



International
Labour
Office

Marking progress against child labour

Global estimates and trends 2000-2012



Governance and Tripartism Department

International
Programme on
the Elimination
of Child Labour
(IPEC)

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Executive summary



Since the year 2000, the ILO has been taking stock and measuring global progress on the reduction of child labour. Since 2006, it has undertaken this analysis in light of the target set by the International Labour Organization of eliminating all the worst forms of child labour by 2016. This report follows the Global Report series on child labour under the follow up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work. Its focus is on the presentation of the new fourth round of child labour estimates for 2012 and to identify the trends from 2000 to 2012. The estimates are based on refined estimation techniques fully comparable with the ones for 2000, 2004 and 2008 rounds.

The Report is divided into four parts. Chapter 1 presents the main results of the newest estimates and trends as well as a brief overview of the driving action behind the results. Chapter 2 provides the details on the newest estimates for the year 2012. Chapter 3 presents a dynamic global picture updating the trends for the period 2000-2012. Chapter 4 sets out some pointers on the way forward. The publication of this Report is timed to provide input into the III Global Conference on Child Labour being held in Brasilia in October 2013.

In contrast to the results reported in the 2010 Global Report, which were published before the Global Conference on Child Labour held in The Hague in May 2010, the newest estimates show

that real advances have been made in the fight against child labour, particularly over the last four years. This means governments, workers and employers organisations, and civil society are on the right track and moving in the right direction. The investment, experience and attention paid to the elimination of child labour, with priority given to its worst forms, are clearly paying off.

However good this news is, it has to be accompanied with an immediate reminder that success in this field can only be relative. As the assessment of the previous Global Report underlined, the progress is still too slow and its pace needs to pick up if the world community is going to come anywhere near to meeting the 2016 goal which it aims to achieve.

The new estimates presented in this Report indicate that **168 million children** worldwide are in child labour, accounting for almost 11 per cent of the child population as a whole. Children in hazardous work that directly endangers their health, safety and moral development make up more than half of all child labourers, numbering 85 million in absolute terms. The largest absolute number of child labourers is found in the Asia and the Pacific region but Sub-Saharan Africa continues to be the region with the highest incidence of child labour with more than one in five children in child labour.

For the 12-year period beginning in 2000, the dynamic picture is one of significant progress.

There were almost 78 million fewer child labourers at the end of this period than at the beginning, a reduction of almost one-third. The fall in girls in child labour was particularly pronounced – there was a reduction of 40 per cent in the number of girls in child labour as compared to 25 per cent for boys. The total number of children in hazardous work, which comprises by far the largest share of those in the worst forms of child labour, declined by over half. Also progress was especially pronounced among younger children, with child labour for this group falling by over one-third between 2000 and 2012.

The decline in child labour was greatest during the most recent four-year period (2008-2012). The Asia and the Pacific region registered by far the largest absolute decline in child labour among 5-17 year-olds for the 2008-2012.

This recent progress is very welcome news, as there were fears that the social hardship caused by the global economic crisis of 2008-2009 and its aftermath could result in an increase in the number of families resorting to child labour in order to make ends meet. The Report suggests reasons why this has not occurred and cautions that close attention must be paid to the risk of child labour among older children when the global economy starts to recover. In many countries the progress that has been achieved is fragile and must be monitored and strengthened to ensure sustainability.

For the first time, global estimates of child labour are presented for different levels of national income. The incidence of child labour is not surprisingly highest in poorer countries. However when seen in absolute terms middle-income countries are host to the largest numbers of child labourers. Therefore the fight against child labour is by no means limited to the poorest countries. The same general pattern holds true across households within countries – child labour is much more common in poorer households but is not limited to poor households.

The new global estimates also provide an update on the sectors where child labourers are

found. Agriculture is by far the most important sector, but the numbers of child labourers in services and industry are by no means negligible. This means that while addressing child labour in the agriculture sector remains an important priority, it is clear that child labour elimination efforts must also focus on the growing share of children in services and in manufacturing – mostly found in the informal economy.

How has this progress over the last 12 years occurred? The decline in child labour has taken place against the backdrop of a sustained global movement against child labour involving a multiplicity of actors and efforts at a variety of levels. The report identifies a number of actions that have driven progress, including political commitment of governments, increasing number of ratifications of the ILO Convention No. 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour and the parallel surge of the ILO Convention No. 138 on the Minimum Age for Admission to Employment, the two principal legal pillars for the global fight against child labour, sound policy choices, as well as solid legislative frameworks.

No one can take sole credit for this result, but many – including ILO and IPEC – have helped draw attention to the negative impacts of child labour on growth, on the future of the societies in which they live, and on the rights of these children. And many actors have contributed to building alternatives to child labour. The ILO's role in leading the fight against child labour through the combination of international labour standards and its supervisory system, technical advisory assistance, support of direct action pilots, capacity building projects, as well as helping to craft global and national frameworks deserves special mention.

We have argued in the Global Reports on child labour that while economic growth is important, policy choices can matter even more. Never has this been more apparent than in the most recent (2008-2012) period covered by the Report, which saw continued progress against child labour despite the global economic crisis and its



aftermath. Increased attention, commitment and ownership by governments are evident. Policy choices and accompanying investments that have been made in education and social protection appear particularly relevant to the decline in child labour.

The significant progress that has been made demonstrates that the overall strategy as set out in the ILO action plans including The Hague Roadmap appears to be sound and producing positive results in terms of strategic policy direction. The integration of action being taken in legislation and enforcement, education, social protection and promotion of decent work opportunities at the national and community levels appears to be a formula for success. Supporting the direct action on the ground with this upstream policy development, implementation and monitoring must remain a high priority for governments and organizations of workers and employers as well as for the donors and other supporting partners.

The key question looking forward is whether we are moving fast enough and targeting action where it is most needed and effective. Clearly the 2016 target date for the elimination of worst forms will not be met. We have warned in previous Global Reports against the danger of complacency and these results add further credence to this warning. Though significant progress has been made, ending the scourge of child labour in the foreseeable future is going to require a substantial acceleration of efforts at all levels. There are 168 million good reasons to do so.

Past experience and evidence from research highlight the particular need to continue to reinforce actions in the four broad policy areas mentioned above: legislation and enforcement mechanisms on minimum age and prohibited work for children, accessible, relevant, and meaningful education and skill development, social protection floors and expanded decent work opportunities for youth above the minimum age for admission to employment and parents.

The Report also identifies the need to reinforce action in relation to age and gender specific responses to child labour, a continued focus on Africa, a continued focus on agriculture and a new focus on manufacturing and services in the informal economy and strengthening national action on monitoring and evaluation of the impact of policies and actions taken on child labour. We must all continue to learn by doing as well as to be innovative and bold in tackling the root causes of child labour.

Another set of suggestions focus on continuing to build the knowledge base, strengthening statistics where they exist and establishing national statistical data sets in all countries. Insufficient information cannot be a justification for failure to act. But at the same time, improving information on child labour is critical to strengthening policy responses and to making certain that resources go to where the need is greatest.

The main message of this Report will hopefully foster hope and determination to stay the course, accelerate the pace and reinforce action. Our work in the elimination of child labour is not near done, but the results of the fourth round of estimates shows clearly that it can be done.

Introduction



This is the fourth issue of the ILO's report series: Global Estimates on Child Labour.¹ The present Report provides new global and regional estimates on child labour for the year 2012 and compares them with the previous estimates for 2000², 2004³ and 2008.⁴

The Report draws on an increasing amount of data from national-level child labour surveys (SIMPOC surveys)⁵ and other sources. Understanding Children's Work (UCW), an inter-agency programme on child labour statistics and research, provided access to non-ILO data and assisted in the analysis.⁶

The new child labour estimates are based on

refined estimation techniques fully comparable with the ones for 2000, 2004 and 2008 rounds. They also benefited from: (a) the international standards on child labour statistics adopted by the 18th International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS) in 2008; and (b) an integrated approach to estimation using standardized tabulation schemes for national data and composite estimation procedures for arriving at regional and global trends.⁷

The remainder of the Report is structured as follows. Chapter 1 highlights the main estimation findings for 2012. Chapter 2 presents the current child labour situation. Chapter 3 presents the dynamic child labour situation, comparing estimation results from 2012 with those of 2000, 2004 and 2008. For Chapters 2 and 3, data are disaggregated to the extent possible by age group, sex, region, branch of economic activity, national income category and status in employment. Chapter 4 provides some pointers for the way forward. The Annex spells out the concepts and methodology underlying the global child labour estimates.

¹ Previously (in 2002, 2006 and 2010), the Global Estimates on Child Labour were released at the same time with and analyzed within the respective year's Global Report on Child Labour by the Director General under the Follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work. The said series of "Global Reports" under the 1998 Declaration was discontinued in 2011.

² ILO-IPEC. *Every Child Counts – New Global Estimates on Child Labour*. ILO International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC). (Geneva, ILO, 2002).

³ ILO-IPEC. Hagemann F., et al.: *Global child labour trends 2000 to 2004*. ILO International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC). (Geneva, ILO, 2006).

⁴ ILO-IPEC. Diallo Y., et al.: *Global child labour developments: Measuring trends from 2004 to 2008*. ILO International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC). (Geneva, ILO, 2010).

⁵ The ILO-IPEC's Statistical Information and Monitoring Programme on Child Labour (SIMPOC) is the statistical arm of IPEC. SIMPOC assists countries in the collection, documentation, processing and analysis of child labour relevant data.

⁶ The Understanding Children's Work (UCW) programme, is a joint programme by the ILO, UNICEF and the World Bank.

⁷ A separate technical publication provides a full account of the estimation methodology and underlying data. See ILO-IPEC. Diallo, Y., et al. : *Global child labour trends 2008 to 2012*. ILO International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC). (Geneva, ILO, 2013).

Main results, progress and challenges



1

New global estimates on the nature and extent of child labour

Far too many children in the world remain trapped in child labour, compromising their individual and our collective futures. The new estimates presented in this Report indicate that 168 million children worldwide are child labourers, accounting for almost 11 per cent of the child population as a whole. Children in hazardous work that directly endangers their health, safety and moral development make up almost half of all child labourers, numbering 85 million in absolute terms. The risk of child labour is highest for children in sub-Saharan Africa, where one child in every five is in child labour. Taken together, the results presented in this Report make it clear that a world without child labour is still too far in the future.

Overview of trends

But the latest global estimate results also indicate clearly that we are moving in the right direction in this regard. As a result of ILO statistical efforts, in this fourth round of the global estimates we are able to put together a dynamic picture of the global child labour situation for the 12-year period beginning in 2000. This dynamic picture is one of significant progress. There were almost 78 million fewer child labourers at the end of this period than at the beginning, a reduction of almost one-third. The fall in girls in child labour was particularly pronounced – in the period 2000-2012 there was a reduction of 40 per cent in the number of girls child labourers as compared to 25 per cent for boys.

Table 1. Children in employment, child labour and hazardous work, 5-17 years age group, 2000-2012

		Children in employment		Child labour		Hazardous work	
		('000)	%	('000)	%	('000)	%
World	2000	351,900	23.0	245,500	16.0	170,500	11.1
	2004	322,729	20.6	222,294	14.2	128,381	8.2
	2008	305,669	19.3	215,209	13.6	115,314	7.3
	2012	264,427	16.7	167,956	10.6	85,344	5.4

Reducing children's involvement in the worst forms of child labour is the most urgent child labour-related challenges facing the global community and the significant progress in this regard is therefore especially noteworthy. The total number of children aged 5-17 years in hazardous work, which comprises by far the largest share of those in the worst forms of child labour, declined by over half during this 12-year period, from 171 to 85 million.

The decline in child labour was greatest during the most recent four-year period (2008-2012) covered by this Report. The number of child labourers decreased by 47 million, from 215 to 168 million, and the number of children in hazardous work declined by 30 million, from 115 million to 85 million, over this period. This recent progress is very welcome news, as there were fears that the social hardship caused by the global economic crisis of 2008-2009 and its aftermath would result in an increase in the number of families resorting to child labour in order to make ends meet. Why has this not occurred? At least

two reasons are likely to be the most important. First, while developing economies were not spared by the crisis, they have generally been quicker to rebound from its effects, although often on a lower growth path. Second, for older children, it is likely that the slower economic growth in the aftermath of the crisis has dampened labour demand, including demand for workers falling in the 15-17 years age group. This argues for close attention to the risk of child labour among older children when the global economy starts to recover.

But another key lesson of this decline is that attention to child labour by States, employers and workers, and other key stakeholders has borne fruit. No one can take sole credit for this result, but many – including ILO and IPEC – have helped draw attention to the negative impacts of child labour on growth, on the future of the societies in which they live, and on the rights of these children. And many actors have contributed to building alternatives to child labour. These are the lessons that will continue to drive ILO-IPEC action in the future.

Other key results

In addition to the global results reported above, the current Report presents new child labour estimates disaggregated by region, sex, age group and national income level. The Report also assesses the characteristics of child labour and how these have changed over time. The key results in each of these areas are presented below.

The regional picture

The largest absolute number of child labourers is found in the Asia and the Pacific region but

Sub-Saharan Africa continues to be the region with the highest incidence of child labour, even though there has been a decline there. For the overall 5-17 years age group, child labourers number almost 77.7 million in Asia and the Pacific. For the same age group, there are 59.0 million child labourers in Sub-Saharan Africa, 12.5 million in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) and 9.2 million in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). Seen in relative terms, however, the biggest concern remains the

Table 2. Children in employment, child labour and hazardous work by region, 5-17 years age group, 2012

Region ^(a)	Children in employment		Child labour		Hazardous work	
	('000)	%	('000)	%	('000)	%
Asia and the Pacific	129,358	15.5	77,723	9.3	33,860	4.1
Latin America and the Caribbean	17,843	12.5	12,505	8.8	9,638	6.8
Sub Saharan Africa	83,570	30.3	59,031	21.4	28,767	10.4
Middle East and North Africa	13,307	12.1	9,244	8.4	5,224	4.7

Note: (a) The regional totals sum to less than the world totals because the latter include countries that are outside of the four main regions reported here.



Table 3. Children in employment, child labour and hazardous work by region, 5-17 years age group, 2008 and 2012

Region		Children population	Children in employment		Child labour		Hazardous work	
		('000)	('000)	%	('000)	%	('000)	%
Asia and the Pacific	2008	853,895	174,460	20.4	113,607	13.3	48,164	5.6
	2012	835,334	129,358	15.5	77,723	9.3	33,860	4.1
Latin America and the Caribbean	2008	141,043	18,851	13.4	14,125	10.0	9,436	6.7
	2012	142,693	17,843	12.5	12,505	8.8	9,638	6.8
Sub-Saharan Africa	2008	257,108	84,229	32.8	65,064	25.3	38,736	15.1
	2012	275,397	83,570	30.3	59,031	21.4	28,767	10.4

Sub-Saharan Africa region. There, more than one in five children (21 per cent) in the 5-17 years age group are in child labour. This compares with 9 per cent in Asia and the Pacific and LAC and 8 per cent in MENA.

The Asia and the Pacific region registered by far the largest absolute decline in child labour among 5-17 year-olds for the 2008-2012 period, from 114 million to 78 million. The number of child labourers in the same age group also decreased in Sub-Saharan Africa (by 6 million), and modestly in LAC (by 1.6 million). It is worth noting that the decline in child labourers in Sub-Saharan Africa region, unlike the other regions, occurred against the backdrop of a significant *increase* in the child population. This means that the decline was entirely attributable to a fall in child labour *incidence* rather than to demographic factors.

The net impact of these changes is that the worldwide population of child labourers has become more concentrated in the Sub-Saharan Africa region. While Sub-Saharan Africa accounted for 30 per cent of all 5-17 year-olds in child labour in 2008, four years later this figure had risen to 35 per cent.

Data shortcomings, however, mean that the regional child labour picture still remains only partial. There are insufficient data to generate separate estimates for the Eastern European and Central Asia regions, for the Pacific and the Caribbean countries or for the industrialised economies.

Child labour and gender

Child labour involvement is much higher among boys than girls for the 5-17 years age group as a whole (99.8 million boys versus 68.2 million girls). The magnitude of the decline in child labour among girls was greater than that of boys, and the gender gap in terms of involvement in employment therefore increased over the 2000-2012 period. While girls accounted 46.2 per cent of all child labourers in 2000 they accounted for only 40.6 per cent in 2012. But it should be noted that these figures might underestimate girls' involvement in child labour relative to that of boys as they do not reflect involvement in household chores, particularly *hazardous* chores, a dimension of child labour that is not included in the global estimates.⁸ Other information available to the ILO indicates that girls may also be more present in less visible and therefore under-reported forms of child labour such as domestic work in private households.

