



RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE AMERICAS TO THE III GLOBAL CHILD LABOR CONFERENCE

**Resulting from the Hemispheric RIAL Workshop against Child Labor
“Moving toward better horizons for children and adolescents of the Americas”**

San José, Costa Rica, February 21-22, 2013

INTRODUCTION

In preparation for the III Global Child Labor Conference to be held in October 2013 in Brazil and in follow-up to the agreements and mandates of the XVII Inter-American Conference of the Ministers of Labor (IACML) of the OAS in El Salvador in 2011, authorities of the Ministries of Labor in the Americas responsible for initiatives against child labor, the IACML Chair, representatives of the Organization of American States (OAS), the International Labor Organization (ILO), the Inter-American Children’s Institute, the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), as well as representatives of employers and workers, grouped in CEATAL and COSATE, and civil society convened in San José, Costa Rica in the Hemispheric RIAL Workshop against Child Labor “Moving toward better horizons for children and adolescents of the Americas”.

Within the framework of the event, the participants highlighted:

- The important advancements in the reduction of indices of child labor in the countries of the Hemisphere, as a result of the strategies that countries have been implementing since the ratification by member states of ILO Convention 182.
- The institutionalization of a comprehensive agenda and policies to address child labor, with a particular emphasis on support to vulnerable families to ensure that children live in a happy and healthy environment free from exploitation and abuse.
- The leadership role of the Ministries of Labor in the definition and implementation of the strategies for eliminating child labor and its worst forms.
- The need to formalize inter-institutional coordination at the governmental level through specific protocols, and at the non-governmental level to work in partnership with employers, workers, international organizations and civil society.
- The particular vulnerability to labor exploitation and economic and social exclusion of certain segments of the population, such as women and children, ethnic groups, and migrant workers.
- The importance of raising awareness about the Hague Roadmap for the Elimination of Child Labor and allocating the necessary resources for its implementation taking into account the particular context of each country in the region.

From these assessments arose the following **recommendations**, which comprise part of the contributions from the Americas to the III Global Child Labor Conference, to push forward the fulfillment of the Roadmap for Achieving the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor adopted in the II Global Child Labor Conference in The Hague in 2010.

In partnership with:



RECOMMENDATIONS – To overcome challenges and reinforce the fulfillment of the goals proposed in the Roadmap approved in 2010:

1. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

1.1. FULL RATIFICATION OF INTERNATIONAL INSTRUMENTS

- Ratify ILO Conventions 138 and 182, and develop comprehensive and targeted policies and programs to ensure their effective implementation.

1.2. HARMONIZATION, REVISION, AND ENFORCEMENT OF NORMS

- Develop and/or harmonize legislation on safe work for youth, minimum age, and prohibited or hazardous work.
- Design and implement social protection policies and conditional cash transfer programs to protect families vulnerable to child labor and enable children to attend school rather than work.
- Revise and reform the framework for labor standards so that labor inspections can be undertaken in the informal sector of the economy.
- Establish programs for ongoing/regular training of key stakeholders on compliance with legal and regulatory provisions to eliminate child labor, including its worst forms.
- Develop and implement a multi-tier and integrated approach, using a combination of enforcement, compliance assistance, and partnerships to address child labor and prevent its recurrence.
- Establish penal systems that discourage the use of child labor, establishing in national labor legislation and other laws, sufficiently dissuasive sanctions for offenders.
- Publish data on a regular basis on labor law enforcement (inspections, penalties, and sanctions) related to child labor violations.

2. PUBLIC POLICY

2.1. DIAGNOSIS AND MANAGEMENT OF INFORMATION

- Develop policies and strategies to identify and monitor cases of child labor, including specific geographic areas [and industries] with a high incidence of child labor, in order to target enforcement and service provision. At the country level, include indicators for monitoring progress in key areas (health, education, employment, social welfare) with disaggregated information by gender and ethnic groups. Monitoring and progress reporting should include the efforts being made by civil society entities.
- Designate a government agency to regularly collect data on the incidence of child labor in order to monitor progress towards its elimination.
- Establish systems to share data on a regular basis in order to prevent isolated interventions.
- Use available data to develop and refine public policies and programs to eliminate child labor.

