



August, 2007

‘Out of work and into school’

Proposed Action Plan to Combat Child labour 15 Recommendations for Companies

Why should businesses take action against child labour?

In the Universal Declaration of Human Rightsⁱ it is stated that ‘every organ of society’ should contribute to ensuring that human rights are observed and implemented. This of course includes the business community. The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)ⁱⁱ, which has been ratified by almost all countries worldwide, obliges states to ‘recognize the right of the child to be protected from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child’s education or to be harmful to the child’s health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development’ (Article 32.1.CRC). National governments have committed themselves to incorporating this obligation in national legislation so that their citizens and organisations, including businesses, comply with international agreements – at home, but also in operations outside their home markets.

The OECD Guidelines for multinational enterprisesⁱⁱⁱ spell out what the national governments of OECD member states expect from the businesses sector – both within and outside their home markets, and throughout their supply chains – and this includes combating child labour. In the Guidelines, it is specified that businesses should encourage their suppliers and subcontractors to comply with them as well.

Furthermore, the United Nations’ *Global Compact* spells out principles that businesses should adhere to – including principle 5: taking effective action to end child labour.^{iv}

The two ‘Conventions’ on child labour of the International Labour Organisation (ILO), ratified by more than three-fourth of all countries, are the most explicit in specifying what combating child labour should amount to in practice. These are the Minimum Age Convention (No.138) and the Convention on the Worst Forms of Child Labour (No. 182). These Conventions have been jointly drafted in the ILO by national governments, employer’s associations and trade unions. The business community is therefore politically and morally obliged to implement them. The Minimum Age Convention specifies that working is banned for children under the age of 15 (developing countries may opt for 14 years’ of age); light work is allowed for 12-and-13-year-olds in most developing countries provided it does not interfere with their schooling. The Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention includes a ban on hazardous work for children under the age of 18. Of course this Convention also bans ‘working’ as a child soldier, in drugs trafficking, pornography and prostitution, and forced labour.

What action can businesses take?

1. **Make explicit in your company's formal policy or code of conduct that all forms of child labour prohibited by the two ILO Conventions (C 138 and C 182) will be avoided and, if need be, combated.**

This is not self-evident, because many companies feel it is enough to combat the worst forms of child labour. The ILO itself has, unfortunately, contributed to this attitude, focusing its project work in 80 different countries on the worst forms of child labour (also see: 'Seven reasons why the ILO should focus on all forms of child labour'). Given that both Conventions against child labour have been ratified by so many nations, there is no conceivable reason why governments and companies should act only against some types of banned child labour.

2. **Make sure that company policy is based, at the very least, on the international conventions against child labour – and comply with national and local legislation if their standards exceed those of the international conventions.**

So far, 149 countries have signed Convention 138, and 163 countries have signed Convention 182. Moreover, all ILO members have agreed that they have an obligation to respect, promote and realize the ban on child labour and comply with three other basic labour standards, even if they have not ratified the Conventions in question (also see recommendation 10). Where national legislation is more stringent, for example by imposing a higher minimum working age, companies are of course obliged to comply with such domestic legislation.

3. **Make it explicit in contracts with your suppliers that they must eradicate child labour and realise labour rights across all sub-contracted operations.**

Child labour is widespread in operations that companies have outsourced to other businesses. Moreover, 'first tier' suppliers also frequently outsource manufacturing to sub-contractors. This is no coincidence. In their attempt to cut costs, many companies outsource some or all of their manufacturing and service operations to low-wage countries, most often to developing countries and/or countries in Eastern Europe. Such outsourced operations frequently involve child labour or fail to comply with other labour standards. Cutting cost, however, can never be used as an excuse by a company to dodge its responsibility when outsourcing manufacturing or service operations. Companies should therefore have a written contract with their suppliers to ensure that the entire supply chain is free from child labour, to facilitate that children are released from work and start going to school, and to observe and implement labour rights. Achieving this in practice will require that the outsourcing company has the names and full contact details of all suppliers and subcontractors, and makes them available to the public.