⁸ While, according to the latest international statistical standards, the definition of child labour for measurement purposes can extend to include "hazardous household chores", this dimension of child labour is not included in the global estimates. This is due to data shortcomings and due to the lack of consensus around what constitutes hazardous household chores for the purpose of child labour measurement. See "Resolution II, Resolution concerning statistics of child labour" in ILO. *Report of the Conference*. 18th International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS), document ICLS/18/2008/IV/FINAL. Geneva, 24 November-5 December 2008.

Table 4. Children in employment, child labour and hazardous work by sex, 5-17 years age group, 2000-2012

Sex		Children in employment		Child labour		Hazardous work	
		('000)	%	('000)	%	('000)	%
Boys	2000	184,200	23.4	132,200	16.8	95,700	12.2
	2004	171,150	21.3	119,575	14.9	74,414	9.3
	2008	175,777	21.4	127,761	15.6	74,019	9.0
	2012	148,327	18.1	99,766	12.2	55,048	6.7
Girls	2000	167,700	22.5	113,300	15.2	74,800	10.0
	2004	151,579	19.9	102,720	13.5	53,966	7.1
	2008	129,892	16.9	87,508	11.4	41,296	5.4
	2012	116,100	15.2	68,190	8.9	30,296	4.0

Child labour and age

Children in the 5-11 years age group account for by far the largest share of all child labourers: 73 million, or 44 per cent of the total child labour population. These young child labourers constitute a particular policy concern as they are the most vulnerable to workplace abuses and compromised education. It is encouraging therefore that progress was especially pronounced among younger children, with child labour for this group falling by over one-third (65.9 million) between 2000 and 2012. Progress fluctuated among older, 15-17 year-old children. While there was an absolute decline in child labour of 11.7 million for

this age group over the 2000-2012 period there was a sharp rise in child labour between 2004 and 2008. Again, these fluctuations are a reminder of the close link between older child labourers and the cyclical evolution of the economy. This group of older child labourers, numbering 47.5 million, will clearly also require close policy attention moving forward.

Table 5. Children in employment, child labour and hazardous work by age group, 2000-2012

Age group		Children in employment		Child labour		Hazardous work	
		('000)	%	('000)	%	('000)	%
5-11 years	2012	73,072	8.5	73,072	8.5	18,499	2.2
12-14 years	2012	70,994	19.6	47,381	13.1	19,342	5.3
5-14 years	2000	211,000	17.6	186,300	15.5	111,300	9.3
	2004	196,047	16.2	170,383	14.1	76,470	6.3
	2008	176,452	14.5	152,850	12.6	52,895	4.3
	2012	144,066	11.8	120,453	9.9	37,841	3.1
15-17 years	2000	140,900	42.4	59,200	17.8	59,200	17.8
	2004	126,682	35.2	51,911	14.4	51,911	14.4
	2008	129,217	35.0	62,419	16.9	62,419	16.9
	2012	120,362	33.0	47,503	13.0	47,503	13.0



Child labour and national income⁹

For the first time, global estimates of child labour are presented for different levels of national income. The incidence of child labour is not surprisingly highest in poorer countries. Twenty-three per cent of children in low-income countries are child labourers, compared to 9 per cent of children in lower middle-income countries and to 6 per cent of children in upper middle-income countries.

When seen in absolute terms, the picture is somewhat different. Middle-income countries are host to the largest numbers of child labourers: there are a total of 93.6 million child labourers in middle-income countries, of which 12.3 million are in upper middle-income countries, while child labourers in low-income countries number 74.4 million. The fight against child labour, therefore, is by no means limited to the poorest countries.

Another recent ILO report indicates that the same general pattern holds across households *within* countries – child labour is much more common in poorer households but is not limited to poor households.¹⁰ Indeed, we know from country-level statistics¹¹ that there are substantial numbers of child labourers from households in the higher income quintiles in most developing countries.

These results make it clear that while income and poverty are important determinants of child labour, they are in no way the only reasons families send their children to work. This in turn indicates that action oriented towards raising national and family income levels is important but will not be sufficient in and of itself to eliminate child labour.

Sectoral distribution of child labour

The new global estimates also provide an update on the sectors where child labourers are found. Agriculture is by far the most important sector, accounting for 59 per cent of all those in child labour and over 98 million children in absolute terms. But the numbers of child labourers in services¹² and industry¹³ are by no means negligible. A total of 54 million are found in the services sector (of which 11.5 million are in domestic work) and 12 million are found in industry. Boys outnumber girls in all sectors with the important exception of domestic work, a form of work that is hidden from public view and outside the reach of workplace inspections, leaving these children particularly vulnerable to exploitation and abuse.

Table 6. Child labour distribution by level of national income, 5-17 years age group, 2012

National income category	Total children (‘000)	Child labour (‘000)	Child labour (%)
Low income	330,257	74,394	22.5
Lower middle income	902,174	81,306	9.0
Upper middle income	197,977	12,256	6.2

⁹ The incidence of child labour is not estimated for high income countries due to data limitations.

¹⁰ ILO-IPEC. *World report on child labour: Economic vulnerability, social protection and the fight against child labour*. ILO International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC). (Geneva, ILO, 2013).

¹¹ UCW Country Statistics database on child labour, available at: www.ucw-project.org/Pages/ChildLabIndicator.aspx.

¹² The service sub-sectors of most relevance for child labour include hotels and restaurant, wholesale and retail trade (commerce); maintenance and repair of motor vehicle; transport; other community, social and personal service activities; and domestic work.

¹³ The industry sub-sectors of most relevance for child labour include construction, mining and manufacturing.

There appears to have been an increase in the relative importance of child labour in services in recent years. The share of total child labourers in services rose from 26 per cent in 2008 to 32 per cent in 2012. Some of this increase could be due in part to the fact that fewer child labourers are in “not defined” category in 2012, pointing to a better measurement of children in services sector, in particular those in the informal economy.

These global results are consistent with trends

observed in countries such as Mexico, Brazil, and Indonesia which also show that child labour *outside* the agriculture sector, and particularly child labour in services, is gaining in relative importance. While addressing child labour in the agriculture sector remains an important priority, it is clear that child labour elimination efforts must also focus on the growing share of children in services and the non-negligible number of children in manufacturing.

Table 7. Sectoral distribution of child labour, number and percentage share, 5-17 years age group, 2008 and 2012

Sector ^(a)	2008		2012	
	('000)	% share	('000)	% share
Agriculture	129,161	60.0	98,422	58.6
Industry	15,068	7.0	12,092	7.2
Services	55,109	25.6	54,250	32.3
(of which domestic work)	(10,557)	(4.9)	(11,528)	(6.9)

Note: (a) Excluding children with missing information on economic sector.

Action driving the estimates and trends

How has this progress over the last 12 years occurred? The decline in child labour has taken place against the backdrop of a sustained global movement against child labour involving a multiplicity of actors and efforts at a variety of levels.

Implementation of ILO Conventions

Political commitment by governments has been fundamental during the last 12 years. This commitment is perhaps best illustrated by the historically rapid ratification of the ILO Convention No. 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour and the parallel surge of the ILO Convention No. 138 on the Minimum Age for Admission to Employment, the two principal legal pillars for the global fight against child labour.¹⁴ Convention No. 182 – adopted in 1999 – has recorded the fastest pace of

ratification ever among ILO Conventions, and 2000 was the year in which Convention No. 138 crossed the mark of 100 ratifications. In ratifying these Conventions, countries are formally acknowledging that child labour is no longer acceptable and are taking on responsibility for ending it. On ratification, States also agree to report to the ILO on a regular basis their progress in implementation, thus assuming the responsibility of accountability to the international community. Figure 1 lists follow-up actions reported by ratifying States under Conventions Nos. 138 and 182 as noted by the ILO's Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations (CEACR).

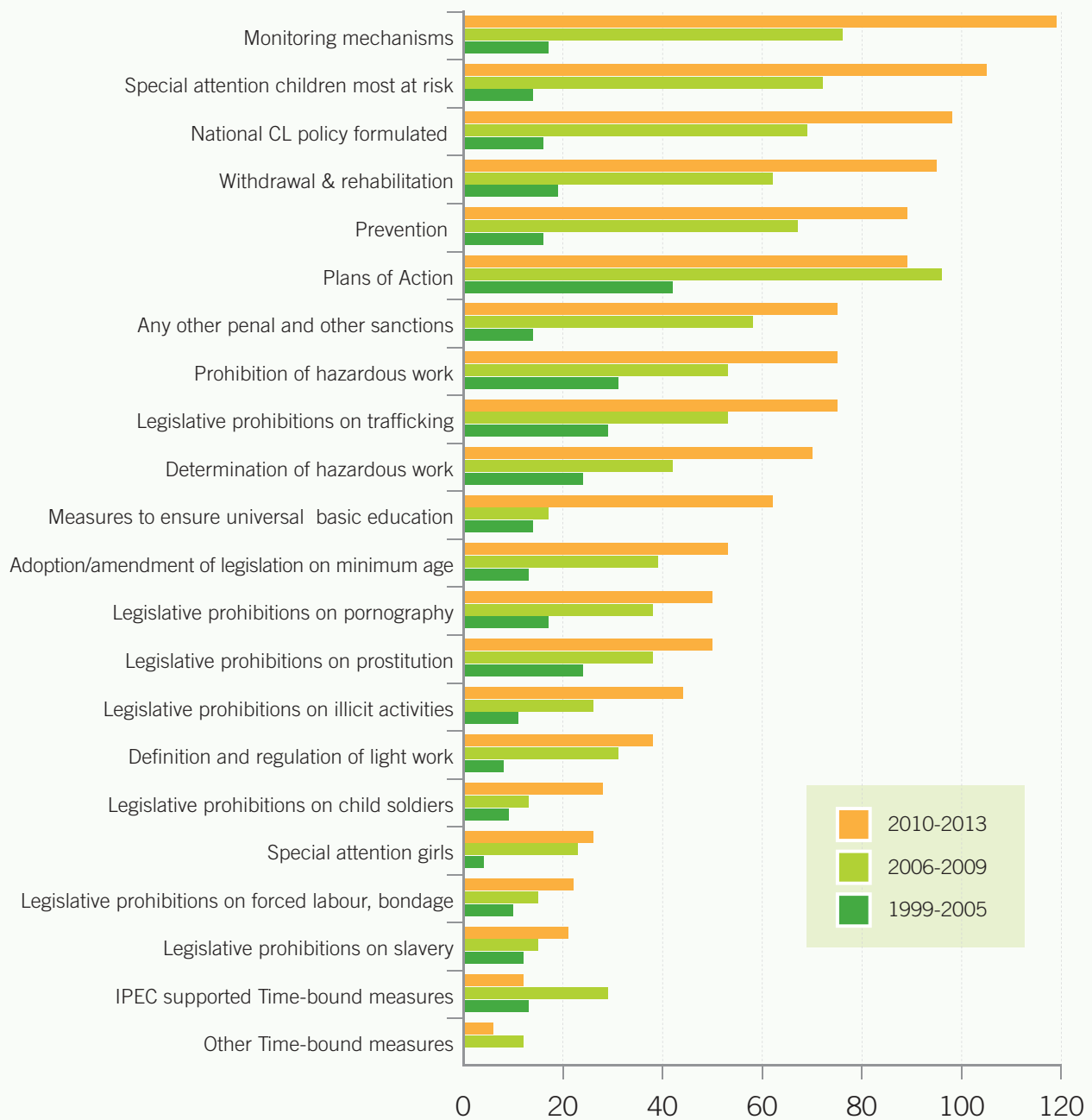
These ILO standards on child labour have acquired recognition as part of the internationally accepted standards relating to children's rights. For instance, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child has always taken ILO standards on child labour as the benchmark for assessing the situation of economic exploitation in examining periodic reports from States Parties to the Convention on the

¹⁴ To date, Convention No. 138 has been ratified by 166 States and Convention No. 182 by 177, out of 185 member States of the ILO, both approaching the goal of universal ratification.

¹⁵ To date, Convention No. 138 has been ratified by 166 States and Convention No. 182 by 177, out of 185 member States of the ILO, both approaching the goal of universal ratification.



Figure 1. Number of actions reported under Conventions Nos. 138 and 182 by type, 1999-2005, 2006-2009 and 2010-2013



Rights of the Child (CRC). This inter-linkage of ILO and CRC has been underlined on many occasions in UN Resolutions and reports.¹⁶

¹⁶ See, for example, United Nations Secretary-General. *Status of the Convention on the Rights of the Child*, UN document A/64/172. Sixty-fourth session of the UN General Assembly, 27 July 2009, Item 67 (a) of the provisional agenda, Promotion and protection of the rights of children. Its paragraph 13 offers a simple definition of child labour by stating that : “Child labour concerns work for which the child is either too young — work done below the required minimum age — or work which, because

of its detrimental nature or conditions, is altogether considered unacceptable for children and is prohibited.” This is a simpler statement of the requirements of ILO standards.



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Policy choices

Indeed, more important than the political and legal commitments *per se* is the fact that these commitments have been accompanied by sound policy choices, as well as solid legislative frameworks. We have argued in the Global Reports on child labour that while economic growth is important, policy choices can matter even more. Never has this been more apparent than in the most recent (2008-2012) period covered by the Report, which saw continued progress against child labour despite the global economic crisis and its aftermath.

Policy choices and accompanying investments that have been made in two areas appear particularly relevant to the decline in child labour over the last 12 years. The first is *education*. The worldwide Education For All (EFA) movement has helped marshal major new investments in improving school access and quality, which in turn has provided more families with the opportunity to send their children to school rather than to the workplace and has made it worthwhile for them to do so. It is not chance that the rapid decline in

child labour since 2000 coincided with a major *increase* in school attendance. Nonetheless, breaking the link between child labour and educational disadvantage remains a major challenge, as highlighted by a recent report by the UN Special Envoy for Global Education Gordon Brown.¹⁷

The second policy area is *social protection*. While extending access to social security also remains a pressing challenge globally, there is clear multi-country evidence indicating that investments in social security are associated with lower levels of child labour.¹⁸ Again, this is not coincidental: social security can be essential to mitigating the social and economic vulnerabilities that can lead families to resort to child labour.

¹⁷ Brown, Gordon. *Child Labor & Educational Disadvantage – Breaking the Link, Building Opportunity*. A Review by Gordon Brown, United Nations Special Envoy for Global Education (London, 2012).

¹⁸ ILO-IPEC. *World report on child labour: Economic vulnerability, social protection and the fight against child labour*. ILO International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC). (Geneva, ILO, 2013).



Legislation

Good national legislation on child labour – in line with international labour standards – is a fundamental basis for all action, and in particular, in defining what constitutes child labour to be eliminated,¹⁹ and providing the basis for efforts to gather statistical information on child labour. Above all, it is legislation that sets forth specific rights and responsibilities (not only of individuals but also of the State and various bodies and authorities), and permits legal remedies for victims and sanctions for violators. Many countries have recently been taking action for the establishment or revision of their lists of what constitutes hazardous work, and including the prohibition of these kinds of work for anyone under 18 years of age as part of enforceable legislation.²⁰

ILO's special role

The ILO's special role in the elimination of child labour cannot be overemphasized. Its great advantage is the involvement of its social partners (employers' and workers' organizations) along with governments in all its action as participants and not as simple observers. This is imperative in promoting the agenda of eliminating child labour as a vital part of the development agenda of a country, as well as in mobilizing both businesses and the people working therein.

Moreover, the ILO has been playing a key role in providing an impetus to and framework for global efforts against child labour, both through its standard-setting and technical assistance. Standard-setting is not limited to the adoption²¹ of Conventions and Recommendations but also



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¹⁹ ILO-IPEC and UCW. *Joining forces against child labour. Inter-agency report for The Hague Global Child Labour Conference of 2010*. ILO International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC). (Geneva, ILO, 2010). See Chapter 7, in particular.

²⁰ Several reports and tools concerning hazardous child labour are available in the hazardous work page of the ILO-IPEC website at: <http://www.ilo.org/ipec/facts/WorstFormsofChildLabour/Hazardouschildlabour/lang--en/index.htm>.

