International Labour Organization

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

# Policy guidance on the elimination of child labour in fisheries and aquaculture

# Policy guidance on the elimination of child labour in fisheries and aquaculture

Published by
**the International Labour Organization**
**and**
**the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations**
Geneva and Rome, 2025

Required citation: ILO and FAO. 2025. *Policy guidance on eliminating child labour in fisheries and aquaculture*. Geneva, ILO; Rome, FAO. https://doi.org/10.54394/WLLR4354



ISBN ILO 9789220423097 (web PDF); 9789220428351 (print)
ISBN FAO 9789251401682



Cover photo: © FAO/Lalo de Almeida

# Preparation of this document

This *Policy Guidance on the Elimination of Child Labour in Fisheries and Aquaculture* was prepared through a consultative process led by a joint working group established by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the International Labour Organization (ILO).

It builds on the *Guidance on Addressing Child Labour in Aquaculture and Fisheries*, published by FAO and ILO in 2013, as well as on a background study undertaken in 2024. Draft versions of this guidance document were reviewed and discussed by multiple stakeholders, both at a dedicated in-person expert workshop held in Rome in September 2024 and through the International Partnership for Cooperation on Child Labour in Agriculture. Incorporating this feedback, the working group finalized the document.

This guidance document reflects the collective knowledge of experts from national governments, workers' and employers' organizations, business associations, youth groups, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), civil society organizations and international or multilateral organizations.

# Contents

## Tables



## Boxes

# Abbreviations and acronyms

| | |
|---|---|
| **CLMS** | Child Labour Monitoring System |
| **HRDD** | Human Rights Due Diligence |
| **IPCCLA** | International Partnership for Cooperation on Child Labour in Agriculture |
| **IUU** | Illegal, Unregulated and Unreported (fishing) |
| **MNE Declaration** | ILO Tripartite Declaration of Principles Concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy |
| **NGO** | Non-Governmental Organization |
| **OECD** | Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development |
| **SDG** | Sustainable Development Goal |
| **TVET** | Technical and Vocational Education and Training |
| **UNCRC** | United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child |

# Executive summary

Child labour persists in fisheries and aquaculture, in contexts ranging from coastal villages and inland fish farms to seafood processing plants. Children may face hazardous conditions, long hours, exposure to chemicals, and risks of exploitation and trafficking, often at the expense of their education, health and development. The continued presence of child labour undermines children's rights and well-being, perpetuates cycles of poverty, and poses challenges to the sustainability of fisheries and aquaculture as sources of livelihoods and food security.

Eliminating child labour in fisheries and aquaculture requires integrated strategies that combine prevention, protection and sustainable alternatives. It is important to recognize that the underlying drivers are multidimensional and interconnected and include poverty, lack of decent work for adults, insufficient access to quality and inclusive education, limited social protection, weak governance, and sociocultural norms that normalize child labour. Effective responses therefore need to be holistic, gender-sensitive and adapted to local realities.

Prevention is the cornerstone of action. Ensuring access to quality education for all – particularly in rural areas – together with bridging programmes that support children's transition back to school, and vocational and skills training, is essential. Expanding social protection and ensuring more resilient livelihoods help families cope with shocks without resorting to harmful coping strategies, such as child labour. Awareness-raising and dialogue with fishing and farming communities can contribute to shifts in perceptions and practices.

Where children are found in child labour, remedial and protection measures are needed. Children engaged in hazardous work or other worst forms of child labour, as established by the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), should be withdrawn and provided with access


© FAO/GMB Akash

to education, training, psychosocial support and other services that promote their development. Ensuring access to social protection and decent work opportunities and productive resources for adults is critical to avoid reoccurrence.

An enabling environment for the elimination of child labour provides the foundation for all action. International labour standards, including the ILO Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138) and Convention No. 182, set the framework for minimum age regulations and the prohibition of the worst forms of child labour. National legislation, hazardous work lists and inspection systems should be aligned with these standards, ensuring that fisheries and aquaculture are explicitly included and effectively regulated. Institutional capacity, coordination between labour and agriculture and fisheries authorities, and integration of child labour concerns into national agricultural, fisheries and aquaculture policies are central to effective implementation. Emerging initiatives in regional fisheries bodies, corporate due diligence frameworks and supply chain regulation provide additional entry points for progress.

All stakeholders have roles to play. Governments are central to providing the legal and policy framework and to investing in services, education and livelihoods. Workers' and employers' organizations, as well as fishers' and fish farmers' associations, can promote effective legal and policy frameworks and safe conditions, strengthen awareness and support monitoring. Civil society and youth organizations contribute to advocacy, research and community-based approaches. The agri-food industry can address risks within supply chains by applying due diligence, promoting fair pricing and ensuring decent and safe working conditions. International partners provide technical support, resources and platforms for knowledge exchange, capacity building and effective implementation of policies and measures to fight child labour.

Knowledge generation and evidence are cross-cutting priorities. Data on child labour in fisheries and aquaculture remain limited, as agricultural statistics are rarely disaggregated by subsector. Strengthening statistical surveys, commissioning sector-specific studies, and establishing child labour monitoring and information systems can help fill gaps. Sharing lessons from good practices, such as child labour-free zones, livelihood diversification and gender-sensitive strategies, can support the effectiveness of interventions.

Moving forward, child labour in fisheries and aquaculture needs to be addressed as part of wider strategies to ensure decent work, sustainable livelihoods and resilient communities. Climate change, migration and economic crises increase vulnerabilities and highlight the need for integrated, adaptive approaches. This policy guidance offers a framework for governments, industry, employers' and workers' organizations, communities and international partners to translate international commitments into practical measures. By acting together, stakeholders can support sustainable fisheries and aquaculture, as part of efforts to build resilient and equitable agri-food systems, while upholding children's rights and well-being.

## Key messages

- **Child labour in fisheries and aquaculture is unacceptable.** It denies children their rights, perpetuates poverty and undermines sustainable development.
- **Prevention must be the priority.** Decent work for adults and responsible business practices, access to quality education for children, and effective social protection are the foundations for eliminating child labour.
- **When child labour is identified, remediation is essential to ensure safe and adequate alternatives, such as the reintegration of children into the education system,** access to psychosocial support and social protection for them and their families.
- **A strong enabling environment is critical.** National laws, policies and enforcement systems should explicitly cover fisheries and aquaculture and be aligned with international labour standards and other relevant instruments.
- **All stakeholders have responsibilities.** Governments, industry, employers' and workers' organizations, civil society and communities must work together, supported by international partners.
- **Evidence and knowledge must guide action.** Data gaps need to be filled and good practices documented and scaled up to inform effective interventions.
- **Resilience is key.** Integrated strategies that promote a just transition, strengthen livelihoods and social protection will reduce vulnerabilities linked to climate change, economic shocks and migration pressures.

# ▶ 1. Introduction

The fisheries and aquaculture sector is an important source of livelihoods for millions of people around the world, supporting approximately 600 million people globally. In 2022, the sector provided direct employment to 61.8 million people (FAO 2024a). Most of them were in small-scale fisheries, while aquaculture accounted for 36 per cent of this global workforce. Fisheries and aquaculture are a particularly important source of jobs and income for people living in areas where employment opportunities may otherwise be limited.

According to the latest global estimates, 138 million children were engaged in child labour in 2024, against 160 million reported in 2020 (ILO and UNICEF 2021; 2025). Despite a rise in child labour in 2020, global progress has resumed, with over 20 million fewer children in child labour since then and over 100 million fewer than in 2000, despite a growing child population.

Among the 138 million children in child labour, the vast majority – 61 per cent – work in the wider agricultural sector, which includes aquaculture and fisheries. Their work not only interferes with education and is harmful to personal development, but many children are involved in occupations or activities that may threaten their health and even their lives. Children perform work prohibited under international conventions or national legislation, a situation that is a menace to them and to sustainable development, not least the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) target 8.7. on the complete eradication of forced labour and elimination and prevention of child labour (ILO and UNICEF 2021; 2025).

Information on child labour in the fisheries and aquaculture sector is limited because data on child labour in agriculture are generally not disaggregated by subsector. Although precise numbers

are unavailable, evidence from multiple contexts strongly suggests that child labour in the fisheries and aquaculture sector is significant. Children are engaged in a wide variety of activities: working on board fishing vessels, unloading catches and preparing nets and baits; preparing ponds and inputs and feeding and harvesting fish in aquaculture; and sorting, processing and selling fish and other aquatic species. Child labour is often more prevalent in family-based, small-scale fishing and fish farming, but also occurs in large-scale, commercial operations.

Tackling child labour is no easy task. Entwined in poverty and social injustices, child labour cannot be addressed in isolation. This ILO and FAO *Policy Guidance on the Elimination of Child Labour in Fisheries and Aquaculture* is an important step forward in strengthening knowledge and advancing national and local action by governments, employers' and workers' organizations to implement fundamental ILO Conventions on the eradication of child labour. This policy guidance updates the ILO and FAO *Guidance on Addressing Child Labour in Fisheries and Aquaculture*, first published in 2013 (FAO and ILO 2013). It outlines the international framework on child labour as one of the ILO fundamental principles and rights at work [1], presents updated information on the root causes of child labour in the fisheries and aquaculture sector and provides action guidance on how to eliminate child labour in fisheries and aquaculture. It complements other important documents, notably the 2023 *ILO Policy Guidelines on the Promotion of Decent Work in the Agri-food Sector* (ILO 2023a).

Eliminating child labour in fisheries and aquaculture is both a legal obligation and a policy priority, firmly grounded in international conventions and global commitments. Addressing this challenge is essential to ensuring that children everywhere can grow, learn, and thrive free from exploitation. Fisheries and aquaculture resources should contribute to food security and be a source of equitable livelihoods and sustainable development opportunities for present and future generations. By strengthening action now, the rights and dignity of children can be protected, while contributing to a more just, sustainable and prosperous future.

## Purpose and structure of this document

This *Policy Guidance on the Elimination of Child Labour in Fisheries and Aquaculture* is a response to requests[2] from key stakeholders in the fisheries, aquaculture and seafood processing sectors for updated guidance on this issue. It reflects major developments over the past decade, including the growing number of ratifications of ILO core conventions and the increasing impact of climate change and other crises on livelihoods and working conditions. Its purpose is to provide guidance for the following stakeholder groups, supporting them to act, individually and jointly, to eliminate child labour in the fisheries and aquaculture sector:

- governments;
- employers' and workers' organizations;
- fishers' and fish farmers' associations;
- civil society groups and organizations;
- businesses in the seafood industry.

The guidance document is organized in two parts. Part 1 focuses on understanding child labour, including its definition in international frameworks, and underlying root causes. Part 2 outlines effective strategies and provides guidance on how stakeholder groups can translate these into action in workplaces, communities, governments and supply chains.

1 The Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work derive from ILO Conventions and Recommendations which set international labour standards on a broad range of subjects related to the world of work, including human rights at work, employment policy and human resources development.

2 Technical Meeting on the Future of Work in Aquaculture in the Context of the Rural Economy, Geneva, Switzerland, 13–17 December 2021. https://www.ilo.org/meetings-and-events/sectorial/technical-meeting-future-work-aquaculture-context-rural-economy.

© FAO/GMB Akash

# Part 1: Framework for addressing child labour in aquaculture and fisheries

Child labour refers to activities that may endanger children's health and safety and deprive them of education. Child labour has no place in the twenty-first century. This section outlines the international framework and conventions that define what constitutes child labour.

## What is child labour?

Child labour is often defined as work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity, and that is harmful to physical and mental development (ILO 1973; 1999; UNGA 1990). It refers to work that: is mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful to children; and/or interferes with their education by depriving them of the opportunity to attend school, obliging them to leave school prematurely, or requiring them to combine school attendance with excessively long hours of work, or strenuous work.

## 1.1 Instruments of the International Labour Organization

Freedom from child labour is a fundamental human right.

Fundamental principles and rights at work are enshrined in the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, adopted in 1998 and amended in 2022 (ILO 2022a). The Declaration affirms that all Members – even if they have not ratified the Conventions in question – have an obligation arising from the very fact of their membership of ILO, to respect, promote and realize the principles concerning the fundamental rights which are the subject of those Conventions, namely:

- freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining;
- the elimination of all forms of forced or compulsory labour;
- the effective abolition of child labour;
- the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation;
- a safe and healthy working environment.

These rights are interdependent, mutually reinforcing and an integral part of decent work.

Fundamental principles and rights at work have been articulated through 10 Conventions and 1 Protocol that establish specific rights and obligations recognized as fundamental both within and beyond the ILO. The two fundamental conventions that address child labour and provide the basis for the above definition of child labour are the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138) and the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182).

While the effective eradication of all forms of child labour remains the overarching goal, Convention No. 182 specifies the types of work that constitute the worst forms of child labour and require urgent measures. Convention No. 138, for its part, requires the adoption of a national policy on child labour and provides the framework for national legislation on a minimum age for admission to employment and specifies that the minimum age for employment must not be less than the age of completion of compulsory schooling and, in any case, not less than 15 years. At the same time,

Convention No. 138 allows for exemptions. For instance, it:

- allows for a lower minimum age of 14 years to be set during a transitional period in countries where the economy and educational facilities are insufficiently developed;
- allows for young persons aged 13 to 15 (or 12 to 14 where the general minimum age is 14) to engage in light work which is not likely to harm their health or development, prejudice their attendance at school or participation in vocational orientation or training programmes, nor their capacity to benefit from the instruction received;
- stipulates that where countries allow light work, national legislation must specify the activities that may be considered light work and the hours and conditions in which such employment or work may be undertaken.

Convention No. 138 stipulates that the minimum age for admission to any type of employment or work, which by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of young persons, must not be less than 18 years. Children are allowed to work from the age of 16 years only where appropriate protections are in place.

Hazardous child labour is defined as work that is dangerous by its nature (for example fishing in rough seas) or by the circumstances under which it is undertaken (for example unhealthy environments). Such work can cause death, injury, illness or permanent disability. Health problems caused by working as a child may only emerge later in adulthood (ILO 2015).

The ILO Worst Forms of Child Labour Recommendation, 190 (ILO 1999), which complements Convention No. 182, provides guidance on the elements to be considered when determining what constitutes hazardous work. These include:

- work that exposes children to physical, psychological or sexual abuse;
- work underground, underwater, at dangerous heights, or in confined spaces;
- work involving dangerous machinery, equipment or tools, or the manual handling or transport of heavy loads;
- work in unhealthy environments that exposes children to hazardous substances, agents or processes, or to extreme temperatures, noise, or vibrations harmful to health;
- work under particularly difficult conditions, such as long hours, night work, or where the child is unreasonably confined to the employer's premises.

Almost all types of work in the fisheries and aquaculture sector display one or more of the hazardous characteristics listed above, making it generally inappropriate for children. This does not, however, exclude opportunities for educational activities for older children, provided these take place in a healthy and safe environment, under strict rules and national legislation.[3]

With universal ratification of Convention No. 182 in 2020, all ILO Member States have committed to eliminate the worst forms of child labour as a matter of priority (ILO 2020). Convention No. 138 has not yet achieved universal ratification, but with 176 ratifications (as of March 2025)[4] this is one of the most widely ratified ILO Conventions.

In addition to the two fundamental ILO Conventions on child labour, the ILO's Work in Fishing Convention, 2007 (No. 188) sets 16 as the minimum age for work on fishing vessels. This may be lowered to 15 for children who have completed compulsory schooling and are in vocational training in fishing. Children aged 15 who are still in school may also be allowed to do light work during school holidays.[5]

3 For more information see Convention No. 182.

4 See the ILO NORMLEX database: https://normlex.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:11300:0::NO:11300:P11300_INSTRUMENT_ID:312283:NO.

