



Malawi National Conference on Child Labour in Agriculture, Cross Roads Hotel, 5-6 September, Lilongwe, Malawi

Outcome Document and Framework for Action

This Malawi National Conference on Child Labour in Agriculture held on 5-6 September 2012 (Lilongwe, Malawi), in the presence of and with the support of Her Excellency, The State President of the Republic of Malawi, Madam Joyce Banda:

- organised by the Ministry of Labour, the Malawi Congress of Trade Unions and Employers Consultative Association of Malawi (ECAM), with support from civil society, UN agencies, multi-stakeholder initiatives, producer associations and business (Tripartite-plus)
- funded by the Ministry of Labour, ECAM and the Eliminating Child Labour in Tobacco-growing Foundation (ECLT)
- incorporating a children's conference supported by Eliminating Child Labour in Tobacco-growing Foundation, Plan International Malawi, Save the Children Malawi, YONECO, World Vision Malawi, Malawi Human Rights Commission, National Youth Council of Malawi and UNICEF

with technical support from the International Labour Organization (ILO) and attended by 290 senior delegates from government ministries, business, trade unions, agricultural producer associations, non-governmental organisations, civil society networks, other United Nations agencies, children and international supporters and development partners,

Recognizes that the Malawi Government has put in place anti-child labour laws, policies, instruments and strategies, including the Constitution of Malawi, the Employment Act (Cap 55.02), The Child Care, Protection and Justice Act, The Education Act, the National Registration Act, the Malawi Decent Work Country Programme, the Child Labour National Action Plan for Malawi (2010-2016), Malawi Growth and Development Strategy II (2011-2016), the National Code of Conduct on Child Labour and the recently gazetted Hazardous Work List, among others; and

Recognizes that all actors have a role to play in eliminating child labour and that the National Steering Committee requires enhanced capacity so that it can guide the implementation of the framework for action embodied in this outcome document, and support tripartism and cooperation between partners, based on respect for their

mandates, in order to promote the collaboration and policy coherence required; and that the necessary tripartite plus sub-structures of the NSC should be established to deal with specific sub-sectors,

Welcomes the contributions towards elimination of child labour in agriculture of:

- The Government of Malawi for formulating the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy II (2011-2016) and prioritizing child labour in the Social Support and Risk Management thematic area as well as gazetting the List of Hazardous Work for children in February 2012;
- Ministries of Labour, Education, Gender and Children's Affairs and Agriculture and Food Security through their development of a conducive policy and legislative environment for mainstreaming child labour issues in their respective ministries
- The International Partnership for Cooperation on Child Labour in Agriculture (consisting of ILO, FAO, IUF, IFAD and IFPRI/CGIAR) for coordinating efforts to develop a List of Priority Actions for Better Addressing Child Labour in Agriculture in Malawi
- The Malawi Congress of Trade Unions and its agriculture affiliates through promotion of decent work for adults and youth and implementing anti-child labour programmes and by integrating child labour concerns into their tripartite policy activities, organising and bargaining agendas
- The Employers Consultative Association of Malawi and business through creating awareness on the issue of child labour, adopting employers' codes of conduct and implementing anti-child labour social responsibility programmes and by engaging in social dialogue with Government and trade union organisations
- Non-governmental organizations, traditional leaders and faith-based organizations through advocacy, awareness creation, community mobilization, improving access to basic education, complementary basic education programmes and promotion of child rights
- Civil society networks on labour and child rights through provision of a platform for the coordination of child labour programmes, creation of knowledge, its management and promoting social dialogue
- Development partners through provision of technical and financial support for the elimination of child labour

Cognizant of the reality that in spite of these laws, policies, instruments, strategies and efforts, child labour in agriculture remains a significant social and economic

problem and that the use of child labour contravenes national and international laws, norms and codes of good agricultural practices;