4. **Ensure that children hitherto employed at the company's own plants, plantations or service operations, or in outsourced or sub-contracted operations across the entire supply chain, are transferred to regular schooling at no cost to their families.**

Experience shows that companies acting against child labour frequently limit their involvement to merely seeing to it that the children concerned are removed and don't feel inclined to facilitate their transition to steady schooling. There have been several highly visible examples of companies keen to rid themselves of the children who worked for them in order to boost their public image. One recent example involved a Dutch fashion label, which announced it intended immediately to sever all links with its supplier in India after

the latter had been found to engage child labour. Businesses that simply make children 'redundant' and leave them to fend for themselves, behave highly irresponsible. Precisely because they have benefitted from children working for them, they have an even greater obligation to create or help facilitate the alternative to work – i.e. education. 'Hybrid' solutions, for example having children do part-time jobs and provide for school in the evening, are fundamentally unacceptable. Every single child is entitled to full-time and comprehensive schooling – not 'separate' but together with other children.

Child labour in cotton seed production in India: the accountability of companies

Multinationals like Bayer and Monsanto and many Indian companies as well, grow hybrid cottonseed in India on farms where child labour is rampant. In the cotton seed production, children often work 12 hours a day, are exposed to pesticides, and frequently have their living quarters in a barn on the farm. The companies that procure the produce have a responsibility for production conditions. Farmers are often paid only 60% of the level that would allow them to hire adults at the local minimum wage of €1,00 per day.

Multinational companies like Bayer and Monsanto have started to take action against child labour, but mainly in areas where local organisations have exerted pressure. Bayer and Monsanto have taken the following initiatives:

- *Sharing information: the companies share all information about their cottonseed procurement, providing, among others, full lists of the sites and farmers involved;*
- *Contracts between the companies and the farmers include a clause prohibiting employment of children under the age of 15;*
- *Joint inspection committees have been introduced at various administrative levels (sub-district, district, state) involving representatives of the companies and NGOs to monitor the implementation of the action plan. Joint inspection teams visit the farms and report violations to the district and state committees;*
- *Incentives and disincentives: suppliers who are found violating the ban on child labour in first instance receive a formal warning, second-time offenders receive 10% less for their produce by way of a fine, and third-time offenders instantly lose their right to supply under the existing supply agreement and receive no new orders. At the same time, suppliers who refrain from using child labour are paid a 5% bonus. Villages where all cottonseed farmers refrain from using child labour receive financial support;*
- *Rehabilitation education for former child labourers: Bayer and Monsanto support a foundation with the goal of launching motivation and encouragement centres in 20 villages so as to prepare former child labourers for their entry into the formal education system;*
- *Measures for the safe employment of child labour and yield improvement: special training courses are offered to farmers for this purpose.*

That said, it is clear from the recent 'Seeds of Change'¹ report and an earlier report ('The Price of Childhood'¹) that further improvement is needed: prices paid out to farmers are far too low, youngsters over the age of 14 (and adults) are made to work very long days and are exposed to pesticides, adults receive less than the minimum wage, labour unions are not involved in the Bayer/Monsanto initiative, and the schooling on offer is at present insufficient.

- 5. Protect children in the ages of 14 to 18, who are permitted by international agreements to engage in paid work, against potentially hazardous and dangerous types of work as specified in ILO Convention 182, and comply with agreements (required by the Convention) on dangerous work between governments, labour unions and industry umbrella associations.**

Many children – up to the age of 14 but particularly those aged 14 to 18 (and often beyond) – fall victim to forced labour or prostitution, are made a soldier, or are engaged in hazardous work unfit for their age. Many examples can be found in industrial or service sectors. Considering that many children work in agriculture, yet another ILO Convention is relevant here: Convention 184 on Health and Safety in Agriculture, which includes, for example, protective measures required when working with chemicals (e.g. pesticides) and agricultural tools. One recent instance where such protection is not available is cottonseed production in India, where farmers growing cottonseed for multinational and Indian companies replaced some young children by teenagers up to 18 years old. The latter, however, are also exposed, without protection, to pesticide-spraying and the burning sun while working the fields for 12 hour or more at a stretch.

- 6. Involve your own staff and your suppliers in combating child labour: inform them and involve them in your company’s action plan against child labour.**

It is very important to involve your company’s own employees in corporate policy which explicitly terms child labour as unacceptable – both in the company’s own operations and throughout its supply chain. Inform your employees about this ban on child labour and provide training to instruct them how they can contribute to the fight against child labour (also see the box on the IFC/World Bank). The same applies to your company’s suppliers. Include a clause in your company’s contract with suppliers or other parties with whom it wishes to collaborate that child labour is prohibited, and also specify what this prohibition means in practice – at the very least an obligation to take concrete steps to facilitate that children who are taken out of the production system start going to school. Make binding agreements with suppliers to ensure that they, in turn, make sure their suppliers and sub-contractors meet the same standard.