2.2. PROGRAMS FOR THE GENERATION OF DECENT EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL PROTECTION FOR FAMILIES RESPONSIBLE FOR WORKING CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS

- Adopt integral policies for the elimination of child labor that ensure the social protection and generation of decent work for the families of working children and adolescents.
- Foster a culture of decent work for adult workers as a strategy to improve the income and living conditions of vulnerable families and to lower rates of child labor in its worst forms.
- Develop and/or strengthen policies and programs that guide the regulation, formalization and elevation of the economic productivity of the informal economy where child labor may be prevalent.
- Develop policies and programs that focus on the links between social protection (including education and health) and decent work and worker rights, with a particular emphasis on protecting vulnerable populations from exploitation and abuse.

2.3. COMPREHENSIVE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN, ADOLESCENTS, THE FAMILY AND ITS SURROUNDINGS

- Combat child labor by strengthening the family, as a fundamental institution for human development, given that children and adolescents receive affection, security, orientation and essential values within their families for their integral development as free and happy human beings, able to exercise their rights and be true citizens.
- Develop ad-hoc and sustainable care services to help families with children that work, as well as to help parents to obtain good jobs and provide better opportunities for these children.
- Identify vulnerable groups (such as single-parent families) and provide them support services, (cash) transfers, school feeding, credit, etc., to decrease the likelihood that children will engage in exploitative labor.
- Implement programs that raise awareness, in particular among parents, about the perils of child labor in light of the benefits of education and healthy recreation, which contribute to the promotion of change towards cultural patterns that respect the rights of children and adolescents
- Ensure the inclusion of a human rights focus in all child labor interventions and its worst forms.
- Implement programs at the national and local level that focus on a comprehensive protection of working children and adolescents by providing them with education, health, recreation and other social services.
- Develop programs targeting the worst forms of child labor and the most vulnerable populations, including girls, indigenous populations, afro descendents and migrants.

2.4 PRIORITIZATION OF EDUCATION AND HEALTH POLICIES WITH AN INTERSECTORAL FOCUS AND A FOCUS ON LIFE CYCLE

- Develop policies and education programs that facilitate access to quality education that prepares for life and work and that respond to the issue of school drop-outs.
- Use education performance indicators to track the retention and success in the education system of children involved in or removed from child labor.

- Strengthen subsidies that enable: a) the elimination or reduction of costs that contribute to limited education access, b) adolescents between 14 and 17 years of age to remain in school, and/or c) completion of vocational training programs, by providing services such as scholarships and financial aid, among others.
- Adequate and expand the inclusive and quality educational provisions according to the realities and needs of children and their families when designing educational policies and programs. Promote the expansion of validated education models for working children and expand after-school programs that offer spaces for integral development of children.
- Develop demand-driven professional and vocational training alternatives, in conjunction with the private sector, for adolescents involved in or at risk of child labor, in order to facilitate their future access to decent work.
- Increase the investments in public policies regarding children and adolescents, especially programs for the prevention and elimination of child labor, as well as processes of restitution of rights.

2.5 INSTITUTIONAL, INTERSECTORAL AND ACROSS GOVERNMENT LEVELS COORDINATION

2.5.1 Development of national intervention protocols with an intersectoral and local focus

- Strengthen coordination and articulation at the intra and inter-ministerial level on policies to address the prevention and elimination of child labor, and identify and engage relevant institutional actors in the issue, such as Ministries of Labor, Education, Agriculture, Social Inclusion, Finance, Women and Children, Justice, etc.
- Achieve coordinated, complementary, and coherent interventions through specific intervention protocols between/among different actors (Ministries of Labor, local governments, employer, worker and civil society organizations) that work towards the elimination and prevention of child labor (both at the national and international level) with the goal of optimizing the use of resources.
- Consolidate and strengthen country-level and local-level Child Labor Elimination Commissions (with the participation of government and social actors) to formulate policies and concrete annual action plans on the prevention and elimination of child labor.
- Develop a national policy and strategy that defines the roles and responsibilities of each government institution/ministry and other actors, and allocate sufficient resources to implement them.
- Develop and elaborate plans of actions for the progressive prevention and elimination of child labor at the local level government entities, taking into consideration the characterization of each municipality.
- Reinforce inter-institutional coordination at international, national and local levels to facilitate services to temporary and migrant agricultural workers and their families, including services such as transportation, childcare, recognized educational equivalency programs, and health care to reduce the likelihood that children will work along with adults.
- Strengthen the budgets and technical resources, including those for inspection and vigilance, of the government institutions and staff members that are responsible for policies and programs to eliminate and prevent child labor.

