

One in 10 children work, UN agency reports at start of conference to end underage labour

14 November 2017 – An estimated 152 million children around the world work, a practice that the international community at a United Nations co-organized conference in Buenos Aires, Argentina, is trying to eliminate.

“Of those, almost half are in hazardous work. We need to recognize that progress has been very uneven,” [said](#) International Labour Organization ([ILO](#)) Director-General Guy addressing the opening of the [IV Global Conference](#) on the Sustained Eradication of Child Labour, which started today.

The senior UN official urged governments to work together to eradicate child labour by 2025, as agreed to in the Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)).

“The goals cannot be clearer, nor can the uncomfortable reality that if we do not do more and better, we will not achieve them,” Ryder warned.

According to an ILO report released yesterday, more than half of all children – some 73 million – work in jobs that directly endanger their health, safety and moral development.

A majority of the children cited between the ages of five and 17 work in agriculture, including farming, fishing, forestry and livestock.

“Poverty is the main cause of child labour in agriculture, together with limited access to quality education, inadequate agricultural technology and access to adult labour, high hazards and risks, and traditional attitudes towards children’s participation in agricultural activities,” ILO said in the report, [Ending child labour by 2025: A review of policies and programmes](#).

Among other findings, the report noted a link between child labour and armed conflicts.

The incidence of child labour in countries affected by armed conflict is 77 per cent higher than the global average, while the incidence of hazardous work is 50 per cent higher, according to the report, which noted the use of Syrian refugee children in the work force throughout the world.

The authors point to the need to boost legal protection and inspections of work places, strengthening social protection and investing in free, quality education, as ways to fight against child labour.

The conference in Buenos Aires runs through Thursday.