- 7. Collaborate and team up with other segments of society, for example trade unions and local and/or national governments, to realize full-fledged schooling for former child labourers**

Companies who find that their operations (or supply chains) involve large numbers of child labourers often find it very difficult or even impossible to get the children concerned to go to school. In most cases, companies should not attempt to set up or fund a school of their own, but team up with other organisations and jointly develop a more permanent solution. The preferred option, by far, is that former child labourers enter the regular education system. Where children cannot (immediately) enter a regular school, companies should, in cooperation with local authorities and civil society organizations, contribute to ‘bridging’ or ‘transitional’ education that enables somewhat older children to enter into the regular – typically full-time – schooling system. Research has shown that children who combine paid work with school do less well at school and run a greater risk of dropping out. Attention must be given to not create parallel structures to formal schooling. Bridge school should only serve as transitional tool to mainstream children into formal fulltime education.

- 8. Make a special effort where needed to address the specific challenges faced by children from discriminated and marginalised groups so that they, too, can make the transition from work to school.**

Many child labourers are from economically disadvantaged, discriminated and/or marginalised backgrounds. Children may be discriminated against because of the type of work done by their parents, their background, or the ethnic group or caste they belong to. Dalits ('outcasts') and Adivasis (tribals) in India, for example, are largely 'overrepresented' in child labour and even more so in bonded child labour. Many people feel it is 'normal' that children from such backgrounds are put to work and don't go to school, and sometimes this way of thinking is encouraged by local vested interests. Although most child labour is often officially prohibited by law, there is considerable social and political resistance to combating it in practice. Explicitly combating all types of child labour banned under the ILO Conventions, across the entire supply chain, will make it easier to reach Dalit and Adivasi children who might otherwise 'disappear', be it 'further up the supply chain' or in other types of work. In addition, a special effort is needed to ensure that these children join children from other backgrounds in regular daytime schooling and don't suffer discrimination at school. An additional effort is needed with a view to offering jobs to their parents or family members, who may need additional training and other types of social support to enable them to compensate for the loss of their children's labour.

9. Ensure that the authenticity of age certificates is adequately verified, and jointly with other parties urge that reliable birth registration systems are set up in areas that don't have them.

A child or youngster's exact age is often difficult to verify or even estimate. Age certificates may be false, particularly because many countries lack a reliable birth registration system. Age may also be assessed through other methods, for example a medical examination by a reliable physician, or through interviews to test a child's knowledge (e.g. has it finished elementary education?). In more general terms, companies could contribute to the development of reliable public birth registration systems, as these are frequently lacking. Together with employers' associations, trade unions and other actors in society, companies should be strong advocates for a birth registration system and thus speed up the introduction of such systems.

10. Combating child labour must always go hand in hand with compliance with the ILO's other three fundamental labour standards^{vi} and other broadly agreed-upon workers' rights.

In addition to refraining from engaging child labour, the following generally recognized fundamental workers' rights should always be observed: freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining, the elimination of all forms of forced or compulsory labour, and the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation. These workers' rights are fundamental human rights. In addition, the following workers' rights are also generally acknowledged: the right to a safe and healthy working environment, a living wage, and no excessively long hours or forced overtime. A company which combats child labour cannot use that as a pretext for violating other workers' rights. But neither can companies justify employing children because of their parents' low income – the latter being precisely the area where companies can make a difference (also see action recommendation 5).

For a broad vision on corporate social responsibility, refer to the 'CSR Frame of Reference' document (edition of June 2007), in which 36 civil society organisations in the Netherlands – including the Dutch members of the 'Stop Child labour' campaign – spell out how they feel companies should honour their responsibility toward society at large.^{vii}

- 11. Pay a procurement price to suppliers that enables them to avoid using child labour and hire adults (or youngsters over the age of 15) instead, offering them decent pay and conditions. If need be, also adjust other elements of your company's sourcing policy with a view to implementing your company's 'no child labour' policy and ensuring that fundamental workers' rights are complied with.**

