One of the countries with the lowest rates

**Argentina leads fight against child labour in the region**

During his participation in the 12th National Meeting of Provincial Commissions to Prevent and Eradicate Child Labour (COPRETI) \(^1\) carried out this week at the labour portfolio, ILO IPEC \(^2\) Southamerica Subregional Coordinator Manuel García told that Argentina is among the countries bearing the lowest child labour rates in the region. He further underlined that “with the experience of the COPRETI, Argentina is a pioneer in Latin America in the field of decentralization and serves as a role model for the rest of the countries.”

Argentina, together with Brazil, Chile Uruguay and Venezuela, is in the group bearing the lowest levels of child labour, with percentages ranging from 5% to 8%. Colombia, Ecuador and Paraguay come next, where 10% to 17% of children work, whereas in Peru and Bolivia between 25% and 35% of them does, pointed out García.

On her part, President of the Comisión Nacional para la Erradicación del Trabajo Infantil (CONAETI) \(^3\) – which functions within the Ministry of Labour – Pilar Rey Méndez, emphasized, “we have to be able to eradicate child labour from Argentina”, and stated “we are striving so that the use of child work force, already prohibited, also constitute a criminal offence.” Mrs. Rey Méndez further highlighted the importance of child care centres (day care centres) to face this problem.

In turn, Coordinator of the Responsible Tourism and Childhood Programme from the Ministry of Tourism, Susana Cafaro, argued that Argentina was the first country in the world where a governmental body adhered to the International Code to protect girls, boys and adolescents from sexual tourism – until then only the private sector adhered to such Code - and created the National Code to Protect Rights of Girls, Boys and Adolescents in Travel and Tourism, showing the progress made in the field.

Daniel Kostzer, from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), recalled that eradication of child labour is one of the indicators of the UN’s objectives for the millenium, and highlighted the contribution and support provided by the universal child allowance (asignación universal por hijo), which he qualified as a step forward and an increase in quality in the field.

At the meeting, organized by the CONAETI, the evaluation of the National Plan to Prevent and Eradicate Child Labour 2006-2010 was shared with the COPRETI. A further review of the objectives of the Plan was carried out, after the experiences gained throughout these 5 years. Moreover, there was a discussion where the various local situations were taken into account, and experiences, visions and ways to deepen were shared.
T’s Notes

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