



# Children and Youth in Hazardous Work

ILO-UN Global Compact Webinar  
24 May 2011



# Structure of the webinar

- Children and youth in hazardous work: facts and figures, definitions
- How can business contribute to the elimination of hazardous work of children
  - in the workplace
    - The practical tool: *Eliminating Child Labour- Guides for Employers*,
  - through community efforts
  - with trade unions
- How to participate in the World Day Against Child Labour
- Additional Resources



# United Nations Global Compact

## **PRINCIPLE 5:**

**"Businesses should uphold the effective abolition of child labour"**

**Child labour is a violation of human rights, and it is recognized and defined by international instruments. It is the declared policy of the international community and of almost all governments to abolish child labour**



# Hazardous Work of Children and Youth...

- ...occurs worldwide, in developed and developing countries
- ...is largely concentrated in the informal economy or in industries hidden from view
- ...affects the healthy development of young bodies
- ...destroys future productivity of young people and national economies
- ...is detrimental to the economic growth of businesses



**...Can be tackled by concentrated efforts from businesses and employers**



# Why should business be concerned?

- It is a **human rights** issue
  - Children and youth employed in hazardous work are often deprived of education and social interaction, and are unable to develop to their full potential
- It is a **decent work** issue
  - Decent work for youth is important for social stability and economic growth. It is in business' interest to support youth employment for persons above minimum working age
- It is an **occupational health and safety** issue
  - All workers should be guaranteed a safe and healthy work environment. However, research shows that young workers face a higher rate of injury than adult workers
- It is a **economic development** issue
  - Eliminating hazardous work of children can boost productivity. Preserving the health of young people ensures a robust workforce for business, as well as for national development
- It is a **global supply chain** issue
  - The world is getting smaller while supply chains are getting longer, making it difficult to ensure ethical production standards
- It is a **community** issue
  - Hazardous work of children affects the entire community. Tackling this issue can help address broader societal issues, such as universal education and poverty alleviation



# Global Statistics on Child Labour

- **306 million** economically active children (under age 18) in the world
- Of these, **215 million** engaged in what is considered child labour
- Of the 215 million child labourers, **115 million** are engaged in **hazardous work of children**



# Key Definitions

- **What is a Child?** All persons under 18 are children and have the right to special protection
- **What is Child Labour?**
  - Any work for which a child is too young:
    - Below age 15 for ordinary work
    - Below age 13 for light work
    - Below age 18 for hazardous work
  - Or is otherwise forbidden under international law (worst forms of child labour)
  - Or which interferes with their education
- **What is hazardous work?** A subset of child labour and a worst form of child labour, it is 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
  - Hazardous work accounts for 95% of the worst forms of child labour, targeted for elimination by **2016**



# Basic Distinctions in ILO Child Labour Standards

Shaded area = child labour elimination

Non-shaded area = acceptable child work

Years of Age

18

15\*

12\*\*


**Work excluded  
from minimum  
age legislation\*\*\***

**Light work**

**Regular work**

**Hazardous work  
and other worst  
forms of child  
labour**

\* The minimum age for employment 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.



# ILO Conventions on Child Labour

## ■ **Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138)**

- Requires member States to specify a minimum age for work not less than the age of finishing compulsory education
- Usually not to be less than 15 years; for developing countries, 14 years is possible as a transitional measure
- National laws may permit 13-15 year olds in light work which does not interfere with school attendance nor harm children's health or development
- Minimum age of at least 18 for hazardous work

## ■ **Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182)**

- Prohibition of the **worst forms of child labour** as a matter of urgency
  - Slavery-like practices, child trafficking
  - Prostitution or pornography
  - Use of children for illicit activities
  - Hazardous work likely to harm health, safety, or morals of children



# What Constitutes Hazardous Work?

ILO Recommendation No.190 gives guidance on factors to be considered in determining hazardous work. These include:

