



CONFERENCE REPORT

The conference held in Nairobi was reviewed by campaign partners on Tuesday, October 10 and the following observations and decisions were made:

- The conference was attended by over 120 delegates and speakers representing 14 countries in three continents.
- The keynote speeches by Kenya Labour Minister, Hon Joseph Ngutu MP and the executive director of the International Labour Organisation, Mr Kari Tapiola were highlights in the conference's discussion of policy.
- Speakers from Brazil's tobacco growers' organisation, Afubra, presented the "Future is Now" campaign, which was an excellent example of an active campaign to eliminate child labour.
- The workshops, which brought all delegates together, provided realistic objectives for the campaign, as well as valuable "on the ground" insights for future planning.
- Following the conference, the campaign partnership of British American Tobacco, the International Tobacco Growers' Association and the IUF union decided to move to the next stage of supporting the creation of national campaigns.

Priorities: All partners wanted to move the campaign on to a development phase, after a successful conference. They agreed that the establishment of a select group of national programmes that could demonstrate results was the main priority, rather than the launch of an extensive programme.

Also, a campaign infrastructure had to be created before funding could be attracted from outside the partnership. Research was needed to define the extent of the problem of child labour in tobacco growing.

Pilot Countries: It was agreed that a series of pilot programmes to develop campaigns would be developed in a limited range of countries. These countries were Kenya, Uganda, Zimbabwe, Ghana, Mexico and Pakistan or Bangladesh. Tanzania was also discussed as a potential pilot as ILO/IPEC was undertaking an education campaign.

In each country, the first step will be to bring together the campaign partners to plan national programmes. Each of the central partners will contact their people in these countries and encourage them to either build on the impetus of the conference or introduce the campaign.

Central Resources for ELC: It was agreed that a central secretariat, probably based in Geneva for access to UN bodies, will be planned for early decisions by the partners.

Research: Prof Njeru's research programme among tobacco growers in Kenya was expected to give a draft report in the first quarter of 2001. It could offer a methodological basis for studies in other countries. Partners were asked to make comments on the Fafo report, presented at the Nairobi conference, as soon as possible and consider whether Fafo could undertake further research.

Other Resources: Partners will aim at widening the support for the campaign from the tobacco sector - other manufacturers, dealers and tobacco growers outside ITGA membership. IUF will advise ILO/IPEC of the campaign and identify other sources of funding among NGOs.

Best Practice Suggestions from Panel Discussion

David Sandeman, Zimbabwe Tobacco Association said that Zimbabwe's Farmers' Development Trust, which supports small-scale farmers expand their skills in a "farming ladder", is influential on child labour prevention. Income generation in schools has been linked with a programme to rapidly expand tree planting. Schools are being trained on growing eucalyptus seedlings that are then given to small-scale farmers. AIDS orphans are being supported within local rural communities and farms through a special trust.

Prof. Enos Njeru, University of Nairobi, is undertaking a cross-sectoral baseline survey of child labour in tobacco-growing regions that will look at these issues:

- Social, economic and political problems.
- The multiplicity of causes and consequences.
- Review the problem in other sectors such as plantations, cotton, pyrethrum, sand harvesting, etc.
- Consider other urban and town-based child labour such as street children, sex workers, househelps and house girls.
- Also the nature of incentives for change among households in tobacco-growing areas will be considered.

Joram Pajobo, Uganda said trade unions in Uganda share experience on the cause and methods of elimination of child labour in the organised agricultural sector. Children are involved in nurseries, transplanting, fieldwork and curing.

In the tea sector, agreement has been reached on eliminating child labour but it is not possible for employers and unions alone. It must involve community leaders. There is a problem among workers as their salary is not enough to pay for education and keep children in school. [He said that there were 26 estates covered by the agreement, owned by 8 companies. Children can go to school and this is assisted by the rule that workers can lose their jobs if children are kept from school].

Parents allow children to work. He suggested that this should be stopped through terms and conditions of service.

The question facing campaigners is "how many children are working at below the legal age?" There is not sufficient information to define the problem.

There is fragmentation in combating child labour. More than 200 groups are registered in Uganda. Greater co-ordination is needed to ensure the impact of IPEC programmes.

Group 1: Widening the Network - identifying other groups to work with at all levels - plantation, national, regional and international.

Issues

- Child labour is not clearly understood or appreciated by many in agriculture. There is a lack of data on the extent of the problem.
- Poverty is seen as the main cause of child labour.

Profile-raising

- Cultures need to be changed.
- Literacy and education must be addressed as an issue. For example, literacy in Kenya among children is rated as 51% of their population.
- More efforts need to be co-ordinated. "Too many cooks" is a criticism of the number of organisations involved in child labour prevention.

Solutions

- Compulsory free primary education.
- More research to define the problem.
- More campaigning and lobbying.
- Better resource management.

Group 2: Practical Experiences on Eliminating Child Labour - what is going on now and how can that be related to tobacco growing.

Issues

- Lack of clear distinction between child work and child labour.
- Scale of farming is important as small-scale farmers do not earn enough to hire labour and thus use family labour.
- Poverty means that children must work to help family group to survive.
- Cultural attitudes.
- Low wages in the agriculture sector.
- HIV/AIDS epidemic has resulted in orphans who need support, but many end up working. There is a complete lack of social services support.

Solutions

- Get Trade Unions to have collective agreement with employers to discover child labour.
- Laws, like Malawi Legislative Act No 6, which prohibits child labour, need to be introduced.
- The public needs to be sensitised by radio, TV, farmers' days, religious programmes, etc.
- Income-generating programmes need to be started in schools to foster attendance and get educational resources.
- Free, compulsory education is needed right through to the legal age of employment.
- Grass roots units in farming communities must be involved. Co-operative societies could also put messages into effect. Religious communities can help "on earth".
- Employers in all sectors of tobacco have to be involved.

Group 3: Establishing Priorities for follow up activities after the conference

Priorities

1. Resource mobilisation.
2. Research on the problems of child labour.
3. Awareness creation.
4. Establish and reinforce laws.
5. Gain commitment of stakeholders.
6. Identify pilot countries where there is a serious problem.
7. Practical activities which aim to solve problems.
8. Effective communications.
9. Stakeholder communications.
10. Need to share Best Practice.
11. Identify and access experts.
12. Access to education opportunities.
13. HIV/AIDS networking with existing organisations.

This group proposed that responsibilities be shared between the Partnership and Stakeholders:

Partnership: 1,2,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,13

Stakeholders: 1,2,3,4,5,7,8,12,13.

[Thus, Partnership and Stakeholders co-operate on priorities 1,2,5,7,8,13]

These priorities would be moved forward by the formation of an international infrastructure with office, staff, money, logistics and address.

Group 4: Establishing Priorities for follow up activities after the conference. (Portuguese language group)

Causes of Child Labour

- Poverty provoked by small farms that grow unprofitable crops and cannot develop.
- Education - lack of direction.
- Ethnic traditions and family attitudes.

Solutions

- Improve wealth distribution.
- Look for solutions on unemployment.
- Make schooling compulsory.
- Effective policies of family planning.
- Provoke cultural changes.
- Involve all segments of community - from family to governments.

Comments from delegates

“The quality of government conspires against children and control of child labour. Corruption, ethnic conflict, mismanagement results in the displacement of children.”

“Income generating activities for schools should involve the whole community, not just school students.”

“Trade unions need support from ITGA and companies in supporting collective bargaining.”