5 In accordance with 9.2 of C 188, in such cases, "it shall determine, after consultation, the kinds of work permitted and shall prescribe the conditions in which such work shall be undertaken and the periods of rest required."

The Convention requires a minimum age of 18 for tasks that could endanger the health, safety or morals of young workers. In certain cases, 16 to 17 year-olds may perform such work if their safety is fully protected and they receive specific vocational instruction and pre-sea safety training. Night work for those under 18 is generally prohibited, although exceptions can be made for training purposes and in instances where health and well-being are not affected. Importantly, decisions on these matters should be made in consultation with the representative organizations of employers and workers, particularly organizations representing fishers and the owners of fishing vessels, to ensure that practical and sector-specific guidance is provided.

There is thus a clear framework prohibiting child labour while outlining the limited conditions under which exemptions may apply. This framework must be incorporated into national laws and regulations. It is essential that fisheries and aquaculture are explicitly covered to provide a clear basis for action and to enable effective implementation and enforcement across all workplaces, including in the informal economy. Part 2 of this guidance document examines these issues in more detail.

### Points to consider

Compare the information in this section with the legislation on child labour in your country (or state). Does it set a minimum age for employment, and is this in line with the provisions of Convention No. 138? Have light work and hazardous work been clearly defined and is light work authorized? Is there an accessible list of prohibited hazardous work? Are children working in family enterprises covered by the legislation in your country (or state)?

## 1.2 Recent international commitments and regulatory developments

The SDGs include a specific target on child labour under Goal 8. Target 8.7 calls on countries to: "Take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, including recruitment and use of child soldiers, and by 2025 end child labour in all its forms."[6]

This target mobilized countries, United Nations agencies, workers' and employers' organizations, academia and civil society to form Alliance 8.7, which promotes initiatives to eliminate child and forced labour, particularly among the Target 8.7 Pathfinder Countries. These countries have adopted roadmaps to achieve Target 8.7. In addition, the United Nations Pact for the Future includes a commitment to eliminate child labour.

The ILO Policy Guidelines for the Promotion of Decent Work in the Agri-food Sector (the ILO Agri-food Guidelines) (ILO 2023a), adopted in May 2023, provide practical recommendations and define the roles of governments, employers and workers in eliminating child labour within the broader framework of fundamental principles and rights at work. Section 2.3 focuses specifically on child labour, while the remainder of Chapter 2 addresses the four categories of fundamental principles and rights at work, namely: freedom of association and collective bargaining; the elimination of forced labour; equality and non-discrimination in employment; and a safe and healthy work environment. The Guidelines emphasize an integrated approach built on the four strategic objectives of decent work: the promotion of rights at work; employment; social protection; and social dialogue. Relatedly, the ILO Technical Meeting on the Future of Work in Aquaculture in the Context of the Rural Economy held in December 2021, provides recommendations for the tripartite constituents and the ILO to take measures to tap the potential of the sector to support full and productive employment and decent work for all, including the importance of eliminating child labour in the sector (ILO 2021).

6 SDG Target 8.7, see for example https://www.alliance87.org.

The Durban Call to Action, adopted at the 5th International Conference on the Elimination of Child Labour in 2022, includes commitments to address child labour in agriculture, including fisheries and aquaculture.

The FAO Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF Guidelines), endorsed in 2014, provides guidance on sustainable fisheries management and on securing livelihoods and ensuring that the rights of small-scale fishers and their communities are fully realized. Chapter 6 calls on actors to promote decent work, protect young workers and uphold children's rights in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (see Part 1). The SSF Guidelines also emphasize creating an enabling environment for fishing communities and families to thrive, for example through social protection, adequate living standards, occupational health and safety in small-scale fishing and access to essential services, such as education.

Several instruments and guidance documents address child labour in the context of global supply chains. A key example is the ILO Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy (MNE Declaration) which was adopted in 1977 and amended in 2022. It calls on governments to establish minimum age regulations and effective policies to eliminate child labour, while affirming the responsibility of enterprises to comply with national regulations and take immediate measures to prohibit and eliminate the worst forms of child labour. The guidance provided by the MNE Declaration aligns with the United Nations' Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD's) Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises on Responsible Business Conduct. In addition, new legislation to promote sustainable and responsible corporate conduct across supply chains is increasingly being adopted at international, national and subnational levels, including the Directive on Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence of the European Union, adopted in 2024.

All these instruments call on governments and other duty bearers to take effective action to prevent and eradicate human rights violations, including child labour. Legislation alone is not enough; it must be backed by concrete measures to ensure implementation and compliance. This requires an enabling policy environment, including adequate institutional capacity in labour inspectorates, alongside laws and regulations.

Governments and other stakeholders are increasingly integrating decent work, including the elimination of child labour, into regulatory frameworks. For example, regional fisheries management organizations and bodies are beginning to adopt labour clauses, such as the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission's Conservation and Management Measure on Crew Labour Standards, adopted in 2024, with similar efforts underway in the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas and the Fisheries Committee for West Central Gulf of Guinea. Although still at an early stage, these initiatives have the potential to make an important contribution to eliminating child labour in fisheries and aquaculture.

## 1.3 Developments in the fisheries and aquaculture sector

According to FAO's *State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture 2024*, global fisheries and aquaculture production reached a record 223.2 million tonnes in 2022 (animals and algae combined). Aquaculture accounted for 130.9 million tonnes – its highest level ever – with farmed animal production surpassing wild-caught species (marine and inland) for the first time (FAO 2024a).

In 2022, an estimated 61.8 million people were employed directly in the fisheries and aquaculture sector. The aquaculture sector accounted for 36 per cent of this global workforce, 54 per cent were employed in capture fisheries, while it was not possible to break down the remaining 10 per cent between fisheries and aquaculture. Most workers were in Asia, reflecting the region's higher production volumes (FAO 2024a).

Direct employment in aquaculture has grown steadily since 1996, particularly during the 2000s. By 2022, just over 22 million people were employed directly in aquaculture, more than 20 million of them in Asia. Around 75 per cent of aquaculture workers were men (FAO 2024a).

Employment in fisheries also increased over this period. In 2022, an estimated 17.9 million people worked in inland fisheries and 15.7 million in marine capture fisheries (FAO 2024a).

The Illuminating Hidden Harvest project estimated that small-scale capture fisheries alone support the jobs and livelihoods of 492 million people worldwide, catching 37 million tonnes – about 40 per cent of global wild-caught aquatic foods – each year (FAO, Duke University and WorldFish 2023). Of these, 60 million people work directly in small-scale capture fisheries, accounting for 90 per cent of all employment in capture fisheries. Another 53 million engage in subsistence fishing, while an additional 379 million household members depend on income from small-scale fisheries, often through support roles, such as gear maintenance, catch sorting, processing and marketing. Women make up about 40 per cent of those working in small-scale fisheries.

Although estimates vary, the fisheries and aquaculture sector provides livelihoods for millions of people. Shifts in production systems will shape those livelihoods in the years to come. Rising aquaculture production is generating new jobs with distinct challenges and opportunities, while declining and migrating fish stocks are likely to affect wild capture fisheries, especially small-scale ones.

Fisheries and aquaculture production systems vary widely by scale (small-scale to industrial), environment (inland, coastal, marine), gear/fleet characteristics, and culture intensity (extensive, semi-intensive, intensive); for typologies and system descriptions, see FAO's *State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture 2024*, the *SSF Guidelines*, the *Illuminating Hidden Harvests global study on small-scale fisheries*, and FAO's *Guidelines for Sustainable Aquaculture*.

Despite progress in some fisheries, concerns remain over the health of marine fishery resources in several regions. The share of marine stocks fished within biologically sustainable levels fell to 62.3 per cent in 2021, down from 64.6 per cent in 2019. However, when weighted by production level, the picture is more positive; an estimated 76.9 per cent of the 2021 landings from FAO-monitored stocks were from biologically sustainable stocks (FAO 2024a). The extent of illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing[7] is unknown but has received increased attention over the past decade. Illegal fishing by large-scale industrial vessels has been linked to forced labour (McDowell et al. 2015; Environmental Justice Foundation n.d.). At the same time, concerns persist about the ways in which industrial fishing and inadequate fisheries management impact the fish stocks on which small-scale coastal fishers depend. Declining stocks in coastal waters have a direct and often severe impact on the livelihoods of small-scale fishers, their families and communities, and can exacerbate child labour.

Concerns also extend to the environmental performance of aquaculture. Research and certification data continue to highlight challenges related to habitat destruction, pollution, the use of chemicals and antibiotics and reliance on feed from reduction fisheries associated with IUU fishing (FAO 2024b).

In addition to environmental concerns, fisheries and aquaculture have come under increased scrutiny for labour rights violations (Garcia Lozario et al. 2022). Recent reports and studies have drawn attention to persistent decent work challenges across the sector, including processing (Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Watch n.d.). They also highlight the barriers workers face in exercising their right to organize and bargain collectively, a factor that underpins wider violations of fundamental labour rights. In recent years, levels of organization and collective bargaining coverage in the sector have not changed significantly.

Environmental sustainability and decent work deficits are closely linked. For example, depleted fish stocks have been directly associated with forced labour on fishing vessels. As catches decline, vessels may travel further out to sea, raising fuel and other costs, which in turn may drive underpayment and poor conditions for migrant fishers (FAO 2021). Similarly, the livelihoods of small-scale fishers and fish farmers may be affected by the depletion of resources, climate-related weather events and other environmental factors, heightening vulnerability and increasing the risk of school drop-out and child labour within families (FAO 2021).

7 For a definition of IUU fishing, please refer to *IPOA - International Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing.*

### ▶ Box 1. The importance of integrated policy

Aquaculture takes many forms, ranging from small, extensively farmed (no-feed) ponds to large-scale operations on land, in rivers, lakes and the sea. Aquaculture is often viewed as an alternative to capture fisheries and to diversify agricultural production. In Zambia, the government launched a National Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy and a National Aquaculture Trade Development Strategy in 2023. Targets include a 150 per cent increase in the real value of total fish and fishery product exports by 2024, together with a 1 to 2 per cent expansion in their share of total exports. The strategy also aims to raise aquaculture production from 30,000 tonnes to 150,000 tonnes by 2024, generating revenue, improving food security and providing more diversified and robust livelihoods. This growth is expected to expand employment, not only on farms but across the supply chain, including in feed supply and processing.

By 2024, aquaculture output had grown substantially to about 75,000–76,000 tonnes, contributing to a national fish supply of around 170,000 tonnes. While this fell short of the 150,000-tonne target, it nevertheless represents rapid growth compared with a decade earlier. Fish exports, however, remain a small share of Zambia's total exports, suggesting that further investment and value-chain upgrading are required (FAO 2024; World Bank 2024a).

Zambia has partnered with the World Bank's PROBLUE program through the AquaInvest Platform, which provides aquaculture suitability mapping, strategic environmental and social assessments, and investment planning support. These tools are designed to de-risk aquaculture investment and guide both public and private actors towards sustainable, inclusive expansion (World Bank 2024b). Importantly, PROBLUE assistance is anchored in the World Bank's Environmental and Social Standard 2 (ESS2), which prohibits harmful child labour and requires preventive measures across contractors and primary suppliers (World Bank 2017).

**Sources**: FAO (2024); GRZ (2023a, 2023b, 2023c); World Bank (2017, 2024a, 2024b).

## 1.4 Trends and developments in child labour

The latest global estimates indicate that in 2024, an estimated 138 million children – 59 million girls and 78 million boys – were in child labour, accounting for almost 8 per cent of all children worldwide (ILO and UNICEF 2025). The majority (61 per cent) were in the broader agricultural sector, including fisheries and aquaculture. Because the estimates do not distinguish between different subsectors but cover the entire primary sector, global data on the number of children specifically working in fisheries and aquaculture are not available.

Worldwide, 60 per cent of boys and 61 per cent of girls in child labour perform agricultural work. However, the intersection of age and sex shapes the composition of child labour. Younger children, both boys and girls, are concentrated in agriculture. With age, however, gender patterns emerge and occupational segregation becomes more visible. Boys are increasingly drawn into industry, while girls are more likely to work in services. These divergences become particularly pronounced during adolescence, reflecting the structural dynamics of labour markets and prevailing social norms.

Child labour remains widespread, especially in informal settings and within family-based activities. Half of all children in child labour are engaged in own-use production work, such as subsistence farming, firewood collection and water fetching, with 68 per cent of them aged 5 to 11.[8] Overall, two in five (54 million) perform hazardous work. Of these, almost half are under 15 and almost one in five is younger than 12 (ILO and UNICEF 2025).

Despite an increase in child labour between 2016 and 2020, global progress has resumed. There are now over 20 million fewer children in child labour than in 2020, and more than 100 million fewer than in 2000, despite a growth in the global child population. Large regional disparities persist. Continued progress has been recorded in Asia and the Pacific and in Latin America and the Caribbean, while both prevalence and absolute numbers have increased in sub-Saharan Africa. This region now accounts for 87 million children in child labour – nearly two thirds of the global total.

Child labour is closely associated with children being out of school. Globally, nearly one-third of children of compulsory school age engaged in child labour are not in education, compared with just 8 per cent of their peers who are not in child labour. The risk is even greater for those in hazardous work, where almost half miss out on schooling. For example, in Asia and the Pacific 42 per cent of children in child labour and 61 per cent of those in hazardous work are not in school. The gap widens sharply during adolescence. Among children aged 15 to 17, nearly 60 per cent of those in child labour are out of school globally, compared with 14 per cent of their peers. In Asia and the Pacific, school non-attendance among adolescents in child labour rises to 71 per cent. Across all regions, adolescent boys in child labour are slightly more likely than girls to find themselves out of school (ILO and UNICEF 2025).

Though there is no statistical breakdown for child labour in fishing or aquaculture, location-specific, mixed-methods and qualitative studies provide important insights into its causes and drivers.

## 1.5 Child labour in fisheries and aquaculture

### 1.5.1 Types of work

Fishing and aquaculture systems are highly diverse, with working conditions shaped by production methods, location and the tools and equipment used. These systems range from subsistence gathering to large-scale industrial fishing, and from backyard fish farming to large-scale mariculture operations. Key characteristics are summarized in table 1.

8 The 2024 estimates are based on a wide range of nationally representative household surveys that fully or partially cover children aged 5 to 17 years. The estimates use available data from 107 countries covering 60 per cent of the global population of children aged 5 to 17 years. Sub-Saharan Africa is the region with the highest data coverage, with 83 per cent of children covered by available data.

