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Swiss Confederation

Federal Department of Economic Affairs,  
Education and Research EAER  
**State Secretariat for Economic Affairs SECO**

WEBINAR | MAY 11, 2023 | 13:30

Webinar Series: Part 1

# **Understanding child labour risks and impacts in companies value chains**

**WEBINAR SERIES**  
CHILD LABOUR DUE DILIGENCE

# The Ten Principles of the UN Global Compact

Corporate sustainability starts with a company's value system. By incorporating the Ten Principles into strategies, policies and procedures, and establishing a culture of integrity, companies are not only upholding their basic responsibilities to people and planet, but also setting the stage for long-term success.

## Companies operate responsibly



HUMAN RIGHTS

1. Businesses should support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights; and
2. make sure that they are not complicit in human rights abuses.



LABOUR

3. Businesses should uphold the freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining;
4. the elimination of all forms of forced and compulsory labour;
5. the effective abolition of child labour; and
6. the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.



ENVIRONMENT

7. Businesses should support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges;
8. undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility; and
9. encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies.



ANTI-CORRUPTION

10. Businesses should work against corruption in all its forms, including extortion and bribery.

## Companies contribute to progress

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



Let's make Global Goals Local Business



Global Compact  
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# 4-part webinar series



Understanding child labour risks and impacts in companies value chains



Develop a policy commitment & identify child labour risks and impacts



Take action to cease, prevent or mitigate child labour risks and impacts



Establish effective grievance mechanisms, remediate impacts & communicate

# Agenda

- **Child labour – the Swiss context**

Valérie Berset-Bircher, Ambassador, Head of International Labour Affairs, State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO)

- **Definition, trends & root causes of child labour**

Sophie de Coninck, Chief of operations, Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work Branch, International Labour Organisation (ILO)

- **Development of the ILO/IOE Child Labour Guidance Tool**

Rita Yip, Senior Adviser, International Organization of Employers (IOE)

- **Companies' role and responsibility in preventing or worsening child labour risks**

Sandra Groth, Sustainable Supply Chains Manager, Save the Children Switzerland

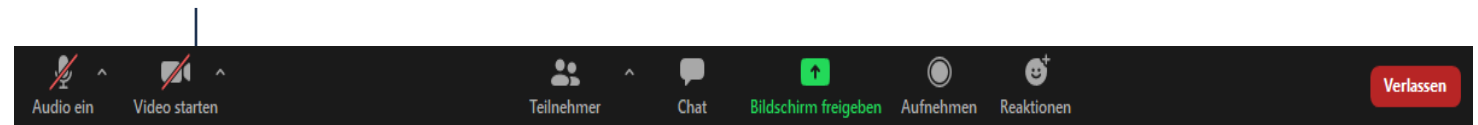
- **Case studies and examples from the ground**

Ines Kaempfer, Chief Executive Officer, the Centre for Child Rights and Business

# Webinar: Housekeeping

- The session is recorded.
- Slides & recording will be made available by UN Global Compact Network Switzerland & Liechtenstein after the webinar.
- Please write your questions in the chat.

*Activate the video before  
you make an intervention.*



↑  
*Make sure you are muted during the  
webinar. Unmute yourself if you wish  
to speak.*

↑  
*Use the chat function to  
type in your questions or  
make a comment.*

# **CHILD LABOUR – THE SWISS CONTEXT**



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Confederazione Svizzera  
Confederaziun svizra

Federal Department of Economic Affairs,  
Education and Research EAER  
**State Secretariat for Economic Affairs SECO**  
International Labour Affairs

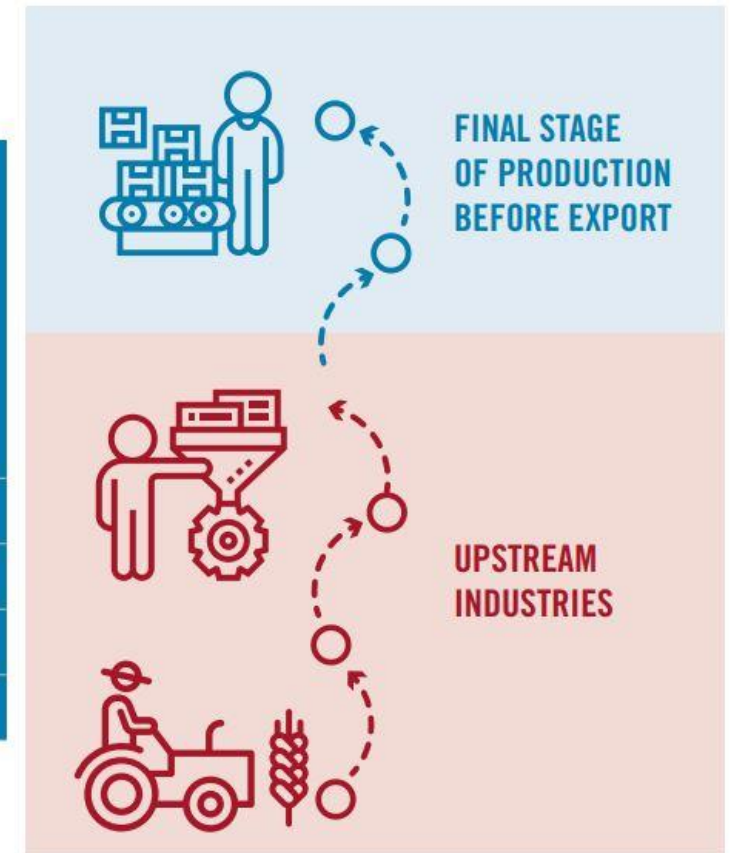
# Child Labour – the Swiss Context

Ambassador Valérie Berset, SECO



# Child Labour in Global Supply Chains

% OF CHILDREN IN CHILD LABOUR WHO ARE WORKING IN GLOBAL SUPPLY CHAINS	REGIONS	% OF WHOM ARE WORKING IN UPSTREAM INDUSTRIES
26	Eastern and South-Eastern Asia	43
22	Latin America and the Caribbean	40
12	Central and Southern Asia	38
12	Sub-Saharan Africa	31
9	Northern Africa and Western Asia	28



*Ending child labour, forced labour and human trafficking in global supply chains:* International Labour Organization, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, International Organization for Migration and United Nations Children's Fund, 2019.





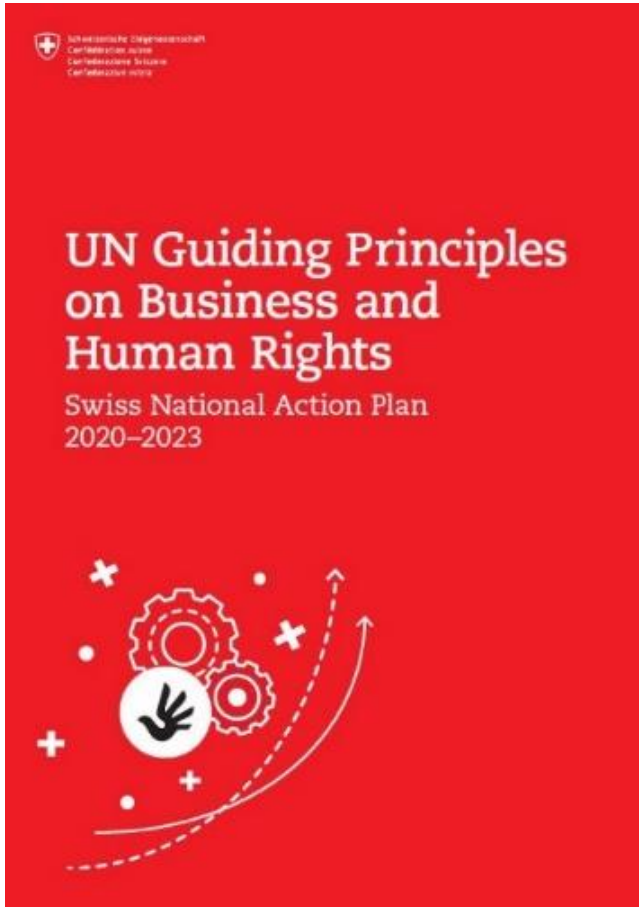
# New legal obligations

**Popular initiative for responsible businesses** was rejected at the popular vote. **The Parliament's indirect counter-proposal** includes :

- ⇒ Reporting obligation on non-financial issues: environmental issues, social issues, personnel issues, human rights and anti-corruption.
- ⇒ Due diligence obligation on conflict minerals: minerals or metals from conflict zones or high-risk areas.
- ⇒ **Due diligence obligation on child labour**: applies to firms that offer goods or services for which there is a well-founded suspicion of child labour.



