

World Youth Summit 2017

## A letter from Your Chair and Co-Chair

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the World Youth Summit 2017! We are honored to serve as Chair and Co-Chair to United Nations General Assembly Third Committee at 2017 World Youth Summit .

Joining this committee as a delegate for an assigned country, we expect you to read through the study guide, do further research to understand the policy and current status of child labour in your country, and find the best solution not only for your country, but for all countries represented in the committee, i.e. the international community.

Feel free to ask us any questions you have, send us your thoughts on your working papers, or discuss different aspects of child labour with us. We hope this guide will point you in the right directions for research, which will in turn create the basis of interesting debates, fruitful discussions and innovative solutions to the problem of child labour in developing countries. We look forward to meeting all of you in person at the conference.

Sincerely yours,

Chair	Chia-Li CHU
Co-Chair	Mad Xi-Chian ZHOU

# Topic: The Problem of Child Labour in Developing Countries

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## Committee Introduction: GA3—Social, Cultural and Humanitarian

The Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Committee (SOCHUM) is the third committee of the General Assembly of the United Nations, tasked with topics surrounding social, humanitarian and human rights issues in the world. Topics discussed at SOCHUM include but are not limited to: human rights, global literacy, women's rights, children's rights, the treatment of refugees and displaced persons, international drug control, crime prevention, and the elimination of racism and discrimination. SOCHUM also works closely with many other UN bodies in order to effectively address its mandated issues.

## A Brief History of Child Labour

Child labour has existed throughout most of human history. The work of children was considered very important in pre-industrial societies, as children needed to provide their labour for their survival or that of their families. Children mostly worked in agriculture or domestic chores; therefore, children rarely attended school, as all the knowledge and skills required for their work could be easily acquired, mainly through the mentoring and apprenticing of competent adults. In addition, the characteristics of pre-industrial societies, such as low productivity and short life expectancy, made it natural for children to engage in productive work, for preventing them from participating in productive work would be more harmful to their own welfare and that of their families in the long run.

However, child labour did not reach its extreme until during the Industrial Revolution, when children were often made to work long hours in horrible conditions for very little money. Children were very useful as labourers, since their smaller size enabled them to move around in small spaces in factories and in mines where normal adults couldn't fit. Children were also easier to manage, control and manipulate. Most importantly, child labour was cheaper than adult labour, and children did not have the capability to demand equal wages. Similar to pre-industrial

societies, children often worked to support their families, and were forced to forego, or often deprived of an education.

In nineteenth century Europe, reformers and labour organizers began to seek restrictions on child labour and improve work conditions. Political pressure on eliminating child labour started to emerge, based on the presumption that all children should be free from exploitation and share equal opportunities to receive education. Child labour went from an integral part of life to be something considered harmful and dangerous to individual development. Children's right to education became increasingly important, and by the mid-twentieth century, the elimination of child labour became accepted by most governments around the world as one of their top priorities.

Today, child labour still exists everywhere in the world. Although in most countries it is illegal, in poorer countries and regions it is still not criminalized enough or seriously prosecuted since child labour has contribution in the country's' human capital accumulation. The United Nations strives to end child labour, with special emphasis on eliminating the worst forms of child labour, such as slavery, prostitution, and hazardous work. Today, with 150 ratifications, ILO (International Labour Organization, an UN body) Convention No. 138 remains the basic framework for both legislative and policy measures to combat child labour. And although there has been significant progress in the reduction of child labour since 2000, it is still not fast enough and many children working and languishing in exploitative conditions need urgent help.

## Child Labour: definition and an overview

### Defining Child Labour

Not all work done by children should be classified as child labour. By the definition given by the International Labour Organization (ILO), child labour refers to work that:

- (a) is mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful to children;
- (b) interferes with their schooling by depriving them of the opportunity to attend school;
- (c) obliging them to leave school prematurely; or
- (d) requiring them to attempt to combine school attendance with excessively long and heavy work.

Child labour is fundamentally different from casual work done by children, which is mostly light and easy to do. This type of work can be done while children are well-integrated into the family, and in addition to an education. Child labour, on the other hand, is work that is difficult to do, or physically exhausting and even harmful. It is work that is dangerous and usually requires children to work for long periods of time. Child labour in its most extreme forms usually leads to children being enslaved, separated from their families, or highly exposed to illnesses and hazardous conditions.