### ▶ Table 1. Characteristics of children's engagement in fisheries and aquaculture production systems

| Production systems/types of operation | Types of work performed by children |
|---|---|
| **Coastal small-scale fisheries** | Children may be engaged in preparation, such as mending nets in fishing operations, and sorting the catch, etc. They may work in small-scale commercial fishing and in subsistence fishing. Participation often follows gender roles, with girls assisting mothers and boys joining fathers or other men in gendered activities. Boys are more likely to participate in fishing and girls in post-harvest handling of the catch. |
| **Inland small-scale fisheries** | Children may be engaged in preparation, such as mending nets in fishing operations, post-harvest handling and marketing. Participation often follows gender roles, with girls assisting mothers and boys joining fathers or other men in gendered activities. |
| **Subsistence and gathering fisheries** | Children may be involved in family activities, e.g. joining their mothers to collect, clean, cook or sell crustaceans or seaweed. |
| **Industrial/commercial fishing** | Children work on large-scale industrial vessels much less frequently than in small-scale family operations. Young workers in industrial fishing (including those aged 15 to 17 who are prohibited from hazardous work) are often migrant workers who may be particularly vulnerable to exploitation and accidents. Human trafficking and forced labour are significant concerns in the high seas fleet. High seas vessels remain at sea for extended periods (sometimes for months or years, with the catch being discharged at sea into refrigerated vessels), making it impossible to attend school. High seas/industrial fishing is male dominated, placing boys at greater risk of child labour. Yet women and girls involved in selling the catch also face significant risks, though these are often less visible and therefore more likely to be overlooked. |
| **Smallholder aquaculture** | Children's work in small-scale aquaculture may include feeding, preparing ponds and harvesting. |
| **Large-scale aquaculture** | Children and young workers in large-scale aquaculture may be engaged in preparing inputs and feed, maintaining grounds and harvesting and sorting. Some tasks may be suitable for young workers (15 to 18 years), while others may be hazardous. |
| **Informal processing** | Children work in semi-informal or informal processing in both subsistence and commercial fisheries and aquaculture, often performing piece-rate work alongside parents, or assisting in family operations. They engage in various tasks, from de-heading and de-veining fish and shellfish, to drying, smoking and packaging. Processing work is mostly undertaken by women and girls. |
| **Formal commercial processing** | Formal commercial processing is mostly undertaken by women, including young women and adolescent girls but may include children under the minimum age of entry into employment. The tasks include filleting, coating and other forms of value addition. |

The tasks in fisheries and aquaculture production systems are associated with several risks and hazards. These are summarized in table 2.

**▶ Table 2. Potential risks and hazards in fisheries and aquaculture production systems**

| Production systems/ types of operation | Risks and hazards |
|---|---|
| **Fisheries (subsistence, subsistence small-scale, semi-industrial, large-scale)** | ▶ Exposure to noise, vibration, poison and toxins<br>▶ Risk of capsizing, violent/unpredictable vessel movements (falls, entrapment, falling objects and collisions)<br>▶ Engine malfunction and fire/explosion risk<br>▶ Lack of communication, safety equipment or emergency systems<br>▶ Extreme weather conditions, sunlight exposure, cold stress and heat stress<br>▶ Lack of port and landing facilities<br>▶ Lack of adequate food and clean water<br>▶ Infectious, waterborne and parasitic diseases<br>▶ Musculoskeletal injuries (due to exposure to arduous manual handling tasks, repetitive strain and awkward postures)<br>▶ Excessive hours of work and heavy, manual or repetitive work<br>▶ Fatigue, overcrowded sleeping areas and lack of rest<br>▶ Limited emergency response and rescue capacity<br>▶ Unsafe and unregulated vessels<br>▶ Use of inappropriate tools and inadequate protective equipment<br>▶ Cuts, lacerations, entanglement in lines/nets and propeller injuries<br>▶ Risk of wild animal encounters and attacks (sharks, crocodiles, snakes and jellyfish)<br>▶ Risk of drowning<br>▶ High risks of physical, psychosocial or sexual abuse<br>▶ Mental health stressors (trauma, economic insecurity and isolation)<br>▶ Child labour, exploitation and vulnerability of migrant/undocumented workers<br>▶ Market volatility and economic pressure leading to unsafe practices<br>▶ IUU fishing, conflict, theft, piracy and security risks |
| **Aquaculture (small-scale and large-scale)** | ▶ Exposure to noise, vibration, poison and toxins (pumps, aerators and machinery)<br>▶ Electrical hazards (pumps, aerators and refrigeration systems)<br>▶ Lack of communication, safety equipment and emergency systems<br>▶ Extreme weather conditions, sunlight exposure, cold stress and heat stress<br>▶ Lack of adequate food and clean water (especially on remote farms)<br>▶ Infectious, waterborne and parasitic diseases<br>▶ Harmful algal blooms and biotoxins<br>▶ Antimicrobial resistance and chemical residues (antibiotics, pesticides and disinfectants)<br>▶ Musculoskeletal injuries (due to exposure to arduous manual handling tasks, repetitive strain and awkward postures)<br>▶ Cuts, lacerations, stings from aquatic organisms and handling injuries<br>▶ Risk of wild animal encounters and attacks (snakes, crocodiles, insects, rodents and birds)<br>▶ Disease outbreaks in farms and spillover to wild stocks |

| Production systems/ types of operation | Risks and hazards |
|---|---|
| | ▶ Escapes of farmed species and invasive species impacts<br>▶ Fire/explosion and chemical hazards (fuel storage, disinfectants and pesticides)<br>▶ Mental health stressors (isolation, economic uncertainty and crop loss from disease) |
| **Processing (formal and informal)** | ▶ Exposure to noise, vibration and cold storage systems<br>▶ Cuts, lacerations and processing knife/blade injuries<br>▶ Musculoskeletal injuries (repetitive filleting, heavy lifting and awkward standing positions)<br>▶ Electrical hazards (processing machinery and refrigeration)<br>▶ Fire/explosion risks (fuel leaks and ammonia leaks in refrigeration)<br>▶ Long hours, heavy manual or repetitive work<br>▶ Inadequate or insufficient medical care at work sites<br>▶ Cold-chain failures and microbial growth in post-harvest handling<br>▶ Antimicrobial resistance and chemical residues in processed products<br>▶ Processing machinery injuries (blades, conveyors and rotating equipment)<br>▶ Exposure to cleaning/disinfecting chemicals (sanitizers and solvents)<br>▶ Limited emergency response in informal processing sites<br>▶ High risks of physical, psychological or sexual abuse (especially in seasonal/informal work)<br>▶ Market volatility and pressure leading to unsafe practices |

## 1.5.2 Root causes and drivers

The root causes and drivers of child labour, both generally and in the fisheries and aquaculture sector, are complex, multidimensional and well documented through research and practice. Over the past decade, understanding how these drivers intersect has deepened (FAO 2021). Rarely does child labour arise from a single factor; it typically results from the convergence of multiple, interrelated vulnerabilities. For instance, a child in a low-income fishing household in a remote area may still attend school and avoid hazardous work, but this can change abruptly if a parent suffers a work-related injury, if the family is forced to migrate because of declining fish stocks, or if productive assets are destroyed by a natural disaster. In such cases, child labour emerges not simply from poverty or geographic isolation, but from their interaction with other risks such as limited social protection, lack of insurance and exposure to environmental, economic and health shocks in the absence of safety nets. This example illustrates a broader reality: the root causes of child labour rarely operate in isolation. Instead, they form a web of structural and situational risks, including limited access to quality education, inadequate employment opportunities for adults, weak governance, exclusion from public services, restrictive social norms and environmental degradation. Addressing child labour therefore requires effective responses that are multidimensional, integrated, sustainable and tailored to address these overlapping and context-specific drivers.

### 1.5.2.1 Multidimensional poverty and economic vulnerability

Multidimensional poverty remains one of the primary root causes of child labour, both in general and in the fisheries and aquaculture sector. It includes both immediate and severe income poverty, where families cannot meet their basic needs and children are drawn into child labour to help support household income. Equally important, and particularly in the context of fisheries and aquaculture, economically vulnerable families can be pushed into child labour by economic shocks, such as the loss of assets due to storms, illness or injury, or sudden price fluctuations – as

observed in the global market for farmed shrimp during the COVID-19 pandemic. Such economic shocks can immediately overwhelm already vulnerable households, often leading to school dropout and the entry of children into child labour as a last resort for family survival (FAO 2021).

The negative effects of economic shocks are exacerbated by the limited coverage of social protection schemes. Fishers, fish farmers and their families frequently live and work in remote rural areas and often operate in the informal economy where access to social protection is inadequate or non-existent. Moreover, small-scale fishers and smallholder farmers often lack access to crop and asset insurance. This can exacerbate the impact of sudden economic shocks.

Beyond their immediate effects, shocks may have long-term consequences, gradually eroding the resilience of households. Fishers, fish farmers and fish workers may be forced to take up loans, often non-transparent, informal loans offered under unfavourable conditions, to cover urgent needs such as medical expenses, asset replacement, education costs, among others. Such debt cycles become crippling over time, weakening household economies and increasing their vulnerability. As a result, the risk of child labour may arise not only as a direct response to the initial shock, but also because of long-term economic deterioration and the absence of adequate social protection (FAO 2021).

#### 1.5.2.2 Lack of access to education and training

Most fishing, aquaculture and seafood processing activities take place in rural, coastal areas that are often poorly serviced compared to urban areas. This is true for most services, including health care, water and sanitation and affordable, quality education. Offering children opportunities for universal, quality education is generally considered to be the most important alternative to child labour, but it is also important to recognize the role of childcare, early childhood development and vocational and skills training. Where no childcare is available, older girls may drop out of school to care for younger siblings. And, where no formal technical and vocational training programmes exist, informal apprenticeships and "learning by doing" are often the only alternatives, but these may lead to child labour (ILO and UNICEF 2021).

#### 1.5.2.3 Decent work deficits

Multidimensional poverty is closely linked to a lack of decent work opportunities for adults and youth above the minimum age for work. These factors drive child labour in multiple ways. Adults in poor quality employment and particularly in the informal economy, may send their children to work to supplement household income. They are also more vulnerable to occupational injuries and illnesses that strain household resources, and to unsafe migration. Many face barriers to exercising their right to organize and bargain collectively. In fisheries and aquaculture, poor and hazardous working conditions are widespread. Examples include small-scale fishers going to sea in unseaworthy vessels when catches decline, migrant workers on industrial vessels labouring in dangerous conditions for little pay, fish farmers and workers handling hazardous chemicals, and fish processing employees working long shifts in the cold with little or no overtime pay (Lincoln et al. 2024). Children engaged in child labour are more likely to grow up in poverty and to face significant decent work deficits as they enter adulthood. In this way, child labour perpetuates a downward intergenerational cycle in which poverty, lack of access to decent work opportunities and continued reliance on child labour reinforce each other over time (FAO 2020; ILO 2023a).

#### 1.5.2.4 Unsafe migration and displacement

Unsafe migration and displacement are increasingly important drivers of child labour, including in fisheries and aquaculture. Children on the move, especially those without documentation, are less likely to access education, health care and other social services. They are more likely to live in poverty and the migration process itself exposes them to risks of trafficking and other worst forms of child labour. Children left behind with relatives as parents migrate may also be more vulnerable to child labour – for example, when ageing grandparents cannot adequately provide for them – and may end up working to fill the labour gap, often in family farming (UNICEF 2025, FAO 2023). Because many fisheries and aquaculture operations rely heavily on migrant labour, there is an elevated risk that children – particularly older children – are drawn into forced labour or unsafe work. This risk is heightened by the fact that migration in the sector is often informal, with limited regulation

or support for migrant workers. Significantly, migrant workers are frequently prevented from forming or joining unions, for example by legal restrictions in destination countries, leaving them more vulnerable to rights violations. Additional barriers, such as language, cultural differences and poor quality employment further discourage workers from organizing or claiming their rights (ILO 2023b).

#### 1.5.2.5 Climate change impacts

Climate change is increasingly affecting livelihoods and working conditions, including in fisheries and aquaculture (ILO 2024). Extreme weather and climate events heighten the risk of devastating economic shocks that push families into poverty. The impacts are especially severe for small-scale producers with limited access to insurance or finance to rebuild livelihoods, for example fish farmers in coastal South Asia who rely on informal financing where crop and asset insurance is often unavailable (Raju-Iyer et al. forthcoming). Such shocks can lead families to withdraw children from school, either to supplement household income or to reduce education costs, thereby increasing the risk of child labour (FAO 2021).

Climate change is also expected to increase workplace hazards, especially for outdoor activities such as fishing and aquaculture. More workers are likely to face risks of heat-related illness and vector-borne diseases, given the nature of work in and around water. Climate change impacts may also increase the use of potentially harmful substances to control climate-induced illnesses in fish and shellfish, exposing aquaculture workers to pesticides and antibiotics (ILO 2024). Severe weather events will further reduce safety at sea, especially for small-scale vessels, heightening risks for fishers of all ages. Broader climate-related risks such as flooding particularly affect coastal communities and communities in wetlands where much fishing and aquaculture production occurs. This may in turn lead to greater migration and displacement, putting children at greater risk of child labour (ILO 2023c).

Climate change impacts are inextricably linked with social inequalities and vulnerabilities. The workers, children and families who are already most at risk are also the most likely to experience direct impacts on their working conditions, incomes and safety. Migrants, informal economy workers and others exposed to socioeconomic risks often lack adequate labour and social protection, yet they dominate sectors heavily impacted by climate change, such as fisheries and aquaculture. Low-income countries face further challenges, with fewer resources for disaster preparedness and food security, and limited capacity to reduce global carbon emissions, despite contributing less to them (Twiss 2023).

Climate change impacts are closely connected to environmental degradation, which can undermine livelihoods and increase hazards for fishers, fish farmers and seafood workers. Yet not all environmental degradation is climate-driven. Weaknesses in fisheries management and aquaculture governance can also contribute to biodiversity loss and declining fish stocks, with devastating consequences for communities that depend on aquatic resources. In addition, some measures designed to manage fisheries and aquaculture and preserve natural resources – such as seasonal fishing bans – can impact livelihoods if they are not accompanied by social protection or other forms of income. Such cases may lead to an increased risk of child labour (FAO 2021).

#### 1.5.2.6 Food production structures and dynamics

The denial of children's right to be free from child labour is a persistent challenge in food systems, as noted, for example, at the ILO Technical Meeting on the Promotion of Decent Work and a Just Transition, Including Skills Development and Lifelong Learning in the Food and Beverage Industry in 2025 (ILO 2025). Many crop and food production systems rely heavily on piece-rate payment which can drive reliance on child labour. This occurs in both small-scale informal production and medium-sized industrial operations (FAO 2020). Structural features such as the labour-intensive nature of some of the farming practices and processing may incentivize the use of child labour. Child labour has, for example, been documented in shrimp farming, wild fry collection and seafood processing plants. In small-scale fishing and farming, labour shortages or low incomes that prevent the recruitment of adult workers often result in children contributing to production, particularly during peak periods such as harvests or peak fishing seasons, usually at the expense of their education (FAO 2020).

Seafood production is often linked to global supply chains that are highly price-driven and depend on a low-cost, frequently migrant workforce. These workers commonly face greater barriers to exercising their fundamental right to organize and bargain collectively. The absence of their collective voice, structured representation and social dialogue increases the risk of wider labour rights violations, including child labour and forced labour (Errighi et al. 2016). At the same time, production for global supply chains is more likely to generate formal jobs with stronger protection for workers, including young workers, than production for subsistence consumption or for domestic or local markets (Ugarte et al. 2023).

#### 1.5.2.7 Perceptions, norms and awareness

Child labour in fisheries and aquaculture results from a complex web of structures and practices that combine to make children's work appear to families as "the best possible alternative". When environmental degradation, climate change, production systems and market forces intersect, they can create a downward spiral that entrenches child labour. This is most prevalent where policies do not guarantee decent work for adults, where social services – especially education and social protection – are lacking in remote rural and coastal areas, or where specific groups such as migrant workers and their children are not adequately supported against economic and other shocks.

These negative spirals are further reinforced by limited information and awareness about child labour, as well as by sociocultural norms that normalize it for certain groups of children, such as those from poor households or migrant worker communities. Gender norms in particular play a decisive role in shaping the types of work children undertake. In many fishing communities, for example, boys are expected to go to sea, while girls engage in shore-based activities, such as primary processing or selling produce in local markets. This exposes boys and girls to different working conditions, risks and hazards (FAO 2021).

#### 1.5.2.8 Lack of conducive policy environment

The policy environment in a country is critical to either eliminating or perpetuating child labour. An enabling policy environment allows for investment in children, promotes decent work for adults, and builds and extends social protection, thereby ensuring that all families enjoy decent living standards. It prioritizes the implementation of policies that uphold fundamental labour rights for all workers, including the self-employed and those in the informal economy, alongside access to social protection and services that guarantee everyone basic standards of living and free, compulsory, good-quality education for all children. These policies must apply universally, regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, migration status or other criteria. Excluding groups such as migrant workers from basic coverage leaves them vulnerable to poverty and decent work deficits, increasing the likelihood of resorting to child labour as a family survival strategy (ILO and UNICEF 2021). These issues are discussed in more detail in Part 2.

