

**Report of the**

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**FAO WORKSHOP ON CHILD LABOUR IN FISHERIES AND  
AQUACULTURE IN COOPERATION WITH ILO**

**Rome, 14–16 April 2010**



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## PREPARATION OF THIS DOCUMENT

This is the report of the FAO Workshop on Child Labour in Fisheries and Aquaculture which was held in cooperation with ILO at FAO headquarters, Rome, Italy, from 14 to 16 April 2010. The report has been compiled by Lidija Knuth, Bernd Seiffert and Rolf Willmann and reviewed by Paola Termine, Brandt Wagner, Susan Gunn and Deepa Rishikesh for consistency and accuracy.

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### ABSTRACT

The Workshop on Child Labour in Fisheries and Aquaculture was organized by Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in cooperation with International Labour Organization (ILO) to generate inputs and guidance to the contents and process of developing guidance materials on policy and practice in tackling child labour in fisheries and aquaculture. In order to promote awareness on and effective implementation of the relevant UN and ILO conventions on the right of the child and child labour, workshop participants reviewed the nature, incidence and causes of child labour in fisheries, fish processing and aquaculture, examined the different forms and types of child labour in both large and small-scale and artisanal fishing operations, shellfish gathering, aquaculture, seafood processing, and work on board fishing vessels and fishing platforms, examined the health and safety hazards of fishing and aquaculture, including the use of hazardous technologies and relevant alternatives, and shared examples of good practice in the progressive elimination of child labour drawn from various sectors and regions.

Child labour often reinforces a vicious cycle of poverty and has a negative impact on literacy rates and school attendance and limits children's mental and physical health and development. The workshop participants agreed on a series of recommendations relating to legal and enforcement measures, policy interventions and practical actions including risk assessments to address child labour issues in fisheries and aquaculture. FAO and ILO were called upon for priority actions to assist governments in withdrawing trafficked children and to effectively prohibit slavery and forced labour. Awareness-raising among all stakeholders and the preparation of guidance materials were also prioritized by workshop participants. Gender issues needed to be considered in all actions and issues adequately addressed relating to discrimination and exclusion of fishing communities, castes, tribal and indigenous peoples, and ethnic minorities in fisheries and aquaculture.



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## ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

BMP	Better Management Practice
CBOs	Community Based Organizations
CCLS	Cambodian Child Labour Survey
CEACR	Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations
CGIAR	Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research
CGIAR	Consultative Group International Agricultural Research
CL	Child Labour
COFI	Committee on Fisheries (FAO)
CSO	Civil Society Organization
ESWD	Gender, Equity and Rural Employment Division
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FIMA	Aquaculture Management and Conservation Service (FAO)
FIMF	Fisheries Management and Conservation Service (FAO)
FIP	Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy and Economics Division (FAO)
FIPI	Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy, Economics and Institutions Service (FAO)
GOI	Government of India
HCL	Hazardous Child Labour List
HIV/AIDS	Human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
HH	Household
ICSF	International Collective in Support of Fishworkers
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IFAP	International Federation of Agricultural Producers
IFRI	International Food Policy Research Institute
IGO	Intergovernmental Organization
ILO	International Labour Organization
ILS	International Labour Standards
IM	Integrated management
IMO	International Maritime Organization
IOE	International Organization of Employers
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IPEC	International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour
ITF	International Transport Workers Federation
IUF	International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Association
JFFLS	Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools
LSMS	Living Standard Measurement Surveys
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
MAFF	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
MDGs	United Nations Millennium Development Goals
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
OSH	Occupational Safety & Health
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
SFLP	Sustainable Fisheries Livelihoods Programme
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SIMPOC	Statistical Information and Monitoring Programme on Child Labour
SLA	Sustainable Livelihoods Approach
STCW-F	Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Fishing Vessel Personnel
UCW	Understanding Children's Work
WWF	World Forum for Fish Harvesters & Fish Workers



## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Workshop of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) on child labour in fisheries and aquaculture, organized in cooperation with the International Labour Organization (ILO) was held in Rome from 14-16 April 2010. There were 35 participants including invited experts and staff of ILO and FAO. This was the first workshop to specifically address child labour issues in fisheries and aquaculture. It generated inputs and guidance on the contents and process of developing guidance materials on policy and practice in tackling child labour in fisheries and aquaculture. Workshop participants agreed on conclusions and recommendations relating to the nature, causes and consequences of child labour in fisheries and aquaculture and how to address them through legal and enforcement measures, policy interventions and practical actions. Participants specified priority actions for immediate implementation and identified cross-cutting issues that need to be taken into account in all interventions. The text of the workshop conclusions and recommendations is reproduced in full below.

### **Conclusions and recommendations**

#### **A. Examining the problems of child labour in fisheries and aquaculture**

##### **Nature and scope of children's work and child labour**

Children engage in a wide range of activities in capture fisheries, aquaculture, post-harvest activities and related activities, especially in the informal small and medium scale sectors. There are a wide range of factors that influence whether an activity should be classified as acceptable work, child labour or worst form of child labour. These include safety and health considerations, the number of hours worked per day and per week and whether it is performed at night, age of the child, whether or not additional activities are undertaken, the nature of recruitment and contractual arrangement, characteristics of the activity including seasonality, applied technology, use of or presence of hazardous substances and technology, water pollution and waterborne diseases, location, whether and how formal education is affected, and weather conditions. Ultimately, such a classification should be based on an assessment of the extent of risk to the physical and mental development of the child including exposure to HIV/AIDS. There are gender differences in the nature of child work. Girls tend to be more involved in post-harvest activities while boys undertake most of the work related to capture fisheries. There are hotspots where unconditional worst forms of child labour are concentrated, often in situations where migration is widespread.

##### **Causes and contributing factors to child labour**

Main causes of child labour include social inequalities, structural unemployment, poverty and vulnerability to shocks as well as migratory (direct and indirect impact) and demographic considerations. While poverty is a major cause, child labour perpetuates poverty. Poor quality, low relevance or absence of formal education as well as costs of schooling and level of parental education are important additional causes of child labour in fisheries and aquaculture. Fishing communities are often in remote rural areas with often very poor access to formal schooling. Cultural practices, such as social attitudes towards child work/labour /ideas about childhood and work, can contribute to the prevalence of child labour. Absence of appropriate national policies and legislation on child labour as well as inadequate enforcement thereof and the lack of an enabling environment that allows community participation in decision-making further contribute to child labour.

##### **Consequences and impacts of child labour**

Negative consequences and impacts of child labour are highly contextual. Child labour often reinforces the vicious cycle of poverty and has a negative impact on literacy rates and school

attendance and limits children's mental and physical health and development. Child labour in capture fisheries may occur to substitute adult labour and reduce labour costs. Poor profitability as a consequence of overfishing can be a driving force for the employment of children. Low paid child labour, in turn, could aggravate overfishing and other negative environmental impacts.

## **B. Addressing child labour in fisheries and aquaculture**

### **Legal measures and enforcement**

- Promotion of the ratification of ILO Conventions No. 138, 182 and 188 by Governments and relevant stakeholders with the assistance of the ILO and FAO.
- Effective implementation of the national minimum age legislation for fisheries and aquaculture.
- Effective implementation of ILO Conventions on child labour.
- Prohibition of slavery and forced labour of children working in fisheries and aquaculture.
- Adoption of laws and regulations on child labour in fisheries:
  - including the determination of hazardous types of activities in conformity with ILO Conventions No. 182 and 188, and
  - determination of light work activities in fisheries and aquaculture.
- Effective enforcement of national legislation through the strengthening of labour inspection, port state control and other relevant enforcement mechanisms, and by training of labour inspectors and other monitoring bodies on child labour issues.

### **Policy interventions**

- Promotion of the international cooperation on child labour in fisheries and aquaculture.
- Awareness raising and sensitization on child labour in fisheries and aquaculture at international, regional, national and community levels
  - e.g. training of lawyers and judges.
- Promotion of the multistakeholder approach and multiactor initiatives, inter-ministerial activities.
- Integration of child labour concerns in fisheries and aquaculture in:
  - Poverty Reduction Strategy Programmes,
  - rural development and agricultural policies, including fisheries policies, and
  - social security policies through the provision of social safety nets, school meal programmes, monthly conditional cash and non-cash support.
- Improved access to quality education that is relevant for children from fishing communities, providing free primary compulsory education, establishment of appropriate apprenticeship and vocational training programmes and providing incentives to teachers to serve in deprived fishing communities.
- National Action Plans to combat child labour developed in consultation with social partners and stakeholders.
- Establishment of National Level Commissions to eradicate child labour including a sub-committee to monitor child labour in fisheries and aquaculture.
- Higher share of child labour budget allocated to combating child labour in agriculture including fisheries and aquaculture, taking due account the actual incidence of child labour in the agricultural sector (70% globally).
- Strengthening social dialogue involving representative organizations of employers and workers, in particular the representative organizations of fishing vessel owners and fishers and other stakeholders.

