

Research Report

COMMITTEE: Fundamental Rights (ILO1)

ISSUE: How can we counter forced child labour?

CHAIRPERSONS: Alice Watelet, Clémire Acelor , Jan Oldenburg

PRESENTATION OF THE CHAIR

Hello delegates!

My name is Alice Watelet and I'm 17. I'm in the British section at the Lycée International de Ferney-Voltaire. Outside school, I'm a volunteer fireman and I also do Aikido and piano. I'm an outgoing and energetic person who enjoys meeting new people and travelling. I've been part of the MUN programme since 2021 and was a delegate at three conferences before becoming committee chair at FerMUN 2024.



This year, the conference will be held at the International Labour Organisation in Geneva, giving us the opportunity to try out a face-to-face tripartite conference. In this committee, we will be debating a key issue: respect of fundamental rights, and in particular children's rights, which are still being neglected in some countries. Children need proper development and access to education and, dear delegates, it is up to you to find solutions that will enable them to have a decent childhood. I look forward to meeting you in January, and I wish you all the best in your research on this issue.

KEYWORDS

Forced labour: any work or service which is exacted from any person under the menace of any penalty and for which the said person has not offered himself voluntarily. situations in which persons are coerced to work through the use of violence or intimidation, or by more subtle means such as accumulated debt, retention of identity papers or threats of denunciation to immigration authorities.

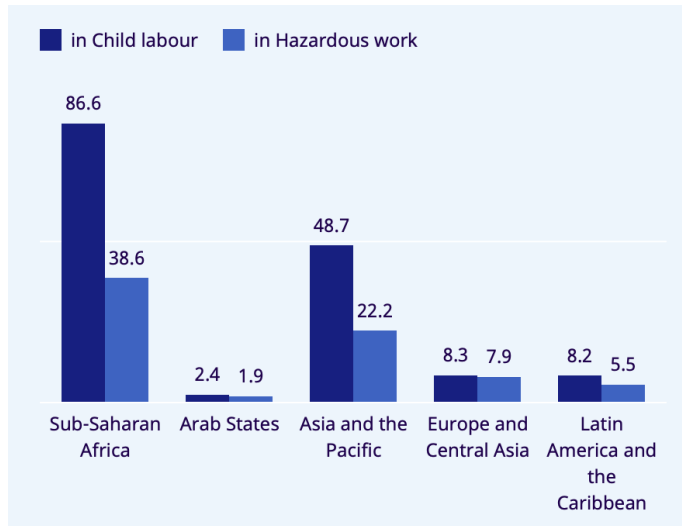
Child labour: work that deprives children of their childhood and dignity, harms their physical, mental, moral and social development and interferes with their schooling.

Debt bondage: a way of settling a debt by directly providing work rather than money or goods.

Serfdom: the condition of a person who is required by law, custom or agreement to live and work on land belonging to another person and to provide that other person, for remuneration or free of charge, with certain specified services, without being able to change his condition.

OVERVIEW

1. What is child labour?



Worldwide, 160 million children are engaged in forced labour - 63 million girls and 97 million boys - which represents almost one child out of ten in the world. As explained in the key words above, child labour describes work that harms children's healthy development and deprives them of their childhood. Therefore, it should not be confused with the participation of children or adolescents above the minimum working age, which is 15 in most countries, in work that does not affect their health and personal

development and does not interfere with their schooling. However, the classification of child labour depends on a number of factors, such as the age of the child, the nature of the work performed, the number of hours worked and the conditions under which the work is carried out. Moreover, these criteria vary from country to country, making children more vulnerable to forced labour in certain regions of the world.

