WORKING TOGETHER TO END CHILD LABOUR IN TOBACCO GROWING IN ZIMBABWE

2021 PROGRESS REPORT FROM THE TOBACCO WORKING GROUP ON CHILD LABOUR
In 2021, the international community made it clear that the persistence of child labour in today’s world is unacceptable and renewed its commitment to drive action to eliminate all forms of child labour by 2025. This report aims to contribute to such efforts by sharing a case of eliminating child labour in tobacco production in Zimbabwe.

The Zimbabwe Tobacco Industry Working Group in Child Labour (TWCL) was formed in April 2021 as part of the Tobacco Industry & Marketing Board (TIMB)’s pledge on action to eliminate child labour within the tobacco industry. The Working Group comprises a tripartite-plus body to support the National Action Plan on Child Labour (NAPCL) with a link through the Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare. The Working Group aims to coordinate, strengthen and leverage action plans on child labour being conducted by individual members and align standard objectives. The objectives of this Working Group are to:

1. Advance the Industry under a common agenda in line with National Action Plan on Child Labour.
3. Build partnerships and mobilise resources.

I am especially delighted that we have been able to make a lot of progress with regards to Child Labour in the tobacco sector in the year 2021. We can now proudly look back on a very successful year. For this reason and on behalf of the entire TIMB Board, Executive and Management team, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all of our relevant stakeholders and especially to our technical partner Eliminating Child Labour in Tobacco (ECLT) Foundation for successfully driving the collaborations which we wish to see evolving. We have also witnessed the successes of the Sustainable Tobacco Program (STP).

A special thank you to the TWCL-Sub working groups as well as the Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare. This project would not have been possible without their support. Unwaver ing dedication and flexibility, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, are the foundations for the success of the Child Labour work done in 2021.

As we look ahead to 2022, TIMB is geared up to work with all partners to address child labour in tobacco farming and achieve the international best practices of sustainably growing tobacco.
ABOUT THE TOBACCO WORKING GROUP ON CHILD LABOUR

The Zimbabwean Tobacco Industry Working Group on Child Labour (TWCL) is a partnership of tobacco companies, auction floors, growers’ associations, government agencies, unions and partners formed in 2021 to accelerate action to eliminate child labour within the tobacco sector.

“The Working Group on Child Labour was born out of the acknowledgement that the causes of child labour are systemic, complex and interrelated. As such, no single company or organization, however innovative or powerful, can eliminate child labour alone. The mission of the TWCL is to drive and coordinate improvements across the tobacco sector as a whole so that children are protected from child labour, and communities where tobacco is grown can thrive”.

Blessing Dhokotera, Acting Chief Operating Officer, TIMB and Chair of the TWCL.

Chaired by the Tobacco Industry Marketing Board (TIMB), the Working Group is a platform to coordinate, strengthen, and leverage actions against child labour using the Agricultural Labor Practices (ALP) code as a de facto standard.

The formation of the TWCL followed a survey that was conducted by the Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency (ZIMSTAT) and the Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare in 2019. The survey indicated cases of child labour on tobacco farms. In response, TIMB pledged to intensify industry efforts against child labour.

In order to effectively address the root causes of child labour, the stakeholders in the tobacco industry set out to follow a due diligence approach to identify, prioritize, respond, measure and report on actions taken. The due diligence approach is aligned with the national and international child labour frameworks. It is also in line with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPR) Protect, Respect and Remedy Framework.

In 2021, the TWCL adopted terms of reference (TOR) which spell out the scope of its work, its objectives and internal functioning. The TORs specify that the scope of work of the TWCL is geared towards collective action and progressively ensuring convergence and mutual reinforcement between all Agricultural Labour Practices principles.

The ALP Code defines requirements and measurable standards on the following topics on tobacco farms:

1. Child labor.
2. Income and work hours.
5. Safe work environment.
6. Compliance with the law.

“The wide engagement within the Tobacco Working Group on Child Labour has opened doors for many players to work together in a multi-stakeholder partnership. Aligning on a common standard for child labour and the industry’s Agricultural Labour Practices allows members to clearly and effectively communicate and train growers and the farming community, which is a vital tool in the elimination of child labour. Step by step, we are creating momentum and seeing progress in achieving our common goals”.

