



# 5<sup>th</sup> Global Conference on the Elimination of Child Labour

Durban, South Africa | May 15-20, 2022

The IUF welcomed the decision of the UN General Assembly to declare 2021 the Year for the Elimination of Child Labour and to call on member States to commit to “secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour...and by **2025** end child labour in all its forms.”

Unfortunately, we have seen deadlines to end child labour come and go. A 2020 joint **ILO and UNICEF report** has already warned that the COVID-19 pandemic will push millions of vulnerable children into child labour and undermine progress made to-date.

However, despite progress in reducing the global figures, the number of child labourers in agriculture remains unchanged. The focus must move from the general to the specific by focusing on agriculture.

**According to the ILO** 70.9% of child labour takes place in agriculture alone with an estimated 108 million children working on farms and plantations around the world.

E: [iuf@iuf.org](mailto:iuf@iuf.org)

Rampe du Pont-Rouge 8

1213 Petit-Lancy | Switzerland

T: + 41 22 793 22 33

F: + 41 22 793 22 38

[www.iuf.org](http://www.iuf.org)



While the prevalence of child labour in agriculture is understood to be a function of poverty, it is important to recognize that the root causes of this poverty are avoidable:

- Child labour occurs when parents are in debt bondage; earn poverty wages; are dependent on piece-rate wages and quotas that compel the use of family labour; suffer illness and are unable to work due to occupational hazards, including exposure to pesticides; when work is seasonal and insecure, with unstable pay.
- Child labour proliferates when employers choose child labour as more pliable, forcing children to undertake hazardous and dangerous work that they cannot compel adult workers to do.

To end child labour requires the removal of the extensive restrictions that prevent agricultural workers from forming and joining unions and from engaging in collective bargaining to secure safe work and stable living wages that lift workers and their families out of poverty and debt.

**152**  
million  
children  
worldwide are  
victims of  
child  
labour



# In support of 2021 as the International Year for the Elimination of Child Labour, the IUF called on:

## THE ILO AND OTHER RELEVANT UN AGENCIES TO:

- Ensure all agricultural workers in all forms of employment have unrestricted access to the right to freedom of association as guaranteed in **ILO Convention 11** adopted in 1921.<sup>1</sup> The implementation of ILO C11 on the Right of Association in Agriculture is key to eliminating child labour and to achieving decent work for adults in agriculture.
- Promote the **ratification** of and support governments in the **implementation of international labour standards**, including ILO C138 on Minimum Age, C182 on Worst Forms of Child Labour, C129 on Labour Inspection in Agriculture, C184 on Safety and Health in Agriculture, C102 on Social Security Minimum Standards and ILO R202 on Social Protection Floors identified for priority action at the 2013 **3rd Global Conference on Child Labour**.
- Strengthen activities and programs aimed at **reducing rural poverty** and include the elimination of child labour in agricultural policy making and education policy in rural areas. Public investment and fiscal commitments to provide for the transition from child labour to school are critical.

## GOVERNMENTS:

- **Establish laws** on child labour in agriculture in compliance with ILO C138 and C182 without exemptions on minimum age and **enforce these laws** through government labour inspection.
- Enact the **universal realization of social protection for all** in line with ILO C102 on minimum standards of social security and ILO R202 on national social protection floors.

- **Improve health and safety** on farms and plantations in order to create decent employment and to end hazardous child labour; this will require full coverage of labour and health and safety laws in agriculture.
- Introduce **mandatory due diligence legislation** which requires companies sourcing from agriculture to respect agricultural workers' right to organize and collectively bargain throughout the supply chain.
- Improve rural strategies, policies and programs aimed at **reducing poverty** and improving rural livelihoods, provide youth employment opportunities and mainstream elimination of child labour into agricultural policy.
- Improve access to **quality education for all children** in rural areas; ensure that rural schools remain open, have decent buildings with sufficient numbers of well-trained and well-paid teachers; and provide **daily nutritious meals**.

## COMPANIES SOURCING FROM AGRICULTURE:

- **Pay a fair price** for agricultural crops to ensure that small holders receive a living income and farmworker unions can bargain living wages thus enabling the fair distribution of value down the supply chain.
- **Ensure traceability of all goods** in their agricultural supply chains in order to ensure that no child labour is used and to remedy any and all identified cases. Remedies for child labour could include paying school fees; contributing to a local school; provision of apprenticeships for children above the minimum age for work.



## EMPLOYERS IN AGRICULTURE:

- **Stop using child labour.**
- **Respect agricultural workers' rights** including the freedom of association and the right to collectively bargain.
- Provide decent **Youth Employment** in compliance with minimum age laws.

## ALL IUF AFFILIATES:

- **Strengthen organizing in agriculture** to build the labour movement locally and nationally. This remains essential for the elimination of child labour.
- **Negotiate agreements with companies** not to use child labour, to ensure decent work throughout their supply chains and not to source from operations which use child labour.
- **Campaign** for the ratification of ILO Conventions key to eliminating child labour in agriculture.

<sup>1</sup> "Each Member of the International Labour Organisation which ratifies this Convention undertakes to secure to all those engaged in agriculture the same rights of association and combination as to industrial workers, and to repeal any statutory or other provisions restricting such rights in the case of those engaged in agriculture." (ILO C. 11, art 1)



The International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations (IUF) is an international trade union federation made up of 423 affiliated trade unions in 127 countries representing over 10 million workers.