



International
Labour
Organization

child and family benefits • pensions • maternity care • disability benefits • unemployment benefits • health care

EXTEND SOCIAL PROTECTION

A silhouette of a family consisting of a mother, a father, and three children of different ages, standing against a bright yellow sunburst background.

COMBAT CHILD LABOUR!



World Day Against Child Labour

12 JUNE 2014



WORLD DAY AGAINST CHILD LABOUR

Social protection is both a human right and makes sound economic and social sense. Social protection enables access to education, health care and nutrition and plays a critical role in the fight against child labour. This year, World Day Against Child Labour draws attention to the role of social protection in keeping children out of child labour and removing them from it. In 2013, at the III Global Conference on Child Labour in Brasilia, the international community adopted the Brasilia Declaration, which stresses the need for decent work for adults, free, compulsory and quality education

for all children, and social protection for all. Echoing those priorities, World Day 2014 calls for:

- Action to introduce, improve and extend social protection, in line with ILO Recommendation No. 202 on social protection floors.
- National social security systems that are sensitive to children's needs and help fighting child labour.
- Social protection that reaches out to especially vulnerable groups of children.

ACCELERATING THE PACE OF PROGRESS

The latest ILO global child labour estimates, released in September 2013, indicate that the number of child labourers has declined by one third since 2000, from 246 million to 168 million. The number of children in hazardous work stands at 85 million, down from 171 million in 2000. Most of this advance was achieved between 2008 and 2012, when the global number fell by 47 million, from 215 to 168 million, and the number of children in hazardous work fell by 30 million, from 115 to 85 million. Despite this progress, the 2016 target set by the international community for the elimination of the worst forms of child labour, as a priority within the global fight for the eradication of all child labour, will not be met. To have any chance of reaching that goal soon, we need to accelerate and intensify our efforts substantially.

"We are moving in the right direction but progress is still too slow. If we are serious about ending the scourge of child labour in the foreseeable future, we need a substantial stepping-up of efforts at all levels. There are 168 million good reasons to do so."

Guy Ryder, ILO Director-General

Accelerating the pace of progress requires action to address the root causes of child labour and social protection is a key part of the response. By protecting children and their families, social protection helps to give all children an equal opportunity to fulfil their potential and live healthy, happy and productive lives.

SOCIAL PROTECTION – KEEPING CHILDREN OUT OF WORK

Poverty and shocks play a key role in driving children to work. Poor households are more likely to have to resort to child labour to meet basic needs and deal with uncertainty. Exposure to shocks, resulting in loss of family income, can have a similar effect on household decisions. For example, economic shocks, such as an adult member of the family losing his/her job, health-related shocks like a serious illness or an employment injury, and agriculture-related shocks, such as drought, flood and crop failure, can dramatically reduce household incomes and cause children to drop out of school and go to work to contribute to the family income.

Social protection aims at providing support to poor families, and assistance to help them to weather various shocks. Social protection instruments which are most helpful in combating child labour include:

- **Cash and in-kind transfer programmes** that enhance income security for families and facilitate access to education and health care, conditional or not, help prevent child labour, and promote enrolling children into schools, taking children for health check-ups.

- **Public employment programmes**, which provide jobs for adults to build and improve roads, schools, health centres and the like, helping to ensure that it is adults who are at work and not children.
- **Social health protection**, which ensures access to health care and financial protection in case of sickness, and can stop households sending children to work when a member of the household falls ill.
- **Maternity benefits**, that protect pregnant women and recent mothers and allow caring for new-born children, have a key impact on improving the health of mothers and children and avoid that older children have to work to replace the mothers' lost income.
- **Social protection for people with disabilities and those who suffer from employment-related injuries or diseases**, prevent households from resorting to child labour.
- **Income security in old age**, providing pensions to older people helps protect younger generations by contributing to the economic security of the household as a whole.
- **Unemployment protection**, which provides adults with at least partial income replacement, reduces the need to rely on the income of working children when facing job loss.

These instruments complement one another; cash benefits and services should be well coordinated. There is no single social protection instrument for addressing child labour. A well-designed social security system will include a specific mix of interventions, designed to best fit the national needs.

Well-designed social finance schemes, such as appropriate microcredit and microinsurance, including through democratic credit unions, can also play an important complementary role in making sure that vulnerable families do not find that the financial services they need are closed to them.

TACKLING CHILD LABOUR THROUGH EXTENDING SOCIAL PROTECTION

The ILO estimates that more than five billion people – about 73 per cent of the world population – do not have access to adequate social protection. In 2012, reflecting the global consensus on basic social protection as a right for all, the ILO adopted a new Recommendation (No. 202) that calls for countries to put in place their national social protection floor that ensures at least essential health care and basic income security throughout people's lives. This Recommendation provides a key framework for and impetus to national efforts to provide universal access to a set of basic social security guarantees.

The 2013 World Report on Child Labour (*Economic vulnerability, social protection and the fight against child labour*) emphasises the importance of addressing the underlying economic and social vulnerabilities that can force families to resort to child labour. Following from this, it stresses the importance of expanding social protection in line with ILO Recommendation No. 202 on social protection floors. The World Report identifies a number of relevant key priorities:

- The need for more information about which social protection instruments help in fighting child labour, in which circumstances, and why, to guide future action.
- Building national social protection floors in line with ILO Recommendation No. 202 on social protection floors. Health care and income security, combined with access to education and other essential services, can prevent child labour.
- Ensuring that social security systems are "child sensitive" – addressing the unique social disadvantages, risks and vulnerabilities children may be born into or acquire later in childhood due to external circumstances.
- Designing social protection programmes that are child-sensitive, and, in particular, child labour-sensitive, to maximise their impact on child labour.
- Ensuring social protection systems reach especially vulnerable groups of children, including children orphaned or affected by HIV and AIDS, migrant children, children from marginalised ethnic minorities and indigenous groups and other economically and socially excluded groups.

BUILDING COMMITMENT

Primary responsibility for formulating national social protection strategies and expanding the delivery of national social security systems to cover as much of the population as possible rests with government, but workers' and employers' organizations also have a key role to play. The social partners can assist the government in integrating child labour concerns into the design, implementation and monitoring of national policies and ensure that they address child labour more effectively. Through collective bargaining, trade unions and employers can ensure that supplementary social security schemes provide adequate and

affordable protection for members and their families, supporting family income security as an essential bulwark against the risk of child labour. Supporting the transition of the informal economy to formality strengthens the foundations of sustainable social security and, at the same time, protects workplaces against child labour. Representative organizations of other concerned groups, such as pensioners, people with disabilities or with particular health needs should also be involved in national consultations as appropriate. Their concerns too may have direct relevance to how social protection contributes to combating child labour.

STRENGTHEN THE WORLDWIDE MOVEMENT AGAINST CHILD LABOUR, JOIN US ON JUNE 12!

World Day Against Child Labour promotes awareness and action to tackle child labour. Support for the World Day grows every year and on 12 June 2014 we look forward to even wider support from governments, employers' and workers' organizations, NGOs and civil society, international and regional organizations and all those in the worldwide movement against child labour.

We invite you and your organization to be part of the 2014 World Day.

Join us and add your voice to the worldwide movement against child labour. For more information, contact ipecc@ilo.org



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