Mat Wilde, TWCL Vice Chairman and Chairman of the Tobacco Exporters Association of Zimbabwe (TLEAZ) Sustainability Sub-Committee.
There were 160 million children in child labour worldwide in 2020, with millions more expected to add to that number due to the impacts of COVID-19. 7 out of 10 work in agriculture.

In sub-Saharan Africa alone, an additional 16.6 million children entered child labour between 2016 and 2020.

The complex root causes of child labour – such as poverty, population growth, youth unemployment, lack of access to quality education and climate change – mean that no single actor or supply chain can address child labour alone. Working together in multistakeholder initiatives such as the Tobacco Working Group on Child Labour is the best way to address the root causes of child labour and accelerate progress towards the SDGs targets in Zimbabwe.

Following the finalization of the survey of child labour on tobacco farms conducted by the Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare (MoPSLSW) and the Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency (ZIMSTAT), the former embarked on a report dissemination exercise beyond the tobacco sector. Acknowledging that child labour occurs across agriculture and other productive sectors of the Zimbabwean economy, in 2021 the MoPSLSW carried out the report-sharing and stakeholder consultation meetings in the tea sector, sugar, small-scale mining, government, development partners and civil society sectors. The output of each stakeholder meeting was a sectoral Action Pledge submitted to MoPSLSW. Action Pledges contain concrete actions that each sector committed to implement to address child labour.

The work of the TWCL in 2021 lays the foundation to contribute to achieving SDGs 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 12, 13, 15 and 17.

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PREPARED FOR TIMB AND ECLT
Zimbabwe aspires to be a prosperous and empowered Upper Middle-Income Society by 2030, as highlighted in the National Development Strategy. Decent work is a key enabler of this aspiration because it offers opportunities for work that is safe, productive and delivers fair income. This can only be achieved through genuine social dialogue and broad-based partnerships that address decent work deficits in each sector of the economy. The Tobacco Working Group on Child Labour is a pioneering initiative in this respect. It is a model that can be replicated in other sub-sectors that have high child labour risk in order that the root causes of child labour are addressed, and the goals of the National Development Strategy 1 are achieved.


Building stronger national systems to tackle child labour, the public and private sectors can make actions reach many more children, farmers, and families driving progress for thriving agricultural communities.
MINIMUM CHILD LABOUR STANDARDS
FOR GROWERS, TIMB, CONTRACTORS, AUCTION FLOORS AND BUYERS DEFINED

In 2021, the Tobacco Working Group on Child Labour formed a Sub-Working Group to define minimum child labour standards for growers, TIMB, auction floors, contracting companies and buyers sourcing from the auction market. The minimum child labour standards will be included in the agreements that are entered annually between contracting companies, growers, buyers and TIMB.

What is unique about the scope of the minimum child labour standards is that it includes independent growers, TIMB and auction floors. Moreover, the child labour standards will be included in the annual licences and coupled with a central child labour database at TIMB. This comprehensive scope ensures an enforceable ‘whole of industry’ approach to tackling child labour. These developments in Zimbabwe promise to close gaps that have been experienced in markets where tobacco is sold through the auction system.

“Ensuring that there are internationally recognised minimum standards for child labour in tobacco production is absolutely critical to protect the children and families in tobacco producing communities throughout the country. The industry is only as strong as it’s weakest link. Therefore, it is important that everyone involved in the tobacco supply chain in Zimbabwe is working towards a common, internationally recognised standard when it comes to dealing with Child Labour. The work done by the Sub-Working Group on Minimum Standards and the Tobacco Working Group on Child Labour is key to achieving these goals and aspirations”.

Peter Kockott, Agronomy Coordinator, Premium Leaf Zimbabwe (Pvt) Ltd, and Chair of the TWCL Sub-Working Group on Minimum Child Labour Standards.

MINIMUM CHILD LABOUR STANDARDS AND REQUIREMENTS FOR CONTRACTING COMPANIES AT A GLANCE

- All contracting companies must put a Child Labour Policy in place that include as a minimum a commitment to the elimination of child labour within their tobacco supply chain.
- All contracting companies must ensure that growers are to have a contract that requires farmers, as a minimum, to:
  1. Commit to prevent and eliminate child labour.
  2. Commit to enrolling their children at school. All contracting companies must monitor school attendance for children of their contracted growers.
- Contracted growers and farmworkers shall receive awareness raising and training on prevention and elimination of all forms of forced and child labour on an annual basis, which are recorded.
- Commitment to transparency in reporting and third-party monitoring.
- Commitment to the establishment of a common industry grievance mechanism.

MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR TIMB, AUCTION FLOORS AND BUYERS SOURCING FROM AUCTION MARKET AT A GLANCE

TIMB, with support from auction floors, auction buyers and other stakeholders, to provide independent growers with training and awareness on the prevention and elimination of child labour, on an annual basis.

- TIMB, with support from government, auction floors, auction buyers and other stakeholders, to monitor school attendance for children of independent growers.
- TIMB, with support from auction floors, auction buyers and other stakeholders, to monitor independent growers for incidents of child labour regularly.
- TIMB, auction floors and buyers sourcing from auction market commit to transparency in reporting and third-party monitoring.
- TIMB, auction floors and buyers sourcing from auction market recognize that tracking progress towards meeting these Minimum Standards is critical for achieving the goals of the TIMB Tobacco Industry Pledge.
- TIMB commits to establish a central data base, monitoring systems and define common metrics to track collective progress towards meeting these standards.
- TIMB shall monitor progress towards meeting these Minimum Standards and publicly disclose an annual progress report.
- TIMB shall ensure there is progress of the industry efforts towards the goal of making Zimbabwe a compliant market.
DEFINING CHILD LABOUR AND HAZARDOUS WORK FOR CHILDREN IN TOBACCO IN ZIMBABWE

In 2021, TIMB commissioned an assessment to understand the definition of child labour and list of hazardous tasks for children below 18 years used in the tobacco sector in Zimbabwe. The outcomes of the assessment showed that there was a need for a common definition of child labour and a list of hazardous tasks set as a common standard for the sector, aligned with national law, industry best practice and international frameworks.

By the end of 2021, the TWCL Sub Working Group on Child Labour Definition and Hazardous Task List had produced a draft proposal, which was submitted to the Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare for national tripartite consultations and final approval.

“Establishing an industry standard definition for child labour, and a specific list of hazardous tasks related to tobacco for children; aligned to industry best practice, national and international standards, is a crucial step towards ensuring that all players in the tobacco sector know and comply with requirements related to child labour. It also ensures that child labour messages are consistent across the industry, and that the performance of different actors can be evaluated and improved based on an approved, common and clear benchmark”.

Mat Wilde, Sustainability Manager, Curverid Tobacco Ltd, TWCL Vice-Chair and Sub Working Group Chair.

ROADMAP FOR APPROVAL OF LIST OF HAZARDOUS TASKS FOR CHILDREN IN ZIMBABWE

During the year under review, the Ministry of Labour, Public Service and Social Welfare outlined a roadmap towards the development of a standard definition of child labour to list hazardous tasks for children below 18 years across all sectors of the Zimbabwean economy.

To make it easier to communicate the list to extension workers, farmers, farmworkers and children, the Sub-Working Group developed the list per stage of tobacco growing. The stages in the draft list include making seedbeds, watering, transplanting, weeding, application of pesticides, fertilizers, topping and suckering, among others.

In the event of a conflict between the sector’s list of hazardous tasks and customer requirements, the draft list specifies that the standard that affords the highest protection to children must be adopted.

Although only formed in 2021, the transformative impact of the Tobacco Working Group on Child Labour has already started to be felt at policy level in Zimbabwe, as evidenced by the government’s decision to build on the Working Group’s work by developing hazardous tasks lists for children under 18 years across all sectors. By taking this step, the Government of Zimbabwe is living up to its commitment to protect children from economic exploitation in line with the Constitution of Zimbabwe, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child.
In 2021, the Tobacco Working Group on Child Labour formed a Sub-Working Group and commissioned a self-assessment to establish the baseline status on child labour policy, due diligence and remediation for 17 member organisations, in line with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs) framework. The outcomes of the self-assessment would be used to drive improvements and measure progress against child labour.

The organizations participating in the self-assessment included TIMB, tobacco merchants, auction floors, farmers’ organizations, National Employment Council Agriculture, and other government agencies. The main outcomes of the self-assessment showed several strengths and gaps in existing approaches to child labour.