²¹ However, the adoption of new standards greatly increases international attention and action on specific topics. One recent example is child labour in domestic work, through the adoption by the ILO of a new Convention No. 189 and Recommendation No. 201 in 2011. See for details: ILO-IPEC. *Ending child labour in domestic work and protecting young workers from abusive working conditions*. Report for the World Day Against Child Labour 2013. ILO International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC). (Geneva, ILO, 2013).

includes the continued international monitoring through reporting as demonstrated in the above Figure 1 – showing the specific action taken by each ratifying State in terms of the specific commitments made through the Conventions.

The ILO has also been providing technical advisory assistance and support for setting action plans at the global level – from that of 2006 following up on the second *Global Report on child labour*,²² through the one in 2010 including *The Hague Roadmap*. The significant progress that has been made over the last twelve years and in particular over the last four years demonstrates that the global direction is on the right course. The overall strategy as set out in *The Hague Roadmap* appears to be sound and producing positive results in terms of policy direction.

Moving forward

The key question looking forward is whether we are moving fast enough and taking action where it is most needed and effective. Clearly the 2016 target date for the elimination of worst forms will not be met. This point is illustrated in Figure 2, which shows the decline in child labour and hazardous work that will occur during the 2012-2020 period if the pace of progress during 2008-2012 is maintained. This shows that at the current pace we will fall substantially short of our 2016 target. Indeed, even reaching this goal four years later, in 2020, would require an increase in the annual rate of reduction from the current 6.5 per cent to *24 per cent*. We have warned in previous Global Reports against the danger of complacency and these results add further credence to this warning. Clearly, “business as usual” is not enough. Though significant progress has been made, ending the scourge of child labour in the foreseeable future is going to require a substantial acceleration of efforts at all levels.

The benefits to ending child labour cannot be overstated. Children who grow up free from child labour have the opportunity to realize fully their rights to education, leisure and healthy development, in turn helping them to make a successful transition into decent work upon completing their education and to be contributing members of society as adults. The costs of inaction are equally clear. Child labour can seriously endanger children’s immediate health and safety, as well as their health status later in life. This is particularly the case for the children in the worst forms of child labour. Child labour also compromises children’s ability to enrol and stay in school, and to benefit from the time they do spend in the classroom. As has been highlighted in previous Global Reports, turning a blind eye to child labour can erode the fabric of societies and can impoverish or even destroy the human capital needed for economic growth and poverty reduction.



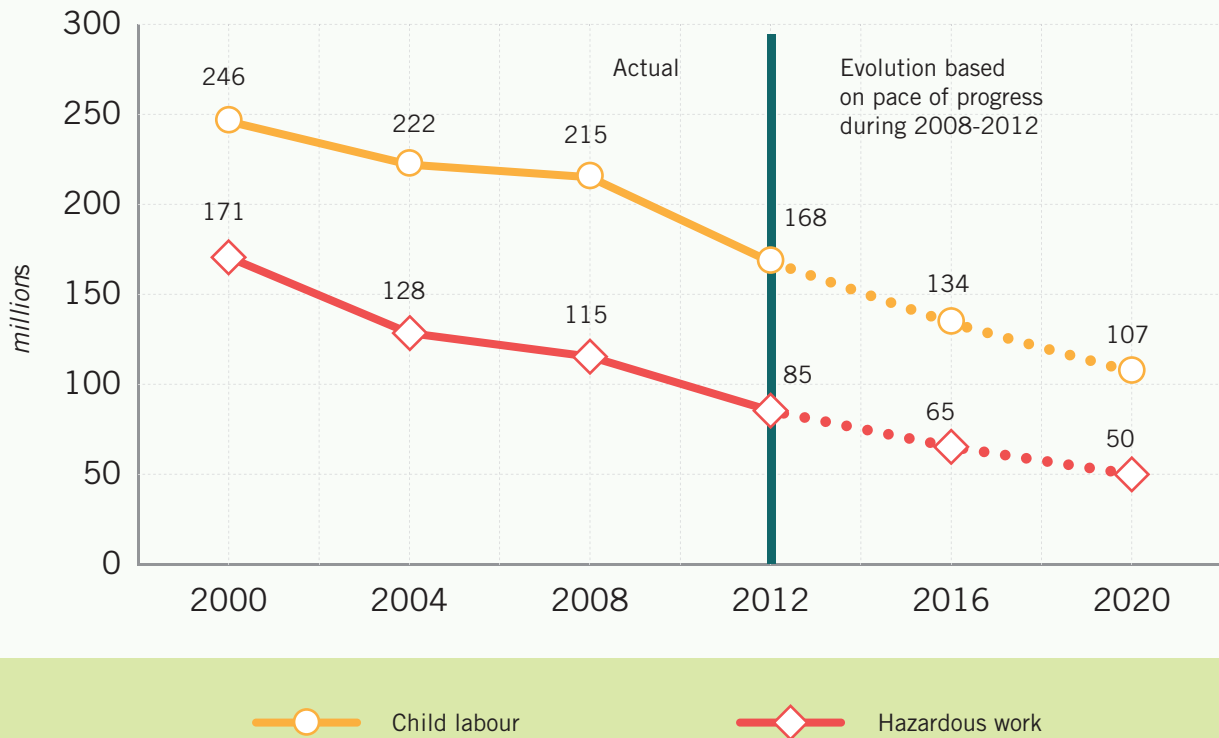
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²² This report was the origin of the target for eliminating the worst forms of child labour in 10 years, i.e. by 2016, encouraged by the sharp decrease in hazardous work shown in the very first trend analysis.



Figure 2. Number of children in child labour and hazardous work, actual 2000-2012 and levels for 2016-2020 assuming pace of progress during 2008-2012

The current pace of progress is too slow to reach the 2016 target of eliminating worst forms of child labour.



The current picture: global child labour estimates for 2012



2

Overview

Child labour remains much too common in the world, although it has decreased significantly since 2000. Child labourers in the 5-17 years age group number 168 million, amounting to almost 11 per cent of all children in this age group. Children in hazardous work directly endangering

their health, safety and moral development make up more than half of all child labourers, numbering 85 million in absolute terms. Children in employment, who comprise both child labourers and children in forms of employment not constituting child labour, number 264 million,

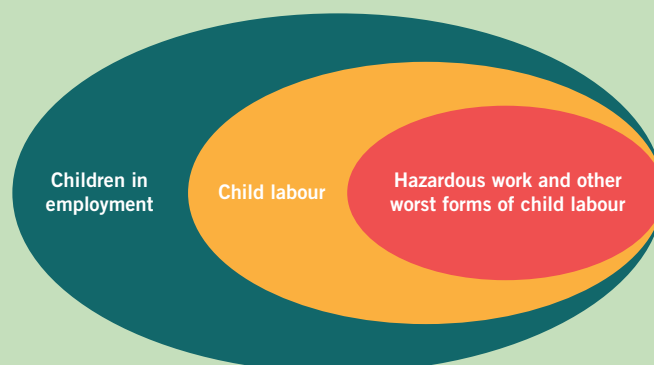
Table 8. Children in employment, child labour and hazardous work by sex, age group and region, 2012

Sex, age group and region		Total children	Children in employment		Child labour		Hazardous work	
		('000)	('000)	%	('000)	%	('000)	%
World (5-17 years)		1,585,566	264,427	16.7	167,956	10.6	85,344	5.4
Sex	Boys	819,877	148,327	18.1	99,766	12.2	55,048	6.7
	Girls	765,690	116,100	15.2	68,190	8.9	30,296	4.0
Age group	5-11 years	858,925	73,072	8.5	73,072	8.5	18,499	2.2
	12-14 years	362,146	70,994	19.6	47,381	13.1	19,342	5.3
	5-14 years	1,221,071	144,066	11.8	120,453	9.9	37,841	3.1
	15-17 years	364,495	120,362	33.0	47,503	13.0	47,503	13.0
Region	Asia and the Pacific	835,334	129,358	15.5	77,723	9.3	33,860	4.1
	Latin America and the Caribbean	142,693	17,843	12.5	12,505	8.8	9,638	6.8
	Sub Saharan Africa	275,397	83,570	30.3	59,031	21.4	28,767	10.4
	MENA	110,411	13,307	12.1	9,244	8.4	5,224	4.7

Statistical concepts and definitions used in this Report

Three main international conventions – the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention No. 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour and the ILO Convention No. 138 on the Minimum Age for Admission to Employment – together set the legal boundaries for child labour and provide the legal basis for national and international actions against it. The Resolution concerning statistics of child labour (Resolution II) adopted at the 18th International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS) in 2008^(a) translates these legal standards into statistical terms for the purpose of child labour measurement. The statistical concepts and definitions used in this Report are in accordance with this ICLS resolution.

Hazardous work is a subcategory of child labour, which is in turn, a subcategory of children in employment.



Children in employment are those engaged in any economic activity for at least one hour during the reference period. Economic activity covers all market production and certain types of non-market production (principally the production of goods and services for own use). It includes forms of work in both the formal and informal economies; inside and outside family settings; work for pay or profit (in cash or in kind, part-time or full-time), or as a domestic worker outside the child's own household for an employer (with or without pay). The terms "working children" and "children in employment" are used interchangeably in this publication. Both denote a broader concept than child labour.

Children in child labour are a subset of *children in employment*. They include those in the worst forms of child labour and children in employment below the minimum age, excluding children in permissible light work, if applicable. Child labour is therefore a narrower concept than "children in employment"; child labour excludes those children who are working only a few hours a week in permitted light work and those above the minimum age whose work is not classified as a worst form of child labour, including "hazardous work" in particular.

Hazardous work by children is defined as any activity or occupation that, by its nature or type, has or leads to adverse effects on the child's safety, health and moral development. In general, hazardous work may include night work and long hours of work; exposure 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; and work in an unhealthy environment which may, for example, expose children hazardous substances, agents or processes, or to temperatures, noise levels, or vibrations damaging their health. Hazardous work by children is often treated as a proxy for the Worst Forms of Child Labour. This is for two reasons. First, reliable national data on the worst forms other than hazardous work, such as commercial sexual exploitation and children engaged in conflict, are still difficult to come by. Second, children in hazardous work account for the overwhelming majority of those in the worst forms.

The concepts and definitions used in this Report are discussed in more detail in the Annex.

Note: (a) See "Resolution II, Resolution concerning statistics of child labour" in ILO. *Report of the Conference*. 18th International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS), document ICLS/18/2008/IV/FINAL, 24 November-5 December 2008, Geneva.



or 17 per cent of the 5-17 years age group.

Behind these headline numbers there are substantial differences by region, age and sex, as reported in Table 8. The specific patterns are discussed in more detail in the following sections of this chapter. The chapter looks separately at children in child labour and children in hazardous work.²³

Involvement in child labour

Child labour is the subset of children's work that is injurious, negative or undesirable to children and that should be targeted for elimination. Three main international conventions – the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the ILO Convention No. 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour and the ILO Convention No. 138 on the Minimum Age – together set the legal boundaries for child labour, and provide the legal basis for national and international actions against it. There are a total of 168 million children in child labour in the 5-17 years age group including 120 million in child labour in the 5-14

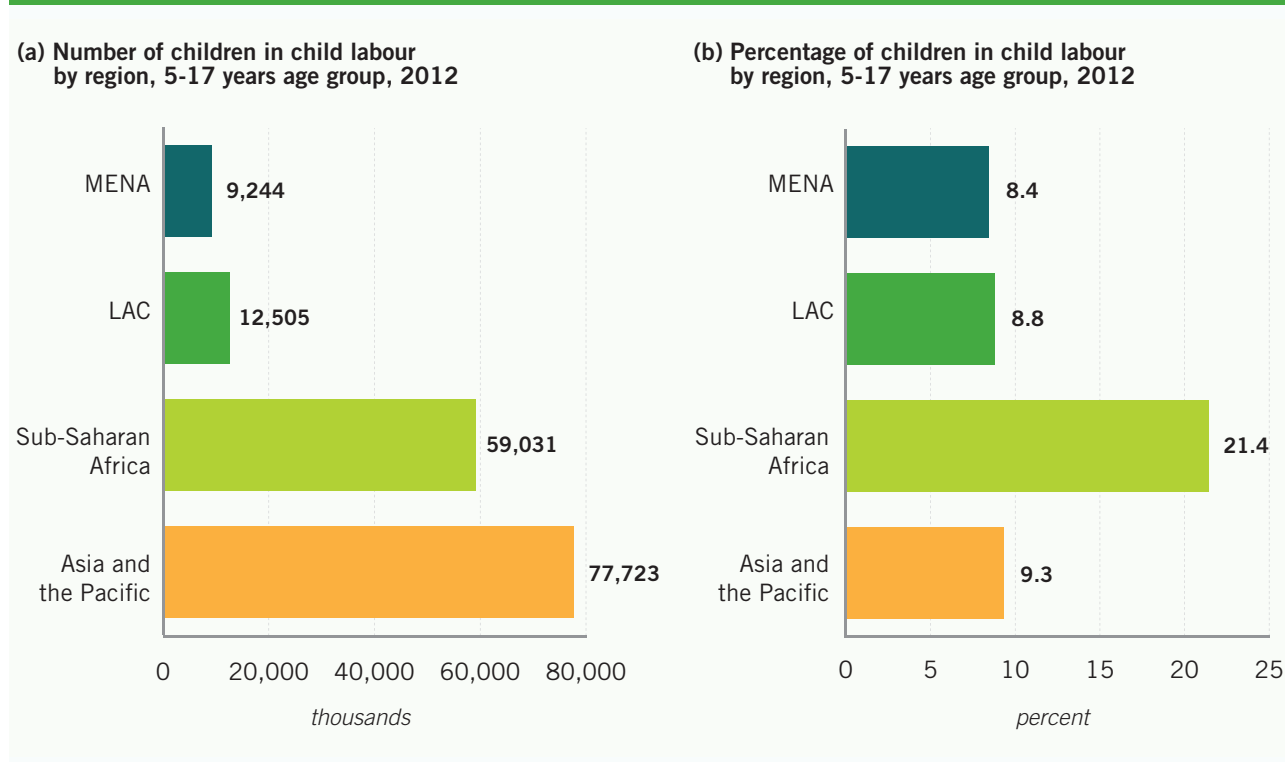
years age group. In relative terms, 11 per cent of all 5-17 year-olds and 10 per cent of all 5-14 year-olds, are in child labour.

Child labour by region

Regional differences in involvement in child labour are considerable: the largest *absolute number* of child labourers is found in the Asia and the Pacific region while Sub-Saharan Africa is the region with the highest *rate* of child labour. For the overall 5-17 years age group, child labourers number some 77.7 million in Asia and the Pacific, 59.0 million in Sub-Saharan Africa, 12.5 million in Latin America and the Caribbean and 9.2 million in the Middle East and North Africa.

Seen in relative terms, however, the biggest concern remains the Sub-Saharan Africa region. There, more than one in five children (21 per cent) in the 5-17 years age group are in child labour. This compares with 9 per cent in Asia and the Pacific and LAC, and with 8 per cent in MENA.

Figure 3. Child labour by region, 5-17 years age group, 2012



²³ Concepts and definitions used in this Report are discussed in detail in the Annex.

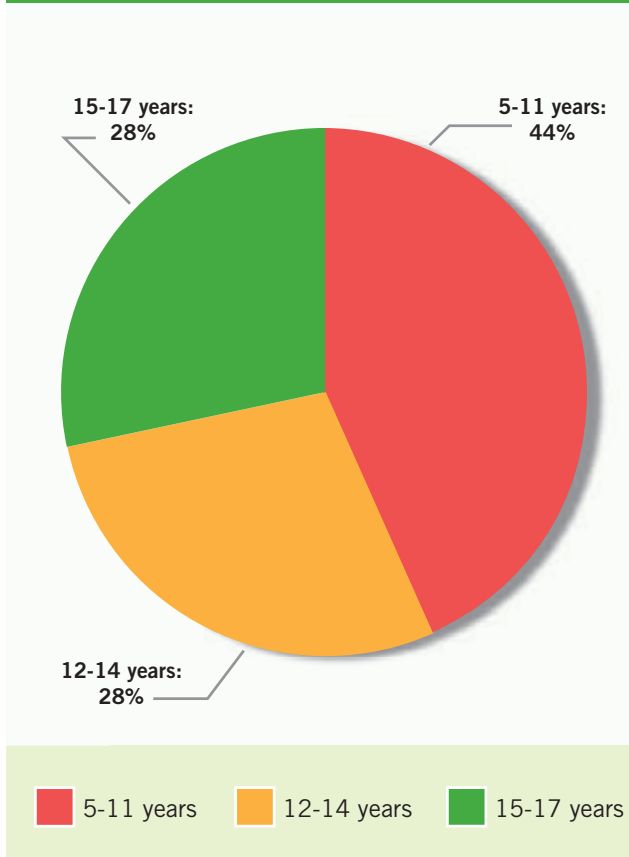
Child labour by age

Children in the 5-11 years age group account for by far the largest share of child labourers, 73 million in absolute terms and 44 per cent of the total child labour population. These young child labourers constitute a particular policy concern as they are most vulnerable to workplace abuses and compromised education. The shares of the 12-14 and 15-17 years age groups in the total child labour population are roughly equal at 28 per cent or 47 million in absolute terms.