Recent research on clothing and shoe manufacturing in Albania and cottonseed growing in India has shown that low prices paid by purchasing companies encourage child labour: low prices may induce suppliers to employ children, or cause parents whose earnings are insufficient for a decent life to put their children to work. Hence, procuring companies should not only demand that their suppliers refrain from employing children – they will also have to create the necessary conditions that will enable their suppliers to implement labour rights. Price is an important prerequisite to consider, but other purchasing conditions are also relevant. Late orders or bad procurement planning on the part of the procuring companies put suppliers under pressure: fearing that no new orders may be forthcoming if they don't deliver on time, suppliers pull out all the stops to meet their deadlines – making their employees work long hours and taking on child labourers as extra hands. In many cases companies should be able to tell readily if workers are compelled to put their children to work at home in order to meet a production deadline. If an adult can produce five pairs of shoes in a day on average but delivers 10, it should be obvious that standards are being violated.

- 12. Whenever possible, try to transfer the job hitherto done by children to their parents or other close relatives, or offer them alternative suitable employment.**

It may not always be possible or even desirable to transfer a child's job to an unemployed parent or relative, but where this is an option, companies have a moral obligation to do so. Companies may also offer training to a parent or relative, to enable them to get a job at the company or elsewhere at no less than a 'living' wage. Another option, which has been put into practice by fashion manufacturer Levi Straus, is to continue to pay children their former wage on condition and as long as they go to school, and then offer them a job once they reach the 'working age'.

- 13. Create, independently or working with others, facilities such as crèches and daycare centres for employees, to help them keep their children out of child labour.**

Many children, notably in agriculture and small-scale production facilities, are subjected to child labour or introduced to the work gradually because their parents start taking them along to their workplace when they're still very young. Pre-school and daycare centres can help to prevent that, while also providing playing and learning opportunities for children – and freeing elder children from having to look after younger brothers and sisters, a duty which prevents them, and girls predominantly, from going to school.

- 14. Plan and implement pro-active investigations, a solid in-house monitoring system, transparency on policy and practice, independent monitoring and verification, and involve those directly concerned and/or affected (the 'stakeholders').**

An adequate management system, which should include the above elements, is indispensable for any company wishing to credibly assert that its supply chain is free from child labour and does not violate other labour rights. This applies in particular to industries, supply chains and countries or regions where child labour is widespread. In industries where child labour occurs, it is not enough to say that neither the company itself nor its suppliers use child labour. The motto should be: don't tell me, show me! Companies should not passively wait for others to confront them with child labour practices or other violations of labour rights – they should be proactive, and launch their

own investigations, and /or have these conducted independently. Be transparent about the findings of such investigations, and state unambiguously what your company is going to do about it, independently or working with others. Civil society organisations and trade unions understand that child labour may occur in the supply chain, especially in those countries without compulsory education and weak, understaffed, absent or corrupt labour inspection services. In practice there is considerable appreciation for companies that are transparent about the issue, and take credible steps to tackle it. Verification of problems that have been identified, whether it be child labour or underpayment of workers, can only be credible if local organisations are involved in the monitoring process. This applies even more to making improvement plans, for example to phase out child labour and ‘guide’ the children to school.

Therefore, companies need to work with local governments, trade unions, and NGOs. A problem may be that such partners – government bodies, unions and NGOs – have little or no presence on the ground. In that case, companies should be able to demonstrate that they have done all they possibly could. One action they can take, for example, is to support capacity-building programmes of local unions and NGOs, and collaborate with them. If all else fails, the option of last resort is to pull out.

15. Participate in efforts to combat child labour in industries where child labour is rampant (stone quarries, tourism, cocoa, cotton (seed) and garment production, commercial agriculture -coffee, tea, rice, flowers etc., through a so-called multi-stakeholder initiative and/or join, if your company is a multinational, an ‘International Framework Agreement’ with one of the sectoral global unions.

In industries where child labour is endemic, the practice might be very difficult or impossible to tackle if a company acts on its own. The best option for companies in such sectors is to work through multi-stakeholder initiatives (MSI). MSIs are collaborative efforts of companies, trade unions and NGOs, and sometimes also involve the government, researchers and specialised institutes. MSIs have many advantages. For one, working together makes it far easier to share experiences in combating child labour. Secondly, companies can also share the costs of monitoring. Thirdly, and this is particularly important, by working together companies can create a new ‘level playing field’ in terms of costs when they, or their suppliers, have to hire more expensive adults. Finally, collaboration with unions is essential to give workers a say in fighting child labour and improving working conditions. However, multi-stakeholder initiatives should meet certain quality criteria. As stated, trade unions should be fully involved in the effort. Furthermore, the alliance should be aware of the risk that its most tardy members effectively set the pace of change. Therefore, transparency, the general public’s ‘right to know’, independent investigation, and campaigns if need be, remain necessary ingredients of the overall effort so as to keep the members of the alliance focused. A good example of an MSI in the fashion industry is the Fair Wear Foundation.