Aware that the majority of child labourers in agriculture work as part of unpaid family labour, and yet the product of their labour provides food for consumption in their families and forms an integral part of agriculture supply chains, reaching both domestic and export markets;

Therefore, **acknowledges** that a coordinated multi-sectoral approach is required to eliminate child labour in agriculture in Malawi in order to achieve the national goals of elimination of the worst forms of child labour by 2016 in line with the Child Labour National Action Plan for Malawi (2010-2016), the Malawi National Education Sector Plan goal to achieve Education for All and Universal Primary Education by 2015, ILO Conventions, in particular, ratified ILO Conventions Nos 138 and 182 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child;

Recognizes that children have to be protected from all forms of exploitation and violence. Children have human rights and any action that is oriented to eliminate child labour in agriculture should include their voices, opinions and promote their participation and be in their best interests;

And further **recognizes** the importance of an integrated area based approach in combating all forms of child labour, taking into account that children in rural communities may be engaged in different forms of child labour as defined by ratified ILO Conventions Nos 138 and 182, including child domestic labour.

Also the Conference **notes** that most child labourers work in agriculture, which is a sector with significant decent work deficits. In Malawi:

- As worldwide, agriculture is the sector with the highest incidence of occupational safety and health hazards and related diseases, accidents and deaths
- The present tenancy labour system commonly entails unfair contractual relations in favour of landlords that contribute to the high incidence of child labour and that the dependent relationships may create de facto employment relationships and consequent responsibilities for employers. In some circumstances, tenancy relations may even result in debt- bondage
- The concern that the expansion of contract farming/integrated production systems may lead to the replacement of dependency on landlords with dependency on multinational enterprises needs to be addressed.
- Child labour in Malawi is associated with inter and intra-district movement of children, sometimes without the knowledge or consent of parents/guardians
- The returns to farmers are low due to purchasing practices in supply chains, high input costs, over-production, low productivity and inefficiency that prevent farmers from accessing a living wage.

- Small scale farmers and fishers have a low degree of self organization at the local level which limits their opportunities to increase economies of scale and weakens their bargaining power.
- Dependency of small scale farmers on single crops with little crop and livelihoods diversification makes households vulnerable to food insecurity in times of shocks that in turn can increase child labour.
- Production systems that impose unreasonably high production quotas and low piece rates can contribute directly to the use of child labour.
- Much labour legislation excludes or has lower requirements for agricultural workers, especially those working in rural smallholder family farms and small scale fishing enterprises
- Loopholes and contradictions in legislation make it difficult to achieve sufficient child protection
- Labour inspection is weak, and does not extend to smallholder family farms, small fishing enterprises and homes.
- Labour relations systems cover only a small number of agricultural enterprises and workers.

Further recognises that the following are integral to ensuring the elimination of child labour:

- A legislative and policy framework i.e. approval of the child labour policy, labour inspection policy and Tenancy Bill enactment
- Rights acquired through the enactment of the Tenancy Bill must be transposed into any framework covering contract farming
- Free and compulsory basic education up to the minimum age for entry into work and employment.
- Access to schools, school materials, availability of qualified teachers, quality school curriculums that are attractive to the rural communities and vocational training opportunities for out of school children
- Mainstreaming child labour concerns in policies and strategies e.g. Agriculture Sector Wide Approach
- Improving productivity among smallholder farmers by improving agricultural extension services, access to agricultural finance, the bargaining strength and upgrading of opportunities for agricultural producer associations, promoting fair conditions and decent wages in contract farming and strengthening agricultural cooperatives and producer organizations.
- Gender equality, social inclusion and non-discrimination
- Promotion of decent youth employment for those above the minimum legal age
- Promotion and enforcement of Good Occupational Safety and Health laws
- Adequately resourced and effective labour inspection services
- The development of a national system of district and community based child labour monitoring to identify children at risk, prevent or withdraw them from

engagement in child labour, refer them to appropriate services and track their progress to ensure they have sustainable alternatives.

