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International  
Labour  
Organization

# Third-party monitoring of measures against child labour and forced labour during the 2016 cotton harvest in Uzbekistan

A report submitted to the World Bank  
by the International Labour Office

This report has been prepared by the ILO at the request of the World Bank for the third party monitoring of the World Bank-financed projects in agriculture, water and education sectors in Uzbekistan. The ILO is grateful for the cooperation of the tripartite constituents of Uzbekistan, and in particular the Federation of Trade Unions of Uzbekistan, in the monitoring and assessment process. The ILO has tried to reflect the constructive comments received from its partners throughout the process. In line with their request, it has formulated concrete suggestions for further work by the constituents, including cooperation involving the ILO and the World Bank. The ILO alone is responsible for the conclusions drawn in this report.

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## Key Findings

- Uzbekistan continues to make policy commitments and develop action plans to reduce the risks of child and forced labour. Government instructions were issued before and during both the 2015 and 2016 harvests. These are increasingly influencing the context within which officials and citizens view their involvement in the cotton harvest.
- Uzbekistan has phased-out organized child labour. ILO first monitored child labour during the 2013 cotton harvest. Since then, the risk has been reduced to the point at which child labour has become socially unacceptable, as noted in 2015 and again this year. This is a major Uzbek achievement, made possible by the availability of educational facilities. Vigilance will be required to ensure the ongoing efficacy of measures against child labour, especially for 16-17 year old pupils in lyceums and same age students in colleges.
- Forced labour was first monitored by the ILO in 2015. The ILO concluded then that the recruitment process contained risks of forced labour. This year, the methodology used by the ILO looked at how commitments made by Uzbekistan in 2015 and 2016 to reduce the risk of forced labour were being applied and concludes that forced labour remains a risk for some categories of people, including staff of educational and medical facilities, staff of other public budget and private entities, and pupils/students of lyceums, colleges and higher education institutions. According to ILO quantitative and qualitative surveys of cotton pickers in 2014 and 2015, these groups, though at higher risk, are a minority of all pickers. Measures are not yet fully in place to reduce the risk, though some are being constructed.
- If called by their normal employer, most pickers continue to receive their salaries or student stipends, while receiving extra payment for the amount of cotton they pick. ILO experts were told of particular efforts by the authorities this year to ensure that payments to cotton pickers were made on time at least every five days. In some instances, incentive payments were made to pickers.
- Ministries and accredited organizations are becoming more aware of forced labour as an issue and have taken steps to build their capacity. Knowledge remains largely theoretical and has yet to influence the operational behaviour of officials. A national strategy for training should be established that helps recognize the risks of forced labour in the Uzbek context and how to apply risk mitigation measures effectively.
- Public awareness of forced labour is improved by the nationwide communications campaign of the Uzbek partners. Banners, posters, leaflets, radio, TV clips and SMS texts

were prominent during the harvest. Using appropriate messages and media to reach people vulnerable to forced labour is an ongoing task.

- Many intermediaries are involved in supplying seasonal agricultural workers for the cotton harvest. Roles and responsibilities are not always clear. A properly regulated labour relations and wage determination system that provides all pickers with adequate wages and decent working conditions would improve incentives to pick cotton voluntarily and reduce opportunities for abusive labour practices. The higher productivity of voluntary pickers would make the task of preventing forced labour entirely manageable.
- No incidences of child and forced labour were identified with regards to World Bank-supported agriculture, water and education projects. Project sites operate in a similar context and share similar risks of child or forced labour to that of others.

## Background

In 2013, the World Bank's Inspection Panel was requested to inspect a World Bank supported project in Uzbekistan because of allegations of child and forced labour. This led to discussions on the work of the ILO in Uzbekistan on child and forced labour and to the signing on 14 October 2014 of a Memorandum of Understanding concerning cooperation between the ILO and the World Bank on child and forced labour in cotton production in Uzbekistan. The cooperation aims at building capacities and increasing the awareness of decision makers, specialists, farmers, pickers and general public to minimize the risks of child and forced labour on one hand. On the other hand, the initiative is intended to assess any potential use of child and forced labour in specific projects areas financed/administered by the World Bank, and facilitate implementation of the Feedback Mechanism to resolve grievances related to issues of child and forced labour.

The WB-ILO cooperation revolves around four main components: capacity building, awareness-raising, Feedback Mechanism and Third Party Monitoring. After the 2015 cotton harvest and again in 2016, the ILO submitted its Third Party Monitoring assessment to the World Bank, covering the following projects:

- i. Second Rural Enterprise Support Project (P109126), including its Additional Financing (P126962) and the associated GEF project (P127486), implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources;
- ii. Horticulture Development Project (P133703), implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources;
- iii. South Karakalpakstan Water Resource Management Improvement Project (P127764), implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources; and
- iv. Improving Pre-primary and General Secondary Education Project (P144856), implemented by the Ministry of Public Education.

## 1. Policy Commitments

1. Since the 2015 cotton harvest, Uzbekistan has continued to adopt policies and implement action plans to tackle labour market challenges. Sustainable elimination of the risk of child and forced labour remains a prominent issue, which is addressed through enhancing skills, increasing jobs for youth, improving working conditions, better functioning labour markets and social protection measures. In October 2016, Uzbekistan ratified ILO Convention No. 87 concerning Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise, the last of the eight fundamental conventions. It is considering ratification of Conventions Nos. 81, 129, 132, 144, 183 and the ILO Protocol on Forced Labour (see the list of commitments in Annex 1).
2. Institutionally, the cooperation between the ILO and the Government of Uzbekistan, the Federation of Trade Unions and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry is supported by the Decent Work Country Programme signed in April 2014. Negotiations over its extension until 2020 are underway. Tripartite social dialogue between the Uzbek parties on issues of child and forced labour is functioning. National, sectorial, territorial and entity collective labour agreements exist, and they include the obligation to implement fundamental conventions, including on child and forced labour.
3. These policy commitments on child and forced labour were generally known by officials when interviewed by ILO experts. They formed the basis of discussions on the full range of measures that the Ministry or accredited organizations were to undertake.
4. The Uzbek partners are committed to further develop the Feedback Mechanism for members of the public to seek guidance as well as to raise complaints regarding child and forced labour and have such complaints investigated and resolved. The FBM of both the FTUU and Ministry of Labour were functioning during the 2016 cotton harvest, and there is a stated willingness to continue the process of improving performance and generating public confidence in the FBM, including with support from the ILO.
5. National monitoring of child and forced labour during the cotton harvest was undertaken again in 2016, in parallel to the work of ILO experts. This commitment of Uzbekistan to develop its own national capacity in monitoring has been supported by the ILO through training measures since 2014.
6. A well-functioning system of compulsory education for children is a prerequisite for the effective elimination of child labour, provided that there is a political willingness to deal with the issue. In Uzbekistan, the secondary education and secondary specialized education systems have large school networks. School authorities monitor the attendance of pupils and

students. Extra-curricular activities for children, introduced mandatorily in all secondary education schools during the harvest period, prove to be an effective additional measure against child labour.

7. The multidisciplinary approach to addressing social problems is institutionalized in Uzbekistan through the national programme "Mahalla-Family-School". It involves various actors at the local level solving social problems that families or people at risk, including children, may encounter. This programme is credited with helping to address child labour successfully and could well be adapted to addressing certain risks of forced labour.
8. In January 2016 the country reconfirmed its priority of modernizing agriculture and mechanizing cotton picking. It is acknowledged that this process requires time, resources and efforts.

#### **ILO definition of Forced Labour**

"All work or service which is exacted from any person under the menace of any penalty and for which the said person has not offered himself voluntarily."

Exceptions are provided for work required by compulsory military service, normal civic obligations, as a consequence of a conviction in a court of law, in cases of emergency, and for minor communal services performed by the members of a community in the direct interest of the community.

The convention requires that the illegal extraction of forced or compulsory labour be punishable as a penal offence, and that ratifying states ensure that the relevant penalties imposed by law are adequate and strictly enforced.