- Work which exposes children to physical, psychological or sexual abuse;
- Work underground, under water, at dangerous heights or in confined spaces
- Work with dangerous machinery, equipment and tools, or which involves the manual handling or transport of heavy loads;
- Work in an unhealthy environment which may, for example, expose children to hazardous substances, agents or processes, or to temperatures, noise levels, or vibrations damaging to their health;
- Work under particularly difficult conditions such as work for long hours or during the night or work where the child is unreasonably confined to the premises of the employer



# How is Hazardous Work Determined?

- ILO Convention No. 138, ILO Convention No. 182, and their accompanying Recommendations provide guidance on the determination of hazardous work
- It is for the competent authorities, in consultation with workers' and employers' organizations, to determine what is hazardous in their national context. **Businesses, including MNEs, through national employers associations, can contribute to determining hazardous work at country level**
- Over 100 countries have now established lists of hazardous work for children, but many need to update their lists, and others have yet to establish lists



# Hazardous Work of Children and Youth Employment

- Not all work by a person under the age of 18 is child labour
  - Depends on the child's age, type, and conditions of work
  - From the minimum age of work and end of compulsory schooling, young people can be engaged in youth employment
- From the minimum working age, young people should be introduced to decent work opportunities
  - The concept of decent work is based on the understanding that employment for young people above the minimum working age can be a source of personal dignity, security and freedom
  - Businesses that set 18 as minimum age may needlessly exclude 15-17 group from decent work opportunities
  - Though they must still be protected from hazardous work and other worst forms of child labour



# Protecting Young Workers

- Of the 115 million children in hazardous work, 54 per cent (62 million) are between **15 and 17** years old
- The number of adolescents engaged in hazardous work in this age group has increased by **20% - 10 million youth-** from 2004 to 2008
- Of a total of 35 per cent of adolescents in this age group who are employed, almost **one in two** are performing work which is harmful to their health or safety
- Research shows that adolescents face a greater risk of workplace injury compared to adult workers
  - One study showed the rate of injury for adolescents 15-17 *is* nearly *twice* that of workers 25 years and older



# Why Businesses Should be Concerned About Hazardous Work of Children

***Rest not only on ethical imperatives but also on factors that make good business sense***

1. It is illegal
2. Helps manage reputation and expand market access
3. Improves productivity in workforce
4. Encourages worker morale, recruitment and retention
5. Contributes to economic and social progress, expanded markets



# What Businesses Can Do

Businesses are key players in the struggle to eliminate child labour and ensure decent work for young workers above the minimum age. You can take action:

- In the workplace
- In the supply chain
- In the community
- In collaboration with trade unions
- On the World Day Against Child Labour 2011



# Workplace Actions to Eliminate Hazardous Work

*Businesses can take these particular actions to eliminate child labour in the workplace:*

- Adhere to minimum age provisions of national labour laws, and where national laws are insufficient, take account of international standards
- Use adequate mechanisms for age verifications upon recruitment
- Maintain up-to-date records of all employees
- When children below legal working age are found in the workplace, take measures to remove them from work and, to the extent possible, provide the child removed from work and his/her family with services and viable alternatives

***Children below the minimum age should be in school and not at work, whether this work is hazardous or not!***





# Workplace Actions: Ensuring the Health and Safety for Youth of Working Age

- Assess and ensure occupational health and safety for all workers, and specifically for those above the minimum age but below 18
- If youth of working age are engaged in hazardous work, either
  - Remove the adolescent from the task or the work condition, OR
  - Remove the hazards by improving work conditions
- Provide workplace safety and health trainings for youth of working age
- Monitor young workers in their work activities and assign experienced adult workers as guides or mentors
- Consult young workers on workplace concerns
- Ensure freedom of association and other labour rights for young workers (and others!)