- The need for disaggregated data on child labour in agriculture down to the agricultural sub sector and agricultural activities level to enable national policy makers to direct available resources and attention to those locations where the majority of child labourers are found.

Therefore, Conference participants **commit** to renewed action to end child labour, in accordance with the Activity Plan for better addressing child labour in agriculture in Malawi, discussed at the Conference, and call upon the following stakeholders to commit to key actions:

Ministry of Education

Achieving Education for All and the elimination of child labour are interconnected. The provision of quality education is a key intervention in the fight against child labour.

In most African countries including Malawi, girls have a less than 50% chance of going to secondary school; average primary school completion rates for boys in sub-Saharan Africa is 56%, and 46% for girls. Even when school tuition is free, costs such as books, clothes, shoes, transportation and long distances to school can be barriers to enrolment and retention.

This Conference notes that:

- According to the 2006 Malawi Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, 29-37% of children aged 5-17 years were involved in child labour, 53.5% of them in agriculture
- At least 4.5 million adult Malawians are illiterate, making it difficult for them to receive and use information
- According to 2011 Education Statistics of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology for 8 years of primary school;
 - There are 105 pupils to a classroom at primary school level
 - Malawi needs 30,000 classrooms
 - 600,000 (20%) school age children are out of school
 - Only 9 per cent master minimum English reading
 - Only 2 per cent master minimum Mathematics
 - 55 per cent of boys complete 8 years of primary education
 - 48 per cent of girls complete 8 years of primary education
 - There are 92 children to a qualified teacher
 - Of 179,265 primary school children who dropped out in 2010-2011:
 - 33 per cent was due to family responsibility

- 8 per cent was due to pregnancy and/or marriage
- 8 per cent was due to long distance to school
- 4 per cent was due to employment

To realize the goals of the National Action Plan on Child Labour for Malawi by 2016 and the Millennium Development Goals, this Conference therefore **calls** upon the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology to;

- From 2012 to 2016, treble investment in education infrastructure development annually through various sources of funding, namely, government funding (in particular, the Local Development Fund and, the Community Development Fund), development partners and private-public partnerships. This should include basic facilities including sanitation, school playground construction and equipment and sports facilities, to improve school retention, mental, social and physical development of pupils, taking into account the particular vulnerabilities and needs of girls and boys.
- Improve early grade literacy and numeracy through teacher training, reducing the trained teacher-pupil ratio to 1:60 and improving the pupil/book ratio
- Increase the national production of school reading materials to 100 per cent by 2016
- Scale up the Complementary Basic Education Programme and vocational skills training, targeting out of school children aged 9-17 to achieve national coverage by 2016.
- Make use of existing materials to improve children's experience of school, including the materials and methodology of the ILO-IPEC SCREAM programme (Supporting Children's Rights through Education, the Arts and the Media) already translated into Chichewa.
- Support, with youth groups, the establishment of children's rights clubs at local level
- Reinforce support for decent work for teachers and engage fully with teachers' organisations to secure the contribution of the education system to the elimination of child labour
- Provide incentives for children's attendance through school feeding or food for schooling programmes combined with school learning gardens for children to produce food for the programmes and learn about agricultural production and nutrition. Encourage dialogue between rural school teachers, the community and parents, so programmes and courses respond to the specific needs and constraints of rural communities

The Ministry of Labour

Government ministries, including the Ministry of Labour, have options when it comes to policy and budgetary investments. The Ministry of Labour must guarantee fundamental rights at work and enforce national child labour legislation, including

resourcing labour inspectors. Government, through the Ministry of Labour, should mainstream child labour elimination as an explicit objective in all relevant policies, ensure adequate technical and financial support and resources in their implementation, and enlist support from development partners.