#### **ILO Standard Indicators of Forced Labour**

- i) Restricted mobility of workers (e.g. guards, high fences)
- ii) Isolation of workers
- iii) Abuse of workers' vulnerabilities
- iv) Deception of workers
- v) Physical or sexual violence against workers
- vi) Intimidation and threats against workers
- vii) Retention of workers' identity documents
- viii) Withholding wages
- ix) Debt bondage
- x) Abusive living and working conditions
- xi) Excessive overtime working

## 2. Assessment Process and Methodology

9. The ILO conducted Third Party Monitoring (TPM) of the use of child and forced labour during the 2016 cotton harvest according to a methodology agreed with the Uzbekistan partners and the World Bank. The methodology was designed to assess how the commitments made by the Government of Uzbekistan to eliminate risks of child and forced labour were implemented, how the systems of risk reduction and management operate, and how efficient they were in having an impact on vulnerable people.
10. In line with the methodology, ILO experts visited ministries, accredited organizations, educational and medical facilities, cotton fields and other sites, held interviews and gathered documents for the primary purpose of assessing what safeguard measures were in place and their efficacy regarding the behavior of officials and the experience of “at risk” groups.
11. Seven ILO experts, each with one national counterpart from the Federation of Trade Unions of Uzbekistan, conducted their work over a six week period in two phases: a pre-harvest phase lasting two weeks between 18 July and 19 August 2016; and a harvest phase lasting four weeks between 14 September and 28 October. The pre-harvest phase assessed whether the ministries and organizations associated with organized recruitment of cotton pickers have measures that prevent child and forced labour and the harvest phase assessed whether the measures were being implemented and verified during the harvest (see Annex 2 for list of ILO experts).
12. Orientation sessions on the methodology, instruments and interview guides were held for the ILO experts on 20-24 June 2016, for the focal points of each Ministry and accredited organizations on 12 July, for national counterparts on 15 July (pre-harvest) and 13 September (harvest), and a mid-harvest feedback session for ILO experts and national counterparts on 1 October 2016.

### Pre-harvest phase (July – August)

13. The pre-harvest phase coincides with the planning and recruitment process for cotton picking in Uzbekistan. Measures against the risk of child and forced labour should be ready at that time. Discussions by ILO experts with competent authorities and accredited organizations during the pre-harvest phase also served to raise awareness on what measures should be taken in preparation for the harvest.
14. During the pre-harvest phase, over 350 interviews were held with the Hokimiyats plus officials of 12 Ministries and accredited organizations that are members of the Co-ordination Council on Child Labour of Uzbekistan<sup>1</sup>:

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<sup>1</sup> Despite its name, the Coordination Council on Child Labour deals with issues related to forced labour as well.

Ministries	Accredited organizations
Labour, including Legal Labour Inspection	Federation of Trade Unions
Agriculture and Water Resources, including Rural Restructuring Agency	Chamber of Commerce and Industry
Public Education (covering the preprimary (kindergartens) and general secondary education (schools))	Women’s Committee
Health	Mahalla Foundation
Higher and Secondary Specialized Education, including the Centre for Secondary Specialized Education (covering the vocational education and training (lyceums and colleges) and tertiary education (institutes and universities))	Kamolot youth organization
	Farmers’ Council
<i>plus</i> Hokimiyats	Human Rights Centre

Interviews with the above institutions and organizations were conducted from top to bottom of the organizational hierarchy, in Tashkent City and at provincial, district and local levels. An interview guide for each Ministry and organization was used to structure discussions.

#### Harvest phase (September – October)

15. The harvest phase focused on the way in which cotton pickers at risk of child or forced labour were recruited and on the way officials were involved in recruiting them. During the harvest phase, all 13 Provinces and Tashkent City were visited by ILO experts for two weeks each. Over 800 sites were visited, half of them World Bank-supported projects sites. Over 1,700 interviews were conducted with Hokimiyats, officials of ministries and accredited organizations, directors of educational and medical facilities, farmers, cotton pickers and brigade leaders, public and private sector organizations, professional and non-professional staff, students and pupils. Site visits were often random and unannounced, although depending on the object, some were by appointment. A certain number of them targeted projects supported by the World Bank. Five interview questionnaires were used, depending on the person being interviewed. Site visits during the harvest phase ended on 28 October, though this year the harvest continued for several more weeks in Districts that had not reached the quota set for cotton to be picked.

16. Interview guides for the pre-harvest phase and questionnaires for the harvest phase were designed to reflect the focus of the methodology on assessing measures to reduce risks of



child and forced labour. They were broadly structured to provide information on measures taken covering:

- Awareness-raising and capacity-building against child and forced labour;
- Recruitment, labour relations and risk mitigation;
- Supervision and checking the application of safeguard and remediation measures.

17. These three main categories of measures need to be in place in order to provide protection for “at risk” groups. How well they are established within an organizational structure and embedded into the organizational culture will indicate whether they are fit-for-purpose in protecting people from child and forced labour. This allows for the adoption of robust avoidance rather than reactive strategies to risks of child and forced labour. This assessment treats each category in turn. (See Annex 3 and 4 for list of Districts visited and examples of interview guides and questionnaires.)

18. Access for ILO experts to officials, facilities and fields was generally excellent during both the pre-harvest and harvest phases. It was facilitated by Uzbek partners at national, regional and local levels. Answers to questions and a large volume of documents were generously provided by respondents, requiring further detailed analysis.

19. As in previous years, getting beyond what ILO experts were given to hear was at times difficult. Many interviewees appeared to have been briefed in advance. This has the advantage of raising awareness of the issue of child and forced labour and meant that evidence of measures were to hand. However, the result tends to be uniform responses given even when circumstances are different.

20. ILO experts can simply record what they observe and are told; it is not possible for them to verify the information received, though triangulation of information has been attempted whenever possible. Occasionally this has indicated some contradictions or anomalies. The ILO assessment relies on a wide range of information sources received by the ILO.

#### Quantitative Assessment of Recruitment Practices

21. ILO monitoring is not a statistical exercise, in contrast to the ILO surveys of recruitment practices in 2014 and 2015, the full analysis of which should be available in 2017. These surveys have been extensively discussed with the Uzbek counterparts, and the ILO has presented them during regular roundtables in 2015 and 2016. The surveys quantified the main groups of people recruited to pick cotton and identified those groups most likely to be voluntary, reluctant or involuntary pickers. They also quantified the likelihood of being called to pick cotton and who called them. The methodology for the ILO third-party monitoring and the structure of this report benefited from the preliminary results of the surveys.

22. The survey shows that, in 2015, there were 2.8 million pickers, 71% of whom women. Half the pickers were usually not economically active, such as housewives, or unemployed and university/college students. About two-thirds were recruited voluntarily. A minority were recruited involuntarily, whereas the remaining cotton pickers were to some degree reluctant, not necessarily due to the work but the conditions of work, and they most probably would willingly pick cotton if wages and working conditions were better.
23. Most pickers are “called” voluntarily by their mahalla or head of organization or Farmers’ Council, according to the survey. Cotton pickers most “at risk” of forced labour are medical and education staff, people employed elsewhere, and university/college students. The majority of them were called by their Director or University Rector, and a significant minority of them were recruited involuntarily.
24. Voluntary pickers have been found by the survey to be significantly more productive than reluctant pickers, who work because of social pressure. Involuntary pickers, who experience some form of coercion, are low productivity. These findings suggest that the harvest could be picked without any involuntary pickers by providing the right incentives through better wages and improved working conditions and accommodation.

### 3. Awareness-raising and capacity-building against child and forced labour

25. One aspect of any system of measures to safeguard against child and forced labour is the extent of awareness of the population about their labour rights and the capacity of institutions to recognize and respond in the right way. Of course, awareness of labour rights means that affected people know and are able to exercise them, and capacity means institutions having procedures in place that their officials know to follow when making decisions. ILO experts in the pre-harvest and harvest phases used the interviews to gauge the extent of awareness and capacity.

#### Awareness-raising

26. The public awareness campaign during the harvest was substantial. It reached remote villages. Messages on child and forced labour, on labour rights and on the Feedback Mechanism hotlines have been distributed nationwide on 836 banners, 44,500 posters, 100,000 leaflets, TV, radio and through SMS texts. The main messages of the campaign were: *“Everybody’s free choice to work is guaranteed”* and *“Everybody has the right to pick cotton voluntarily in decent working conditions or refuse to pick cotton”*.

27. The campaign was driven by FTUU and its local offices. Sometimes, at the local level, the above messages would get submerged by cotton harvest recruitment campaigns. Therefore, more synergy between hokimiats, Farmers’ Council, Mahalla Fund, The Women’s Committee, education and medical facilities, with involvement of the media, would help deliver information about job opportunities with labour rights to people at risk.

28. Awareness on child labour is high. The unacceptability of child labour is recognized by all sections of society: authorities, teachers, specialists, farmers, parents and children themselves.

29. Raising awareness on forced labour is work in progress. Almost all cotton pickers interviewed confirmed that they were informed that picking is voluntary, they may leave the field or they do not need to pay someone to pick instead of them. However, the rate of those who know how and where to complain in case of violation of their labour right was lower. This highlights the fact that efforts should be continued with better-targeted communication, underlining the rights of all citizens concerned and the ways to ensure the observance of these rights. It could come as part of a broader year-round campaign on decent work, in line with the UN Sustainable Development Goal 8.