The COVID-19 crisis made these vulnerabilities evident. Containment measures, including workplace and school closures had profound effects on child labour and exposed weaknesses in social services and policies. Workplace closures caused income loss and undermined livelihoods, especially for migrant workers who were often stranded without income. At the same time, many food sector workers were declared essential and required to report to work under heightened risk of infection. These pressures strained households and increased children's risk of entering child labour. Prolonged school closures compounded the impact and the long-term repercussions are still unfolding (Committee on World Food Security 2021).

## Points to consider

The table below details the key tasks in a seaweed value chain and the entry points for child labour in seaweed cultivation. Consider the tasks and try to identify the risks and hazards that children may face.

### ▶ Table 3. Common production cycle of seaweed farming and the entry points for child labour

| Stage | Core tasks | Child labour entry points | Key risks to children (hazard types) |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Pre-farming** | Seedling cleaning, sorting and segmentation | Assisting with seed/ seedling cleaning and preparation during peak preparation times | Repetitive hand strain; prolonged hours reducing study time; minor cuts/skin irritation |
| **Farm construction** | Building stakes/lines; transporting materials; installing anchor points | Carrying/placing materials; helping with rigging | Musculoskeletal injuries (heavy loads); cuts/ punctures from tools/ wood; slips/near-shore drowning |
| **Planting** | Attaching seedlings to lines/monolines | Tying seedlings for long periods | Repetitive strain (upper limb, back); sun exposure; fatigue; missed schooling during peak times |
| **Crop maintenance** | Line tightening/repair; sediment removal; pest control; applying inputs | Manual maintenance help; handling chemicals inputs | Chemical exposure (when inputs used); ergonomic strain; cuts/abrasions |
| **Harvesting** | Detaching seaweed from lines; hauling; transporting wet seaweed | Helping with harvest; lifting and carrying heavy wet biomass | Musculoskeletal injury; slips/falls; drowning risk if offshore; long workdays |
| **Post-harvest (cleaning and sorting)** | Washing; removing debris; sizing/sorting for quality | Performing repetitive cleaning/sorting to prepare for drying | Repetitive motion injuries; exposure to contaminants; eye/skin irritation |
| **Drying** | Spreading; turning; guarding drying racks/ mats; pest control | Turning and tending drying racks; guarding overnight drying | Heat/UV exposure; dehydration; inhalation/ contact with pesticides; contamination risks |
| **Packaging** | Dry product weighing; baling; bagging; carrying sacks | Packing and carrying sacks to store/market | Heavy loads causing musculoskeletal strain; crush/injury risk; long hours |
| **Marketing/transport** | Loading/unloading; transporting to traders/ markets | Assisting with loading; porterage; informal sales | Transport hazards; heavy lifting; long hours away from school |

**Source:** FAO. (forthcoming). *Child Labour in Aquaculture: Case Studies on Seaweed Farming.*

© FAO/Sylvain Cherkaoui

# ▶ Part 2: Guidance for action

Action against child labour is contained in multiple international frameworks, such as the Durban Call to Action. These frameworks provide strategic priorities to be adapted and applied to specific contexts and fall into two broad categories that must usually be combined:

- prevention and transformative strategies address the underlying root causes of child labour in fisheries and aquaculture;
- withdrawal, rehabilitation and re-integration are required for children who are too young to work or found in the worst forms of child labour, including hazardous work.

These strategies form part of promoting fundamental principles and rights at work, as well as the broader promotion of children's rights. Their application should, as far as possible, be evidence-based and grounded in collaborative data generation.

## 2.1 Effective strategies to prevent and eliminate child labour in fisheries and aquaculture

### 2.1.1 Prevention strategies

Prevention strategies address the root causes of child labour, aiming to ensure that families and children are never put in a situation where child labour appears to be the best option. Prevention therefore includes a wide range of activities that promote decent work, fair wages, occupational health and safety and stable livelihoods. Expanding access to social protection — such as health insurance, unemployment benefits and emergency income support — helps families cope with shocks without resorting to harmful coping strategies.

Equally essential is ensuring that children have viable alternatives to child labour, most notably free access to quality education. This encompasses pre-primary care and development, compulsory basic education, secondary and technical education, and vocational training, as well as safe school-to-work transitions. Bridging programmes and vocational training opportunities can help children to remain in school, especially in remote coastal and inland communities. Education systems should provide relevant and adaptive curricula, adequate infrastructure and decent working conditions for teachers. Schools should also integrate awareness of child labour risks into curricula. Public campaigns and dialogue with parents and employers can further shift harmful norms and raise awareness about the risks of child labour and the value of education.

Fostering the transformation of sociocultural norms that normalize child labour, ensuring participation and a voice for children and young people, encouraging systemic behaviour change at community level, and strengthening the capacity of responsible organizations and stakeholders are usually necessary preconditions for effective prevention. Inter-agency and interdisciplinary collaboration are equally vital.

Prevention also includes strategies to protect young workers of legal working age from hazardous work and exploitation. This may involve: the ratification and domestication of fundamental ILO Conventions; effective health and safety measures and labour inspection; awareness-raising on risk reduction in fishing, fish farming and processing operations; and improved access to technical and vocational training. It also requires clearly defining hazardous work in the sector, setting a minimum age for work not less than the compulsory school leaving age, and enforcing minimum age regulations across industrial and artisanal fisheries, and in aquaculture.

### 2.1.2 Withdrawal and reintegration strategies

Withdrawal and reintegration strategies are necessary when children are found in child labour, especially its worst forms, and must be removed from work immediately to safeguard their health and development. This also applies to children who are victims of child trafficking and other worst forms of child labour. These strategies aim to provide alternatives for both the child and the family, through measures such as psychosocial support, access to education, and decent work for parents and adult relatives. Appropriate alternatives must always be provided when withdrawing children. Access to justice and reparation must likewise be ensured in cases of forced child labour and trafficking.

As emphasized in the Durban Call to Action, data and evidence are essential to plan, monitor and adjust strategies so they are comprehensive, targeted and effective. Collaboration, in data collection and analysis, as well as in the implementation of initiatives to prevent, protect and withdraw children, is essential to ensure the relevance and effectiveness of interventions. Working across multiple disciplines and organizations is therefore a cross-cutting priority.

All strategies must also be adapted to the local context, including socioeconomic structures and sociocultural norms. Understanding gender dynamics and applying a gender lens across all interventions is particularly important to ensure that all children, including those hidden at home, receive support and have their rights upheld. This requires recognizing women's roles in fisheries and aquaculture and protecting their rights. Strategies must also consider other factors such as migration status or geographic location in remote rural areas, to ensure that no child is discriminated against or excluded.

## 2.2 Evidence-based good practices to prevent and eliminate child labour in fisheries and aquaculture

This section presents evidence-based strategies for preventing and eliminating child labour, illustrated with good practice examples from fisheries and aquaculture. It also provides guidance on the ways in which different stakeholders and duty bearers can translate these strategies into concrete action. The strategies are grounded in the Durban Call to Action (box 2) and aligned with the ILO Policy Guidelines on the Promotion of Decent Work in the Agri-food Sector and the ILO Framework for Action on Child Labour.

### ▶ Box 2. The importance of decent work

The Durban Call to Action emphasizes the importance of decent work to the elimination of child labour. It also contains specific recommendations to address child labour in agriculture, including fisheries and aquaculture:

- Increase investment in the economic and social development of rural areas as a strategy for reducing poverty, recognizing that the elimination of child labour is an essential prerequisite for decent work in the sector and can contribute to sustainable food systems.
- Facilitate increased access to finance and credit, including for smallholder farmers, particularly in Africa, to promote investment and innovation.
- Create mechanisms to improve the labour conditions of smallholder and family farms to end their functional dependence on child labour, as well as of families who earn their livelihood in fishing, forestry and livestock herding. Ensure adequate incomes for small producers and owner-operators by, for example, increasing productivity and supporting diversification. Support – in line with relevant ILO instruments, including the Promotion of Cooperatives Recommendation, 2002 (No. 193) – the establishment and functioning of cooperatives, as well as representative organizations of small producers. Reassess piece-rate wage systems in agriculture and recognize the need to guarantee adequate minimum wages for agricultural workers, sufficient to meet their families' needs.
- Adopt an action plan to eliminate obstacles to the establishment, growth and pursuit of lawful activities of rural workers' organizations, thereby giving agricultural workers a role in economic and social development, in line with the ILO Rural Workers' Organizations Convention, 1975 (No. 141).
- Ensure the participation of agriculture-related ministries and other agricultural stakeholders, including employers' organizations and workers' organizations, in national policy and legislative frameworks and action plans. Promote cooperation between agricultural extension services and labour inspection and other relevant authorities.
- Enable and encourage, through regulatory measures and other approaches, agricultural stakeholders and communities to adopt safe agricultural practices and eliminate or minimize work-related hazards and risks, including exposure to harmful substances, such as hazardous pesticides. Promote greater availability of efficient and safer machinery, equipment and tools, and employ sustainable technologies to improve occupational safety and health and eliminate the need for child labour.

Strengthen agricultural labour markets and create decent work opportunities for youth, women and men. Support innovative vocational education and training in agri-food production and processing services.

### ▶ Box 3. Promoting decent work in the agri-food sector

The ILO Policy Guidelines for the Promotion of Decent Work in the Agri-food Sector provide recommendations for governments, workers' and employers' organizations on tackling child labour in food systems.

Governments should consider:

(a) ratifying and effectively enforcing the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138), and the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), underpinned by the development, through tripartite consultation, of national policies, strategies and plans of action with measurable outcomes and monitoring and evaluation frameworks, and strengthened inter-ministerial coordination and institutional capacities, including regarding education and law enforcement;

(b) establishing or reinforcing partnerships and multi-stakeholder platforms to pursue an integrated approach to tackling child labour;

(c) strengthening due diligence through accountability systems of all stakeholders and providing support for implementation, when applicable;

(d) ensuring the elimination of child labour by promoting decent work that delivers a decent income for young people of legal working age and adults as an important factor to this end, with a particular emphasis on workers in the informal economy, and ensuring access to social protection for children and their families to mitigate the poverty and economic uncertainty that underpin child labour;

(e) strengthening comprehensive, adequate and sustainable social protection systems, including social protection floors, in line with the Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102), and the Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202), which set minimum standards for the provision of family or child benefits that help to alleviate poverty, a key driver of child labour, and cushion the impacts of economic shocks on workers and their families. In strengthening an enabling environment to tackle child labour, particular attention needs to be paid to local development planning and implementation, especially in high-risk localities;

(f) investing in measures to increase the productivity and incomes of farmers in order to reduce incentives for the use of child labour, for instance by providing access to skills development and training, in particular to improved technical and vocational education and training systems that match labour market needs, or financing the adoption of modern technologies. Access to savings insurance schemes and government programmes, such as providing start-up funds, loans or matching workers' contributions can also help. These initiatives shall encourage access of children to education;

(g) promoting access to free, compulsory, quality basic education as well as early childhood education, where applicable, and raising awareness among communities where child labour is prevalent of its harmful effects and the importance and benefits of schooling; (h) raising awareness of national minimum age legislation in the agri-food sector, including the distinction between acceptable youth employment and hazardous child labour, which is to be banned for any person under the age of 18 years. This starts with the development of a national list of prohibited activities and may require establishing what light work (non-hazardous work, performed for a limited number of hours, without interfering with school attendance) is permitted under national legislation, in line with Article 7 of Convention No. 138;

(i) improving occupational safety and health and working conditions for young people who are of legal minimum working age in their country, while pursuing prevention and withdrawal

### ▶ Box 3. Promoting decent work in the agri-food sector *(cont.)*

strategies for children, especially those engaged in hazardous work, taking into account Convention No. 138 (Article 3) and the Worst Forms of Child Labour Recommendation, 1999 (No. 190) (Paragraph 3), and ensuring that children are not displaced from one form of child labour to another;

(j) providing assistance for enterprises to establish child labour prevention programmes in their operations and out-grower schemes. These are best facilitated through social dialogue between employers' and workers' organizations, including through collective bargaining;

(k) strengthening employers' and workers' organizations, including through capacity-building and awareness-raising support as critical preventative measures;

(l) strengthening workers' and farmers'/producers' organizations to ensure their participation in and contribution to child labour prevention and elimination programmes;

(m) establishing or strengthening child labour monitoring systems, including community-based systems, which involve the identification, referral, protection and prevention of child labourers in the sector. These could be particularly effective if pursued in collaboration with local authorities, labour inspection, agricultural extension, education and social services and with the active participation of employers' and workers' organizations and non-governmental organizations concerning matters that directly affect them;

(n) addressing the underlying causes of child labour in agri-food activities by introducing regulations limiting practices that may incentivize the use of child labour, reassessing piece-rate wage systems in agriculture and recognizing the need to guarantee adequate minimum wages.

Employers and their organizations should focus on:

(a) conducting due diligence in their operations, ensuring that the minimum age for employment or work is respected and that the recruitment of adult workers does not involve the recruitment of their children as family members;

(b) taking proactive and effective measures to prevent and contribute to eliminating child labour in coordination with governments by engaging in negotiations on decent and fair wages;

(c) promoting fair pricing with commodity buyers and retailers with a view to preventing and eliminating child labour by improving wage outcomes for workers.

Workers' organizations should focus on:

(a) raising social awareness;

(b) supporting efforts to eradicate child labour in agri-food production, and cooperating with relevant authorities and services on the prevention and elimination of child labour.

**Source**: ILO (2023a).

## Points to consider

Bearing in mind the recommendations in the Durban Call to Action and the ILO Policy Guidelines for the Promotion of Decent Work in the Agri-food Sector, the following examples show how strategies to tackle child labour in fisheries and aquaculture can be implemented.

### 2.2.1 Poverty alleviation, stable livelihoods and decent work for adults

By addressing poverty and promoting inclusive and sustainable development, children are less likely to enter child labour, particularly hazardous work. For parents to see schooling as the best option for their children, families need income security and social benefits such as health insurance, and safety nets to withstand short- and long-term crises. Decent work for adults and youth of legal working age and social protection for families are therefore essential to poverty alleviation and resilient livelihoods, creating conditions in which parents can prioritize their children's health and education. Ensuring adults have access to decent work opportunities, comprehensive and sustainable social protection, safe working environments and the ability to exercise their rights, cannot be separated from poverty alleviation. Poor-quality jobs will not improve livelihoods or reduce poverty.

In most small-scale fishing and aquaculture communities, poverty is complex and requires an integrated approach. In many cases, there is a need to improve fisheries management and promote responsible practices to secure stable, resource-based livelihoods. Small-scale fishers, fish workers and their communities need secure rights to the resources they depend on, as well as to land in coastal areas. At the same time, they frequently face pressing challenges such as ill-health and a lack of social services. Efforts to promote responsible fishing and sustainable aquaculture must therefore be combined with social and economic development to create both the incentives and the capacity for effective fisheries management. Applying a rights-based approach to fisheries management can help to address the broader human rights dimensions of fishing community livelihoods, while ensuring sustainable resource utilization. A holistic livelihood approach, working across sectors and applying multistakeholder interventions is essential. This may include a wide range of measures, such as:

- micro-insurance schemes;
- value chain development;
- skills training and support for alternative livelihoods;
- active labour market policies;
- investments in public services, in particular health, education and social protection.

Ensuring access to social protection can play a critical role in eliminating child labour in fisheries and aquaculture and is discussed in Section 2.2.4.

