



ECLT FOUNDATION

Addressing the challenge of child labour in tobacco growing

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Geneva, 8 April 2002

A unique alliance to address the challenge of child labour in tobacco growing launched in Geneva, Switzerland

The ECLT Foundation (*Eliminate Child Labour in Tobacco*), which is supported by the International Labour Organisation (ILO), was officially launched in Geneva on Friday 5 April 2002. Its members are representatives of the trade unions, the tobacco growers and the corporate sector. Together, these stakeholders have decided to create, through an innovative alliance, a unique international initiative to address the challenge of child labour in tobacco growing. The Foundation is based in Geneva, Switzerland. Its director is Marc Hofstetter.

Child labour is a widespread phenomenon in all agricultural sectors, including tobacco growing. It is a complex issue which finds its root causes in poverty, long-standing traditions and a lack of proper law enforcement and education facilities. In Eastern and Southern African countries, child labour is worsened by the AIDS pandemic: AIDS orphans or children whose families have been ravaged by the disease are forced to become household heads and ensure their own livelihoods.

The ECLT Foundation's objective is to contribute to the elimination of the use of child labour in the tobacco growing sector in order to provide children with an upbringing that gives them the best chance in all aspects of life.

Three fundamental principles underline the ECLT Foundation action:

- children have the right to schooling, a full family life and a safe and healthy upbringing;
- children under the minimum legal age or under the age recognised by the relevant ILO Conventions should not be employed in the production of tobacco leaf;
- as many tobacco farms are family-run, it may be possible that children take part in routine chores as part of family life for the development of craft skills. This must however not extend to potentially hazardous tasks using machinery and agro-chemicals and must not impede proper educational development including school attendance.

Action priorities:

The ECLT Foundation will support and fund local as well as community based projects that combat child labour. It will concentrate its efforts in tobacco growing countries of Eastern and Southern Africa in a first phase and will work with local partners, such as NGOs, governments and communities. In parallel, the ECLT Foundation will fund independent research on child labour in tobacco growing in order to improve its overall response. Another objective for the ECLT Foundation is to establish and share best practice and lessons learnt in the field of combating child labour.

Ron Oswald, IUF's General Secretary and President of the ECLT Foundation Board stresses that "acting in a common cause, the ECLT Foundation brings together a unique alliance organisations representing tobacco wage workers, small and large scale tobacco farmers as well as the corporate sector. We are committed to support local initiatives, share best practice and work with all relevant stakeholders to eliminate child labour in tobacco growing".

ECLT Foundation Board composition:

Founding members: the International Union of Food, Agriculture, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers Association (IUF), the International Tobacco Growers Association (ITGA), British American Tobacco

Members: Dimon Incorporated, Gallaher Group Plc, Imperial Tobacco Group Plc, Japan Tobacco Inc., Philip Morris International, Philip Morris USA, Scandinavian Tobacco Company, Standard Commercial Corp., Universal Leaf Tobacco Co., Inc.

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