

Rooting out child labour from cocoa farms

Paper No. 2

Safety and health hazards



International
Labour
Organization



*Rooting out child labour
from cocoa farms*

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First published 2007

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IPEC

Rooting out child labour from cocoa farms. Paper No. 2: Safety and health hazards

Geneva, International Labour Office, 2007

ISBN 978-92-2-119733-1 (print)

ISBN 978-92-2-119734-8 (web PDF)

ILO CIP data: child labour, child worker, agricultural worker, hazardous work, occupational safety, occupational health, farming, cocoa, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Nigeria

Funding for this ILO publication was provided by the United States Department of Labor (RAF/02/50P/USA) and the International Cocoa Initiative Global Issues Group (RAF/03/06P/ICA).

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Printed in Italy

Graphic design and layout: International Training Centre of the ILO, Turin, Italy

Photographs: WACAP project

Preface

Of the ILO's estimate of 218 million child labourers from 5-17 years old in the world, about 70 per cent are working in agriculture. These children work on small family farms or large plantations, caring for domestic animals, weeding and harvesting, collecting fodder and fuel. A countless number of these children are missing out on school and many are regularly exposed to serious hazards and exploitation. The extent to which agricultural work is harmful to children depends on a number of factors, including the type of work they do, the hours they work, their age and their access to education. It also depends on whether or not they are separated from their families for long periods, and the degree to which they are exposed to specific hazards. Children who work on family farms – which characterizes most child agricultural workers – are by no means immune to the many hazards associated with agriculture.

The problems related to agricultural child labour are particularly acute in sub-Saharan Africa, where nearly 30 per cent of all children under the age of 15 are thought to be working. International media attention at the beginning of the decade on the use of child labour in cocoa farming in West Africa under appalling conditions placed a glaring spotlight on just how harmful and hazardous agricultural work can be for children, particularly in areas of extreme rural poverty. This increased concern about child labour in cocoa and other crops in the region and the urgent need for immediate action to address it at all levels gave rise to the ILO-IPEC technical assistance programme to combat hazardous and exploitative child labour in cocoa and commercial agriculture called WACAP. From 2002 to 2006, WACAP supported projects in five countries: Cameroon,

Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea and Nigeria.

Overall, the project was very effective in raising awareness, mobilizing stakeholders, building institutional capacities in the countries and removing several thousand children from hazardous work in agriculture. Most importantly, it demonstrated that working with communities to help them resolve their own problems related to child labour can make a substantial difference in keeping children out of the workforce.

The four papers in this series, *Rooting out child labour from cocoa farms*, synthesize the knowledge and experiences acquired from implementation of the WACAP programme in the individual countries.

- *Paper No. 1: A synthesis report of five rapid assessments*
- *Paper No. 2: Safety and health hazards*
- *Paper No. 3: Sharing experiences*
- *Paper No. 4: Child labour monitoring – A partnership of communities and government*

They are complemented by training manuals for education practitioners and farmers.

- *Rooting out child labour from cocoa farms – A manual for training education practitioners: Ghana*
- *Training resource pack on the elimination of hazardous child labour in agriculture*

These publications were supported under WACAP with funding from the United States Department of Labor and the Cocoa Global Issues Group. Many thanks to these donors and to the numerous implementing agencies and other stakeholders that took part in this important programme.

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Acknowledgments

This paper was written by Richard Rinehart (IPEC consultant). Sherin Khan (IPEC) provided overall direction and guidance for this paper and the others of this series. Peter Hurst (IPEC) and Yacouba Diallo (IPEC) provided comments on an earlier draft. Susan Afanuh (U.S. National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health) provided invaluable assistance by reviewing the reports from Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, and

Guinea. Margaret Mottaz-Shilliday (IPEC consultant) reviewed and edited the text. Special thanks to former IPEC Directors Guy Thijs and Frans Röselaers under whose guidance the project was implemented. The authors and researchers who conducted the country-level OSH studies and the children and others who participated in them are also acknowledged.

1. Purpose and scope of this paper

The paper highlights safety and health hazards and risks for children in the context of farming cocoa in West Africa, where children are known to be working under hazardous conditions.¹

From 2002 to 2006 the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) of the International Labour Organization (ILO) implemented a project called the Programme to Combat Hazardous and Exploitative Child Labour in Cocoa/Commercial Agriculture in West Africa (WACAP). Five studies on the safety and health situations of children working in cocoa farming in Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, and Nigeria were carried out under WACAP by local organizations in each country. The final reports for these studies form the foundation of this document.²

The paper describes the current debate related to connecting occupational safety and health (OSH) with child labour policies and programmes. It then briefly reviews the context in which child labour exists in cocoa farming and some of the common activities and tasks performed by working children and adults. The OSH hazards and risks identified by the country-level studies are also covered, as well as the recommendations by the reports' authors for policy-makers, practitioners, and donors on how to address the prevalent and persistent OSH problems faced by these children.

Finally, the paper highlights gaps and opportunities for future research.

Considerable work has already been done examining the OSH hazards and risks for children and adults working on cocoa farms and in agriculture in general. For example, Mull conducted a comprehensive review in Ghana that characterized in detail the job tasks and activities performed by children in cocoa production.^{3, 4} The resulting reports examined hazardous work and gave recommendations for appropriate work by children according to age. ILO-IPEC has also recently completed a series of publications on OSH in agriculture that apply to cocoa production. These include a three-document training resource pack on eliminating hazardous child labour in agriculture for trainers and farmers and a policy and guidance package.⁵

The purpose of the present paper is to not to repeat the information provided in the above-mentioned documents, but to add value to the previous work by synthesising the findings of the five OSH studies conducted by local organizations under WACAP. It is hoped that this information can be used by policy-makers and project designers in their efforts to eliminate hazardous work for children.

¹ See, for example, Sustainable Tree Crops Program: *Child Labor in the Cocoa Sector of West Africa: A synthesis of findings in Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, and Nigeria* (International Institute of Tropical Agriculture, 2002) p. 19. [accessed at <http://www.iita.org/news/cocoa.pdf> April 2006].

² Reports are referenced on page 7.

³ L.D. Mull: *Analysis of Job Tasks and Activities Performed by Children in Cocoa Production, Final Report*. Prepared by Creative Associates International, Inc., for the United States Agency for International Development, EGAT Division, (Washington, 2003).

⁴ L.D. Mull and S.R. Kirkhorn: *Child labor in Ghana cocoa production: focus upon agricultural tasks, ergonomic exposures, and associated injuries and illnesses*. Public Health Rep. 2005 Nov-Dec; 120(6): 649-55.

⁵ IPEC: *Training resource pack on the elimination of hazardous child labour in agriculture* (Geneva, ILO, 2005) and IPEC: *Tackling hazardous child labour in agriculture: Guidance on policy and practice* (Geneva, ILO, 2006).