This conference **urges** the Ministry of Labour to strengthen their efforts to eliminate child labour in agriculture by:

- Creating a conducive policy and legislative environment by expediting approval of the child labour policy, the Labour Inspection policy and supporting enactment of the Tenancy Labour Bill, ensuring that rights acquired through its enactment are transposed into any framework covering contract farming
- Formalize the Child Labour Unit by regularizing its structure and recruiting specialist staff
- Establishing an effective and functional national Child Labour Monitoring System (CLMS) as a priority and improve linkages with District Labour Officers
- Ensure effective labour inspection of child labour in agriculture, including in smallholder farms and homes
- Strengthen inter-ministerial coordination on child labour issues by convening regular meetings of the Tripartite plus National Steering Committee on Child Labour and a technical committee on child labour.
- Ensure a working referral and remediation (i.e. social services system) is in place for companies and organizations to refer their findings during monitoring
- Follow up on recommendations of this Conference and establish a monitoring mechanism.
- Train the judiciary in child labour case management
- Popularize the nationally agreed List of Hazardous Work prohibited to children under the age of 18 (appended to the Employment Act, 2012) including through the training of labour inspectors, extension officers, social partners and community based CLM groups.
- Initiate a review of the List of Hazardous Work to ensure its relevance and accuracy.
- Promote the development of active labour market policies, particularly when modernization of agriculture includes steps that may reduce labour demand. These should promote the creation of alternative jobs and appropriate skills training for women and men, including for young workers above the minimum age for work.
- Undertake a comprehensive child labour survey, disaggregating data about those agricultural sub-sectors and activities in which most child labourers are found, to then allocate resources for child labour prevention and elimination appropriately.

Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security

Agricultural productivity is directly linked to the level of educational attainment and child labour. Evidence suggests that rates of return to schooling among farmers are highest in those regions experiencing substantial agricultural productivity growth. Studies in Malawi have shown that well-educated farmers exhibit higher levels of efficiency because (i) they are able to gather, understand and use information from research and extension more easily than illiterate farmers and (ii) educated producers are very likely to be less risk-averse and therefore more willing to try out modern technologies and to manage their farm as a business.

Quality of extension services and access to markets positively influence efficiency, because they provide the incentive and means for farmers to access improved crop technology and improve farmers' liquidity and the affordability of the inputs required for production. Therefore, any threat to Malawi's agricultural productivity negates the fight against child labour in agriculture in the country.

Over 90% of the total agricultural value-added comes from about 1.8 million smallholders who own on average less than 1.0 ha of land. Land pressure is particularly intense in the southern region of Malawi where the per capita average landholding size can be as low as 0.1 ha, whereas the average per capita landholding size in the other regions is 0.2 ha and more. This partly explains the migration for work and trafficking for child labour of children from the southern region to other regions of the country. The 2008 Population Census estimated the country's population at 13.1 million and growing at 2.8% per annum, possibly doubling by 2025. This puts enormous pressure on agriculture to grow at levels sufficient to feed the growing population. Given the declining land holding sizes, the only plausible way to improve agricultural productivity is to enhance efficiency.

There is a wide gap between yields observed in on-farm and experimental trials and the actual yields obtained by farmers. For example, while potential yields for hybrid maize range from 5 to 8 tonnes per hectare, the average actual yield rarely exceeds 1.5 to 2.5 tonnes. Evidence suggests that levels of efficiency among the majority of Malawian smallholders are low to moderate.

Therefore, this Conference urges the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security to:

- Integrate child labour concerns in agriculture development policies, programmes and research and formally recognize and institutionalize child labour as a cross cutting issue in the Ministry
- Develop, *through a tripartite process*, a policy on fair agricultural investments including a regulatory framework to implement fair contract farming to ensure that well-functioning enterprises provide decent working conditions and wages
- Provide deadlines/milestones for the expansion of contract farming/integrated production for export crops, while ensuring that contracts follow the above-mentioned policy.