# National Action Plan on Business & Human Rights (NAP)



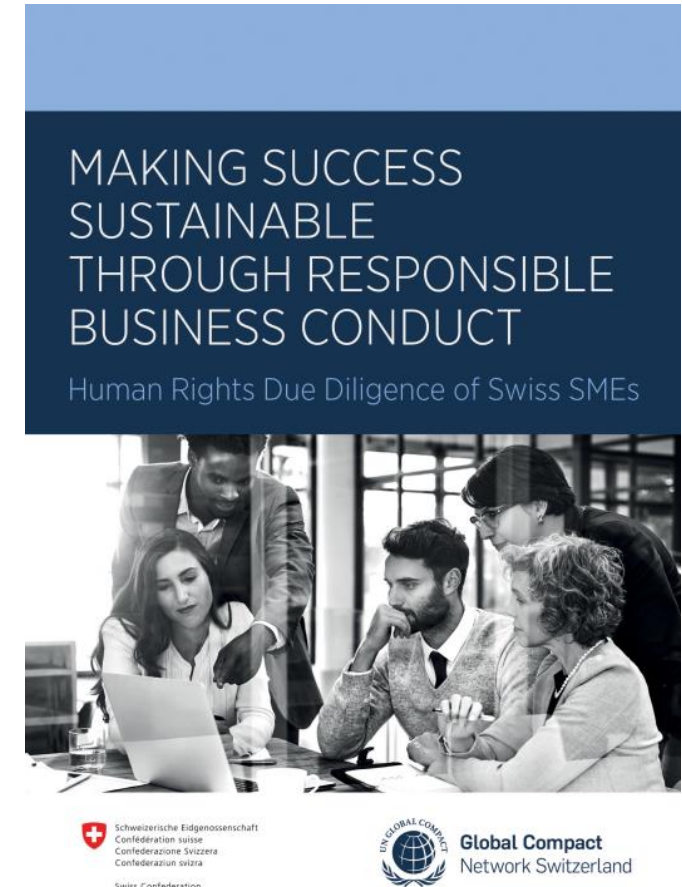
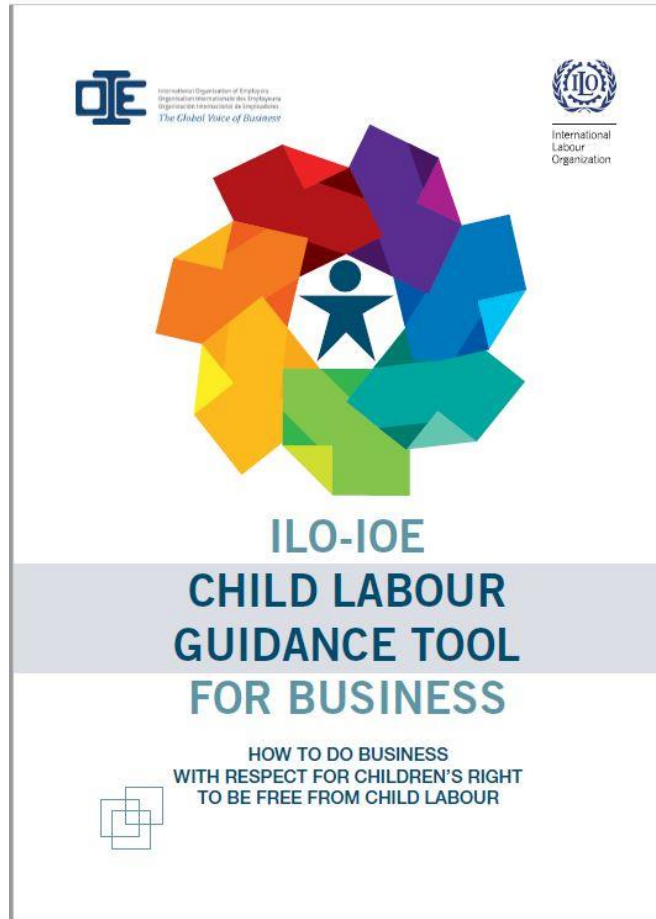
Implementation of the UN Guiding Principles in CH

- 2016: first NAP was adopted on parliamentary request
- Revised NAP 2020-2023
- Creation of support measures (tools, guidelines, etc.)
- Awareness-raising activities for Swiss companies

→ The NAP is the framework for our support to companies on human rights due diligence



# Useful tools





# Events

- 18.10.2023: Swiss Forum on Business and Human Rights in Bern. Information will follow on our website (<https://www.nap-bhr.admin.ch/>) and on our LinkedIn page ([SECO International Labour Affairs](#))
- 29-30.11.2023: Child Labour Platform annual meeting in Geneva. In case of interest, please contact us ([info.dain@seco.admin.ch](mailto:info.dain@seco.admin.ch))



# **DEFINITION, TRENDS & ROOT CAUSES OF CHILD LABOUR**



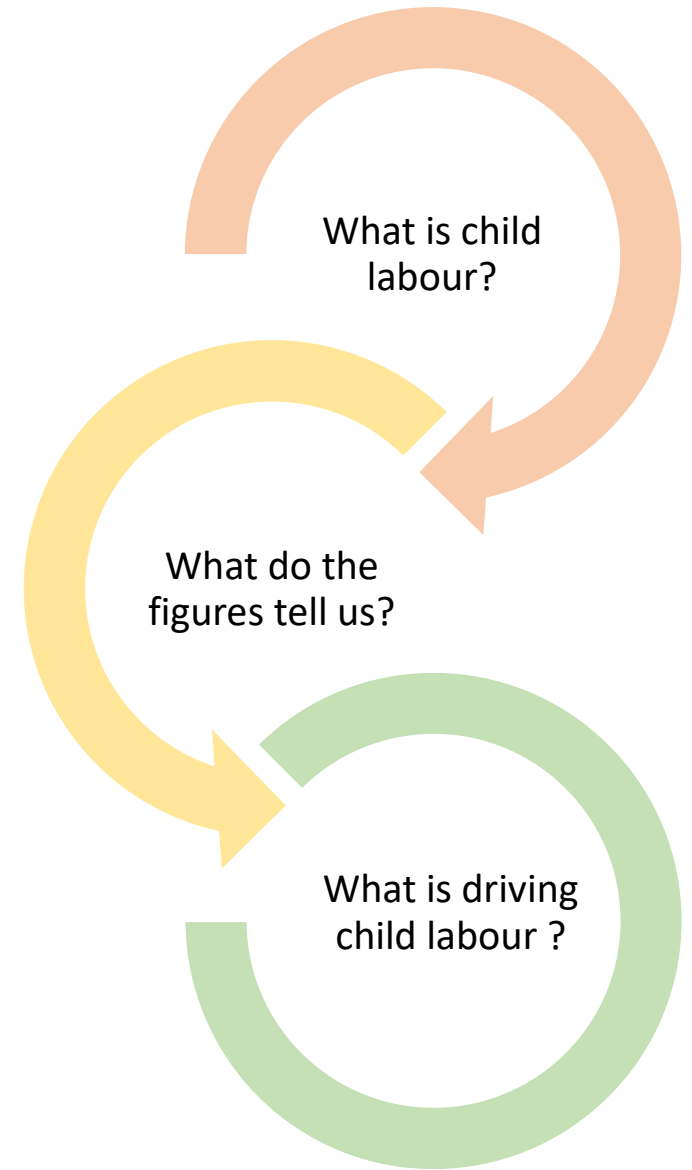
## Webinar Series on child labour due diligence – Part 1

Child labour – definitions, trends  
and root causes

11 May 2023



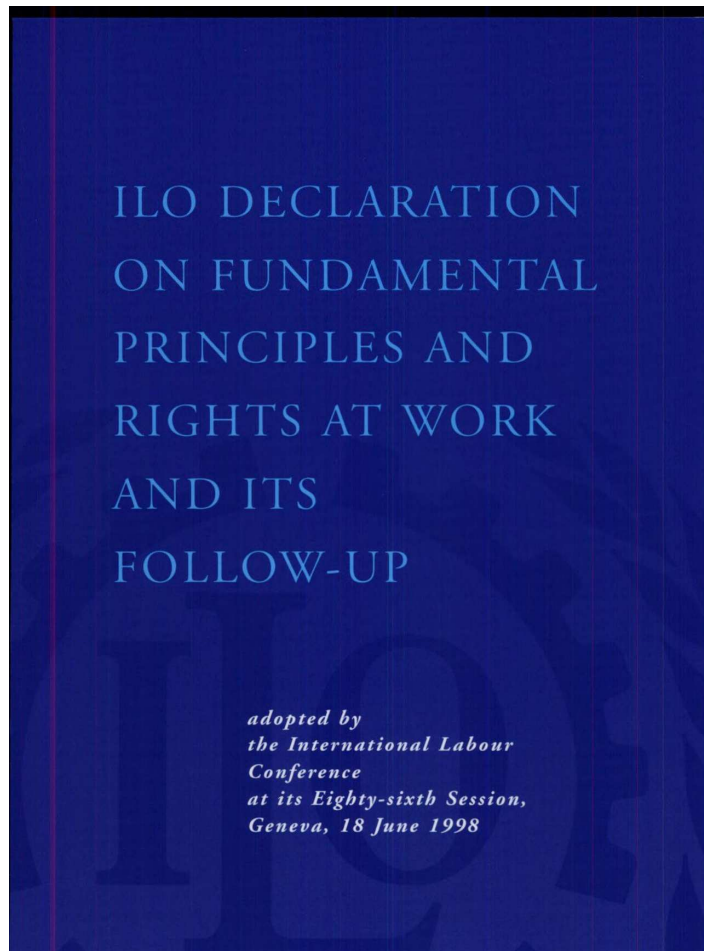
# Outline







# Fundamental principles and rights at work



- freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining,
  - the elimination of forced or compulsory labour,
  - **the abolition of child labour,**
  - the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation
- 
- a safe and healthy working environment





**The principle of the effective abolition of child labour** requires that every child, girl or boy, be given the opportunity to develop his or her full physical and mental potential.


