



Strategy to accelerate the reduction of child labour in Latin America and the Caribbean by 2025¹

(Draft document for consultation, prepared by the Technical Secretariat of the RI. April, 2016)²

Latin America and the Caribbean is one of the regions of the world that has achieved a significant reduction in the incidence of child labour since 2002.³

By 2012, there were **12.5 million** children and adolescents aged 5 to 17 performing child labour in the region - which represents **8.8%** of the total population in these ages-, and more worryingly, **9.6 million** performed hazardous work, putting at risk their health, safety, morals and even, in some circumstances, their lives.⁴

Why a new strategy is required to accelerate the reduction of child labour?

- There is a stagnation in the rate of the reduction and that creates concern about the ability to meet deadlines adopted in the policies of the countries of the region, as well as in international instruments, notably the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development that in the **target 8.7⁵** refers to "**put an end to child labour by 2025**".⁶
- There is concern about the change in the economic conditions prevailing in the countries of the region, including the structure of the labour market in the region, characterized by the growing informality and the decent work deficits,

¹ Should be noted that in accordance with the Hemispheric Agenda of Decent Work 2006-2015, the foreseen target to eradicate child labour should be met by 2020, but the recent adoption of the Agenda by 2030, extends that period to 2025.

² This version includes the comments received from 8 focal points of the governments; 1 focal point of the employers' organization (Colombia) and 2 focal points of the workers' organization (Argentina and Panama)

³ Hagemmann et al (ILO, 2006); Diallo et al (ILO, 2011) and ILO, 2013

⁴ ILO, 2013. Measuring progress in the fight against child labour: estimates and trends between 2000 and 2012 http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---ipec/documents/publication/wcms_221514.pdf

⁵ This goal is included in the 8th Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) referred to "Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all". See: <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/es/economic-growth/>

⁶ See CEPEI, 2015.

which could generate backsliding in the progress made in the reduction of child labour.

What innovations are included in the new strategy?

The proposed strategy considers the **fiscal constraints** faced by countries to continue and redouble efforts in the reduction of child labour, as well as the delicate situation of the international and regional economy that characterizes the current context; it is based on the **knowledge and evidence**⁷ accumulated by the sustained work performed by different actors in the region and is supported by the use of **the returns of the existing investments**⁸ in sectors such as social protection, productive diversification, improvement of educational quality and supply, expansion of health coverage, active policies of labour market, among others.

- Based on a systemic, inter-institutional, cross-sectoral and intergovernmental **social development approach**, due to the muticausal nature of child labour.
- Promotes a **binding articulation of existing services and resources** for the use of synergies and the **optimization of institutional investments** and their effect on child labour.
- Focuses on two **priority target groups**: i) children and adolescents below the legal minimum age for admission to employment that work or are in hazardous work and ii) children and adolescents at risk of becoming involved in child labour, according to their needs and characteristics.
- Seeks to **strengthen the capacities and the improvement of knowledge** by key actors involved in the management and operation of policies and programs that are part of the inter-agency and cross-sectoral approach, to **increase the effect and impact of relevant services** on child labour.

Which population is the strategy focusing on and what does it propose?

The strategy emphasises the combination of two approaches: prevention and protection.⁹

The **prevention** approach seeks to achieve **the first generation free from child labour by 2025**, through:

⁷ See Cheng, 2015: http://white.lim.ilo.org/ipec/documentos/sistematizacion_completa.pdf

⁸ In accordance with Sauma 2015, more social spending in education reflects on lower rates of child labour; however, differentiated actions with higher impact on child labour by the educational system should be considered.

⁹ According to Sauma 2015, each of these approaches should consider differentiated interventions for the population participating in productive activities in the non-agricultural informal sector, for rural populations and indigenous people or those who are part of households whose incomes come from the participation of its members in these activities.

- Avoiding the incorporation to the work of new boys, girls and adolescents below the minimum age for admission to employment.
- Avoiding the engagement of teenagers in hazardous activities.

The preventive approach includes actions aimed to identify and timely intervene children born from 2010 and on, that are at risk of child labour, in order to prevent its early entry into the labour market ("turning off the tap").