## Practical actions

- Removal and rehabilitation of children engaged in hazardous child labour in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors and their social integration through education and other measures including vocational training (e.g. light work in aquaculture, such as ornamental fish raising).
- Risk assessment as an important tool for identifying and addressing safety and health hazards. Informed risk assessment, through community participation, bringing in expertise on occupational safety and health, as well as specific knowledge of fisheries and aquaculture operations, is useful in determining what types of activities and specific tasks pose risks to children and young persons and, if possible, how to eliminate or mitigate these risks. Risk assessment is particularly useful for determining the types of fishing operations and aquaculture activities and tasks that are so hazardous as to be prohibited for children. It was noted that FAO and ILO have developed tools for risk assessment, including tools designed specifically for the fisheries and aquaculture sector that can be used and/or built upon. Youth access to appropriate safety and health information and training should be secured.
- Appropriate technical and safety training prior to work on fishing vessels for the youth. This could include training in schools (through vocational training, apprenticeships and, to some extent, integrated into school programmes). Also important is training by employers, including awareness training related to specific vessels and enterprises. The Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools (JFFLS) could be adopted, tested and institutionalized to help address child labour in fishing and fish farming communities.
- Appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) for the youth (e.g. properly-fitted personal flotation devices/lifejackets). However, hazardous work should be prohibited, as safety equipment, including PPE, may still not provide suitable protection for young persons and may not be used, or used properly, by young persons.
- With respect to training and equipment, international instruments concerning training and safety and health of fishers, e.g. the International Maritime Organization's (IMO's) Torremolinos Protocol of 1993 relating to the 1977 Torremolinos International Convention for the Safety of Fishing Vessels, the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Fishing Vessel Personnel (STCW-F) of 1995, the ILO Work in Fishing Convention, 2007 (No. 188) and Work in Fishing Recommendation, 2007 (No. 199), as well as other FAO, ILO and IMO codes, guidance and safety publications, play important roles.
- Implementation of national laws, regulations and other measures concerning occupational safety and health (OSH). For example, the OSH laws and regulations restricting the amount of weight that can be carried by children.
- Assistance to fishers to obtain appropriate technology that would reduce child labour. Substitutes for hazardous substances, technologies and practices could be identified and promoted.
- Improved awareness of the link between child labour in the fishing sector and education through existing structures (e.g. school management committees, influential local organizations and management committees).
- Withdrawal of trafficked children from work in the fishing sector. This should be accompanied by rehabilitation (such as counselling, psychosocial and medical support, etc.) and social integration in vocational training or education to prevent return to child labour.

- Introduction of alternative income generation in fishing communities, especially for vulnerable parents and youth meeting the national minimum age for employment.
- Private voluntary standards and certification programmes that reflect core labour standards, and social and environmental standards.

### **Closing the knowledge and data gap**

ILO, FAO and other interested workshop participants could jointly develop a strategy and guidance to improve national statistics and survey instruments to include collection of better and more cost-effective data on children's work and child labour in fisheries and aquaculture, based on existing guidelines and guidance materials. Part of this effort could be linking up with other initiatives, such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and World Fish/World Bank, that are planning to expand the sample size of living standard measurement surveys (LSMS) in Africa, and support better coverage on fisheries, including the development of specific modules on fisheries.

Specific recommendations include:

- Adapt and integrate standard household surveys through the introduction of sector modules, or introduce specific questions.
- Ensure sufficient disaggregation: all data should be age- and sex-disaggregated; industrial and occupational classification to the third digit; including as necessary details on specific activity, including time use.
- Collect information on occupational injuries and diseases, in order to improve understanding on occupational hazards,.
- Collect more in-depth data through oversampling to obtain representative information on specific hotspots; as well as undertake action-oriented research and case studies, including relevant social partners, local communities, and other interested stakeholders.
- Compare household survey data with other national level data (Censuses) or other local surveys and investigations: (i) National Household (HH) surveys such as SIMPOC, LSMS, as well as Household Budget Surveys and Labour Force Surveys; (ii) sector specific surveys; (iii) baseline studies; and (iv) rapid assessments and case studies including qualitative information.
- Seek innovative solutions and proxy variables, and combine different sources of information to overcome the limitations of the underreporting of child labour sensitive information.
- Recognize and take up relevant indigenous knowledge and the understanding of the environment and management of fisheries and aquaculture resources.
- Build capacities of stakeholders to access, analyze and use data and information.

### **The actions that could be taken to address causes and consequences of child labour in fisheries and aquaculture**

Include key stakeholders such as:

- girls and boys,
- parents and guardians,
- medics and paramedics,
- government ministries and agencies: labour ministries, including labour inspection and occupational safety and health services; fisheries agencies and departments; maritime safety agencies; education ministries and youth ministries, where they exist,
- representative employers' organizations, in particular fishing vessel owners' organizations,
- representative workers' organizations, in particular representative organizations of fishers and fishfarmers,

- fishers organizations (e.g. cooperatives),
- multi-stakeholder initiatives (e.g. Understanding Children's Work, Agricultural Partnership for the Elimination of Child Labour),
- private sector (buyers, sellers),
- civil society (e.g. NGOs and consumers),
- public and private training institutions,
- regional/state/provincial/local authorities and organizations,
- international organizations,
- women's organizations,
- research institutes/universities, and
- community-based organizations.

Consideration should be given to the matter of manageability versus inclusiveness (not having a process so complex that it does not function).

### **Priority actions**

- Assist governments in withdrawing trafficked children working in fisheries, eradicate slavery and forced labour, and integrate these interventions with the counseling of trafficked children and their parents, with vocational training and education to prevent the return to child labour, or with adequate work placement (for youth between 16 and 18 years of age) (International Organization for Migration (IOM) and ILO).
- FAO and ILO should develop guidance and other tools to address child labour in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors. Consideration should be given to making use of the tools to address child labour that have already been developed by the FAO and ILO, though these may need to be adapted to the particular problem of child labour in the fishing sector (e.g. adapt, test and promote institutionalization of existing tools to fisheries, such as alternative education approaches as the Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools (JFFLS)).
- FAO and ILO should gather good practices and lessons learned, in one easily accessible place, on addressing child labour in the fishing sector, drawing upon FAO and ILO experiences. At a later stage FAO and ILO will have to look at target groups.
- ILO and FAO should, through multistakeholder consultation, assist in identifying the worst forms of child labour in specific fisheries and aquaculture activities.
- FAO and ILO should raise awareness on child labour among ministries of fisheries/agriculture and other rural institutions.

### **At the local level**

- Secure community participation and empowerment in the prevention and elimination of child labour through participatory assessments of what constitutes child work and child labour at community level.
- Create awareness of the local communities on the negative impacts of child labour; encourage communities to establish protection networks and community watch to identify and refer cases of child labour.
- Raise awareness of child labour through existing structures (e.g. school management committees) (ILO/FAO/CSOs/etc.).

**Crosscutting factors to be considered in all actions**

- Ensure adequate consideration of gender issues in all actions.
- Address issues related to discrimination and exclusion of fishing communities, castes, tribal and indigenous peoples, and ethnic minorities in fisheries and aquaculture.
- Promote a better understanding of the underlying causes of child labour in each situation in order to identify best strategy for its prevention and elimination.
- Promote alternative income generation activities in fishing communities, especially for vulnerable parents and youth having completed schooling (FAO, ILO).
- Promote policy coherence and cooperation at all levels between core stakeholders to adequately address the complexity of causes of child labour.
- Substitute as much as possible safer technologies and limit the use of hazardous substances.
- Make use of incentive-based approaches which include monitoring of conditions (e.g. Conditional Cash Transfer and conditional loans for income generation).
- Undertake initiatives to overcome lack of legal documents by children, including the promotion of birth registration (make it accessible, easy, not costly).
- Promote the maintenance of national records of the age of children.
- Promote community-based compliance monitoring, often best done by community organizations and community leaders.
- Raise awareness and involve people in finding appropriate solutions (including solutions that may be cost-effective).
- Take into account local conditions and considerations in policy formulation and implementation.

## **1. OPENING OF THE WORKSHOP**

The *FAO Workshop on Child Labour in Fisheries and Aquaculture in cooperation with ILO* was held in Rome from 14–16 April 2010. The workshop was attended by 35 invited experts and staff of ILO and FAO. The workshop agenda and list of participants are given in Appendix A and Appendix B.

Mr Ichiro Nomura, Assistant-Director General of the FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department, welcomed the participants and thanked the organizations and governments supporting their participation. He observed that the FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department had a longstanding cooperation with ILO in the area of working conditions in fishing including safety at sea aspects and expressed his great satisfaction that this cooperation would from now on also include the important area of tackling child labour in fisheries and aquaculture. He noted that while child labour issues did not yet feature prominently in the work of the Department, the Committee on Fisheries (COFI) will soon be asked to adopt aquaculture certification guidelines that included among its minimum substantive requirements a provision stating that: Child labour should not be used in a manner inconsistent with ILO conventions and international standards. While data are scarce on the incidence and nature of child labour in fisheries and aquaculture, merely on the basis of numbers, Mr Nomura noted that it would be most widespread in the small-scale subsectors of capture fisheries, aquaculture and post-harvest fish processing, distribution and marketing. These small-scale sectors are estimated to provide over 90 percent of the above 120 million direct and indirect fisheries livelihoods that support more than 500 million people or about 8 percent of the world population. He looked forward to the outcome of the workshop in terms of guidance to FAO and ILO in their quest to develop good practices guidance, awareness raising materials and to recommend action to specifically tackle child labour in fisheries and aquaculture. He thanked the Governments of the Netherlands and Norway for providing funding support to the workshop. His full address is given in Appendix C.