The objective is to prevent children from doing some work that is detrimental to their education and development

- Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138)
- Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182)



# What is child labour ?

Work by children below the official minimum age for employment for a given type of work:

- In general 15 years or the age of completion of compulsory schooling, if higher (or 14)
  - 18 years for [hazardous work](#)
  - 13 years for [light work](#) (or 12)
- 

# What is hazardous work ?

Work which, **by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children**

=> Hazardous work is defined at national level by the competent authority in consultation with employers and workers organizations



Guidance for governments on some hazardous work activities which should be prohibited is given by [Article 3 of ILO Recommendation No. 190](#) :

- work which exposes children to **physical, psychological or sexual abuse**;
- work **underground**, under water, at **dangerous heights** or in **confined spaces**;
- work with **dangerous machinery, equipment and tools**, or which involves the manual handling or transport of heavy loads;
- work in an unhealthy environment which may, for example, expose children to **hazardous substances**, agents or processes, or to temperatures, noise levels, or vibrations damaging to their health;
- work under particularly difficult conditions such as **work for long hours or during the night** or work where the child is unreasonably confined to the premises of the employer.

[Back](#)

# What is light work ?

Work which is:

- (a) not likely to be harmful to their health or development; and
- (b) not such as to prejudice their attendance at school, their participation in vocational orientation or training programmes


=> Light work is defined at national level by the competent authority in consultation with employers and workers organizations



[Back](#)



# What are the worst forms of child labour ?

- **all forms of slavery** or practices similar to slavery, such as the sale and **trafficking of children**, debt bondage and serfdom and forced or compulsory labour, including forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict;
  - the use, procuring or offering of a child for **prostitution**, for the production of **pornography** or for pornographic performances;
  - the use, procuring or offering of a child for **illicit activities**, in particular for the production and trafficking of drugs as defined in the relevant international treaties;
  - work which, by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to **harm the health, safety or morals of children (hazardous work)**
- 

# So what do we want to eliminate ?

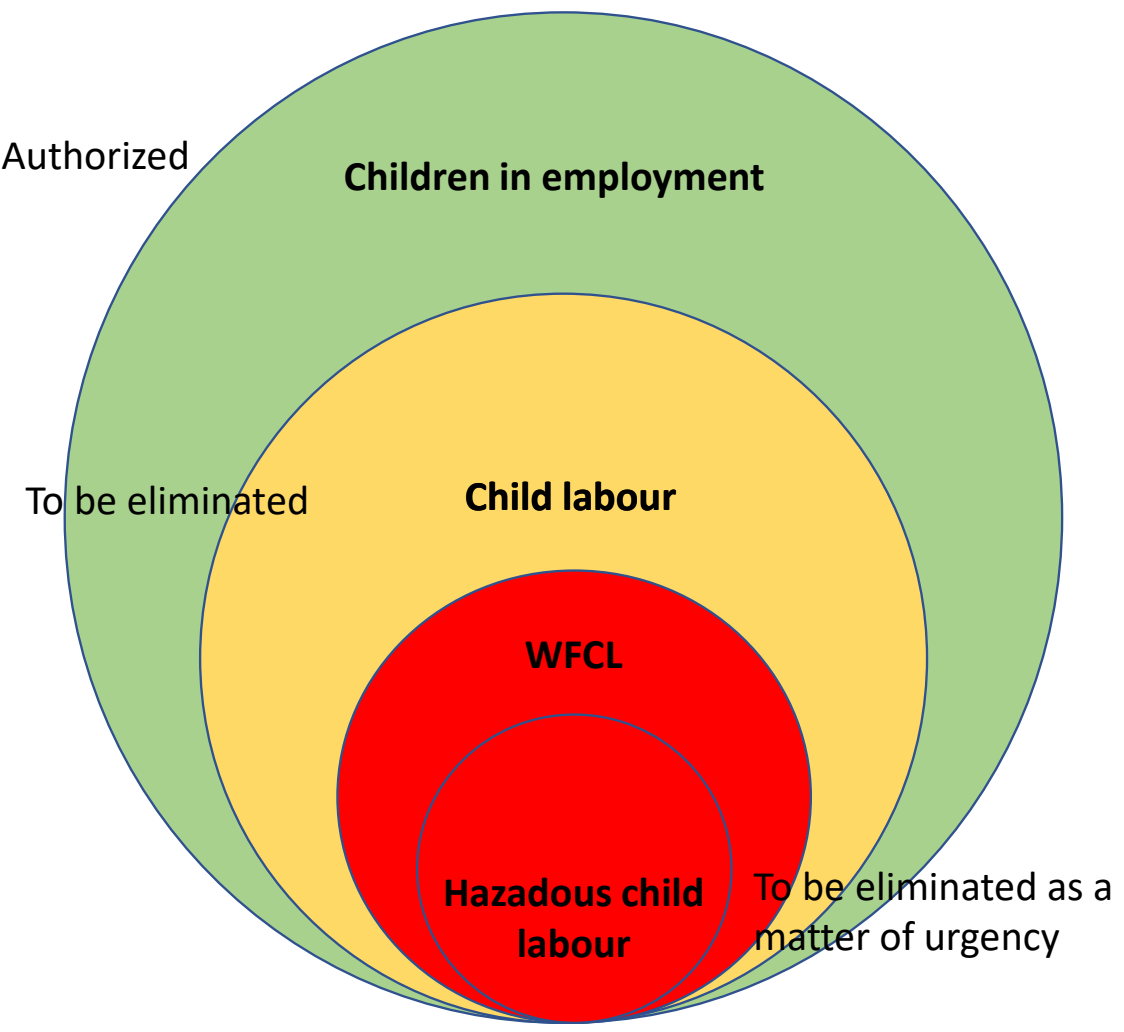
18

Between the minimum age and 18	Green	Green	Red
Between 12/13 and the minimum age	Green	Yellow	Red
Less than 12/13	Yellow	Yellow	Red
	Light work	Regular work	Hazardous work and other WFCL

14/15/16 Minimum age

12/13



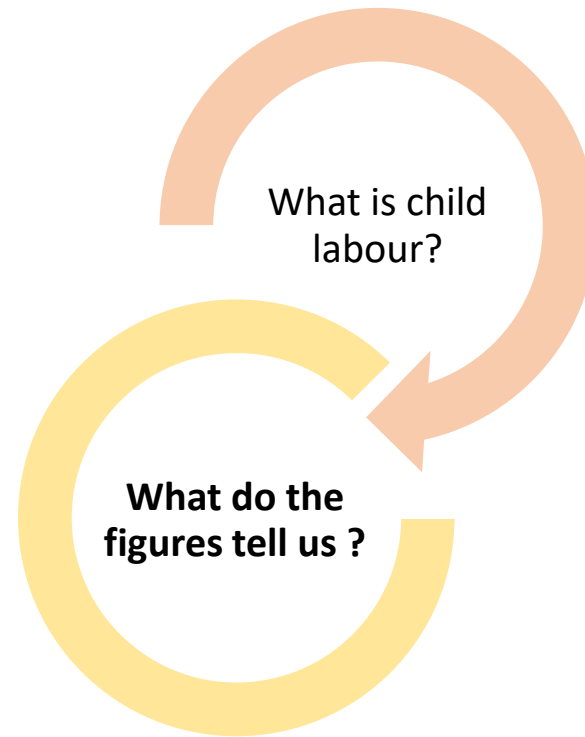


<b>Between the minimum age and 18</b>			
<b>Between 12/13 and the minimum age</b>			
<b>Less than 12/13</b>			
	<b>Light work</b>	<b>Regular work</b>	<b>Hazardous work and other WFCL</b>

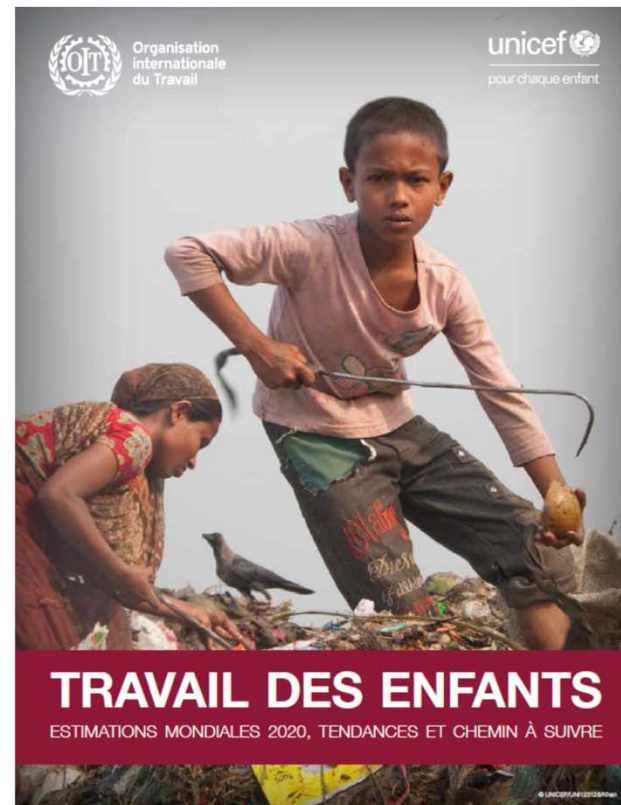
Whether or not particular forms of “work” can be called “child labour” **depends** on the child’s age, the type and hours of work performed, the conditions under which it is performed and the objectives pursued by individual countries. The answer varies from country to country.

