000 on June 12
- Annual centerpiece of awareness raising and social mobilization campaign
- Year round: 12 to 12 campaign, focus of research
- Activities around the globe
- Employers play an important role



# How you can help: World Day against Child Labour

- Mark the World Day against Child Labour at headquarters and other offices and retail outlets. Include photo exhibitions of child labour scenes, and distribution of World Day materials (posters etc.) *Materials are available at [www.ilo.org/ChildLabourWorldDay](http://www.ilo.org/ChildLabourWorldDay)*
- Organize of a forum to discuss child labour, especially the role of business in addressing the problem. ILO can provide examples of successful initiatives and help design for you.
- Highlight World Day against Child Labour on business websites, linking to the World Day website.
- Include articles on World Day in corporate newsletters or magazines.
- Encourage offices and business partners in other countries to contact local ILO-IPEC offices, which coordinate World Day activities with employers and workers organizations and governments in close to 80 countries





# How you can help: Child Labour Platform

- Initiative of UN Global Compact Labour Working Group, IPEC, and Leading Companies in the fight against Child Labour
- Initiative aims to:
  - Foster exchange among companies, governments, workers organizations and civil society: what works, what does not
  - Identify obstacles and ways to overcome them
  - Catalyse collective approaches
  - Build the global knowledge base on child labour in supply chains



# For more information

- ILO – International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour [www.ilo.org/ipec](http://www.ilo.org/ipec)  
Benjamin Smith: [smithb@ilo.org](mailto:smithb@ilo.org)
- ILO Helpdesk for Business on international labour standards [www.ilo.org/business](http://www.ilo.org/business)
- [The UN Global Compact Labour Principles, A Guide for Business](#)  
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