

World Day Against Child Labour 2007 to focus on elimination of child labour in agriculture

June 5, 2007

GENEVA (ILO News) – This year's World Day Against Child Labour on 12 June is to focus on the elimination of child labour in agriculture, which accounts for a staggering percentage of the world's working children and is one of the most dangerous forms of work for children and adults like.

The ILO's International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) estimates that over 100 million boys and girls aged 5-14 work as child labourers on farms and plantations the world over, where they are often exposed to hazards and risks that run the gamut from the mixing, handling and applying of toxic pesticides to using dangerous cutting tools, to working in extreme temperatures and operating powerful farm vehicles and heavy machinery.

To strengthen the worldwide movement against child labour, the ILO is to launch a new partnership on 12 June with five international agriculture-based organizations: the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), the International Federation of Agricultural Producers (IFAP) and the International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations (IUF).

The aim of this new partnership will be to develop common policies, programmes and activities at international and national levels against child labour in agriculture. These partner organizations will play an important role in working with ministries of agriculture, agricultural advisory services, research bodies and other offices involved in agricultural policy issues. It may also be expanded in the future to include other agricultural-based organizations.

The ILO stressed that not all children working in agriculture can be considered child labourers under the terms of ILO conventions No. 138 and No. 182 if they perform tasks appropriate to a child's age and that are a normal part of growing up in a rural environment.

The World Day Against Child Labour is observed worldwide on or around 12 June each year. It serves as a catalyst for the growing worldwide movement against child labour.

A substantive press release, and a set of fact sheets and other background information, will be issued on 8 June for use by the media on the world day. The press release will be for publication on or after 2300 GMT on 11 June. The ILO has also prepared digital news and information material for use by broadcasters on or after the World Day. For more information, media materials and other background on child labour, see www.ilo.org/childlabour.

World Day Against Child Labour 2007 Events

In Geneva, the main event on 12 June, coincides with the ILO's International Labour Conference and consists of the Signing Ceremony for the Declaration of Intent on Cooperation on Child Labour in Agriculture between the ILO, FAO, IFAD, IFPRI (CGIAR), IFAP, IUF launching the new global partnership. During this ceremony in the Palais des Nations the partner organizations will make statements supporting the Partnership. It is followed by a public event organised jointly with the City of Geneva and Le Respect on the Place des Nations with 500 schoolchildren releasing balloons in solidarity with the child labourers in agriculture all around the world. During the whole week of 11 June, the Euresst restaurants and bars in the ILO building will display the WDACL

2007 posters and distribute the postcards "Harvest for the Future: Agriculture without Child Labour" to its customers (sponsored by the Compass Group).

In Rome events organized jointly by the ILO Rome Office, FAO and IFAD are:

- on 11 June in the evening: Opera-Ballet Performance on Child Labour by the Ariston Proballet Sanremo Company at the at Teatro Olimpico, Roma organized by Mediascena Europa (co-sponsored by the Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities, FAO, ILO, IFAD, and the Region of Lazio);
- on 12 June in the morning at the FAO "Child Labour in Agriculture" (FAO/IFAD/ILO organized event), followed by a press conference; in the afternoon an ILO Rome/Ministry of Social Solidarity/Ministry of Labour and Social Security organized Congress and Roundtable on Child Labour in Italy: Scenarios and New Challenges (organized at the FAO).

Around the world, numerous events, discussions and other activities are planned to mark the day and raise awareness on child labour in agriculture and the new global partnership. Activities include:

- Roundtables, forums, workshops, seminars, trainings with policy makers, trade unions, farmers, other UN organizations
- Press conferences, Radio and TV programmes, major awareness raising campaigns in the media, including stories of working children in newspapers,
- Children performing in drama, song and dance, marches of children wearing tshirts and pins against child labour, drawing and essay competitions,
- Photo exhibitions, presentations of studies etc.

In more than 100 countries around the world, people are reminded that at least on this one day of the year, they should reflect on the fate of working children. Many of the activities are organized jointly with the new partner organizations and are located in major agricultural production districts.

ILO-International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC)

The International Labour Organization's goal with regard to child labour is the progressive elimination of all its forms worldwide. The worst forms of child labour, which include hazardous work, commercial sexual exploitation, trafficking of children and all forms of slavery, among others, should be abolished as a priority.

The ILO seeks to strategically position child labour elimination at the macro-level in socio-economic development and poverty reduction strategies of its member countries in order to encourage mainstreaming and integration of child labour issues and concerns. In doing so, the ILO – through its International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) – emphasizes the need for assessing and monitoring the extent and nature of the problem, the strengthening of institutional capacities and the provision of assistance for the development and implementation of national policies.

It is clear from IPEC experience that parents and families who are given a viable choice prefer to keep children out of the workplace. Thus, the ILO's strategies have put increasing emphasis on poverty alleviation as well as expanding and improving institutional mechanisms for education and law enforcement, among other key areas of work. As such, the work of IPEC fits into and supports various development frameworks, such as the Millennium Development Goals, the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers and the Education for All Initiative.

Broadcast quality video material on child labour in different regions of the world is available to broadcasters by contacting the Department of Communication, Radio and TV unit on mann@ilo.org.

Interviews can be scheduled via the ILO Department of Communication with experts in child labour and gender. Please contact the ILO by phone or fax or request a list of contacts by email.

For more information, please contact the ILO Department of Communication in Geneva at +4122/799-7912 or visit the IPEC website at: www.ilo.org/childlabour.