

# FAO's contribution to reducing and preventing child labour in agriculture 2012-2014

## News from the web

Child labour is work that interferes with compulsory schooling or damages children's health and personal development. Thanks to continuous efforts at the international and local level, recent global data,<sup>1</sup> show that the number of children engaged in child labour worldwide has significantly declined from 215 to 168 million children (40 percent decline for girls and 25 percent for boys).

Despite this progress, approximately 98 million boys and girls aged of 5-17 are still engaged in child labour in agriculture, one of the three most dangerous sectors to work in. Hazardous work is one of the worst forms of child labour; it is likely to harm the health and safety of children as they may be exposed to toxic chemicals, use dangerous tools, carry heavy loads, work on fishing boats at night or herd livestock in prolonged isolation.

### FAO's work on child labour in agriculture: a renewed commitment

In its new Strategic Framework (2014-2017), FAO has defined rural poverty reduction as its third Strategic Objective. FAO's work on child labour in agriculture is part of the organization's programme on decent rural employment under this objective. In this context, policy and programmatic changes at country level related to child labour prevention and reduction in agriculture have been identified as a key benchmark for measuring progress towards this goal. FAO's new internal procedures for project cycle management specifically refer to the importance of ensuring that child labour concerns are considered in the design, review and implementation phases of FAO projects.

FAO's child labour in agriculture prevention programme (CLAP) has been providing policy and technical support through the development of guidance, tools and methodologies, but also in country and regional initiatives. In addition, CLAP works through strategic cooperation and partnerships, and strives to have child labour in agriculture concerns integrated in every relevant branch of FAO's work to achieve maximum impact.



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### FAO contribution to global and regional efforts on child labour

FAO participates in major global and regional initiatives and events on child labour to advocate for integrated and sustainable approaches to child labour in agriculture.

#### Strengthening inter agency cooperation

FAO plays a leading role in the International Partnership for Cooperation on Child Labour in Agriculture, which brings together a range of partner organizations to work for the elimination of child labour in agriculture. Since 2007, FAO, ILO, IFAD, IFPRI/CGIAR and IUF have joined forces through this Partnership to scale-up action to eliminate and prevent child labour in agriculture, including fisheries, forestry and livestock.

The Partnership will soon be launching a new website. We invite you to visit this space to learn more about the Partnership's work, child labour trends in different agricultural sub-sectors, and to access a wealth of additional resources.

#### The III Global Conference on Child labour

The Global Conference in Brazil, attended by delegates from 152 countries, emphasized the need for a continued focus on child labour in agriculture. This was duly reflected in the Brasilia Declaration on Child Labour, the final outcome document adopted at the Conference. In addition to promoting the ratification and implementation of the child labour conventions, the Declaration also called upon countries to ratify two important complementary conventions related to employment in agriculture, namely: Convention No. 129 on Labour Inspection in Agriculture, and Convention No. 184 on Safety and Health in Agriculture.



The Declaration also advocates for the consideration of child labour concerns in agricultural policy making, and for effective use of public services to ensure rural children have access to quality education and do not engage in child labour.

FAO contributed to a series of online “dialogues” to deepen the understanding of child labour in agriculture. FAO also took part in the child labour in agriculture panel and contributed to a report presented at the Conference by the regional Inter-Agency Group on Child Labour (GITI) in which FAO is a member. The report, entitled: [United Nations System priorities to address Child Labour in Latin America and the Caribbean](#), provides valuable new data and an analysis of child labour trends in the region, with a particular focus on rural areas.

### International Conference on Child Labour in Agriculture

At the first [International Conference on Child Labour in Agriculture](#), held in 2012 in the United States of America, FAO chaired a workshop on addressing child labour in neglected agricultural sub-sectors, such as fishing, forestry and livestock-keeping and contributed to the Framework of Action issued by the Conference.

### World Day Against Child Labour

The 12th of June is the World Day Against Child Labour. This is an important date to raise awareness on the 98 million child labourers in agriculture. The day also provides an opportunity for FAO to share experiences on the work it has carried out at the local and global level, and to define new commitments and ways forward to achieve child labour reduction goals. Each year FAO coordinates a number of events in collaboration with the ILO and other partners.

More details can be found at:

[www.fao-ilo.org/fao-ilo-child/world-day-against-child-labour/en/](http://www.fao-ilo.org/fao-ilo-child/world-day-against-child-labour/en/)

In 2014, the ILO-designated theme for World Day Against Child Labour will be the linkages between child labour and social protection. Within FAO, social protection has become a growing area of interest and is acknowledged as a promising tool to

reduce rural poverty and food insecurity, both of which are root causes of child labour in agriculture.