The five OSH reports reviewed in this paper

Cameroon

Organisme de développement d'étude de formation et de conseils. 2004. *Identification des risques et dangers liés au travail des enfants dans les plantations de cacao et l'agriculture commerciale au Cameroun*, in French only.

Cote d'Ivoire

Bonny, Jean Sylvain; Kambou, Sié; N'Guessan, K. Joseph. 2004. *Approfondissement du concept de travail dangereux des enfants dans la cacaoculture et l'agriculture commerciale en Côte d'Ivoire*, Survey report, first draft, Oct. 2004, in French only.

Ghana

Occupational and Environmental Health Unit, Ghana Health Service. 2004. *Health and safety risks of children involved in cocoa farming in Ghana, A study conducted in Ghana to understand hazardous child labour in cocoa/commercial agriculture* (Accra).

Guinea

Société africaine d'études et d'ingénierie financière. 2005. *Etude pour mieux comprendre le travail dangereux des enfants dans les plantations de cacao et de l'agriculture commerciale en Guinée, rapport d'enquête nationale*, in French only.

Nigeria

Department of Agricultural Economics and Extension, Federal University of Technology Akure (Nigeria). 2004. *Report towards understanding of hazardous child labour in cocoa/commercial agriculture in Nigeria* (Akure).

2. OSH and child labour: The issues

The debate over how occupational safety and health fits into the worldwide drive to eliminate the worst forms of child labour has been ongoing for many years. The ILO Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), now ratified by over 90 per cent of the ILO's member countries, calls for the elimination of all worst forms of child labour. Included in these worst forms is all "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."⁶ The work activities covered by this broad directive are often referred to as "hazardous work" and apply to all children under age 18, including those over the legal minimum working age. However, Convention No. 182 does not define specific tasks; this is up to national authorities in consultation with employers' and workers' organizations. Clearly, the intent of the Convention is to prevent children from working in situations where they are exposed to excessive OSH hazards and risks.⁷

Because the situations of individual countries differ, Convention No. 182 intentionally does not define the OSH hazards that constitute hazardous work. Governments that have ratified the Convention are required to determine which hazards exist in their own countries with the input from local industry, labour and other interested groups. To a large extent, this is being done by national governments, but the process is far from simple and has proven to be controversial. Not everyone agrees on where to draw the line between an appropriate workplace for children and one where the OSH hazards are too great. A lack of scientific data and basic information about the tasks that children perform is sometimes mentioned as limiting

factors in making policy decisions. There are also legitimate fundamental disagreements on how much culture and tradition should be factored into the decisions. For example, in some places children are expected to work to learn a trade or help provide for their families, even if the work is hazardous.

Sometimes, even when national consultations on defining hazardous work for children result in the drawing up of lists of banned activities and the enactment of appropriate policies and laws, large discrepancies may persist between what happens at the national level and what gets changed on the ground. Often very little is done. This is partly because most child labourers are found in small informal workplaces and/or remote areas. It is fair to say that most of these workplaces are off the radar screens of government inspectors knowledgeable about OSH. It is difficult enough to enforce OSH laws and regulations in small-scale enterprises for adult workers, let alone for children. Moreover, there may be too many workplaces to inspect and regulate, and the owners and operators may be poor and lack the resources to improve the work environment once OSH hazards and risks are identified. As a result, very little, if any, regulatory pressure is put on the type of workplaces where most children work. This situation is particularly relevant to the agriculture sector in developing countries where the majority of child labourers are found.⁸

Another problem related to OSH and child labour is that most organizations dealing with child labour issues at the local level do not have simple information about OSH to provide to employers and other groups. Furthermore, the staff of most organizations who interact

⁶ A more detailed discussion of key concepts and terminologies concerning ILO Convention No. 182 is given in Annex 1.

⁷ A "hazard" is anything with the potential to do harm. A "risk" is the likelihood of potential harm from that hazard being realized. For example, the hazard associated with power-driven agricultural machinery might be getting trapped or entangled by moving parts. The risk is high if guards are not fitted and workers are in close proximity to the machine. If, however, the machine is properly guarded, regularly maintained, and repaired by competent staff, then the risk of injury is lower. IPEC: *Tackling hazardous child labour in agriculture, Guidance on policy and practice – Guidebook 1: User guide* (Geneva, ILO, 2006).

⁸ IPEC: *Facts on child labour in agriculture*, fact sheet http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/ipec/publ/download/factsheets/fs_agriculture_0303.pdf [accessed April 2006].



A child labourer in Ghana involved in cocoa farming with numerous scars on both legs.

with child labourers lack the skills to recognize OSH hazards and risks, many of which can be overlooked by the untrained eye. They also lack practical tools for working with employers and other groups to improve conditions in ways that make business sense. In the absence of a regulatory “stick” for improving OSH conditions in small enterprises and in remote areas, improvements generally have to be made voluntarily.

In summary, work under hazardous conditions carried out by children above the legal minimum working age but below 18 years is child labour to be eliminated with highest priority according to Convention No. 182. In light of this, the important challenges for donors, governments and organizations that focus on child labour issues should do the following:

- recognize where OSH hazards and risks to children are high;
- ensure that children who are legally allowed to work are not engaged in hazardous work;
- provide practical solutions to employers and other groups on how to make workplaces more productive and safer for all workers; and
- prevent or withdraw children from doing certain hazardous tasks if the conditions cannot be improved through practical means.

It is because these goals are largely neither being met by the international development community nor national and local governments that IPEC supported the five OSH studies reviewed in this paper. These studies were undertaken to help address OSH issues in policy-making and the development of future programmes.

3. Context of child labour in cocoa farming

The following are short overviews of the child labour situation in cocoa farming in the five countries covered by the OSH studies as described by the reports. There are similarities across all the countries, such as the tradition of socializing children through work, having

children work on family plantations, children missing school because of work, the effects of the drop in cocoa prices (resulting in the shortage of adult labour), and the use of young children for hazardous tasks (cutting open cocoa pods and clearing land with a machete).

