



International
Labour
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THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION AND THE US DEPARTMENT OF LABOR PARTNERSHIP TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOUR AND FORCED LABOUR

The elimination of child labour and forced labour has been at the heart of the work of the International Labour Organization (ILO) since its creation 100 years ago, and the US Department of Labor (USDOL) has been a longstanding partner in this fight. The persistence of child labour and forced labour in the 21st century is unacceptable and concerns all of us. Children whose education is denied or impeded by child labour lack the skills needed for gainful employment later in life. The poor job prospects of children formerly in child labour leave them more susceptible to poverty as adults, meaning they are also more likely to depend on their children's labour or productivity as a household survival strategy. Similarly, people in forced labour, including children and their families, are often caught in a vicious cycle of exploitation and poverty.

The ILO's most recent global estimates of child labour indicate, however, that significant progress is being made. From 2000 to 2016, there was a net reduction of 94 million children in child labour and the number of children in hazardous work was halved. In parallel, the ILO Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention (No. 182) was ratified by 186 countries, reaching almost universal ratification.

The challenges ahead, however, remain formidable: in 2016, 152 million girls and boys were in child labour and 25 million men, women and children were trapped in forced labour.

The US Government has articulated its commitment to combating child labour and forced labour in federal laws, trade policies and international agreements. The Bureau of International Affairs (ILAB) at the USDOL promotes a fair global playing field for workers by enforcing trade commitments, strengthening labour standards and combating child labour, forced labour and human trafficking.

The ILO and the USDOL have been collaborating since 1995 to combat child labour and forced labour: more than 100 projects have been implemented and a wealth of information has been generated to guide policy efforts and raise awareness. Beyond this, the ILO and the USDOL have led global efforts to raise awareness of child labour and forced labour and of the best practices for addressing them. Starting with the Oslo and Amsterdam Conferences in 1997 and following with three global conferences (The Hague, 2010; Brasilia, 2013; Buenos Aires, 2017), a worldwide movement against child labour and forced labour has been built.