## **2. WORKSHOP OBJECTIVES**

The workshop objectives were to (i) provide a forum where participants exchange and discuss knowledge, experiences and good practices on child labour in fisheries and aquaculture and the ways to address child labour issues, and (ii) agree on a set of recommendations, provide advice and define actions that can be applied by governments, international organizations, fishworkers' organizations, the fishing industry and other stakeholders. The workshop outcome will be an important input for a joint ILO and FAO technical publication providing guidance on tackling child labour in fisheries and aquaculture. It will also inform on relevant follow-up activities including the Global Conference on Child Labour (held in the Netherlands in May 2010).

The structure of the workshop programme included plenary presentations and discussions as well as small group discussions.

The workshop also provided a forum for consultation with potential partners to seek synergies and complementarities with their programmes and activities. As such, it was hoped and anticipated that it would be valuable not only to FAO and ILO but also for the other participants and their organizations.

## **3. FAO AND ITS WORK RELATING TO CHILD LABOUR**

Eve Crowley, Deputy Director of the Gender Equity and Rural Employment Division of FAO, welcomed all participants to this first global workshop on child labour in fisheries and aquaculture.

Ms Crowley reminded participants that some 70 percent of child labour worldwide occurs in agriculture. When FAO refers to agriculture it always includes the fisheries, aquaculture and forestry sectors. Agriculture is one of the three most hazardous professions and many children are engaged in forced and hazardous agricultural activities, including working long hours, using sharp tools designed for adults, carrying loads too heavy for their immature bodies, operating dangerous machinery and engaging in hazardous techniques such as diving. Risk exposure to toxic pesticides, extreme

temperatures, rough sea, dusts, smoke, diseases and unsanitary conditions are additional factors making activities hazardous.

Ms Crowley mentioned that poverty and food insecurity are the main cause of child labour in agriculture, including fisheries. Child labour both contributes to and is a consequence of poverty. Availability and accessibility of schools, costs of school fees, policies on compulsory education, flexibility of school schedules and curricula, opportunities for vocational preparation, and perceived quality and relevance of education are important factors influencing decisions of parents to send their children to school or to work. Cultural practices also play a role in child labour.

In 2007, FAO, ILO, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), the International Federation of Agricultural Producers (IFAP) and the International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations (IUF) initiated a partnership to eliminate child labour in agriculture, especially hazardous child labour. The partners have pledged to work together to i) promote cooperation and achieve policy coherence on child labour among the partners; ii) create awareness of and mainstream child labour concerns into existing activities, programmes and projects of agricultural organizations; iii) promote action and cooperation in operational activities aimed at improving rural livelihoods, creating alternative income-generating activities; iv). promote action and cooperation in operational activities to ensure that children do not carry out hazardous work in agriculture; and v). promote opportunities for decent youth employment in agriculture and in rural areas.

Ms Crowley introduced examples of activities undertaken by FAO since signing the Partnership agreement, which included among others:

- Study on child labour and children's economic activities in agriculture in Ghana,
- Newsletter on participatory approaches and child labour in agriculture,
- Paper on child labour and Gender prepared for a FAO/IFAD/ILO Workshop on Gender and Rural Employment
- Draft FAO Rural Employment Strategy includes work on elimination of child labour,
- Rural Youth Employment Paper and positioning FAO's work on Youth Employment,
- Integration of child labour in the Junior Farmer Fields and Life Schools (Child Labour Prevention Module)
- Testing and adapting Junior Farmer Fields and Life Schools approach in the Farming and Livelihood Improvement Programme in Ghana,
- Promoting Youth Employment at country level (Comores, Gaza and West Bank, Honduras, Malawi, Mozambique, Nepal, Sudan, Tunisia).

Ms Crowley further explained that a wider range of challenges need to be addressed to successfully fight child labour in Agriculture. Among others, these challenges include that child labour is primarily taking place in the informal sector, which is often not sufficiently reached by employers, employees and national producer or fisher organizations. Without an overall change in poverty patterns and overall economic development of a country, it will remain challenging to eliminate child labour. Insufficient awareness and/or action by public, private sector and civil society stakeholders characterize the situation, often accompanied by Government action that is not consistent and cohesive.

Last but not least, it is important to differentiate between economic activities of children in agriculture that are acceptable and those which are defined as child labour. Activities in agriculture can be positive, providing children with practical and social skills for work as adults. Improved self-confidence, self-esteem and work skills are attributes often found in young people engaged in some aspects of agricultural work. The important differentiation between acceptable participation in working activities that are educational and beneficial and child labour is in some specific cases not easy. This can make awareness raising and promotion of child labour elimination challenging.



Ms Crowley concluded her presentation by expressing her hope that the workshop will provide new impetus and recommendations for stakeholder action leading to a stronger and enlarged partnership for fighting child labour in fisheries and agriculture and that the workshop will provide input for the preparation of a joint ILO and FAO technical publication to provide guidance on tackling child labour in fisheries and aquaculture. Furthermore, she expressed her expectation that some of the recommendations and conclusions of the workshop would be presented at *The Hague Global Child Labour Conference* in May 2010 and that the workshop would indirectly also lead to more FAO member country support and funds to strengthen mainstreaming of child labour in FAO's work programme.

#### **4. ILO AND ITS WORK RELATING TO CHILD LABOUR**

Brandt Wagner, Senior Maritime Specialist, Sectoral Activities Department, ILO, Geneva, provided a brief overview of the ILO's mandate, structure and activities. Before doing so, he thanked the FAO for convening the workshop and inviting ILO's participation, and thanked the Governments of Norway and of the United States of America for funding the participation of several ILO participants. He noted that ILO was unique in that it is a tripartite UN agency, where not only governments but also employer and worker organizations have a voice and vote. He referred to important ILO Declarations, including the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, which calls for member States to respect, promote and realize in good faith the principles and rights relating to the effective abolition of child labour. He set out the strategic objectives of the ILO, and the means of action to achieve these, including the adoption and implementation of international labour standards. In 2007, the ILO adopted the Work in Fishing Convention and Recommendation, which revitalized ILO's efforts to promote a legal framework to improve conditions of work of fishers. All these aforementioned instruments include specific provisions relevant to the workshop. He referred to several positive experiences of FAO-ILO cooperation concerning fishing and other sectors, and looked forward to practical results that would also lead to coherent UN system action to address child labour in the fishing sector.

Jean Dejardin, International Organization of Employers (IOE), noted that child labour is largely a consequence of poverty and is prevalent in the informal economy. It is mainly the responsibility of governments to provide for an environment that is favourable to a good upbringing of children. Governments need to ensure and take responsibility for free, basic and compulsory education, adequate schooling, daycare centers, and other support structures for children including training and social protection. It was also a government responsibility to promote sensible employment policies that allow for productive jobs for the parents. He observed that a distinction needed to be made between child work, child labour and the worst forms of child labour (and this was subsequently done by the meeting). He stressed that the worst forms of child labour needed to be eliminated as soon as possible. But he also noted that the immediate dismissal of children at work may have dramatic consequences for the children themselves. For example, the Rugmark entailed dismissal of children in carpet workshops/factories, mainly in Pakistan. Not long thereafter, most of these children were involved in prostitution, drug trafficking, robberies and other crimes. Concluding, he observed that child work may also be a positive source of training and experience, if adequately controlled (in terms of hours of work, nature of work, remuneration, etc.).

Razafindraibe Harmony Lucien, International Transport Workers Federation (ITF), presented the perspective of workers' organizations in the fisheries sector of the Africa region including in Madagascar, his home country, where he heads the fishworkers organization. He pointed out that the major cause of child labour in fisheries and aquaculture is poverty, particularly in Africa where an important percentage of child labour is found in the fisheries sector as studies have shown in, for example, Benin, Ghana and Senegal. In most cases, the lack of compulsory schooling is an important factor contributing to increased child employment in small-scale fisheries. ITF recognizes that this workshop, with its objective of sharing experience and understanding of the problem, is very important to address child labour and to draw the attention of governments to their responsibilities and

engagement in tackling child labour in fisheries and aquaculture. He noted that it is one of the hardest challenges we are facing as a great number of children are concerned but we hope that guidance and recommendations resulting from this workshop will help us to move forward. On behalf of the workers, ITF expressed special thanks to FAO and ILO for having organized this important workshop and for inviting the social partners.