- Strengthen the mechanism for an inclusive input cost surveillance system
- While limits on contract farming still exist, open up competition in the auctioning of tobacco by registering more buyers
- Improve targeting of the Agriculture Input Subsidy Programme to reach more effectively food insecure households. In the long term the targeting should include food insecure households at risk of making use of child labour, in combination with the condition on non-use of child labour Improve availability of certified first generation hybrid seeds and other varieties, while promoting local seed production
- Improve availability of extension services in communities and capacitate the extension system to assist in child labour prevention and reduction;
- Equip extension workers with transport and cross-learning opportunities;
- Expand opportunities for training of youth above the minimum age for entry into employment in improved agronomy practices, using methodologies such as Junior Farmer Field Schools and Model Farm Schools
- Raise awareness of the hazards of agricultural work including fishing, building capacity of producers to undertake risk assessments and identify safer agricultural practices.
- Facilitate the formation of extension/market/credit related organizations and collective farmers' institutions that provide opportunities for risk sharing and improved bargaining strength
- Liaise with service providers to improve access to agricultural insurance and existing social protection services
- Improve access to informal sources of learning and information sharing among farmers through experimental learning such as demonstration plots and Farmer Field Schools
- Intensify investments in drought risk management instruments (e.g. small dams and water harvesting for home gardens) given smallholder farmers' very high reliance on rainfall.
- Promote multiple use irrigation systems that are child labour smart.
- Promote sustainable natural resource management including fisheries and forestry to reduce the demand for child labour.
- Promote winter gardening in farming communities so that the *dimba* income can be used to supplement the cash for purchasing inputs for upland crops
- Promote good agricultural practices with potential to reduce child labour such as labour saving technologies, conservation agriculture, Integrated Production and Pest Management,
- Encourage crop, food crops and livelihoods diversification food security among farmers
- Conduct value chain analysis in key sectors to determine the distribution of the wealth produced and promote fair returns to farmers
- Support the endorsement of the updated International Code of Conduct on the Distribution and Use of Pesticides during the 38th FAO Conference to be held in June 2013. The Government of Malawi will commit to implement the actions

outlined in this updated Code of Conduct. The Code makes specific reference to hazardous child labour and recommends including pesticide application in the national hazardous work list (ILO convention 182)

Malawi Congress of Trade Unions and its agricultural affiliates

Adults in decent work will have children in school. In addition, organized workplaces are child labour-free. However, child labour is prevalent in non-unionized, unprotected, informal work in agriculture. Trade Unions have a special responsibility and interest in promoting programmes against child labour and abusive labour practices in their businesses, work places and communities. They ensure that adults earn decent wages, monitor compliance with child labour codes and collective agreements and adherence to occupational health and safety standards.

Therefore this conference **calls upon** the MCTU and its affiliates to:

- Organize agricultural workers and tenants to fight against child labour through formalization, protection under the law and improved incomes and conditions in the current informal economy
- Work for improved occupational safety and health (OSH) for all in agriculture
- Advocate for properly resourced, effective labour inspection in agriculture
- Advocate for the ratification of ILO Convention No. 184 on Health and Safety in Agriculture
- Promote the outreach of union OSH representatives to unorganized workplaces.
- Develop a National Policy on Child Labour to provide guidance to MCTU and its affiliates on children's rights in the world of work
- Be active participants in community based CLMS

Employers' Consultative Association of Malawi (ECAM)

Employers' associations play a central role in the fight against child labour through the development of labour codes, guides and standards for their members. Therefore, the Malawi National Conference on Child Labour in Agriculture urges ECAM to;

- Develop and promote adoption of employers' anti-child labour guidance
- Provide training to employers on child labour
- Promote business's adoption of and compliance with global labour standards, the decent work agenda and human rights principles
- Implement child labour programmes

- Support employer engagement in community based CLMS.
- Promote the outreach of employer OSH expertise to the small farming sector.