<p>Cameroon</p>	<p>Children work mainly for small producers, who constitute the majority of cocoa producers in Cameroon (70 per cent of cocoa producers inherit their plantations). The depressed economy in the country and the fact that cocoa harvesting is not mechanized make child labour widespread. Work that is supposed to help children learn to become productive members of society leads to exploitation. Children work mainly for their families and are not compensated. About three-quarters of the part-time child labourers in the study were children of their employers. They were much more likely to work full time if they did not work for their parents. Children who work on non-family farms earn a small amount of money or are given food or other services.</p>
<p>Côte d'Ivoire</p>	<p>The cocoa industry depends heavily on manual labour. Despite a boom in sales in the 1970s, it was never mechanized like other agricultural sectors. The drop in cocoa prices on world markets beginning in 1980 made it difficult to hire regular adult labourers, and conflicts between landowners made conditions unfavourable for migration from other areas. As a result, children of cocoa plantation families worked for free, or other non-family children were hired for cheap labour. Most children between 6 and 17 who work on cocoa plantations work for their families. This is culturally acceptable, especially since the plantation will be passed on to the next generation.</p>
<p>Ghana</p>	<p>Four main reasons were given by farmers for employing children on cocoa farms: boosting family finances, teaching children how to farm, enabling children to support themselves, and compensating for the absence of mature labour. Three groups of children were identified as being involved at various levels of cocoa farm work:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Children who are out of school (or never went to school) and engaged in cocoa or other farm work full time. They work to support themselves and may thus be described as child labourers. 2. Children in school who work regularly or part time on cocoa farms as hired labourers. Some of these children also work to earn the support from their benefactors in the form of accommodations and food. 3. Children who are in school full time and assist parents on their cocoa farms, usually outside school hours. They sometimes skip classes to accompany their parents to the farm. This was especially the case during the peak farming season. The majority of children encountered belonged to this last category.



Guinea	Agriculture has not become modernized despite heavy investment and thus depends on manual labour. Despite the large number of cocoa plantations, they are not very profitable. Because of labour shortages (due to rural exodus) and the low profitability of cocoa, children work mainly for their families or for other planters who request their services. Some children undertake group or communal work with other children on third-party plantations. These are paid, temporary, day contracts that are negotiated between group leaders and planters. With day contracts, injuries are not the responsibility of the planter. Work for children is considered preparation for future responsibilities. The cocoa producing region has a high rate of schooling for children, but some families still must "reserve" some children purely for plantation work. Also, some children had to work to pay school fees.
Nigeria	The children in the study who were full-time farm workers were not enrolled in school. They followed their parents to the farm. Some children reported wanting to be in school, but their parents told them that they could not afford to send them or, in the case of girls, were not willing to send them to school. Many parents felt that they needed the children to assist them on the farm. Most children who were engaged in full-time farm work were the children of sharecroppers or casual labourers working on the cocoa farms.

4. Common cocoa farming activities and tasks

The five country-level OSH studies described similar tasks conducted by children on cocoa farms. The reports noted that there is virtually no division of labour between children and adults, but the percentages mentioned show that the older children were more likely to engage in more hazardous work (discussed in the next section). The following are the main tasks identified, which are similar to those described by Mull⁹:

- spraying pesticides;
- fetching water for mixing pesticides;
- carrying pesticide sprayers from home to the farms and back after work;
- clearing and preparing land with machetes;
- planting and working in the nursery;
- pruning with machetes or chainsaws;
- weeding with machetes;
- harvesting pods with machetes and “pluckers”;

- transporting harvested cocoa produce to different areas on farms and to villages;
- cutting open cocoa pods with machetes; and
- extracting and drying cocoa seeds.

According to the reports, virtually all children, regardless of age, cut open cocoa pods and provided some form of transport, which involved carrying wet cocoa beans on their heads to their communities for the fermentation and sun drying processes. The cocoa beans were packaged in bags or baskets, which were usually “very heavy”.

Older children were more likely to spray pesticides, although one report indicated that some children as young as 5 years old did so also. Very little protective equipment or clothing was used. Adults were more likely to use it than children, and one study



Young child labourers use machetes to clear weeds under adult supervision.

⁹ Mull: op.cit.



The “go-to-hell”, one of the most dangerous tools cited by children and cocoa farmers, consists of a bamboo pole with a knife attached at the end to cut cocoa pods from the upper parts of cocoa trees.

mentioned that part-time working children were slightly more likely than full-time working children to use such equipment. The most common protective equipment cited was rubber boots.

Children’s responses indicated that the tools most frequently used in carrying out their tasks were cutlasses (machetes), baskets, jute bags/sacks, pluckers (called “go-to-hell” in

Ghana). For illustrations, see photos on pages 12 and 13.

The report for the OSH study conducted in Guinea mentioned that because of the extent of child labour, researchers reported observations on many types of plantations besides cocoa. In some cases, cocoa was grown on plantations together with other products.

5. OSH hazards and risks

As mentioned earlier, the OSH hazards and risks experienced by children working on cocoa farms and in agriculture in general have been well documented elsewhere. The documents cited previously contain considerable amounts of information that should be referenced by those developing future policies and programmes on the subject.

The purpose of this chapter is to highlight the observations and findings from the five OSH studies conducted under WACAP, which have not been systematically summarized to date. It is hoped that the information from these studies will complement the earlier work done on the subject. This section covers the following questions, using the reports as the source for answers:

- What activities are considered hazardous work?
- What is the involvement of children in the use of agrochemicals?
- What are the prominent injuries or other acute hazards observed?
- Are estimates of OSH hazards and risks representative of a broader population beyond those studied?
- Where do children go for treatment when they are injured? (traditional healers, health clinics, etc.)
- Is personal protective equipment available?
- What are the general hygiene and sanitation conditions?
- To what existing social programmes or services related to OSH do children, families, adult workers, or employers have access? Do these programmes or services present useful knowledge? Do they use them?
- What regulatory environments are mentioned? Are regulations enforced and/or effective?

5.1 What activities are considered hazardous work?

The report for Cameroon stated that handling pesticides, clearing land, transporting heavy loads, and breaking cocoa pods to extract seeds were the most hazardous work activities. The

report for Côte d'Ivoire gave three parameters to determine the hazardous character of an activity:

1. the environment;
2. the work hours; and
3. the nature of tasks.

Environmental dangers for the cocoa plantation included difficult access to worksites and poisonous animals and insects such as snakes and scorpions. Regarding hours worked, the children in the study worked on average 22.9 hours per week. Several conditions affected the number of hours children work: nationality (foreign children work more hours), schooling (children who have left school work more than children in school and more than children who never went to school), payment (children who are paid work more hours), relation to producer (children who work for parents work more hours than those who work for a distant relative). Work considered hazardous included pesticide spraying, clearing land with a machete, extracting seeds from the cocoa pods (using a machete), and transporting heavy loads.

Nearly all children participated in clearing land for plantations, which usually implied using a machete. Boots were the most common form of protection used, although half did clearing without any form of protection whatsoever. Children who went to school were just as likely to do land clearing as those who did not. Extracting seeds was considered a basic activity of cocoa production and was done even by young children too small to clear the land with a machete. Seventy-eight per cent of children aged 7-10 years extracted seeds, a task that typically requires the use of a machete or other sharp object. Seventy-two per cent of children aged 7-10 years transported cocoa; most carried loads on their head. There are no standards for weight carrying according to children's ages.

