

Convention 182 of ILO

August 14, 2020

The International Labour Organisation welcomed a global agreement to combat the worst forms of child labour as the **first time all of its member states have ratified a convention in a process that lasted 21 years.** The 101-year-old **United Nations agency that brings together governments, business and workers groups** says ratification formalised by Pacific archipelago Tonga means all 187 members have ratified the convention. It was the fastest ratification of a convention at ILO.

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Universal ratification of Convention 182 is an historic first that means that **all children now have legal protection against the worst forms of child labour.** It reflects a global commitment that the **worst forms of child labour, such as slavery, sexual exploitation, the use of children in armed conflict or other illicit or hazardous work that compromises children's health, morals or psychological wellbeing, have no place in our society.**

Ending child labour has been one of the main goals of the ILO, which was **founded in 1919.** The UN agency estimates that **152 million children worldwide are affected, with 73 million in hazardous work.** Most child labour takes place in the agriculture sector, mainly due to poverty and parents' difficulties in finding decent work. Convention No. 182 calls for the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, which includes slavery, forced labour and trafficking. It forbids the use of children under 18 in armed conflict, prostitution, pornography, illicit activities such as drug trafficking, and in hazardous work.

The **Convention was adopted by ILO member states meeting in**

Geneva in 1999. It is one of the organization's eight **Fundamental Conventions**, which cover issues such as the elimination of forced labour, the abolition of work-related discrimination and the rights to freedom of association and collective bargaining. The ILO said incidence of **child labour and its worst forms dropped by almost 40% between 2000 and 2016** as ratification rates increased and countries adopted laws and policies, including relating to minimum age to work.

However, the UN agency fears the **COVID-19 pandemic could reverse years of gains**, especially as progress has slowed in recent years, particularly among children 5 to 11 years, and in some geographical areas. As **2021 is the International Year for the Elimination of Child Labour**, the ILO plans to raise awareness of the issue to accelerate progress.