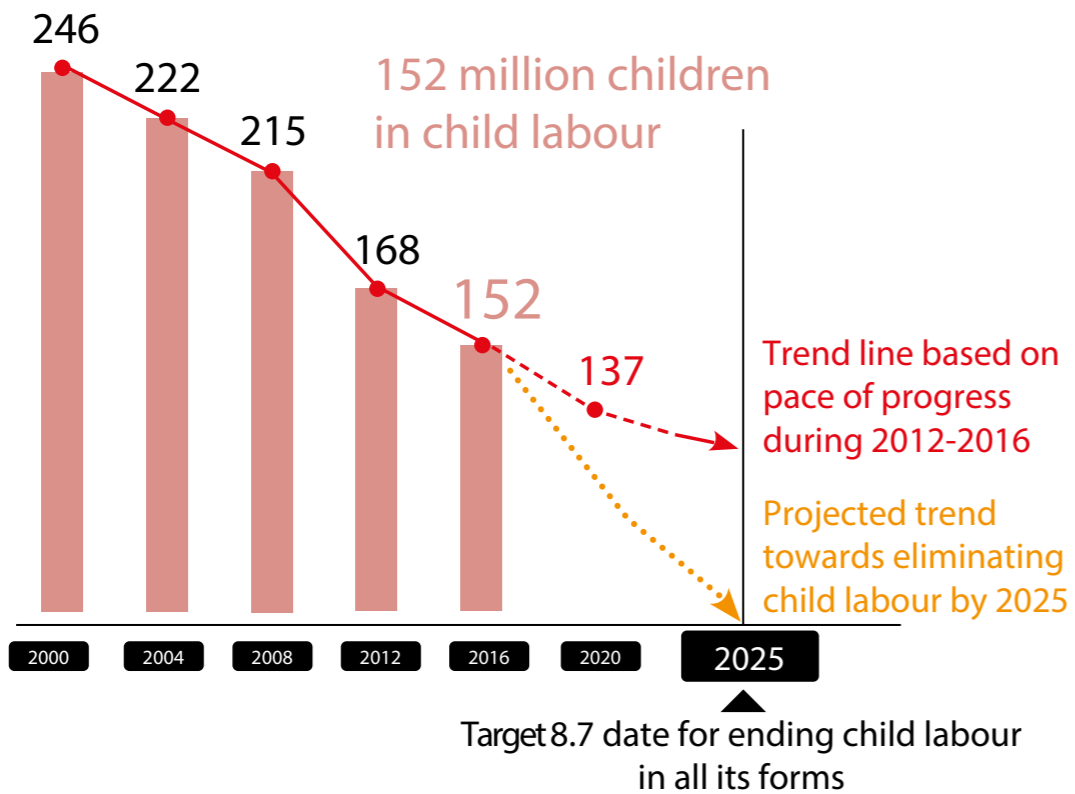
BOX 1. GLOBAL ESTIMATES ON CHILD LABOUR

The ILO is the acknowledged leader in the generation of global estimates on child labour and is, together with UNICEF, co-custodian of SDG indicator 8.7.1 (proportion and number of children aged 5-17 years engaged in child labour, by sex and age). Through a series of Global Reports produced since 2000, mainly thanks to USDOL support, the ILO has been able to keep a global spotlight on trends in child labour and the need to address the issue. The estimates attract significant media attention and are widely used in the international arena and in policy discussions. The data used to generate the estimates comes from nationally representative household surveys.



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The global estimates show a dramatic decline in child labour, however accelerated efforts are needed for achieving the



USDOL HAS CONTRIBUTED TO CHILD LABOUR AND FORCED LABOUR REDUCTION IN 78 COUNTRIES

Technical cooperation between the ILO and the USDOL began in February 1995, when the first USDOL-ILO Cooperative Agreement was signed. The USDOL provided US\$2.1 million to implement technical cooperation projects in Bangladesh, Brazil, the Philippines, and in Thailand. In these early days, efforts focused on a handful of countries and on piloting innovative programmes to demonstrate that child labour could be effectively tackled.

Since then, the ILO and its flagship programme on child labour and forced labour, IPEC⁺, have developed a more holistic approach to promote the sustainable reduction of child labour and, between 2004 and 2018, the USDOL has supported the reduction of child labour and forced labour in 78 countries.

Examples are the Time-Bound Programmes (TBP), which emphasize the need to address the root causes of child labour, linking action for its elimination to national development policies and labour market processes and outcomes. El Salvador, Nepal and the United Republic of Tanzania were the first countries to pilot TBPs with the support of the USDOL and the ILO: many countries have since implemented these programmes, benefiting from these pioneering experiences.

Currently, within the framework of the multi-stakeholder Alliance 8.7 to end forced labour, modern slavery, human trafficking and child labour, pathfinder countries are piloting new actions and approaches for going further and faster to achieve SDG Target 8.7. The USDOL is providing strategic and financial support to this process and to other goals pursued through the Alliance 8.7.

1. The IPEC+ Global Flagship Programme brings together two leading ILO technical cooperation programmes – the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) and the Special Action Programme to combat Forced Labour (SAP/FL) – to establish a major new force in the fight against child labour, forced labour and human trafficking.

RESULTS FROM UZBEKISTAN

MOST CHILD LABOUR AND FORCED LABOUR HAS BEEN ELIMINATED FROM COTTON FIELDS

The cotton harvest in Uzbekistan is one of the world's largest seasonal recruitment operations, with some 2.6 million people temporarily picking cotton every year. In response to concerns raised over the use of child labour and forced labour, the ILO has been monitoring the cotton harvest since 2013, through an agreement with the Uzbek Government and employers' and workers' organizations. In 2015, collaboration extended to the World Bank to cover projects financed by the Bank. During the most recent harvest in 2018, ILO experts carried out 11,000 unaccompanied and unannounced interviews with cotton pickers and others involved in the harvest in all provinces of the country. Although there were some reported cases of recruitment of local staff of state institutions, results show that the Uzbek Government did not systematically use child labour or forced labour, a development that has been welcomed by human rights activists. The recommendations emerging from the ILO surveys and monitoring activities on child labour and forced labour have been followed by advocacy and training on measurement.

This monitoring effort in the cotton sector built on the Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP), the implementation of which is supported by a USDOL-funded project, with mutually reinforcing results. The project aims at building the capacity among national and local stakeholders to advocate for a reduction in child labour and forced labour and to promote respect for fundamental principles and rights at work. It also facilitated the ratification of Convention No. 87 on Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise by Uzbekistan in December 2017, which provides the legal foundation for independent workers' and employers' organizations.