MAIN RESULTS OF THE SELF-ASSESSMENT

Many of the stakeholders already have in place management and remediation systems to address child labour.

POLICY

- 10/17 reported that they have a child labour policy.
- 10/17 reported that they have a child labour due diligence process.
- 11/17 reported that they provide for or cooperate in remediation.

DUE DILIGENCE

- 5/10 reported that the policy specifies what is child labour by age group.
- 4/10 reported that their organization conducts or takes part in human rights impact assessments (HRIA).
- 9/17 reported that their organization has a system for tracking the effectiveness of its child labour programmes, including appropriate qualitative and quantitative indicators.

A CLOSER LOOK AT SOME OF THE GAPS

The assessment showed that there is a need for strengthening existing management systems to fully align with the UNGPs and effectively manage child labour.

BASELINE ON CHILD LABOUR POLICIES & PRACTICES
The TWCL self-assessment tools were based on UN Guiding Principles, national legislation, the ECLT Foundation Members’ Pledge of Commitment, the Sustainable Tobacco Programme (STP), and international best practice. The TWCL members were trained by ECLT Foundation to understand the questions before completing the questionnaire. ECLT also consolidated the findings and produced a report for the TWCL.

“The application of the ECLT Members’ Pledge of Commitment tools in the tobacco sector in Zimbabwe represents a milestone in ensuring that the Pledge has ‘teeth’, application and impact beyond ECLT members. Through our collaboration with TIMB, it will be possible to verify and account for how companies and other actors are living up to claims made in their self-assessments. We are also better able to provide support where improvements are needed”.

Dr Innocent Mugwagwa, Senior Programme Manager, ECLT Foundation, technical advisor to TIMB.

“The purpose for conducting the baseline survey was to provide a critical reference point for assessing the industry players’ current position on child labour with a view to accelerate actions on the same. Survey results have been used to establish an industry-wide definition of child labour, producing a list of hazardous tasks for work in tobacco and serving as a basis upon which the industry can play its part in achieving the ambitions of the National Action Plan on Orphans and Vulnerable Children. The expectation is that players that have not yet committed to actions to eliminate child labour will be supported to transition to the accepted standard of compliance within their supply chains. Survey results revealed that players in the tobacco industry are committed to transparency, honest reporting and continuous improvement. It is against this backdrop that TIMB will be able to steer the industry on a path of continuous improvement in line with national and international frameworks”.

Graham Kanoderesa, STP Coordinator, Mashonaland Tobacco Company and Chair of Sub Working Group on Baseline of Child Labour Policies and Practices.
FARMER EDUCATION PROGRAMME

The child labour standards defined by the Tobacco Working Group on Child Labour would not be possible without farmers being familiar with them, understanding what acceptable work and unacceptable work is, and applying that knowledge on their farms. In this regard, the TWCL formed a Sub-Working Group on Farmer Education to outline a plan for raising awareness among the farming communities on child labour.

The Farmer Education programme trains tobacco farmers, farmworkers, extension agents and agronomists in Zimbabwe on the following:

1. What is child labour. How does it occur. What to look out for.
2. What tasks are too hazardous for children to undertake.
3. How to identify and manage occupational safety and health risks on their farms in line with the principles of the Agricultural Labour Practices code.

The Farmer Education programme will use face-to-face training, drama and theatre, radio, bulk short message systems, social messaging, pictorials, television, newspapers, a handbook and other information, education, and communication materials in English and local languages.

AN EMPOWERMENT-BASED TRAINING APPROACH

The Farmer Education programme will adopt an empowerment-based approach where farmers will be trained to identify risks and hazards on their farms and make improvements so that young people above the minimum working age can access safe and decent work opportunities.

By sufficiently improving workplace safety and health conditions, a young person above the minimum age of employment can earn a decent living on the farms, learning skills, providing income for their families and communities, and supporting the national economy.

“The beauty of training the trainers is that the skills and knowledge in farm risk management will be imparted to company and government extension workers, lead farmers, farmers’ associations, and unions: the key institutions in agriculture. Moreover, farmers can apply the skills on the farm as a whole because risks and hazards are often the same across multiple crops and farming activities.”