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Figure 4. Child labour distribution by age group, 2012



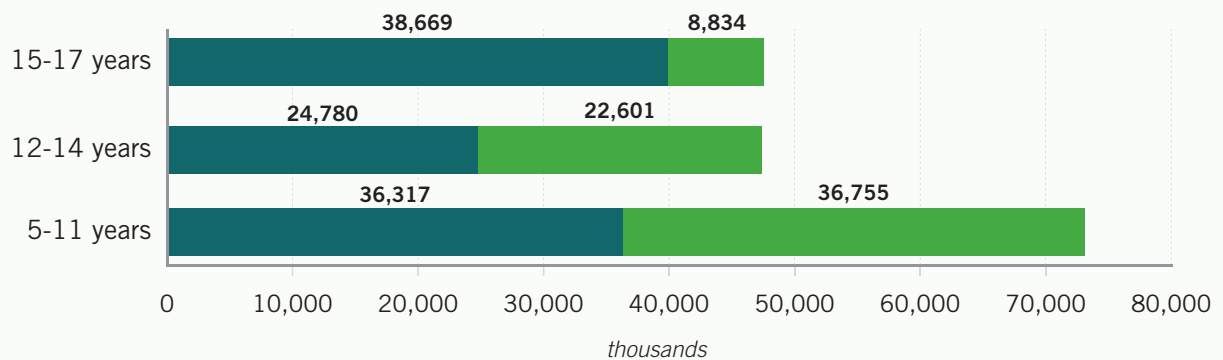
Child labour by sex

While child labour involvement is much higher among boys than girls for the 5-17 years age group as a whole (99.8 million versus 68.2 million girls), this overall gender gap is a reflection entirely of gender differences in child labour among older children. There is almost no difference by sex in the involvement of 5-11 year-olds in child labour – boys and girls each make up roughly half of the overall child labour population for this age group. A gender gap begins to appear in the 12-14 years age range, where boys account for 52 per cent of all child labourers and outnumber girls by 2.2 million. The gender gap rises dramatically in the 15-17 years age range, where boys account for 81 per cent of all child labourers and outnumber girls by 29.8 million.

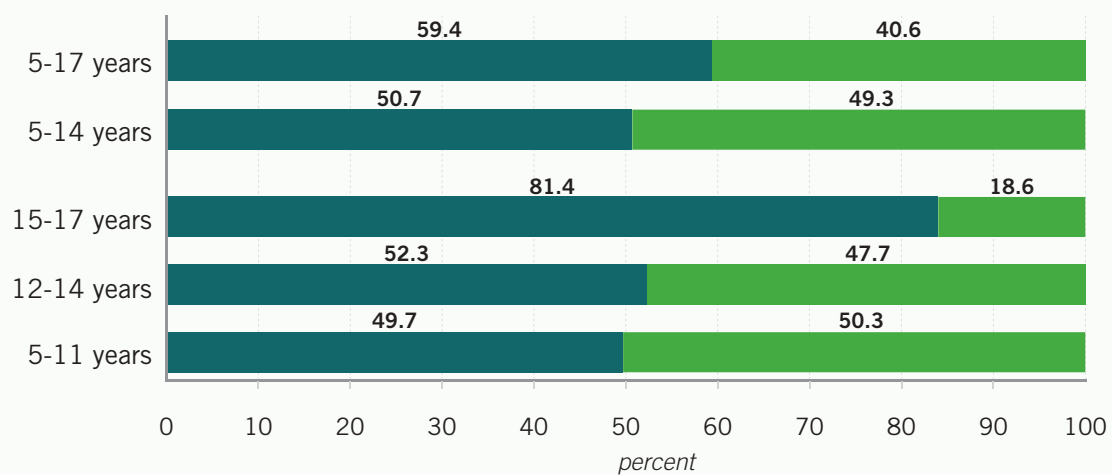


Figure 5. Children in child labour by sex and age group, 2012

(a) Number of children in child labour by sex and age group, 2012



(b) Distribution of children in child labour by sex and age group, 2012



Boys Girls

These figures do not, however, capture involvement in household chores, a form of work performed predominantly by girls in many societies. While, according to the latest international statistical standards,²⁴ the definition of child labour for measurement purposes can extend to include “hazardous household chores”, this dimension of child labour is not included in the global estimates. This is due to data shortcomings and due to the lack of consensus around what constitutes hazardous household chores for the purpose of child labour measurement. Girls may also be more present

in less visible and therefore underreported forms of child labour such as domestic work in private households.

²⁴ See “Resolution II, Resolution concerning statistics of child labour” in ILO. *Report of the Conference*. 18th International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS), document ICLS/18/2008/IV/FINAL. Geneva, 24 November-5 December 2008.

Involvement in hazardous work

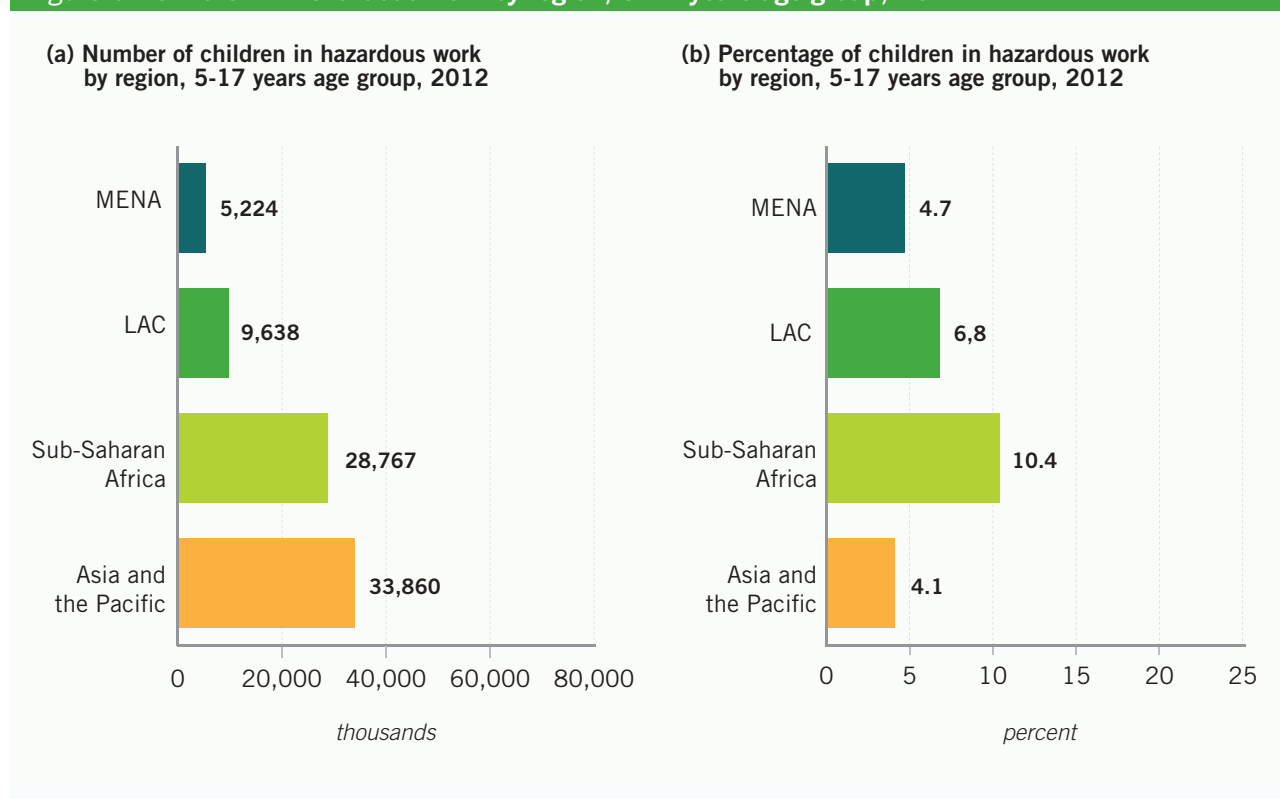
Hazardous work by children, which is one aspect of the worst forms of child labour (see below), is any activity or occupation that, by its nature or type, has or leads to adverse effects on the child's safety, health and moral development.²⁵ More specifically, hazardous work is work in dangerous or unhealthy conditions that could result in a child being killed, injured and/or made ill as a consequence of poor safety and health standards and working arrangements.²⁶ The elimination of hazardous work, therefore, constitutes a particularly pressing challenge facing the global community. There are a total of 85 million children in hazardous work in the 5-17 years age group and 38 million in hazardous work in the core

5-14 years age group. Hazardous work accounts for about one-half (51 per cent) of child labour among 5-17 year-olds and for about one-third (31 per cent) of child labour among 5-14 year-olds.

Hazardous work by region

The largest numbers of children in *hazardous work* are again found in the Asia and the Pacific (33.9 million) and Sub-Saharan Africa (28.8 million) regions. There are 9.6 million children in hazardous work in the LAC region and 5.2 million in MENA. The percentage of children in hazardous work is highest in the Sub-Saharan Africa region (10 per cent), followed by the LAC region (7 per cent), MENA region (5 per cent) and Asia and the Pacific region (4 per cent).

Figure 6. Children in hazardous work by region, 5-17 years age group, 2012



²⁵ Hazardous work is reported separately from the worst forms generally because of the far greater availability of data on this aspect of the worst forms of child labour, compared to other aspects of the problem.

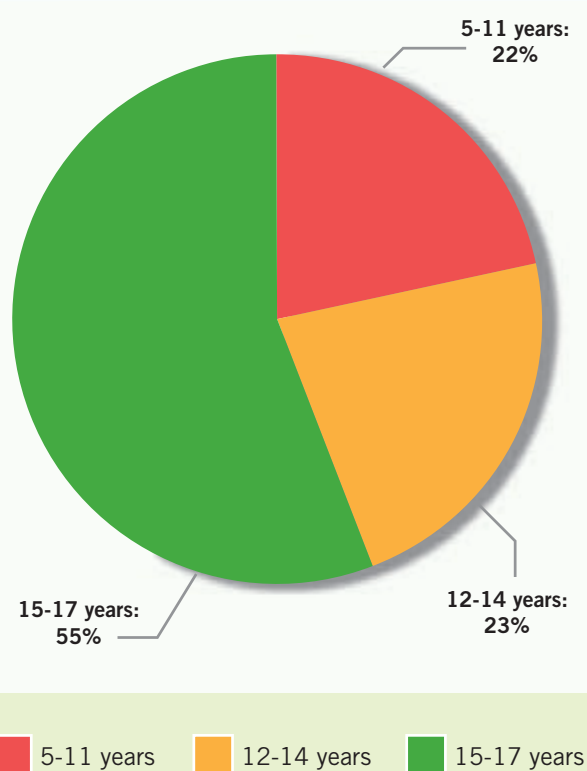
²⁶ See the "hazardous child labour" page at the ILO-IPEC website at <http://www.ilo.org/ipec/facts/WorstFormsofChildLabour/Hazardouschildlabour/lang--en/index.htm>.



Hazardous work by age

Children aged 15-17 years make up the largest share of the overall population of 85 million children in hazardous work, although numbers of younger children performing hazardous work also remain considerable. Children aged 15-17 years account for 55 per cent (47.5 million) of all children in hazardous work, while 12-14 year-olds account for 23 per cent (19.3 million) and 5-11 year-olds account for 22 per cent (18.5 million).

Figure 7. Hazardous work distribution by age group, 2012



Hazardous work by sex

For the 5-17 years age group as a whole, boys account for nearly two-thirds of all children in hazardous work. This pattern, however, is again driven entirely by older children in the 15-17 years age group, in which boys account for 81 per cent of all children in hazardous work (and in child labour).²⁷ Among younger children, the gender pattern is in fact *the opposite*: the number of girls in hazardous work is greater than that of boys, and by a considerable margin. For 5-11 year-olds, girls account for 58 per cent of all children in hazardous work, outnumbering boys by 2.8 million. For 12-14 year-olds, girls account for 56 per cent of all children in hazardous work and outnumber boys by 2.3 million. It is also worth recalling again that hazardous household chores, which are likely predominantly performed by girls, are not reflected in these figures.

Forced labour of children

Global estimates of children in worst forms *other than hazardous* are not measured directly, owing to the often hidden and illicit nature of these extreme forms of child labour and the consequent lack of reliable data on them in most countries.²⁸ However, according to the 2012 ILO estimate of forced labour,²⁹ there were about 5.5 million children³⁰ aged 17 years and below, representing

²⁷ Recall that for this age range, child labour is restricted to children performing hazardous work.

²⁸ Worst forms other than hazardous refer to Art. 3 (a)-(c) of ILO Convention No. 182: (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; and (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. Worst forms other than hazardous are included in the global estimate to the extent that they also form part of the measurement of employment below minimum age and hazardous work by children.

²⁹ The concept "forced or compulsory labour" is all work or service which is exacted from any person under the threat of a penalty and for which the person has not offered himself or herself voluntary. It can occur where work is forced upon people by State authorities, by private enterprises or by individuals. For more details on methodology and underlying data, see ILO, 2012. ILO Global Estimate of Forced Labour. Results and Methodology.

³⁰ This figure shows around the same level as what the ILO estimated in 2002 as that of children in forced or bonded labour

26 per cent of the global total of 20.9 million forced labour victims: involved in various forms of forced labour: for sexual exploitation (960,000 children); forced labour for labour exploitation (3,780,000); and forced labour imposed by the State (709,000). While it is not possible to calculate the exact extent of the overlap, it can be assumed that many of these child victims of forced labour are also accounted for as being engaged in hazardous work. ILO continues to take

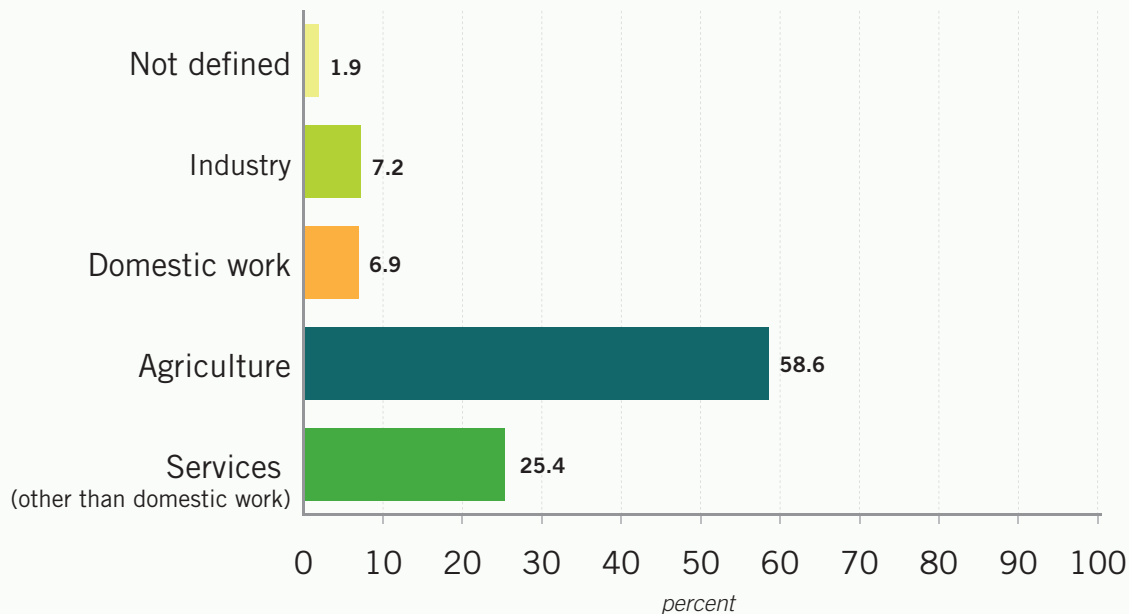
further action with a view to refining the estimation of forced labour of both children and adults, including the publication of survey guidelines.³¹ Various efforts are in place to measure directly the worst forms of child labour other than hazardous work for future ILO global estimates.³²

(5.7 million) in the very first round of the global child labour estimates, even though they are not comparable technically speaking. See ILO-IPEC. *Every Child Counts – New Global Estimates on Child Labour*. ILO International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC). (Geneva, ILO, 2002), p. 25.