30. The high level of awareness is largely due to the systematic information and capacity building activities by the FTUU, ML, MPE<sup>2</sup>, CCIU, etc. This was less applied, however, by other members of the Coordination Council on child labour, especially at the local level, yet they could also play a major role. A national capacity building and awareness raising strategy on child and forced labour with clear roles and responsibilities and impact assessment tools would be beneficial.

#### Capacity-building

31. Training workshops to build capacity of various actors from national to local level institutions and organizations were organized by the FTUU, ML, MAWR, MH, MPE, MHSSE, FC, MF, Women's Committee, Kamolot, and hokims, based on existing training infrastructures. The risk of forced labour is openly addressed, but theoretical understanding needs to be applied in practice. Recognizing forced labour in the Uzbekistan context, what measures should be established to reduce the risk and how to apply those safeguards is work in progress. A number of people still deny the existence of any risk.
32. Requests for further trainings were made by two thirds of respondents. These should be practical, better targeted, coordinated, systematic and with quality control elements. It is crucial to target more actively LI, FC, Kamolot, MF, the Women's Committee, especially at local levels. Specific training materials on child and forced labour were developed for the agriculture, health, education sectors and other target audiences, like hokims, trade unionists, etc. These need to be converted into more practical tools with a strengthened component on labour relationship, rights of workers, decent work, etc.
33. ILO experts were told of good examples of child and forced labour topics being integrated into the extracurricular activities and training curricula of pupils/students in secondary general, secondary specialized and higher education institutions. But this was not systematic. More could be done to institutionalize this practice at secondary specialized and higher education levels, particularly.

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<sup>2</sup> Awareness raising and capacity building activities by the MPE were conducted as part of the World Bank-supported GPE Project.

#### 4. Recruitment, labour relations and risk mitigation

34. A second element of the assessment of the system of measures to safeguard against child and forced labour relates to the employment relationship and responsibilities of the participating organizations to mitigate risks.
35. Labour relations cover the primary relationship between farmer and picker, their duties, wages and working conditions, the function of intermediaries, any contractual or regulatory requirements, and signs of hierarchy or dependency between those involved in recruitment. Cotton picking is neither a spontaneous nor individual activity. Every year, pickers' brigades are formed up to two months before the harvest. Nearly all pickers are "called" by someone. This year, ILO experts were told that more emphasis had been put on recruiting cotton pickers from amongst the unemployed.
36. During their site visits and interviews, ILO experts were told that many intermediaries play a role in facilitating the provision of pickers. This is not surprising, given the scale of the temporary labour force required. At the request of the FC, labour is provided in a way that involves directly or indirectly mahalla community officers, and in some cases school and college directors, university rectors, directors of medical facilities, heads of enterprises or state budget organizations, local authority officials, and other organizations, such as the Kamolot youth organization.
37. These intermediaries appear to operate with rudimentary knowledge of, or responsibility for, ensuring minimum working conditions or implementing the provisions of labour law. Although minimum standards are specified for wages and working conditions, their application varies. Pickers working in adjacent fields can work under different conditions of employment. For example, ILO experts were shown lists of brigades with deductions made from their pay for items like food while others did not. Many pickers were not fully aware whom they legally worked for.
38. Brigade leaders assume responsibilities for cotton pickers and may sign contracts on their behalf with the FC, but the status of these leaders is not clearly defined. For example, leaders of university student brigades may be the students' university lecturers or from Kamolot. Farmers are accountable for their pickers but cannot easily verify whether they are working involuntarily or whether their recruitment otherwise conforms to the law.
39. If called by their normal employer, most pickers continue to receive their salaries or student stipends, while receiving extra payment for the amount of cotton they pick. ILO experts were told of particular efforts by the authorities this year to ensure that payments to cotton pickers

were made on time at least every five days and, in some instances, incentive payments were made to pickers.

40. Picking is variously justified as a national duty, a community obligation, a temporary transfer of work tasks, or frequently an opportunity to earn additional income. The employment relationship and the role of intermediaries lack sufficient regulation. Most pickers deemed to be at risk are dependent on the intermediary for their main income or education. This results in multiple niches for potential malpractice.
41. Creating a functioning labour relations and wage determination system for cotton pickers would be a major step in reducing the risk of forced labour. The ILO experts observed that the foundations of such a system are being put in place but much remains to be done.
42. There should be a major role for the Ministry of Labour in this regard. Its role should be in defining, regulating and enforcing good practices, responsibilities and standards of labour relations, including amongst intermediaries. It should provide information and other services through local employment assistance centres for temporary agricultural workers. It should establish itself as an essential adviser to Pahtashtab<sup>3</sup> on labour availability, wages, working conditions and labour standards during the harvest, in order to help attract only voluntary pickers.
43. Although they exist, written job contracts are more often collective contracts between intermediaries on behalf of farmers and brigades of pickers, rather than written individual contracts between the farmer and picker. Contracts should specify wages, working conditions (standards of food, water, transport, accommodation, sanitary facilities, working time, etc.), and termination provisions, and justify any deductions. Wages based on the amount of cotton collected should ensure that an adequate daily wage can reasonably be earned, particularly at the late stages of the harvest.

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<sup>3</sup> Pahtashtab are working groups of local officials who ensure coordination and the proper functioning of the cotton harvest.

## 5. Supervision and checking the application of safeguard and remediation measures

44. The third element of the assessment of measures against the risk of child and forced labour focused on how well ministries and organizations conduct internal controls to ensure risk management becomes embedded into the organizational culture and into the decisions and behaviour of officials.
45. ILO experts noted cases of good internal tracking, control and reporting on implementation of measures to reduce the risk of child and forced labour in their Ministry or organization. This is not yet widespread, the most problematic being rural facilities. Some entities report up their hierarchy on staff picking cotton and some deny doing so. Some report to district Pahtashtabs but for reasons of checking quotas rather than as a measure against child and forced labour. The measures would need to be audited regularly, accountability of various levels of institutions/organizations for supervision/control should be raised and appropriate follow-up measures need to be implemented, in order to ensure that the system of safeguards performs.
46. The public education system, with its tradition of pupils' registers, along with other measures, plays an important role in keeping children away from cotton picking. This culture should be extended to implementing measures against risks of forced labour among adults, i.e. staff of educational, medical and other type of institutions/organizations and students above 18 years old.
47. Declarations made by vulnerable people of their willingness to pick may be unreliable if their recruitment is effectively carried out by those on whom they depend for their primary income or education. ILO experts noted that some intermediaries saw such declarations as confirmations that no coercion had taken place. Nonetheless, it would be good practice that parallel measures and options be available for potentially recruited staff to express alternative views in confidential ways.
48. In some regions, groups made up of representatives of hokimiyats, FC, the Women's Committee, mahallas and occasionally others, including prosecutors, claim to be visiting the fields to check cotton-picking processes, working conditions and the way farmers implement their legal obligations. It was not clear whether the checking process was ad hoc or planned and based on a standard methodology. There was scant evidence that the MAWR were actively engaged in risk management or inspecting the adherence to labour standards.
49. In 2016, national monitoring of child and forced labour was again conducted nationwide during the harvest by teams consisting of the FTUU, CCIU, Kamolot and other accredited

organizations. It reportedly carried out 386 monitoring visits, which identified three cases of children picking cotton and 74 farms with inadequate working conditions, such as substandard living conditions, delay of wage payment or payments below the set minimum wage. In all cases remedial action was taken. National Uzbek monitoring is showing potential to transform itself into an effective supplementary instrument of supervision.

50. The Feedback Mechanisms of both the FTUU and Ministry of Labour were functioning in 2016. Investigations of complaints from the public about child and forced labour are acting as a supervisory mechanism after an alleged event. Reforms since last year have incorporated some international best practice principles into the Mechanisms. These include now anonymous complaints to the FTUU's FBM, greater transparency, streamlined process of registering and monitoring complaints, engagement of volunteers to strengthen FBM hotline capacity, and an appeals process. During the 2016 harvest, the FBM under the FTUU received 1,902 requests, of which 85 complaints/requests for information directly related to cotton picking. Six cases of child labour were confirmed, two cases were recognized as presenting risks of forced labour and some more referred to sub-standard working conditions. The ML received 3,919 inquiries during the cotton harvest. Thirty of these were registered as grievances. Of them, two grievances related to child labour and three to forced labour. An additional five infringements related to child labour and nine related to forced labour were identified by legal labour inspectors during the cotton harvesting season independently. No complaints to the FBM against higher-level officials have been upheld, though administrative fines and dismissals against more junior officials have reportedly resulted from some investigations into child and forced labour. Effectiveness will require generating further public confidence in using the FBM and clarity over their respective roles. This calls for enhanced publicity, transparency, standard operating procedures for investigating complaints, and an ongoing process of introducing and testing reforms and organizational structures. It also requires regional capacity building, and exchange of good practices for labour inspectors and lawyers on how to investigate and resolve complaints in a sensitive manner, while protecting the interests of all the involved parties. Harmonization of the two FBM channels and further standardization of procedures are recommended in order to simplify the use and ensure sustainability.