Susan Gunn, Senior Technical Advisor on Hazardous Child Labour, ILO, Geneva, introduced to the participants ILO's International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC). She explained that IPEC works both at global and local levels. It conducts surveys that yield the global and national estimates of child labour which guide countries in their planning as well as form the basis for the "world wide movement" against child labour, a global awareness-raising campaign that reaches its highpoint on 12 June every year with the World Day Against Child Labour activities. IPEC's main work, however, is with individual countries – at present over 80 – to assist them with policy, legal reform, monitoring systems, and the identification-removal-rehabilitation of children trapped in child labour. The highest priority goes to those children who are in the "worst forms", i.e. hazardous work, sexual exploitation, slavery-like conditions, crime and armed groups.

Ms Gunn presented statistics (since updated) that showed child labour continuing to decline worldwide with 215 million in child labour in 2008, compared with 246 million in 2002. One group shows an unexpected and worrisome increase, however. Child labour in the age group 15-17 has increased from 59 million in 2002 to 62 million in 2008. This indicates that more youth are taking up more dangerous work than previously, perhaps because of the economic crisis, and is likely of particular relevance to the fishing sector. Similarly, among the regions of the world, Africa shows little decline. At present, there are virtually no statistics on child labour in fisheries as this is combined with agriculture as a whole (60% of all child labour).

Deepa Rishikesh, Coordinator, Child Labour Team, International Labour Standards Department, ILO, Geneva, provided an introduction to the International Labour Standards (ILS) System and the ILO Child Labour Conventions including the ILO Regular System of supervision and special procedures; role of the social partners in the ILS system and particularly in the reporting system; and a summary of the content of the two ILO core Conventions on child labour.

After an overview of the ILO's supervisory mechanisms, including a brief description of the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations (CEACR) as well as the tripartite Conference Committee on the Application of Standards, she informed participants of the content of the two ILO core Conventions on child labour, namely Convention No. 138 on Minimum Age which has received ratifications from ILO 155 member States and Convention No. 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour which has received 172 ratifications.

The main requirements of Convention No. 138 include the need for member States to specify a minimum age for admission to employment or work below which no child may be engaged in work. However, an exception to this rule gives discretion to States whose economy and educational facilities were insufficiently developed to specify a lower minimum age of 14 years after consultation with the organizations of employers and workers concerned (social partners). Other requirements of Convention No.138 include measures to be taken to provide free and compulsory education to all children up to the minimum age for employment, as well as the need to determine in laws or regulations the types of hazardous work to be prohibited for young persons below 18, and also what penalties exist for employers found to be in violation of said provisions. Examples of types of hazardous work, determined by Governments in consultation with social partners, include the following:

- night work or work involving long hours;
- work involving the transportation of heavy loads;
- work with dangerous substances or chemicals; and
- work with dangerous or heavy machinery.

Ms Rishikesh pointed out that governments may include fishing as a type of hazardous work but that the employment of young persons as from the age of 16 years in certain types of hazardous activities may be authorized, after consultation with the organizations of employers and workers concerned, on condition that:

- their health, safety and morals are fully protected; and
- they have received adequate specific instruction or vocational training in the relevant branch of activity.

Convention No. 138 allows light work activities to be carried out by children between 13 and 15 years of age (for countries that have specified a minimum age of 15) and by children between 12 and 14 years of age (for countries that have specified a minimum age of 14), provided that the work does not affect the child's education and is not physically, mentally and socially injurious to the child. The competent authority should determine such light work activities and the conditions in which such employment or work may be undertaken. The CEACR has observed that the types of light work most frequently determined are:

- agricultural work (such as the preparation of seeds and crops, the maintenance of crops without the use of insecticides or herbicides, the harvesting of fruit, vegetables or flowers, picking and sorting in farms and herding);
- forestry work and landscaping (including the planting of bushes and the maintenance of public gardens, without the use of insecticides or herbicides);
- domestic work (such as kitchen help, household help or looking after children); and
- the distribution of mail, newspapers, periodicals or publicity.

Convention No. 182, requires member States to prohibit and eliminate as a matter of urgency the unconditional worst forms of child labour, namely:

- the sale and trafficking of boys and girls under 18 for both labour and sexual exploitation;
- debt bondage and serfdom and forced or compulsory labour, including forced or compulsory recruitment of children under 18 for use in armed conflict;
- the use, procuring or offering of young persons under the age of 18 for prostitution or pornography;
- the use, procuring, or offering of a child under 18 for illicit activities, in particular for the production and trafficking of drugs.

Member States are required to determine the types of hazardous work prohibited to children under 18, after consultation with the organizations of employers and workers concerned, taking into consideration relevant international standards, in particular Paragraphs 3 and 4 of ILO Recommendation 190. Examples of the types of hazardous work contained in Recommendation No. 190 include:

- work which exposes children 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;
- work in an unhealthy environment which may, for example, expose children to hazardous substances, agents or processes, or to temperatures, noise levels, or vibrations damaging to their health; and
- work under particularly difficult conditions such as work for long hours or during the night or work where the child is unreasonably confined to the premises of the employer.

Ms Rishikesh drew then the attention of participants to the “programmatic” provisions of Convention No. 182. First, she underlined that each member State shall design and implement programmes of action to eliminate as a priority the worst forms of child labour: in consultation with relevant government institutions and employers' and workers' organizations; taking into consideration the views of other concerned groups for example; the views of the children, their families and, as appropriate, other concerned groups committed to the aims of the Convention, such as NGOs.

She also referred to effective and time-bound measures under Article 7, paragraph 2 of Convention No. 182 where each Member shall, taking into account the importance of education in eliminating child labour, take effective and time-bound measures to: a) prevent the engagement of children in the WFCL; b) provide the necessary and appropriate direct assistance for the removal of children from the WFCL and for their rehabilitation and social integration; c) ensure access to free basic education, and, wherever possible and appropriate, vocational training, for all children removed from the WFCL; and d) identify and reach out to children at special risk; and e) take account of the special situation of girls.

Finally, she referred to Convention No. 188 on the minimum age for work on fishing vessels. The objective of this Convention is to ensure that fishers have decent conditions of work on board fishing vessels with regard to minimum requirements of work on board and include provisions on minimum age of fishers (similar to Convention No. 138 but a higher minimum age). This Convention has so far been ratified by one member State.

Ms Rishikesh's presentation resulted in animated discussions from the participants who demonstrated a keen interest on issues related to International Labour Standards.

Patricia Colbert, Programme Analyst, FAO Gender, Equity and Rural Employment Division (ESWD) introduced the afternoon session for which participants divided into three working groups. The groups discussed during the afternoon of the first day the nature and scope of child labour in fisheries and aquaculture, examined causes and contributing factors and analysed consequences on well-being at individual, community and national levels. The three working groups decided to commence their deliberations with an initial focus on either capture fisheries, aquaculture or the fisheries post-harvest sector. In this way, each of these three sub-sectors was thoroughly discussed by at least one of the working groups. The summary reports of each group were presented in plenary during the morning session of day 2. The below summarizes the working group reports and plenary presentations and discussion. The names of the working group facilitators and rapporteurs are shown in Appendix E.

## **5. OUTCOME OF WORKING GROUPS OF DAY 1**

### **EXAMINING THE PROBLEM OF CHILD LABOUR IN FISHERIES, FISH PROCESSING AND AQUACULTURE**

At the outset, the working groups recalled the important distinction between work carried out by children and child labour to be abolished. While some work carried out by children can be an acceptable activity above a certain minimum age (but never less than 12 years), child labour as defined by Conventions No. 138 and No. 182 poses a risk to the mental and physical development of the child because the minimum age limit is trespassed, it interferes with education or it is hazardous or a worst form of child labour. The relevant ILO Conventions and the UN Convention on the Right of the Child provide the internationally agreed legal framework and give guidance on how to determine the specific requirements in the national context such as with the elaboration of the types of hazardous work in different sectors including fisheries and aquaculture. Participants agreed on the importance of context specific analyses to assess and address child labour in general and in fisheries and aquaculture specifically.

#### ***Nature and scope of child labour in fisheries and aquaculture***

Children engage in a wide range of activities in capture fisheries, aquaculture, post-harvest activities and related activities, especially in the informal small-and medium-scale sectors.

Children are engaged in all phases of a fishing trip including its preparation, while on board the vessel or craft or on foot in nearshore waters, and at the time of return to shore or harbour. Activities range from boat and netmaking, to the procurement and loading of food (and drugs at times), the launching of the boat as well as the recruitment of other child labourers. On board the vessel, children may

engage in rowing or steering the boat, keeping watch, scooping/removing water, casting and pulling the net or angling, operating machinery/gear, and sorting and cleaning the fish. Children may also engage on foot in nearshore collection of fish and shell fish including fish fry used in aquaculture. At the time of return to shore, children help in unloading, sorting and cleaning the catch, pulling the boat onshore, cleaning of the net and hull, boat and net repair, and others.

In the post-harvest sector, children are active in fish loading and unloading, transport and marketing, and in various types of fish storage and processing activities including sorting, peeling, slicing and filleting, and fish salting, smoking, curing, and drying as well as packing. Children are known in some instances to be required to provide sexual services in exchange for gaining access to fish for processing and marketing. This can expose them to a high risk of contracting HIV/AIDS.