³¹ ILO. *Hard to see, harder to count – Survey guidelines to estimate forced labour of adults and children*. ILO Special Action Programme to Combat Forced Labour (SAP-FL) and ILO International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC). (Geneva, 2012).

³² See, for example, ILO. *Sampling elusive populations: Applications to studies of child labour* (forthcoming).

Figure 8. Sectoral distribution of children in child labour, 5-17 years age group, 2012





Characteristics of child labour

The new global estimates also provide an update on the sectors where child labourers are found. *Agriculture* is by far the most important sector, accounting for 59 per cent of all those in child labour and over 98 million children in absolute terms. Child labour in agriculture consists primarily of work on smallholder family farms, although it also extends to activities such as livestock production, fishing and aquaculture. Agriculture is one of the three most dangerous sectors in terms of work-related fatalities, non-fatal accidents and occupational diseases.³³

The numbers of child labourers in *services and industry* are also far from negligible. A total of 54 million are found in the services sector and 12 million in industry. The services sector includes

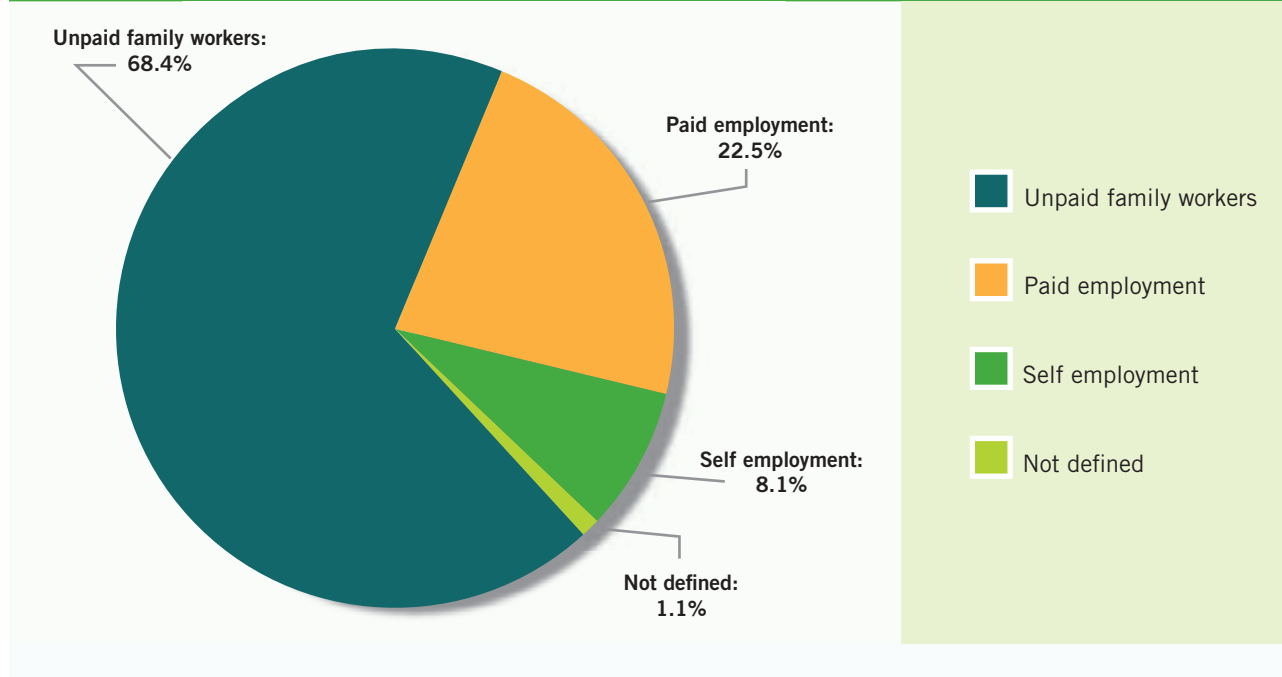
domestic work, which involves a total of 11.5 million children. Child labour in the services sector also includes primarily informal work in hotels and restaurants, in street selling and other forms of commerce, in car repair shops and in transport. Child labour in industry relates primarily to work in construction and in manufacturing, again mainly in informal settings.

Boys outnumber girls in all sectors with the important exception of domestic work, a form of work that takes place hidden from public view and outside the reach of workplace inspections, leaving concerned children particularly vulnerable to exploitation and abuse.

With respect to status in employment, child labourers work primarily without being paid by their own families. Unpaid family workers account for more than two-thirds of child labourers (68 per cent), followed by paid employment (23 per cent) and self-employment (8 per cent) and self-employment (8 per cent) and self-employment (8 per cent).

³³ See the “child labour in agriculture” page of the ILO-IPEC website at: <http://www.ilo.org/ipec/areas/Agriculture/lang--en/index.htm>.

Figure 9. Children in child labour by status in employment, 5-17 years age group, 2012



The dynamic picture: trends in child labour for the period 2000-2012



3

Overview

The 12-year period beginning in 2000 was one of significant progress against child labour. While the total global population of children grew slightly, there were almost 78 million fewer child labourers aged 5-17 years at the end of this period than at the beginning. In relative terms, the percentage of children in child labour fell from 16 per cent in

2000 to less than 11 per cent in 2012. Progress against hazardous work directly endangering children's health, safety and moral development was even more rapid, falling by over 85 million in absolute terms and from 11 to 5 per cent in relative terms.

Figure 10. Global trends in incidence of child labour and hazardous work, 5-17 years age group, 2000-2012

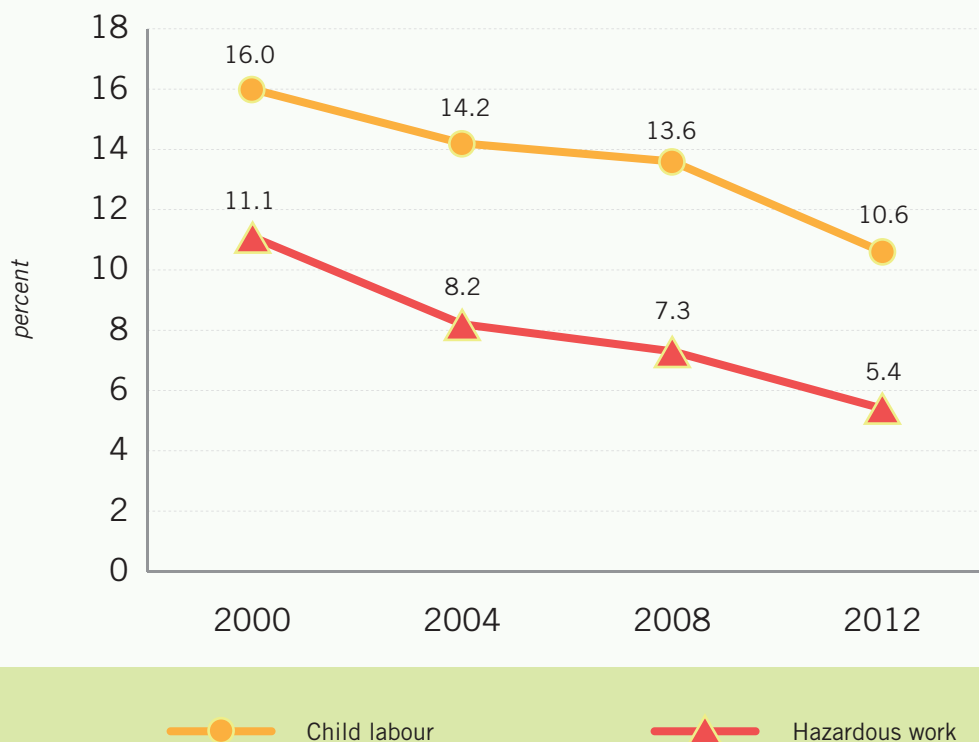
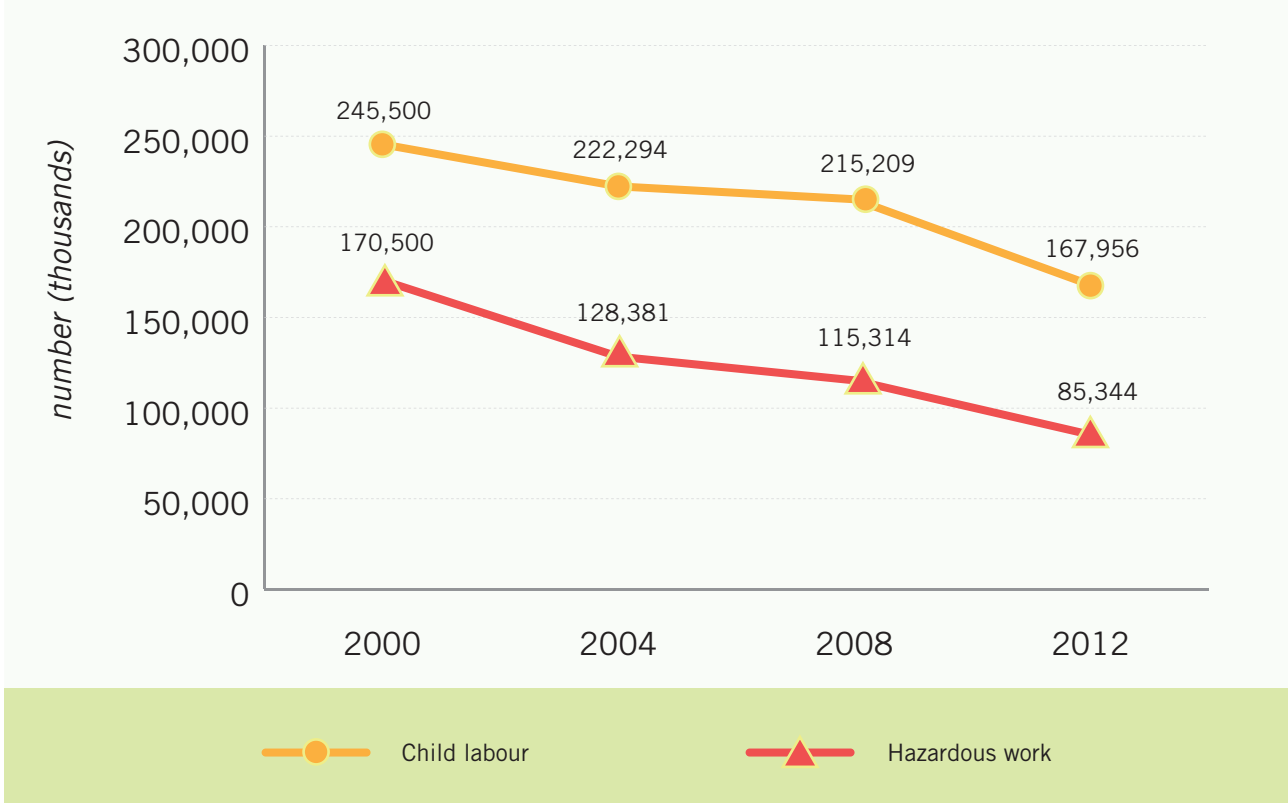


Figure 11. Global trends in number of children in child labour and hazardous work, 5-17 years age group, 2000-2012



Progress across all categories of child labour was largest during the most recent, 2008-2012, period. The overall number of child labourers aged 5-17 years decreased by 47 million, from 215 to 168 million, over this period.

The overall number of children in hazardous work declined by 30 million, from 115 million in 2008 to 85 million in 2012.



Table 9. Children in employment, child labour and hazardous work by sex and age group, 2000-2012

		Total children	Children in employment		Child labour		Hazardous work	
		('000)	('000)	%	('000)	%	('000)	%
World (5-17 years)	2000	1,531,400	351,900	23.0	245,500	16.0	170,500	11.1
	2004	1,566,300	322,729	20.6	222,294	14.2	128,381	8.2
	2008	1,586,288	305,669	19.3	215,209	13.6	115,314	7.3
	2012	1,585,566	264,427	16.7	167,956	10.6	85,344	5.4
Sex								
Boys	2000	786,500	184,200	23.4	132,200	16.8	95,700	12.2
	2004	804,000	171,150	21.3	119,575	14.9	74,414	9.3
	2008	819,891	175,777	21.4	127,761	15.6	74,019	9.0
	2012	819,877	148,327	18.1	99,766	12.2	55,048	6.7
Girls	2000	744,900	167,700	22.5	113,300	15.2	74,800	10.0
	2004	762,300	151,579	19.9	102,720	13.5	53,966	7.1
	2008	766,397	129,892	16.9	87,508	11.4	41,296	5.4
	2012	765,690	116,100	15.2	68,190	8.9	30,296	4.0
Age group								
5-14 years	2000	1,199,400	211,000	17.6	186,300	15.5	111,300	9.3
	2004	1,206,500	196,047	16.2	170,383	14.1	76,470	6.3
	2008	1,216,854	176,452	14.5	152,850	12.6	52,895	4.3
	2012	1,221,071	144,066	11.8	120,453	9.9	37,841	3.1
15-17 years	2000	332,000	140,900	42.4	59,200	17.8	59,200	17.8
	2004	359,800	126,682	35.2	51,911	14.4	51,911	14.4
	2008	369,433	129,217	35.0	62,419	16.9	62,419	16.9
	2012	364,495	120,362	33.0	47,503	13.0	47,503	13.0

Table 10. Children in employment, child labour and hazardous work by region, 5-17 years age group, 2008 and 2012^(a)

Region		Children population	Children in employment		Child labour		Hazardous work	
		('000)	('000)	%	('000)	%	('000)	%
Asia and the Pacific	2008	853,895	174,460	20.4	113,607	13.3	48,164	5.6
	2012	835,334	129,358	15.5	77,723	9.3	33,860	4.1
Latin America and the Caribbean	2008	141,043	18,851	13.4	14,125	10.0	9,436	6.7
	2012	142,693	17,843	12.5	12,505	8.8	9,638	6.8
Sub-Saharan Africa	2008	257,108	84,229	32.8	65,064	25.3	38,736	15.1
	2012	275,397	83,570	30.3	59,031	21.4	28,767	10.4

Note: (a) Results concerning regional trends in child labour are presented for 2008 and 2012 only, due to data limitations in the global estimates prior to 2008.

Trends in child labour

The number of children aged 5-17 years in child labour fell by almost 78 million globally over the period from 2000 to 2012. The proportion of children in child labour declined from 16 per cent to under 11 per cent over the same period. Again, progress over the most recent four-year period was especially marked. Child labour fell by 47 million in absolute terms and by 3 percentage points in relative terms from 2008 to 2012. Trends in child labour by region, age range and sex are discussed below.

Regional trends in child labour

Results concerning regional trends in child labour are limited to the 2008-2012 period due to data limitations in the global estimates prior to 2008. Child labour among children aged 5-17 years declined in both absolute and relative terms in the Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) and Sub-Saharan Africa regions during the 2008-2012 period. Asia and the Pacific registered by far the largest decline in the number of child labourers, from 114 million in 2008 to 78 million in 2012. The number of child labourers

also decreased in Sub-Saharan Africa (by 6 million), and modestly in LAC (by 1.6 million).

The decline in the percentage of 5-17 year-olds in child labour during 2008-2012 was also largest in the Asia and the Pacific region (4 percentage points), followed by Sub-Saharan Africa (3.9 percentage points) and LAC (1.2 percentage points).

The net impact of these regional trends is that the population of child labourers is becoming more concentrated in the Sub-Saharan Africa region. Figure 14, which reports changes in the regional distribution of child labour for the 5-17 years age for the 2008-2012 period, illustrates this point. While Sub-Saharan Africa accounted for 30 per cent of all 5-17 year-olds in child labour in 2008, four years later this figure had risen to about 35 per cent. At the same time, the share of total child labour accounted for by the Asia and the Pacific region fell dramatically, from 53 to 46 per cent, for the same 5-17 years age group over the 2008-2012 period.