NASFAM, FUM, TAMA, TAML and other agricultural producer associations

The National Smallholder Farmers Association of Malawi (NASFAM), the Farmers Union of Malawi (FUM), Tobacco Association of Malawi (TAMA) and the Tea Association of Malawi (TAML) individually bring together the largest groups of agricultural producers in Malawi, representing smallholder producers of cotton, groundnuts, tobacco, rice, tea and chilli. Recognizing that these are major cash crops in rural households and that most child labour occurs as part of unpaid family labour, the Malawi National Conference on Child Labour in Agriculture calls upon agricultural producer associations to;

- Sensitize farmers on child labour
- Promote labour saving technologies
- Improve access to credit, crop insurance and market access for their membership
- Promote adult literacy education among their membership
- Educate farmers on contract farming and contracting
- Promote farmers' cooperatives and value addition
- Promote village savings and loan schemes, including social welfare funds among their members
- Promote good agricultural practices among smallholder farmers, including conservation agriculture, crop diversification, occupational safety and health

In order to achieve the goal of child labour elimination by 2016, this Conference urges all corporations to observe the following general principles:

- Ensure farmers receive fair prices that cover the production costs and enable them to earn a decent living and send their children to school
- Respect for ILO Conventions/international labour standards and Codes on Decent Work, including the fundamental rights at work (freedom of association and the effective right to collective bargaining, and freedom from child labour, forced labour and discrimination), taking into account their mutually reinforcing and enabling role.
- Respect and promote freedom of association and effective right to collective bargaining in order to promote social dialogue and decent incomes and working conditions for small farmers and agricultural workers
- Encourage collective trade union interaction with grower associations for effective promotion of freedom of association and collective bargaining
- Improve productivity of farmers to enhance their incomes and improve supply efficiency.
- Increasing opportunities to add value to produce before export

- Promoting good agricultural practices, including environmental stewardship, conservation agriculture, crop diversification and occupational safety and health
- Provision of timely information on demand and supply conditions for farmers to determine their production targets
- Supply chain-wide application of corporate standards in accord with publically agreed international standards
- Their responsibility in supply and value chains to ensure that child labour is not used.
- Support for community based CLMS.

Traditional leaders

Traditional leaders have a critical role to play in child labour elimination. The Conference calls on them to

- Strengthen the role of traditional leaders in the fight against child labour and encourage senior traditional leaders to mainstream child labour concerns through, for example, participation in District child labour committees.
- Raise awareness in their communities about the hazards of child labour and importance of education to the development of girls and boys and to the future prosperity of their communities
- Promote changes in practices such as early marriage and other gender-discriminatory practices that contribute to the perpetuation of child labour
- Ensure that all people in their communities have access to land for production, ensure that proper land ownership and inheritance systems are in place, and advocate for the introduction of household food security programmes in their communities
- Formulate local bylaws that prohibit child labour for presentation to District Assemblies and support their enforcement
- Support community based child labour monitoring systems

Religious leaders and faith groups

This Conference calls upon religious leaders and faith-based groups to

- Sensitize communities on the on the hazards of child labour and importance of education to the development of girls and boys and to the future prosperity of their communities
- Participate in child labour monitoring systems and in community and district child labour committees

District Assemblies

This Conference calls upon District Assemblies to

- Strengthen the contribution of District Assemblies to the implementation of the Malawi National Action Plan against Child Labour
- Formulate and implement District-level action plans to combat child labour aligned with the National Action Plan. This requires securing adequate funding for such plans.
- Create or strengthen existing District Child Labour Committees

Participate in Child Labour Monitoring Systems and facilitate the provision of necessary social services for sustainable withdrawal and prevention of children from child labour.

Local leaders and communities

This Conference calls upon local leaders and communities to

- Contribute to the implementation of the Malawi National Action Plan against Child Labour
- Formulate and implement community action plans to combat child labour aligned with the National Action Plan. Seek adequate funding for such plans from local district and national government, development partners and other stakeholders.
- Create or strengthen existing Community Child Labour Committees
- Participate in Child Labour Monitoring Systems and facilitate the provision of necessary social services for sustainable withdrawal and prevention of children from child labour.