In aquaculture, children engage in the collection, peeling and selling of shrimp seed done by boys and girls, often at ages 8 to 12 years old, helping hands and cleaning ponds, feeding the fish, seaweed farming and processing, ornamental fish culture, cage culture in rivers and estuaries and mariculture in coastal waters.

Whether a child's activities should be considered as acceptable work, child labour or worst form of child labour depends on a wide range of factors. These factors include safety and health considerations, the number of hours worked per day and per week and whether it includes night times, age, whether or not additional activities are undertaken, the nature of recruitment and contractual arrangement, characteristics of the activity including seasonality, applied technology, use of or presence of hazardous materials, water pollution and waterborne diseases, location, whether and how formal education is affected and weather conditions. Ultimately, such a classification should be based on an assessment of the extent of risk to the physical and mental development of the child, including exposure to HIV/AIDS. There are gender differences in the nature of child work and in its associated risks. Girls tend to be more involved in post-harvest activities while boys undertake most of the work related to capture fisheries. There are hotspots where unconditional worst forms of child labour are concentrated, often in situations where migration is widespread.

### ***Causes and contributing factors to child labour***

Main causes of child labour include social inequalities, structural unemployment, poverty and vulnerability to shocks as well as migratory (direct and indirect impact) and demographic considerations. While poverty is a major cause, child labour perpetuates poverty. Poor quality, low relevance or absence of formal education as well as costs of schooling, and level of parental education are important additional causes of child labour in fisheries and aquaculture. Fishing communities are often in remote rural areas with often very poor access to formal schooling. Cultural practices, such as social attitudes towards child work/labour/ideas about childhood and work, can contribute to the prevalence of child labour. Absence of appropriate national policies and legislation on child labour as well as inadequate enforcement thereof and the lack of an enabling environment that allows community participation in decision-making further contribute to child labour.

### ***Consequences and impacts of child labour***

Negative consequences and impacts of child labour are highly contextual. Child labour often reinforces a vicious cycle of poverty and has a negative impact on literacy rates and school attendance and limits children's mental and physical health and development. Child labour in capture fisheries as in other activities may occur to substitute adult labour and reduce labour costs. Poor profitability as a consequence of overfishing can be a driving force for the employment of children.

## **6. THE EXTENT AND DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOUR IN THE FISHERIES SECTOR AND IDENTIFICATION OF DATA GAPS**

Lorenzo Guarcello, Researcher, Understanding Children's Work and its Impact (UCW), explained that this joint interagency research programme by ILO, UNICEF and the World Bank was initiated in December 2000. The project's ultimate aim is to lay the groundwork for effective action against child labour at the international and local levels. This requires reliable information on child labour including of children working in agriculture, livestock, forestry and fisheries. Estimates of children in employment can be obtained from various types of household surveys such as the Living Standard Measurement Surveys (LSMS), Labour Force Surveys or socio-economic surveys. The difficulty is to obtain sector specific data as these would require much higher sample sizes than commonly applied in household surveys. As a consequence, quantitative information on children's involvement in a specific sector like fisheries and aquaculture is scarce.

Several measures would need to be taken to address this issue including (a) adjustments to the questionnaires used in household surveys; (b) use of industrial and occupational classification to at least three digits in order to have an initial understanding of the phenomenon, and (c) increased sample size (oversampling) in order to get representative information by, for example, region and age. Other measures could include the conduct of sector specific surveys, the use of census data in combination, for example with LSMS, and rapid assessments which even if not representative of the overall population, can be useful especially for measuring the worst forms of child labour.

ILO's child labour statistics are supported by the Statistical Information and Monitoring Programme on Child Labour (SIMPOC), which is the statistical arm of IPEC. SIMPOC assists countries in the collection, documentation, processing and analysis of child labour relevant data including numbers on the extent, characteristics and determinants of child labour. Ideally, different sources of information should be combined in order to cross-check the different estimates. Such cross-checking can be also useful to identify the areas for improvement in the different questionnaires.

The main advantage of household surveys is their national coverage that provides an overall picture of the phenomenon while allowing for some disaggregation by age, sex, region, ethnicity. They can be used to analyse the determinants of child labour. The main limitation of household surveys is the broad classifications they use in terms of occupations and industry. A peculiarity of the SIMPOC survey is that they are designed to measure the extent of children in employment. SIMPOC surveys usually report information by industry and occupation which is essential to measure children's involvement in fisheries. Moreover, SIMPOC surveys contain an additional module to identify children's involvement in hazardous work.

On the example of Senegal, the difficulty was shown to arrive at reliable disaggregated data by sector and occupation. There are differences depending on the criterion used, occupation or sector. In the ensuing discussion, several national efforts to improve child labour data were mentioned including Cambodia's plan to conduct a specific survey on child labour in fisheries and the inclusion of a child labour module in Uganda's national surveys during the last five years (report and questionnaire is online available on the Web site of Uganda's Bureau of Statistics: [www.ubos.org](http://www.ubos.org)).

Participants proposed various suggestions on how ILO, FAO and other agencies could jointly develop a strategy and guidance to improve national statistics and survey instruments to include collection of better and more cost-effective data on children's work and child labour in fisheries and aquaculture. Linking up with other initiatives, such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation funded programme of expanded LSMS coverage in Sub-Saharan African countries, could be a strategy to be pursued. In this regard, reference was made to the WorldFish Centre's effort to develop for LSMS a specific module on fisheries and aquaculture. The need was also identified for innovative solutions and proxy variables to overcome the limitations of the underreporting or distorted reporting of child labour sensitive information. The recognition and take up of relevant indigenous knowledge was also important as were capacity building of stakeholders to access, analyze and use data.

## **7. PRESENTATION OF EXPERIENCES AND LESSONS LEARNED ON HOW TO TACKLE CHILD LABOUR ISSUES IN FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE**

Rebecca Metzner, Fishery Planning Analyst, FAO, Rome, facilitated the presentation and discussion in plenary of participants' experiences and lessons learned on child labour issues in fisheries and aquaculture.

Ujjaini Halim, World Forum for Fish Harvesters & Fish Workers (WFF), provided a perspective on child labour issues in India where there is a large number of child labour the majority of whom is in the informal sector, agriculture, subsistence fishing and aquaculture. She noted that it is a point of concern that the numbers of child labourers are increasing despite various efforts of the government to eliminate and regulate child labour in the country. As per Census 2001 data there were 12.7 million economically active children in the age-group of 5-14 years in India. The number was 11.3 million in 1991 (always according to the Population Census) thus showing an increase in the number of child labourers in that decade. The above figure however does not include millions of child labourers in subsistence fishery/aquaculture who remain invisible.

The single most prominent cause of child labour in the fishery sector is poverty of fishing households followed by their limited access to education, health, housing and other basic amenities. There is a strong gender dimension, girls working longer hours in fishery and aquaculture. The fishery sector, especially aquaculture, remains neglected in child labour related policies and programmes in the country. This is manifested in non-availability of sustained data on sector-wise engagement of child labour in fishery and aquaculture. Though government of India (GOI) is hesitant to ratify ILO conventions related to child labour, there are legal frameworks, policies and programmes to address child labour. But these interventions lack specific focus on fisheries/aquaculture and enforcement in general remains poor. Moreover, some acts/programmes need to be more inclusive.

One significant step to address child labour in India is making education compulsory (6-14 years) by the state but the problem is that quality education is not ensured. Rural youths seldom have access to decent employment opportunities, there are not enough vocational trainings, etc. Government representatives have poor capacity to deal with child labour and there is poor synergy between ministries dealing with child labour. Another significant factor is 'demand', both at national and international level. Aquaculture is export oriented in India so global market demand shapes the labour market, influencing economic conditions of poor households who are engaged in this sector, thereby indirectly impacting growth of child labour. Same is true for bilateral and multilateral agreements regarding fishing and aquaculture.

The way GOI distinguishes between work carried out by children and child labour to be eliminated is not effective. Normally, children contributing as family labour (even in hazardous work) are not considered as child labour. But in practical terms these children involved in family-run activities are also deprived of education like officially recognized child labour. So a good indicator for determining child labour would be considering all the children deprived of education due to their engagement in fishery/aquaculture work irrespective of the nature of work.

Key challenges, therefore, are to make child labour in fisheries and aquaculture visible, to deepen understanding regarding their engagement in fisheries /aquaculture particularly in hazardous work and update the existing list of hazardous work in the Child Labour Prohibition and Regulation Act 1986. It is important to clearly distinguish between work carried out by children and child labour to be eliminated. It is important to effectively enforce existing legal provisions and at the same time it is necessary to revise programmes/policies/and acts to make these more inclusive. Priority actions include:

- investigation on status of child labour in fisheries and aquaculture in India (include subsistence and artisanal fisheries/aquaculture) and generating data on the above topic on regular basis, documenting cases (in aquaculture), and good practices;
- ensuring quality education (state's obligation)/vocational trainings;

- campaigns for community awareness, participation, establish community watch, campaign for ratification of ILO conventions;
- sensitization (capacity building of state actors) and making adequate resources available for addressing the child labour problem thus enabling them to ensure a better monitoring mechanism;
- making multistakeholders of civil society aware (including consumers) and accountable;
- acknowledging/promoting good works done by NGOs, CSOs and CBOs to eliminate child labour in fisheries and aquaculture (more support for such cooperation); and
- ensuring policy coherence at all levels to ensure poverty is not intensified further.