Figure 12. Regional trends in number of children in child labour, 5-17 years age group, 2008 and 2012

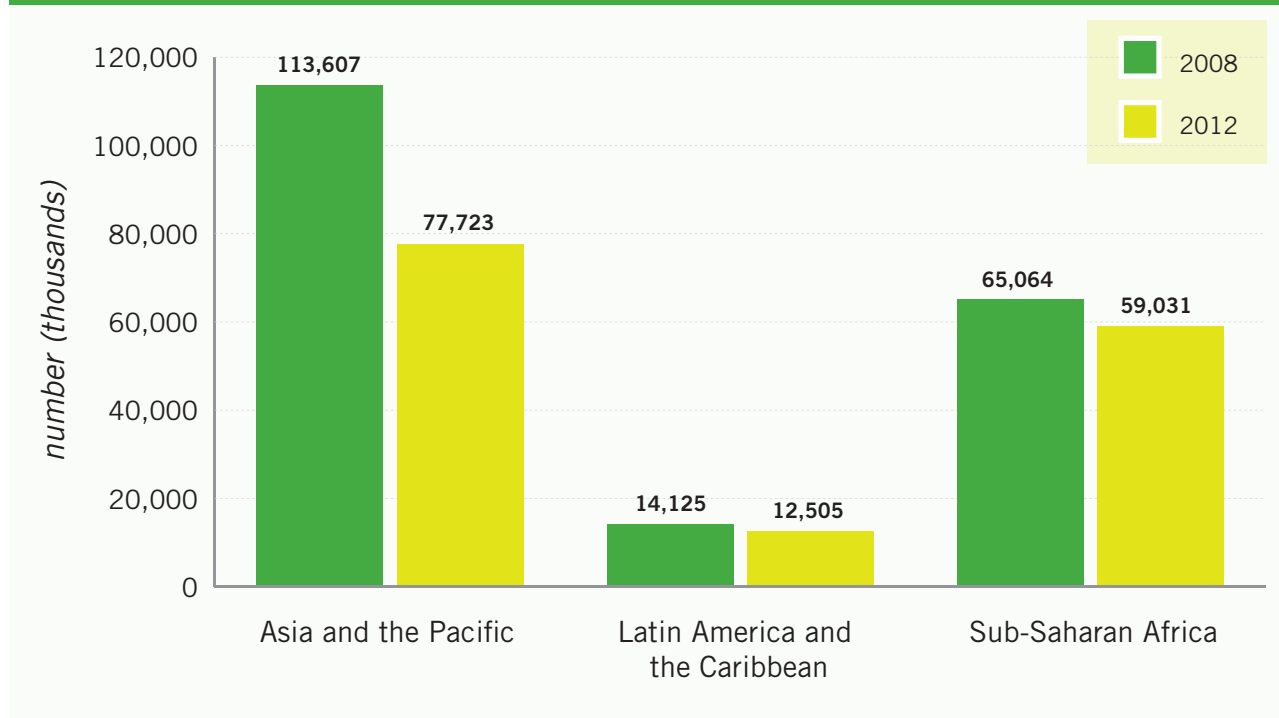




Figure 13. Regional trends in incidence of child labour, 5-17 years age group, 2008 and 2012

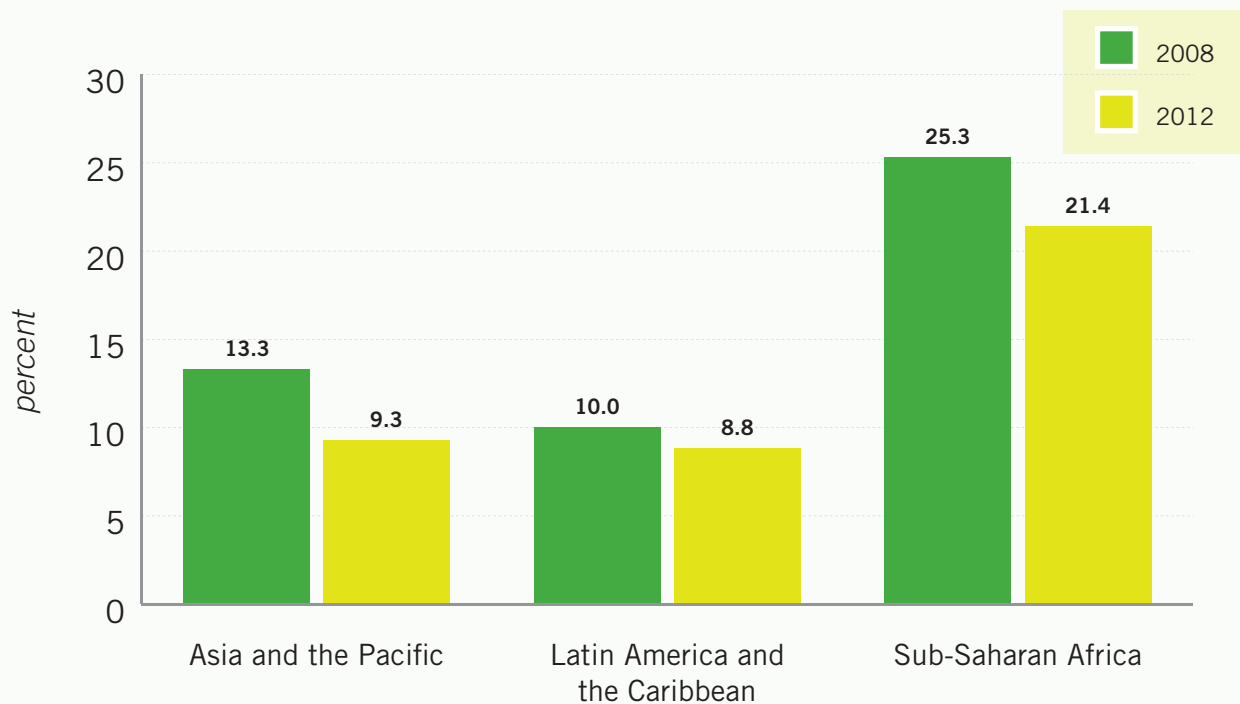
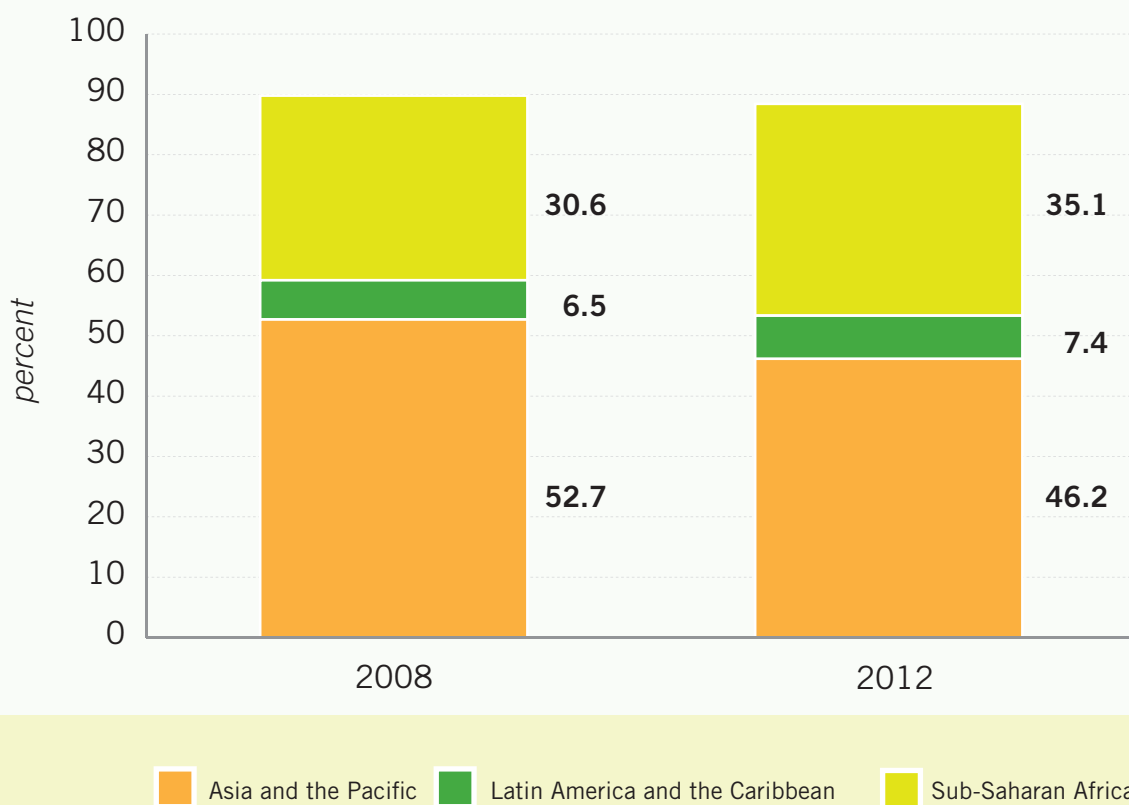


Figure 14. Changes in the regional distribution of children in child labour, 5-17 years age group, 2008 and 2012^(a)



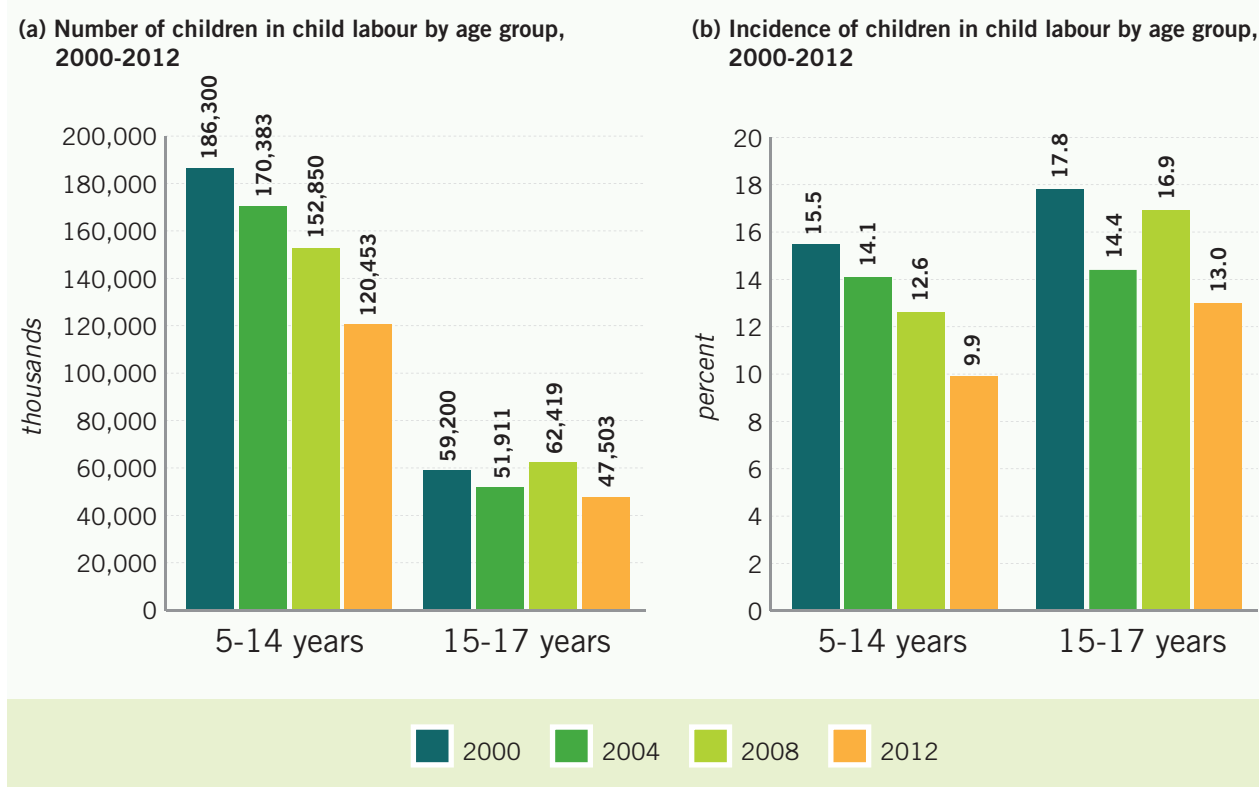
Note: (a) Distribution sums to less than 100 because countries that are outside of the three main regions are not shown here.

Age-specific trends in child labour

The decline in child labour over the 2000-2012 period also extended to all age groups, but was particularly pronounced among younger children. Child labour among 5-14 year-olds fell by over one-third (65.8 million) in absolute terms between 2000 and 2012. Progress fluctuated among older, 15-17 year-old, children. This group saw an 11.7 million absolute decline in child labour over the 2000-2012 period, but this overall decline masked a sharp rise in child labour among 15-17 year-olds in the 2004-2008 period.

The decline in child labour for each age group was also very significant when seen in relative terms. The share of children in child labour fell from 15.5 per cent to 9.9 per cent among 5-14 year-olds and from 17.8 per cent to 13 per cent among 15-17 year-olds over the 12-year period from 2000 to 2012 (Figure 15b).

Figure 15. Trends in child labour by age group, 2000-2012



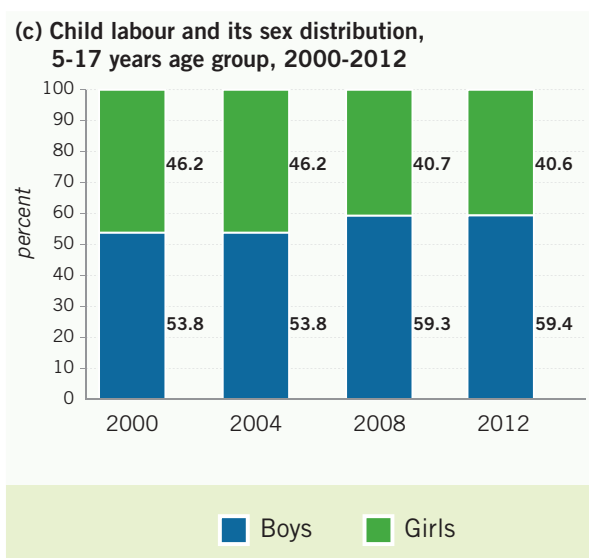
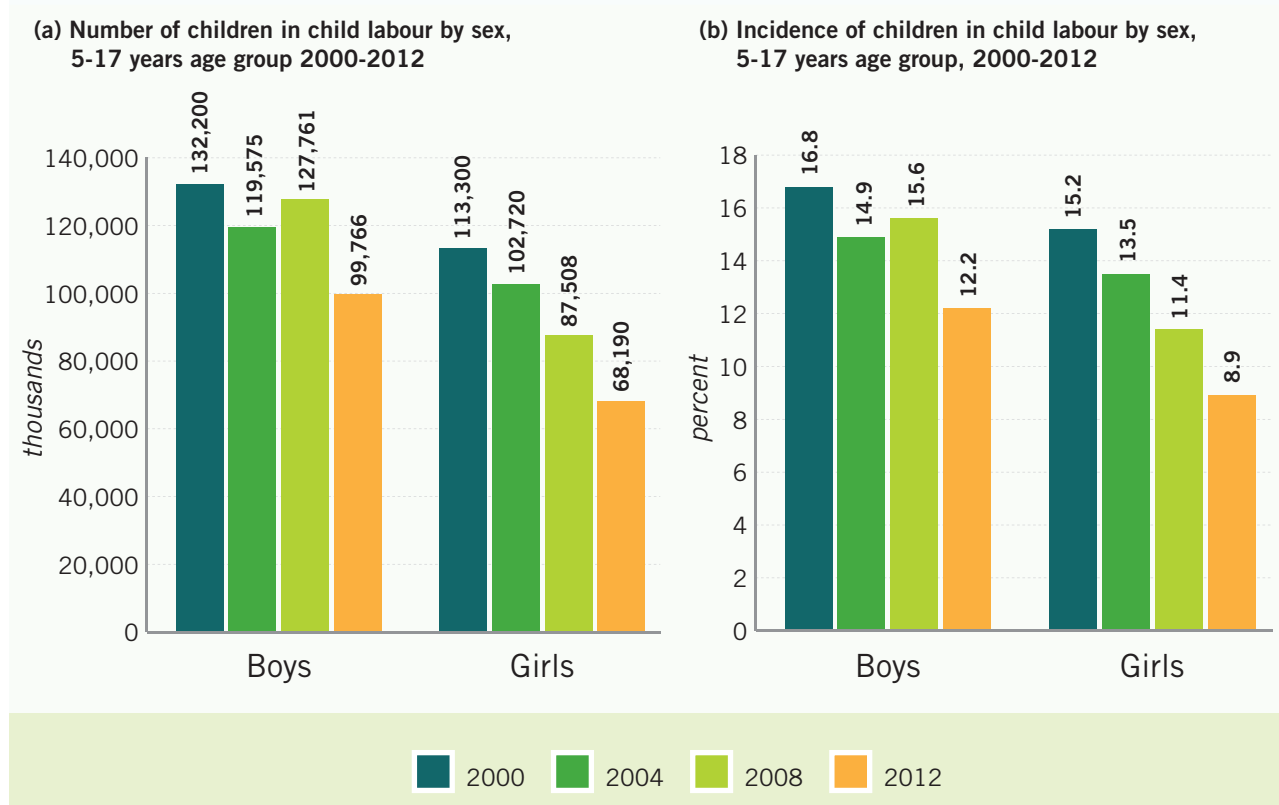


Gender-specific trends in child labour

Progress against child labour during the 2000-2012 period extended to both boys and girls. The fall in girls in child labour was particularly pronounced – in the period 2000-2012 there was a reduction of 40 per cent in the number of girls in child labour as compared to 25 per cent for boys.