=> Information on ratification and comments from the ILO supervisory bodies can be found on [NORMLEX](#)

=> Information on the national legislation can be found on [NATLEX](#)

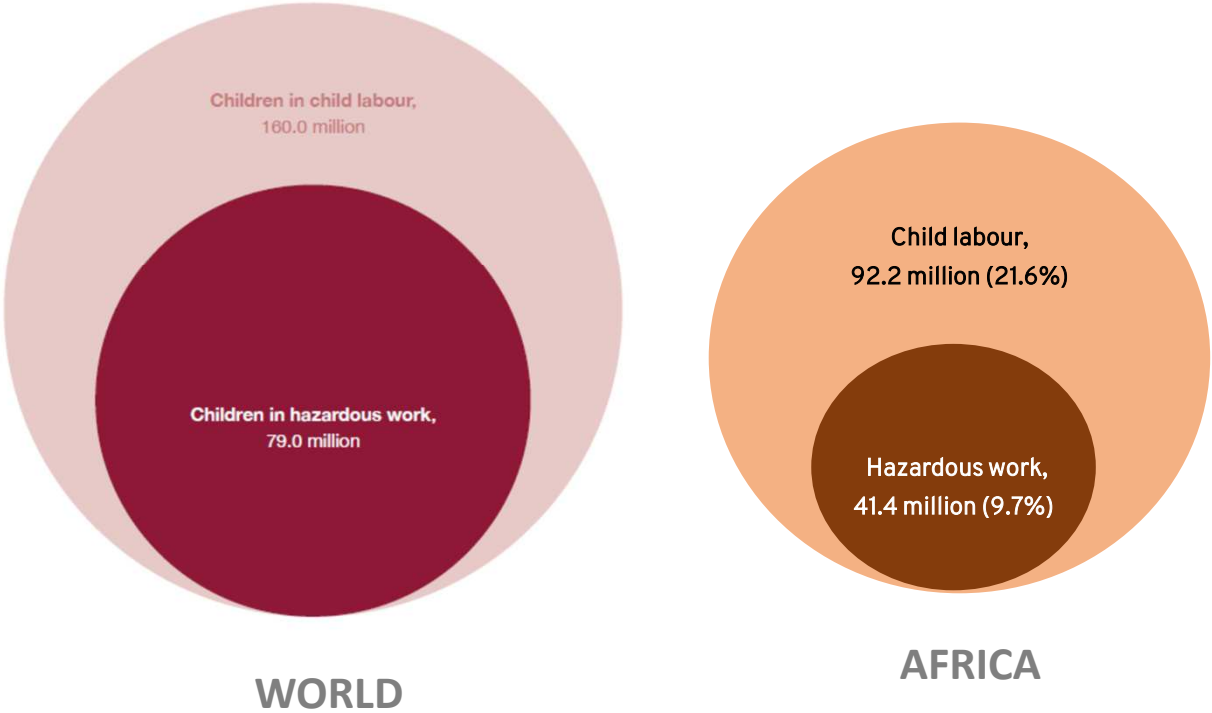


ILO/UNICEF Global Estimates  
on Child Labour, 2020  
(pre-COVID)



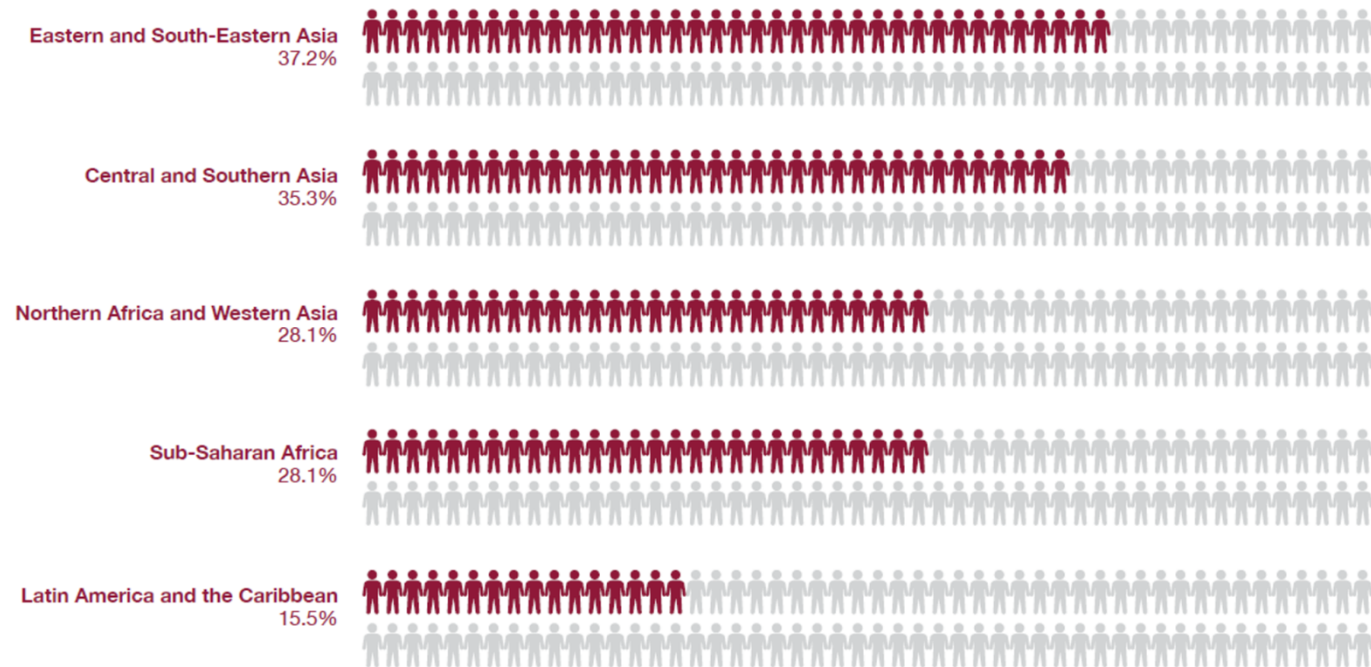
**Worldwide, 160 million children are engaged in child labour; 79 million of them are performing hazardous work**

Fig 1. Number of children aged 5 to 17 years in child labour and hazardous work



## Across all regions, significant shares of children in child labour are out of school

Fig 28. Percentage of children aged 5 to 14 years in child labour not attending school, by region

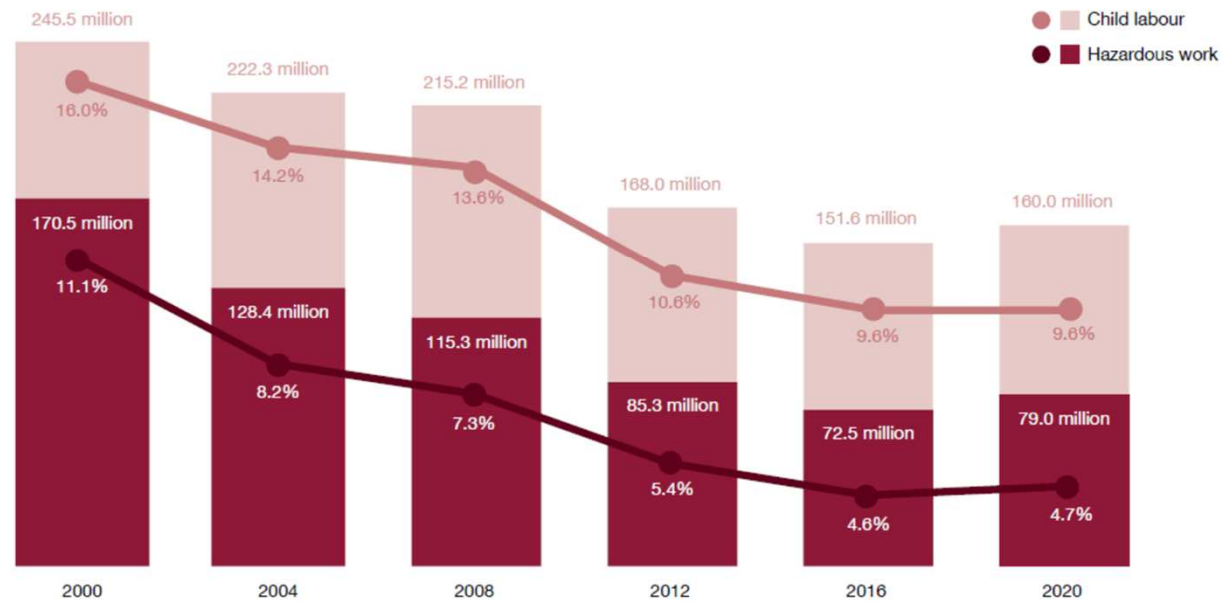


Notes: The figure shows regional groupings used for SDG reporting. The region of Oceania is omitted because of low data coverage. The region of Europe and Northern America is omitted because of the low levels of children in child labour and out of school.

