

INTERNATIONAL LABOR ORGANIZATION (ILO) (November 8, 2010)

In the past years, our Office has been working with the issues of Forced and Child Labour, furnishing technical cooperation to key stakeholders and implementing a number of activities in the country. We actively participate in the National Commission to Eradicate Forced Labour (CONATRAE) and the National Commission to Combat Child Labour (CONAETI).

Activities and studies implemented by ILO Brazil are based on official data provided by the Government. As you may know, ILO is not competent to inspect labour relations; therefore it is not the certifying instance of the existence or not of such practices. Through the years, in different occasions, we have recommended that the American Embassy only use official information from the Brazilian Government.

I would also like to emphasize that ILO counts with its own monitoring mechanisms to verify the application of ratified Conventions (the Committee of Experts in the Applications of Conventions and Recommendations and the Commission on Application of Standards), which evidently includes child labour and forced labour related Conventions.

Effectively, in the last years there has been significant improvements regarding prevention and eradication of child and forced labour in Brazil to which, I would say, ILO's contribution, throughout different means and mechanisms, including their technical cooperation projects, has been important.

Among the factors that contributed for this development, we can mention:

a) In 1995 the Brazilian Government created the Special Mobile Inspection Groups within the Ministry of Labour, whose competence is to inspect complaints and allegations of forced labour and child labour cases. This Ministry keeps a database in which the information from inspection raids is inserted.

b) Furthermore, several other mechanisms were created along the past 15 years in which we recognize as improvements in the fight against forced labour and child labour. For example, the launching of a National Action Plan to Eradicate Forced Labour in 2003 by president Lula, edited and relaunched in 2008 with a special focus on prevention and rehabilitation of victims. In the case of child labour, in 2008, a Presidential Decree regulated the C.182 with the list of Worst Forms of Child Labour – charcoal activities included – and the National Action Plan was launched in 2004 and revised in 2010.

c) Since 1992, when IPEC initiated its activities in Brazil, a number of sectorial pacts were celebrated for child labour prevention and elimination, such as: footwear, sugarcane and charcoal sectors. The results of these pacts were the drastic reduction of child labour occurrences in these sectors. In addition, as consequence of the huge social mobilization that arised from the high numbers of children involved in child labour, specially in the charcoal, sugarcane and footwear sectors, in 1994, the National Forum for the Eradication of Child Labour (FNPETI) was created. FNPETI, which included

December 15, 2010

80 institutions – workers, employers and governmental organizations and the civil society, is a key social control instance that allows the monitoring of the public policies implementation and social awareness on the child labour issue.

d) In 2004, the Ministry of Labour released a list of employers caught using forced labour. This, also called “Dirty List”, turned out to be a great instrument for the cause due to the fact that goods and produces can be traced throughout their productive chains. Following a request from the National Secretariat of Human Rights, ILO Brazil, NGO Reporter Brasil and Ethos Institute conducted some studies on these chains, which stimulated the creation of the National Pact to Eradicate Forced Labour. This Pact is a proposal in which public or private enterprises sign up to, committing themselves to cut commercial relations with those in the “Dirty List”. Bluechip companies such as Vale, Petrobras, Walmart , Carrefour, among others, are signatories, representing 20% of the Brazilian GDP.

Within the scope of the Pact, ILO Brazil is implementing a technical cooperation Project funded by USDOS/DRL to Eradicate Forced Labour from Global Supply Chains through Social Dialogue. Different supply chains from specific productive sectors such as cattle raising, charcoal, sugarcane and cotton are being mapped. These maps provide information regarding intermediaries and end buyers who purchase products coming from employers within the “Dirty List”. Such buyers are the ones invited to participate in the Pact due to their influence in the productive processes of these supply chains.

The aforementioned studies are being undertaken in a cooperation effort with the NGO Repórter Brasil, aiming for a broader view on the Forced Labour issue. It must be noted that these studies will not provide a specific view on Forced Child Labour.

Although in Brazil there is no specific IPEC project on charcoal sector, a resourceful tool for child labour monitoring was implemented as a result of Ministry of Labour and Employment (MLE) and IPEC. This tool allows the monitoring in the country the child labour occurrences based on the information collected by MLE labour inspectors.

Specifically in relation to charcoal production, according to the Ministry of Labour, in the past 3 years no child has been found under forced labour conditions. Nevertheless, the same cannot be said to cases involving adults.