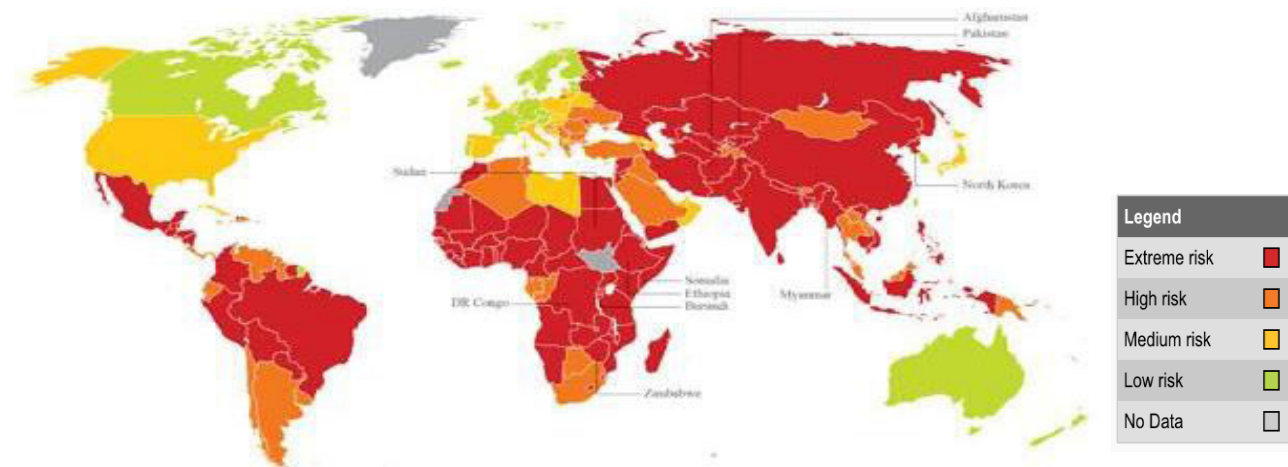
## An Overview

As of 2012, it is estimated that 168 million children worldwide engaged in child labour, accounting for almost 11% of child population as a whole. There has been significant progress during the 12-year period since 2000, with the reduction of almost 78 million child labourers at the end of this period.

**Table 1. Children in employment, child labour and hazardous work, 5-17 years age group, 2000-2012**

		Children in employment		Child labour		Hazardous work	
		('000)	%	('000)	%	('000)	%
<b>World</b>	2000	351,900	23.0	245,500	16.0	170,500	11.1
	2004	322,729	20.6	222,294	14.2	128,381	8.2
	2008	305,669	19.3	215,209	13.6	115,314	7.3
	<b>2012</b>	<b>264,427</b>	<b>16.7</b>	<b>167,956</b>	<b>10.6</b>	<b>85,344</b>	<b>5.4</b>

The Child Labour Index 2012 evaluates the frequency and severity of reported child labour incidents in 197 countries. Worryingly, nearly 40% of all countries have been classified as ‘extreme risk’ in the index, with conflict torn and authoritarian states topping the ranking. Myanmar, North Korea, Somalia, Sudan are ranked joint first.



The largest numbers of child labourers are found in the Asia and the Pacific region (almost 78 million or 9.3% of child population), but Sub-Saharan Africa continues to be the region with the highest incidence of child labour (59 million or 21% of child population). There are 13 million (8.8% of child population) in Latin America and the Caribbean, and in the Middle East and North Africa there are 9.2 million (8.4% of child population).