# Global trends

## Global progress against child labour has stalled since 2016

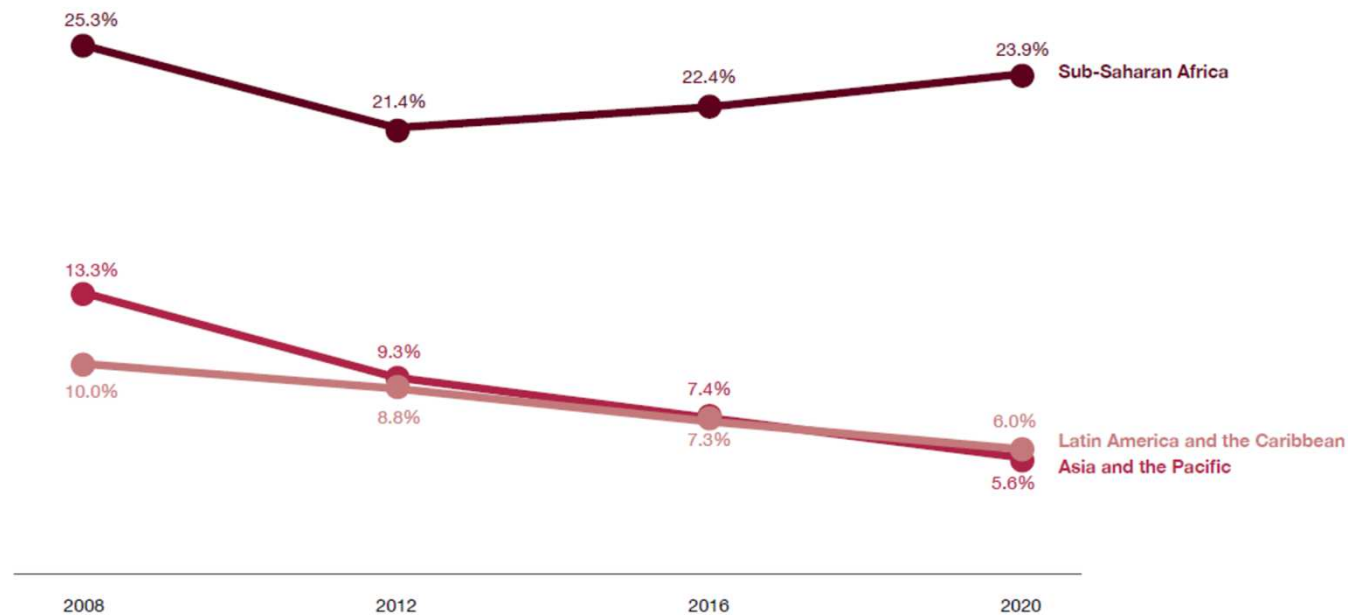
Fig 3. Percentage and number of children aged 5 to 17 years in child labour and hazardous work



# Regional trends (%)

**Asia and the Pacific and Latin America and the Caribbean have seen steady progress on child labour since 2008; similar progress has eluded sub-Saharan Africa**

Fig 4. Percentage of children aged 5 to 17 years in child labour, by region



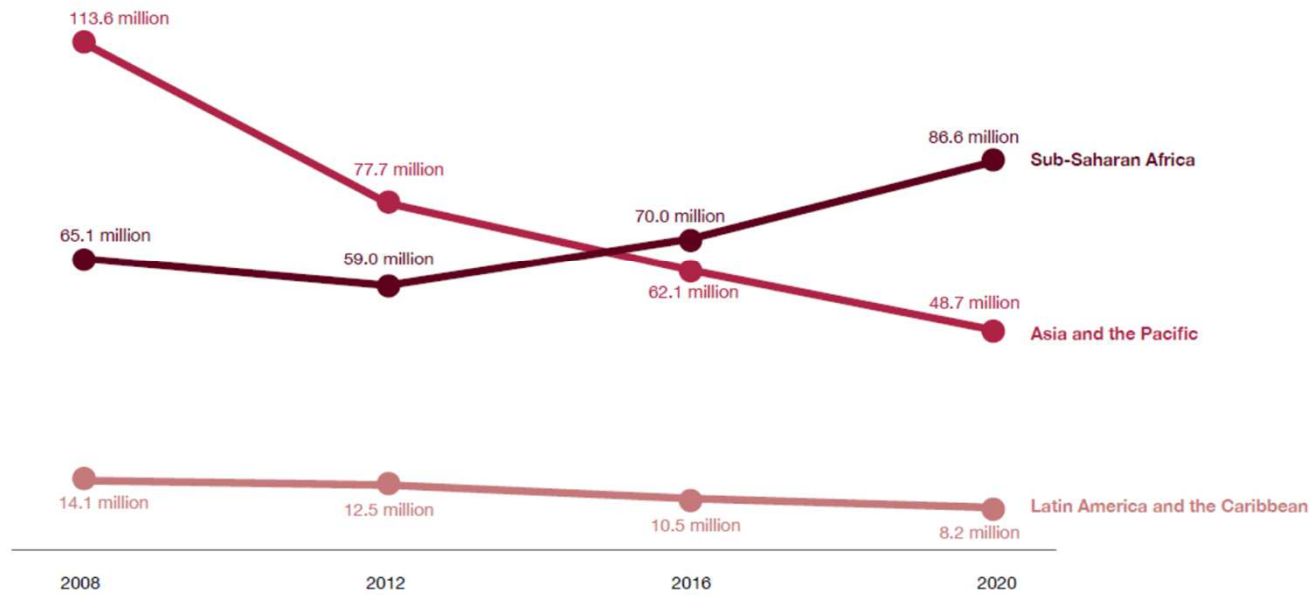
Notes: The figure shows regional groupings used for ILO reporting. Comparable historical data prior to 2016 were not available for other regions.



# Regional trends (millions)

**The number of children in child labour has increased in sub-Saharan Africa, while it has declined in other parts of the world**

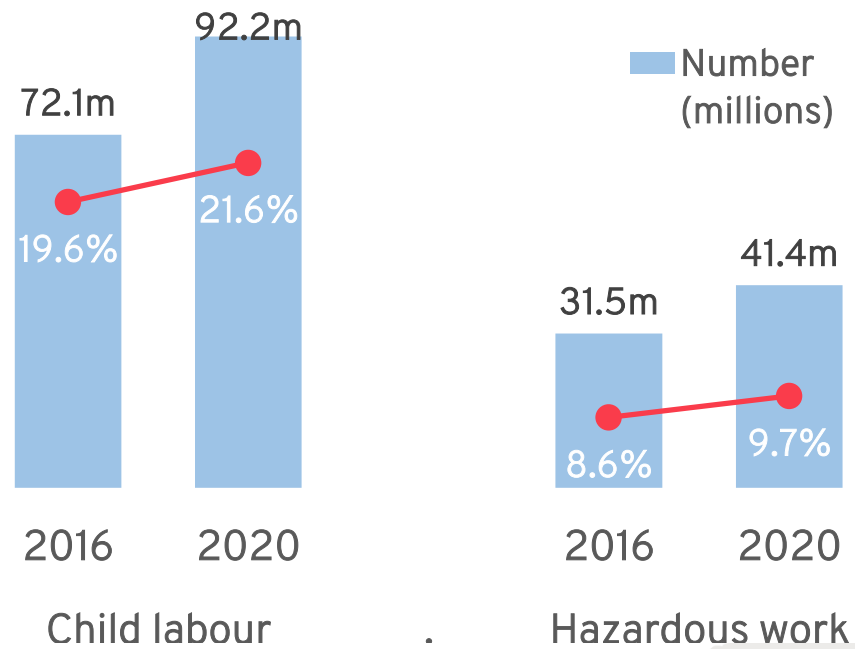
Fig 5. Number of children aged 5 to 17 years in child labour, by region



Notes: The figure shows regional groupings used for ILO reporting. Comparable historical data prior to 2016 were not available for other regions.

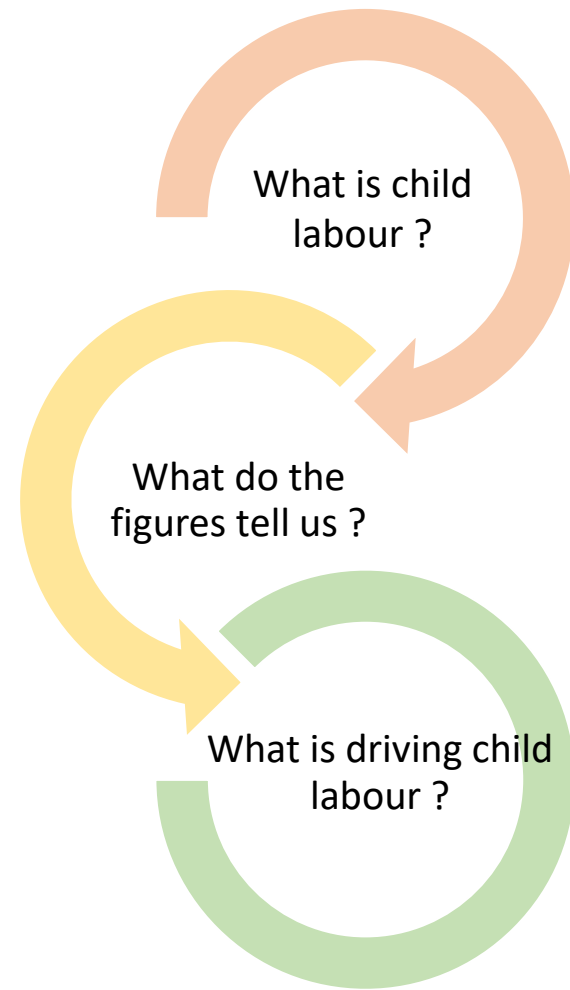
# Trends in Africa

No. and per cent of children in child labour and hazardous work, 2016 and 2020, Africa



Africa has a fast growing population

If the prevalence of child labour remains unchanged we should expect 105 million children in child labour in 2025



# Factors underlying child labour

The high concentration of child labour in rural areas in agriculture and in family or own-account production units underscores its close link with poverty and related factors such as informal employment.

