

# Child Labour: Growing Up Too Quickly

The need to support themselves and their families forces over 200 million children aged 5 to 14 years to work. More than half of these child workers toil in hazardous occupations, such as agriculture, mining and construction.

Agriculture exposes children to pesticides, extreme temperatures, disease-carrying insects and dangerous machinery. Mining and construction involve long hours of strenuous physical labour, often in environments rife with dust, noise and toxic chemicals such as mercury, which is used for gold extraction.

Children are powerless in the face of such hazardous working conditions: they lack the experience to recognize risks and they lack the physical and emotional strength to protect themselves. Every year, more than 25 000 child workers under 17 years die as a result of occupational injuries.

Children also lack the choice to shape their own lives: many child workers cannot attend school – a precious right that will equip them to build a better future for themselves.

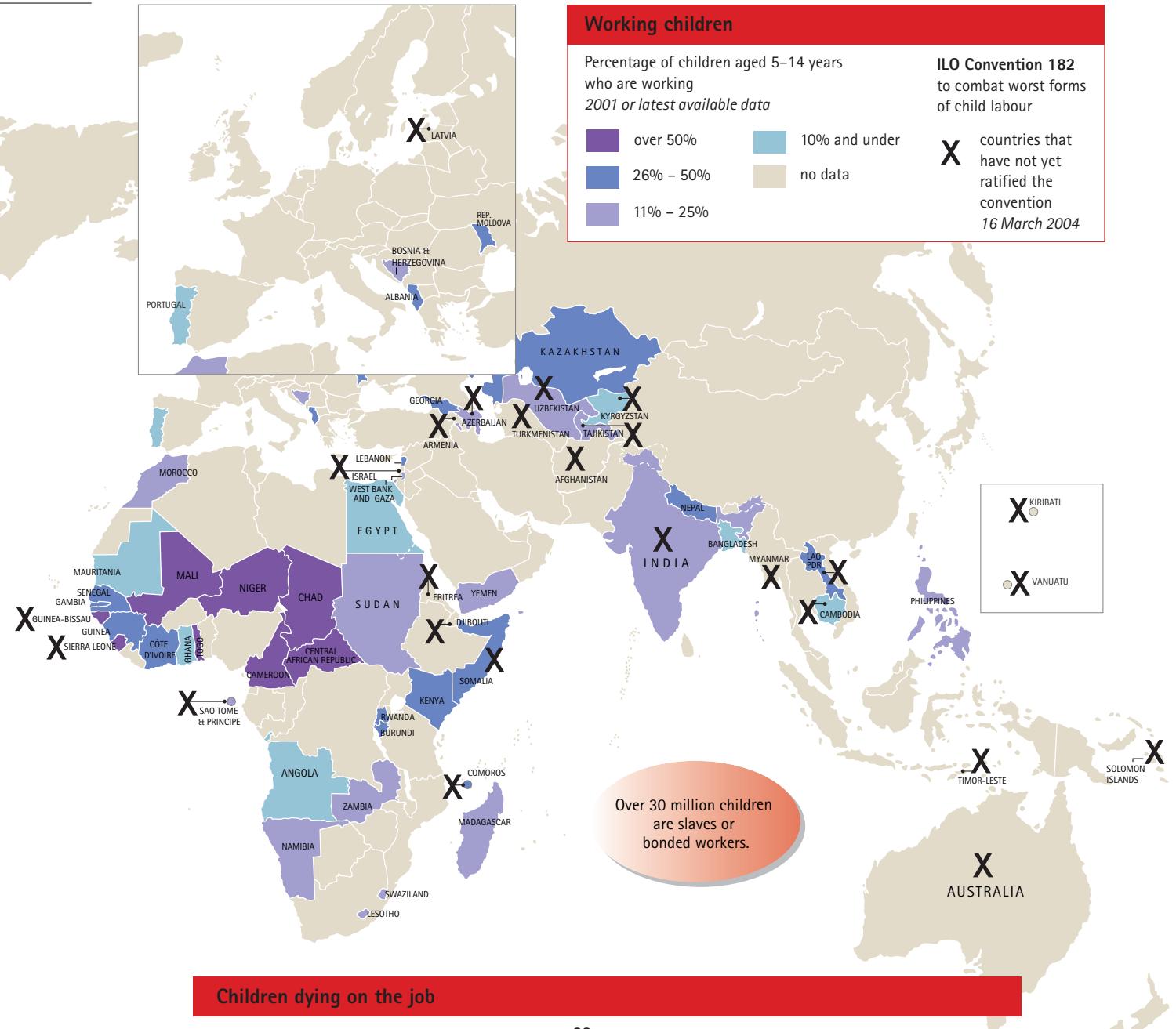
The International Labour Organization's Convention 182 calls for the immediate elimination of the worst forms of child labour, including hazardous child labour. Nearly 150 countries have already committed themselves to the fight against hazardous child labour by ratifying the Convention. There is, however, a long road ahead in developing alternative livelihoods for children and their families.



Child scavengers search through waste with their bare hands.

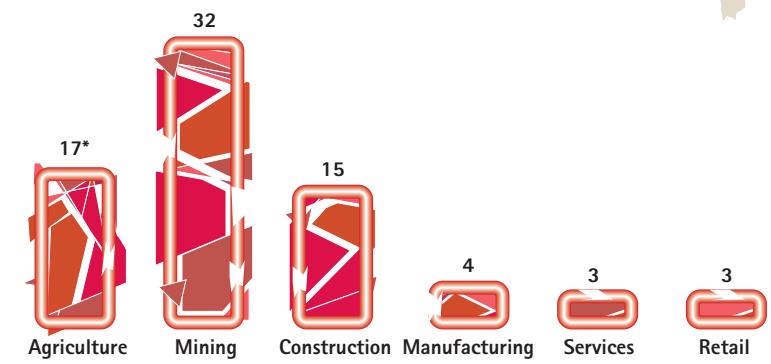


Mines are an extremely dangerous working environment.



## Children dying on the job

Injury fatality rates per 100 000 child workers aged 5-17 years (full-time equivalent)  
1994



\* This figure refers to injury fatality rates per 100 000 child workers aged 15-17 years.