ECLT Foundation, technical advisors to TIMB.
THE ROAD AHEAD

The achievements of the Tobacco Working Group on Child Labour in 2021 provide solid foundation to drive further improvements in collective action on child labour and amplify positive impact in 2022 and beyond.

2022 is the year for harmonizing and integrating the four workstreams of the Tobacco Working Group on Child Labour:

1. Minimum Child Labour Standards,
2. Child Labour Definitions and List of Hazardous Tasks
3. Child Labour Policies and Practices
4. Farmer Education.

Consolidating the outputs of the four workstreams will create momentum for the TWCL members to consult and define a long-term strategy and ambition going forward.

ROADMAP FOR ADVANCING THE TOBACCO WORKING GROUP ON CHILD LABOUR AGENDA IN 2022

NATIONAL LEVEL
- ECLT – Government of Zimbabwe (GoZ) Memorandum of Agreement signed.
- Support social dialogue for approval of list of hazardous tasks for all sectors.
- Hazardous Child Labour List approved
- GoZ workplan
- National Steering Committee (NSC) on child labour formed
- NSC terms of reference developed
- Child Labour Unit created
- Terms of reference for national action plan (NAP) adopted
- NAP consultant engaged
- National child labour mapping exercise

INDUSTRY LEVEL
- TIMB Child Labour Officer recruitment.
- TWCL members submit improvement plans to TIMB.
- TIMB workplan and budget for 2022 developed
- Farmer education program developed
- TWCL 2021 Communication of Progress
- GoP consultation for Strategic Plan
- TWCL members trained in using reporting systems and database
- TIMB first Communication of Progress
- TIMB child labour reporting systems and databases developed
- TIMB consultations for Strategic Plan
- TIMB staff capacity building

Q1 2022
- TIMB consultation for TWCL
- National child labour baseline study
- TWCL Strategic Plan
- Good practices webinar
- TWCL members trained in using reporting systems and database

Q2 2022
- TIMB consultation for TWCL
- National child labour baseline study
- TWCL Strategic Plan
- Good practices webinar
- TWCL members trained in using reporting systems and database

Q3 2022
- TIMB consultation for TWCL
- National child labour baseline study
- TWCL Strategic Plan
- Good practices webinar
- TWCL members trained in using reporting systems and database

Q4 2022
- TIMB consultation for TWCL
- National child labour baseline study
- TWCL Strategic Plan
- Good practices webinar
- TWCL members trained in using reporting systems and database

Q4 2022
- Child labour component of NAP on Orphans and Vulnerable Children launched
- Child labour monitoring system launched

Q1 2022
- Farmer education program rollout
- TWCL members trained in using reporting systems and database
- TIMB first Communication of Progress
- TIMB consultations for Strategic Plan
- NAP consultant engaged
MEMBERS OF TOBACCO WORKING GROUP ON CHILD LABOUR OF ZIMBABWE

1. Boka Tobacco Floors
2. Boost Hail & Cotton
3. Childline Zimbabwe
4. Curverid Tobacco (Pvt) Ltd
5. Eliminating Child Labour in Tobacco Growing Foundation (ECLT)
6. Inter-Continental Leaf Tobacco Co. (Pvt) Ltd
7. Mashonaland Tobacco Company
10. Northern Tobacco
11. Premier Tobacco Auction Floors (Pvt) Ltd
12. Premium Leaf Zimbabwe (Pvt) Ltd
13. The Department of Agricultural, Technical and Extension Services (AGRITEX)
14. Tian Ze Tobacco Company (Pvt) Limited
15. Tobacco Industry Marketing Board (TIMB) – Chairperson
16. Tobacco Research Board (TRB)
17. Tobacco Sales Floor (TSF)
18. Zimbabwe Farmers Union (ZFU)
19. Zimbabwe Integrated Commercial Farmers Union (ZICFU)
20. Zimbabwe Leaf Tobacco
21. Zimbabwe Tobacco Association (ZTA)
22. General Agriculture and Plantation Workers Union of Zimbabwe
23. National Employment Council Tobacco
The Tobacco Working Group on Child Labour (TWCL) was formed in 2021 to coordinate, strengthen and leverage action plans on child labour in the Zimbabwe tobacco industry, using the Agricultural Labour Practices (ALP) programme as a de facto standard.

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