In Guinea, where work is seen as teaching children, the researchers said that the problem is not the work in itself, but results when the work is unsuitable relative to the physical

capacity of the child. The authors stated that some parents think that the tougher a child is made to be, the better prepared he or she is for the future. It was noted that in 95 per cent of cases, children do “difficult” work. The children prepared and cleared the land, which was “without a doubt” the most hazardous activity. Children were used most for this activity because it corresponded to their school vacation. Because of school, fewer children were available for harvest and transport. However, 79 per cent of children observed carried loads. Loads were more than 15 kg in most cases and more than 30 kg in 28 per cent of cases. The authors noted that 95 per cent of the children worked without protection, generally without shirts and with open, plastic shoes or barefoot.

Côte d’Ivoire

“It is certainly not possible to envision stopping the use of children on cocoa plantations considering the scarcity of adult labour. But certain measures can be taken to prevent risks linked to child labour on these plantations.”

In Ghana, like the other countries, child labour involved many activities from land preparation through transplanting of seedlings and other management practices to the harvesting and sale of the cocoa beans. In the execution of these activities, children encounter dangers as a result of the tools and equipment used and the lack of access to protective clothing. Children’s responses indicated that the cutlass and go-to-hell were the two most dangerous tools. About half of the children interviewed had no training in tool use. Others learned from parents. A few said they had some training in school.

Overall, hazards (identified by children) that children faced in cocoa farm work included:

- trip and slip hazards resulting in falls, and associated injuries, such as lacerations, abrasions, fractures, and sprains;
- ergonomically inappropriate tools and awkward postures adopted in working, such as bending over for extended periods, use of harvesting tools like “pluckers” which lead

to long periods of extension of the back (thereby predisposing the children to back strain);

- unsafe tools that cause injuries, such as lacerations that may be associated with massive bleeding and the potential for bacterial infections such as tetanus (these hazards may predispose children to sickness, deformities and even death);
- biological hazards from insects, snakes, and parasites;
- chemicals used in pesticides and fertilizers, carrying the risk of severe acute poisoning and less acute effects such as skin and respiratory problems (e.g., asthma); and
- physical hazards such as excessive ultraviolet exposure and excessive heat and humidity (during the rainy season).

Responses from Ghanaian farmers and farm owners indicated that children working on cocoa farms perform similar roles in all stages of cocoa farm work and use all the tools and equipment that adult farmhands use. The farmers indicated, however, that the children’s involvement was rather on a smaller scale; hence, they may not encounter the same level of dangers. Farmers and farm owners also made it clear that, regardless of their intent, they have few protective measures in place for children.

5.2 What is the involvement of children in the use of agrochemicals?

The five OSH reports did not give many details about the specific agrochemicals used on the farms by children or where they work. The report for Nigeria mentioned that:

- The chemicals to which the presence on the farm exposes children include fungicides (e.g. copper sulfate, Metalaxyl) and insecticides (e.g. Lindane, Endosulfan, Cypermethrin). Most of these pesticides range between moderately and highly toxic substances according to World Health Organization (WHO) classification. This implies that exposure to them should be avoided.

The only other report that named individual agrochemicals was that for Cameroon. These are:

- fungicides (Ridomil, Nordox);
- insecticides (Gamaline, Cypercal);
- herbicides; and
- fertilizer.

Brand names for pesticide products are given in parentheses. Ridomil is contained in the names of many products and the active ingredients vary depending on the full name. The active ingredient for Nordox is copper oxide. Gamaline contains Lindane as its active ingredient. Cypercal is a pyrethroid insecticide.

No other details were provided in these two reports, and the reports from the three other countries were silent on the specific agrochemicals used. The report by Mull, cited earlier, listed four pesticides reported in cocoa production. These included Pirimiphosmethyl, Lindane, Ridomil Plus, and Propoxur, all characterized as moderately to highly toxic. Absorption can occur by dermal, inhalation, and ingestion routes. Mull also stated that exposure to an increasing variety of pesticides will likely continue because it is anticipated that other agrochemicals including organophosphates, carbamates, organochlorines, and pyrethrins will be used in the future.⁴

According to the authors of the Cameroon study, children are more likely to spray pesticides as they get older, although ten per cent of children aged 5-7 in the study did so also.¹⁰ Children spraying or working around pesticides risk intoxication through oral, dermal, and inhalation exposure. Children often drink water from a source that is only a few meters from sprayed areas.

In Côte d'Ivoire, it was estimated that 134,000 children aged 10 and older were involved in pesticide spraying, although the more schooling children had, the less likely they were to use pesticides. Researchers said that virtually none of the children exposed to pesticides used effective protection. Some children cover their face with a handkerchief, which may

exacerbate exposure as the clothing becomes saturated with pesticide residue. The authors said that the greatest dangers for children are poverty, which prevents them from buying protective equipment, and erroneous notions about safety ("God will protect us" or the belief that children who do not handle pesticides directly are in no danger). Technical agents from different programmes working with farmers often recommended that producers sell "safer pesticides," but these materials were too expensive for the farm owners.

The researchers in Ghana observed that children and adults use handkerchiefs or cloth to cover their noses while farms are sprayed, and it was evident that children remained on the farms during the exercise. About 65 per cent of the children admitted that they experienced itching and or burning of the hands as a result of handling and applying chemicals on the farms. Re-entry periods (the time between spraying pesticides and working in the sprayed areas) were short and 90 per cent of the time children went back to the farms within a day after spraying.

In Ghana the children studied were not involved in the actual spraying of the cocoa farms. This was done by personnel employed by the government. One children's focus group said children applied fertilizer on the farm but their involvement in pesticide application on the farm was limited to fetching water for the sprayers.

Of the boys interviewed in Nigeria, about 20 per cent helped in transporting the sprayer after mixing the chemicals, while 18 per cent were involved in mixing, and 3 per cent in spraying. This trend was the same for girls. The interaction with children revealed that, apart from carrying heavy loads of agrochemicals on their heads, "the chemical drizzled on their bodies, thus exposing them to the dangerous effect of active ingredients contained in the pesticides." Children who sprayed pesticides wore no personal protective equipment.

Although most of the children said they were not involved in the actual spraying, they claimed to

¹⁰ See table on page 22 of Organisme de développement d'étude de formation et de conseils: *Identification des risques et dangers liés au travail des enfants dans les plantations de cacao et l'agriculture commerciale au Cameroun* (2004). The text that follows, however, says that only children 13 and older spray pesticides.

be present on the farms during the application: "...a situation that exposes them to the pesticide hazards at the same level as the applicators." Eighty per cent of the focus groups said parents retained their children on the farms while the spraying went on. The chemicals to which children were exposed on the farm ranged from moderately toxic to highly toxic substances according to WHO classification.

