

**FORUM:** UNICEF

**ISSUE:** Fighting child labour

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**POSITION:** Deputy Chair of UNICEF

### **INTRODUCTION:**

In reference to the joint publication of UNICEF and ILO in 2020, to which link is referenced in the "Useful Links" section, the number of children being victims of child labour has risen to 160 million worldwide (63 million girls and 97 million boys), which is equivalent to 1 in 10 children worldwide (7.8% of girls and 11.2% of boys). Child labour is the most common in the agricultural sector, accounting for 70% of worldwide child labour rate.

### **DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS:**

**Child labour** - work that deprives children of their childhood, potential, and dignity, thus interfering with their mental, social, physical and moral development and/or interfering with their schooling. Hazardous child labour is defined as likely to harm the safety, morals and health of children.

### **SELECTED ORGANIZATIONS WORKING AGAINST CHILD LABOUR:**

**IPEC (International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour)** - established in 1992 by the International Labour Organization, its aim is to eliminate child labour progressively through "strengthening the capacity of countries to deal with the problem and promoting a worldwide movement to combat child labour." Operating in 88 countries, it is the biggest single operational programme of the ILO.

**Global March against Child Labour** is a worldwide network of trade unions, teachers' associations and civil society organisations working against slavery, child labour and trafficking, as well as ensuring that all children enjoy their rights and have access to free and meaningful education.

**Save The Children** is a global membership organisation, operating in 118 countries. It works in the most disadvantaged local communities educating them about the rights of children, delivering innovative development programmes and acting on major emergencies.

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

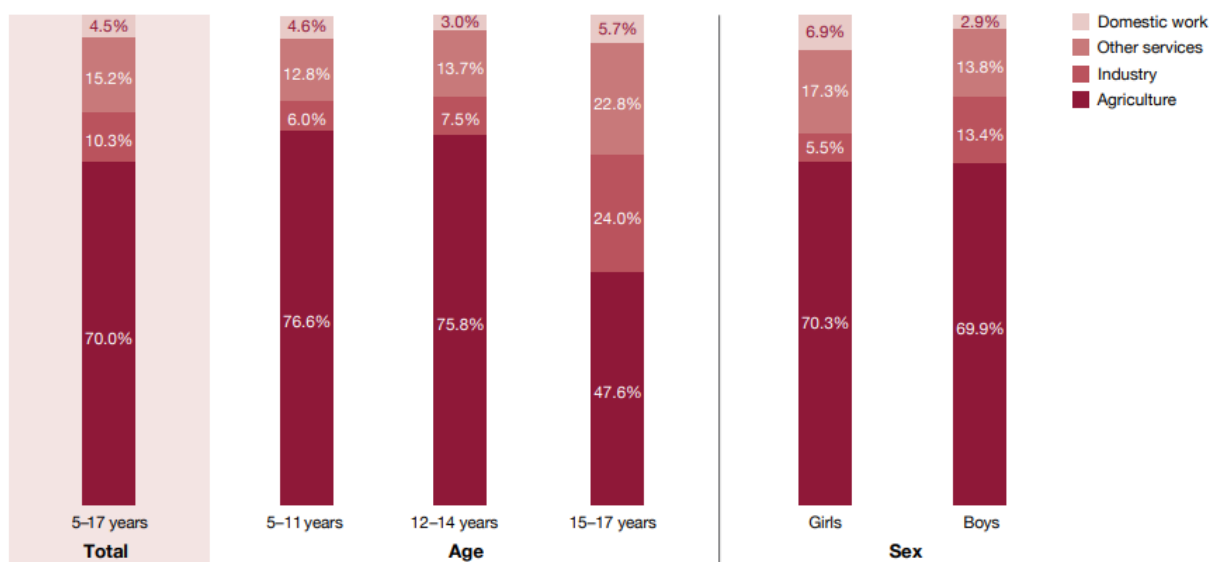
Referencing to Article 3 of ILO Convention No.182, the worst forms of child labour are: hazardous child labour; the use, procuring or offering of a child for prostitution, production of pornography, illicit activities such as drug trafficking and production; all forms of

slavery, including trafficking and the sale of children, serfdom, debt bondage and forced recruitment of children for use in armed conflicts.

Of 160 million children nearly half (79 millions) pursue hazardous work. The highest rate of child labour is to be found in Sub-Saharan Africa, equalling 86.6 million children, of whom 38.6 millions engage in hazardous activities. The second area to have the highest number of labouring children is Asia and the Pacific region (48.7 million in general, 22.2 million in hazardous child labour), whereas for Europe with Central Asia and Latin America with the Carribean the numbers are respectively 8.3 and 8.2 million.

Regarding child labour within different sectors, the highest prevalence is to be found in the agriculture sector, followed by industry, services and domestic work.

Fig 17. Percentage distribution of children aged 5 to 17 years in child labour, by sector of economic activity, age and sex