**Table 3. Children in employment, child labour and hazardous work by region, 5-17 years age group, 2008 and 2012**

Region		Children population		Children in employment		Child labour		Hazardous work	
		('000)		('000)	%	('000)	%	('000)	%
Asia and the Pacific	2008	853,895		174,460	20.4	113,607	13.3	48,164	5.6
	<b>2012</b>	<b>835,334</b>		<b>129,358</b>	<b>15.5</b>	<b>77,723</b>	<b>9.3</b>	<b>33,860</b>	<b>4.1</b>
Latin America and the Caribbean	2008	141,043		18,851	13.4	14,125	10.0	9,436	6.7
	<b>2012</b>	<b>142,693</b>		<b>17,843</b>	<b>12.5</b>	<b>12,505</b>	<b>8.8</b>	<b>9,638</b>	<b>6.8</b>
Sub-Saharan Africa	2008	257,108		84,229	32.8	65,064	25.3	38,736	15.1
	<b>2012</b>	<b>275,397</b>		<b>83,570</b>	<b>30.3</b>	<b>59,031</b>	<b>21.4</b>	<b>28,767</b>	<b>10.4</b>

There are more boys (99.8 million) involved in child labour than girls (68.2 million). The decline in child labour among girls was greater than that of boys, while girls accounted for 46.2% of all child labourers in 2000, they accounted for only 40.6% in 2012. However, it should be recognized that these figures might be underestimated, since girls are more likely to be involved in household chores than boys, particularly hazardous chores, which are not included in global estimates.

**Table 4. Children in employment, child labour and hazardous work by sex, 5-17 years age group, 2000-2012**

Sex		Children in employment		Child labour		Hazardous work	
		('000)	%	('000)	%	('000)	%
Boys	2000	184,200	23.4	132,200	16.8	95,700	12.2
	2004	171,150	21.3	119,575	14.9	74,414	9.3
	2008	175,777	21.4	127,761	15.6	74,019	9.0
	<b>2012</b>	<b>148,327</b>	<b>18.1</b>	<b>99,766</b>	<b>12.2</b>	<b>55,048</b>	<b>6.7</b>
Girls	2000	167,700	22.5	113,300	15.2	74,800	10.0
	2004	151,579	19.9	102,720	13.5	53,966	7.1
	2008	129,892	16.9	87,508	11.4	41,296	5.4
	<b>2012</b>	<b>116,100</b>	<b>15.2</b>	<b>68,190</b>	<b>8.9</b>	<b>30,296</b>	<b>4.0</b>

23% of children in low-income countries are child labourers compared to 9% of children in lower middle-income countries and 6% of children in upper middle-income countries. Middle-income countries host the largest numbers of child labourers: a total of 93.6 million children, of which 12.3 million are in upper middle-income countries, and 74.4 million in lower middle-income countries. Those are estimates compared between different countries. However, the same

general pattern can be observed across households within countries— child labour is much more common in, yet not limited to poorer households. These results indicate that while poverty is an important cause of child labour, it is not the only reason children go to work.

**Table 6. Child labour distribution by level of national income, 5-17 years age group, 2012**

National income category	Total children (‘000)	Child labour (‘000)	Child labour (%)
Low income	330,257	74,394	22.5
Lower middle income	902,174	81,306	9.0
Upper middle income	197,977	12,256	6.2

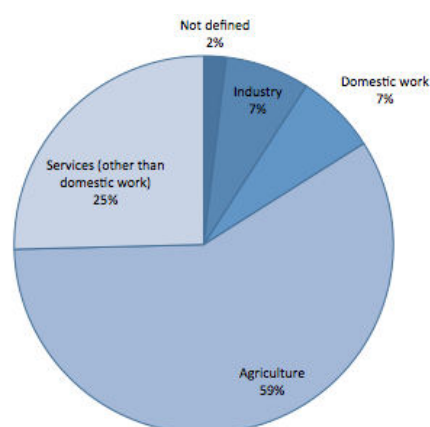
While agriculture remains by far the most important sector where child labourers can be found (98 million, or 59%), the problems are not negligible in services (54 million) and industry (12 million) — mostly in the informal economy.

**Table 7. Sectoral distribution of child labour, number and percentage share, 5-17 years age group, 2008 and 2012**

Sector <sup>(a)</sup>	2008		2012	
	(‘000)	% share	(‘000)	% share
Agriculture	129,161	60.0	98,422	58.6
Industry	15,068	7.0	12,092	7.2
Services	55,109	25.6	54,250	32.3
(of which domestic work)	(10,557)	(4.9)	(11,528)	(6.9)

Note: (a) Excluding children with missing information on economic sector.

Contrary to popular beliefs, most child labourers are employed by their parents rather than in manufacturing or formal economy. Children who work for pay are usually found in rural settings.