Stabilizing incomes and livelihoods through better resource management and resilience will become increasingly important as climate change affects fisheries and aquaculture. Declining stocks, weather-related shocks and sea level rise threaten livelihoods and may force migration, heightening vulnerability. Climate change adaptation and mitigation are therefore central to strategies to address poverty and child labour in the sector.

Integrating decent work considerations into policies and actions to address poverty and child labour must be a priority. As noted above, decent work opportunities for adults are a necessary pre-condition for eliminating child labour. An integrated approach should encompass all four pillars of the Decent Work Agenda – rights at work, employment creation, social protection and social dialogue – as well as the five interrelated and mutually reinforcing categories of fundamental principles and rights at work. The promotion of employment for youth who are above the minimum legal age and no longer attending school also deserves attention. Migration awareness campaigns and safe migration services are essential for both sending and receiving communities. Promoting gender equity in the world of work and women's economic empowerment is equally important, together with raising awareness among men, women, boys and girls in fishing and fish farming communities of their rights.

Ultimately, strategies must break the vicious cycles of poverty, decent work deficits and environmental degradation – exacerbated by climate change – that create intergenerational poverty and child labour risks.

### 2.2.2 Organization, participation and representation

Preventing and eliminating child labour requires collective action and strengthening workers' and employers' organizations in the fisheries and aquaculture sector is essential for enhancing and advancing these efforts. The right to organize and to bargain collectively – one of the fundamental principles and rights at work – is an enabling right that opens the way to other rights through social dialogue. Trade unions and employers' organizations play a crucial role in combating child labour through advocacy, monitoring and improving working conditions. They are key partners in dialogues with the government on socioeconomic development issues and a good source of information on national law, regulations and local practice. Employers' organizations act as crucial "bridge builders" by translating ILO conventions and other guidance, such as the United Nations' Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights into practical, workplace-level actions for their members.

Organizing small-scale fishers and fish farmers into cooperatives or producer organizations can further strengthen their position. Such organizations allow members to: negotiate better prices (both when selling a catch or harvest and when buying inputs); pool resources to achieve economies of scale; upgrade skills; access new technologies, insurances and financing; and enter higher-value markets.

When addressing organization and representation in relation to child labour, it is important to recognize children's right to participation, as enshrined in the UNCRC (articles 12 and 31).[9] The organization of children and young people, such as through community youth groups, can play a meaningful role in monitoring, raising awareness and supporting community efforts to eliminate child labour.

Women often face greater barriers than men in organizing and collectively representing their views, particularly in fisheries and aquaculture where much of their work remains invisible. Deliberate efforts are therefore needed to strengthen women's organization and representation.

9 To read to full text of the UNCRC, see https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-rights-child.

### ▶ Box 4. The Torkor model

The Torkor model, implemented in the inland fishing community of Torkor on the eastern shore of Lake Volta in Ghana, is a bottom-up, participatory, area-based approach to eliminating child labour. Initiated by the General Agricultural Workers' Union, its objective was to establish a child labour-free zone in the fish landing sites of Torkor.

The Torkor model was set up in 2016. It successfully addressed the trafficking of children into fishing and, more broadly, child labour in the communities of Torkor.

The successes lie in a comprehensive and collaborative strategy that brings together community stakeholders, supply chain actors and government to prevent child labour, provide alternatives for children removed from work, and protect young workers. Strategies include:

- Improve access to education, including bridging classes and other forms of informal education.
- Support livelihood diversification and strengthen family resilience in the community, for example through the establishment of women's fish smoking cooperatives.
- Train adult workers to replace child labourers, particularly divers.
- Run sustained awareness and advocacy campaigns in the communities, including consistent messaging on zero-tolerance for school dropout.
- Maintain community-based monitoring of child labour.

**Key lessons from Torkor include:**

- Addressing the root causes of child labour must be a priority.
- Supply chain initiatives should complement, not duplicate or replace, government systems and initiatives; capacity development with government, supply chain actors and community representatives must be integral.
- Capacity development and empowering of workers to represent themselves and increase agency is essential.
- Involving parents and children/young people in decision-making and implementation is crucial.
- All forms of child labour must be addressed to avoid displacement; tackling only one supply chain is insufficient.

The Torkor model is comparable to other community- and area-based interventions in other parts of the world and in other sectors. It can therefore serve as a general model for addressing child labour in small-scale fishing and aquaculture.

For more information see Torkor model brief and Child labour free zones.

### 2.2.3 Access to good-quality, affordable education and other suitable alternatives

A key strategy for poverty alleviation, sustainable development and the reduction of child labour is education. Governments should provide quality schooling in fishing and aquaculture communities. This includes access to early childhood education and development, which has proved effective in increasing enrolment to primary school, especially in remote rural areas. It also requires access to free, compulsory, quality basic education and to technical and vocational education and training (TVET) for young people (FAO 2020; ILO 2023a). Integrating fisheries and aquaculture knowledge into school curricula can further increase the relevance of education to children and families in fishing and aquaculture communities.

**▶ Box 5. Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools**

FAO's Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools (JFFLS) methodology introduces locally relevant agricultural and aquatic food system subjects alongside life skills. It adapts the Farmers Field Schools peer learning model for adolescent boys and girls, allowing them to build practical skills in a safe setting while demonstrating the immediate value of education to families and communities.

In fishing and aquaculture areas, JFFLS can familiarize youth with post-harvest issues in fisheries and aquaculture and can feed into TVET opportunities, where they are available.

For more information see FAO's Global Farmer Field School Platform and case studies of the Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools.

All children must have access to education, regardless of their gender, ethnicity, migration status or other personal characteristics. Stateless children and the children of migrant workers are often vulnerable to exclusion. This risk is acute in fisheries, aquaculture and seafood processing, particularly in larger industrial operations that often rely heavily on migrant workers. Children of migrant workers require targeted support to participate in education, including enrolment when missing identity documents, access to bridging classes and learning in their native tongue. Non-formal education can also play a key role, both in remote rural areas and during crises, through for example, remote education.

As the impacts of climate change grow, migration and displacement are expected to increase, both internally and across borders (Beyer and Milan 2022). Prevention and protection measures against child labour that ensure access to education for all children, will likely become more important than ever.

### 2.2.4 Social protection

Even when education is available, incentives may be necessary to encourage attendance. Social protection programmes that link school attendance with benefits have proved particularly effective in keeping children in school and protecting them from child labour (ILO and UNICEF 2022). These include school feeding or food-for-schooling programmes. The latter allows other family members to benefit from take-home rations provided by the school. Some countries use conditional cash transfer programmes, that require school-age children to attend school. Others use non-conditional cash transfers that have also been effective in reducing child labour (ILO and UNICEF 2022). Where communities include the children of migrant workers, it is important to cater for their special needs regarding enrolment despite missing documents, semester schedules and transfer certificates. In many cases, investment in school infrastructure and incentives for teachers to serve in remote fishing communities are required.

Universal social protection schemes have proved particularly important for eliminating child labour across sectors and geographies. As such, they should be viewed as an investment in children, not as measures to put in place when a country achieves a certain level of development. The ILO and UNICEF conclude that:

- inclusive, universal social protection programmes throughout the life cycle (for example child grants or old-age pensions) are more likely to reduce child labour, while hard, punitive conditionalities are unlikely to have a positive impact. Supplementary initiatives that incentivize participation in education and ensure access to health care are more likely to be effective;
- social protection programmes must be child sensitive, considering potential positive and negative implications for child labour. for example, cash transfers that increase household economic activities without accompanying initiatives to support school participation and protect against child labour, may inadvertently increase children's work participation rates;
- transfer amounts must be predictable and sufficient to meet household needs to achieve a positive impact on child labour;
- combining social protection schemes with complementary services, notably education and access to health care, is particularly effective. complementary services can also include childcare, especially where cash transfers increase women's economic participation, to avoid older children taking on care and domestic chores at the expense of their education. (ILO and UNICEF 2022.).

In addition to the general conclusions on the role of social protection schemes in eliminating child labour, such schemes can be particularly important in fishing and aquaculture communities where seasonal work, income fluctuations and economic shocks are common. Providing cash transfers during closed seasons, can not only support fishers' compliance with environmental regulations, but also enable families to prioritize education and reduce the risk of child labour (box 7).

### ▶ Box 6. Social protection for fisheries and aquaculture

Brazil's Seguro-Defeso is a seasonal unemployment insurance programme for small-scale fishers. It provides income support (equivalent to one minimum wage per month) during the closed fishing season (defeso), when fishing is prohibited to protect spawning stocks. Eligible beneficiaries must be formally registered fishers and rely primarily on fishing for income.

An impact evaluation study conducted by FAO and the International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (FAO & IPC-IG, 2023) shows that Seguro-Defeso contributes meaningfully to child labour prevention by stabilizing household incomes during times of economic vulnerability. Key findings include:

- Increased school attendance and reduced youth NEET status (not in education, employment or training).
- Reduced need for informal or hazardous child labour during closed seasons.
- Improved household resilience, particularly regarding housing and sanitation conditions.

The study concludes that integrating sector-specific social protection measures – such as closed-season income support – into child labour strategies is essential to address the root causes of child labour in fisheries.

For more information see *Socioeconomic Impact Evaluation of Unemployment Insurance for Small-scale Fishers in Brazil (Seguro-Defeso)* and FAO's Social Protection for Fisheries and Aquaculture.

### 2.2.5 Protection of young workers

Children between the ages of 15 (or 16 for fishing, in line with Convention 188) to 17 may work in non-hazardous jobs that do not interfere with compulsory education. Not all children's work is detrimental, but identifying what is hazardous can be complex. ILO Conventions require countries to adopt lists of hazardous work prohibited for those under 18. In some countries, all work in fishing is deemed hazardous; others allow certain types of work in fisheries and aquaculture. Typically, heavy or dangerous machinery (for example industrial fishing gear), harmful substances (for example pesticides and antibiotics used in some forms of aquaculture), night work, work under water and sometimes work on water, are prohibited across all sectors. As a result, those under 18 can perform only limited tasks in fisheries and aquaculture. Work must also not interfere with compulsory schooling – for example, multiday fishing operations are generally unsuitable for children under 18, unless they are enrolled in vocational training to become fishers.

Work that is potentially suitable for 15 to 17 or 16 to 17 year olds, typically includes pre- and post-harvest activities on land, such as mending nets, some processing activities or selling the harvest. Certain farming tasks, such as feeding, may be acceptable, unless this involves handling medicated feeds.

For children below the minimum legal age of employment, the appropriate response is withdrawal if they are found in child labour. For those above the minimum age who may legally be employed, it is essential to ensure that they are engaged in age-appropriate tasks and are not exposed to hazardous work, rather than end their employment, thereby allowing children to contribute to household income and to learn on the job – often the only pathway for the next generation of fishers and fish farmers to gain skills.

Formal technical and vocational training in fisheries and aquaculture is generally limited and informal training systems often receive little oversight. ILO Conventions Nos. 138 and 188 allow minimum-age exemptions where work is undertaken as part of training. In many countries the systems needed to operationalize these exemptions must be established or strengthened – an important priority for fisheries and labour authorities.

Strategies and measures to protect children should be closely linked to broader efforts to improve occupational safety and health for all workers; for work on board fishing vessels this includes improving safety at sea. It should also be noted that in 2022, a safe and healthy working environment was recognized as a fundamental principle and right at work (ILO 2022a).

**▶ Box 7. Technical and vocational training in fishing**

- The North Sea College in the fishing port of Thyboroen in northwest Denmark, offers a two-year vocational programme for commercial fishers. The curriculum covers fishing skills, sound fisheries management and extensive safety at sea training, and inducts students into a life at sea by living and working with crews for extended periods. The college partners with local fishing companies to provide supervised apprenticeships and to support a safe school-to-work transition for young fishers.
- In Torkor, Ghana, adults have been trained as divers to replace underage workers, in recognition of the fact that diving is a hazardous activity that should not be performed by anyone under 18.

### 2.2.6 Climate change mitigation, environmental stewardship and improved fishing and farming practices

Climate change impacts are increasingly felt in fishing- and aquaculture-reliant communities and their intersections with child labour through economic shocks and migration are noted above. Yet relatively few child labour initiatives address climate change as an underlying root cause, and few climate change mitigation initiatives take into consideration their potential impact on child labour. Future effort should not only recognize this link but also map location-specific climate change impacts and embed mitigation measures as integral components, on a par with other actions to protect and improve livelihoods and build resilience in fishing and aquaculture households.

**▶ Box 8. Checklist for addressing climate change impacts on child labour**

When addressing child labour in fisheries and aquaculture, determine:

- Are the communities in question vulnerable to climate change impacts?
- If so, what events are most likely to occur (for example drought or flooding)? Note that impacts may be rapid-onset (for example flooding) or slow-onset and less visible (for example pond disease or migrating fish stocks).
- How are these impacts likely to affect fishing, aquaculture and other livelihood activities?
- Will this lead to increased debt, reduced income, loss of property or other assets, or other effects that could undermine children's education, health, nutrition or basic needs?
- Would children and families consider child labour a survival strategy if these impacts occur?
- What immediate measures would help households prevent child labour following a climate-related event?
- What longer-term measures would help protect livelihoods and well-being and reduce reliance on child labour?

Implement responses accordingly in child labour policies and action plans.

Other forms of environmental degradation, such as overfishing, may also undermine livelihoods and increase the risk of child labour. Environmental stewardship is therefore an important prevention measure, not only in relation to climate change. Improved fisheries and aquaculture practices that limit negative environmental impacts can strengthen resilience and stabilize livelihoods. In addition, better practices in aquatic food production may enhance efficiency and reduce labour shortages, for example the use of improved fishing gear or organization into associations and cooperatives that undertake harvesting jointly.

### 2.2.7 Safe migration

Fishing and aquaculture operations in many parts of the world rely heavily on migrant workers to fish, farm, process and transport seafood. Ensuring that these workers migrate freely and safely and are recruited in line with the ILO's General Principles and Operational Guidelines for Fair Recruitment, is crucial to prevent forced labour and human trafficking, including of children. This is a complex but essential priority, supported by a significant knowledge base that can inform policies, programmes and systems. Safe migration begins with fair recruitment: migrant workers should not be charged fees that lead to

debt bondage; they should have access to support and grievance mechanisms, be able to join a trade union of their choice at home or in their destination country, and they should clearly understand their contracts, the work expected of them and their rights.

Migration and child labour are linked in different ways, each requiring tailored strategies to prevent exploitation and protect children from hazards.

**Children as migrant workers.** Children may migrate for work on their own or with their families, either within a country or internationally. Migration may be motivated by the hope of improving livelihoods and life opportunities or forced by circumstances such as conflict or natural disaster. Children who migrate alone are extremely vulnerable to child labour and need special protection to avoid falling victim to trafficking or other types of exploitation. This includes (but is not limited to) outreach work and access to formal and non-formal education and training, health care and safe spaces such as social clubs or events where adults can provide support. Such measures are only appropriate for children above the minimum age for employment, who have completed compulsory education and who work and live in safe conditions. Otherwise, the priority must be to remove the child from child labour and ensure access to basic education and rehabilitation.

**Children migrating with families.** Children who accompany parents or older siblings in search of work have the right to access education, health care and other services on an equal basis with other children in the community, though these rights are often at risk of being infringed. Preventing discrimination may involve, for example, establishing bridging classes or other non-formal education opportunities, creating systems to allow children without national identity cards to access services, and providing psychosocial support to help them cope with a new environment. Robust birth registration systems, as a basis for issuing identity documents are essential for all children, including those on the move.

