**Call for action: ending child labour in agriculture with the help of agricultural stakeholders**

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Description automatically generated**Agricultural stakeholders play a decisive role in the elimination of child labour in agriculture. This Call for Action provides an opportunity to **raise your voice** and express your concerns, commitments, and actions towards the elimination of child labour in agriculture, and to highlight the situation and reality of rural communities and the agricultural sector.

SDG 8.7 sets a target to **eliminate all forms of child labour by 2025**, however, this is an incredibly challenging target to achieve, and all stakeholders must upscale action to progress in the elimination of child labour. Given that 71% of all child labour is found in agriculture, it will not be possible to achieve target 8.7 without a breakthrough in the sector. Therefore, agricultural stakeholders are essential to upscale and mobilize action.

Please present **concrete and realistic actions** that you or your organization can or could take to reduce child labour in agriculture and **provide recommendations** to agricultural and other stakeholders.

**Guidance for contributions:**

The summary of the FSN Forum consultation held in 2020 is available online in [Arabic](http://www.fao.org/3/cb0644ar/cb0644ar.pdf), [Chinese](http://www.fao.org/3/cb0644zh/cb0644zh.pdf), [English](http://www.fao.org/3/cb0644en/cb0644en.pdf), [French](http://www.fao.org/3/cb0644fr/cb0644fr.pdf), [Russian](http://www.fao.org/3/cb0644ru/cb0644ru.pdf) and [Spanish](http://www.fao.org/3/cb0644es/cb0644es.pdf).

**Child labour** is commonly **defined as work that is inappropriate for a child’s age, affects children’s education, or is likely to harm their health, safety or morals. It is work that impairs children’s well-being or hinders their education, development and future livelihoods. When identifying or raising issues related to child labour in agriculture, take into account: i) age, as** not all tasks undertaken by children in agriculture are considered child labour, ii) gender, as girls and boys can engage in different labour activities and face different hazards and challenges, and iii) agricultural sub-sectors, as children are found in farming, fisheries and aquaculture, livestock, and forestry.

**We invite you to take the following key themes into account for your contribution to this Call for Action:**

* **Hunger and malnutrition**, as in some circumstances, children work to meet their food needs.
* **Climate change and environmental degradation** can make agricultural work more intensive and income less predictable, increasing the engagement of children to meet labour demand and support vulnerabilities of their families.
* **Agricultural investment programmes**: by integrating child labour prevention and risk mitigation measures in their investment designs, development partners and financial intermediaries, such as development banks and private sector investors, can become game changers in the creation of employment and livelihood opportunities to reduce family dependency on child labour. They can provide opportunities for adolescents and youth for decent rural employment, and reduce rural poverty that creates child labour in agriculture.
* **Family farming** relies on generational renewal as the main precondition of keeping agriculture viable and sustainable. This process implies the transmission of knowledges, skills, and capacities from the older generation, which also contributes to enhancing children’s sense of community belonging. However, low family incomes, household poverty, few livelihood alternatives, and inadequate access to education can lead to assigning children tasks that are age-inappropriate, hazardous and/or interfere with schooling. Exposing girls and boys to child labour not only puts their well-being at risk but also prevents them from acquiring the skills that would allow innovations in the agricultural sector, break the inter-generational cycle of poverty, and bring improvements to the households’ and communities’ livelihoods.
* **Humanitarian contexts** because child labour increases during conflict, food system crises, and when climate and natural disasters unfold.
* **Occupational safety and health (OSH) and pesticide exposure,** as children have special characteristics in terms of physical, cognitive, behavioural and emotional growth that make them more vulnerable to hazardous work and expose them to additional risks (i.e. long working hours, exposure to pesticides, dangerous equipment and tools, or abuse).
* **Decent youth employment (14/15-17):** children belonging to this age cohort are still children (below 18) but within the national working age. Therefore, they can be in situations of child labour or decent youth employment depending on the danger of the tasks that they are carrying out. Hence, by addressing the hazardous nature of agriculture tasks we can turn situations of child labour into situations of decent youth employment.
* **Digital innovation and blockchains**: scaling up traceability, transparency and sustainability along agricultural value chains, they provide a possible way to monitor farmers’ vulnerabilities in agri-food systems and allow for targeted remediation interventions for addressing the drivers of child labour.
* **Multi-sectoral approach:** social protection programmes that support livelihoods of vulnerable households and efforts to increase access to affordable and quality education can prevent child labour in agriculture.

**Proponent** (name/gender/institution)

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| **Yuki Onogi/ male/ PARCIC** |

**Title of your contribution**

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| **Agricultural investment programmes & Multi-sectoral approach** |

**Mark your category of agricultural stakeholder/actor**

* International Organization (UN, IUF, IFPRI, etc.)

