



## **STATEMENT**

### ***World Day against Child Labor: Elimination of Child Labor in Agriculture***

International Food Policy Research Institute

June 12, 2007

The International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), representing the Alliance of the Centers of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), hereby confirms its cooperation with other partners in the efforts to eliminate child labor in agriculture.

The CGIAR is a strategic partnership of countries, international and regional organizations, and private foundations dedicated to mobilizing agricultural science to reduce poverty, promote agricultural growth, and protect the environment. It supports 15 international research centers conducting groundbreaking work to ensure a food-secure future. IFPRI is one of the centers of the CGIAR system. IFPRI's mission is to provide policy solutions that cut hunger, malnutrition, and poverty.

The most important contributor to child labor is poverty. Rich parents do not have to send their children to work. Children in many poor families often have to work in the fields to contribute to their families' livelihood, and cannot attend school. Without education, their future will be as bleak as their past.

Because child labor is prevalent in agriculture, the problem is pertinent to the CGIAR mission and the research activities of its centers. By contributing to agricultural development and concomitant economic growth and poverty reduction, the CGIAR centers help to reduce child labor.

Research shows that food and agricultural policy reforms can reduce child labor and increase the educational attainment of children. In 1993, for example, Vietnam, a country with 70 percent of its population engaged in agriculture, experienced a child labor situation typical of poor countries. More than half of its children worked essentially full time. But in just five years, 2.2 million Vietnamese children had stopped working altogether. The country reduced the share of 6- to 15- year-olds working at least seven hours a day from 57 to 38 percent. It did not achieve this by undertaking a campaign against child labor. Rather, almost half of the reduction in child labor came from agricultural policy reform. Vietnam lifted its restrictions on rice exports and as a result Vietnamese rice farmers could sell their grain abroad, rice prices increased, and many Vietnamese farm families used their extra income to send their children to school rather than to the field.

To help tip poor parents' decisions in favor of education, some countries have decided to pay families to send their children to school. IFPRI has conducted evaluations of several programs in Asia, Africa, and Latin America that transfer cash or food directly to households that send their children to school and meet other conditions. Research shows that such programs can help significantly reduce child labor and increase school enrollment.

As these examples illustrate, sustainable solutions to the problem of child labor require a mix of poverty reduction and agricultural growth, educational attainment, and legal action protecting children. CGIAR research helps fulfill the first two conditions.

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*The International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) seeks sustainable solutions for ending hunger and poverty. IFPRI is one of 15 centers supported by the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research, an alliance of 64 governments, private foundations, and international and regional organizations. Please visit our website at [www.ifpri.org](http://www.ifpri.org).*