5.3 What prominent injuries or other acute hazards were observed?

In Ghana, thorn pricks/tree stump injuries, slips and falls, insect stings, and collapse of the cutting end of pluckers are other dangers cited by the farmers, thus confirming children's claims of dangers encountered. These farmers alleged that children are not assigned certain dangerous tasks, yet they do not deny that children are injured from using dangerous tools. The injuries cited include cuts and wounds from cutlasses and pluckers, dislocation of arms and limbs, deformities, tetanus, and even death. These dangers and the resulting injuries, sickness, and deformities are common and are suffered equally by adult farmers and children.

The major acute hazards cited in Cameroon were falling trees and branches, animal bites, fires (to clear the land), pesticide poisonings, muscle disorders, skin irritation from plants and chemicals, and psychological risks (stress, lack of pay, long work hours, rape of young girls by planters). Doctors and union representatives in Cameroon have noted several health problems in child workers: slower growth, immaturity of sex organs, heat stress, lack of sleep, and HIV/AIDS. Adults often give children alcohol, tobacco and stimulants to make them work harder.

Acute health outcomes noted in Côte d'Ivoire included neck pain, headaches, backaches, itching, nausea, cough, respiratory and muscular difficulties, eye and throat irritation, stomach ache and heatstroke. The report stated that neck and back pain were a result of heavy loads for transport. Irritations and itching resulted from a lack of protective clothing. Nausea, respiratory difficulties, and muscle pain may be caused by pesticide

exposure. Headaches may be caused by pesticide exposure and carrying heavy loads. Transport activities provoked the highest incidence of the conditions mentioned, although pesticide spraying was considered the most dangerous activity due to the seriousness of the associated health effects and the fact that many of these may go unnoticed. The study also breaks down physical risks by cause. Clearing land with a machete caused the most physical harm (81.4 per cent of children suffered machete injuries) followed by extracting seeds (46.1 per cent) and transport (4.1 per cent).

The report from Nigeria stated that about a quarter of both boys and girls reported physical injuries associated with their work on cocoa farms. During the focus group discussions, the most common physical injuries reported were machete or knife cuts resulting from contact with sharp sticks and twigs on the farm and cuts resulting from sharp edges of harvesting hooks. Some children reported suffering machete injuries while breaking pods, others while weeding, and still others reported sustaining injuries from machetes during transport from the farm to the home.

Ghana

"Cocoa farm work involves several activities from land preparation through transplanting of seedlings and other management practices to the harvesting and sale of the cocoa beans. In the execution of these activities children encounter dangers as a result of the tools and equipment used and the lack of access to protective clothing."

5.4 Were estimates of OSH hazards and risks representative of a broader population beyond those studied?

The quantitative estimates of the numbers of children performing hazardous tasks and activities and the work-related injuries and illnesses mentioned by the reports represented the children included in the studies – not

necessarily the general population of child labourers in cocoa or agriculture. Researchers stated in one report that given the small size of the sample, generalizing of results should be done with reserve. In another, it was noted that the sample was meant to give an idea of the extent of the work done and its consequences, not for extrapolating to the broader population.

Nevertheless, the fact that the tasks and activities undertaken by children and the reported adverse health outcomes were consistent across all countries (except pesticide use in Guinea) and with the report by Mull¹¹ suggests that the overall situation is similar for child labourers in cocoa/agriculture who were not included in the individual studies. It is also reasonable to assume that the situation may be worse, on average, for children not reported on by the studies if they lived in more isolated areas, had language barriers, or were inaccessible to the researchers for other reasons.

5.5 Where do children go for treatment when they are injured?

The OSH reports imply that most medical treatment is done at the plantation. In Cameroon, for example, "...in case of strain, wood pieces are used instead of splints; clothes (often dirty) serve as a tourniquet for serious wounds; plants are used to treat snake bites". Self-treatment, a mix of traditional and modern, was the most common response to injuries. In Côte d'Ivoire, less than 16 per cent of the victims interviewed used a health centre, despite the fact that 10 of 12 villages had one. This is reportedly because of the poverty of villagers and the persistence of traditional beliefs and practices. In Ghana, about a third of the respondents went to hospitals or clinics when they were seriously injured.

The Mull report that focused on Ghana stated that because of the lack of transportation and the rural isolation of many communities, only the more extreme injuries would likely result in a visit to a hospital or clinic. This conclusion was

supported by most of the people interviewed. They indicated that community or family members provided local herbal treatments for most of their injuries, and that because of lack of transportation they resorted to visiting a hospital for only the most severe injuries.

5.6 Is personal protective equipment available?

Personal protective equipment is generally not available for children. It was reported that the use of protective equipment is a rarity among smallholder cocoa farmers. Adult farmers sometimes wore Wellington boots, but they were unable to provide them for the children with the excuse that Wellington boots were not available in small sizes.

Personal protective equipment (PPE) issues

Workers often refuse to wear PPE even if it is available, particularly in hot climates where its use can contribute to the risk of heat-stress related illnesses. Respirators are almost universally ineffective in developing countries, particularly on small farms. They give workers and owners a costly sense of safety, in terms of both money and health. Younger workers (below the age of 18 years) should not be assigned to tasks for which respirators are required because it implies they are working with hazardous substances and respirators are designed to fit adults, not adolescents.

Child workers normally wear shorts (skirts or dresses for girls), tee shirts and flip-flops (or bare feet) while working on cocoa farms. Basic PPE, such as boots or shoes that cover the toes, long pants, and gloves were generally not worn by working children. Where boots were available, adults generally wore them. More sophisticated PPE that should be worn while applying pesticides, such as protective clothing and respirators, were virtually nonexistent or inappropriate for children. PPE is expensive, it needs to be selected properly for the job and properly cleaned and maintained. It is also uncomfortable to wear.

¹¹ Mull, op. cit.

5.7 What are the general hygiene and sanitation conditions?

There were no toilets or wash areas near the plantations. In Cameroon, the lack of wash areas is especially dangerous for those who handle pesticides. Potable drinking water was usually not available. Farm workers, including children, drank from shallow ponds and streams running near the farms. During the dry seasons, the children carried water to their parents on the farms. In a few cases, parents and children carried well or borehole water from home to the farms.

Adult and child workers generally go home to wash themselves and their clothes, taking contaminants picked up on the farm home with them. Thus, their spouses and children (who may not have been on the farm) are exposed to insects, larvae of intestinal parasites, pesticides, and other chemicals.

5.8 What existing social programmes or services related to OSH do children, families, adult workers, or employers have access to? Do these programmes or services present knowledge useful to them? Do they use them?

Respondents indicated that there were virtually no measures in place to protect the children who work on cocoa farms from the OSH hazards and risks described above. Although there are organizations (both government and nongovernmental) concerned with the problem of working children, their activities are rather limited, localized, and lack the mainstreaming required to deal with the problem.