Children

This Conference included the participation of children. The children present at the Conference committed themselves and called on other children to

- Participate in child labour monitoring; reporting instances of child labour observed to local leaders, parents and government authorities. When they do so, they must be protected from any reprisals.
- Form child rights clubs to advocate and promote child rights in their communities

Tobacco industry

Tobacco is a labour intensive and technically demanding crop. Often, the crop is grown in hard-to-reach areas; characterized by poor road networks, long distances to schools and lack of access to reliable water sources. These circumstances,

among others, expose tobacco growing to the risk of child labour, especially in independent production systems and tenancy labour arrangements, as is the case in Malawi. Where traceability is possible, as in integrated production systems, tobacco companies can support better agronomy practices of farmers, labour choices and production levels, thereby generating higher returns for farmers. Therefore, this Conference calls upon tobacco companies to:

- Ensure that there is a reduction and removal of hazardous child labour in the tobacco growing value chain
- Pay tobacco growers and workers fair prices and decent wages
- Ensure tobacco growers and agricultural workers in integrated contracting farming systems are paid fair prices and decent wages
- Where integrated production systems are possible, increase the number of smallholder farmers under contract farming arrangements
- Increase and improve the infrastructure and delivery system for farmers to have access to buyers
- Increase the number of extension workers in line with increases in farms under contract farming
- Train extension workers in identifying child labour and risks/hazards to children, as well as good agricultural practices to improve yields
- Create incentives for growers that do not use child labour and who send their children to school
- Cooperate with other appropriate agencies to ensure remediation for children withdrawn from child labour
- Promote health and safety among tobacco farmers, with specific attention to Green Tobacco Sickness
- Promote labour saving technologies
- Train farmers to protect the environment as a measure to reduce child labour, improve yields and improve food security

Tea sector

Malawi is the second largest tea producer in Africa, after Kenya. After tobacco and sugar, tea is the third biggest export earner for Malawi, accounting for 8 per cent of export earnings. There are approximately 10,000 smallholder tea farmers in Malawi. Tea is also an important employer, with an estate labour force of 40,000-50,000 people at peak season. The tea companies also procure green leaf from smallholder out-growers. Although over 90 per cent of the children of these farmers are able to go to primary school, only 25 per cent on average continue on to secondary schooling. While fair trade affiliation has helped deal with the problem of child labour

in some tea estates, this has often simply displaced child labourers in that children still work in other activities and still miss school. This Conference therefore urges the tea companies to undertake the following actions to eliminate child labour in the tea supply chain by 2016 in line with the National Action Plan on Child Labour for Malawi:

- Ensure that price setting enables tea growers and workers to be paid fair prices and decent wages
- Strengthen the Tea Association of Malawi, the Tea Merchants Association of Malawi and the Smallholder Tea Development Committee to manage and coordinate activities of the sub-sector
- Introduce a revolving fund for a production input support programme
- Improve intensity and reach of extension services to tea growers, in order to improve tea quality, yield and efficiency, including improving food security
- Improve infrastructure in smallholder tea areas, especially the road network and increase the number of buying centres, construction and renovation of leaf weighing sheds/offices for growers
- Invest in HIV and AIDS interventions, including environmental conservation
- Expand adult education programmes for tea growers

Sugar sector

Sugar is Malawi's second most important crop in terms of foreign exchange generation. It accounts for 9 per cent of total export earnings and contributes 5-6% to Malawi's GDP. Smallholder cane growers account for approximately 9 per cent of agricultural activity and nearly 5% of the overall sugar industry, including milling.