**Children left behind.** Migration may also affect children when parents or guardians move away and children are left in the care of grandparents or other relatives. These children are vulnerable not only to psychosocial impacts (for example loneliness) but also to child labour. Older caregivers, particularly those without adequate social protection, may struggle to provide for children in their care without relying on them to contribute income, by farming, fishing or undertaking extensive domestic chores, often at the expense of education and development. In some households, foster children may be expected to "pay their way" through domestic duties. Child labour in out-migration communities is therefore as important to address as it is in receiving communities. Strategies include awareness-raising and strengthening social protection.[10]

10 UNICEF (undated) UNICEF working paper. Children "left behind" https://www.unicef.org/media/83581/file/Children-Left-Behind.pdf and UNICEF (2024) Technical Note. Inclusion of Children in the Context of Migration into National Child Protection Systems https://migrantprotection.iom.int/en/resources/report/technical-note-inclusion-children-context-migration-national-child-protection.

**▶ Box 9. Five factors to prioritize education**

A study among migrant worker families in Samut Sakhorn, a seafood processing hub in Thailand, identified five factors that positively influenced decisions to prioritize education over child labour:

- Families with a more secure economic situation were less dependent on children's income and more likely to prioritize education.
- Access to transitional education, particularly programmes supporting migrant children to learn the Thai language and social norms, and integrate into the formal schooling system, greatly improved participation in education.
- Employer support, including facilitating contact with education services and providing sponsorship, had a positive impact.
- Education was viewed as a priority by most families in the study; non-participation was shaped by other factors.
- Families with longer-term prospects of remaining in Thailand were more inclined to enroll their children in school.

**Source**: Asia Foundation and ILO (2015).

### 2.2.8 Child protection, case management and referrals

Children's right to protection from violence, exploitation and abuse is enshrined in the UNCRC (UNGA 1990). Governments must therefore establish child protection systems, including case management systems, that enable social workers, teachers, NGOs, humanitarian organizations, communities and their leaders, and others to work together to provide individualized support to children at risk or already subject to violence and exploitation.[11]

Support to prevent children from entering child labour, and to remove and reintegrate those already engaged in it, can form an integral part of child protection systems, provided these systems include child labour as a criterion in screening and facilitate access to alternative education, health care and psychosocial support.

This may require building the capacity of case managers and frontline personnel, including nurses, teachers and social workers, to identify child labourers, assess their needs and ensure appropriate alternatives for both the child and their family.

Integrating child labour concerns into existing or emerging case management systems is one way to establish a Child Labour Monitoring System (CLMS) at the national level. A CLMS identifies children in child labour or at risk of entering it; refers them to services and other support as alternatives to child labour; and follows up to ensure they remain out of child labour – and siblings or other children do not take their place. A CLMS also continuously monitors child labour trends in a country or region, providing critical information for action. It is not merely a data collection tool, but a system that enables evidence-based interventions to prevent child labour, protect working children and support their removal and reintegration where necessary.

Often CLMSs are set up and managed by governments. However, there are also examples of CLMSs set up by supply chain actors to address child labour in the geographical areas from which

11 For more information on child protection systems see https://www.unicef.org/child-protection.

they source produce.[12] For CLMSs and child protection case management systems to effectively address child labour in fishing and aquaculture, they should:

- cover geographical areas where fishing and aquaculture take place, including remote coastal areas;
- link to relevant authorities, notably labour inspection systems, service provisions schemes (for example education, health care, etc.) and social protection schemes;
- respect children's right to privacy, including regulations on confidentiality and data protection;
- recognize children's roles in family-based fishing and aquaculture operations and be able to distinguish between work done by children that is not child labour, and situations that amount to child labour;
- work with communities to identify children in need of support and to engage with parents, children, employers and others to change practices when family-based work deteriorates into child labour;
- acknowledge the seasonal nature of work and connect families to wider social protection schemes and other initiatives that can stabilize livelihoods during the off-season.

Hence CLMSs in fishing and aquaculture must be situated within a wider framework, as part of implementing the right policy mix.

### 2.2.9 The right policy mix

Effectively addressing child labour requires the right mix of policies, systems and programmes across multiple domains. The underlying causes and drivers are interconnected; therefore, the policies implemented must also be interconnected. It is not sufficient to address only one dimension of the root causes, such as education access or employment promotion for adults, if other aspects remain unaddressed and continue to fuel both the supply of and demand for child labour.

Governments must therefore ensure the right mix of educational, social and economic policies, underpinned by a robust legislative framework and sufficient institutional capacity to guarantee effective implementation (ILO 2022b).

Defining this policy mix requires close consultation with key stakeholders and a process of social dialogue involving workers' organizations, employers and their organizations, and governments. When undertaken effectively, the policy mix to eliminate child labour can also make a key contribution to broader development goals, including the SDGs (ILO 2018). The ILO consistently highlights the need for legal commitments to end child labour and of placing social dialogue at the centre of the process. To achieve SDG target 8.7, policies should:

- promote and ensure decent work for adults;
- ensure enforcement of labour law and other legal frameworks;
- institute social protection systems that allow for income security and stable livelihoods;
- ensure access to free, compulsory and good-quality education for all children;
- govern global supply chains effectively;
- protect children from the impact of fragility and crisis.

In fisheries and aquaculture this means, for example, ensuring access to education in remote rural and coastal areas; designing social protection systems that account for the seasonality of fisheries and aquaculture and provide temporary protection during off-seasons; and enacting legislation to protect fishers and aquaculture workers, including those in the informal economy and throughout all nodes of the supply chain. It also requires acknowledging and mitigating the growing fragility caused by climate change.

Moreover, fisheries and aquaculture development policies and governance frameworks must consider the socioeconomic impacts of regulations. For instance, measures to conserve fish stocks or aquaculture zoning regulations should be

12 For an example of a supply chain-driven CLMS see https://www.nestle.com/stories/system-tackle-child-labor-education-effective.

screened for their potential impacts on the livelihoods of fishing and aquaculture communities (including fishing/farming families and other community members), as well as the knock-on effects on children and the risk of child labour. Where negative impacts are anticipated, safeguards and mitigation measures must be put in place.

**▶ Box 10. The ALFA Project**

The United States of America's Department of Labour (USDOL) supported the ALFA Project (2021–2025) which aims to promote fundamental principles and rights at work and decent jobs in global seafood supply chains originating in Member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). The project supports the ASEAN Secretariat and ASEAN Member States in establishing comprehensive policy and programme frameworks that foster national and regional partnerships, address underlying causes, and ensure enforcement of up-to-date legislation. Generating research and evidence to underpin robust policy frameworks is central to the project's strategy.

In collaboration with the ILO, the ALFA project has supported the development of both the ASEAN Declaration of the Prevention of Child Labour, Including the Elimination of the WFCL and the ASEAN Roadmap on the Elimination of the WFCL by 2025. Together these instruments provide a comprehensive, multisectoral framework to guide ASEAN Member States in tackling child labour, including in fisheries and aquaculture. They emphasize the need for intersectoral responses that combine access to education, child protection, poverty reduction, enforcement of up-to-date legislation, and capacity development for government and civil society duty bearers. They also highlight the importance of robust data and evidence for effective strategy development and implementation.

The Declaration and Roadmap therefore illustrate both *the right policy mix* and how multisectoral frameworks and regional partnerships can be established to combat child labour within a region or state. They also offer inspiration for integrating the elimination of child labour in fisheries and aquaculture (and other high-risk sectors) into broader national and regional policy frameworks.

The right policy mix should include policies to promote responsible business conduct in the fisheries and aquaculture sector, in line with the MNE Declaration. This is discussed further below.

## 2.2.10 Legal frameworks

A legal framework that clearly and explicitly prohibits child labour and protects children is a necessary foundation for consistent, effective action. Although an international legal framework exists – comprising ILO Conventions and other agreements – many instruments still need to be translated into adequate national legislation and effectively implemented. Laws are effective only if applied and enforced and incentives are required to ensure compliance. Eliminating child labour is difficult because it is embedded in production systems, rooted in poverty and linked to wider social injustices. Practical and realistic pathways are therefore required and community engagement and buy-in are essential. Simply adopting legislation is not sufficient. Governments must, in collaboration with other stakeholders:

- promote awareness raising to improve understanding of legal requirements and thereby increase the likelihood of compliance;
- ensure that labour inspection departments and other relevant law enforcement agencies have sufficient capacity to enforce legislation, including adequate personnel and operational procedures, and a legal mandate to operate in the informal economy;
- ensure that legislation provides full coverage for all children, including those engaged in informal economic activities and children from vulnerable and invisible groups, such as the children of migrant workers.

In fisheries and aquaculture, this means that legislation to prohibit child labour must cover both industrial undertakings and small-scale family units, including those in the informal economy. In some countries, the agricultural sector and the informal economy are excluded from labour inspection, hampering enforcement. Where this is the case, expanding labour inspection coverage is a key priority. It also means that enforcement agencies must be able to access at-sea workplaces to inspect, advise and issue directions. Labour inspection services may therefore need to work jointly with agencies such as fisheries inspectorates and coastguards to board vessels in port or at sea. This may, in turn, require capacity development for at-sea law enforcement agencies, joint-inspection protocols and routines, and stronger intersectoral coordination.

### 2.2.11 Coordination and collaboration

As discussed above, coordination and collaboration are a necessary condition for effective action against child labour in fishing and aquaculture. In many cases, it may be necessary to establish mechanisms at national, regional and local levels, as well as at the sectoral level (in fishing and/or aquaculture), to ensure that stakeholders across different disciplines and institutions can work together effectively. Such mechanisms must balance the benefits of coordination with the overhead costs (for example, time) involved. Integrating efforts to eliminate child labour into existing systems and structures can therefore be an effective way to achieve adequate coordination, while limiting the costs involved. It is also essential that coordination processes include workers and employers, as well as children and parents.

**▶ Box 11. Integrated and coherent action against child labour**

Over the past two decades, many countries around the world have established government-led forums to strengthen integrated and coherent action against child labour. These forums are often called Child Labour Committees, Child Labour Commissions or Child Labour Councils. In some cases, they have become statutory organizations accountable to the highest levels of national government. In others, the national structure is replicated at lower levels, creating regional and local committees that facilitate on-the-ground referrals and multidisciplinary enforcement.

Examples include the national Child Labour Commission in Botswana and the National Council Against Child Labour in the Philippines

Under the umbrella of Alliance 8.7, countries that sign up to become Pathfinder Countries, must adopt and implement national roadmaps towards the elimination of child labour and forced labour within the country. The roadmaps support multisectoral action against forced labour and child labour and bring together government, workers' and employers' representatives and civil society actors under one, coherent policy framework.

### 2.2.12 Decent work in supply chains

Supply chain governance is essential to prevent child labour and protect young workers. This applies to domestic, regional and global supply chains.

The United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGP) and the ILO MNE Declaration clearly outline the responsibilities of States to ensure that legal frameworks are in place and that policy environments uphold human rights and decent work. The UNGP also highlight the responsibility of businesses to

comply with whichever standards – international labour standards or national regulations – offer the higher level of protection. Where adverse human rights impacts nevertheless occur, enterprises are expected to provide for or cooperate in effective remedy, including through legitimate grievance mechanisms, restitution, compensation, rehabilitation, and guarantees of non-recurrence, in line with UNGP Principle 22 and ILO's fundamental conventions. Other resources, including the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises on Responsible Business Conduct and the ILO Agri-food Guidelines provide further guidance.

Because fish and other aquatic products are among the most globally traded commodities, governance of global supply chains is particularly important in fishing and aquaculture. Human Rights Due diligence (HRDD) is increasingly recognized as vital to eliminating child labour and other rights violations. While businesses are responsible for instituting robust HRDD systems within their supply chains, governments are increasingly regulating HRDD.

It is important to stress that effective HRDD is not a "check box exercise" to verify compliance with laws and standards. Rather, HRDD is a process of engaging in dialogue across supply chains – with suppliers and their subcontractors, governments, workers' organizations, employers' organizations, industry associations and other key stakeholders. Critically, consultations must include those with the greatest stake: fishers, fish farmers, fish workers and their representatives, as well as young people. Because downstream businesses may not always be able to facilitate such consultations directly, local partners such as fisher and fish farmer associations and community-based organizations may play a crucial role.

HRDD also helps ensure that safeguards and prevention measures are embedded throughout supply chains. Effective and robust HRDD integrates risk assessments and social dialogue and requires concrete action by supply chain actors to identify, prevent, mitigate, remediate and account for actual and potential human rights impacts of business activity. Governments, in turn, play a key role in creating an enabling environment for sustainable business by requiring robust due diligence, levelling the playing field and rewarding responsible behaviour.

Multinational companies and buyers have the influence to advance systemic change across their operations and supply chains and promote the protection of children's right to be free from child labour. In upholding their responsibility to respect human rights – including labour rights – throughout their operations, enterprises should conduct human rights due diligence, paying particular attention to areas and chain segments where risks are likely to be the most significant. This includes responsible sourcing, particularly fair pricing that contributes to improving income outcomes for producers and wage outcomes for workers, regular checks on and capacity building for suppliers and working with communities to address root causes such as poverty, informality and lack of access to quality free education.

A strong commitment to eradicating child labour on the part of enterprises provides significant business advantages by unlocking access to premium markets and enhancing reputational risk management, ultimately leading to improved workforce productivity and more sustainable and profitable operations. It may generate greater business opportunities, as business customers increasingly recognize the value and importance of working with companies that effectively manage their human rights risks. Company efforts to address human rights challenges, such as child labour, are also increasingly recognized by investors.

Several tools to support robust HRDD are available online. These include the ILO-International Organisation of Employers' Child Labour Guidance Tool for Business, which is not specific to the seafood industry but broadly applicable, particularly to multilateral enterprises. The ILO's Eliminating Child Labour: Guides for Employers provides practical tools oriented toward small and medium-sized enterprises. Other tools are tailored to fisheries and aquaculture supply chains, considering the characteristics discussed in Part I of this guidance document. While none focus exclusively on child labour, all those listed in Annex 2 integrate child labour.

### 2.2.13 Closing the data and knowledge gap

Good-quality data and knowledge are essential for designing and implementing initiatives to eliminate child labour in fisheries and aquaculture. This includes statistical data on prevalence, qualitative information on consequences, causes and drivers, as well as monitoring, evaluation and learning data on progress, good practices and effective strategies.

Although the knowledge body on child labour in fisheries has grown over the past decade, several challenges remain. These include: limited statistical data on the nature and prevalence of child labour in fisheries and aquaculture, including at the subnational level; the need to expand evidence on emerging issues, such as the intersections between climate change impacts and child labour; and the need for further documentation of good practices that will enable the mainstreaming of child labour considerations into fisheries management and aquaculture governance and extension. Strengthening stakeholder collaboration to generate and share knowledge remains an essential component of any intervention to eliminate child labour in fisheries and aquaculture.

Knowledge-building strategies should include the integration of child labour information – preferably disaggregated by subsectors – in national statistical surveys, such as labour force surveys and multiple indicator cluster surveys. The ILO and its social partners have published extensive guidance on child labour statistics and regularly support Member States in undertaking surveys with child labour components.[13] Integrating child labour into statistical research related to climate change, fisheries management and other areas is still not widely practised but could become a priority in future.

In addition to statistical surveys, location-specific mixed-methods and qualitative studies can provide valuable insights into child labour in fishing and aquaculture communities. These may include sectoral studies, knowledge, attitude and practices surveys, and the integration of child labour elements into poverty and gender assessments.

The ILO, FAO, UNICEF and other partners have built considerable expertise in these methodologies and readers are encouraged to consult their websites for guidance.[14] Interested readers may also refer to the 2013 Guidance on Addressing Child Labour in Fisheries and Aquaculture for a more extensive discussion of data needs and collection strategies.