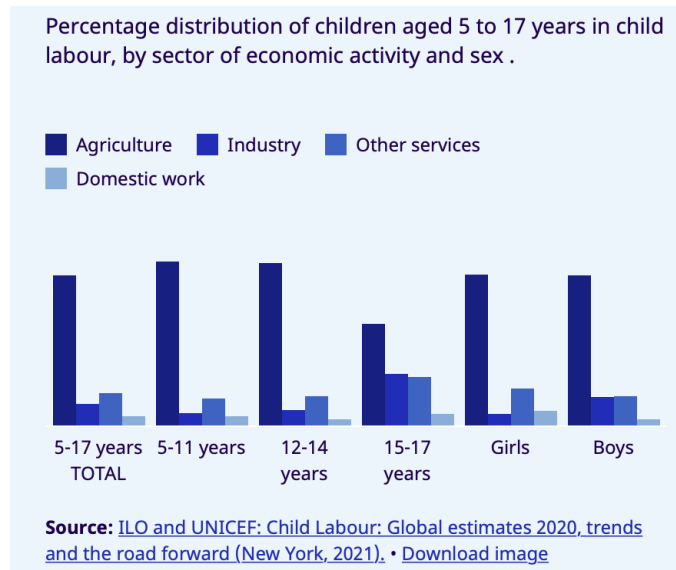
In order to take effective and immediate measures to abolish child labour, the ILO has identified the worst forms of child labour:

- all forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery, such as the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage, serfdom and forced or compulsory labour, including forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict (child soldiers)
- using, recruiting or offering a child for prostitution, the production of pornographic material or pornographic performances
- the use, procuring or offering of a child for illicit activities, in particular for the production and trafficking of drugs
- 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.

2. Factors that can lead to child labour.

To abolish forced child labour, it is necessary to address the root causes of the problem and to tackle national policy issues such as poverty, but also access to employment and education. It is essential to be aware that the majority of child labour takes place within

families who are often in financial difficulty and who consider that the help provided by their children is crucial and necessary.

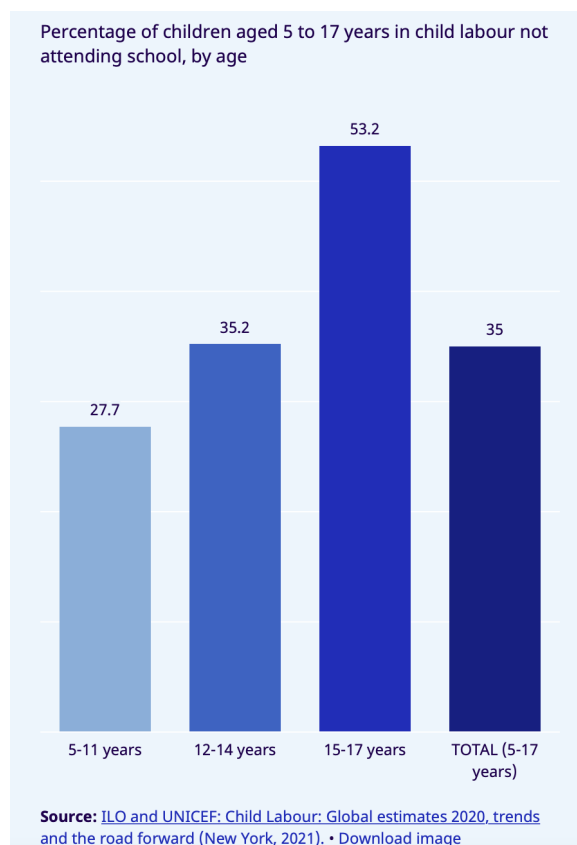


The main sector concerned here is agriculture. In fact, 72% of child labour, and 83% of the work done by children aged between 5 and 11, is carried out by families working on farms or owning family micro-enterprises. These figures reflect the fact that 70% of children involved in child labour, a total of 112 million children, work in the agricultural sector. It has also been observed that child labour is more prevalent in rural areas than in urban areas (122.7 million children in forced labour in rural areas compared with

37.3 million in urban areas).

We also note that the proportion of boys performing forced labour is higher than the proportion of girls. However, when the definition of child labour also includes household chores of more than 21 hours a week, the proportion of child labour performed by girls rises sharply.

3. What are the consequences?



The major impact of this type of work on these children is their separation from education and the institutions that provide it. The vast majority of these children do not go to school, even though they may still be of compulsory school age. More than a quarter of children aged between 5 and 11 and more than a third of children aged between 12 and 14 who are forced to work do not go to school. This drastically reduces their chances of obtaining decent work in the future. Child labour compromises the education of young people, demonstrating once again the harmful effects of child labour.

UN TREATIES AND MAJOR EVENTS

- Globally, the ILO ► [ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and its Follow-up](#) , adopted in 1998 and amended in 2022, is the expression of the will of governments, employers' organisations and workers' organisations to promote fundamental human values. This means that, in accordance with this declaration, all ILO member states have an obligation to respect, promote and put into practice the abolition of child labour.