OVER ONE MILLION CHILDREN WERE WITHDRAWN OR PREVENTED FROM ENTERING CHILD LABOUR

Real advances have been made in the fight against child labour, providing an important foundation for efforts moving forward. The USDOL has supported several initiatives to tackle child labour, including awareness raising, workplace monitoring, and assistance for vulnerable children and families that addresses the root causes of child labour and exploitation. Strategies include linking vulnerable groups to existing government social programmes, providing children with quality education or afterschool services, helping families improve their livelihoods to meet basic needs without relying on child labour.

The efforts have paid off: as a direct result of projects funded since 1995, more than one million children formerly in child labour were able to go to school and children at risk have been prevented from entering child labour. However, these numbers can only partially reflect the vast impact of the USDOL-ILO partnership: the establishing of legal frameworks and their enforcement, and mainstreaming of child labour concerns in national policies have improved the lives of millions of children worldwide, protecting them from exploitation and allowing them to develop their full potential. Similarly, thousands of families have benefited directly and indirectly from ILO-USDOL projects to end forced labour.

ESTABLISHING LEGAL FRAMEWORKS BASED ON THE INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS ON CHILD LABOUR

The ILO has worked closely with member States to promote the ratification of Conventions on child labour and forced labour. Since it entered into force in November 2000, 186 countries have ratified ILO Convention No. 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour, reaching almost universal ratification, and 171 countries have ratified ILO Convention No. 138 on the Minimum Age of Admission to Employment. The Forced Labour Convention (No. 29), adopted in 1930, has been ratified by 178 countries and its Protocol of 2014 by 32 countries; the Abolition of Forced Labour Convention (No. 105) has been ratified by 175 countries since it entered into force in 1959. However, much more needs to be done to turn these commitments to eliminate child labour and forced labour into reality.

The first step is to transpose the standards into national laws. The USDOL-ILO collaboration

plays a critical role in this regard: it builds the capacity of governments to ensure a constructive and coordinated role in combatting child labour, forced labour and human trafficking. It also provides technical advice and advocates for improved legislation. Strengthening the enforcement of legislation is another key element of the strategy to support countries to tackle child labour and forced labour.

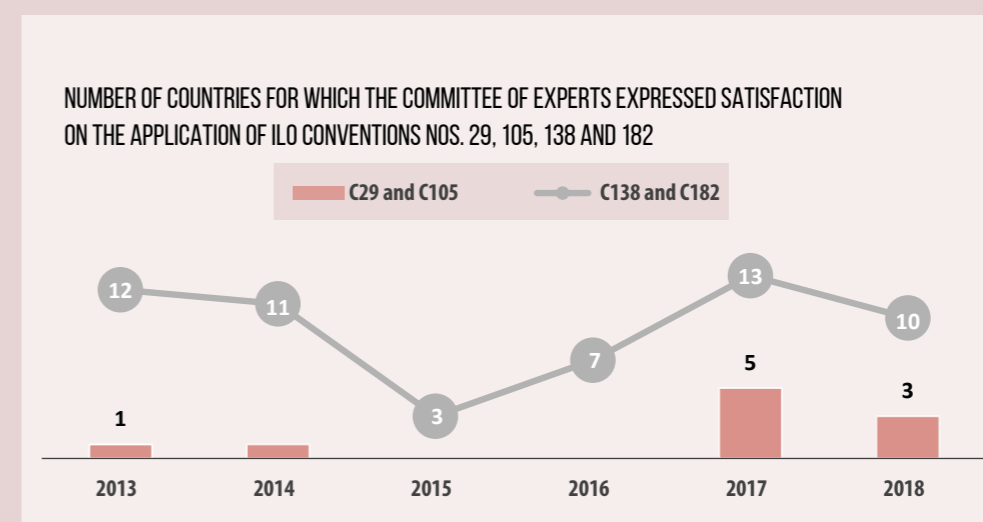
Over the 15 years from 2004 to 2018, a total of 59 countries have developed, revised, or updated their legislative framework to comply with the provisions of ILO Conventions on child labour. Some countries had to change their national constitutions to ensure that the rights of children are fully recognized in law and in practice. Many of the adapted laws related to the establishment of a national list of hazardous work for children below the age of 18.