**If none of the above applies, please indicate which category of actor or sector you belong to (for example, labour, education, or social)**

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**Region/Country/Location**

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| **Lebanon** |

**Agricultural sub-sector** (farming, fisheries and aquaculture, livestock, or forestry)

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1. Please provide some **background** context to your contribution and proposal:
   * What is the issue of child labour in agriculture that concerns you? What are the main causes? And consequences? What direct/indirect or intended/unintended impact do you think your work is having on child labour in agriculture?
   * Has COVID-19 had an (in)direct impact on child labour in the agri-food system in your country?
   * If applicable, please describe activities and projects, previously implemented or ongoing, to address child labour in agriculture, as well as their impact/results:

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| A child should be always a child. When they start to work, its reason is always related to poverty. And while working, they will be given a responsibility for not only working hard whether or not they like, they need to grow up fast to understand a fact that they need to earn some income to make his/her family’s life better, which any child does not need to think about. Child labour makes all children lose their precious childhood. This will put a huge impact on their future children who will more likely follow the same footpath.  Before moving to Lebanon, we used to work in Sanliurfa, South of Turkey, supporting Syrian children living in rural areas with provision of educational activities where at the beginning of our projects only 40% of children went to local public school. The rest were working in the agriculture sector. Although we wanted to let all the children go to school, most of the children had to work together with their parents to help with harvest vegetables to make their living condition better. As their living conditions were very bad, we could not force the parents to stop their children from working because this would make their living even worse. This was against Do no harm policy. At that time all we could do was to visit their children at the same time and same date of the week and allow us to spend a few hours on giving recreational and cognitive based activities so that children can enjoy childhood activities as well as learn something. As we had a small team and were working in over 10 villages, we could visit each village only once a week. Luckily, all the parents were at least willing to allow their children to stop working for a few hours once a week for our activities. (Prior to this request, we had had already worked in the same villages with provision of food baskets and winter support over 12 months.) After giving children activities over 6 months, some parents start to understand that their children were enjoying the activities and learning something and were able to see some progress in cognitive development. Although over the 12 months of the project period we didn’t increase the weekly hour of activities with children, some parents started to feel ok to send their children to local public school. Although their income from their children’s contribution to work decreased, luckily Turkish government was supporting Syrian children in school with provision of ESSN for education, which gave a small amount of monthly allowance to be paid to families who sent their children to public school. We made sure that all the families in the project areas received this ESSN for education. By the time we finished our project in 2019, over 65% of Syrian children were in local public school compared with around 60% nationally.  Our success resulted in making their parents re-realising the importance of education by seeing actual progress among children from our educational activities and seeing their children enjoying themselves. It took us a long time to achieve, but it was worth it. |

1. **Please describe the action** you or your organization can or could take to address or increase efforts towards the elimination of child labour in agriculture. If this is not applicable, please explain in the next sections the challenges you or your organization face in addressing child labour in agriculture and present recommendations for agricultural and other stakeholders to upscale action.

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| It is important to address not only child labour but also poverty issues together to be tackled. When we talk to parents, we need to understand the root causes of child labour. Without addressing poverty issues, parents will never listen to us. However, if we tackle child labour, we also need to have a solution to ease poverty level if not being able to eliminate it. A thing like ESSN for education would be ideal. |

1. **Challenges:** What are the main obstacles you, or agricultural stakeholders in general, face in addressing child labour in agriculture? How could these challenges be overcome or addressed (for example, through policy, legislation, capacity building, etc.)?

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| Since I’m now based in Lebanon, what I see is that only Food security sector is trying to discuss this issue among just a sector members. To solve this issue, we need to solve other sectors like Child protection, Ministry of Social Affairs, Ministry of Labour, etc who are tacking a poverty issue.  As long as this issue is dealt with by Food Security sector, the sector will look at only what is related to the sector. We need to realise that we have to think beyond the sector to address and overcome this issue by bringing more people from different sectors and stakeholders. |

1. **Recommendations for agricultural stakeholders:** What recommendations would you give to agricultural stakeholders to address the issue of child labour in agriculture you presented?

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| As mentioned above 3. We should take an overarching approach to overcome this issue. Although this has been discussed by Food security sector led by FAO/WFP, it would be better to be led by more mutual actors like UNICEF or UNHCR. |

1. **Recommendations for other stakeholders:** What would you recommend to other stakeholders addressing the issue of child labour in agriculture (labour, education, child protection, or social sector stakeholders, including ministries of labour, inspectors, educators, social services practitioners, etc.)?

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