The two ILO conventions relating to child labour are ILO Convention 138 on the Minimum Age for Admission to Employment and ILO Convention 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour.

Convention No. 138 / 1973

It was the first ILO convention to achieve universal ratification. The aim of this convention was to ask countries to set a minimum age for admission to employment and to put in place national policies to abolish child labour. It was accompanied by a Recommendation ([R146 - Minimum Age Recommendation, 1973 \(No. 146\)](#)) specifying the ways in which governments should act and behave to combat child labour. It also specifies that in order to achieve the elimination of child labour, laws setting the minimum age for admission to employment should be integrated into overall policy responses and actions in relation to poverty, job search, free and compulsory education, social security, etc.

Convention No. 182 / 1999

This Convention has drawn international attention to the urgent need to take action to abolish the worst forms of child labour as a matter of priority, without losing sight of the long-term objective of eradicating all forms of child labour. It calls on all ratifying states to take immediate and effective measures to abolish the worst forms of child labour. It was also accompanied by a Recommendation ([R190 - Worst Forms of Child Labour Recommendation, 1999 \(No. 190\)](#)) identifying the worst forms of child labour.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

- Education is one of the factors with the greatest impact on children and their development, yet forced child labour prevents access to educational institutions. This is why ensuring free, compulsory and good quality education, at least up to the minimum working age, is essential to give children an alternative to forced labour and opportunities for a better future. Decent and remunerative work should then be promoted so that children are able to continue their education with the aim of gaining access to this work.
- IPEC is the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour established by the ILO, which carries out concrete projects and actions aimed at abolishing forced child labour. It is involved in promoting national policy reform programmes, institutional capacity building and other concrete measures to eliminate child labour. All governments should draw inspiration from it or apply it.

- To abolish forced child labour, we must first eradicate one of its main causes: poverty. To do this, we need to take action against famine and provide more support for parents who want to find decent work, so that they do not have to resort to child labour. It is also essential to extend social protection for children and parents in order to slow down the effects of poverty and financial uncertainty.
- In the agricultural sector, families and family farms living in rural areas need greater financial and infrastructural support from the State so that they are no longer dependent on child labour to function. For example, governments need to support economic diversification and invest in basic agricultural infrastructure.
- It is necessary to monitor the companies and investigate all suspected forms of forced child labour within these large franchises. The punishment of some of them, if found guilty, could be based on international laws that must be respected. This should then be backed up by effective protection systems for the children concerned.
- Another solution could be to ensure that every birth of a child is registered, so that every child has a legal identity and rights that they can easily enjoy.

Questions to consider:

1. What solutions have been put in place to ensure that children's rights are respected in your country?
2. Are there regions in your country where access to school/education is difficult or impossible for children? (If so, how can these inequalities in access to education be remedied?)
3. Does your country employ child soldiers and what can be done about it?
4. Are you aware of the existence of forced child labour in your country or company?
5. How can you defend the rights of these children and help them at your level (companies; employees; governments)?
6. Do people in your country enjoy effective social security/protection?
7. Are labour rights respected in your company (presence of trade unions, human resources managers, etc.)?

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Websites:

- ❖ [What is forced child labour?](#)
- ❖ [Global Education Coalition](#)
- ❖ [ILO IPEC](#)
- ❖ [ILO Conventions on child labour](#)
- ❖ [Child labour, global estimates 2020, trends and the road forward](#) (graphs)
- ❖ [What is child labour \(IPEC\)](#)
- ❖ [Ending child labour by 2025:](#)
- ❖ [Global Education Coalition](#)
- ❖ [Action against child labour \(IPEC\)](#)
- ❖ [ILO Conventions on child labour \(IPEC\)](#)
- ❖ Source of first graph : [Children in child labour](#)
- ❖ Source of the second graph : [The agricultural sector accounts for the largest share of child labour worldwide](#)
- ❖ Source of the third graph : [Over one third of children in child labour are out of school](#)

Videos :

- ❖ [The fight against child labour - the UN in action](#)
- ❖ [ILO reports on child labour globally \(2010\)](#)

Website to help you find out more about your country : [The World Factbook](#)