51. ILO experts saw some evidence, albeit limited, that the Labour Inspection participates in either of the above initiatives. This leaves the state institution legally mandated with the control over the implementation of labour legislation with insufficient opportunity for implementing measures against the risks of child and forced labour other than in response to specific complaints. Information and provision of advice to employers and workers by the labour inspectors are two of their key roles along with enforcement, according to ILO Conventions No. 81 and 129. These Conventions are not yet ratified by Uzbekistan, but they provide guidance for labour inspection in the specific context of the cotton harvest. They are



also under consideration for ratification. Restrictions to the access of labour inspectors to workplaces, such as formal approval by a higher authority, prior notification of the employer, not visiting the same workplace more than once a year, are not in conformity with the guidance of the Conventions. Efforts should be made to increase the capacities of labour inspectors to prevent and address cases of child and forced labour, in which they have a potentially significant role.

## 6. Groups “at risk” of being called to pick cotton

52. ILO experts were able to interview “at risk” groups and their “callers” (normally their organizational head, such as university rector, school and college head, director of medical facility and other entities), as defined by the ILO’s qualitative and quantitative surveys. The main categories determined to be “at risk” of being called to pick cotton are: i) educational and technical staff of schools and colleges, ii) medical and technical staff of medical facilities, iii) students 18 years and older, and iv) staff of other state budget and private sector entities. Most of these people are dependent on the person calling them to pick for their main livelihood or education.

### i. Kindergartens, schools, lyceums and colleges

53. ILO experts visited over 190 kindergarten and schools, and over 40 colleges and lyceums, and spoke to over 260 teaching and 60 non-teaching staff. Pupil/student attendance was high. Staff attendance was also generally high, though some registers were unavailable. Some staff said they pick cotton outside normal working hours. In a number of such institutions, the head reported weekly the number of staff doing so to District education officials. The institutions function normally during the harvest, as far as ILO experts could tell.

54. Measures to prevent child and forced labour include legal prohibition of involving pupils/students at any time and staff of public education system and secondary specialized education in cotton picking during school hours. They also include ministerial instructions, awareness and training events, mandatory extra-curricular activities for children and attendance tracking of pupils and staff. The focus is on child labour, which generally does not exist in cotton picking. It is worth noting that along with the political commitment of authorities to eliminate child labour, the widespread availability of educational facilities as an alternative to work places, has enabled the decision to prohibit child labour to be realized quickly, unlike in many parts of the world. Ongoing vigilance is needed, and this seems fully recognized in Uzbekistan.

55. Vocational college students are not called to pick cotton, even if they are 18 years or older. In some colleges, attendance registers need to be improved.

### ii. Institutes and universities

56. Visits to 26 higher education institutions were undertaken. Most of them were not operating fully during the harvest as students were picking cotton for about one month. Brigade leaders are from faculty or Kamolot. Students from non-agricultural profile institutions in Tashkent are less likely to be organized for cotton picking. The Ministry of Higher and Secondary Specialized Education needs to address forced labour as a relevant topic and increase awareness among their staff and students of how to minimize the risks of forced labour.

57. Recruitment, working conditions and logistics are organized between the Kamolot, the University Rector and the Farmers' Council. Yet these generally lack expertise or an explicit mandate in labour relations. Students do not participate in the negotiations, and this leaves space for potential abuses. Risks could be reduced with proper regulations and the capacity of actors involved in the recruitment process could be improved with tools and knowledge.
58. Written requests by students to participate in the harvest were provided to ILO experts but other evidence of measures to safeguard students against forced labour was rarely available. Given the dependency of students on the authorities who participate in the recruitment, the real extent of voluntariness is unclear. Students remain at risk of forced labour. The Ministry of Higher and Secondary Specialized Education should cooperate with the Ministry of Labour on measures to ensure voluntariness on one hand and the possibility for expressing an alternative view on the other. The whole of the MHSSE should play a full role in the Coordination Council on Child Labour which deals with forced labour as well, in recognition of its responsibility to minimize risks of forced labour amongst students.
59. For the large number of students who choose to pick cotton, improved working conditions of student brigades should be ensured throughout the whole system. Deductions from earnings are made for food in some student brigades but not in others. Accommodation quality varies considerably. Minimum standards should be enforced and thoroughly supervised.

### iii. Medical staff

60. ILO experts visited over 50 medical care facilities. Most of them function normally during the harvest, as far as the ILO experts could tell. Staff attendance is usually monitored. In most cases where medical staff were assigned to cotton picking brigades, it was for the provision of medical services. Still, despite the legal prohibition of involving staff of medical institutions in cotton picking, there were cases when these were found picking cotton. The medical staff reported that they were working voluntarily, mostly outside working hours. Some staff (both medical and technical) were registered on leave to participate in cotton picking in other localities.
61. Broadly, preventative measures include legislation and ad-hoc awareness-raising. Awareness of child and forced labour risks is high. Other measures, however, are not well developed. The Health Ministry should pay more attention to risks of forced labour, given that there is an announced policy against medical staff going to harvest other than to provide medical services.

### iv. Other organized pickers

62. ILO experts visited directors and staff of other public budget and private entities. These staff may be vulnerable to being called by their employer to participate in the cotton harvest or to pay not to go. Brigades of staff from such organizations were seen picking cotton in the fields.

The ILO is informed that, sometimes, the entity itself will make a financial contribution instead of sending its staff to pick cotton.

63. In 2016, hokimiyats had been instructed not to request contributions of staff, money or motivational prizes from private companies. Information from secondary sources indicates that such requests in 2016 were less insistent than in previous years.
64. The ILO experts found that few entities had enacted measures against the risk of forced labour or procedural guidance on how the Director should react in the event of receiving a request for staff to pick cotton. Some were generally aware of these risks and the protective measures that could be taken. Reporting up their organizational hierarchy on the presence or absence of staff in the fields does not seem to be required. The lack of clear instructions from the top of the organizational structure leaves directors, as well as their staff, exposed to unauthorized requests to provide staff by the local authorities trying to fulfill their quota.
65. The Ministry of Labour and social partners should continue awareness-raising activities and inform entities and hokimiyats accordingly. If the entity forms part of a larger organization, this organization needs to accept responsibility for protecting its staff from the risk of forced labour by issuing clear guidance and requiring regular reports.

## 7. World Bank-supported projects

66. ILO experts visited a total of 367 sites (farms, schools, enterprises, etc.) of four World Bank-supported projects throughout the country in order to assess if they were using child or forced labour, in contravention of agreements between the World Bank and the Government of Uzbekistan, or had taken particular measures to prevent child and forced labour. The projects were: Improving Pre-Primary and General Secondary Education Project (GPE), Second Phase of the Rural Enterprise Support Project (RESP II, including RESP II Additional Financing), Horticulture Development Project (HDP), and South Karakalpakstan Water Resource Improvement Project (SKWRIP). The number of sites visited was equivalent to an average of 6% of all 6,282 identified World Bank-supported project sites. The minimum number of sites to be visited during the harvest phase by ILO experts for each project was agreed with World Bank project managers in advance. (see Annex 5)

World Bank-supported Project	Project component	Total beneficiaries	Beneficiaries visited by ILO	% of total beneficiaries
<b>GPE</b>	Pre-schools	2,420	92	4%
	Schools	1,632	106	7%
<b>RESP II (incl. RESP II AF)</b>	Entrepreneurs who received sub-loans for agricultural (non-cotton-related) activities	566	51	9%
	Farmers who are members of Water Users Associations benefitting from water canal repairs	1,200	77	6%
<b>HDP</b>	Entrepreneurs who received sub-loans for horticultural (non-cotton-related) activities	42	20	48%
<b>SKWRIP</b>	Cotton farms in areas that will benefit from improved water supply system, and did not sign up for mechanized harvesting in 2016	422	21	5%
<b>Total</b>		<b>6,282</b>	<b>367</b>	<b>6%</b>

67. World Bank-supported projects have a variety of direct and indirect beneficiaries with different relationships to the risks of child and forced labour. Specific mitigation measures against child and forced labour have been agreed with the World Bank.

Some of the farmers, who benefited from water canal repairs under RESP II project or will benefit under the SKWRIP project, grow cotton. Potentially, child or forced labour could be used to pick the cotton in their fields. For these beneficiaries, preventative measures put in place include (i) legal clauses in the agreements with the Water Users Associations; and (ii) training and awareness activities on preventing child and forced labour.

Staff of GPE-funded schools and pre-schools could be called to pick cotton against their will or be requested to pay for hiring replacement workers. For these beneficiary institutions, the preventative measures in place include information and awareness-raising campaigns and training activities, which focus on the use of the national Feedback Mechanism to report any coercion.