Dela Afenyadu presented child labour issues in fisheries in Ghana. Notwithstanding national commitment to their rights and development, many children in Ghana still engage in a variety of occupations including fishing. Children engage in fishing do so as part of the socioculture of their ethnicity; might have migrated from stressful domestic circumstances; might have been trafficked; or might be in debt bondage. For both the marine and Volta Lake fisheries, open access and the socio-culture of fishing lead to excessive pressure on, and over-exploitation of, fish stocks, resulting in falling catch per unit effort, profitability and therefore a rising trend in poverty. Collapse of the lower Volta basin fishery due to the ecological shock resulting from the creation of the Akosombo dam has also exacerbated the negative trends and propelled migration into the Volta lake fishery upstream, worsening the pressure created by the fishing socioculture and open access. These trends spark adaptive responses of gear intensification and innovation as well as progressive substitution of children for adult labour, creating rising demand for child labour. Beyond adaptive responses, escape responses are also triggered by the aforementioned negative trends, whereby fishers migrate in search of more promising fisheries leaving their usually large households under the care of single female household heads – their wives. The resulting domestic challenges lead to trafficking of some children from these households or migration by the children themselves. Parents engaging their children in fishing, as well as migration and child trafficking, then tend to supply child labour to meet the demand already generated, creating a child labour market. Two approaches, rights-based and participatory approaches, are used in Ghana to curtail child labour in fishing. The latter has tended to be more promising even though a synthesis, of both is emerging and might finally prove to be the most effective. Finally, it is the sociocultural dimension of child labour in fishing that is difficult to deal with. As there are no schools for teaching fishing skills, the national fishery may collapse due to lack of fishery skills if child labour, the only avenue for acquiring fishing skills, is effectively eliminated. There is therefore a need for formal education and training in fishing for children of the appropriate age, with improved training techniques, as well as safety, ethics and technology. The national fishery should also be managed for profitability and sustainability, to eliminate the need to substitute children for adults.

José Roberto Morales, National Coordinator, ILO-IPEC, El Salvador, gave a presentation on Child Labor Eradication in Fisheries: El Salvador Experience. In El Salvador, the process for eradicating child labour in fisheries was developed on the basis of two complementary strategic approaches. The first step took place back in 1999 by implementing a pilot programme for withdrawing around 200 children from hazardous activities such as mollusk extraction. Lessons learned from that programme indicated the existence of different child labor conditions which were related to the nature of the different fishing activities developed within their communities. The next step consisted in the generic identification of the conditions of child labour in the fishing sector. The Rapid Assessment methodology developed jointly by the ILO and UNICEF was used for the study. As a result, seven fishing activities were identified as the most common in the country.

*Creation of an enabling environment.* This task was oriented to the provision of technical support to the country's authorities in order to create a systematic mechanism that could allow identifying the magnitude and incidence of child labour, to adopt specific public policies and time-bound national plans. This part of the strategy also focused on capacity building for providing relevant services to children engaged in hazardous fishing activities. *Specific interventions:* These interventions allow the design of a specific answer for the issue of children engaged in hazardous fishing activities. The



strategy integrated a group of services and activities oriented to withdraw children from fishing activities considered as dangerous.

In a five-year period, the project was able to withdraw 4 200 children from hazardous fishing activities in four geographic areas of the country. These numbers are nearly 38% of the estimated total population of children working in the fishing sector of the country.

Eddi Walakira, of the Makerere University Faculty of Social Sciences, gave a presentation on child labour in fisheries and aquaculture in East Africa, with a deeper insight into the Uganda case. The East African region is home to an estimated 318 million persons which makes it the most populous of all African regions. The population has grown at an average rate of 2.6 between 2005 and 2010, with Uganda having the highest growth at 3.2 per annum. Children aged less than 18 comprise half of the East African population while those aged 5–14 years make up nearly 30 percent of the population. The incidence of child labour is estimated at 36 percent, which is higher than the rate for the sub-Saharan region. Being the most populous region in Africa, it also has the largest number of working children. Until recently, fish and fish products have in the past contributed up to 6 percent of the GDP for countries like Uganda and have provided livelihoods for nearly 2.5 million persons. In both fisheries and aquaculture, children provide employment exceeding 40 percent of the sector participating labour force in the East African countries. In agriculture generally, children provide 50 percent of the labour force for countries like Uganda. Poverty and other sources of vulnerability are the major causes of children's entry into work. Working children are most susceptible to exploitation and often suffer debilitating consequences owing to their participation in hazardous work, including work in fisheries and aquaculture. Yet caution must be taken that not all activities related to fishing are hazardous. Children undertake actual fishing and also provide support services including cleaning fish, retailing, food preparation, repair of nets among others. A study supported by ILO (Bureau of Employers' Activities –See Walakira and Byamugisha 2008) in Uganda, revealed that children in fishing often work for long hours, undertake work during night hours and many of them suffer injuries and many other sicknesses. Many girls experience sexual exploitation and the risk of contracting sexually transmitted diseases as a result of working in fishing communities is always high.

Interventions to address child labour have comprised legislative and policy initiatives and programmes to prevent, withdraw and rehabilitate the affected children – most often with the support of ILO/IPEC and partners. The scale of the programmes however, is often too limited to create significant and long lasting impact, owing to the magnitude of the problem. Effective interventions are known (i.e. prioritizing education with focus on quality, reduction of costs and making it relevant to local conditions, focus on poverty alleviation and social protection, among others), however resource mobilization and scope of interventions remain significant challenges. Hence, there is a need for concerted action among actors at different levels, the need to scale up access to quality education and skills training for older children and undertaking initiatives that are multisectoral and with multiple actors.

Mrs. Kaing Khim, Deputy Director General of Fisheries Administration (FiA), Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF), Cambodia, highlighted the economic, social and nutritional importance of the fisheries sector in her country. Fisheries provide employment to about 6 million people in Cambodia and many of them are rural poor and including children.

In spite of a decline in child labour in Cambodia over the period 2001–2005, the situation of child labour in the country continues to be of serious concern, with the highest child economic activity rate in all of east and south east Asia. The Cambodian 2001 Child Labour Survey (CCLS) revealed the following picture of child labour in that year:

- 2.3 million children were working in Cambodia;
- 52% of 7–14 year olds were economically active (i.e. more than 1.4 million children);
- one-third of those under age 12 were economically active;
- 37 000 children were working away from home; and

- 55% of rural children, aged 7–14 years, were involved in some sort of economic activity, compared to 40% among urban children.

More than 80 percent of child labour is found in agriculture, forestry and fisheries but precise data by individual sub-sectors are not available. In fisheries, typical activities in which children are involved include work on board fishing vessels, construction and repair of fishing boat and gear, and fish processing, transport and marketing.

The main causes of child labour relate to poverty and food insecurity which in turn are characterized by low incomes, lack of assets and non-diversified household economies. Child labour is considered a key obstacle to achieving universal primary education and to reducing poverty in Cambodia.

The government of Cambodia has ratified the core ILO conventions, adopted them in national legislation and seeks their effective implementation. A government priority is the elimination of all kinds of worst forms of child labour. This requires commitment of all concerned government agencies and development partners including the fisheries agency. Comprehensive research is needed on child labour in the fisheries sector to inform policy to address it and eliminate the worst forms of child labour on a priority basis. In closing, Mrs Khim requested ILO, FAO and other development partners to assist her agency in this endeavour.

Sebastian Mathew, International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF), focused on the need for adopting a framework to look at children's work and child labour in fisheries and aquaculture. He pointed out that the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138) of ILO requires effective abolition of – or putting an end to – child labour, and that the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182) of ILO requires prohibition and elimination of worst forms of child labour (e.g., slavery, trafficking, debt bondage and forced labour, as well as of hazardous work). He suggested that minimum age for children in fisheries and aquaculture activities should be specified at the national level towards drawing a distinction between children's work and child labour. This was to be undertaken for (i) light work; (ii) non-hazardous work; (iii) tolerable hazardous work; and (iv) intolerable hazardous work, consistent with the ILO Conventions 138 and 182. A better understanding of technology and labour processes – especially the contextual relationship between fishworkers, fishery resources, fishing/fish farming and fish processing methods – was sought towards determining children's work and child labour in fisheries and aquaculture. This was especially important, it was observed, to determine hazardous work and to improve health and safety of children under the age of 18.

While types of light work, non-hazardous work and tolerable hazardous employment or work of children should be regulated, all types of indentured child labour, trafficking and sexual abuse of children and forced child labour should be prohibited, *inter alia*, in fisheries and aquaculture, he argued. Employment or work of children in intolerable types of hazardous work, particularly in fisheries and aquaculture, should also be prohibited, it was contended. Intolerable types of hazardous work were deemed as activities that can still jeopardize the health, safety and morals of children even after they receive adequate specific instruction and vocational training in the relevant fishery or aquaculture activity (e.g., diving, certain types of night work, lifting heavy loads, handling dangerous machinery and tools and exposure to pollution and chemicals).