This approach will allow to progressively implement actions that will avoid the entry of the younger generations of children to child labour, so that by 2025 all age groups are being preventively covered.

0-5 years: Actions to verify and ensure the conditions necessary for the timely development of cognitive and functional skills and competences, allowing the children with characteristics that make them a population at risk or in a trajectory of child labour, to have a good start in life. Includes registration identity, access to adequate nutrition and stimulation services, monitoring of growth and development, protection from violence and harmful environments, services of care and preschool education, access to physical, motor and leisure development activities, and peer relationship.

6-13 years: Actions oriented to accompany the transition to school and prevent lags in the learning process of children and adolescents with characteristics that make them a population at risk or in a trajectory of child labour. Includes in-school food services, conditioned and non-conditioned transfers, educational mediation to support low educational climate in homes, access to health and social protection services, creative use of leisure time, sport, healthy recreation, leisure and culture promotion.

14-17 years: Support actions to the permanence and success in the education system, and the conclusion of the regular basic education, conditional cash transfers, pedagogical strategies to neutralize the effect of the low educational climate at home, access to curricular side technical vocational skills for employability, access to permitted and protected jobs.

The **protection** approach¹⁰ seeks to restore the rights of boys, girls and adolescents who are in a situation of child labour, through:

- Removing children and adolescents below the legal minimum age from work.
- Removing adolescents from hazardous work and substitute those activities with protected works or appropriate training alternatives.

¹⁰ The focal points requested to extend this protection approach and within it, to provide information on protected adolescent work.

The **protection approach** is a reinforced and renewed continuity of the efforts that have been taking place in the region with the aim of child labour eradication, which seeks to provide care for children and adolescents in child labour situation or performing hazardous work, regardless of their age by 2025, based on an immediate needs approach and under the expectation that in the medium and long term, their demand will progressively decrease inversely to the successes of the preventive approach.

This approach includes specific services for each major category of child labour:

- Programs and services aimed at the **removal of children and adolescents below the legal age**;
- Protected work alternatives or education and training for **adolescents being removed from hazardous work**;
- Judicial protection and immediate withdrawal **of children and adolescent victims of criminal forms of exploitation** such as forced labour, drug trafficking, commercial sexual exploitation, human trafficking and recruitment for armed conflict.

What is necessary to ensure in the countries in order to implement this strategy?

The strategy envisages the development of **strategic tools**, which include:

- The strengthening of processes and **information systems** of public institutions, to incorporate variables aimed at the timely identification of child labour or its imminent risk and its institutional prioritization by the appropriate social protection services;
- The development of **systems of monitoring and evaluation** that verify and contribute to improve the approach, the coordination and the inter-institutional accompanying on the issue, while allowing also to establish and document progress towards the eradication of child labour and the achievement of the goal of the ODS 8.7 as well as to inform and sustain the self-declaration of the countries as "free from child labour";
- An instrument to allow the incorporation of households that are vulnerable to child labour or with child labour among its members, as a target population with priority in **programs of conditional cash transfer** already operating in several countries of the region and which are considered to have a potential to contribute to the reduction of 30% of child labour in the short term and in the long term, combined with the increase in the quality of education. ¹¹

¹¹ See Lavado, 2015

The proposed strategy is an opportunity to move from declaration to action and make progress towards fulfilment of the Agenda 2030

The proposed strategy is based on solid studies that demonstrate the **feasibility and important social return** that investing in the prevention and eradication of child labour poses to the countries of the region¹²; as well as the close **interrelation, reciprocity and interdependence** that target 8.7 maintains with other targets and goals beyond the Sustainable Development Objectives (SDG 8)¹³, so it represents the leading edge of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

The scope of target 8.7 of the SDGs programmed with 5 years in advance (2025, while the other targets are scheduled for 2030), recognizes not only the importance and prominence of the target, but also **the impact that the reduction of child labour has in other areas of social development.**

Latin America and the Caribbean has the **best conditions and perspectives to reach target 8.7 in the next 10 years** and also to have a multiplier effect on other regions of the world.

¹² See Sauma, 2015.

¹³ See CEPEI, 2015.