## Approaches to Categorize and Regulate Child Labour

Child labour is a global problem and needs to be addressed in the structure of international law. If there are no uniformed standards on regulation on child labour, it is inevitable that some countries will sacrifice children's right for economic advantage in labour force. An Increasing number of international legal instruments address various aspects of child labour. In the following, we will further examine and understand main conventions and protocols, and their approach to end child labour.

Early international conventions on child labour focused on the setting of minimum ages for employment in different sectors of work (manufacturing industry ,agriculture...etc). The most significant convention would be **C138 - Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138)**, formed by the ILO, and accepted by UN. It divides its analysis of child labour into the three categories of hazardous work, light work, and basic minimum age of children's work.

### **C138: the Abolitionist Approach**

Overall, C138 is based on the notion that employment of children is fundamentally unacceptable, hence the setting the minimum age in different categories of work. C138 also calls for all states to make abolition of child labour a national policy. However, it is questionable whether such an extreme approach was ever necessary. While some child labour does involve slavery-like practices, some forms of labour is freely chosen by children too.

Since the adoption of C138, the debate of children's right to education, protection (welfare) versus children's right to freedom of work (agency) has constantly been brought up when making international policies. The international community gradually came to recognize that some work by children may be beneficial. Increasingly, not only the ideas of children's welfare but also the idea that children should be allowed to make choices in their own lives are considered.

### **The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)**

Article 32 of Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) provides for the child's right to be protected against economic exploitation, with reference to the relevant positions of other international instruments. This means that that any work carried out by children in conditions below those established by UN conventions or by the International Labour Organization should be considered as economic exploitation.

### **C182: The Prioritization Approach**

After the convention on the rights of the child (CRC) was opened for signature in 1989, children basic human rights began to feature more prominently in discussions on child labour.

**C182 - Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182)** was a result of discussions focused more on the human rights perspective. Unlike the abolitionist approach of C138, C182 prioritizes and focuses effort on the elimination of the worst forms of child labour, cases which greatly violates human rights. The worst forms of child labour as defined by Article 3 of ILO Convention No. 182 include:

- (a) all forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery, such as the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage and serfdom and forced or compulsory labour, including forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict;
- (b) the use, procuring or offering of a child for prostitution, for the production of pornography or for pornographic performances;
- (c) the use, procuring or offering of a child for illicit activities, in particular for the production and trafficking of drugs as defined in the relevant international treaties;
- (d) work which, by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children.

C182 implies that while child labour takes many different forms, it is an international priority to eliminate those which heavily violates human rights, namely the worst forms of child labour, this is called a prioritization approach: international efforts will primarily be focused on the most harmful forms of child labour.

### **Optional Protocols aiding C182**

Optional protocols of CRC, passed by the United Nations to aid C182 on the elimination of worst forms of child labour corresponds with the categorization of worst forms of child labour in C182,

- (a) Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict
- (b) Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography

Two supplementary conventions to the 2000 United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime also addresses some of the worst forms of child labour:

- (a) The Protocol to prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially women and children.
- (b) Protocol Against the smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea, and Air.



Due to the nature of child labour being a part of the informal economy, categorizations of child labour lack consistency in studies due to the different statistical methods. However, according to the reports of ILO and other relevant UN reports, we summarized the following categories and definitions across all current conventions, protocols and reports of UN under the current structure of international law:

Economically Active Children (See definition 1 below)						
Economically Active Children, but not Child Labour.		Child Labour (See definition 2 below)		Worst Forms of Child Labour (See definition 4 below)		
Types of work/ labour		Light work	Other work, Non-Hazardous	Hazardous work (See definition 3 below)		Unconditional worst forms of child labour:
				Jeopardize	Harm	
Conventions and protocols involved		C138			C182 2 Optional protocols of CRC, 2 supplementary conventions of Transnational Organized Crime	
Minimum age of working		13, 12 in developing countries	15, 14 in developing countries	18, 16 under certain conditions		

1. Economic Activity by Children:

This is a broad concept that encompasses most productive activities undertaken by children whether for the market or not, paid or unpaid, for a few hours or full time, on a casual or regular basis, illegal or legal; it excludes chores undertaken in the child’s own household and schooling. To be counted as “Economically Active Children”, a child must have worked for at least one hour on any day during a seven day reference period.