#### Points to consider

- Think about a country with a significant seafood industry that you are familiar with.
- Consider the forms of child labour that children may be engaged in within fisheries, aquaculture and other sectors in that country.
- Make a list of relevant government agencies and civil society organizations that could contribute to the elimination of child labour in the country. For each actor, note which strategies they could implement. For example, the Ministry of Education and local government education offices could strengthen access to compulsory basic education and provide informal bridging classes, while the Ministry of Agriculture and feed companies could disseminate information on the protection of young workers.

Try to relate these examples to your own country and context.

13 ILO STAT.

14 Innocenti Research Centre; ILO Statistics and Research on Child Labour; FAO Child Labour in Agriculture.

## 2.3 Turning strategies into action: What can stakeholders do?

### 2.3.1 Recommended actions

Different types of stakeholders and duty bearers play different roles in policies and action aimed at eliminating child labour in fisheries and aquaculture. Table 4 identifies recommended actions for key stakeholders in the fisheries and aquaculture sector and offers practical examples of how these have been implemented in different contexts. It serves as a practical reference for adapting strategies to national and local circumstances.

▶ **Table 4. Recommended actions and concrete examples for stakeholders and duty bearers working to eliminate child labour in the fisheries and aquaculture sector**

| | Recommended actions | Intended impact | Examples |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Primary stakeholders** | | | |
| Children and young people | ▶ Form or join clubs and associations<br>▶ Attend school and seek support if attendance is hindered<br>▶ Use the ILO SCREAM Pack to conduct awareness campaigns and peer education programmes<br>▶ For those above the minimum age for work, join trade unions | ▶ Enable children to understand their rights and actively participate in decisions affecting them<br>▶ Enable young workers to participate in and benefit from collective bargaining agreements and other processes for social dialogue | ▶ Youth Advocacy Toolkit (UNICEF UK) – Tools for choosing issues, creating advocacy plans and engaging decision-makers<br>▶ 2022 UNICEF Youth Advocacy Guide – Global resource supporting youth-led advocacy with modules on digital advocacy and mental wellness |
| Small-scale fishers, farmers and their communities | ▶ Establish after-school clubs and safe spaces for children<br>▶ Form or join associations/ cooperatives for representation<br>▶ Establish or join trade unions | ▶ Early identification and prevention happens at community level, strengthening protection networks | ▶ Community child protection committees in Ghana identify and respond to child labour risks<br>▶ Community members in the Philippines created safe spaces for children during fishing hours |
| **Government actors** | | | |
| Labour and resource inspectorates | ▶ Include fisheries and aquaculture in regular child labour inspection cycles<br>▶ Integrate child labour indicators into labour market information systems<br>▶ Coordinate joint inspections with fisheries inspectorates<br>▶ Establish referral systems with social welfare departments | ▶ Increased enforcement of child labour laws<br>▶ Formalization of working conditions<br>▶ Coordinated inspections identify underage workers more effectively than separate agency efforts | ▶ Joint labour and fisheries inspections in Peru target ports and landing sites<br>▶ Small-scale fishers in Sri Lanka must comply with national labour laws as licensing requirements |

| | Recommended actions | Intended impact | Examples |
|---|---|---|---|
| Policymakers | ▶ Integrate child-sensitive indicators in national fisheries and labour policies<br>▶ Expand cash transfer and other child benefits programmes to fishing households<br>▶ Ratify relevant ILO Conventions and establish legal frameworks prohibiting child labour<br>▶ Ensure that minimum age legislation is consistent with the obligation to ensure free and compulsory education<br>▶ Ensure freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining for all workers and promote social dialogue in the sector<br>▶ Provide seasonal access to social protection schemes<br>▶ Support formalization of informal enterprises<br>▶ Mandate cross-sectoral coordination between ministries | ▶ Systemic change through cross-sectoral alignment<br>▶ Reduced economic vulnerability of families due to social protection coverage | ▶ In Senegal, child labour indicators added to national fisheries policies<br>▶ Brazil's Seguro-Defeso programme gives families income support during fishing closures, reducing reliance on child labour |
| Education institutions | ▶ Ensure access to quality education, including free, compulsory, quality basic education, as well as early childhood education, where applicable<br>▶ Provide flexible learning for legally working children<br>▶ Promote the establishment of formalized training programmes, skills qualifications systems and quality apprenticeships in fisheries and aquaculture<br>▶ Add child labour and rights topics to school curricula<br>▶ Train teachers to identify at-risk children<br>▶ Launch school feeding programmes<br>▶ In communities where child labour is prevalent, raise awareness of its harmful effects and the importance and benefits of schooling; | ▶ Better school attendance and completion rates<br>▶ Enhanced community monitoring | ▶ In Madagascar, school meal programmes connected to fishing communities encourage attendance |

| | Recommended actions | Intended impact | Examples |
|---|---|---|---|
| Law enforcement entities | ▶ Coordinate with labour and fisheries inspectorates for inspections<br>▶ Prosecute perpetrators of human trafficking and forced child labour<br>▶ Work with government and civil society to identify at-risk children | ▶ Increased enforcement of child labour laws | ▶ In Ghana, joint police operations with NGOs freed children from fishing servitude<br>▶ Thailand's Anti-Trafficking Task Force uses expanded labour/port inspections to detect child labour |
| **Social partners and civil society** | | | |
| Workers' and employers' organizations | ▶ Mobilize and organize workers and employers in fisheries and aquaculture<br>▶ Contribute to tripartite processes for creating laws and regulations<br>▶ Adopt codes of conduct on child labour and train members<br>▶ Conduct research and risk assessments on child labour<br>▶ Raise social awareness of the harmful impacts of child labour | ▶ Increased enforcement of child labour laws | ▶ Trade unions in West Africa trained members on child labour issues<br>▶ Thai seafood processors' associations adopted codes of conduct banning child labour<br>▶ The Economic Community of West African States' Regional Action Plan aims to eliminate WFCL by 2025 |
| Community-based organizations | ▶ Train members on child labour prevention and community outreach<br>▶ Create community support systems like savings groups and childcare cooperatives<br>▶ Connect families to social protection programmes and available assistance<br>▶ Work with government agencies to identify at-risk children | ▶ Early identification and prevention happens at community level, strengthening youth and civil society | ▶ NGOs in Solomon Islands piloted youth-led awareness campaigns in coastal villages<br>▶ ILO and FAO supported national child labour action plans in Cambodia and Uganda |
| **Supply chain actors** | | | |
| Commercial seafood sector and investors | ▶ Support freedom of association and collective bargaining<br>▶ Ensure decent working conditions, fair prices and fair wages for adult workers<br>▶ Implement reliable age verification systems and protect young workers<br>▶ Conduct third-party audits including child labour assessments<br>▶ Institute human rights due diligence systems | ▶ Stronger supply chain compliance and incentives for decent work | ▶ Thai seafood processors use third-party labour audits that include child labour checks<br>▶ European buyers require supplier codes of conduct with child labour safeguards |

| | Recommended actions | Intended impact | Examples |
|---|---|---|---|
| **International organizations** | | | |
| Intergovernmental bodies and development organizations | ▶ Create and monitor declarations, roadmaps and directives for member states<br>▶ Support development and implementation of child labour policies<br>▶ Address root causes through climate action, education, health care and livelihood support<br>▶ Build child labour risk assessments into all fisheries and aquaculture projects<br>▶ Support community-based solutions through pilot surveillance models and national action plans | ▶ Evidence-based innovation<br>▶ Empowered youth and local civil society | ▶ Surveillance models and national action plans<br>▶ Donor-funded school feeding programmes in Madagascar encouraged attendance in coastal fishing communities |
| **Cross-cutting enablers (all stakeholders)** | | | |
| | ▶ Apply a gender lens in all interventions<br>▶ Ensure access to social protection for vulnerable groups<br>▶ Promote data collection, monitoring and reporting on child labour<br>▶ Foster social dialogue and community participation | ▶ Foster a coordinated, human rights-based approach to eliminating child labour in fisheries and aquaculture | ▶ National child labour steering committees in several countries have promoted coordinated approaches, combining gender-responsive strategies, improved monitoring systems and expanded social protection coverage:<br>▪ South Africa has had a National Steering Committee to guide its Child Labour Programme of Action<br>▪ Egypt has a National Steering Committee for implementing its National Action Plan to Combat the Worst Forms of Child Labour<br>▪ Rwanda has established Child Labour Steering Committees at district and village levels to conduct awareness-raising and inspections<br>▪ Kenya has implemented initiatives with County Child Labour Committees feeding into a National Steering Committee to combat child labour |

## 2.3.2 Enabling implementation

The following good practices will facilitate the implementation of the recommended actions listed in table 4.

### 2.3.2.1 Community-based approaches

Community-based approaches are well-documented good practices for eliminating child labour across multiple sectors, complementing other measures such as legislative reforms.[15] By empowering and engaging community members and organizations, initiatives are more likely to be relevant to local contexts and effective over time. They also help build commitment, raise awareness and foster durable change.

Where possible, community-based approaches should build on existing structures, systems and organizations rather than creating new ones. Working with fisher and fish farmer associations, women's groups, youth groups and other community-based organizations already present is generally more effective than establishing parallel entities.[16]

**Points to consider**

Children and young people have a right to participate in matters that affect their lives, as established by the UNCRC (articles 12 and 31). Initiatives to eliminate child labour must therefore be designed so that children and young people can play an active role, rather than being passive recipients. This approach is also more likely to secure buy-in from children and families.[17]

Community-based initiatives are often implemented as area-based programmes, and address all forms of child labour in a fishing or aquaculture community, as opposed to initiatives that address child labour in an individual workplace, operation or sector. The area-based approach ensures that all relevant stakeholders can be mobilized and that no child or family is excluded by narrow sector-based screening criteria.[18] For instance, in the ILO-led Asia Regional Child Labour Programme (ARC), area-based interventions were applied to create "child-labour-free zones" in rural communities across South Asia, combining local education access, social protection and community monitoring systems to comprehensively address child labour. This *approach* is especially useful in small-scale, family-based operations, where households often rely on multiple income sources and children combine fishing or aquaculture with other forms of work, for example domestic chores, primary processing, trade or agriculture. However, sector-based approaches may be necessary where risks are concentrated in a specific sector or supply chain, for example aquaculture establishments, industrial vessels or processing facilities. Such initiatives typically focus on specific workplaces and may involve establishing grievance mechanisms, awareness-raising, revising recruitment and contracting systems, addressing gender disparities or tackling other decent work deficits. In these contexts, empowerment and participation remain crucial. Top-down initiatives that exclude social dialogue are generally less effective. Enabling workers to organize is often an important first step.[19]

15 See for example the STOP Child Labour Coalition on Child Labour Free Zones https://stopchildlabour.org/child-labour-free-zones.

16 See for example ILO (2024) Myanmar Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (MyPEC) emerging good practices https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/2024-06/MyPEC-goodpractices-brief-2024-mm.pdf and FAO (2020) Framework on the Elimination of Child Labour in Agriculture

17 Children's right to participation is enshrined in the UNCRC, available at https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/crc.pdf.

18 STOP child labour studies in India / STOP Child Labour Coalition on Child Labour Free Zones.

19 Jessica L. Decker Sparks et al., "Worker-less social responsibility: How the proliferation of voluntary labour governance tools in seafood marginalise the workers they claim to protect", *Marine Policy*, Vol. 139, 2022, 105044, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.marpol.2022.105044.

#### 2.3.2.2 Institutional capacity, mainstreaming and integration

Institutional capacity is critical to implement policies and regulations, as discussed elsewhere. It involves enabling government agencies, social partners, community organizations, fishers' and farmers' associations, youth groups and other key duty bearers and stakeholders to contribute to the elimination of child labour.

Institutional capacity includes:

- training staff and partners to understand child labour dynamics and possible responses, including cross-training between child labour specialists and fisheries/aquaculture professionals;
- allocating sufficient resources to implement interventions, monitor progress and assess impact – not only within government departments but also among duty bearers. for example, seafood businesses need to dedicate staff time and mobilize on-the-ground networks to fulfil their hrdd obligations;
- establishing coordination mechanisms, with organizations setting aside resources to participate. While coordination requires investment, it can also save resources by reducing duplication, improving information sharing and strengthening the effectiveness of strategies.

Mainstreaming and integration into existing institutional policies and programmes has proved effective at national, local and sectoral levels. In fisheries and aquaculture, this means not only embedding child labour concerns into "traditional" labour, education and social protection programmes, but also into fisheries and aquaculture management and governance, environmental conservation and climate change mitigation programmes. This can include putting safeguards in place to ensure that fisheries regulations do not undermine household livelihoods (which could lead to child labour) and actively incorporating awareness-raising and risk assessments into fisheries and aquaculture initiatives.

#### 2.3.2.3 International development cooperation

International development partners and organizations play an important role in strengthening institutional capacity. They can provide resources, such as financing for coordination mechanisms and training, thereby enabling knowledge sharing across geographies and sectors, and support the evaluation and documentation of lessons learned. Examples include Alliance 8.7 and the International Partnership for Cooperation on Child Labour in Agriculture (IPCCLA), both of which facilitate cooperation and knowledge sharing among multiple partners. Alliance 8.7 focuses on supporting the realization of SDG target 8.7, while the IPCCLA focuses specifically on preventing and eliminating child labour in agriculture, including fisheries and aquaculture. Both initiatives make a range of knowledge products available through their websites.

# 3. Concluding remarks

Child labour in fisheries and aquaculture remains a significant challenge, despite strengthened international frameworks and increasing attention from governments, industry and civil society. While precise data are limited, evidence shows that children continue to be engaged in hazardous activities across the sector, undermining their rights and constraining opportunities for sustainable development.

This policy guidance has outlined the drivers of child labour, the international and national frameworks that address it, and the strategies and practices that can be adapted to different contexts. Effective prevention requires tackling the root causes, including poverty, lack of decent work, and limited access to education and social protection. Where child labour is present, protection and reintegration measures are essential to safeguard children's well-being and provide sustainable alternatives.

The elimination of child labour depends on an enabling environment, underpinned by legislation and enforcement aligned with international standards, effective institutions, and integration of child labour considerations into fisheries and aquaculture policies and management systems. It also relies on coordinated contributions from governments, employers' and workers' organizations, civil society, the seafood industry and international partners.

Ongoing investment in data collection, monitoring and knowledge sharing is needed to inform and adapt responses. Emerging challenges, including climate change, environmental degradation and migration, highlight the importance of resilient and adaptive strategies that address multiple vulnerabilities simultaneously.

The elimination of child labour in fisheries and aquaculture is an attainable goal, if stakeholders at all levels sustain their efforts and align their actions. By embedding child labour concerns within broader agendas on decent work, sustainable livelihoods and food security, progress can be consolidated and extended. This document is intended as a resource to support that process, offering evidence and guidance that can inform national strategies, sectoral initiatives and community-level interventions.

# References


Asia Foundation and ILO. 2015. *Migrant and Child Labor in Thailand's Shrimp and Other Seafood Supply Chains: Labor Conditions and the Decision to Study or Work*. https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/%40asia/%40ro-bangkok/documents/publication/wcms_402971.pdf.

Beyer, Robert, and Andrea Milan. 2022. *Climate Change and Future Human Mobility*. IOM UN Migration and Global Data Institute. https://emergencymanual.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbdl1956/files/2023-03/iom_global_data_institute_thematic_brief_1_evidence_summary_on_climate_change_and_the_future_of_human_mobility.pdf

Committee on World Food Security. 2021. *Impacts of COVID-19 on Food Security and Nutrition: Developing Effective Policy Responses to Address the Hunger and Malnutrition Pandemic*. Committee on World Food Security, High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition.

