

# *The world's debt to children*

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Photo: La Razón.

By María Josefina Arce.

Recent data from the International Labor Organization (ILO) reveal the sad reality faced by millions of children around the world, who are subjected to various forms of exploitation.

The international organization stated that this situation has worsened in the last four years. At present, 218 million children are involved in economic production, a figure that seems to increase.

According to the information, the agricultural sector accounts for 70% of minors in child labor, followed by the services sector, with 20%.

This serious problem is not only related to labor. Minors are also exposed to trafficking, sexual exploitation, and forced recruitment in armed conflicts.

In Africa, according to the ILO, one out of every five children resorts to any kind of work to survive. This is a scenario that is present throughout the world, aggravated at the global level by the COVID-19 pandemic.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, one of the regions hardest hit by the virus, prolonged school closures and increased poverty among the most vulnerable families pushed more children to perform various tasks to help support the household.

In the area, the number of children in this situation now exceeds eight million. This is a significant setback in efforts to eliminate this problem, which is a consequence of poverty.

As experts say, dropping out of school and entering the labor market prematurely reduces the chances of getting better jobs in the future, perpetuating the conditions of poverty.

It also encourages higher illiteracy rates, causes disease and malnutrition, and contributes to premature aging.

International organizations warn that the goal of eradicating child labor by the year 2025, as set out in the Sustainable Development Goals, seems far off for now.

The International Convention on the Rights of the Child establishes that "mankind owes the child the best that it can give"; therefore, it continues to be a global challenge to put an end to the exploitation of this population segment, whose personal and emotional development and enjoyment of their rights are affected.



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