2. Child Labour

A narrower concept than “Economically Active Children,” Child Labour refers to work that interferes with children’s schooling by depriving them of the opportunity to attend school, obliging them to leave school prematurely, or requiring them to attempt to combine school attendance with excessively long and heavy work. It excludes children aged 12 years or older who works only a few hours a week in permitted light work and those aged 15 years and above whose work is not “Hazardous”. Light work, contrary to hazardous work may contribute to a child’s development, economic resources, and hones useful skills for his or her future.

### 3. Child Labour in Hazardous Work

Hazardous work means an activity or occupation that by its nature or its type, has or leads to adverse effects on the child's safety, physical or mental health and moral development, and should not be performed by anyone under the age of 18.

### 4. Worst Forms of Child Labour

The worst forms of child labour gravely violates children's right, as categorized in C182, including child slavery, child prostitution, child trafficking, and other hazardous work conditions.

The Categories of unacceptable child labour derive both from the abolitionist approach of C138 and the prioritization approach of C182. Both sets of standards are integrated into the current position of UN on child labour though there are criticisms of C138 for its inappropriateness for many developing countries.

## **Data in Hazardous Work and Worst Forms of Child Labour**

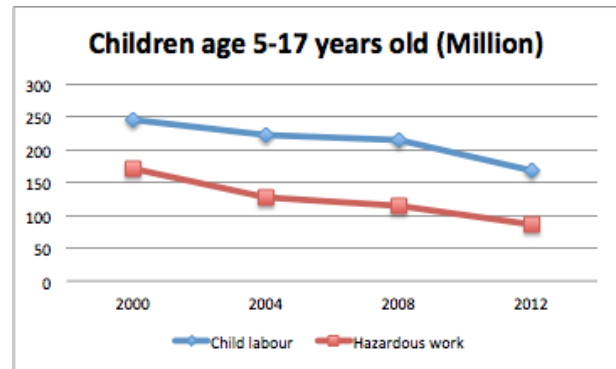
Approximately 115 million children around the world are engaged in hazardous work today accounting for 53% of all child labourers. Each year an average of 22,000 children are killed because of hazardous working conditions and countless injured, disabled, suffering ill health and stunted development as a result. And, disturbingly, hazardous child labour has continued to increase among children in recent years.

The worst forms of child labour include child slavery, child prostitution, child trafficking, and other hazardous work conditions. Children reduced into slavery are considered objects that can be traded, transported, and transferred from a person or a group of persons to another for the purpose of exploitation. UNICEF reported in 2003 that fighting human trafficking would help prevent the worst forms of child labour like prostitution, involuntary marriage, and domestic servitude, and it is estimated that 1.2 million children are trafficked each year.

ILO's 2002 global report estimates that over 6 million children worldwide are in slavery. This includes an estimated 5.7 million in forced or bonded labour, and 300,000 children forced into child soldiering. There are estimated 1.8 million children in prostitution and pornography, which some argue should also be considered as slave-like practices. Furthermore, an estimated 1.2 million children of various ages and of both genders are trafficked. Finally, estimates show that 85 million children are in hazardous work that directly endangers their health, safety and development, which comprised more than half of all child labourers.

Large portions of child workers are forced into labour and some are even transported across country border lines. The International Labour Organization estimated in 2005 that between

980,000 and 1,255,000 children are forced into labour. Though overall the number of all child labour is gradually declining in recent years, it is still difficult to eliminate all forms of child labour. We need to consider not only the elimination of child labour practices, but also the development of children who manage to leave labour, and prevention of their re-entry into labour before adulthood.