The following table illustrates these advances by region and the number of pieces of legislation that were adopted to enhance the protection of children from child labour.

REGION	NO OF COUNTRIES	NO OF LAWS
Africa	23	50
Latin America	16	97
Asia and the Pacific	11	35
Central Asia, Eastern Europe and Arab State	9	27
TOTAL	59	209

BOX 2. COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS EXPRESSED SATISFACTION ON THE APPLICATION OF ILO CONVENTIONS NOS. 29, 105, 138 AND 182*

The progress of member States in implementing the ILO's child labour and forced labour Conventions is regularly considered by the ILO's standards supervisory system. The ILO's Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations (CEACR) is responsible for the regular system of supervision of ratified Conventions. The Committee examines periodic reports submitted by member States on the measures they have taken to implement the provisions of the Conventions, including when requested, measures taken with the support of IPEC+. Over the last five years, there have been a number of comments made by this body that have noted "with satisfaction" the various measures taken by governments in respect of applying the relevant ILO Conventions on child labour and forced labour.



*Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138) concerns the minimum age for admission to employment or work; Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182); Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29); Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No. 105)

276 POLICIES, PLANS AND PROGRAMMES ADOPTED IN 60 COUNTRIES

Since 2004, the USDOL and the ILO have assisted 60 countries to develop, adopt and implement policies with a direct and indirect impact on child labour, such as national child labour elimination strategies

and policies, national action plans for the elimination of the worst forms of child labour, and regional or sectoral plans and policies.

REGION	NO OF COUNTRIES	NO OF POLICIES, PLANS AND PROGRAMMES
Africa	21	63
Latin America	15	119
Asia and the Pacific	12	60
Central Asia, Eastern Europe and Arab State	12	34
TOTAL	60	276

IMPROVED NATIONAL POLICY COHERENCE: THE INCLUSION OF CHILD LABOUR AND FORCED LABOUR CONCERNS IN RELEVANT POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES

Child labour is a complex phenomenon influenced by a multitude of factors. Its complexity means that there is no single or simple answer to it: the response must address many parameters, for example through policies which promote social and economic development, compulsory education in line with the minimum age for employment, and decent work for adults and young people, as well as effective social protection.

The USDOL and the ILO have supported countries to mainstream the issues of child labour or forced

labour concerns in development, education and social protection policies and programmes. Recent examples include the integration of child labour issues into the new District Medium Term Development Plan in Ghana and the mainstreaming of child labour and child trafficking concerns into the disaster management plans in Nepal (2018).

The following table shows the number of policies, plans and programmes in which child labour concerns have been mainstreamed over the period 2004 – 2018.

REGION	NO OF COUNTRIES	NO OF POLICIES, PLANS AND PROGRAMMES
Africa	20	67
Latin America	14	70
Asia and the Pacific	11	52
Central Asia, Eastern Europe and Arab State	13	31
TOTAL	58	220



RESEARCH AND CAPACITY BUILDING

The knowledge base about child labour and forced labour has grown considerably in recent years, contributing to an improved understanding of these phenomena and informing policy and programme design. USDOL has supported the production of reliable statistics, global estimates, thematic research studies and research tools since it started collaborating with the ILO on child labour in 1995.

The collaboration has generated a wealth of research that is used extensively worldwide. Global estimates on child labour are produced every four years, and are used to help chart how far we have come and how far we still have to go to end child labour. The first ever global estimates on forced labour were produced in 2005 and were repeated in 2012 and 2016.

The partnership between the ILO and the USDOL has supported the collection of data on child labour and forced labour in more than 60 countries, contributing to the design of appropriate policy responses. Global Reports and evidence-based studies developed in response to the Roadmap for Achieving the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour by 2016 that emerged from The Hague Global Child Labour Conference, inform global efforts on child labour and related themes such as youth employment and social protection. The forthcoming Alliance 8.7 Report on Child Labour, Forced Labour and Human Trafficking in Global Supply Chains will provide insights into the measuring of and responding to child labour and forced labour in these supply chains.