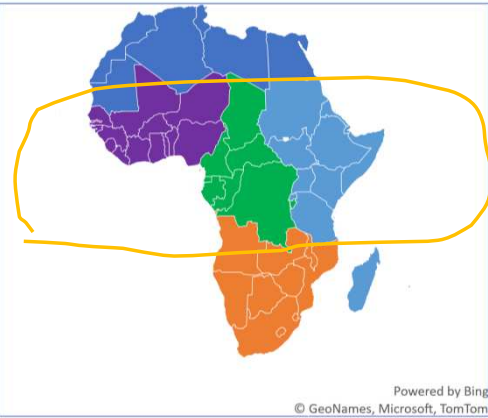
The major root causes of child labour include:

- Widespread poverty linked to the predominance of subsistence farming and the informal economy - Lack of living wage / income
- Poor access to social services such as quality education and health care;
- Vulnerability to external shocks in the absence of adequate social protection and social safety nets;
- Functional dependency to child labour;
- Socio-cultural factors such as gender roles and gender inequality, practices such as child fostering, and lack of awareness of child labour and the risks faced by child labourers;
- Lack of freedom of association, discrimination
- Additional risk factors such as precarious migration, conflict and disruptions linked to climate change; and
- Institutional factors such as inadequate laws and weak law enforcement, weak labour relations

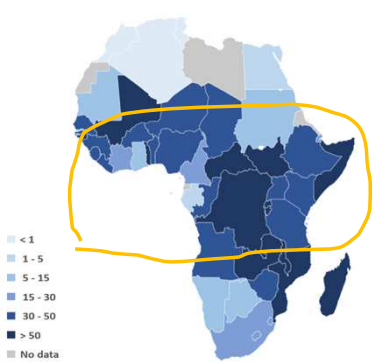
# Child labour in relation with broader development challenges

## The case of Africa

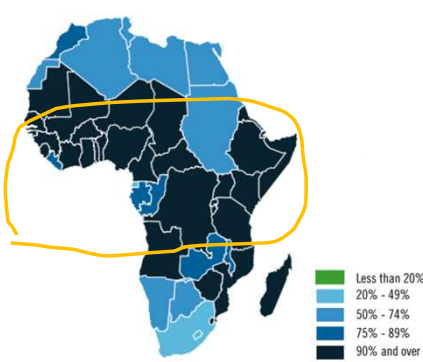
African sub regions most affected by child labour



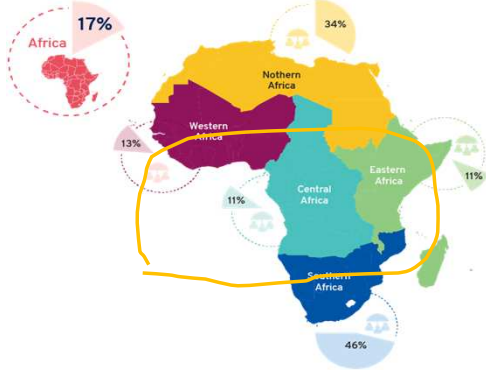
Percentage of the population below the poverty line



Proportion of informal employment in total employment



Population receiving at least one social protection benefit



Thank you

► **Sophie De Coninck**

Chief of operations

Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work Branch

E: [deconinck@ilo.org](mailto:deconinck@ilo.org)



# **DEVELOPMENT OF THE ILO/IOE CHILD LABOUR GUIDANCE TOOL**



# ILO/ IOE Child Labour Guidance Tool

Rita Yip, IOE Senior Adviser

Thursday 11 May 2023



# International Organisation of Employers (IOE)

- Largest global private sector network, representing 50 million businesses through 150 national employers' organisations, in nearly 150 countries.
- Sole representative of business in social and employment policy debates taking place in the ILO, across the UN, G20 and other emerging forums.



# What we do? Expertise, Advocacy and Service

## Policy priorities

- Child Labour
- International Labour Standards
- Human Rights and Responsible Business Conduct
- Industrial Relations
- Employment and Skills
- Labour Migration
- Sustainable Development
- Future of Work
- Occupational Safety and Health
- Diversity and inclusion



# Child Labour



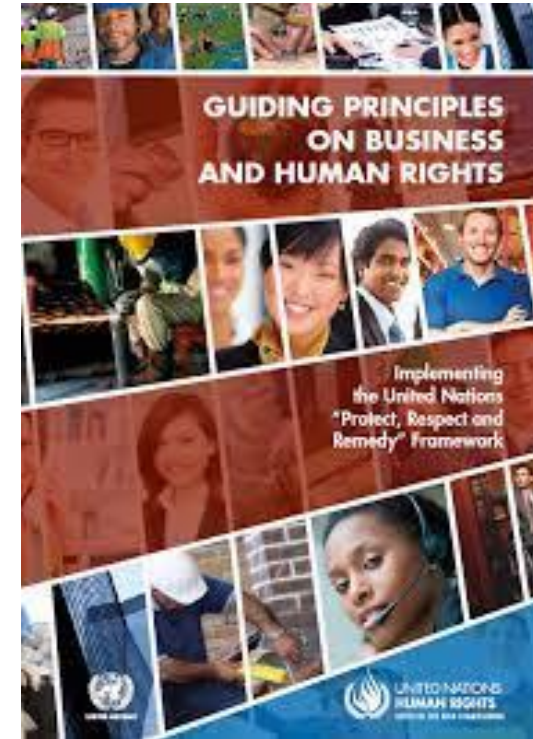
**United Nations**  
Global Compact



**IPEC+**  
Global  
Flagship  
Programme

# WHY

- UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs)
- An easy one-stop resource for employers



# HOW

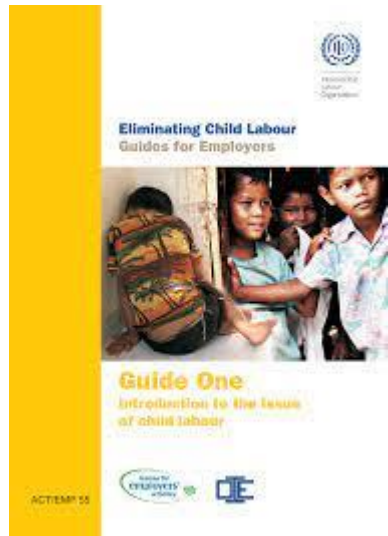
Deep dive of existing resources

Develop a diagnostic protocol

In-depth assessment of five companies

Multistakeholder workshops

360 degree review



# International Elimination of Child Labour Changemaker Award

- Criteria:
  1. Focus on [Durban Call to Action](#)
  2. Impactful
  3. Sustainable
- Entries open **12 June 2023**
- Entries close **12 August 2023**
- More information contact Rita Yip [yip@ioe-emp.com](mailto:yip@ioe-emp.com)



A powerful  
and balanced  
voice for business



International  
Labour  
Organization



CHILD  
LABOUR  
PLATFORM



A powerful  
and balanced  
voice for business

# Thank you!

[www.ioe-emp.org](http://www.ioe-emp.org)  
[ioe@ioe-emp.com](mailto:ioe@ioe-emp.com)



# **COMPANIES' ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITY IN PREVENTING OR WORSENING CHILD LABOUR RISKS**



**Save the Children**

# **FOR CHILDREN. IN SWITZERLAND AND WORLDWIDE.**

- **100+ years of experience in Children's Rights based work**
- **Global expertise locally anchored**
- **Collaborating with the private sector to jointly create long-lasting and impactful solutions**



**SANDRA GROTH**

**Sustainable Supply Chains Manager  
with 20 years of experience in the  
field of Corporate Responsibility**

**[Sandra.Groth@savethechildren.ch](mailto:Sandra.Groth@savethechildren.ch)**

# Why children are everyone's business



# Child Labour is often invisible



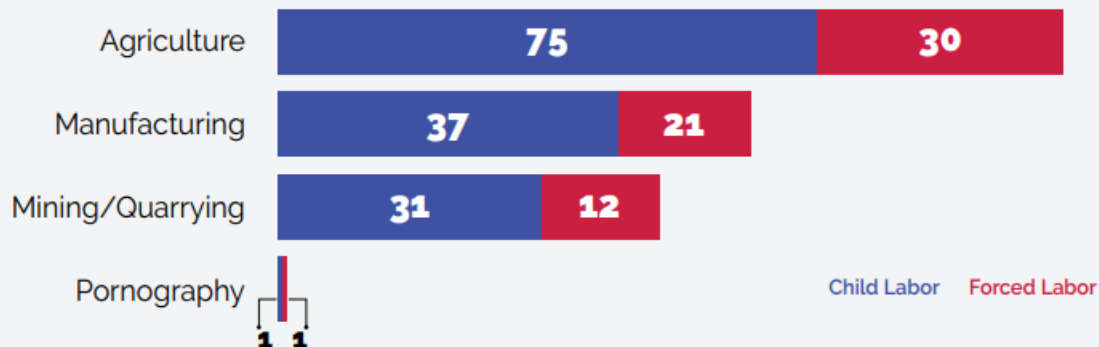
## What we see...