Entrepreneurs receiving sub-loans for non-cotton agricultural activities through the HDP and RESP II projects could be requested to either contribute labour directly or pay for hiring replacement workers for the cotton harvest. For these project beneficiaries, preventative measures in place include legal clauses in sub-loan agreements about prohibition of child and forced labour as well as information and awareness-raising through the training programs of the projects.

68. The methodology used by the ILO experts did not differ between interviews at World Bank-supported project sites and non-World Bank sites. ILO experts assessed whether measures were in place by competent authorities and by beneficiaries themselves to reduce the risk of child and forced labour and whether they were having an impact on the behaviour of officials and “at risk” groups of pickers. Interviews were conducted with direct and indirect beneficiaries, with staff, pupils, students and pickers. As in 2015 and in view of the ILO’s assessment of risks of forced labour in general, concerns arose over the candidness of interviewees, the accuracy of staff attendance registers and the real degree of voluntarism of pickers from World Bank-supported institutions or working on World Bank supported project sites.
69. No incidences of child or forced labour were found during the site visits. The majority of interviewees appeared well informed about the prohibition of child and forced labour and were aware of the publicity and the Feedback Mechanism. The local FC representatives seemed active in this respect. In common with non-GPE schools, GPE schools had specific measures in place, such as pupils and staff attendance recording, widespread awareness raising and capacity building activities, extracurricular activities for children during the harvest season, etc. This may point to the tradition of the MPE compared to other ministries, as well as the performance of the GPE project.

70. When visiting World Bank-supported project sites, ILO experts noted information and capacity-building sessions, legal provisions and monitoring measures. These complement general activities by the World Bank against child and forced labour at national level. Standardized provisions against the use of child and forced labour in the agreements between the FC and brigade leaders, monitoring by the FC and other accredited organizations, wages and working conditions of pickers all appeared to be equivalent to sites not covered by the World Bank projects. As such, being part of the general system, World Bank-supported project beneficiaries are exposed to the same potential risks of child and forced labour.
71. However, World Bank-supported project beneficiaries might be less vulnerable to some of these risks. This arises from the mere fact of being World Bank beneficiaries, who are able to alert the competent authorities of the potential consequences of non-compliance, as well as benefitting from more awareness raising and capacity building events on the prohibition of child and forced labour. ILO experts could not observe this in practice, of course, and there is no evidence that the competent authorities treat World Bank-supported projects any differently from other entities. For this reason, the ILO cannot at this stage yet conclude that particular measures were put in place in World Bank-supported projects to an extent which would be sufficient to prevent the reversal of such measures and safeguards once the World Bank support ends.

## 8. Conclusions and recommendations

72. Recognizing the risks of forced labour enables the authorities and institutions to take specific measures against them. Policy commitments and action plans have a helpful supporting role. Nevertheless, a number of organizations and competent authorities explained that they were not involved in the provision of pickers or that the risk of forced labour did not exist. Various justifications were given for such statements despite inconsistent accounts that had been received from within the same organizations.
73. The Ministry of Public Education has measures embedded in its procedures and structures to prevent the organized use of children in the harvest. Child labour is generally absent from cotton picking. Ongoing vigilance is needed, particularly by the Ministry of Higher and Secondary Specialized Education of the most vulnerable 16 – 17 year old age group in lyceums and colleges, and this seems to be fully recognized in Uzbekistan.
74. The information campaign on child and forced labour has been substantial, and it has used a wide variety of media outlets. Messages on forced labour have highlighted the element of choice in the recruitment of cotton pickers. More targeting of messages towards vulnerable pickers, those involved in their recruitment, and local officials is an ongoing task.
75. Much has been done to build the capacity of ministry officials, accredited organizations and competent authorities on forced labour issues. It is work in progress. High quality training at all levels should emphasize recognizing the risks of forced labour in the Uzbek context and developing practical risk-reduction measures. A comprehensive national training strategy that is incorporated into the training infrastructures available in each ministry and organization should be adopted.
76. There are many intermediaries participating in the recruitment process, and this can lead to situations where cotton picking is done involuntarily. Strengthening a functioning labour relations system for cotton pickers would be a major step in reducing the risk of forced labour and formalizing seasonal agricultural work. The Ministry of Labour has a central role to play in defining roles and responsibilities, regulating and licensing participants, specifying minimum wages and working conditions, providing information to job seekers and other active labour market policies, and enforcing application of the system. A comprehensive approach would have to involve the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources.
77. The Farmers' Council, together with other accredited organizations involved in the recruitment of pickers, need to shift focus towards the unemployed population instead of



staff and university students who are already fully occupied. This would require good information on who the unemployed are and how to organize them voluntarily into brigades.

78. The Ministry of Higher and Secondary Specialized Education should cooperate with the Ministry of Labour on measures to ensure voluntariness and better working conditions of student brigades. The role of the Kamolot youth organization needs to be better defined and where necessary regulated.
79. The Ministries of Health, of Public Education, and of Higher and Secondary Specialized Education need to increase awareness among their staff and pupils/students 18 or over about the risks of forced labour. Measures need to be embedded into their organizational structures and procedures that reduce the risk of forced labour, including any requirements to pick cotton outside normal working time.
80. Other public budget and private entities need to raise awareness of, and directors need to have clear guidance on their right to resist calls to provide staff to the harvest. FTUU and CCIU can assist in disseminating guidance.
81. Declarations of willingness by vulnerable people may be unreliable if they are led to consent by those on whom they directly depend for their livelihoods or education. Such declarations need to be treated with caution unless they are accompanied by parallel measures and options for expressing an alternative view. Justifications should not be required for preferring not to pick; authorization for not picking should be unnecessary; and unless termination conditions are specified in contracts, reasons to decide to stop picking should not be requested.
82. Important measures have been introduced for voluntary recruitment but they are not yet robust enough to change recruitment practices or the experience of pickers decisively. Local imperatives from the hokimiyats to achieve the picking quota can over-ride good practices and procedures. National monitoring and the Feedback Mechanism are playing an increasing role in preventative measures. These should aim at ensuring public confidence in the exclusive reliance of voluntary recruitment practices.
83. Changing ingrained practices and social attitudes of a large-scale organized recruitment system takes time, political will and capacity. This will involve many actors. Yet the issue is manageable: it is feasible to arrive at a situation where there are sufficient safeguards, procedures and awareness that not only child labour but also all risks of forced labour in the cotton harvest are eliminated and remedies are readily available in case of abuse.

## List of Annexes

- Annex 1 Policy commitments and action plans by the Government of Uzbekistan, the social partners and other accredited organizations.
- Annex 2 Names of ILO experts who conducted pre-harvest and harvest assessments.
- Annex 3 Interview guides and questionnaires used by ILO experts.
- Annex 4 Districts covered by ILO experts.
- Annex 5 Number of World Bank-supported project sites visited by ILO experts, by project and province.
- Annex 6 ILO presentation made at Round Table in Tashkent on 17 November 2016.
- Annex 7 List of acronyms

## Annex 1

### **Policy commitments and action plans by the Government of Uzbekistan, the social partners and other accredited organizations**

**08.12.1992** - *Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan, prohibiting any form of forced labour and giving legal basis for protection of people against discrimination, exploitation and forcing;*

**22.09.1994** - *Criminal Code, Article 138 prohibits forced confinement. A person involved in such acts is punishable by a fine up to fifty minimum monthly wages, or correctional labour up to three years or a restriction of freedom from one to three years or imprisonment up to three years;*

**21.12.1995** - *Labour Code, article 7, prohibits forced labour, i.e. coercion to perform work under the threat of any penalty (including as a means of labour discipline);*

*Criminal Code, Article 135 (article amended on 29.08.2001) prohibits trafficking in human beings. According to this article the person involved in trafficking will be subject to life detention for 3 to 5 years;*

*Criminal Code, Article 137 (article amended on 29.08.2001) describes measures taken against the persons involved in kidnapping. Such an offense is punishable by restraint of liberty for three to five years, or imprisonment from three to five years. The same act committed, for example, against a minor is punishable by imprisonment from five to ten years. The same act, which has involved serious consequences, shall be punished with imprisonment from ten to fifteen years;*

**12.09.2008** - *Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers № 207 on measures for implementation of the Convention on the Minimum Age for Admission to Employment and the Convention on Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour ratified by the Republic of Uzbekistan;*

*Administrative Code, Article 49 (article amended on 21.12.2009) imposes a punishment on the official who violated labour and labour protection legislation, a penalty of two to five minimum wages. If the violation has been committed against a minor, the penalty is increased from five to ten minimum wage;*

*Administrative Code, Article 49-1 (article introduced on 21.12.2009) states that the employment of children in work that can harm their health, safety or morals, is punishable by a fine from one to three minimum wages;*

*Administrative Code, Article 51 (article amended on 21.12.2009) prohibits the officials with administrative functions from imposing any form of compulsory labour, except in cases provided by law. Violation of this article shall be sanctioned by a fine of one to three minimum wages. The same offense committed against a minor is punishable by a fine of five to ten minimum wage;*

**26.03.2012** - Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers № 82 on additional measures for implementation during 2012-2013 of the Convention on Forced Labour and the Convention on the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour ratified by the Republic of Uzbekistan;

**05.27.2014** - Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers № 132 on additional measures for implementation during 2014-2016 of conventions of the International Labour Organization (ILO) ratified by the Republic of Uzbekistan;

**07.07.2015** – Action Plan of measures regarding preparatory works for free hiring of pickers by farming enterprises through labour market facilities and non-admission of cases of child labour and forced labour during the cotton season in 2015, and PM letter to the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Karakalpakstan and hokims of provinces on implementation of this AP, of October 3rd, 2015.