Policy-oriented research, including impact evaluations of projects and of relevant policies and programmes, has contributed to improving the understanding of the relative effectiveness of different programmatic approaches for addressing child labour. Knowledge products also include tools to measure, monitor and analyse child labour and forced labour.

Capacity-building activities complement research efforts: training of national partners, particularly on data collection and analysis, contribute to the sustainability of child labour and forced labour monitoring. A range of relevant knowledge products has been developed, including handbooks and training tools for business, legislators, judges and labour inspectors.





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BUILDING OWNERSHIP ON CHILD LABOUR: THE NATIONAL ACTION PLAN FOR CHILD LABOUR IN MYANMAR

In 2014, the USDOL-funded the ILO-Myanmar Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (MyPEC) began to support the Technical Working Group on Child Labour (TWG-CL) composed of key ministries, workers' and employers' organizations, civil society organizations and UN agencies. The project's strategy was to strengthen the knowledge, awareness and capacity of the TWG-CL and its member institutions to achieve ownership and leadership on child labour issues. The Factory and General Labour Law Inspection Department (FGLLID) was put in the driver's seat. Since 2014, the TWG-CL has met quarterly and led the process for the determination of hazardous work and the development of the National Action Plan (NAP) on Child Labour.

The development of the NAP followed a highly participatory and inclusive process (2016–2018) that was led by the FGLLID and endorsed by the TWG-CL. With the support of the project, consultations were held with stakeholders from upper and lower Myanmar, with youth networks and with stakeholders in industrial zones.

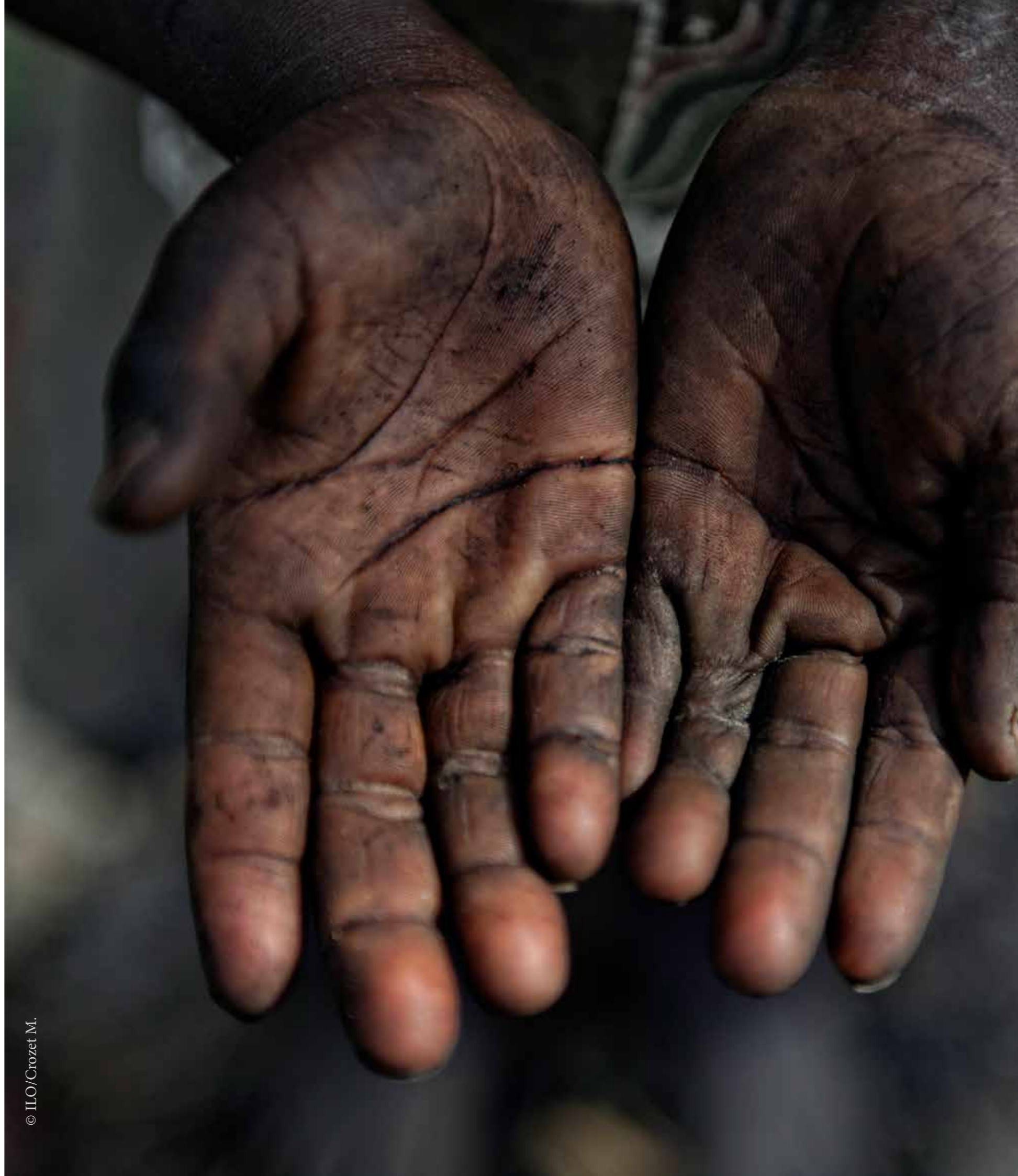
The overall goal of the NAP was defined as follows: “By 2030 all boys and girls in Myanmar are effectively prevented and protected from child labour, especially in its worst forms.”