First tier: Direct suppliers, factories, plantations, processing plants of agricultural or extractive commodities

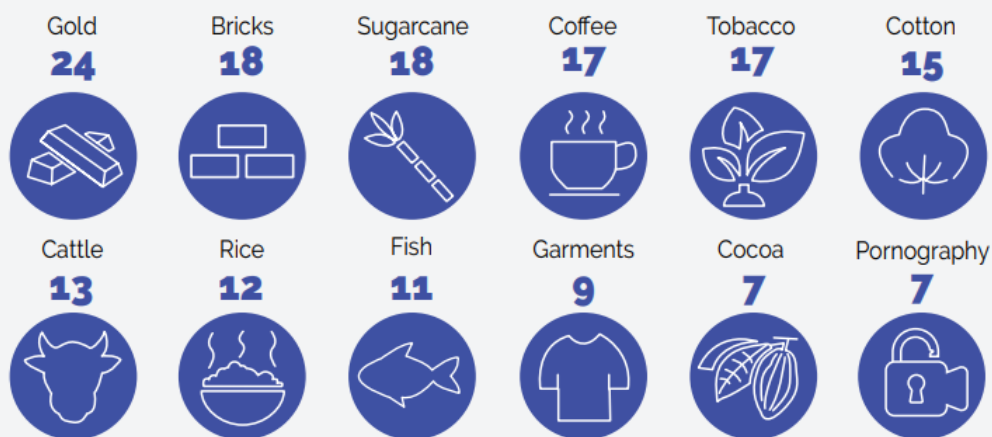
Where we have the most significant risks of child labour...

# GOODS PRODUCED GLOBALLY UNDER USAGE OF CHILD LABOUR

Number of Goods Produced Globally by Production Sector, Disaggregated by Child Labor and Forced Labor



Goods with the Most Child Labor Listings by Number of Countries



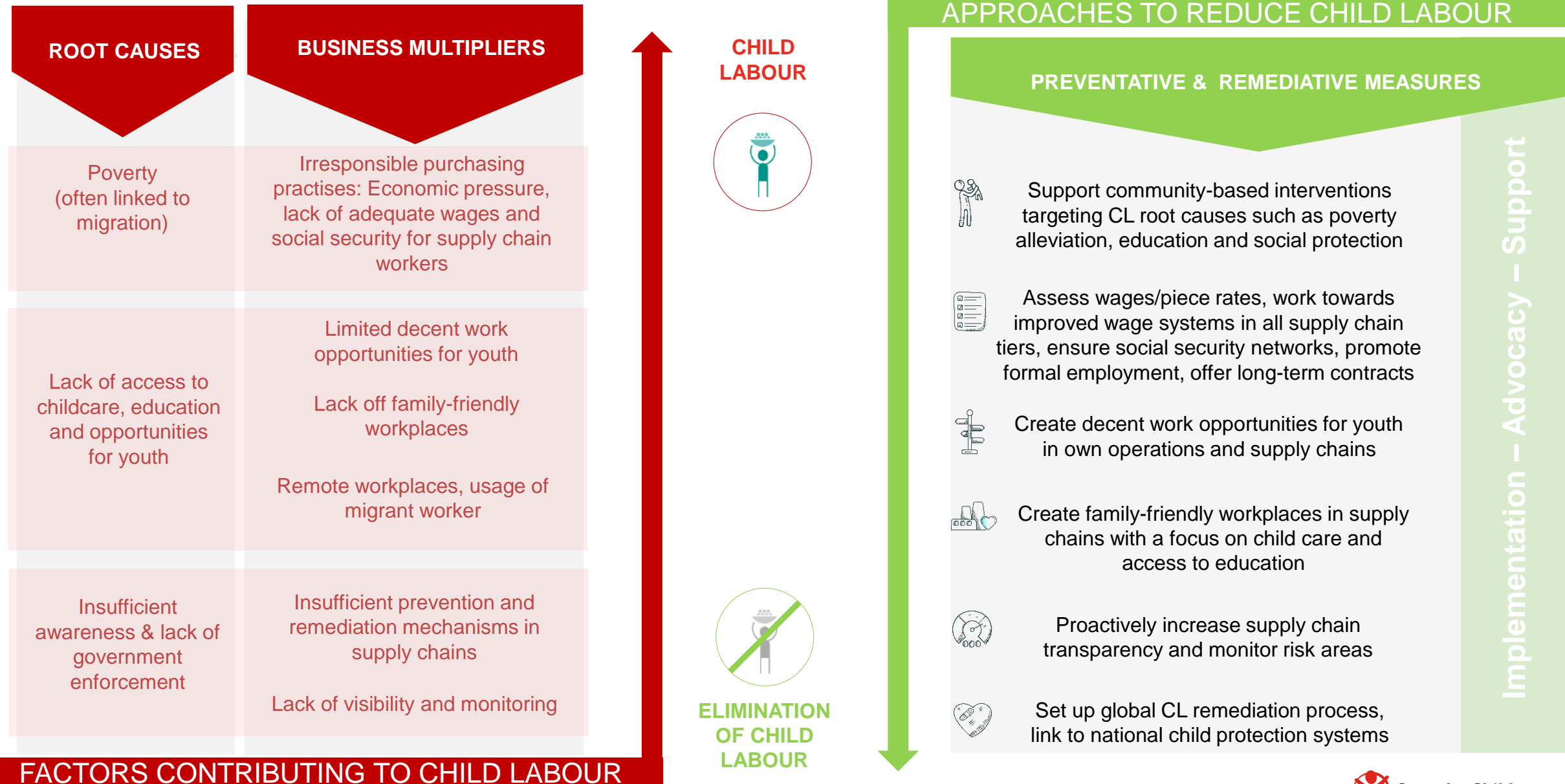
Source: [2022-TVpra-List-of-Goods-v3.pdf \(dol.gov\)](https://www.dol.gov/2022-TVpra-List-of-Goods-v3.pdf)

TABLE 1. TOP FIVE EXPORTING INDUSTRIES WITH RISK OF CHILD LABOUR IN THEIR SUPPLY CHAIN, DIRECT AND INDIRECT CONTRIBUTIONS, BY REGION (2015)<sup>15</sup>

Region	By DIRECT contributions	By INDIRECT contributions
Sub-Saharan Africa	Agriculture Wholesale and retail Transport and storage Textiles and apparel Food products	Food products Mining, non-energy Basic metals Transport and storage Wholesale and retail
Eastern and South-Eastern Asia	Agriculture Textiles and apparel Wholesale and retail Mining, energy Transport and storage	Food products Textiles and apparel Wood Mining, energy ICT and electronics
Central & Southern Asia	Textiles and apparel Agriculture Wholesale and retail Transport and storage Food products	Textiles and apparel Food products Wholesale and retail Transport and storage Other business services
Northern Africa and Western Asia	Agriculture Wholesale and retail Transport and storage Mining, energy Accommodation and food	Food products Mining, energy Textiles and apparel Wholesale and retail Agriculture
Latin America and the Caribbean	Agriculture Wholesale and retail Accommodation and food Transport and storage Textiles and apparel	Food products Motor vehicles Chemicals Basic metals Textiles and apparel

Source: [ALLIANCE 8.7 \(alliance87.org\)](https://alliance87.org/)

# TOC: Companies' role and responsibility



**FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO CHILD LABOUR**



**THANK YOU!**



**Save the Children**

# **CASE STUDIES AND EXAMPLES FROM THE GROUND**





## Child Labour - Setting the Scene

*Ines Kämpfer, CEO*

**THE CENTRE**  
FOR CHILD RIGHTS AND BUSINESS

# CHILD LABOR IS ENDEMIC IN OUR SUPPLY CHAINS.

ANALYSIS OF 20 CHILD RIGHTS RISK ASSESSMENTS ACROSS MANUFACTURING, AGRICULTURE AND MINING IN 4 REGIONS ( ASIA, MIDDLE-EAST, AFRICA, SOUTH-AMERICA)

## GENERAL OBSERVATIONS:



of our assessments provide direct evidence of child labor.



A high risk was identified in eight other supply chains.

*(Exception: natural stone in Vietnam and Tier 1 textile suppliers in Ethiopia)*



The worst violations (volume and severity) happens on lower levels.

## EXAMPLES:

### Mining : Cobalt, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)

- 10% of 12-14 year old, 19% of 15-17 year old children in mining communities work in the Artisanal mining (cobalt).

### Agriculture : Roses, Türkiye

- All children from the age of seven work with their parents.
- All observed cases are classified as child labor based on age, working hours and/or working conditions .