Another potentially effective option would be for a multinational company to enter into an ‘international framework agreement’ with a global trade union federation that it routinely negotiates with, to spell out the labour rights to be observed (and avoiding and combating child labour!) for all its employees at all its sites around the world, whether in its own operations or in its supply chain.

The IFC (World Bank) on combating child labour

The International Finance Corporation (IFC) is a unit of the World Bank that provides project advice and funding to companies – typically for major projects. The IFC has developed an extensive policy on CSR, and also provides advice on the implementation of fundamental labour standards including child labour. In its 20-page Good Practice Note ‘Addressing Child Labor in the Workplace and Supply Chain’^{viii} the IFC spells out several recommendations for combating the ‘harmful’ types of child labour. ‘Harmful child labour’ as such is not a term used in treaties and conventions on child labour, but the IFC says it coined the phrase in line with the recommendations of the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention as well as the UN’s Convention on the Rights of the Child. The IFC defines the term as follows:

‘Harmful child labour consists of the employment of children that is economically exploitative, or is likely to be hazardous to, or interfere with, the child’s education, or to be harmful to the child’s health, or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development.’ It is not made explicit in this definition if ‘the child’s education’ refers to compulsory regular education. If that is the intended meaning, this would be an internationally accepted definition. Even so, it is unclear why the IFC has opted to use the term ‘harmful child labour’, as companies tend to interpret this as meaning ‘the worst forms of child labour’, which does not cover types of child labour that obstruct schooling.

Definition issues aside, the IFC has nevertheless made useful recommendations, including:

Implementation

- *Create a procedure for age verification of applicants as part of hiring policy;*
- *Establish a protocol for how to respond when harmful child labour is detected;*
- *Communicate the policy to employees, suppliers/contractors and the community;*
- *Obtain support of senior management and provide training to all senior staff;*
- *Cultivate a core group of committed staff to act as ‘champions’ of the issue;*
- *Provide training and awareness programmes to employees at all levels;*
- *Build accountability by assigning clear responsibilities at all levels;*
- *Reward staff for their efforts toward eliminating harmful child labour;*
- *Create a mechanism by which employees and others can report violations with the assurance of confidentiality.*

What to do if child labour is discovered?

- *Release children from work that is harmful;*
- *Enrol them in school;*
- *Reintegrate children with their families and communities in cases where they are alienated from them;*
- *Provide alternative income-generating activities for the parents or other adult relatives of those children who are relieved from harmful work;*
- *Address the physical and mental health of children working under harmful conditions;*
- *Create conditions that remove the need for children to do harmful work;*
- *Protect and educate children who work legitimately;*
- *Identify safe work with fair wages and healthy working conditions for working children who meet minimum age requirements.*

Finally ...

... not a recommendation but an appeal: don't allow yourself, as a company, either to be lured or fooled into thinking, or implored, convinced or told that child labour is a fact of life and that the company does something good by employing a child.

Employing even one child helps to perpetuate child labour. Combating child labour helps to create more jobs and better wages for adults and thus also to alleviate poverty!

Sometimes, local social pressure or heartbreaking individual circumstances may seem to suggest that the most humane or easiest remedy is to give employment to a young child that should be at school. But doing so would undermine the efforts of those fighting child labour and seeking to confirm and put into practice as a standard that societies should not tolerate it. Moreover, even in the direst of circumstances, the best solution is to hire a parent or other adult relative who would be entitled to a higher wage, can support the child, and can see to it that it receives a proper education.

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'Stop Child Labour – School is the best place to work'

Those wishing to comment on this draft document are cordially invited to send their input to Gerard Oonk, of the India Committee of the Netherlands, at: g.oonk@indianet.nl Suggestions and comments received by will be used to improve or expand this document, the final version of which will serve as the CSR policy document for the 'Stop Child labour – School is the best place to work' campaign.