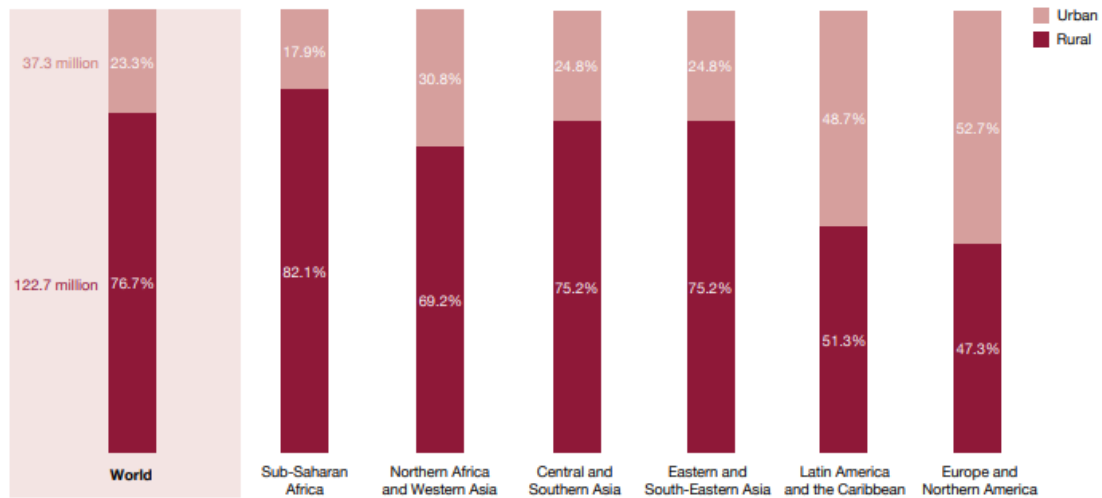
Note: Due to rounding, figures in percentages do not add up to 100 per cent.

Source: [CHILD LABOUR](#)

The largest share of child labour occurs within families, making up 72% of all child labour worldwide (Fig. 22). Moreover, child labour is frequently connected with children being unable to attend school. Many more children in child labour struggle to balance the demands of school and child labour at the same time, which compromises their education and their right to leisure.

Child labour is significantly (nearly three times) more common in rural areas (Fig.16); 122.7 million rural children are victims of child labour in comparison to 37.3 million urban children. The only regions where the majority of child labour concentrates in urban areas are Europe and North America.

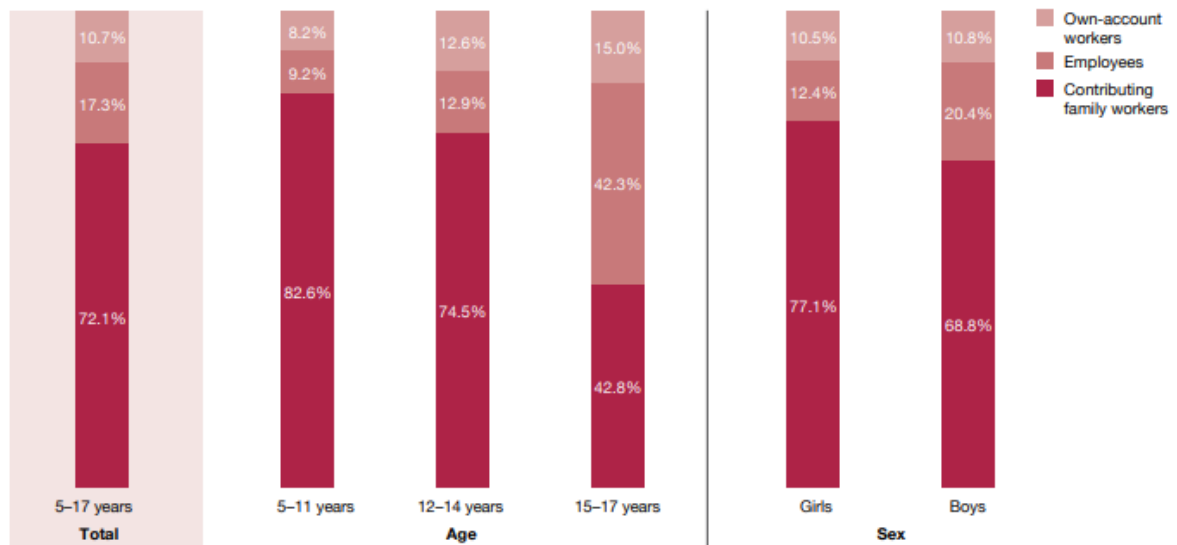
Fig 16. Percentage distribution of children aged 5 to 17 years in child labour, by residence and region



Notes: The figure shows regional groupings used for SDG reporting. The region of Oceania is omitted because of low data coverage. Caution is warranted when interpreting data for Europe and Northern America due to the small number of children in child labour.

Source: [CHILD LABOUR](#)

Fig 22. Percentage distribution of children aged 5 to 17 years in child labour, by status at work, age and sex



Note: Due to rounding, figures in percentages do not add up to 100 per cent.

### POSSIBLE SOLUTION:

In order to contribute to child labour prevention, it is vital to educate oneself and others, opting for choosing sweatshop-free products whenever possible - child labour is entrenched in manufacturing industry to a degree where it is difficult to avoid, especially among famous

brands in whose interest it is only to sell the product along with spreading their image, not focusing on the production being conducted ethically. Another possibility is to contact retailers and shareholders to inquire about labour practices in their companies and manufactures.

Investing ethically is a choice that ought to be made by entrepreneurs; employers should increase safety norms, carrying out workplace risk assessments for the sake of identifying hazardous work and removing children from any work that could be harmful to them. Children below the minimum age must not be employed at all.

### USEFUL LINKS

[https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed\\_norm/@ipec/documents/publication/wcms\\_797515.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed_norm/@ipec/documents/publication/wcms_797515.pdf)

[https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@dgreports/@dcomm/@publ/documents/publication/wcms\\_456960.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@dgreports/@dcomm/@publ/documents/publication/wcms_456960.pdf)

[https://www.ilo.org/ipec/ChildlabourstatisticsSIMPOC/WCMS\\_817699/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/ipec/ChildlabourstatisticsSIMPOC/WCMS_817699/lang--en/index.htm)

<https://stopchildlabour.org/>