**13.08.2015** - Minutes of the Cabinet of Ministers that establishes the prohibition against child and forced labour in the cotton harvest, approved by the Prime Minister;

**08.09.2015** - Plan of measures on further development of co-operation with the ILO (which includes monitoring and the Decent Work Country Programme), approved by the First Deputy Prime Minister;

**03.10.2015** - Letter of the Prime Minister addressed to the Chairman of the Karakalpakstan Cabinet of Ministers and to Governors (hokims) of all Provinces, instructing them on implementation of the prohibition of child and forced labour, especially in health and education facilities for under 18-year-olds;

**07.01.2016** - Action Plan for the improvement of working conditions, employment and social protection of workers in agriculture in 2016-2018, approved by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Uzbekistan, № 02 / 7-28;

**24.03.2016** - Action Plan to enforce the ILO conventions on forced and child labour, ratified by the Republic of Uzbekistan, approved by the First Deputy Prime Minister of Uzbekistan, № 02-1 / 1577;

**22.07.2016** - Plan of practical measures to further enhance cooperation with the International Labour Organization (ILO) on the basis of participation of the Republic of Uzbekistan delegation in the 105th session of the International Labour Conference (30 May - 10 June 2016, Geneva, Switzerland), approved by the First Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Uzbekistan, № 02 / 7-28;

**23.08.2016** - Joint letter of the Ministry of Labour and the Federation Council of Trade Unions of Uzbekistan, addressed to the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Karakalpakstan and regional khokimiyats on holding information campaign to ensure free recruitment and elimination of child and forced labour during cotton harvest;

**23.09.2016** – *Joint letter of Federation of Trade Unions and the Chamber of Commerce of Uzbekistan, addressed to the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Karakalpakstan and regional khokimiyats on the need to create hygienic conditions, provision of medical assistance and daily warm food to pickers;*

**12.10.2016** - *Amendments to the law on Trade Unions, their rights and guarantees of their activity;*

**28.10.2016** - *Employment programme for 2017;*

**22.09.2016** - *Amendments to the law on Labour Protection;*

*The Contract between Uzpahtasanoatexport holding and farmers on purchase of raw cotton includes a provision on unacceptability of use of child and forced labour in cotton picking. If such cases are detected, the raw cotton is not purchased;*

*CCI Program "Kaizen - Lean Production", aimed at efficient use of labour resources, creation of decent conditions and respective salary level for employee.*

## Annex 2

### **Names of ILO experts who conducted pre-harvest and harvest assessments.**

1. Svetlana Egorova
2. Wiking Husberg
3. Jana Costachi
4. Oxana Gerasimova
5. Leyla Shamchiyeva
6. Kassiyet Tulegenova
7. Oxana Lipcanu

## Annex 3

### Cities and districts covered by ILO experts during the harvest phase

1. **Tashkent:** Angren city and Bekabad, Buka, Qibray, Oqqurgan, Piskent, Quyi Chirchiq, Orta Chirchiq, Yukori Chirchiq Districts;
2. **Fergana:** Fergana city, Kokand city; and Altyariq, Baghdad, Beshariq, Dangara, Furqat, Kuva, Qo'shtepa, Uzbekistan and Yozyovan<sup>4</sup> Districts;
3. **Kashkadarya:** Karshi city; and Guzar, Karshi, Koson, Myrishkor, Muborak, Nishon Districts;
4. **Sirdarya:** Gulistan city; Akaltin, Bayaut, Khavast, Mirzaabad and Sardob Districts;
5. **Navoi:** Navoi city and Karmana, Kyzyltepa, Khatyrchi, Navbakhor districts;
6. **Samarkand:** Samarkand City and Jomboy, Oqdarya, Payariq, Pastdargom, Samarqand, Urgut districts;
7. **Djizak:** Djizak city and Dustlik, Gallaorol, Djizak, Pakhtakor, Zaamin districts;
8. **Surkhandarya:** Termez city and Angor, Jakurghon, Muzrabot, Sherobod, Kizirik districts;
9. **Andijan:** Andijan city and Baliqchi, Boz, Oltinkol, Shakhrihon, Ulugnor districts;
10. **Karakalpakstan:** Nukus city and Beruniy, Shimbay, Elikqala, Qanliko'l, Shumanay, To'rtkul districts;
11. **Khorrazm:** Urgench City and Khazarasp, Khanka, Kushkupir, Urgench, Kiva districts;
12. **Bukhara:** Bukhara City and Bukhara, Alat, Gijduvon, Karaulbazar, Karakul, Shafirkan, Kagan Districts;
13. **Namangan:** Namangan City and Namangan, Uychi, Turakagan, Minbuloq, Chortok districts.

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<sup>4</sup> In the Yozyovan district, visits were undertaken to World Bank-supported RESP project sites only.

## Annex 4

### **Interview guides and questionnaires used by ILO experts**

#### **During the pre-harvest phase:**

1. Interview guide for the Ministry of Labour, its subordinate agencies, institutions and establishments;
2. Interview guide for the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources, its subordinate agencies, institutions and establishments;
3. Interview guide for the Ministry of Public Education, its subordinate agencies, institutions and establishments;
4. Interview guide for the Ministry of Higher and Specialized Secondary Education, its subordinate agencies, institutions and establishments;
5. Interview guide for the Ministry of Health, its subordinate agencies, institutions and establishments;
6. Interview guide for the Hokimiyats;
7. Interview guide for the Federation of Trade Unions;
8. Interview guide for the Chamber of Commerce and Industry;
9. Interview guide for the Women's Committee;
10. Interview guide for the Kamolot;
11. Interview guide for the Farmers' Council;
12. Interview guide for the Mahalla Fund;
13. Interview guide for the Human Rights Centre;
14. Interview guide for the Water Users Associations.



## INTERVIEW GUIDE (example)

### Federation of Trade Unions of Uzbekistan

This interview is carried out as part of the Assessment of measures against child and forced labour in cotton picking in Uzbekistan by the ILO and the Uzbek counterparts. The assessment aims at identifying the systemic measures in place in the country to minimise the risk of child and forced labour in the cotton harvest and the way they are translated into practice at various levels.	
<b>Visit code:</b>	...../...../...../...../..... initials/ tuman / viloyat / date / time
Name of the institution/organization ( <i>Ministry/subsidiary agency/establishment</i> ) and location (province/ district/locality):	
Name and title of the interviewee(s):	
Date: dd/mm/yyyy: ...../...../.....	
Time: hh/mm: ...../.....	
Name of the interviewer:	

### Awareness raising and capacity building

*This set of questions aims at identifying the measures taken to maintain high levels of awareness and capacity amongst officials, staff and other categories of population on the prohibition of child and forced labour<sup>5</sup>.*

1. Has the organization carried out trainings/ seminars/ informative events on child and forced labour for its:
  - staff and members **Yes/ No**
  - other groups (especially those at risk of child and forced labour<sup>6</sup>) **Yes/ No**

If yes, please, provide details on number of participants, exact topics, timing, duration, frequency, plan of events if available, are the topics part of specific trainings or integrated into more general ones? Show evidence if available (agenda, lists of participants, reports, training plan, etc.).

<sup>5</sup> AP for improving working conditions, employment and social protection of workers in agricultural sector in 2016-2018; AP on ensuring implementation in 2016 of the ILO Conventions on elimination of forced and child labour, ratified by Uzbekistan; 2015 TPM report

<sup>6</sup> This category may include, but is not limited to students, staff of medical and education institutions, etc.

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2. Has the staff and members of your organization participated in trainings/ seminars/ informative events on child and forced labour carried out by other organization/ institution:  
**Yes/ No**

If yes, kindly provide details who participated, who organized the event, exact topics, timing, duration, etc.