## Summary:

- Every day, an estimated 168 million boys and girls work as child labourers, in the farms, fields, factories, homes, streets and battlefields. They face hunger, hard work, ill-health and poverty.
- Whether or not particular forms of ‘work’ can be called “child labour” depends on the child’s age, the types and hours of work performed, the conditions under which it is performed and the objectives pursued by individual countries. The answer varies from country to country, as well as among sectors within countries. (regulated in C138)
- A staggering 85 million children are engaged in hazardous work, which is illegal. Hazardous child labour means working in dangerous industries or in workplaces, where children are likely to meet exploitative situations by nature or circumstances of work. Some examples of hazardous working conditions are working in mines or with chemical and pesticides in agriculture. (regulated in C182)
- In the worst forms of child labour, child labour involves children being enslaved, separated from their families, exposed to serious hazards and illnesses and/or left to fend for themselves on the streets of large cities often at a very young age. (regulated in C182, with aid of various optional protocols)
- At least 2 million children are trafficked annually for child labour and sexual exploitation. Most child labourers are in the informal economic sector, where they are not protected by laws and regulations. The worst forms of child labour are illegal and must be eradicated immediately. (regulated in C182, with aid of various optional protocols)

## Harms to Children

Many children are enslaved by their employers and neglected when they are injured or deficient in health. In fact, it is estimated that 126 million children work under physical or sexual abuse, resulting in humiliation and trauma.

Children are not suited for many of the laborious tasks that are imposed upon them, causing child workers to experience rapid skeletal growth, low heat tolerance, sleep deprivation, and higher chemical absorption rates. These side effects stem from the fact that most working children are not fully developed, and therefore are not suited to work in the same environments as adults. Also, lack of supervision in work areas combined with the lack of necessary experience often leads to fatal incidents for children working with machinery.

Overall, child labour is a growing issue as it damages young people not only physically, but also mentally through trauma and shock.

## Reasons Behind Child Labour

### **Poverty**

Poor children and their families may rely upon child labour in order to improve their chances of getting basic necessities. More than one-fourth of the world's people live in extreme poverty, according to 2005 U.N. statistics. Studies found that 80% of child workers were impoverished, while 65.1% were beaten or scolded by their employer. Poverty deeply affects child labour in that many underaged workers only choose to work in order to provide for their family. Similarly, a highly impoverished area will result in poorly regulated work conditions and force children to endure unsanitary environments. The intensified poverty in parts of Africa, Asia, and Latin America causes many children there to become child labourers.

In many families in developing economies, children must work to supplement the family's income, either in a formal setting of factory and domestic work or in more informal settings such as the family's own farm or home. To completely do away with all forms of child employment could spell disaster for families that rely on the additional income that their children are able to bring home.

### **Education**

In part, the millennium development goal of all children receiving primary education by 2015 aids the cause of preventing child labour, because child labour contributes to children being denied schooling. When a child is in school, that child cannot also be labouring in a factory or as a domestic worker at the same time.

Children without education are more likely to be forced into the labour market at an earlier age, working more dangerous jobs than their educated contemporaries. Recent research also shows that child labour is associated with lower educational attainment, and later in life with jobs that fail to meet basic decent work criteria. Early school leavers are less likely to secure stable jobs and are at greater risk of remaining outside the world of work altogether. Children in hazardous

work are more likely to have left school early before reaching the legal minimum age of employment.

However, it can be extremely difficult to track how many children should be in school and are not, particularly when child labourers are not enrolled at a school at all. UNICEF pushes for universal birth registration, claiming that it would help keep track of how many children were unaccounted for in schools, as without accurate and complete birth records officials cannot be sure how many children they are missing in their classrooms.

## **Social Values**

In some countries, children were seen as private properties of their parents and do not have any rights, resulting in the low wage and unfair treatment in workplaces. In some places, work is seen as a way to learn skills and integrate into society. Whether these kinds of cultural beliefs are rational or not, it is prevalent in certain societies, especially in Eastern developing countries, where incidents of child labour remain high.

Some countries, such as Peru and regions of the United States, consider child employment in the form of helping at tending crops to be a rite of passage for those growing up in rural communities. For those that view child employment as a rite of passage, doing away with child employment completely would deny children part of their cultural heritage.

## **Violated or Inadequately Implemented Laws**

Even when laws banning child labour exists in almost every country, they are often violated. The manufacture and export of products often involves multiple layers of production and outsourcing, which can make it difficult to monitor who is performing labour at each step of the process. Extensive subcontracting can intentionally or unintentionally hide the use of child labour.