It was noted that the farmers' main form of corrective measures to avoid injury was advice and "coaching" of children working on cocoa farms. The use of protective clothing is least

likely to be considered. In one country, about three-quarters of the farm owners and caretakers interviewed thought there were adequate measures in place to counter injury or disease occurrence among the children who work on farms.

Other study findings amply demonstrated that, although several organizations that work with children do work related to the rights of children, not much was happening to protect the child from hazardous child labour. The efforts of these organizations are not coordinated and therefore lack the potency to produce the desirable impact.

5.9 What regulatory environments are mentioned? Are regulations enforced and/or effective?

The introduction for the Cameroon report mentions that, although legislation exists to protect children, it is insufficient. There are currently laws in place that:

- set a minimum age law (the age is 16 for what is considered hazardous work);
- set work hours for children and define hazardous tasks that are prohibited for children;
- require medical exams of child workers to determine their suitability for tasks
- require one day of rest per week;
- require 12 hours of consecutive rest after a day of work; and
- regulate health and safety in agriculture, including protection when working with pesticides.

The study's authors noted that the hazardous tasks prohibited for children are very general; they include carrying loads beyond their capacity, driving vehicles, and performing any work harmful to the morality of the child. Monetary fines are given for breaking these laws, but the authors stated that most people in Cameroon are unaware of these laws and they are very difficult to enforce in the informal work sector. Difficulty in accessing plantations also makes it difficult to

enforce laws. The authors described the duties of the occupational safety and health ministry: to organize medical services, promote safety and health measures, and ensure studies of workplaces. Other government and professional institutions and their roles in workplace safety were also described.

In Ghana, labour inspection in the agricultural sector is very limited, as the enforcement

agencies (the departments of labour and factories inspectorate) have not been adequately resourced to perform such activities. Legislation on occupational safety and health did not cover the agricultural sector until promulgation of the Labour Act 651 in 2003. Existing occupational safety and health policies did not cover the sector. The other country-level reports were generally silent on this topic.

6. Recommendations of the authors of the five country-level reports

Children working in agriculture experience many serious OSH hazards, from severe injuries to debilitating musculoskeletal disorders to the short- and long-term effects of pesticide poisonings. Some of the OSH studies provided recommendations on how to move forward with the current situations in their countries. Several recommendations are highlighted below. The recommendations generally include a combination of public awareness at the national and international level, enforcement of laws within each country, and OSH training. The Ghana report offered four broad actions to address relevant issues related to OSH and child labour:

1. Consultation and discourse to clarify the definition of child labour and continuing education to create awareness

Children should be taught their parents' trade as a way of becoming responsible individuals. However, teaching a child should not be confused with turning a child into a worker (a source of labour and revenue earner). Unless this distinction is clarified, parents – especially those who are poor and without formal education in rural settings – may have difficulty appreciating the problems caused by forcing young children to work. The expected result of this discourse should be the establishment of community and workplace actions.

Examples of such actions are as follows:

- a. For the community:
 - i. Sensitize members to the risks inherent in child labour and its impact on the vulnerable child and community.
 - ii. Assist communities to understand the needs of the growing child, including the role of work, education, and recreation (play).
 - iii. Clearly understand the ILO conventions and local laws on child protection.
 - iv. Link farm activities to potential health and safety hazards, the root causes of child labour, and solutions available.
- v. Form Child Labour Committees to enforce school enrolment and attendance.
- vi. Promote activities of Child Labour Committees to work hand in hand with government agencies to control child labour.
- b. For farmers:
 - i. Understand the role of work in socialization and the impact of excessive work on children.
 - ii. Recognize the need for child work to be commensurate with the age and abilities of the child, to be carried out under supervision and only when basic training and guidance are provided.
 - iii. Accept the need to avoid assigning certain tasks to children, e.g. handling pesticides. Avoid having children nearby during spraying of farms.
 - iv. Understand the need for the observance of re-entry intervals for chemicals after spraying. This should be on average, one week (not the current one day) and should be observed by everyone including the adult farmers and children.
 - v. Respect the need for children to have time for play and recreation.
 - vi. Learn the importance of health-promoting practices, e.g. ensuring adequate nutrition and a balanced diet for children and preventing parasitic infestations through frequent and appropriate handwashing and the use of footwear.

2. Improvement of farming and farm practices

In order to create a safe work environment for both children and adults working on farms, several organizations need to collaborate to introduce farmers to proper farm management and practices. Tools associated with high risks, such as cutlasses and the "go to hell," should be

replaced or at least modified to make their use safer. Their use, if no alternatives are available, should be limited to adults, and every attempt should be made to keep them out of reach of children.

3. Advocacy and promotion of government and international policies on child labour and the health and safety of the child

4. Intersectoral collaborative action to address the issues of child labour and an effective monitoring system involving the relevant sectors

The issue of farm labour cuts across several development sectors. The implementation of relevant policies falls through the cracks in the absence of a conscious effort to monitor and ensure action. The Ministry of Manpower Development, which houses the Child Labour Unit, should consider either forming or strengthening networks and coordinate continuous collaboration of stakeholder organizations. This should be done with the objective of mainstreaming child labour into the agenda of different organizations with different focuses. A national repertoire of stakeholder organizations who will actively work together is also recommended. Possible membership of such a collaboration could include:

- Centre for Development of People (CEDEP)
- Cocoa Board (COCOBOD)
- District Administrations
- District Coordinating Councils
- Factories Inspectorate Division
- Ghana Agricultural Workers Union (GAWU)
- Ghana Education Service
- Ghana Health Service
- Ministry of Food and Agriculture
- Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development
- Regional Administrations
- Regional Coordinating Councils
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

Various functions, including enforcement, advocacy, promotion, supervision, and policy reviews, can be performed by these collaborating agencies. Researchers from Guinea stated that finding solutions is difficult because the system of child labour is a direct

effect of the country's poverty. They recommend targeted information campaigns during the school year with the help of teachers and school administrators to raise awareness about hazardous work. Children should also receive tetanus vaccinations in case of machete injuries, and they should get protective clothing, especially boots.

In Cameroon, recommendations include prohibiting children under 15 from chopping trees and setting fires to clear the land, providing protective clothing, training in the use of pesticides, training about hazards and their effects, prohibiting children from handling pesticides, prohibiting smoking on the plantation, giving children rest breaks and lightening the loads they carry, limiting the workday to eight hours, HIV/AIDS awareness, and providing special protection for girl workers vulnerable to sexual abuse.

