

**STATEMENT
OF THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF EMPLOYERS IN AGRICULTURE AND FOOD
INDUSTRY AND ITS MEMBER-ASSOCIATIONS ON
COMBATING THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOUR
IN THE AGRICULTURE SECTOR OF MOLDOVA**

Child labour is a worldwide problem and it is requesting attention in the Moldovan society. It is an issue which concerns everyone and it concerns the agribusiness as well. Employers' interest is to take a proactive approach by anticipating and preventing the phenomenon, despite how difficult this may be.

The National Federation of Employers in Agriculture and Food Industry (FNPAIA) is an organisation of good standing; therefore child labour is of much concern for the organisation and we acknowledge the important role FNPAIA can play in combating child labour by advocating compliance with national labour laws and international conventions on child protection. Employers need to know more in this respect and this is where FNPAIA has much to do.

FNPAIA has conducted a survey in the horticulture sub-sector in two rayons (Orhei and Criuleni) to determine the prevalence of child labour by identifying and describing the characteristics, causes and consequences of child labour, to examine the dynamics and perceptions that perpetuate child labour and decide on employer action to combat the worst forms of child labour.

Horticulture has not been selected incidentally, although there are other sub-sectors where presumably child labour is used. The horticulture sub-sector has certain specificities: it is the secondly largest sub-sector in the national agriculture after viticulture and it is labour intensive; it is associated with hard working conditions like high temperatures/radiation, use of hazardous chemicals, incidence of agricultural machineries and working with sharp tools which may cause injuries to children.

The findings of the above-mentioned survey indicate multiple reasons for child labour, including poverty, poor quality of education provided in rural schools, ignorance of parents and children, poor employers' knowledge about the labour legislation and related issues, and the cultural background which implies educating children through work.

In this context it should be mentioned that the term "child labour" should not be associated with the hand of help usually children give to their parents. It should not be associated with light work or small tasks normally done by children in their family.

Child labour is hard work, for long hours, under difficult conditions, doing such work which surpass children's physical abilities, prejudice their health and education. ILO Convention 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour defines in article 3: "*...for the purposes of the Convention, the term the worst forms of child labour comprises:*
(a) *all forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery, such as the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage and serfdom and forced or compulsory*

labour, including forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict;
(b) the use, procuring or offering of a child for prostitution, for the production of pornography or for pornographic performances;
(c) the use, procuring or offering of a child for illicit activities, in particular for the production and trafficking of drugs as defined in the relevant international treaties;
(d) work which, by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children”.

FNPAIA will take steps and will put in place a system of actions, vigorously monitor this system to ensure real outputs, and will work with the government and the civil society towards achieving the common objective – unconditional elimination of the worst forms of child labour. FNPAIA will further act proceeding from findings of the survey. The survey findings illustrate that child labour affects health and education of children. The interviewed children indicated different diseases they suffered from and analysing children's answers about their working conditions, it is clear that the working environment has an effect on child's young body: 72% of the interviewed children (402 child respondents) said they worked under high temperatures, 66% had to carry heavy loads, while 33% of children in the age group 10-14 had to carry loads 11-20 kg heavy, 12% of children worked with chemicals. From a sample of 33 children, 9 said they have spinal problems. Child labour affects the process of education too. During the agricultural season (in autumn), the rate of school attendance usually drops by 20%.

The FNPAIA system of actions will comprise a set of activities on sensitising agricultural employers regarding findings of the survey. Further on, FNPAIA will organise training sessions for representatives of employers' organisations from different parts of the country, round tables and other awareness measures aimed at combating the worst forms of child labour in the agricultural sector of Moldova.

Under this statement the National Federation of Employers in Agriculture and Food Industry (FNPAIA) is validating the findings of the survey carried out in the framework of the ILO project on combating child labour in the agriculture sector in Moldova. FNPAIA and its member-associations is stating its commitment to fully engage in combating the worst forms of child labour.

The place of the child is in school and child's work is to study.

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Chişinău