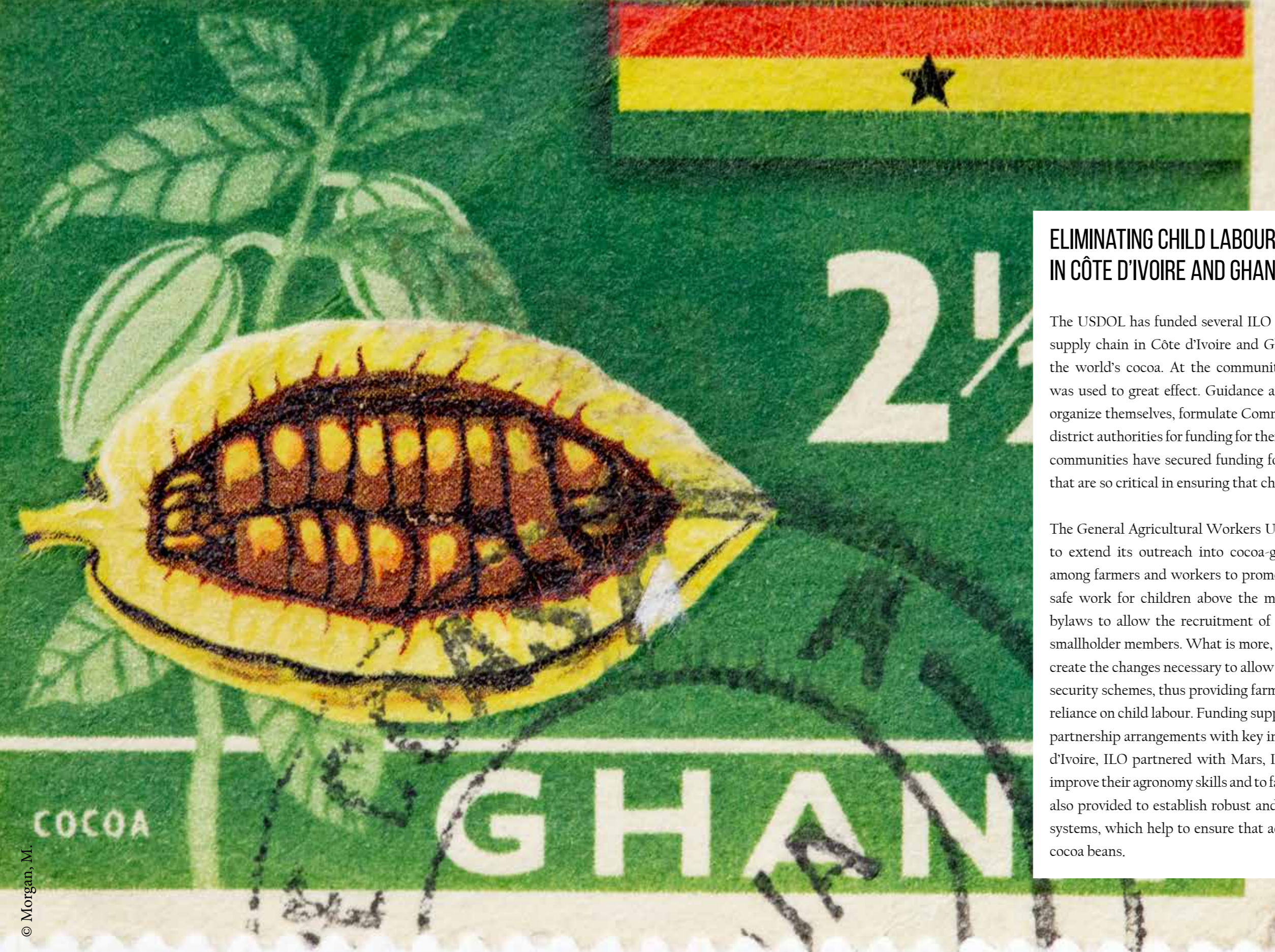
In 2018, the Government finalized the draft NAP on Child Labour in Myanmar and on 5 February 2018, the Myanmar National Child Labour Eradication Committee was established to overlook its implementation. It has formed eight subcommittees at the state and region levels to prepare detailed workplans and budget estimations. The Government is now considering ratifying ILO Convention No. 138.