The decline in child labour among girls aged 5-17 years was consistent across the 12-year period and totaled 45.1 million in absolute terms and 6.3 percentage points in relative terms (Figure 16). Child labour among boys in the same age range fell by 32.4 million and 4.6 percentage points, although this overall decline masked a slight rise over the 2004-2008 period.

Figure 16. Trends in child labour by sex, 5-17 years age group, 2000-2012



The magnitude of the decline in child labour among girls was greater than that of boys, and the gender gap in terms of involvement in employment therefore increased over the 2000-2012 period. As reported Figure 16c, while girls accounted for 46.2 per cent of all child labourers in 2000 they accounted for only 40.6 per cent in 2012.



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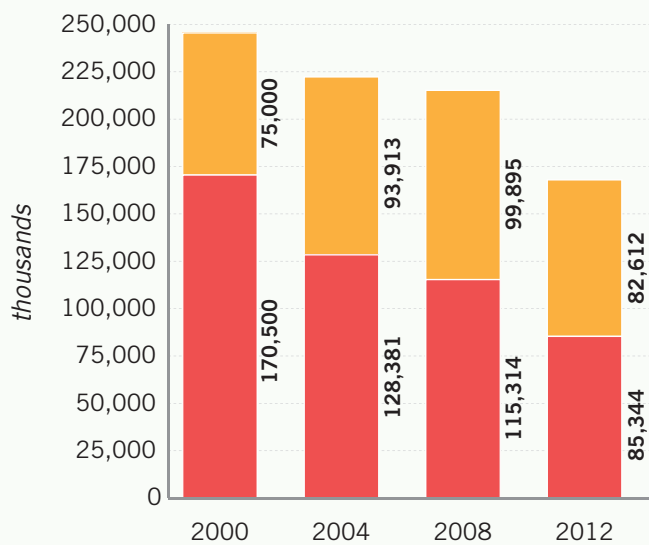
Trends in hazardous work

Reducing children’s involvement in hazardous work is again the most urgent child labour-related challenge facing the global community and the significant progress in this regard over the 2000-2012 period is therefore especially noteworthy. The total number of children aged 5-17 years in hazardous work declined by over half over the 12-year period, from 171 to 85 million. The relative decline was equally marked, from 11 per cent of all 5-17 year-olds in 2000 to 5 per cent in 2012.

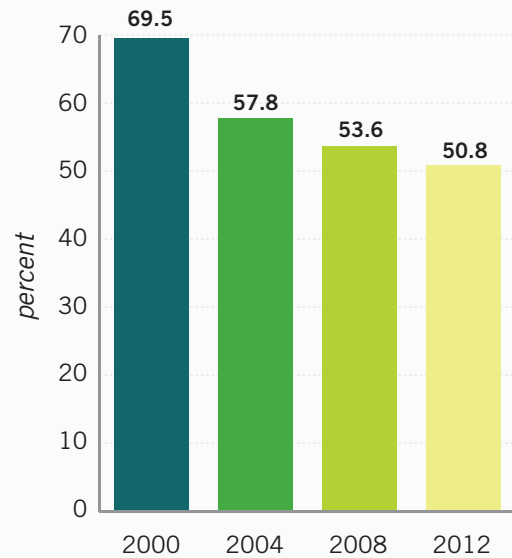
The global decline in hazardous work outpaced that of child labour generally, meaning that the hazardous work content of child labour declined over the 2000-2012 period. As reported in Figure 17b, while 70 per cent of child labourers performed hazardous work in 2000, this figure declined to 51 per cent in 2012. In other words, there were fewer children in child labour in 2012 compared to 2000, and those remaining in child labour were less likely to be performing hazardous work.

Figure 17. Relative changes in child labour and hazardous work, 5-17 years age group, 2000-2012

(a) Number of children in hazardous work and other child labour, 2000-2012



(b) Hazardous work as a percentage of child labour, 2000-2012



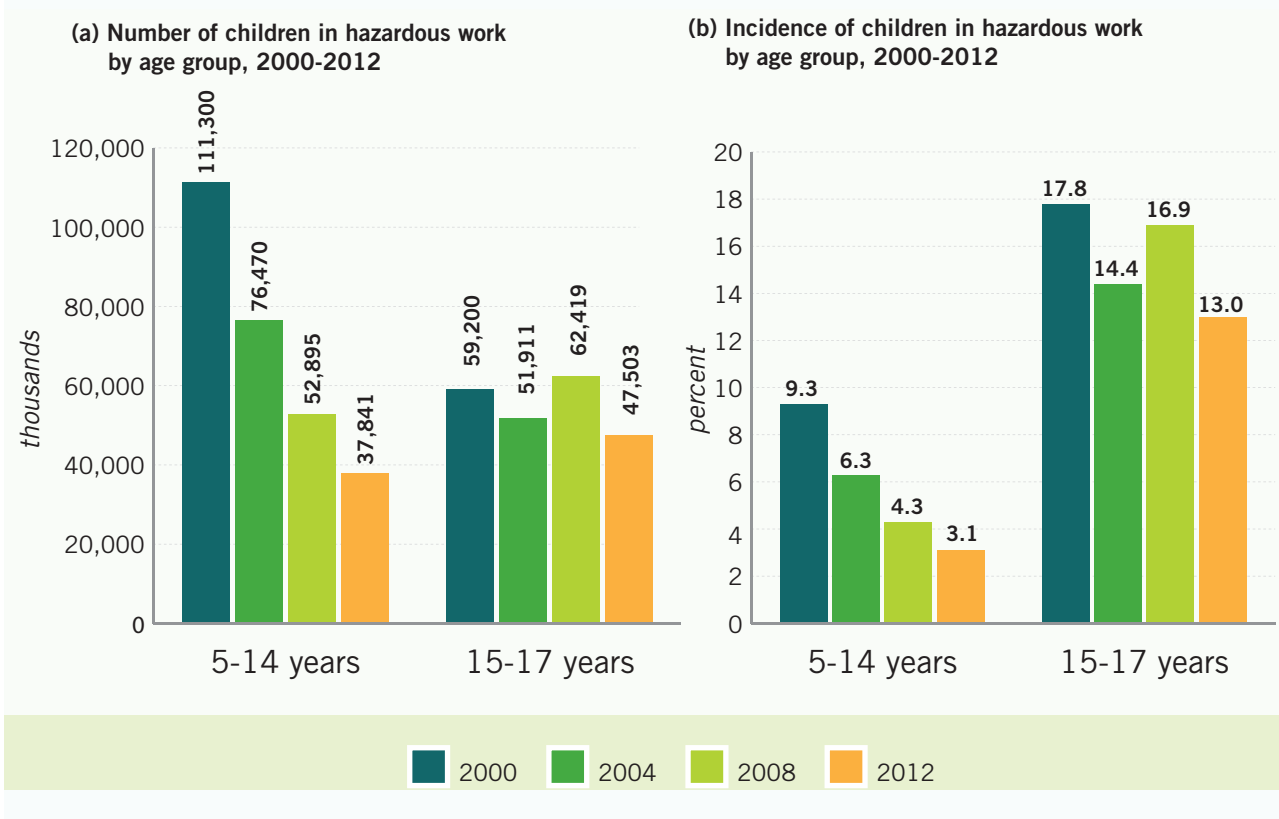
Other child labour Hazardous work



Age-specific trends in hazardous work

The decline in hazardous work over the 2000-2012 period extended to all age groups but was especially pronounced among younger children. Numbers of children aged 5-14 years in hazardous work fell by two-thirds, from 111.3 million to 37.8 million, between 2000 and 2012. Progress was slower but also very significant among older, 15-17 year-old, children. This group saw an absolute decline of about one-fifth, from 59.2 to 47.5 million, in numbers in hazardous work (Figure 18a). For 15-17 year-olds, the decline in hazardous work during the most recent, 2008-2012, period was particularly pronounced, and came after a significant *increase* in hazardous work in the previous 2004-2008 period. Seen in relative terms, the share of 5-14 year-olds in hazardous work fell from 9 to 3 per cent, while the share of 15-17 year-olds in hazardous work fell from 17.8 per cent to 13 per cent, over the 2000-2012 period (Figure 18b).

Figure 18. Trends in hazardous work by age group, 2000-2012



Gender-specific trends in hazardous work

Progress in reducing hazardous work during the 2000-2012 period extended to both boys and girls. Hazardous work among girls aged 5-17 years declined by more than half in both absolute and relative terms, from 74.8 million in 2000 to 30.3 million in 2012 (Figure 19a), and from 10 per cent in 2000 to 4 per cent in 2012 (Figure 19b). The reduction among boys was smaller but nonetheless also very significant. There were 40.7 million fewer boys in hazardous work in 2012 than in 2000; the percentage of boys in hazardous work was almost 6 percentage points lower in 2012 compared to 2000.





Changes in the characteristics of child labour

There appears to have been an increase in the relative importance of child labour in services in recent years. The share of total child labourers in services rose from 26 per cent in 2008 to 32 per cent in 2012 (Figure 20). Some of this increase could be due in part to the fact that fewer child labourers are in “not defined” category in 2012, pointing to a better measurement of children in services sector, in particular those in the informal economy.

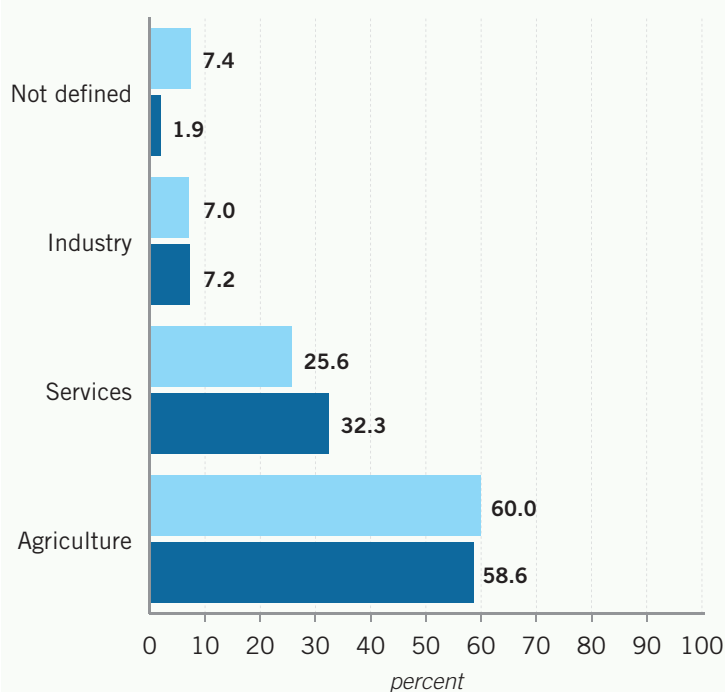
These global results are mirrored in national results for countries such as Mexico, Brazil, and Indonesia which also show that child labour *outside* the agriculture sector, and particularly child labour in services, is gaining in relative importance.

While addressing child labour in the agriculture sector remains the most important priority, it is clear that child labour elimination efforts must also address the growing share of child labourers working outside this sector.

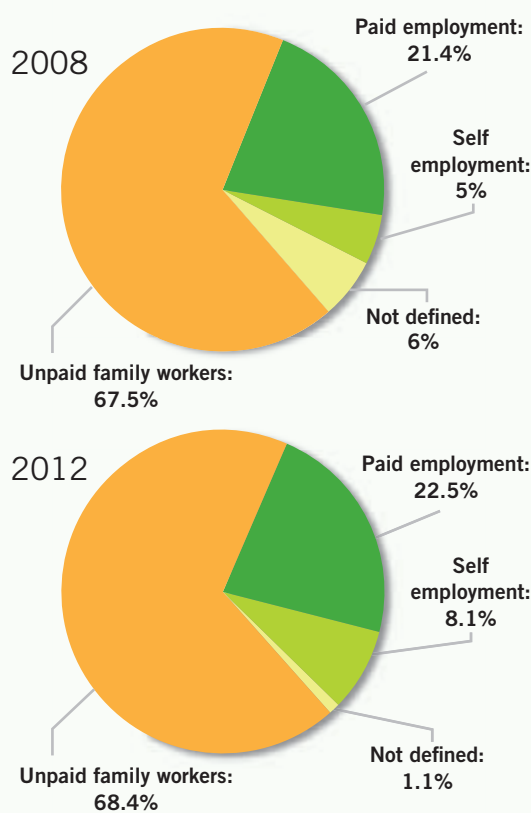
The composition by status in employment, reported in Figure 20b, indicates a small shift towards self-employment between 2008 and 2012.

Figure 20. Child labour trends in the economic sector and in the status in the employment, 5-17 years age group, 2008 and 2012

(a) Distribution of children in child labour by economic sector, 5-17 years age group, 2008 and 2012



(b) Distribution of children in child labour by status in employment, 5-17 years age group, 2008 and 2012



2008 2012

Unpaid family workers Self employment
Paid employment Not defined

Looking forward



4

This fourth edition of the Global Estimates paints a picture of both important progress, and of substantial remaining challenges. On the one hand, the sustained global efforts against child labour over the past 12 years appear to have borne fruit – child labour fell by almost a third and hazardous work by over half in the period from 2000 to 2012. On the other hand, the pace of progress still remains much too slow to achieve the goal of eliminating its worst forms by 2016.

Taking into account the information presented in Chapters 1, 2 and 3 and of other ILO/IPEC knowledge, experience and lessons learned, a number of key observations emerge on the needs and challenges faced by ILO constituents and the worldwide movement, and on potential ways to accelerate the effort to eliminate child labour. These elements are consistent with and reinforce the broader set of recommendations contained in the Hague Roadmap and the global action plans endorsed by the ILO's Governing Body, while at the same time draw attention to new developments. They are intended to provide input into the discussions at the III Global Conference on Child Labour to be hosted by the Brazilian Government in Brasilia from 8-10 October 2013.

Improving statistical data bases at global and national levels. While the child labour estimates presented in this Report are global in scope, the availability and quality of the data upon which they are based differs widely across countries

and regions. There are still relatively few data on child labour in the Eastern European and Central Asia regions, in the Pacific sub-region, in the industrialised economies and in several Asian countries. Data on child labour are now available for many Sub-Saharan Africa countries, but data on hazardous work remain much more limited, and comparable data over time, needed for monitoring and assessing trends, remain inadequate in the region. There is a need for national statistics institutions to fill these data gaps in order to permit the effective monitoring of progress against child labour at the national, regional and global levels. Continued attention to the disaggregation of data by sex, age and other characteristics remains important.