Environmental Justice Foundation. n.d. Thailand's Seafood Slaves: Human Trafficking, Slavery and Murder in Kantang's Fishing Industry. https://ejfoundation.org/reports/thailands-seafood-slaves

Errighi, Lorenzo, Ivanka Mamic, and Birgitte Krogh-Poulsen. 2016. *Global Supply Chains: Insights into the Thai Seafood Sector*. ILO Asia-Pacific Working Paper Series. International Labour Organization. https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/%40asia/%40ro-bangkok/documents/publication/wcms_474896.pdf.

FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations). 2020. *FAO Framework on Ending Child Labour in Agriculture*. https://openknowledge.fao.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/89ac247c-5dcd-4eeb-a208-3b481d5b1f94/content.

_____. 2021. "Tackling Child Labour in Fisheries and Aquaculture. Background Paper". https://openknowledge.fao.org/items/22a09c47-5895-45de-9f73-36b13a95d910.

_____. 2023. "Child Labour in Small-Scale Agriculture in Viet Nam – Technical Paper". Ha Noi. https://doi.org/10.4060/cc7400en———. 2024a. *The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture 2024. Blue Transformation in Action*. https://openknowledge.fao.org/items/06690fd0-d133-424c-9673-1849e414543d.

_____. 2024a. *The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture 2024. Blue Transformation in Action*. https://openknowledge.fao.org/items/06690fd0-d133-424c-9673-1849e414543d.

_____. 2024b. *Guidelines for Sustainable Aquaculture*. Thirty-sixth Session of the Committee on Fisheries, 8–12 July 2024. https://openknowledge.fao.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/b87a56eb-749d-4e76-b952-413708c021e0/content.

FAO, Duke University, and WorldFish. 2023. Illuminating Hidden Harvests: *The Contributions of Small-scale Fisheries to Sustainable Development – Executive Summary*. https://openknowledge.fao.org/items/bbc2093d-69d9-4f1b-ae51-cfaa2969b52f.

FAO and ILO (International Labour Organization). 2013. *Guidance on Addressing Child Labour in Fisheries and Aquaculture*. https://openknowledge.fao.org/items/06690fd0-d133-424c-9673-1849e414543d.

FAO and IPC-IG (International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth). 2023. *Socioeconomic Impact Evaluation of Unemployment Insurance for Small-scale Fishers in Brazil (Seguro-Defeso)*. Research Report No. 78. FAO and IPC-IG. https://openknowledge.fao.org/items/2feafdd0-236b-4fbf-ba7e-c7673e35cbf3.

Focus on Labour Exploitation. 2024. "Press Release on Europe's First Worker-driven Social Responsibility Pilot Launched in UK, 9 January 2024". https://labourexploitation.org/publications/press-release-europes-first-worker-driven-social-responsibility-pilot-launched-in-uk.

Garcia Lozano, Alejandro J., Jessica L. Sparks, Davina P. Durgana, et al. 2022. "Decent Work in Fisheries: Current Trends and Key Considerations for Future Research and Policy". *Marine Policy* 136: 104922. https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0308597X21005339?via%3Dihub.

Government of the Republic of Zambia. 2023a. *National Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy*. Lusaka.

_____. 2023b. *National Aquaculture Trade Development Strategy*. Lusaka.

_____. 2023c. *National Food and Nutrition Strategic Plan 2023–2027*. Lusaka.

ILO (International Labour Organization). 1973. Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138). https://normlex.ilo.org/dyn/nrmlx_en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:C138

_____. 1999. Worst Forms of Child Labour Recommendation, 1999 (No. 190*)*. https://normlex.ilo.org/dyn/nrmlx_en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO:12100:P12100_INSTRUMENT_ID:312528:NO.

_____. 2015. *The List of Hazardous Work*. https://www.ilo.org/resource/brief/list-hazardous-work.

_____. 2018. *Ending Child Labour by 2025: A Review of Policies and Programmes*. https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed_norm/@ipec/documents/publication/wcms_653987.pdf.

_____. 2020. *ILO Child Labour Convention Achieves Universal Ratification*. 4 August 2020. https://www.ilo.org/resource/news/ilo-child-labour-convention-achieves-universal-ratification#:~:text=All%20187%20member%20States%20of,182).&text=GENEVA%20(ILO%20News)%20–%20For,ratified%20by%20all%20member%20States.

_____. 2021. *The Future of Work in Aquaculture in the Context of the Rural Economy: Background Document for Discussion at the Technical Meeting on the Future of Work in Aquaculture in the Context of the Rural Economy.* Geneva.

_____. 2022a. ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and its Follow-up. Adopted at the 86th Session of the International Labour Conference (1998) and amended at the 110th Session (2022). https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/2024-04/ILO_1998_Declaration_EN.pdf

_____. 2022b. "International Labour Conference Adds Safety and Health to Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work", paper presented at the 110th International Labour Conference, Geneva, 10 June 2022 (unpublished).

_____. 2023a. *Policy Guidelines for the Promotion of Decent Work in the Agri-food Sector*. *Meeting of Experts on Decent Work in the Agri-food Sector: An Essential Part of Sustainable Food Systems (Geneva, 8–12 May)*. https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/2024-05/Policy%20guidelines%20for%20the%20promotion%20of%20decent%20work%20in%20the%20agri-food%20sector.pdf.

_____. 2023b. *Migrant Workers' Rights to Freedom of Association and Collective Bargaining. First Edition.* https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/%40ed_protect/%40protrav/%40migrant/documents/publication/wcms_883446.pdf.

_____. 2023c. *Issue Paper on Child Labour and Climate Change*. https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/%40ed_norm/%40ipec/documents/publication/wcms_894326.pdf.

_____. 2024. *Ensuring Safety and Health at Work in a Changing Climate*. https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/2024-07/ILO_SafeDay24_Report_r11.pdf.

_____. 2025. "Promotion of Decent Work and a Just Transition, Including Skills Development and Lifelong Learning, in the Food and Beverage Industry". Report for the Technical Meeting on the Promotion of Decent Work and a Just Transition, Including Skills Development and Lifelong Learning in the Food and Beverage Industry. https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/2025-01/TMFBI-2025-EN%202025%2001%2027.pdf.

ILO and UNICEF (International Labour Organization & United Nations Children's Fund). 2021. *Child Labour: Global Estimates 2020, Trends and the Road Forward*. https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/%40ed_norm/%40ipec/documents/publication/wcms_797515.pdf.

_____. 2022. "The Role of Social Protection in the Elimination of Child Labour: Evidence Review and Policy Implications". https://www.ilo.org/publications/role-social-protection-elimination-child-labour-evidence-review-and-policy.

_____. 2025. *Child labour: Global Estimates 2024, Trends and the Road Forward*. 2024. ILO and UNICEF. https://www.ilo.org/publications/major-publications/child-labour-global-estimates-2024-trends-and-road-forward.

Lincoln, J., J. Sorensen, K.C. Elliot and F. Poulain. 2024. *Proceedings of the Sixth International Fishing Industry Safety and Health Conference (IFISH 6)*. FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Proceedings No. 72. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2024. https://openknowledge.fao.org/items/8be305ea-467c-4e3b-b475-3d9e3ec71851.

McDowell, Robin, Margie Mason and Martha Mendoza. 2015. AP Investigation: Are Slaves Catching the Fish You Buy? *Associated Press*, 25 March 2015.

Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Watch. n.d. "Seafood Social Risk Tool (Warm-water Shrimp – Bangladesh and India)". https://www.seafoodwatch.org/our-projects/seafood-social-risk-tool.

Raju-Iyer et al. Forthcoming. *Socio-economic Baseline Study in Shrimp Farming Communities in Andhra Pradesh*. Acharya Nagarjuna University and the Monterey Bay Aquarium.

Twiss, Shannon. 2023. "Working Against Climate Change: Connecting Labor Rights and Environmental Justice". *The Georgetown Environmental Law Review* 35(2). https://www.law.georgetown.edu/environmental-law-review/wp-content/uploads/sites/18/2024/01/Twiss-Note.pdf.

Ugarte, Cristian, Marcelo Olarreaga, and Gady Salovici. 2023. "Child Labour and Global Value Chains". *The World Economy* 46(5): 941–68. https://doi.org/10.1111/twec.13401.

United Nations General Assembly. 1990. Convention on the Rights of the Child. General Assembly Resolution 44/25 of 20 November 1989. https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/crc.pdf.

UNICEF. 2025. "Indicators for Children on the Move". https://data.unicef.org/resources/indicators-for-children-on-the-move.

World Bank. 2017. *Environmental and Social Framework: Environmental and Social Standard 2 – Labour and Working Conditions*. Washington, DC.

_____. 2024a. *Zambia Economic Update: Enhancing Agricultural Productivity for Growth and Resilience*. Washington, DC.

_____. 2024b. *PROBLUE Annual Report 2024*. Washington, DC.

# Annex 1. Checklist for projects supporting the elimination of child labour in fisheries and aquaculture

When planning a support programme in the fisheries and aquaculture sector, particularly in the small-scale, informal economy, this simple checklist can help ensure that child labour considerations are addressed. Developed for local-level action, it can also be adapted for national-level programmes.

**1. Policy, legal and institutional frameworks**

- Has the government ratified ILO Conventions Nos. 138 and 182?
- Which government agency is responsible for coordinating work on the elimination of child labour? What other relevant institutional structures and organizations exist? Are there workers' and employers' organizations, NGOs or others working on child rights, child protection, gender or other related issues? What coordination mechanisms are in place?
- Which government policies and regulations on child labour are in place? How are they enforced and coordinated? Are they generally accepted and complied with in fishing and aquaculture communities?
- Are there local or national good practices on eliminating child labour that could be applied?
- What is the level of awareness of child labour issues among decision-makers (local and national), as well as among fishers, farmers, children and other direct stakeholders?

**2. Occupations, working conditions and child labour**

- Which fisheries and aquaculture subsectors are present (capture fishing, aquaculture, processing and marketing)? Are operations primarily small-scale, mid-sized or industrial?
- What are the major areas of fishing activity and the centres of farming, harvesting and processing?
- What techniques and production systems are used (for example fishing gear, vessel/craft type, intensive/extensive aquaculture, species produced, production systems, fish processing methods, marketing and distribution channels)?
- Where is fish marketed and how is it transported?
- What auxiliary activities (for example boatbuilding and net-making) exist?
- In which of the identified activities are children working? What tasks and jobs do they perform? Do these same children also work outside fisheries and aquaculture, and if so, doing what?
- How many children (by age and sex) are involved in child labour?
- How many hours do children work and what are their tasks? Does their work interfere with schooling?
- What are the main reasons children work? Are the reasons different for boys and girls, or across age groups?
- How are prices and wages set? Are piece-rate systems in use? Is there a minimum wage for workers in the industry and is it sufficient for workers to sustain themselves and their families?
- How are wages paid – directly to workers or via intermediaries; in cash, via electronic transfer, as catch shares or in other forms?

- Are workers allowed to organize? Are they currently organized and is there a mechanism for collective bargaining? Are there collective bargaining agreements in place stipulating wages, hours of work and other working conditions?

**3. Education and other aspects of community life**

- Is school compulsory, available and affordable? To what age and grade is schooling compulsory? Are schools or other education programmes accessible to all children, regardless of gender, migration status, etc.?
- Are there incentives for school attendance (for example school feeding programmes)?
- Are school curricula suitable for children living in fishing and aquaculture communities?
- Do young people find decent employment easily? Is there unemployment and, if so, who is most likely to be unemployed (young men/young women)? Why?
- What are the government's local or national plans for schooling and education facilities in the future?
- If children do not attend school, what are the reasons?
- What social services are available in the community? What are the main poverty and vulnerability factors?
- Are there functioning community or professional organizations, including workers' and employers' organizations, and community fisheries management bodies?
- Have there been, or are there currently, actions against child labour at local level? If so, by whom and on what scale?
- What is the level of awareness of child labour issues among community members?

# Annex 2. Tools, guidelines and other resources

| Tool/guideline/resource | Main features | Target group |
|---|---|---|
| ILO Policy Guidelines for the Promotion of Decent Work in the Agri-food Sector | Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work in the context of agri-food systems | Policymakers, employers' and workers' organizations |
| ILO NORMLEX database | All ILO Conventions and information on ratification of conventions | Policymakers, researchers, advocates, due diligence teams |
| ILO NATLEX database | Database on labour legislation, organized per country | Policymakers, researchers, advocates, due diligence teams |
| ILO Committee of Experts portal | Reports on periodic reporting on implementation of ILO Conventions and requests from the Committee of Experts to ILO Member States | Policymakers, researchers, advocates, due diligence teams |
| ILO Child Labour portal | Extensive knowledge platform on child labour containing general introductions and links to reports and other resources | Policymakers, employers' and workers' organizations, private sector businesses, child rights advocates, researchers and students, NGOs and other civil society organizations |
| ILO SCREAM pack | Practical kit for education practitioners, youth mobilizers and others working with children | Educators, youth organization representatives, child rights activists, others working with children and young people |
| FAO Child Labour in Agriculture portal | Reports and other sources of information focusing on child labour in agriculture, forestry, fisheries and aquaculture | Policymakers, researchers and students, agricultural organizations, private businesses, workers' organizations, and civil society organizations |
| E-learning series: End Child Labour in Agriculture | 10 certified self-study courses on child labour in agriculture | Policymakers, employers' and workers' organizations, private sector businesses, child rights advocates, researchers and students, NGOs and other civil society organizations |
| FAO State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture website | Comprehensive reports on the fisheries and aquaculture sector, including analysis of employment and livelihoods, environmental performance, stock status and contributions to global food security | Policymakers, researchers and students, fishers' and fish farmers' organizations, private businesses, workers' organizations and civil society organizations |
| FAO Small-scale Fisheries portal | Introductions, reports and other knowledge products on small-scale fishing | Policymakers, researchers and students, fishers' and fish farmers' organizations, private businesses, workers' organizations and civil society organizations |

| Tool/guideline/resource | Main features | Target group |
|---|---|---|
| FAO Family Farming Knowledge Portal | Knowledge products on family farming – section on fisheries and aquaculture | Policymakers, researchers and students, fishers' and fish farmers' organizations, private businesses, workers' organizations and civil society organizations |
| Alliance 8.7 | Multipartner website containing resources related to SDG target 8.7 on the elimination of child labour and forced labour | Policymakers, employers and workers' organizations, private sector businesses, child rights advocates, researchers and students, NGOs and other civil society organizations |
| USDOL portal on Child Labour and Forced Labour | Entry point to the Bureau of International Labour Affairs/USDOL resources such as the lists of goods and services produced with child labour and the sweat and toil app and reports | Policymakers, employers and workers' organizations, private sector businesses, child rights advocates, researchers and students, NGOs and other civil society organizations |
| **ASEAN** Declaration **and** Roadmap on child labour | Examples of regional, intergovernmental commitments to elimination of child labour | Policymakers and implementers, anyone working to eliminate child labour in South East Asia |
| ILO-IOE Child Labour Guidance Tool for Business | Guidance for employers on how to address child labour within their operations and supply chains. Not specific to fishing and aquaculture | Business representatives, employers' organisations |
| IPCCLA | Webpage on the IPCCLA with links to statements, initiatives and resolutions by founding members. | Policymakers, the general public and other concerned actors on the elimination of child labour in agriculture |
| Durban Call to Action | Agreed outcome document from the Fifth Global Conference on the Elimination of Child Labour | Policy makers and other duty bearers |
| ILO Framework for Action on Child Labour | Outlines the ILO's contributions to implementation of the Durban Call to Action, including insights on lessons | Policy makers and other duty bearers |

© FAO/Sylvain Cherkaoui

**International Labour Organization**

Route des Morillons 4
CH-1211 Geneva 22
Switzerland

**ilo.org**