On the international level, the report proposes obtaining support from ILO and the International Cocoa Initiative to put pressure on pesticide manufacturers to improve availability and content of pesticide labels, and to support the Cameroonian government in setting safety and health standards, particularly for agriculture. Researchers also recommend training workers about safety and protection, placing children in school, developing a safer technology for cracking pods to extract seeds, and making suggestions to producers about keeping first aid kits and protective clothing on hand. At the local level, with the help of ILO, the government should assist in organizing information campaigns about child labour, safety, training, and AIDS. OSH can be introduced into agricultural training schools.

In Côte d'Ivoire, the authors proposed possible partners for action: the national government, the ANADER (National Agency for Rural Development), FRC (Foundation for Regulation and Control), FDPCC (Development Foundation for the Promotion of Coffee Cocoa), RICAE (Ivorian Network of Communicator Friends of Children), and the Sustainable Tree Crops Program. Actions to take include training and awareness; developing safety standards, especially for pesticide spraying; and improving financial access to protective clothing and equipment for transportation, etc.

7. Gaps and opportunities for future research

There are many gaps and opportunities for future research, but not in the traditional OSH sense. As mentioned in the beginning of this report and reinforced throughout, quite a bit is known about OSH hazards and risks for children working in cocoa and agriculture. Mull³ conducted a comprehensive task-mapping exercise in Ghanaian cocoa farms and ILO-IPEC has recently published a targeted training programme and an extensive guidance package on OSH in agriculture. Together with the findings from the five country-level studies summarized here and from other reports, it is clear that large numbers of children work in cocoa production in West Africa, and most if not all of them are at great risk of experiencing work-related injuries and illnesses. The OSH hazards and risks are known and well characterized by activities and tasks, attitudes, and circumstances, but the path to improve the OSH situation remains elusive. This section of the report mentions some of the areas where more information might be helpful in the design and implementation of new policies or programmes.

The issue of OSH and child labour cannot be addressed in isolation, as it is subject to all the various push and pull factors that lead to children working in the first place. The causes of child labour and reasons why children do hazardous work are many and multifaceted. The prevailing view among cocoa farmers in West Africa appears to be that many aspects of child labour can be described as part of the child's socialization process necessary to equip the child to assume eventual adult roles and to take over properties, including cocoa farms of parents. In many farming communities, this type of work is not considered as hazardous child labour but appropriate child work. The phenomenon of hazardous child labour may also be attributed to poverty, the lack of quality schools, dysfunctional families and/or the loss of parents that make children orphaned. The impact of pandemics such as HIV/AIDS may worsen the situation.

In some cases children are preferred to adults as farm labour because they provide a cheaper alternative. Adult labour is not readily available in

some areas because of urban migration, which may be a factor making it relatively expensive. High adult-labour costs in cocoa farming may also be due to the fact that it is typically a small-scale manual endeavour and low-cost simple improvements to increase productivity and the OSH situation have not been compiled or packaged in a way that reaches farmers.

All of the causes and reasons for children being engaged in hazardous work are interrelated, and it is likely that sustainable solutions to the problem will need to be wide scale and comprehensive. There are future research opportunities to examine the extent to which sector-specific (or discipline-specific) organizations and government agencies (e.g., those involved with education, health, nutrition, environment, housing, cooperatives, or microfinance) can work with other sector-specific organizations to find common ground around occupational safety and health.

Ghana

"No matter what is done, children will always be found on our farms. It is impossible to create a society in which children will be prohibited from visiting the place of work of their parents. Indeed, in Africa, children born in farming communities make their first visit to the farm when they are weeks old. Mothers work on farms with the babies strapped to their backs. The provision of farm houses, workshops, water, and sanitary amenities are critical to health and safety on our farms and there has to be conscientious effort to bring these about. The same applies to availability and use of appropriate farm tools and implements."

Improvement in OSH protection

The country-level reports noted the need to improve levels of OSH protection, especially in relation to exposure to pesticides and the use of cutlasses (machetes) and the "go to hell" knife. There is a need for stronger action in these areas. The reports acknowledged that in

many situations the only “solution” may be prevention or withdrawal of children from certain hazardous tasks.

Assessment of the extent of children’s exposure to pesticides and other agrochemicals

The Ghana experience in which “the children studied were not involved in the actual spraying of the cocoa farms...this was done by personnel employed by the government” should be further studied to determine how widespread the practice is and its true impact on reduced exposures for children. This strategy may be a model for other countries, although it could also put the government-hired adult workers who travel from farm to farm to spray pesticides at great risk of pesticide poisoning (and their families from contaminated clothing and equipment brought home every evening). Extensive targeted training on the hazards of pesticides, proper handling procedures to minimize exposures, and sustained access to climate-appropriate personal protective equipment for these workers would be necessary to make such a programme effective.

Development of an action manual for the cocoa industry, including best practices

More effort should be put into researching and developing an action manual for this industry, possibly producing a “photo atlas” of hazards and low-cost solutions that make business sense, determining “best practices” to prevent hazards and increase productivity, and identifying new paths and strategies to inform and educate adult farmers who hire children. This type of activity could be initiated by local university graduate students and their professors if resources are available to support them—and to support the development of local university-based OSH programmes. Publications, such as the U.S. National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: *Simple Solutions: Ergonomics for Farm Workers*¹² could provide a useful model. This could perhaps be linked to the adaptation of the ILO Work Improvement in Neighbourhood Development Programme (WIND) training

manual: *Training programme on safety, health and working conditions in agriculture*.¹³

Identification of target groups for OSH training

A related issue for future work is to identify which groups should be targeted for training on OSH hazards and risks. Children are often mentioned as the most important target group. But do they have the power to change the situations and practices on farms? Other groups could be parents of working children and adult farmers. Schoolteachers, village leaders, cocoa buyers, and the staff of organizations that interact with farmers for reasons unrelated to OSH could also be the target of future training programmes.

Coherency between policy and programme design

Further connections between policy and programme design are needed in the area of occupational safety and health. Currently, no clear criteria or guidelines exist for determining which specific tasks or activities (e.g., mixing and spraying pesticides, carrying heavy loads, or opening cocoa pods with machetes) or circumstances (e.g., hours worked each week or access to clean food, water and first aid) qualify as “hazardous work” for young workers in cocoa and agriculture, particularly in the context of ILO Convention No. 182. This is partly because much of the work children do in agriculture is also considered hazardous work for adults by outside “experts.” But for the people who grew up doing this work, the perceived hazards and risks are likely low, considered normal, or they can not conceptualize ways to do things differently. While there are many reasons to suggest that children are more vulnerable than adults to hazardous work, it is difficult to identify and separate tasks older youth can do safely from the more hazardous ones and expect that dividing lines will be drawn in the farmer’s field where no one is looking. Training programmes can be developed to attempt to educate farmers and children on OSH hazards and other issues related to hazardous work, but if there is little perceived need to change behaviours, the demand for such programmes will be low.