In concluding, Sebastian Mathew highlighted the importance of supply-side and demand-side interventions in general, and in fisheries and aquaculture in particular, towards abolition of child labour. These interventions should include measures such as: effective schooling for girls and boys; targeted poverty reduction programmes; policy focus on inclusive economic growth especially of those who are excluded or discriminated against, such as women, fishing castes and communities, tribal and indigenous peoples and ethnic minorities; and social labelling initiatives in international trade in fish and fish products. Last but not least, he pointed out that the effective governance of fisheries resources could alleviate conditions leading to both supply of, and demand for, child labour in fisheries and aquaculture.

Vegard Iversen, Senior Fellow, School of International Development, University of East Anglia, explained that the purpose of his presentation was to show the important role of education in the child labour context. In doing so, he drew attention to two fundamental issues that often are overlooked. The first relates to what children (in fishing communities and elsewhere) actually learn in school. Based on data from the Annual Status of Education Report 2009 – published by the Indian NGO Pratham<sup>1</sup> - even in apparently ‘shining’ states (Gujarat), learning outcomes are poor. Kerala’s expected achievements are echoed in learning outcomes (but Kerala is also now the Indian state with the highest percentage of young school age children in private schools). Bihar is doing well compared to Gujarat which says, perhaps, more about Gujarat than Bihar. In relation to the quality of the assessments, he noted that the reports meticulously document the methods used for testing reading, writing and mathematical skills) and based on annual tests of learning outcomes among more than 500,000 children in rural India. This choice of states is not arbitrary – Gujarat is often used as an example of the new ‘shining’ India, while Kerala is widely acclaimed for its achievements in education and health care provision; Bihar and Uttar Pradesh are large and populous Northern states with abysmal development records.

In the second part of his presentation, he provided an example of an empirical analysis of school attendance (imperfectly) measured by enrolment and based on the very extensive and detailed data-set collected as part of what in India has come to be known as the PROBE study<sup>2</sup>. He drew the attention of the audience to the required scope for gaining in-depth and comprehensive understandings of the many factors that may affect school attendance and differentially so for boys and girls. The PROBE study is exemplary in that in addition to very detailed information on household characteristics (e.g. education, demography, housing, land, livestock, other assets, parental aspirations), a number of relevant variables at the community (see descriptions in slides) and school (ditto) levels were collected, which in combination enables a very rich and comprehensive analysis of the determinants of school attendance. One particularly interesting point is that while a large number of variables impact on the attendance of girls (one implication is that policy makers can pursue a number of different avenues to improve attendance for girls in these study areas), only a few variables affected the school attendance of boys.

Katherine Snyder, WorldFish Center, gave a presentation on Children’s Agency in Seeking Work and Labour Opportunities in Fisheries. She observed that what often gets left out in discussions of child labour is the acknowledgement that children are sometimes active agents in seeking out work. While it is undeniable that some children are forced into work and indeed are trafficked to work for others, there are also many children, such as those described earlier, who pursue work opportunities themselves and choose to drop out of school. No one is stealing their childhood or coercing them, but they have made the choice, given the socio-economic context in which they live, to pursue an opportunity that appears to hold more promise for their future. The failure to recognize children’s agency is linked to the Western notion of children as dependent and passive (Nieuwenhuys 1996). While children may actively seek out work, this does not mean that their work is valued in the same way that adult labour is. In addition, their work is often not subject to the same laws and they thus often lack basic labour rights that are in place to protect adults.

Working is another way that children move into adulthood. Doing work well is an important aspect of identity in many African communities and influences your marriage choices and social networks. In addition to social identity, children are attracted to work for the cash it provides them but also because it offers opportunities for sociability and even fun in many cases. Poor schools and the applicability of the education children receive in them also motivates children to pursue work opportunities rather than stay in school.

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<sup>1</sup> The ASER reports can be downloaded from the Web site [www.asecentre.org](http://www.asecentre.org)

<sup>2</sup> The tables are from a paper published by J. Dreze and G. Kingdon (2001): ‘School Participation in Rural India’, *Review of Development Economics*, 5(1): 1-24.

Efforts to address child labour must be multisectoral and include ministries of labour, agriculture, natural resources and education. Communities themselves and the children who work should be involved in coming up with solutions to child labour. Measures should focus on improving schools and the relevance of school curricula to the long-term goals of children and their families.

## **8. OUTCOME OF WORKING GROUPS OF DAY 2**

### **IDENTIFYING SOLUTIONS OF CHILD LABOUR IN FISHERIES, AQUACULTURE, AND POST-HARVEST OPERATIONS**

#### *Policy and legal measures*

Key requirements are the promotion, ratification and effective implementation of ILO conventions on child labour. Various policy and legal measures are needed in this context including social dialogues (e.g. Brazil), the effective implementation of existing legislation, training of labour inspectors, the establishment of national commissions (e.g. Brazil) and inter-agency joint committees on child labour, the establishment of children's protection networks (e.g. Brazil) and the integration of CL issues into fisheries and aquaculture policy frameworks (e.g. El Salvador).

One of the policy actions to consider is the tripartite process of determining what types of fisheries sector related activities need to be included in the "national hazardous child labour lists"; this is required of all countries that have ratified ILO Convention No. 182. ILO Convention 188 also calls for national determinations on work that might be undertaken by young persons on fishing vessels. These determinations are important because they provide the legal basis for other types of action as well as being a key awareness-raising activity for the parties involved in the process.

Examples provided by workshop participants of fishery and aquaculture related activities that countries have determined to belong into the hazardous child labour list (HCL) include all types of open sea fishing, underwater activities, work at night, loading and unloading of weights above a certain maximum, and extraction activities in mangrove areas. Some technologies such as Muro Ami fishing in the Philippines were entirely banned. For reasons of awareness-raising and correct determinations of HCL, as a matter of principle, employers, workers and other concerned stakeholders should be involved in such decisions together with the concerned government agencies.

Various interventions are needed to eliminate hazardous child labour including technological changes, basic safety training, ensuring compliance of vessels with international safety standards, incentive measures such as cash transfers, and not least awareness raising and education. Concerning health and safety of fishers and other workers, there exist many tools on risk assessment. In risk assessments, ideally the entire chain from fish harvest to the ultimate sale of the fresh or processed product should be reviewed for identifying hazardous activities. There are usually alternatives available to substitute for hazardous technologies or practices but the switch to these non-hazardous techniques may incur costs and also require training.

It was recognized that economic distress and environmental degradation as a consequence of overfishing and poor management of coastal resources may contribute to poor working conditions, unsafe fishing operations and higher incidence of child labour. Good fisheries management practices resulting in healthy fish stocks and good economic returns can lower occupational risks in fishing and reduce the economic need for child labour.

#### *Closing the knowledge gap*

There is a scarcity of sector-specific child labour data in fisheries and aquaculture. Country-wide child labour surveys and other types of socio-economic and demographic household surveys generally do not have sample sizes that are too small for statistically significant assessments of the child labour situation in the fisheries sector. Various measures can be taken to improve the data availability and

close the knowledge gap including oversampling of fishing and fish farming households in national sample surveys, the conduct of fishery sector specific child labour surveys, amendments to agricultural and fisheries census questionnaires to capture information on child labour, and dedicated case studies in specific geographical areas where child labour is widespread (i.e. hotspots). In this context, the need was highlighted of adequate coverage of the fishery post-harvest sector.

### ***Practical actions***

Practical actions such as awareness-raising, training and educational activities can be taken by all concerned including not just government agencies but also the following:

- trade unions;
- employers' organizations;
- fisheries organizations (e.g. cooperatives);
- multistakeholder initiatives;
- private sector (buyers, sellers); and
- civil Society (e.g. NGOs and consumers)

Awareness raising and sensitization campaigns on the negative impact of child labour that target local communities were considered critical for effective implementation of child labour legislation.

The importance of national birth records that allow the determination of the age of children was highlighted in order to allow for effective compliance monitoring by labour inspectors and others.

The need was expressed to compile good practices and lessons learned on the elimination of child labour in fisheries and aquaculture in one easily accessible place. ILO and FAO could establish a web site for this purpose.

Monitoring is important to ensure effective compliance with child labour regulations. This is often best done by community organizations and community leaders who are aware of local realities and can involve the concerned people in finding appropriate solutions. In this context, the importance was highlighted of sensitizing local communities through dialogue and participatory assessment of child labour.

Access to quality education by children was considered among the most critical interventions to reducing the incidence of child labour. The special needs of children in often remotely located fishing and fish farming communities need to be recognized and addressed through suitable measures such as facilitating physical, economic and social school access, monitoring of teacher attendance and performance, providing incentives for school attendance such as free meals and school stipends, and establishment of appropriate apprenticeship and vocational training. Adequate arrangements need to be put in place to ensure the education of children of migrant fishing families.

