

Foreword



Patrick Pizzella
Acting U.S. Secretary of Labor

At the G20 Leader's Summit in Buenos Aires in September 2018, the U.S. Department of Labor signed on to a strategy to eliminate child labor, forced labor, human trafficking, and modern slavery globally. It did so because eliminating child labor and forced labor is the right thing to do and is a priority for the Trump Administration. The Department takes seriously our enforcement of labor rights included in all U.S. free trade agreements and preference programs, including prohibitions on child labor and forced labor.

Exploitative child labor is inexcusable—it robs children of their childhoods, restricts their ability to attend school, and undermines the efforts of governments and employers that play by the rules. Not only are these outcomes unacceptable for children, but workers in the United States and in other countries should not have to compete with unscrupulous producers who use child labor or forced labor. These reprehensible practices undercut the higher standards we maintain and that are needed to safeguard the well-being of our workforce here at home and to protect vulnerable children and their families from exploitation in countries around the world.

The Department's *Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor* assesses government efforts to eliminate child

labor in 131 countries and territories. More importantly, it provides concrete recommendations on areas where additional efforts are needed in order to make meaningful progress, including in labor and criminal law enforcement.

For more than 25 years, the Department's Bureau of International Labor Affairs has funded initiatives to combat child labor and forced labor in more than 90 countries, including by increasing enforcement capacity, researching the nature and extent of these problems, and supporting policy actions to protect children and adult workers from labor exploitation. These projects have helped demonstrate effective approaches that have been replicated and expanded by many governments. The Department also worked with private sector and civil society actors to support their efforts to confront this problem.

As the Department's experience has shown, it will take a broad-based, coordinated push from all sides to accelerate progress and achieve the goal of eradicating child labor worldwide. Let us work together to do the right thing for children—and to do right by our workers.

PATRICK PIZZELLA
Acting Secretary of Labor
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Martha E. Newton, Deputy
Undersecretary for International Affairs

One hundred years ago, in early 1919, representatives from governments around the world came together to draft the Constitution of what would become the International Labor Organization, powerfully asserting that “the failure of any nation to adopt humane conditions of labour is an obstacle in the way of other nations which desire to improve the conditions in their own countries.” These first principles regarding the world of work inspired global action, including at the U.S. Department of Labor. The Department’s Bureau of International Labor Affairs (ILAB) has worked on these issues globally for more than 70 years, and that includes more than 25 years of concerted efforts to end child labor and forced labor.

One of the ways we carry out these principles today is by shining a spotlight on child labor and forced labor around the world, and supporting innovative ways to eradicate these abuses. It is part of our mission at ILAB to ensure a fair global playing field for workers in the United States and around the world by combating international child labor, forced labor, and human trafficking.

This latest edition of our flagship report, the 2018 *Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor*, mandated by the Trade and Development Act of 2000, includes more than 2,100 recommendations that governments can take to address child labor, including nearly 1,300 that concern improvements in labor and criminal laws and enforcement. This and more than 1,000 pages of research also are available via a mobile app, called Sweat & Toil.

What the research shows us is that despite global efforts, child labor remains a problem. About 152 million boys and girls ages 5 to 17—more than double the entire child population in the United States—are involved in child labor; half of those are in hazardous work that endangers their safety, health, and moral development.

To end these objectionable abuses requires strong resolve. It requires governments to pass laws that protect against labor exploitation and to convert those laws into adequate enforcement practices. It requires investing adequately in their labor inspectorates and doing a better job of prosecuting perpetrators of child labor and forced labor.

ILAB is committed to working in partnership to support governments in doing these things and doing them better. In Brazil, for example, we have a project that has trained more than 1,000 government officials to better recognize indicators of forced labor, set up an online platform for the government to receive complaints of forced labor from rural workers, and developed a monitoring tool to help the government identify hot spots for locating forced labor. Such efforts have the potential to positively transform the lives of workers who might otherwise be vulnerable to forced labor.

Employers need to be a part of the solution, too. Business leadership is vital in addressing these abuses in global supply chains. That is why we work to support the private sector to do its part to address child labor and forced labor. We engage directly with a variety of business and industry groups such as the Global Battery Alliance, Nestlé, and the global cocoa and chocolate industry, to name a few. We also have developed a mobile app, Comply Chain, that provides companies with practical, step-by-step guidance on how to develop robust social compliance programs to prevent, detect, and address child labor in their supply chains.

Finally, we have collaborated directly with numerous NGOs around the world through technical cooperation projects. For instance, in 2018, we funded a global project to strengthen labor and criminal legal frameworks concerning child labor, forced labor, and human trafficking, as well as their enforcement; a project to foster accountability in the recruitment of fishery workers in Thailand; and a project to prevent and reduce child labor and forced labor in palm oil supply chains in Colombia and Ecuador.

Achieving the elimination of child labor and forced labor demands more than wishful thinking. It demands strong and decisive action. The Department remains fully committed to partnering with governments, businesses, civil society, and international organizations to end child labor, forced labor, and any form of modern day slavery. We are all in this fight together, and through our collective efforts, I am confident that we can succeed.

MARTHA E. NEWTON
Deputy Undersecretary for the
Bureau of International Labor Affairs
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