¹² See NIOSH-CDC: *Simple Solutions: Ergonomics for Farm Workers*, Publication No. 2001-111 (Atlanta, 2001), <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/01-111pd.html> [accessed May 2006].

¹³ Available at http://www.win-asia.org/Content/WIND_BOOK.HTM.

Linking ILO Conventions No. 182 and No. 184

One practical suggestion is to explore how ILO Convention No. 182 on the worst forms of child labour and ILO Convention No. 184 on safety and health in agriculture can be linked for mutual benefit.¹⁴ Article 4 of C.184 requires countries to draw up national programmes on safety and health in agriculture and to regularly review them. A strong element on child labour in such national programmes would be beneficial. Furthermore, a national OSH programme in agriculture could link into the national lists of occupational sectors and activities where child work is prohibited as required by Article 4 of C.182.

Dealing with the problems of children working for non-family members or who have been trafficked

Finally, another challenge and opportunity for future research is to determine how to locate and observe children working on farms that do not belong to their parents or relatives, children who have been recruited or trafficked from other areas to work, or children who do not attend school and work long hours. The five OSH studies reviewed here included only small percentages of these children who are arguably the most vulnerable to both OSH hazards and risks and to other worst forms of child labour.

¹⁴ See Annex 1 for information on these ILO Conventions.

Annex: Key concepts and terminology

Key concepts and terminology related to child labour that are used by the ILO Conventions and throughout this document are defined below.¹⁵

Who is “a child”?

Article 2 of the ILO Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No.182) states that “the term ‘child’ shall apply to all persons under the age of 18.” This is the definition that is followed in this document.

What is “child labour”?

Child labour is work that harms children's well-being and hinders their education, development and future livelihoods. Child labour is work which, by its nature and/or by the way it is carried out, harms, abuses, and exploits the child or deprives the child of an education.

What are “the worst forms of child labour”?

While child labour of both boys and girls takes many forms, the elimination of the worst forms of child labour as defined by Article 3 of ILO Convention No. 182 is a priority. These are:

- (a) 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;
- (b) the use, procuring or offering of a child for prostitution, for the production of pornography, or for pornographic performances;

- (c) 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;

- (d) 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.

What is “hazardous child labour”?

Subparagraph (d) of Article 3 cited above describes what is referred to as “hazardous child labour (HCL).” HCL is work in dangerous or unhealthy conditions that could result in a child being killed, or injured (often permanently), and/or made ill (often permanently) as a consequence of poor safety and health standards and working arrangements.

Advice for governments on some HCL activities which should be prohibited is given in the ILO Worst Forms of Child Labour Recommendation, 1999 (No 190), which accompanies Convention No. 182:

Paragraph 3. In determining the types of work referred to under Article 3(d) of the Convention, and in identifying where they exist, consideration should be given, inter alia, to:

- 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,

¹⁵ See IPEC: *Tackling hazardous child labour in agriculture: Guidance on policy and practice. Guidebook 1: Background and policy information.*

- 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.

Under Article 6 of Convention No. 182, governments are required to:

- design and implement programmes of action to eliminate as a priority the worst forms of child labour and
- consult with relevant government institutions and employers' and workers' organizations, taking into consideration the views of other concerned groups as appropriate.

Convention No. 182 calls for international cooperation and assistance for putting an immediate end to the worst forms of child labour through:

- priority action to determine which hazards bring work into the category of the worst forms;
- the establishment of monitoring mechanisms and the implementation of programmes of action;
- the adoption of measures for prevention, rehabilitation, and reintegration; and
- particular attention to children at special risk and the situation of girls.

Children's rights with regard to work

All adults and children are entitled by international conventions to certain rights by virtue of being human, and it is recognized that children have rights, including the right to work, from a certain age, in a safe and healthful workplace environment where hazards have been identified, risks are assessed and appropriate prevention or control measures are put in place. As with adults, they also have a right to know about the dangers and risks to their own safety and health and the consequences that working may have on their education and future. They should learn how to protect themselves, know which laws exist specifically for their protection, and know to

whom they can turn for help. Young workers should also have the right to refuse dangerous work tasks and conditions and should receive workers' compensation in the event of work injury or illness.

Other terminology associated with the use of the word "child"

As noted in Section 3.1, Convention No. 182 states that "the term 'child' shall apply to all persons under the age of 18." However, there are other subcategories, based on age, that are also relevant to action on child labour.

Young workers are female and male adolescents below age 18 who have attained the minimum legal age for admission to employment and are therefore legally authorised to work under certain conditions. The ILO Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No.138) stipulates that ratifying States fix a minimum age for admission to employment or work. Under this Convention, the minimum age for employment or work should not be less than 15 years, but developing countries may fix it at 14. A number of countries have fixed it at 16.

This stipulation does not mean that young workers should be engaged in work where the OSH hazards and risks are high, and efforts must be made to ensure that young workers are safe. In general, girls and boys aged 13 to 15 are permitted to carry out "light work" under the ILO Minimum Age Convention No. 138. Article 7 states that national laws or regulations may permit the employment or work of persons 13 to 15 years of age on light 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 approved by the competent authority or their capacity to benefit from the instruction received.

Article 7, Paragraph 4 of the same Convention allows developing countries to substitute the ages of 12 and 14 for 13 and 15 in Paragraph 1 above.

Clearly, the term “child labour” does not encompass all work performed by girls and boys under the age of 18. Child labour is not children doing small tasks around the house, nor is it children participating in work appropriate to their level of development that allows them to acquire practical skills. Millions of young people legitimately undertake work, paid or unpaid, that is appropriate for their age and level of maturity. By so doing, they learn to take responsibility, they gain skills, they add to their families’ and their own well-being and income, and they contribute to their countries’ economies. Rather, child labour is harmful to children and does not contribute to their well-being.

Relevance to the cocoa and agriculture sectors

Agriculture is a complex and heterogeneous economic sector comprising a number of subsectors. It involves agricultural production methods that differ from country to country and between developed and developing countries. It ranges from highly industrialized, commercial production to traditional small-scale, subsistence farming. The distinction that has traditionally been drawn between these two

types of farming is slowly eroding, however, with the increasing commercialization and industrialization of agriculture, especially in response to the promotion of export-oriented agriculture by governments and multinational enterprises.

The Safety and Health in Agriculture Convention, 2001 (No. 184) makes specific reference to young workers and hazardous work that is consistent with the two child labour Conventions No. 138 and No.182. Article 16 of Convention No. 184 states:

The minimum age for assignment to work in agriculture which by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out is likely to harm the safety and health of young persons shall not be less than 18 years.

But Article 16(3) states the following: *National laws or regulations or the competent authority may, after consultation with the representative organizations of employers and workers concerned, authorise the performance of hazardous work as from 16 years of age on condition that appropriate prior training is given and the safety and health of the young workers are fully protected [i.e., the risks are low].*

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