ADVOCACY AND PARTNERSHIPS

The ILO and the USDOL have led global efforts to raise awareness of child labour and forced labour and the best practices for addressing them. The World Day Against Child Labour (WDACL) is commemorated every year on 12 June, and has generated major media interest since 2002. Global conferences on child labour convene governments, employers' and workers' representatives, international organizations and civil society to consolidate the global commitment to the eradication of child labour; they are important opportunities for advocacy and for establishing partnerships. The last Global Conference on the Sustained Eradication of Child Labour was held in Buenos Aires (Argentina), in November 2017, and for the first time focused also on forced labour in line with SDG target 8.7.

ILO constituents, governments, workers' and employers' organizations, as well as partnerships with NGOs, academia and international organizations have played a critical role in achieving all of the results described above. Alliance 8.7 aims to further accelerate and scale up action and to drive collaboration and innovation at all levels.





ELIMINATING CHILD LABOUR IN THE COCOA SUPPLY CHAIN IN CÔTE D'IVOIRE AND GHANA

The USDOL has funded several ILO projects to address child labour in the cocoa supply chain in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana, which together produce 60 percent of the world's cocoa. At the community level, an integrated area-based approach² was used to great effect. Guidance and support was provided to communities to organize themselves, formulate Community Action Plans, and present the plans to district authorities for funding for their implementation. Using this approach, many communities have secured funding for the provision of basic educational services that are so critical in ensuring that children are in school and not in child labour.

The General Agricultural Workers Union (GAWU) of Ghana has been supported to extend its outreach into cocoa-growing communities and to build capacity among farmers and workers to promote occupational safety and health, including safe work for children above the minimum age for work. GAWU modified its bylaws to allow the recruitment of farmers and has recruited some 15,000 new smallholder members. What is more, GAWU has worked with the Government to create the changes necessary to allow cocoa farmers to contribute to national social security schemes, thus providing farmers with a social safety net that reduces their reliance on child labour. Funding support was also provided through public-private partnership arrangements with key industry partners. In the Soubré region of Côte d'Ivoire, ILO partnered with Mars, Inc. to train community members on how to improve their agronomy skills and to facilitate better access to markets. Support was also provided to establish robust and sustainable child labour monitoring (CLM) systems, which help to ensure that adults and not children are used in harvesting cocoa beans.

2. An integrated area-based approach consists of a set of integrated and different sector actions that simultaneously addresses interlinked and systemic issues that perpetuate all forms of child labour in a particular community.



INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO INVESTIGATE FORCED LABOUR SMART LAB GENESIS

The Decent Work SMART LAB is an inter-institutional knowledge management initiative developed to promote decent work in Brazil. Initially conceptualized within a project funded by the USDOL and implemented by the ILO, it was designed primarily to support Brazilian efforts to combat slave labour. It then quickly gained traction and scope.

