

# FACTS ON CHILD LABOUR

## International Labour Organization

One out of six children in the world today is involved in child labour, doing work that is damaging to his or her mental, physical and emotional development.

These children work in a variety of industries, and in many parts of the world. The vast majority are in the agricultural sector, where they may be exposed to dangerous chemicals and equipment. Others are street children, peddling or running errands to earn a living. Some are domestic workers, prostitutes, olfactory workers. All are children who have no fair chance of a real childhood, an education, or a better life.

Children work because their survival and that of their families depend on it. Child labour persists even where it has been declared illegal, and is frequently surrounded by a wall of silence, indifference, and apathy.

But that wall is beginning to crumble. While the total elimination of child labour is a long-term goal in many countries, certain forms of child labour must be confronted immediately. An ILO study has shown for the first time that the economic benefits of eliminating child labour

will be nearly seven times greater than the costs. This does not include the incalculable social and human benefits of eliminating the practice: nearly three-quarters of working children are engaged in what the world recognises as the worst forms of child labour, including trafficking, armed conflict, slavery, sexual exploitation and hazardous work. The effective abolition of child labour is one of the most urgent challenges of our time.

### Key statistics

246 million children are child labourers.

73 million working children are less than 10 years old.

No country is immune: There are 2.5 million working children in the developed economies, and another 2.5 million in transition economies.

Every year, 22,000 children die in work-related accidents.

- The largest number of working children - 127 million - age 14 and under are in the Asia-Pacific region.
- Sub-Saharan Africa has the largest proportion of working children: nearly one-third of children age 14 and under (48 million children).
- Most children work in the informal sector, without legal or regulatory protection:
- 70% in agriculture, commercial hunting and fishing or forestry;
- 8% in manufacturing;
- 8% in wholesale and retail trade, restaurants and hotels;
- 7% in community, social and personal service, such as domestic work.
- 8.4 million children are trapped in slavery, trafficking, debt bondage, prostitution, pornography and other illicit activities.
- 1.2 million of these children have been trafficked.
- The above information is from the International Labour Organization's website which can be found at [www.ilo.org](http://www.ilo.org)

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