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3. What is the level of awareness and capacities of staff and members on:  
child labour,

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forced labour,

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measures to address those,

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responsibility for violating the legislation on child and forced labour (R203) and existing sanctions

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how to protect themselves against fraudulent or abusive recruitment and employment practices, their rights and responsibilities at work, and how to gain access to assistance in case of need, including the FBM (hotlines) (R203).

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4. How do you ensure that staff, members of your organization and general public overall who voluntarily pick cotton, are aware of their right to leave the cotton field if they change their mind?

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5. Is there need for further trainings on child and forced labour for your organization?  
Yes/ No

If yes, name topics, timeframe, target audience, etc.

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**Recruitment related activities and mitigation of the risks of child and forced labour among voluntary cotton pickers**

*This set of questions aims to identify the role of the organization in the recruitment process (direct or indirect), if any, what the specific related responsibilities of the organization are and the measures it takes to prevent the risks of child and forced labour among its staff, members and other categories of population.*

6. What is the role (including oversight function) that your organization plays in organizing the recruitment of cotton pickers, at different levels (national, province, district)? What is the role (including oversight function) that your organization plays in coordinating supply of cotton pickers, at different levels (national, province, district)?

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7. What are the measures that your organization takes to support free hiring of cotton pickers, especially among unemployed people and other job seekers across the whole country? (*internal regulations, cooperation with other partners, etc.*)<sup>7</sup>

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8. What are the measures that your organization takes to ensure non- participation in cotton picking of education and medical institutions' staff and pupils/students above 18 during working hours and pupils/students below 18 at all? (*internal regulations, capacity building, awareness raising, cooperation with labour inspection, TUs, etc.*)<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> AP for the free hiring of cotton pickers for the 2015 harvest; AP for improving working conditions, employment and social protection of workers in agricultural sector in 2016-2018; AP on practical measures to develop cooperation with the ILO

<sup>8</sup> Labour Code, AP for the free hiring of cotton pickers for the 2015 harvest; AP on practical measures to develop cooperation with the ILO, p. 10; relevant CEACR comments on implementation of C 105

9. What are the measures that your organization takes to ensure that neither it nor any of its responsible staff and members are associated with coercion or threats of penalties (either explicitly or implicitly)? (such as over employment, income, promotion)<sup>9</sup>.

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10. What are the measures that your organization takes to ensure that forced labour is not directly or indirectly facilitated by and within the organization, for example through payments in lieu of labour for cotton picking, or by putting pressure on staff and members to persuade family members to pick cotton against their will?

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11. What are the measures that your organization takes to ensure respect of labour and social protection rights of cotton pickers (contracts; working conditions, such as food, drinking water, breaks, transportation, the costs of which should not be deducted from their wages; etc.)?<sup>10</sup>

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12. Are the individual consents of staff and members of your organization for picking cotton voluntarily filed during working hours?

**Yes/ No**

13. Please, elaborate on how is the voluntariness of staff picking cotton during working hours without any threat of penalty ensured and verified.<sup>11</sup>

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**If the organization plays a role in the recruitment process (Q 6), go to Qs 14 . If not, go to Q 15**

14. Please, elaborate on the measures that the organization takes in cases when too few people volunteer to pick cotton.

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<sup>9</sup> 2015 TPM report; CEACR Observation to C105 of 2015

<sup>10</sup> AP for improving working conditions, employment and social protection of workers in agricultural sector in 2016-2018

<sup>11</sup> 2015 TPM report, CEACR comments

### **Enforcement of legislation**

*This set of questions aims to identify the measures taken by the organization to implement the legislation on child and forced labour, including on elimination of abuses and fraudulent practices by labour recruiters. It also looks into the application of sanctions and/or corrective measures.*

15. What are the measures that your organization takes to ensure the implementation of legislation on child and forced labour?

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16. Please, elaborate on the FBM, its criteria for functioning, main results, challenges ahead and perspectives for further improvement.

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### **Supervision/Monitoring/Evidence**

*This set of questions aims to identify the human resources involved in/responsible for actions against child and forced labour, at national, province and district levels. It also aims at identifying the available mechanisms to implement and monitor the existing commitments in child and forced labour.*

17. Is there a designated person at this level of the organisation (national, province, district) responsible for applying policy, monitoring implementation and reporting on measures taken to minimise the risk of child and forced labour?

**Yes/ no**

If yes, please, give details on his/her title, % of work share on child and forced labour, rank, job descriptions, etc.

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18. Does the responsibility apply to just this organisation, to member organisations, and to other organisations with which you interact at this level?

**Yes/ No**

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19. Please, provide information on monitoring/checks of member organizations in view of their compliance with the legislation and policy commitments? Kindly elaborate, by describing the frequency, scope, outcomes, corrective/ remedial action, etc. of such monitoring/visits with evidence.

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20. Please, elaborate on anything else that the organization is or is not doing or might do to reduce the risk of child and forced labour.

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**During the harvest phase:**

1. Interview guide for province and district authorities and organizations (Khokimiyats, territorial departments of the ML, MAWR, MPE, CSSE, MH, Kamolot, Women Committee, FC, FTUU, CCIU);
2. Questionnaire for cotton pickers;
3. Questionnaire for farmer/ brigade leader/ WB supported project;
4. Questionnaire for the heads of educational and medical institutions and private companies;
5. Questionnaire for the staff of educational and medical institutions and private companies;
6. Questionnaire for the pupils/students of educational institutions and private companies;
7. Daily report form.

**QUESTIONNAIRE FOR COTTON PICKERS (example)**

This interview is carried out as part of the Assessment of measures against child and forced labour in cotton picking in Uzbekistan by the ILO and the Uzbek counterparts. The assessment aims at identifying the systemic measures in place in the country to minimise the risk of child and forced labour in the cotton harvest and the way they are translated into practice at various levels.		
<b>Visit code:</b>	initials/ tuman / viloyat / date / time	Date: dd/mm/yyyy:
Name of the institution/organization ( <i>Ministry/subsidiary agency/establishment</i> )		
<b>DO NOT FILL IT IN!</b>		
Location (viloyat)	Tuman	Locality/ nearest locality
GPS:	En route/ Planned	
Name of the interviewer:		
WB supported project/ not a WB supported project		

Male	Female	Age
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Younger than 18 years old</li> <li>• 18 years or older</li> </ul>
<p>1. Are you a:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• permanent worker / member of the farm;</li> <li>• temporary worker</li> </ul>		
<p>2. Who called you to pick cotton?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. the farmer</li> <li>b. Leader or friend from self-organized brigade</li> <li>c. My boss or someone in authority from employment place</li> <li>d. My teacher or head of college/university</li> <li>e. Mahalla representative</li> <li>f. Someone who wanted to be replaced as a cotton picker</li> <li>g. Law enforcement officer</li> <li>h. No one, I volunteered</li> <li>i. A relative</li> <li>g. Other _____</li> </ol>		
<p>3. Are you picking cotton?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Every day full day</li> <li>b. Week-ends only</li> <li>c. Outside your normal work hours only</li> <li>d. Other _____</li> </ol>		
<p>4. What is your usual activity outside cotton picking?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housewife</li> <li>• self-employed</li> <li>• unemployed</li> <li>• retired</li> <li>• student</li> <li>• nurse</li> <li>• doctor</li> <li>• teacher</li> <li>• technical staff in medical or educational institution</li> <li>• employee in a state organization / ministry / enterprise</li> <li>• employee in a private firm</li> <li>• other _____</li> </ul>		
<p>5. Where are you from?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. location</li> <li>b. Distance</li> <li>c. Institutions/organizations. Which one? _____</li> </ol>		



<p>6. Do you have work contract for cotton picking?:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Yes, individual</li> <li>b. Yes, group/ collective</li> <li>c. Yes, only verbal agreement</li> </ul>
<p>7. For each pass, what is/was the fee you received per day, on average:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. First pass:</li> <li>b. Second pass:</li> <li>c. Third pass:</li> </ul>
<p>8. Where do you sleep?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. at home;</li> <li>b. in dormitories nearby [ask to see the conditions]</li> <li>c. elsewhere / do not know</li> </ul>
<p>9. How do you get to the field?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a organized by their institution or employer,</li> <li>b. organized by farmer,</li> <li>c. other _____</li> </ul>
<p>10. What are the working hours?</p>
<p>11. Do you have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular breaks; <b>Yes / No</b></li> <li>• Food and drinking water <b>Yes / No</b></li> </ul>
<p>12. Who covers your costs for transportation, food, water and accommodation, if any?</p>
<p>13. Are you picking cotton because you want to?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Yes</b></li> <li>• <b>No</b></li> </ul>
<p>14. <b>If you pick cotton against your will (“no” to question 13), why do you do it?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. To please my Director;</li> <li>b. Because everyone does their share;</li> <li>c. Because the community benefits;</li> <li>d. I did not want to pay a replacement worker;</li> <li>e. I fear negative consequences if I did not.</li> <li>f. I have no choice;</li> <li>g. Other:</li> </ul>
<p>15. Has anyone told you that by refusing to pick cotton:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) You may lose your job/ study place;</li> <li>b) You may be denied in payment of salary/ scholarship or have deductions made;</li> <li>c) You may lose some social benefits;</li> </ul>

- d) You will have to pay;
- e) You may have other negative consequences \_\_\_\_\_

If you selected any of the above, please, explain, who told.

