



FAO Workshop on Child Labour in fisheries and aquaculture in cooperation with ILO

Rome, 14-16 April 2010

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 specific priority actions for immediate implementation and identified cross-cutting issues that needed to be taken into account in all interventions. The text of the workshops 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
 - 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 CL 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 & 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 & 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 Standards Measurement Study (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 & 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 & private training institutions
- regional/state/provincial/local authorities and organizations
- international organizations
- women's organizations
- research institutes/universities
- community-based organizations.

Consideration should be given to the matter of manageability vs. 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 will have to look at target groups.
- ✘ ILO and FAO should, through multi-stakeholder 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 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.