Companies in developed economies often employ child labour, intentionally or unintentionally, in the pursuit of the greatest possible profit margins. By paying local suppliers unfair wages, those local suppliers then seek cheaper means of production, which often means employing children.

Those in charge of employing children in dangerous work environments do not want to face the consequences of their actions. With advanced knowledge of inspections, companies and factories that force children to work long hours in unsafe conditions can train their employees on the 'correct' responses to the inspector's questions, and force employees to sign documents saying that they received non-existent safety training, as was done at the Vase Apparels factory in Bangladesh and many other similar factories.

It is also worth noting that many countries have laws in place concerning child labour and do little to nothing to enforce them. Authorities—governments, police, and employers— are largely unwilling or unable to accurately police companies for child labour due to traditional values and insufficient funding. National policies under the pressure of free trade also contributed to the emergence of child labour, which became an important tool for developing countries to remain competitive and attract foreign investments and transnational corporations.

## International Efforts Toward Child Labour

### **United Nations Involvement**

The United Nations has taken many steps in order to decrease the prevalence of child labour in the world today. One major action that the UN took, as previously mentioned, was the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989. The Convention on the Rights of the Child is the most supported human rights convention in the entire world, and with the ratification of this treaty by all except two countries, this accord has had a major impact in regards to reducing child labour.

Another important step that the United Nations has taken occurs through the International Labour Organization, or the ILO. The International Labour Organization (ILO)—the United Nations agency charged with addressing labour standards, employment, and social protection issues, specifically geared towards the reduction of child labour, the ILO created Convention No. 182 in 1999 and Convention No. 138 in 1973.

Lastly, in 2002 the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on Children included child labour in the development agenda. This proved to be very significant because this suggested to all nations that a new plan must be set in order to inspire an international movement against child labour in the hopes of completely abolishing it in the future. Through all of these steps, the United Nations has and continues to work for the overall eradication of child labour in the world today.

### **International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC)**

The ILO's International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) was established in 1992 and has played a key role in promoting international and national awareness of child labour as a major rights issue and development concern. Through IPEC, the ILO has made a major contribution to global knowledge on child labour. A statistical programme has supported more than 250 child labour surveys, 60 of which were national in scope. Since 2000 the programme has provided regular global and regional estimates of the numbers of child labourers.



Knowledge about concrete steps towards eliminating child labour has been gathered and documented through evaluations and collections of good practice examples of different interventions and types of child labour. The Understanding Children's Work (UCW) programme, a research initiative of the ILO, UNICEF and the World Bank, has been an important partner of IPEC in extending the knowledge base on child labour.

IPEC has been active in more than 100 countries. Through policy-focused work it has encouraged the development of appropriate legal and policy frameworks in line with international standards on child labour. At the same time, many of its projects have also worked at the community level, helping to remove children from child labour by equipping them with education and skills.

## Limitations and Critiques of International Efforts

### **Could Current System Actually Hurt Children's Right to Work?**

When a ban is used as the sole instrument to eradicate the worst forms of child labour, policy makers run the risk of confusing child labour resulting from a choice with child labour resulting from enslavement or deception. Choice by children or parents would disappear if economic conditions were better. Poverty alleviation techniques would eliminate that segment of the worst forms of child labour. Neglecting better focused policies would amount to punishing those whose misery is so stark that horrible forms of child labour become the best option.

Implementing International legislation such as ILO Convention C182, or C138, may do more harm than good. By curing the symptoms (i.e. child labour), policy makers may fail to address the main causes of harmful forms of child labour, of which poverty is a non-negligible component. Blindly banning harmful forms of child labour without relevant supportive measures would be dangerous, and possibly forcing children to work in more discrete yet even more dangerous working conditions, where law enforcement is harder or outright impossible to happen.

## Case Studies

According to Verisk Maplecroft, a company that specializes in global risk analysis and publishes the Global Risks Portfolio and studies on child labour in individual countries, Brazil, China, India, and the Philippines are nations that currently, “pose ‘extreme’ child labour complicity risks for companies operating worldwide, due to worsening global security and the economic downturn.”