# Work Place Actions:

## Ensuring Safe and Legal Apprenticeships

- Refer to national legislation regarding minimum age and conditions for apprenticeships
- ILO Convention No. 138- Young people above the age of 14 may participate in training in “undertakings”
- Be cautious of the term “apprenticeship” or “work/study programs” which may just be a cover for child labour, including hazardous child labour

***No young person, regardless of age, should be involved in an apprenticeship that involves hazardous work conditions!***



# A Practical Tool for Employers

## *Eliminating Child Labour: Guides for Employers (ILO-ACT/EMP and IOE)*

- Package of 3 guides designed to help businesses and their organisations take action against child labour
- Provides strategies for:
  - ☐ the prevention of child labour
  - ☐ withdrawal of children from work
  - ☐ protection of those children who are above the minimum age of employment and do work



# Step By Step Guide:

## *How employers can eliminate child labour*

- Step By Step serve as a guiding framework
- Each enterprise will face different and unique challenges

### **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



# Step 1: Analyse the situation

*Determine the extent of the child labour and hazardous work problem*

- Understand the child labour situation in your country or sector
  - Requirements of the law
  - Requirements of industry standards
  - Risk factors such as migration, weak education systems, presence of WFCL in country
- Understand the child labour situation in the business
  - Verify age of employees
  - Determine number of workers whose age is difficult to verify



# Step 2: Design the strategy

*Tackle the problem areas specific to your business and your objectives*

- Determine your specific scenario. Different enterprises will have different objectives. Do you want:
  - ☐ to prove your firm is child labour free?
  - ☐ to operate within the law?
  - ☐ to eliminate a significant problem?
  - ☐ to appease a buyer concerned with its supply chain?
- Gain assistance from government, trade unions, NGOs, community groups, and other local organizations



# Step 3: Hiring, Hazards, Hours (3H's)

*Take three immediate actions to reduce the problem of hazardous work of children*

## 1. Hiring

- ☐ End the practice of hiring children with a definitive ban, not a temporary freeze

## 2. Hazards

- ☐ Consult national legislation, the ILO, or health and safety experts to correctly identify workplace hazards
- ☐ Reduce the risk from hazards by improving workplace safety and health
- ☐ Remove adolescents from tasks and environments that are deemed hazardous for adolescents

## 3. Hours

- ☐ If the hazards are due to excessive hours, reduce hours to bring them in line with national legislation, but, if possible, do not reduce income



# Step 4: Support children and their families

*It is dangerous to simply dismiss children without ensuring adequate social support*

- Work with local and international child labour reduction programmes to provide social safety nets for families
- Encourage microfinance and skills training
  - Encourage parents of working children to join micro-credit organizations
  - Encourage parents of working children to set up private savings and credit schemes
- Improve wages, hire family members
  - If parents work for the same employer, consider raising the wage of parent
  - Otherwise, consider hiring parent or older sibling
- Support education
  - Provide support in the forms of scholarships, stipends and donations to local schools





# Step 5: Eliminating the need for children in your business

*Eliminating hazardous work of children should not affect the ability of your enterprise to remain in operation and earn a profit*

- These four steps may help your enterprise reduce its dependence on child labour:

## Checklist

### Reducing the need for child workers

1. Mechanize tasks currently done by children \_\_\_\_\_
2. Improve production layout \_\_\_\_\_
3. Review the wage differential for children below and above the legal working age \_\_\_\_\_
4. Replace child family labour \_\_\_\_\_



# Step 6: Eliminate child labour from supply chain

*As global supply chains are getting longer, it is important that businesses ensure that suppliers meet international child labour standards*

- Initial screening of prospective suppliers' practices, premises, and working conditions
- Make suppliers aware of the requirements of your business
- Write the conditions into contracts with suppliers
- Monitor suppliers and assist them to improve working conditions, while engaging with labour inspectorates, and promoting mature systems of industrial relations
- Work with suppliers to improve work conditions and build capacity
- Where possible, establish stable and long term relationships with suppliers
- Drop suppliers only as a last resort (while ensuring children are provided with remedy)
- Centralize home-based production, into the formal economy



# Step 7: Use a code of labour practice

*Business principles or ethics statements, if appropriately developed, implemented, and followed, can help boost corporate credibility*

- Adopt formal statements containing ethical principles that govern your enterprise's conduct
  - Internal objective: coherence among employees and employers
  - External objective: demonstration for consumers
- Credibility depends on implementation, integration, and quality of engagement, esp. with workers