The Malawi Growth and Development Strategy II prioritize the sugar industry as a key contributing sector to overall national economic growth. One of the main strategies to bring about growth in the sugar sector is the promotion of out-grower schemes. This provides opportunities to address the challenges in this sector: helping small-scale farmers to get out of the vicious cycle of low productivity, high input costs, use of child labour, low income and consequently low investments; improving labour conditions in the sugarcane industry, which are still among the toughest; making a responsible transition to mechanized harvesting, with care for large numbers of cane cutters who will lose their jobs and who often have little prospect of finding other work; expanding sugarcane cultivation responsibly, without entering into land and water conflicts with the local population. To reduce child labour in line with the goals of the Child Labour National Action Plan for Malawi, this Conference urges the sugar companies to:

- Pay sugarcane growers and cutters fair prices and decent wages
- Train out-growers to increase productivity through intensifying extension services

- Implement adult literacy education interventions among sugarcane growers and cutters
- Adopt labour saving technologies in order to reduce demand for child labour
- Promote occupational safety and health among out-growers

Other 'neglected sectors' in Agriculture

Cotton, cattle rearing and fisheries in Malawi remain poorly studied, unknown and under-served areas in the fight against child labour. And yet it is known that child labour is prevalent in these sectors. Likewise child labour also takes place in non export food crop production and other agricultural activities either for home consumption or local markets. While no disaggregated data exists that would show how many child labourers are to be found in these activities, it can be assumed that it is here where the majority of child labourers in agriculture might be found. This conference calls on the Government and all groups of stakeholders present at the conference, to give significantly more attention to prevent and eliminate child labour in these hard to reach situations.

The Government should partner with a wide range of organizations and other stakeholders that interface with these sub-sectors and the rural population to:

- Commission studies on child labour prevalence in the sectors, agricultural and rural activities
- Raise awareness on child labour issues
- Promote labour saving technologies and other GAPs
- Promote decent work and fair prices in neglected areas
- Promote occupational safety and health
- Explore and promote innovative solutions that build on the livelihood capacities of food insecure and poor households in which child labour is prevalent, while closely working with local communities to find sustainable solutions.

Non-Governmental Organizations

NGOs with their wide networks and grassroots reach are rightly placed to contribute to tackling the problem of child labour at both policy and ground level.

Therefore this conference calls upon NGOs to:

- Participate in community based Child Labour Monitoring System, in order to contribute to monitoring the incidence of child labour in agriculture, particularly the most vulnerable groups, assist in their withdrawal, rehabilitation and education"

- Support the establishment of a national system/protocol for the tracing, reunification and reintegration of trafficked children
- Advocate for systematic training of farmers on basic occupational safety and health risk assessment
- Advocate for more systematic involvement of extension workers and their networks in the elimination of child labour
- Promote partnerships with workers and employers association at all levels of the supply chains
- Advocate for solutions to family poverty by working with families and rural communities

Development partners

With vast global reach and resources, development partners should significantly contribute to the action against child labour in agriculture by providing technical expertise on development matters, conducting research and mobilising financial resources among other things.

The conference urges the development partners, agencies and programmes to:

- Mainstream child labour in development programmes
- Prioritize investments in education, decent work including livelihood support as an important ingredient in poverty alleviation and reducing vulnerability
- Support a country-wide studies on child labour incidence in agriculture including its subsectors to inform a national child labour programme
- Support a mechanism for the monitoring and follow up of outcomes of this Malawi National Conference on Child Labour in Agriculture

Media

This conference urges the media to:

- Report regularly, accurately and responsibly on the issues of child labour
- Establish a dedicated Media Association for Elimination of Child Labour
- Encourage Government, employers and workers' organisations, enterprises, NGOs, development partners and other stakeholders to address the root causes of child labour
- Create greater public awareness on the dangers of child labour, both for the child and for national development.

Other stakeholders, including the Ministry of Gender and other ministries, are invited to contribute to the Framework of Action embodied in this document by submitting their commitments to the National Steering Committee.