## **9. SUMMING UP AND CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The final session of the workshop was chaired by Paola Termine and facilitated by Patricia Colbert. Rolf Willmann provided a brief summing-up of the workshop proceedings. Participants reviewed, discussed and amended a draft of the workshop's conclusions and recommendations which had been prepared by the joint FAO-ILO Secretariat on the basis of the discussions and findings of the workshop's working group and plenary sessions. The final text agreed by all participants is shown in the Executive Summary.

## **10. WORKSHOP CLOSING**

In closing comments, Brandt Wagner (ILO), on behalf of all his colleagues and ILO participants, thanked Mr. Nomura, Ms. Crowley, Mr. Willmann and all the members of the FAO secretariat, for

organizing and hosting the workshop. The issue of child labour was felt in the heart and challenged the mind. The ILO had already done much work on the issue of child labour, but recognized the need to do more work with respect to the fisheries sector. ILO participants, both from the secretariat and the invited experts, had appreciated the opportunity to discuss the contents and implementation of the relevant ILO standards – in particular the widely ratified Minimum Age Convention (No. 138) and the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention (No. 182) and the newly adopted Work in Fishing Convention (No. 188), to share the experiences gained from more than 20 years of work through the International Programme for the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) and to provide other valuable experiences and views from their perspectives of labour inspectors, employers/fishing vessel owners and representative workers' organizations. The ILO had great respect for the knowledge and work of the FAO in the fisheries sector, and it had been very useful to learn about related FAO objectives and activities, particularly its field work that was relevant to, and often directly concerned, with child labour. All the participants had contributed a great deal to the workshop, and had helped not only gained greater insight into the challenges of addressing child labour in the fisheries sector but had also started work on identifying how the two UN agencies could move forward to address the issue coherently, efficiently and expeditiously.

Eve Crowley (FAO) highlighted in her closing remarks the high quality and richness of the workshop discussions and congratulated the participants to have agreed and formulated a good number of concrete conclusions and recommendations. The workshop was the first globally coordinated event on the topic and has brought not only FAO, ILO and social partners together, but also a much wider range of experts and multiple experiences and views. Ms Crowley continued by saying that the workshop has helped FAO to map how FAO can attend to the topic of child labour in fisheries and aquaculture. Addressing child labour in fisheries is complex, situation specific and remains challenging. One way FAO and partners should work now is to identify the hotspots of child labour and to concentrate on the worst forms of it. This would also need to involve situation specific sets of analysis, including risk assessments, gender analysis as well as analysing the social, cultural, economic and environmental context in which child labour occurs.

FAO and ILO need to continue to jointly work together in the fight against child labour making use of the complementary approaches of the two agencies and building on the diverse expertise needed to successfully address the complexity of the problems at hand and to ensure the holistic perspectives needed for engaging in solutions.

ILO and FAO will seek to reflect in their work programmes joint and coordinated efforts on child labour in fisheries and aquaculture. Some more immediate actions to be taken as a follow up to the workshop include that FAO will take the responsibility to finalize the Workshop report in collaboration with ILO. The report will be widely distributed and published on the ILO-FAO Web site.

Core recommendations of the Workshop will inform the “The Hague Conference Global Child Labour Conference, 10–11 May 2010 – Towards a World without child labour – Mapping the Road to 2016”, in particular during the parallel workshop on child labour in Agriculture. The workshop outcomes will be used to inform a joint ILO – FAO publication providing technical guidance on eliminating child labour in Fisheries and Aquaculture. ILO and FAO agreed to prepare a concept note to attract funding for joint and complementary activities. Both organizations wish to stay in contact with the workshop participants to continue to work together in fighting child labour in fisheries and aquaculture.

**APPENDIX A**  
**Workshop Agenda**

**Wednesday, 14 April 2010**

Opening

Workshop objectives

Meeting each other and workshop overview

FAO and its work relating to child labour and the Partnership for Cooperation on Child Labour in Agriculture

ILO and its work relating to child labour

- An overview of the ILO's mandate, structure and activities
- The ILO's International Programme for the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC)
- Worker's and Employers Organizations positions

An overview of international standards concerning child labour and fisheries

Introduction to the group work

Working Groups: Examining the problems of child labour in fisheries, fish processing and aquaculture

**Thursday, 15 April 2010**

Presentation and discussion of outcomes by each of the 3 working groups

The extent and distribution of child labour in the fisheries sector and identification of data gaps

Presentation of experiences and lessons learned on addressing child labour in fisheries and aquaculture

Working Groups: Identifying solutions of child labour in fisheries, aquaculture, and post-harvest operations

**Friday, 16 April 2010**

Presentation and discussion of the outcomes of the 3 working groups

Discussion on the Way Forward

Summing-up of workshop findings

Conclusions and recommendations

Closing of the workshop

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## APPENDIX C

### **Opening Address by Mr Ichiro Nomura Assistant Director-General Fisheries and Aquaculture Department**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Welcome to Rome and welcome to FAO.

I'm very grateful that you have accepted our invitation to participate in the Workshop on Child Labour in Fisheries and Aquaculture. The workshop has been convened by FAO in cooperation with ILO – the International Labour Organization. In addition to our colleagues from ILO, staff of the FAO Gender, Equity and Rural Employment Division of the Economic and Social Development Department have played a key role in the organization of this workshop. The Fisheries and Aquaculture Department has a longstanding cooperation with ILO in the area of working conditions in fishing including safety at sea aspects. I'm very pleased that our cooperation now also includes the important area of tackling child labour in fisheries and aquaculture. This is in line with FAO's participation in the international agricultural partnership for fighting child labour in agriculture which in addition to FAO, includes the ILO, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD); the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR); International Federation of Agricultural Producers (IFAP); and International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations (IUF). This workshop may be the beginning to extend this partnership to include also organizations from fisheries and aquaculture.

The issue of child labour in fisheries and aquaculture has likely received inadequate attention in the work of the Fisheries and Aquaculture Department. It has never been subject of discussion in the Committee on Fisheries (COFI) which is the technical governing body of FAO dealing with fisheries and aquaculture. However, soon COFI will be asked to adopt aquaculture certification guidelines that include among its minimum substantive requirements a provision stating that: Child labour should not be used in a manner inconsistent with ILO conventions and international standards. The importance of these certification guidelines cannot be underestimated as experience shows a significant influence of internationally agreed guidelines on voluntary certification or labelling schemes and thus producers and consumers alike. This is especially the case in fish and fishery products which are among the most traded food products globally.

Among our field projects, the UK DFID-funded Sustainable Fisheries Livelihoods Project (SFPL) in West Africa was one of the few that did some investigations on child labour in fisheries. These suggested the need for a better understanding of the links between poverty, children's work and child labour within fishing communities. From the very extensive general research on child labour emerges moreover that next to poverty other household attributes as well as the quality of local schools exercise a strong impact on the likelihood that children will work. While data are scarce on the incidence and nature of child labour in fisheries and aquaculture, merely on the basis of numbers, it surely is most widespread in the small-scale subsectors of capture fisheries, aquaculture and post-harvest fish processing, distribution and marketing. These small-scale sectors are believed to provide over 90 percent of the estimated above 120 million direct and indirect fisheries livelihoods that support more than 500 million people or about 8 percent of the world population.

Any visit to a busy beach-landing site in West Africa, South Asia or Central America would show children engaged in helping to unload fish and it would not be unusual to find pirogues or kattumarans or canoes with some children or youth among the crew. Then when returning to the next hamlet or town it would be quite common to see young girls alone or next to their mothers transporting, washing, sorting and selling fish. On the way, when passing some fish ponds in say a Southeast Asian country, we may observe children and youth throw feed into a pond or sit with a rod and hook & line to angle a fish or two or more for lunch or dinner. These highly visible encounters with working children in fisheries and aquaculture are likely the more benevolent types while the most

exploitative, abusive and hazardous practices remain out of sight. But for the uninformed outsider even the harmless appearing trading of fish between the owner of a canoe and a youth may hide an underlying abusive relationship fuelled by asymmetric distribution of power and wealth and might hide the fact that some of these children do not go to school.

I do not wish to dwell further into a matter you are here to discuss in detail and provide guidance to FAO and ILO in our quest to develop good practices guidance, awareness raising materials and to recommend action to specifically tackle child labour in fisheries and aquaculture. Before ending I should not fail to express my gratitude to the Governments of the Netherlands and Norway which through their funding have made the convening of this workshop possible.

Wishing you a productive meeting and a nice stay in Rome.

**APPENDIX D**

**List of Facilitators and Rapporteurs of Working Groups**

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**The Workshop on Child Labour in Fisheries and Aquaculture was organized by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in cooperation with the International Labour Organization to generate inputs and guidance to the contents and process of developing guidance materials on policy and practice in tackling child labour in fisheries and aquaculture. Child labour often reinforces a vicious cycle of poverty and has a negative impact on literacy rates and school attendance and limits children's mental and physical health and development. The workshop participants agreed on a series of recommendations relating to legal and enforcement measures, policy interventions and practical actions including risk assessments to address child labour issues in fisheries and aquaculture.**

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**Report of the Workshop on Child Labour in Fisheries and Aquaculture in cooperation with ILO**

**FAO**