## *Tips for Setting a Code of Conduct:*

1. Behaviour counts more than words
2. Fix the problem before setting the code
3. Communicate internally first
4. Internal codes often end up in the public domain
5. Refer to and align with ILO standards



## Step 8: Auditing, monitoring, certification

*Provides a detection system but in itself does little to solve the problem or address root causes.*

- Make accurate assessments by:
  - ☐ Reviewing worker's documents
  - ☐ On-site inspections (announced and surprise)
  - ☐ Off site, confidential interviews with workers



# A Note on Child Labour Monitoring (CLM)

- Involves identifying child labourers or at-risk children, referring them to social services, then tracking them to verify that children have been removed, are in school or some other satisfactory alternative
- By regularly repeating this process, CLM ensures that the area, industry or sector under surveillance stays child labour free
- Broader and more effective than labour inspection alone
  - A comprehensive child labour monitoring covers the workplace, the school, and sometimes the community
  - Ensures that child labourers in the informal economy (such as in home-based workshops, farms, or fishing areas) are identified and assisted



# Community Actions to Eliminate Hazardous Work of Children

*Businesses can contribute to community efforts to eliminate child labour and help children removed from work to have access to quality education and social protection*

- Work with other companies, sectoral organizations and employers' organizations to develop an industry-wide approach to address the issue, and build bridges with stakeholders such as workers' organizations, law enforcement authorities and labour inspectorates
- Establish or participate in a task force or committee on child labour in your representative employers' organizations at local, state, or national level
- Within your sphere of influence, participate in prevention and re-integration programs for former child labourers by providing education, skills development, and job training opportunities
- Participate in national and international programmes, including media campaigns, and co-ordinate with local and national authorities, workers organizations, and others.



# Engaging with Trade Unions to Eliminate Hazardous Work of Children

- Presence of free trade unions is the best guarantee for avoiding hazardous work and other forms of child labour
- Multinationals can sign International Framework Agreements
- Supports basic workplace rights, freedom of association and collective bargaining in order to promote safe work conditions
- Can fix a living wage, (most legitimately done in negotiation with workers' organizations), to address a root cause of CL
- Trade unions can help tackle hazardous work of children in many ways:
  - Provide continual monitoring presence
  - Organise in the informal economy
  - Can provide trainings on occupational health and safety for young workers
  - Can developing micro-credit cooperatives, social protection for union members
  - Can support education initiatives for former child labourers



# The World Day Against Child Labour

## 12 June 2011

### Warning! Children in Hazardous Work- End Child Labour

- This 2011 World Day will provide a global spotlight on **hazardous child labour** and call for urgent action to tackle the problem
- Businesses can play a key role in raising awareness at the community and international level





# How Businesses Can Participate

- ❑ 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. The ILO can provide case studies that document how companies have done this and suggest panellists for child labour forums.
- ❑ 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.



# Resources

- [ILO-ACT/EMP \*Eliminating Child Labour- Guides for Employers\*](#)
- [ILO-IPEC/YEP/Safe Work \*Safe Work for Youth Toolkits\*](#)
- [Children's Rights and Business Principles](#)
- [ILO-IPEC \*Facts on Child Labour Monitoring\*](#)
- [ILO Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy](#)
- [ILO Helpdesk for Business](#)
- [ILO Codes of Practice on Occupational Safety and Health](#)



# Contact Information

- For further information regarding child labour: [www.ilo.org/ipec](http://www.ilo.org/ipec)

CSR and child labour: Benjamin Smith-  
[smithb@ilo.org](mailto:smithb@ilo.org)

For information regarding the World Day  
Against Child Labour:

[www.ilo.org/ChildLabourWorldDay](http://www.ilo.org/ChildLabourWorldDay)

- For information regarding the labour principles of the UN Global Compact, the ILO MNE Declaration and the ILO Helpdesk for business:

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ILO Multinational Enterprises Program

[www.ilo.org/multi](http://www.ilo.org/multi) and [www.ilo.org/business](http://www.ilo.org/business)