A multi-faceted policy response. The global estimates indicate clearly that child labour is not a phenomenon limited to the poorest countries, though it remains most prevalent among the poorest families and communities. This suggests that relying on national income growth alone will not be sufficient to eliminate the child labour of what is still far too large a number of children. Rather, there is a need for an active policy response addressing the entire range of social and economic factors leading to children's involvement in child labour – including family and child poverty. Past experience and evidence from research highlight the need to reinforce actions across all four broad policy

areas: legislation, education, social protection and labour market policy. First, continued efforts are needed to expand access of girls and boys to free, relevant and quality basic education, which promotes quality learning and flexible skills development. Second, there is a need to build social protection floors to prevent vulnerable families from resorting to child labour to cope with economic and social vulnerability. The ILO Social Protection Floors Recommendation (No. 202) of 2012 provides a key framework for efforts in this regard. Third, decent work opportunities need to be expanded for youth above the minimum age for admission to employment in order to provide families with an incentive to invest in their children's education earlier in the lifecycle and for adults in general to ensure improved and more secure family incomes. Fourth, there is a need to continue strengthening the legal frameworks of all fundamental principles and rights at work, with an emphasis on appropriate identification, prohibition and protection against hazardous

work, on improving the responsiveness of labour inspection and law enforcement mechanisms to deal with child labour cases, and on ensuring the rights of employers' and workers' organizations to contribute to combating child labour in enterprises – especially in the informal economy. Finally, greater awareness is needed of the benefits of education, of the health and developmental costs of child labour, and of the basic national rules on the minimum working age and work prohibited for children so that households are able to make informed choices concerning the allocation of their children's time between the classroom and working.

Age and gender specific responses. Child labour remains relevant throughout the 5-17 years age spectrum. Just under half of all child labourers are aged less than 12 years and a renewed effort is needed to ensure that all children under the minimum working age are receiving free and good quality compulsory education under conditions that foster learning for girls as well as boys. The most significant decline in child labour occurred among girls and gender focused measures must continue to be implemented. At the same time, specific policies need to be introduced and reinforced for older children of working age, whose participation in work is also linked more to general labour market conditions. This requires ensuring specific safeguards for children above the minimum age of employment but under the age of 18. An integrated policy approach - within the broad framework of the ILO Decent Work Agenda - is necessary in this context, addressing both boys and girls in child labour among older children and the wider youth employment issues.

A focus on Sub-Saharan Africa. ILO action plans call for a special focus on Sub-Saharan Africa and the statistics presented in the current Report indicate that this call remains valid. Although the decline in child labour during 2008-2012 offers some cause for optimism, Sub-Saharan Africa is still the region where children face by far the highest risk of child labour and also the region where progress has been slowest and least consistent. An enhanced focus and support for the development and full implementation of national action plans for the elimination of child labour, especially its worst forms, and the scaling



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up and replication of pilot projects, knowledge building and integration of child labour into national development agendas is called for as a priority.

A continued focus on agriculture and a new focus on other sectors. The agriculture sector still accounts for the largest share of child labourers, but evidence cited in this Report indicates that the make-up of child labour is beginning to change. Child labour outside the agriculture sector, and particularly in services, is gaining in relative importance. The policy implications of these changes are clear. While addressing child labour in the agriculture sector remains critical, child labour elimination efforts must also address the growing share of child labour occurring within the informal economy in services and the substantial numbers of child labourers in the informal economy in different areas of manufacturing. This also requires the development of further work with the relevant employers' and workers' organizations in the sectors concerned. Within the services sector, attention to child domestic workers is especially important given their heightened vulnerability to exploitation and abuse. The ILO Domestic Workers Convention (No.189) and Recommendation (No. 201) of 2011 offer an important framework in this regard.

Building the knowledge base, monitoring and evaluation. Insufficient information cannot be a justification for a failure to act. But at the same time, improving information about and monitoring mechanisms of child labour is critical to strengthening policy responses and to making

certain that resources will be directed to where they will have the greatest effect. While there has been considerable progress in recent years in terms of improving understanding of child labour, key knowledge gaps remain. Particularly important in this context is knowledge on policy *impact* – including both social and labour market policies. This highlights the need for substantial additional investment in systematic impact assessments and evaluations of interventions in relevant policy areas in order to identify which policy approaches work best against child labour, in which circumstances and why. The factors driving child labour in non-poor households constitute another important knowledge gap. A third knowledge gap relates to the relationship between child labour and youth employment. Integrated responses to child labour and youth employment issues require better information about the specific ways that child labour influences youth employment outcomes, and vice versa.

International cooperation and partnerships. While national governments have the primary responsibility to end child labour, social partners have important roles to play. Efforts to utilize social dialogue and recognize the contribution of labour relations to the elimination of child labour appear to be paying off in a number of countries. Stepping up the close involvement of the social partners will enhance national ownership and sustainability. Where national resources for action are limited in the countries concerned, it is imperative that international cooperation, partnerships and assistance continue to be undertaken in the spirit of Article 8 of ILO Convention No. 182. A decline of international cooperation and partnership at this juncture would jeopardize much of the progress made to date. The fact that real progress at such a significant rate is being made should be a magnet for more cooperation. The contribution to child labour elimination is one of the best returning investments in social and economic development, poverty eradication and human rights in the 21st century. With the ILO's leadership, other agencies' cooperation and the engagement of the worldwide movement, we can, through mutual assistance and national ownership, continue to make progress against child labour.

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Annex: concepts and definitions



Concepts and definitions³⁴

Three main international conventions – the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention No. 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour and the ILO Convention No. 138 on the Minimum Age for Admission to Employment – together set the legal boundaries for child labour and provide the legal basis for national and international actions against it. The Resolution concerning statistics of child labour (Resolution II) adopted by the 18th International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS) in 2008³⁵ translates these legal standards into statistical terms for the purpose of child labour measurement. The statistical concepts and definitions used in this Report are in accordance with this ICLS resolution.

Children in employment are those engaged in any economic activity for at least one hour during the reference period. Economic activity covers all market production and certain types of non-market production (principally the production of goods and services for own use).

It includes forms of work in both the formal and informal economy; inside and outside family settings; work for pay or profit (in cash or in kind, part-time or full-time), or as a domestic worker outside the child's own household for an employer (with or without pay).

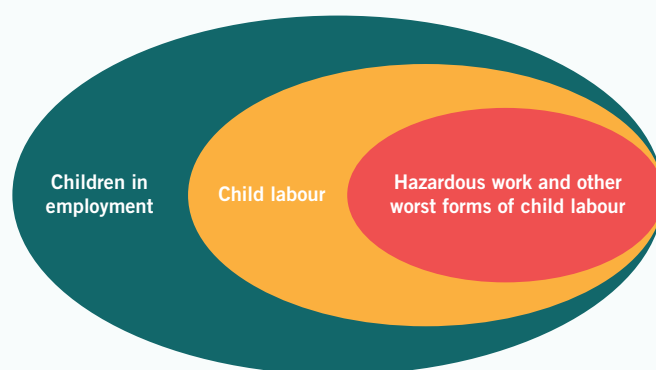
The terms “*working children*”, “*children in economic activity*” and “*children in employment*” are used interchangeably in this publication. All denote a broader concept than “child labour”.

Children in child labour are a subset of *children in employment*. Children in child labour include those in worst forms of child labour and children in employment below the minimum age, excluding children in permissible light work, if applicable. Child labour is therefore a narrower concept than “children in employment”, excluding all those children who are working only a few hours a week in permitted light work and those above the minimum age whose work is not classified as a worst form of child labour, or as “hazardous work” in particular.

Hazardous work by children is any activity or occupation that, by its nature or type, has or leads to adverse effects on the child's safety, health (physical or mental) and moral development. Hazards could also derive from excessive workload, physical conditions of work, and/or work intensity in terms of the duration or hours of work even where the activity or occupation is known to

³⁴ For a more detailed discussion of the methodology used, see ILO-IPEC. Diallo, Y., et al. *Global child labour trends 2008 to 2012*. ILO International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC). (Geneva, ILO, 2013).

³⁵ See “Resolution II, Resolution concerning statistics of child labour” in ILO. *Report of the Conference*. 18th International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS), document ICLS/18/2008/IV/FINAL. Geneva, 24 November-5 December 2008.

Figure 21. Children in employment, child labour and worst forms of child labour

be non-hazardous or “safe”.

In sum, “hazardous work”, which is taken as a proxy to the “worst forms of child labour”, is a subset of “child labour”, which is in turn, a subset of children in “employment” (or “working children”), as illustrated in Figure 21.

ILO global estimation

For the purpose of global estimation, a specific sequential procedure for measuring child labour has been adopted within the framework of the international standards as schematically represented in Figure 22.

As indicated in the diagram, the total of children in designated hazardous industries, children in designated hazardous occupations, children with long hours of work and children working in other hazardous work conditions make up in aggregate the total number of children in hazardous work. For the purposes of calculating the global and regional estimates, hazardous unpaid household activities by children are excluded from the methodology since only a few countries provided the necessary data on unpaid household services (household chores) carried out by children at home. Some technical issues regarding thresholds and combined economic activities and unpaid household services also need to be settled before full measurement of child labour on the basis on the general production boundary can be adequately carried out.

The final estimate of child labour is then obtained by adding to the total number of children in hazardous work, the number of other children

aged 5 to 11 years who were engaged in any economic activity during the reference period (employment below minimum age), and the number of other children 12 to 14 years old who were engaged in an economic activity that could not be considered as permissible light work during the reference period.

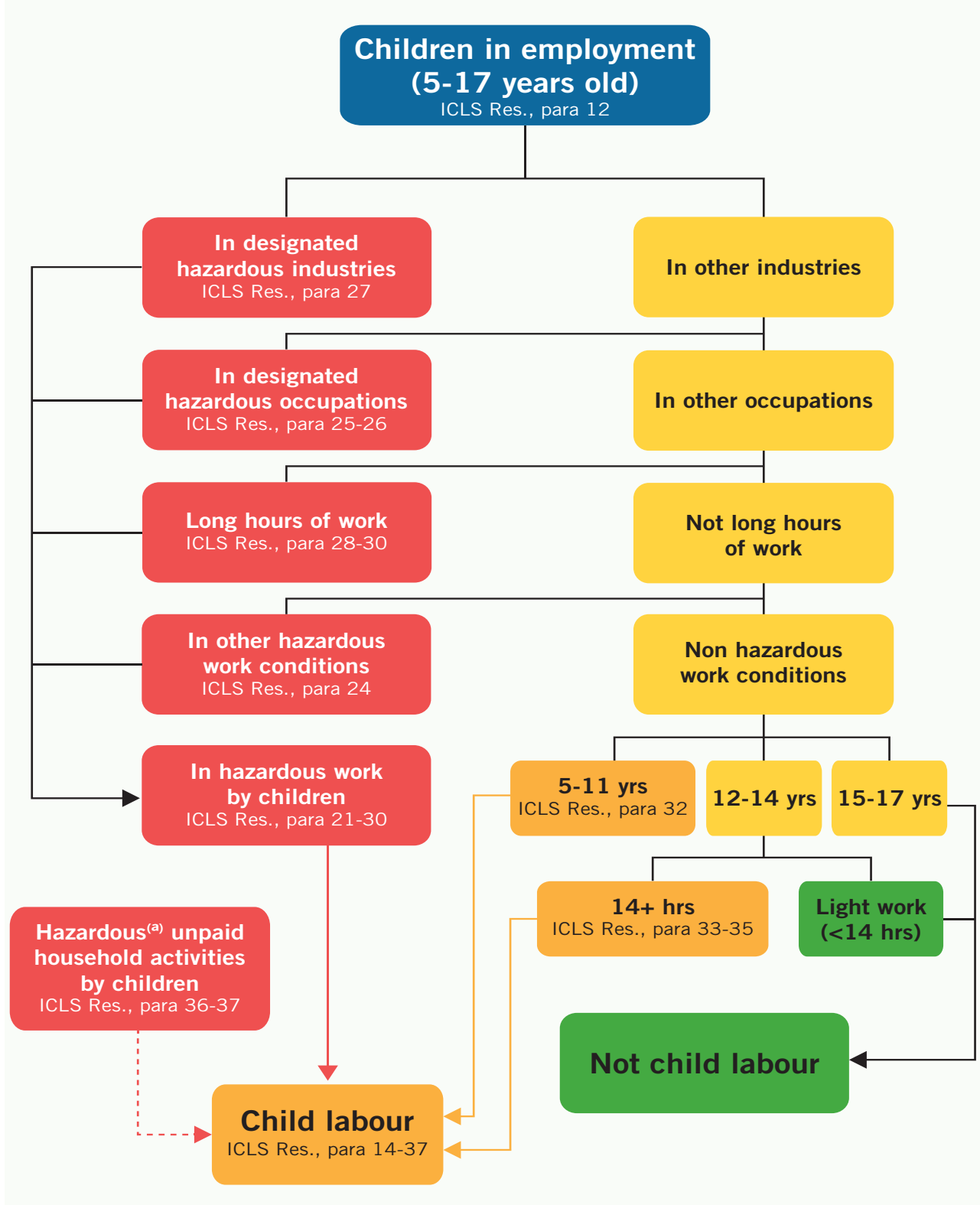
Permissible light work is defined in the present context as any non-hazardous work by children (12 to 14 years) of less than 14 hours during the reference week. The 14-hour threshold was also used in earlier ILO global estimations. The choice was based on provisions in the ILO Convention (No. 33) on the Minimum Age (Non-Industrial Employment), 1932, which sets two hours per day, on either school days or holidays, as the maximum for light work from the age of 12 years.³⁶

In this process, children in *worst forms of child labour other than hazardous work by children* are not measured directly. They are included in the global estimate to the extent that they also form part of the measurement of employment below minimum age and hazardous work by children. It is hoped that with improved methodology this category of child labour can be measured directly in future ILO global estimates.

³⁶ Article 3 (para. 1) of the Convention states that “Children over twelve years of age may, outside the hours fixed for school attendance, be employed on light work (a) which is not harmful to their health or normal development; (b) which is not such as to prejudice their attendance at school or their capacity to benefit from the instruction there given; and (c) the duration of which *does not exceed two hours per day on either school days or holidays*, the total number of hours spent at school and on light work in no case to exceed seven per day” (emphasis added).



Figure 22. Conceptual framework of the ILO global estimation of child labour



Source: ILO-IPEC. Hagemann F., et al. *Global child labour trends 2000 to 2004*. ILO International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC). (Geneva, ILO, 2006), with reference to the Resolution concerning statistics of child labour of ILO. *Report of the Conference*. 18th International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS). Document ICLS/18/2008/IV/FINAL. Geneva, 24 November-5 December 2008.

Note: (a) This term “hazardous” in the context of unpaid household services (as found in the 18th ICLS resolution paragraphs 15 (c), 36 and 37) may in fact include the element of hindrance to education or other criteria wider than ‘hazardous’ economic activity (covered by the ICLS resolution paragraph 17 (d)) that requires the minimum age of 18 years under Convention No. 138 and to be included as a worst form of child labour prohibited by Convention No. 182.

Methodology and underlying data

Some 75 national data sets were used for the ILO 2012 global estimation of child labour. Data are derived from national household surveys carried out between 2008 and 2012. In all, 53 countries from all the major world regions were covered by the surveys. Some countries provided multiple data sets across different years.

The data sets used in the estimates go back to specialized surveys on child labour (ILO/SIMPOC); national labour force surveys or other national household surveys such as the UNICEF Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS) or the World Bank Living Standards Measurement Studies (LSMS).

On the basis of the 75 data sets, two samples of countries were constructed for the purpose of global estimation. The first is called the full sample, the second is the matched sample. The full sample contains the latest data sets of the 53 countries, i.e. the data sets closest to 2012. It was used to construct a direct estimate of child labour in the world for the year 2012. The matched sample, consisting of 29 countries for which data sets were also available in the previous global estimates, helped to control variability and contributed to improving the accuracy of the estimates.

Since national household surveys on child labour often differ with regard to: (i) age groups covered; (ii) types of questions asked; (iii) response categories included in the questionnaires; and (iv) the extent of missing values, data had to be harmonized prior to the estimation exercise.

The regional and global estimates of child labour are derived by extrapolation of national data using a composite estimation method. It involved three basic steps: (i) an estimation based on the full sample or the “direct estimation”, (ii) an estimation based on the matched sample or the “indirect estimation”, and (iii) a “composite estimation” based on the full and matched samples together. The latter maximizes the advantages and minimizes the drawbacks associated with the direct and indirect estimates. This approach is fully comparable with the one used in the previous global estimates.