On this important occasion, a new e-learning course on child labour in agriculture will be launched and an initial set of lessons will be accessible through a dedicated online platform.



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### Regional events

In December 2013, FAO participated in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Inter-Sectorial Workshop on Accelerating Actions towards the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour held in Indonesia. FAO presented on the challenges and opportunities to eliminate child labour in agriculture in ASEAN member countries.

In October 2013, a FAO workshop on child labour in agriculture and rural poverty in Central America, Mexico and Dominican Republic was organized in partnership with the ILO in El Salvador. The workshop involved FAO and ILO staff as well as ministries of labour and agriculture, and provided an opportunity to share experiences and increase multi-sectorial collaboration. It strengthened capacities of FAO officers to integrate child labour issues into their work.

### Child labour in agriculture prevention at national level

Country level activities are a central part of FAO’s action to reduce and prevent child labour in agriculture. FAO builds the awareness and capacity of agricultural stakeholders to address child labour in agriculture in collaboration with labour stakeholders. For instance, FAO brings national labour and agricultural stakeholders together to develop joint work plans. As needed, FAO provides support to the implementation of key activities, often in the areas of improved stakeholder coordination, integration of child labour issues in agricultural policies and programmes, knowledge generation and capacity building.

### Cambodia

**A national action plan to combat child labour in the fisheries sector was developed.** The plan includes the incorporation of child labour into the policies of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries and legal frameworks for fisheries and aquaculture. It also includes an assessment of work hazards for children and promotes measures to help ensure that education and livelihood opportunities are adequately provided to children and their families.

Fishing communities themselves have committed to tackling child labour at local level as part of the sustainable management of small-scale fisheries in the guidelines: “Making a Brighter Future for Small-scale Fisheries through Community Fisheries in Cambodia”.



## Lao PDR

In February 2013, **the capacity of provincial officers to address child labour in agriculture was strengthened** to support the implementation of the National Plan of Action to Eliminate the Worst Forms of Child Labour in Lao PDR.

## Malawi

In 2012, **a Framework for Action was endorsed** at the National Conference on Child Labour in Agriculture, and the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security joined the National Steering Committee on Child Labour. FAO's work helped to build momentum and political will in the lead-up to the National Conference. The Malawi government has also integrated child labour issues into a number of policies and programmes such as the Malawi Fisheries Policy and Implementation Plan.

In collaboration with the ILO, FAO has also been working to strengthen the skills of managers and technical staff within ministries at local and national level to address child labour. A nationwide rollout of training was undertaken in 2013 for all district agricultural offices, delivered by the ILO, FAO and the related ministries. In addition, youth trainers gained knowledge on child labour prevention in agriculture as part of the Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools trainer curriculum.

## Mali

**A nationally-owned roadmap to prevent and eliminate child labour in agriculture was developed** by agricultural and labour stakeholders. Child labour issues were also included in the 2013 agricultural campaign, and a joint Call to Action on child labour in agriculture was issued. Mali is one of three countries in which the International Partnership for Cooperation on Child Labour in Agriculture is translating global level guidance and knowledge products into collaborative country-level work.

Through targeted research, FAO helped to increase the level of knowledge on child labour in the rice and cotton value chains and identified technologies and practices with the potential to reduce hazardous child labour. This knowledge was subsequently translated into capacity development tools and training sessions targeted at farmer field school facilitators and extension workers operating in rice and cotton production, in collaboration with the Integrated Production and Pest Management programme and the ILO. A visual guide for facilitators was developed to help them communicate the risks associated with pesticides for children. Additionally, community awareness was raised through a complementary radio programme developed with a local producers' organization.



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## Niger

**A coordination unit on child labour in agriculture has been established**, including agriculture, labour and child protection stakeholders. In 2013, research on child labour and its alternatives was undertaken in the rice and vegetable producing areas of the Niger River. The report will feed into an



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upcoming national workshop for the development of a multi-stakeholder work plan.

## Tanzania

**Child labour issues were integrated into a number of policies** such as the Zanzibar Livestock Policy, the Tanzania Mainland Fisheries Sector Development Programme and the National Human Rights Action Plan. In addition, FAO responded to a request from the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries Development to provide a series of trainings on child labour for directors and technical staff within the Ministry. Participants identified community fisheries institutions known as Beach Management Units as a key partner at the local level, and FAO supported the ministry to provide training to such units in five districts and in the development of communication materials on child labour in fisheries. Child labour prevention activities in Tanzania formed part of a broader strategy to promote decent rural employment in the country.

