



## **Submission to Consultative Group to Eliminate the Use of Child Labour and Forced Labour in Imported Agricultural Products**

Set up in 2001, the ECLT Foundation addresses the drivers of child labour in the tobacco-growing sector. ECLT Foundation is a partnership of tobacco growers, tobacco companies and workers' unions. We work with communities and local government, as well as children, to change attitudes and provide increased access to basic services and livelihoods.

ECLT is active in tobacco growing areas where child labour is prevalent. We work in Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, the Philippines and Kyrgyzstan. We have a diverse range of partners including the government in the Philippines, a multilateral agency (ILO) in Tanzania, a workers' union in Kyrgyzstan and non-governmental organisations elsewhere. All projects have national project advisory committees which reflect the tripartite make-up of the ECLT Board (companies, growers and unions).

*(a) Examples of identification, monitoring, verification, and/or certification systems, or other models, that have been successful in reducing child labor and/or forced labor in the global supply chains within the agricultural sector or other industries;*

ECLT has developed an effective model that addresses the underlying causes of child labour. The recognised causes of child labour are poverty, lack of food security, the absence of quality education, poor health and children having to fend for themselves, following the death of one or both parents due to HIV/AIDS. Parents also take children with them when they work long distances from home, and have no child care alternatives. In partnership with governments and communities, ECLT seeks to address these issues through a range of projects that respond to local circumstances. Our projects provide alternative ways for parents and guardians to increase their incomes and improve food security. They also focus on changing local attitudes towards child labour, providing access to education, vocational training, health and other basic services.

With programme partners and stakeholders, ECLT has developed indicators for assessing levels of child labour and evaluating the impact of its programmes. Comprehensive external evaluations suggest that the ECLT model is having a positive and sustainable impact on reducing child labour. In Malawi an evaluation in January 2010 demonstrated that the programme has contributed to getting children back to school. The programme includes: improvements to school infrastructure; sensitisation of local communities to child labour; improved food security; and better access to clean water, sanitation and health services. In 2007, there was an 11% increase in enrolment to school in the project area. In 2008 there was a 23% increase and in 2009 a further 8% increase.

ECLT's experience shows that when local communities are involved in meaningful monitoring, it can become part of an integrated and sustainable solution. For example, several of ECLT's programmes have mobilised and strengthened the capacity of local communities to create and run Child Labour Committees. These village-based committees have responsibility for monitoring child labour, ensuring support for withdrawn children and identifying vulnerable children.

Child Labour Committees also play an important role raising awareness. In Uganda, 500 committee members used specially prepared training manuals to sensitise farmers in different villages to the negative

impacts of employing child labour. A final evaluation reported that understanding of child labour issues amongst tobacco farmers increased by 87%.

In Kyrgyzstan, as part of an ECLT initiative, school representatives have taken responsibility for monitoring school absenteeism in order to influence the attitudes and behaviours of parents, as well as children. In Tanzania, the Urambo District Council has adopted a child labour monitoring system that was devised, tested and reviewed by an ECLT partner. The District Council has decided to replicate this system in all of its nine wards.

These examples show that work in the community harnesses the power and potential of local people and authorities to take action to end child labour. It is only by providing the tools, resources and alternatives that communities themselves can address the issue.

*(b) The roles and responsibilities that may be appropriate for the business sector and other stakeholders (governments, unions, nongovernmental organizations, and others) in establishing independent, third-party monitoring and verification systems for the production, processing, and distribution of agricultural products or commodities;*

At an international level, the work of ECLT is guided and supported by its members, which include tobacco companies, tobacco growers and workers' unions. In addition, the International Labour Organization acts as an Advisor to the Board. On the ground, ECLT also works in partnership with communities and governments to deliver and execute its projects.

The **role and responsibilities** of each of these players is key to the success of the projects. Local and national government, UN agencies, NGOs, unions, tobacco companies and growers are represented on local advisory committees. In addition they play specific roles in addressing child labour. For example, tobacco companies and growers collaborate in child labour training for leaf technicians on the ground. In response to input from ECLT programme partners, governments have improved policies and the enforcement of laws to address child labour. Local and national government have also taken over responsibility for funding some of the ECLT initiatives that address child labour. For example, the vocational college funded by ECLT and built by a local partner in Uganda was handed over to the local government in March 2010. As planned, the running costs have been included in the 2010 Ugandan national budget. This is an excellent example of sustainability and shared responsibility.

Tobacco is grown and processed on small, medium and large-scale farms. Solutions and actions need to be tailored to fit the different methods of production. An effective response to child labour in a diverse sector is grounded in dialogue with stakeholders, mobilises communities to take action and addresses the challenges they face.

Communities need to be involved from an early stage in devising and implementing strategies that they can then own and take responsibility for. ECLT's experience shows that communities successfully manage local water, sanitation and health projects. Once engaged they are best placed to advocate for change nationally and influence their own communities. This involvement leads to sustainable projects that can have long-lasting impacts.

*c) Other information that would be useful to the Consultative Group in meeting its mandate to develop recommendations relating to a standard set of practices for independent, third-party monitoring and verification for the production, processing, and distribution of agricultural products or commodities to reduce the likelihood that agricultural products or commodities imported into the United States are produced with the use of forced labor or child labor.*

ECLT would caution against removing a source of revenue for poor communities by restricting trade. Exporting agricultural produce enables poor producers to lift themselves out of poverty through their own

efforts, rather than relying on charity. Banning trade without addressing the underlying causes and drivers will only make things worse and will clearly lead to increased poverty and further hardship for children. ECLT's experience shows that by addressing the underlying causes of child labour we can offer a sustainable way to reduce it.

ECLT believes that monitoring and verification systems make sense provided they are part of an integrated approach that seeks to address the underlying causes of child labour in the supply chain. Integrated efforts, to address policy issues, create national and local capacity for action, ensure relevant investment in key areas such as education and training, are essential for making progress.

It is important to tackle child labour as part of national and regional development strategies. Another more effective way for the United States to use its influence is through USAID. For example, all USAID-funded projects could be expected to specifically address the elimination of child labour with clearly defined programmes that include measurable targets, especially in those geographical areas where child labour is prevalent.

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