ⁱ See: <http://un.org/Overview.rights.html>

ⁱⁱ See: <http://ohchr.org/english/law/pdf/crc.pdf>

ⁱⁱⁱ See: <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/56/36/1922428.pdf>

^{iv} See Global Compact website:

<http://www.unglobalcompact.org/AboutTheGC/TheTenPrinciples/principle5.html>

^v See document 'Seven Reasons Why the ILO etc.: <http://www.indianet.nl/sevenreasons.html>

^{vi} See ILO page: <http://www.ilo.org/dyn/declaris/DECLARATIONWEB.INDEXPAGE>

^{vii} see CSR Frame of Reference of 36 Dutch civil societ organizations:

[http://mvo-platform.tuxic.nl/files/Publicaties/MVO%20referentiekader-web%20\(2\).pdf](http://mvo-platform.tuxic.nl/files/Publicaties/MVO%20referentiekader-web%20(2).pdf)

^{viii} See: [http://www.ifc.org/ifcext/enviro.nsf/AttachmentsByTitle/p_childlabor/\\$FILE/ChildLabor.pdf](http://www.ifc.org/ifcext/enviro.nsf/AttachmentsByTitle/p_childlabor/$FILE/ChildLabor.pdf)

About the campaign ‘Stop Child Labour – School is the best place to work’

The ‘Stop Child Labour – School is the best place to work’ campaign is based on the conviction that the Millennium Development Goals can only be achieved if all forms of child labour are eradicated and all children up to the age of 15 are given the opportunity of full-time education. The campaign aims to convince policy makers that they should close the gap between Millennium Goal 2 – i.e., that all children receive at least five years of primary education – and ILO Convention 138, which states that children should only be allowed to work from the age of 15. The campaign aim, therefore, is to achieve that, by 2015 every child receives formal, regular and uninterrupted education for at least 8 or 9 years.

The campaign is being carried out by the Alliance2015 network of European development Organisations: Cesvi (Italy), Concern (Ireland), Deutsche Welthunger Hilfe (Germany), IBIS (Denmark), Hivos (the Netherlands) and People in Need (Czech Republic) in co-operation with three other organizations: the General Education Union (Algemene Onderwijsbond), FNV and the India Committee of the Netherlands (ICN).

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GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Campaign ‘Stop Child labour – School is the best place to work’

Definition of Child Labour: Child Labour is work performed by a child that is likely to interfere with his or her education, or to be harmful to their health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development. (*Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 32.1*)

Principle 1: Child labour is the denial of a child’s right to education

The elimination of child labour and the provision of full time formal education are inextricably linked. The focus of attention must be to actively integrate and retain all ‘out of school’ children into formal education systems. Children have the right to education at least until the age they are allowed to work which is 15 (while developing countries can choose 14). In addition efforts must be made to remove all barriers to local schools as well as ensuring the necessary financial and infrastructural support for the provision of quality education.

Principle 2: All child labour is unacceptable

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (quoted above) along with a host of other international agreements unequivocally affirm the right of all children to live in freedom from exploitation. Approaches to the issue have tended to prioritize and segregate solutions to different types of child labour depending on certain categories. These range from children working in hazardous industries, children doing so-called non-hazardous work but missing out on school, to those working as full time domestic servants at home or elsewhere. The SCL campaign believes that such distinctions, while helping to cast a spotlight on the worst abuses and specific strategies, tend to be too narrow in their focus and offer only partial solutions. Efforts to eliminate child labour should focus on all its forms, preferably aiming at all children in a certain community.

Principle 3: It is the duty of all Governments, International Organisations and Corporate Bodies to ensure that they do not perpetuate child labour

All governments have a duty to ensure that they do not permit, or allow child labour to exist within their state. Furthermore they have a duty to ensure that state agencies, corporate bodies as well as their suppliers and trading partners worldwide, are fully compliant with the CRC and other international agreements protecting the rights of the child.

As part of their corporate social responsibility, all transnational and other business enterprises using child labour should create and implement a plan to remove children from their workforce, including their supply-chain, and enrol them in full time education.

Principle 4: Core Labour standards must be respected and enforced to effectively eliminate child labour

The eradication of child labour is closely linked to the promotion of other labour standards in the workplace: the right to organise and collective bargaining, freedom from forced labour, child labour and discrimination. A living wage, health and safety at work, the absence of forced excessive overtime are also crucial. Child labour undermines the opportunities for adult employment and decent wages. Experience has shown that child labour is highly unlikely to exist when a free trade union is present and where core labour standards are respected.