The child labour index for 2012 ranks Myanmar followed by North Korea, Somalia, Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Zimbabwe, Afghanistan, Burundi, Pakistan, and Ethiopia as the top 10 countries with the worst frequency and severity of child labour. Forty percent of children in Myanmar never enroll in school; this country is a real-world example of how lack of education corresponds to child labour issues. In North Korea programs for child “re-education through labour” and labour camps for young people who have committed political offences are common and in Somalia UNHCR reports that almost 40% of children under the age of 15 are participating in the worst forms of child labour. Child labour is rampant in the mining industries of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Zimbabwe, and Ethiopia while in Burundi approximately 25% of children ages 4-15 are victims of child labour and slavery and child prostitution is on the rise. In conflict-ridden Afghanistan, children account for half of the population and a third who are primary school-aged work in the poppy fields or the cement and textile processing industries. Cultural practices where children (especially girls) are bought or sold to settle debts are common in both Afghanistan and Pakistan, and Pakistan’s Punjab province is brimming with labour offences due to global trade in stitched rugs, sports equipment, and musical instruments.

Bangladesh is an example of a country where child labour is common and accepted in the context of social and cultural norms. Roughly 7.4 million children in this country between the ages of 5 and 17 work and of these, 3.2 million are considered child labourers who are mainly from the slums and tribal regions. Aid work in Bangladesh must take into account that the families of working children rely on their income to survive, placing great value on this practice, and employers often choose to employ children to save money and because they are obedient and submissive compared to adult workers.

## Possible Solutions:

- Create mechanisms to monitor child labour around the world, possibly with reporting to national governments and international organizations like UN ILO. Domestic law enforcement, social workers, or NGOs might be involved in systematic monitoring or workplaces around the world.
- Encourage foreign purchasers of products associated with child labour to certify their purchases were not made with child labour.
- Support and strengthen existing international conventions and the work of international organizations and NGOs.
- Identify countries with especially serious problems of child labour and focus on encouraging them to change their domestic law and build institutions to suppress child labour and make it easier to educate children.

- Establish new funds or support old funds designed to support the incomes of impoverished families in risky regions to ensure the education of their children.
- End the demand for child labour through structural adjustment, such as helping developing countries industrialize and end poverty.
- A coherent policy approach aims ultimately to promote decent work for all. Education is not doubt key to that goal. However, without first tackling child labour and relevant abuse, and providing youth with suitable work, these children would not have a chance of decent education, let alone decent work in adulthood.
- Ensure free, compulsory and quality education through to the minimum age of employment by providing families with incentives to invest in their children's education as an alternative to child labour.
- Promote education as an alternative to child labour, and, following from this, ensure that children enter adolescence with the basic skills and competencies needed for further learning and securing decent work.
- Expanding social protection helps prevent child labour from being used as a household survival strategy in the face of economic breakdown and social vulnerability.

## Questions to Consider:

Child labour is an immensely complex issue. Poverty is the leading cause of child labour worldwide and often children from impoverished families need to work to support themselves, their family, and schooling. If denied job opportunities, poor children are forced into worse working conditions that is harder to regulate, with lower salaries, sometimes even turning to worst forms of child labour. Thus, it is crucial to understand this issue in depth in order to create effective solutions.

1. How can we provide other alternatives for families who turn to child labour as a last resort and avoid doing more “harm than good” when implementing measures to combat this issue?
2. How can international aid organizations and national governments work with social and cultural norms to eradicate child labour?
3. How do we use strategies involving multi-sector cooperation and versatility to eradicate child labour permanently and ensure that solutions are lasting?

## Supplementary Reading:

The US department of labour Bureau Of International Labour Affairs has created powerful tools for showing data, past actions and research on child labour in different countries. If you wish to

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understand your country's policy stance and current status in child labour, this will be a good starting point.

<https://www.dol.gov/agencies/ilab/resources/reports/child-labour/asia-pacific>

The ILO's World Report on Child Labour 2015 gives the latest information and a finer detail on the problem and impact of Child Labour.

[http://www.ilo.org/ipec/Informationresources/WCMS\\_358969/lang--en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/ipec/Informationresources/WCMS_358969/lang--en/index.htm)

The Examination of Implementations of child labour law in different regions of the world:

<http://www.ilo.org/ipec/areas/Childdomesticlabour/iInternationalnationallegislation/lang--en/index.htm>