2.6 EFFECTIVE PARTICIPATION OF CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS IN THE FORMULATION, EXECUTION, AND EVALUATION OF PUBLIC POLICIES

- Consult with children and adolescents to ensure that their needs and perspectives are reflected in the formulation of national and local policies to prevent child labor. Review, in particular, Article 12 of the International Convention on the Rights of the Child to adjust the “Right to be heard.”
- Facilitate exchange of information and consultation with youth as policies for youth employment are developed and implemented. Especially support the institutional strengthening of youth parliaments and councils.

2.7 FOLLOW-UP, MONITORING AND EVALUATION SYSTEMS

- Design a common monitoring, tracking, and evaluation methodology for policies and programs to eliminate and prevent child labor at the country level.
- Strengthen the monitoring and control mechanisms to ensure the effective restitution of rights and protection of children and adolescents, involving local communities, the public, parents, teachers, and trade unions.

3. SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY AND MOBILIZATION

- Make reference to the emphasis on comprehensive care which implies a shared responsibility and solidarity of all members of society (citizens, trade unions, enterprises) in the protection of children from labor exploitation and abuse.
- Advance a culture of zero tolerance of child labor and its worst forms and of full exercise of rights, developing information and prevention campaigns that create awareness among the population in general (enterprises, citizens, journalists, trade unions, government, families) on the shared responsibility and the social costs of child labor to achieve an America free of this plight.

3.1. PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

- Promote public-private partnerships among private enterprises, labor unions and civil society, in general, to achieve not only the compliance with labor laws, but also the development of good practices within their strategies of corporate social responsibility.
- Assist companies in understanding the responsibilities they face regarding child labor and its worst forms and developing policies of zero tolerance in their supply chains (from collaborators and suppliers to distributors) and in the work environment.
- Promote programs that allow small and medium enterprises to adopt child labor verification and monitoring standards (risk identification and management) in their supply chains.
- Coordinate jointly (state, enterprise and labor unions) actions that permit the re-establishment of the rights of working children.
- Promote the adoption of child labor monitoring and verification standards for public enterprises that mitigate the risk of child labor in government institutions or procurement.
- Publicly recognize the companies that comply with child and adolescent labor regulations.
- Incorporate and engage the media in the design of public campaigns to increase awareness and social participation, and provide training and information on child labor issues to journalists so that they can cover these issues with a children’s rights perspective.

3.2. LOCAL ACTION NETWORKS

- Create networks of local entities and/or committees for the prevention and elimination of child labor to strengthen and leverage sustainable actions with an impact at the territorial level.

3.3. WORKERS AND EMPLOYERS INVOLVEMENT

- Increase the effective participation of employer and worker organizations in national and local strategies against child labor.

3.4. EXPAND THE CELEBRATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL DAY AGAINST CHILD LABOR TO PROMOTE NATIONAL, REGIONAL AND LOCAL ACTION

- Develop a sustained awareness raising strategy that goes beyond the celebration of one day per year.

4. INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

- Exchange experiences that have important achievements in eradicating child labor (best practices), analyze their sustainability and develop a mapping of successful experiences
- In the framework of exchange activities, analyze the feasibility of the sustainability of best practices (which may have worked in one country) and their implementation in other countries of the region.
- Ask the international community to support declaring 2016 as the International Year against the Worst Forms of Child Labor.
- Seek economic support at the international level to support the national efforts of countries with precarious economic development, targeting the worst forms of child labor; in order for this issue to receive priority attention.
- Strengthen Roundtables for international cooperation and civil society organizations, aligning the cooperation through memoranda of understanding in order to be more effective in the elimination of child labor and its worst forms.
- Support and provide resources for expanding horizontal South-South cooperation.