In 2014, the Federal Labour Prosecution Service (MPT) first created an experimental data science lab for investigation, aiming at law and order enforcement. It then obtained access to information in databases of other governmental authorities and agencies in other domains (i.e. human rights and labour relations, social security, OSH data, etc.). In 2015, the MPT branch in Mato Grosso state became aware of the successful work performed by the ILO in developing a managerial and monitoring system for the Integrated Action Project (IAP) - the livelihoods component of the intervention - as well as other knowledge-based products generated by the project “Consolidating and Disseminating Efforts to Combat Forced Labour in Brazil and Peru”.

As a result, the MPT in Mato Grosso proposed an arrangement with the ILO Office in Brazil which resulted in the creation of the ‘Combatting Slave Labour SMART LAB’ and the signing of a Cooperation Agreement between the two institutions. As a consequence of the immensely positive results, the scope of the ‘SMART LAB’ broadened, eventually being renamed the ‘Decent Work SMART LAB’, which widened the thematic approach to include other fundamental principles and rights at work, as well as social dialogue, and occupational safety and health.

FORCED LABOUR IN NEPAL: FROM DATA COLLECTION TO REHABILITATION

Since 1998, the ILO and the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) have partnered to prepare the Nepal Labour Force Survey (NLFS). These surveys have provided vital statistics related to labour and employment in Nepal and utilize an approach that is consistent with international standards, informing policymakers and development practitioners to guide policy and programmatic responses to labour issues.

Through the ILO's Bridge Project, the USDOL recently contributed to the cost of the forced labour component of the 2017/2018 NLFS, making Nepal one of the first countries to have mainstreamed forced labour concerns into a regular data collection system.

These efforts to collect reliable data on forced labour are coupled with interventions aimed at supporting the elimination of traditional forms of debt bondage systems and to reduce contemporary forms of forced labour. For example, livelihood interventions are being provided to 700 former bonded labourers from the districts of Kanchanpur, Surkhet and Bajura in the Far-Western Development Region of Nepal. Through the Bridge project, freed bonded labourers receive intensive skill and employability enhancement trainings, after which they are linked to the job market through work placements or are given additional support to facilitate self-employment. Trainings span across 14 trades in the sectors of construction, agriculture and transportation.

Efforts in Nepal to tackle forced labour go beyond technical cooperation: the Nepalese Government has recently allocated resources to rehabilitate and to provide education and employment to former bonded labourers in its 2019–2020 budget plan, which is hoped to be sustained in the future.



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BEING THE ENGINE OF CHANGE: CHILD LABOUR IN MEXICO

In 2000, child labour among children between the ages of 12 and 17 was estimated at 17.1% in Mexico. As one of the first countries to ratify Convention No. 182 on the elimination of the worst forms of child labour (2000), Mexico took a proactive approach to tackle this challenge, focusing on the root causes, policy responses and assisting the victims.

Two major USDOL-funded projects supported these efforts. The first one³ aimed at preventing and eliminating the commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) and at protecting CSEC victims through a combination of awareness raising, harmonization of the legal framework, and direct care provision to sexually exploited children in three cities (Tijuana, Guadalajara and Acapulco). The second project⁴ aimed at contributing to the elimination of child labour in agriculture: more than 6,100 indigenous or migrant children were prevented from entering child labour or withdrawn from agricultural plantations in Veracruz, Oaxaca and Chiapas. Beyond direct interventions to withdraw children, the project aimed at strengthening the legal and policy framework and at increasing the knowledge base to tackle child labour in agriculture.

The results of these projects exceeded expectations. The national sugar industry put into practice an action plan to eliminate child labour from the whole value chain. The Labour Ministry established a national inter-ministerial “plus” (employers, workers, NGOs, academia) coordination committee and 32 local coordination bodies on the prevention and eradication of child labour. Most important, Mexico modified its Constitution to increase minimum age from 14 to 15 years and secondary legislation was adapted accordingly, paving the way towards the ratification of Convention No. 138 in 2015. Also thanks to these efforts, child labour had been down by 5.5% in 2015.

3. Support for the prevention and elimination of the commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) and the protection of CSEC victims in Mexico (2002-2007).

4. Stop Child Labour in Agriculture: contribution to the prevention and elimination of child labour in Mexico, in particular in its worst forms in the agricultural sector, with special focus on indigenous children and child labour as a result of migration (2012-2014).



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International Programme on the Elimination
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