### Production : Global

- 800 cases between 2019 – 2022
- 1st tier 75.5% Lower tiers 24.5%



# CHILD LABOUR IN AGRICULTURE

*CHILD LABOUR - SETTING THE SCENE*

**THE CENTRE**  
FOR CHILD RIGHTS AND BUSINESS

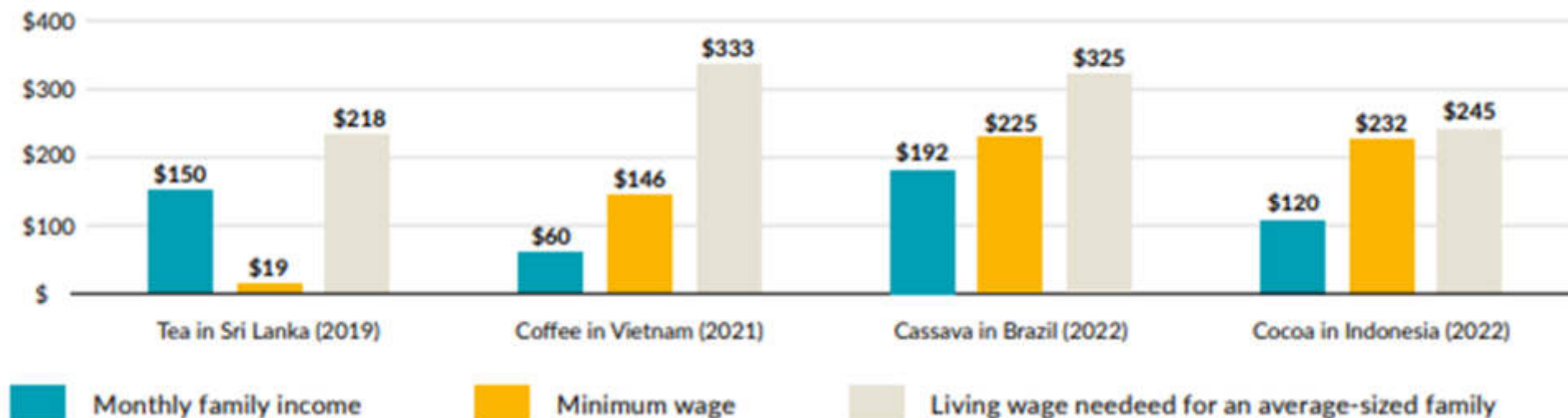
# AGRICULTURE: A SECTOR DEPENDING ON CHILD LABOUR

**73%** started working before the age of twelve.

**38%** of the children surveyed help with the coffee harvest.

Children as young as **7** years old work on the farm.

Children of cocoa farmers perform dangerous jobs.



*“My father's income was not enough for four children to go to school. So I started working when I was 14 so my two younger brothers could go to school.”*

*– A 17-year-old girl, Sri Lanka 2021: Textile sector*

# INCREASED CHILD LABOUR RISKS

Smallholders depend on their children to work with them



Long, consecutive harvest periods without school attendance



Collaboration from a young age



dangerous activities



Children of migrant workers are particularly at risk



No early childhood education



Early school dropout



Unhealthy and dangerous housing situation during migration



Growing up without my parents in the care of my extended family in my hometown



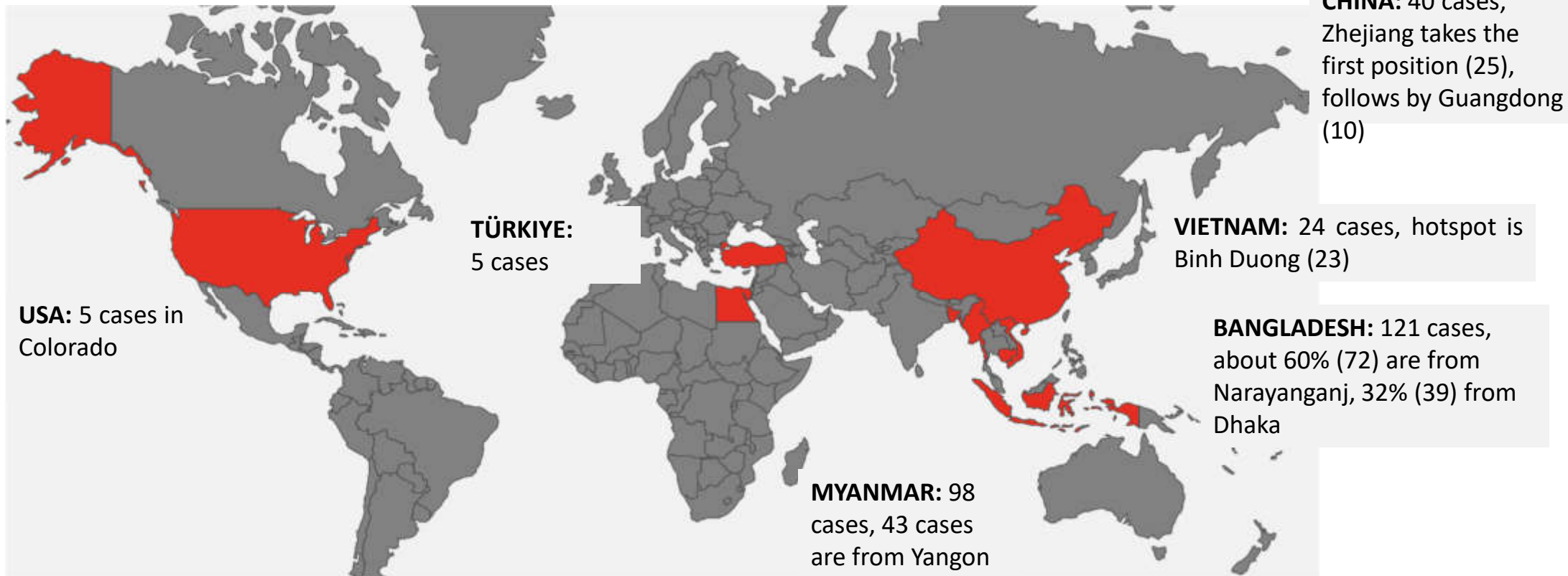
Higher risk of exploitation and human trafficking



## Child Labour in Manufacturing

# CHILD LABOUR DATA FROM THE CENTRE

In 2022, 301 cases were reported to The Centre.



# CHILD LABOUR DATA FROM THE CENTRE

## OUT OF THE 301 CASES REPORTED TO THE CENTRE IN 2022



Occurred in *small-sized factories*, with less than 500 workers on average.



Half are *underage workers* and, half are *young workers* engaged in hazardous work.



of the cases happened with **subcontractors**



Of the cases were found in **Tier 1 suppliers** indirectly supply products to brands through importers

### Top 3 industries for child labour cases



68%  
Garment



8%  
Printing



7%  
Footwear

### Top 3 positions for child labour cases



59%  
Helper



12%  
Operator



9%  
Sewing

### Children were introduced to work by their...



49%  
Relatives



25%  
Neighbours



18%  
Self-applied

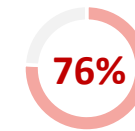


7%  
Friend

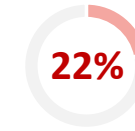


1%  
Labour Agent

Among the cases where we have information on how they were discovered...



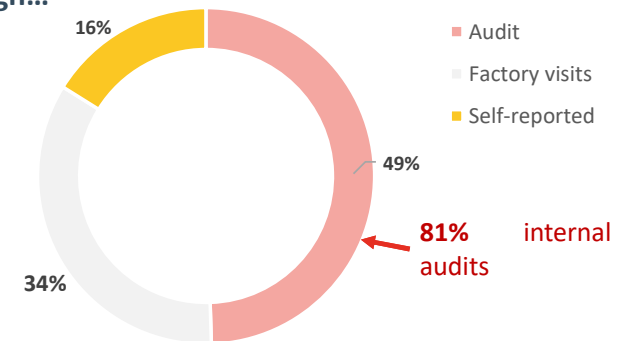
Announced audits



Unannounced audits

The other 2% were semi-announced and in-house audits.

While child labour cases were identified through...



The remaining 0.3% was identified on suspicions during a project.



# CASE STUDY: CHILD LABOUR CASES IN MANUFACTURING -EXAMPLE

GARMENT FACTORY : TEN UNDERAGE WORKERS AND 43 YOUNG WORKERS UNDER 18 YEARS

## BACKGROUND

- Ten underage workers and 43 young workers under 18 years with excessive working hours and hazardous work positions identified during an external audit and followed internal audit in September and October 2022 in Myanmar.
- Aged from 13 to 17, their work involve ironing, chalk drawing, using snap machines and sewing cotton scissors.
- Hazards: excessive working hours, sharp tools, and scald.

## ROOT CAUSES

- Poverty – worsened due due to Covid-19 / military coup
- Other: family members' health issues
- All have dropped out from school in Grade 4 to 9 in 2020 and 2021.



Child in ironing position

## EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

- Factory using daily labourers to cope with unpredictable order volumes



Child using snap machine

# A LACK OF OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE...

...CAUSES CHILD LABOUR

LACK OF EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN THE FORMAL SECTOR



Systematic exclusion



Unintended consequence: crowding out into the informal sector and upstream stages of the supply chain



If employed in the formal sector: lack of security and labor protection

WIDESPREAD EXCLUSION

***Ethiopia, Brazil, India, Indonesia, Sri Lanka Vietnam (2021)***

- *Young workers are systematically excluded from Tier 1 operations.*
- *Prove other suitable options too costly*

***DRC (2021)***

- *72% of working children aged 15-17 in mining communities work in the informal mining of cobalt*

# THE CENTRE

FOR CHILD RIGHTS AND BUSINESS



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