## Enhancing the knowledge base on child labour in agriculture

Knowledge and capacity are crucial building blocks to achieve positive change in policies and practice. FAO is working to strengthen this base through research, guides and capacity development tools.

## E-learning course

"End Child Labour in Agriculture" is an online course that is currently under development and will be available in English, Spanish and French. The FAO-ILO course targets ministries of agriculture, producers' organizations, statistical and research institutes as well as FAO staff at headquarters and decentralized offices.

## Publications

The FAO-ILO [Guidance on addressing child labour in fisheries and aquaculture](#) builds on the outcomes of an FAO-ILO Workshop on Child Labour in Fisheries and Aquaculture, as well as consultations with small-scale fisheries stakeholders in Cambodia and Malawi. The guide is available in English and Spanish.

The leaflet [Children's work in the livestock sector](#) provides an overview of children's involvement in the livestock sector, as well as the challenges to health and education that this represents, and guidance on how to address these issues.

The policy brief on child labour in Latin America – [Child labour in agriculture: A form of reproducing poverty across generations](#) (in Spanish) was issued with the related press release: [Eradicating child labour in agriculture: A way to break the poverty cycle](#) (in Spanish).

Furthermore, ending child labour is an integral part of FAO's broader strategy on decent rural employment and has been covered in the following publications:

- [Decent rural employment for food security: A case for action](#)
- [Guidance on how to address decent rural employment in FAO country activities](#)
- [Quick reference for addressing decent rural employment](#)
- [Promoting decent employment in forestry for improved nutrition and food security](#)

### Integrating child labour concerns in wider knowledge exchange on agriculture

FAO is paying greater attention to child labour in agriculture across its work areas in its publications and fora. For instance, child labour was considered in the 2013 High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition consultation on the role of sustainable fisheries and aquaculture for food security and nutrition in 2013. It was also addressed in [Good practice policies to eliminate gender inequalities in fish value chains](#) and the [Passport to mainstreaming gender in water programmes](#). Indicators on child labour contribute to the report "Measuring sustainability in the Cotton farming systems – towards a guidance framework".<sup>2</sup> The Nature & Faune magazine of the FAO Regional Office for Africa recently published an article on the links between child labour and youth employment (available in English and French).<sup>3</sup>

Child labour concerns are being addressed in a number of FAO's global mechanisms. For instance, in 2013, a revised International Code of Conduct on Pesticide Management was approved at the 38th Session of the



FAO Conference. The revised code pays specific attention to the health and wellbeing of children – encouraging government and the pesticide industry to take special actions to reduce children's vulnerability to exposure. Similar advances are being made in fisheries. The International Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries cover situations of decent work and child labour. The Guidelines<sup>4</sup> are expected to be finalized during the next session of the Committee on Fisheries in 2014. Further, for the first time, a stand-alone article on small-scale fisheries was presented during the 14th Session of FAO's Sub-Committee on Fish Trade in 2014. The related background paper included the section Employment: decent work in small-scale fisheries with specific reference to child labour.<sup>5</sup>

### The way forward

Despite recent progress, agriculture is still the sector where by far the largest share of child labourers are found. FAO is substantially increasing its work in this area, in collaboration with the ILO, in order to meet this challenge. FAO's revised Strategic Framework pays particular attention to the issue and FAO has established a child labour in agriculture prevention programme that aims to (a) advance the knowledge base, (b) generate tools and develop approaches and (c) extend assistance and policy support at country level across regions.

### Endnotes

1. ILO. *Global estimates and trends 2000-2012 - Marking progress against child labour*. Available here: [www.ilo.org/ipec/Informationresources/WCMS\\_221513/lang-en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/ipec/Informationresources/WCMS_221513/lang-en/index.htm)
2. Executive summary available at: [www.icac.org/getattachment/mtgs/Plenary/72nd-Plenary/](http://www.icac.org/getattachment/mtgs/Plenary/72nd-Plenary/)
3. FAO. 2013. *Nature & Faune: Enhancing natural resources management for food security in Africa*. Volume 28, Issue 1. Accra, Ghana. Available at: [www.fao.org/docrep/019/as290e/as290e.pdf](http://www.fao.org/docrep/019/as290e/as290e.pdf)
4. <http://www.fao.org/fishery/nems/40424/en>
5. [www.fao.org/cofi/29684-0b91666f87a4802652ab71e4f1c00c56c.pdf](http://www.fao.org/cofi/29684-0b91666f87a4802652ab71e4f1c00c56c.pdf)

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