16. Has anyone told you that:  
picking cotton is voluntary

- Yes
- No

you have the right to leave the field if you do not want to pick cotton

- Yes
- No

you do not need to pay if you refuse to pick cotton

- Yes
- No

17. Do you know other people who are picking cotton against their will?

- Yes
- No

18. **If yes**, why do they do it?

- a. To please the Director;
- b. Because everyone does their share;
- c. Because the community benefits;
- d. He/ she did not want do pay a replacement worker;
- e. She/ he fears negative consequences if he/ she did not.
- f. She/ he has no choice;
- g. Other:

19. Are you satisfied with:

- |                       |          |
|-----------------------|----------|
| a) working hours      | Yes / No |
| b) wages              | Yes / No |
| c) working conditions | Yes / No |
| d) water              | Yes / No |
| e) accommodation      | Yes / No |
| f) food               | Yes / No |
| g) transportation     | Yes / No |
| h) toilet facilities  | Yes / No |
| i) medical care       | Yes / No |

If no to any of the above, please, explain \_\_\_\_\_

<p>20. Have you seen or heard any public information (e.g. posters, banners) against the use of child and forced labour in cotton harvest? If yes, what namely?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes</li> <li>• No</li> </ul>		
<p>21. Do you know how to complain in case of violation of your labour rights/ hotline?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes</li> <li>• No</li> </ul>		
<p><b>IF THE COTTON PICKER IS YOUNGER THAN 18 YEARS OF AGES</b></p>		
<p>22. Male / female</p>	<p>23. Date of birth</p> <p>Age: ..... years</p>	<p><b>24. Source of the information:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Official identification document,</li> <li>b) Child's statement,</li> <li>c) Guardian's statement,</li> <li>d) Teacher's statement,</li> <li>e) Employer's statement,</li> <li>f) School register,</li> <li>g) Communal register,</li> <li>h) Visual assessment</li> </ul>
<p>25. With whom do you work here?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) with my parent(s)</li> <li>b) with my brother(s)/sister(s)</li> <li>c) with fellow students from my class or educational facility (i.e. college, vocational training centre, lyceum, university)</li> <li>d) with others _____</li> </ul>		
<p style="color: red;">Any child involved in cotton picking should be immediately withdrawn from the field and referred to Labour Inspectorate or local authorities for assessment and rehabilitation services, if needed.</p>		
<p>Comments</p>		

## Annex 5

Number of World Bank-supported project sites visited by ILO experts, by project and Province

#	Province	GPE				RESP II				HDP		South Karakapakistan		TOTAL	
		pre-schools (2420 total) Planned	visited	schools (1632 total) planned	visited	Sub-loans (566 total) planned	visited	WUAs (1200 total) planned	visited	Entities 42 total planned	visited	planned	visited	planned	visited
1	Tashkent pr	3	3	4	6	5	7	9	8	4	5			25	<b>29</b>
2	Fergana	6	2	4	16	2	8	9	12	4	4			25	<b>42</b>
3	Andijan	4	6	2	4	5	21	9	9					20	<b>40</b>
4	Kashkadarya	6	6	4	4	2	4	9	11					21	<b>25</b>
5	Surkhandarya	8	18	10	15									18	<b>33</b>
6	Sirdarya	6	5	4	8	2	2	9	14					21	<b>29</b>
7	Jizzakh	10	11	8	8	3	2			1				22	<b>21</b>
8	Navoi	10	10	8	10									18	<b>20</b>
9	Bukhara	5	5	4	6	5	4	9	11					23	<b>26</b>
10	Karakalpakstan	2	2	2	5							21	21	25	<b>28</b>
11	Khorazm	10	9	8	7					4	6			22	<b>22</b>
12	Samarkand	2	2	2	4	5	3	9	12	7	5			25	<b>26</b>
13	Namangan	12	13	10	13									22	<b>26</b>
	<b>ILO target</b>	84	92	70	106	29	51	63	77	20	20	21	21	287	<b>367</b>
	<b>WB target</b>	73	<b>92</b>	49	<b>106</b>	29	<b>51</b>	63	<b>77</b>	20	<b>20</b>	21	<b>21</b>	255	<b>367</b>

## Annex 6

**ILO presentation made at Round Table in Tashkent on 17 November 2016.**



### ILO Assessment of Measures

TO REDUCE THE RISK OF CHILD LABOUR AND FORCED LABOUR  
DURING THE 2016 COTTON HARVEST IN UZBEKISTAN

#### Policy commitments

- Uzbekistan continues to engage with the ILO and has adopted and implemented policies on labour and social protection. These are conducive to enhancing skills, increasing jobs, and improving working conditions and labour relations and reduce risks of child and forced labour. A list of decisions and instructions will be included in the report.
- Since the 2015 harvest, the Government has made further commitments against child and forced labour, especially in the Action Plan for Improving Labour Conditions, Employment and Social Protection of Workers in Agricultural Sector 2016-18.
- Instructions to Hokims and other officials at all levels have been issued. They have a positive effect and are generally known when officials are interviewed by ILO experts.
- Uzbekistan has ratified all fundamental ILO Conventions covering child labour, forced labour, discrimination at work, and freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining. Uzbekistan is encouraged also to ratify the new ILO Protocol on Forced Labour.
- An extension of the Decent Work Country Programme until 2020 is being negotiated.

## Methodology of third-party monitoring (1)

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The ILO experts with international experience focused on how commitments to eliminate risks of child and forced labour are implemented, how the systems of risk reduction and management work, and their impact on vulnerable people.

7 assessment teams, led by an ILO expert working together with a National Counterpart spent 6 weeks assessing measures in two phases:

1. pre-harvest phase in July-August visiting 13 Ministries and Organizations from central to local level (350 interviews with officials);
2. harvest phase in September-October examining activities of officials and impact on “at risk” people (724 sites visited, with 1,634 interviews in each Province and Tashkent City)

The methodology and questionnaires were developed together with the Uzbek partners, covering

- awareness and capacity
- recruitment and risk mitigation
- supervision and checking.

## Methodology of third-party monitoring (2)

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- During the harvest ILO experts visited 6% of all identified beneficiaries of World Bank-supported projects in Uzbekistan (300 sites, 685 interviews).
- Access was generally excellent and facilitated by Uzbek partners at Tashkent and regional levels. Answers and documentary evidence were provided by respondents, requiring further detailed analysis.
- Site visits finished on 28 October. This year, the harvest continued for several more weeks in Districts that had not reached their quota.
- The analysis takes into account information from all available sources.

## Recruitment practices

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- Preliminary results from an ILO quantitative survey also informed the methodology. Full survey results will be available in 2017.
- The ILO estimates there were 2.8 million cotton pickers in 2015. Most were called to pick by their mahalla, by their workplace or organisation superior or by the Farmers' Council
- A significant number – perhaps two-thirds - are recruited voluntarily and a certain minority is recruited involuntarily. In addition, it would appear that a number of cotton pickers are to some degree reluctant, not necessarily due to the work but the conditions of work and that they most probably would willingly pick cotton if wages and working conditions were better.
- Those “at risk” of involuntary work are mainly education and medical staff, students and other employed.
- Voluntary pickers are significantly more productive than reluctant pickers. Involuntary pickers are the least productive. With better wages and working conditions, all of the harvest could be collected by voluntary pickers.

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## Awareness and capacity (1)

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- Several training workshops to build capacity of officials, including Hokims, were conducted before the harvest. Ministries, organizations and entities were involved at all levels from national to mahalla, using their own training infrastructure and trainers. The risk of forced labour is openly addressed.
- The public awareness campaign during the harvest is substantial. It reached remote villages. Messages on child and forced labour, on labour rights and on the Feedback Mechanism hotline have been distributed nationwide on 836 banners, 44,500 posters, 100,000 leaflets, TV, radio and SMS texts:
  - “Everybody’s free choice to work is guaranteed”
  - “Everybody has the right to pick cotton voluntarily in decent working conditions or refuse to pick cotton”
- The resulting awareness is high. The unacceptability of child labour is recognized by all sections of society: authorities, teachers, specialists, farmers, parents and children themselves. This is underpinned by measures embedded in the public education system.

## Awareness and capacity (2)

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- Awareness on risks of forced labour is improving but more is needed:
- Requests have been made from all levels in Ministries and organizations for more information and training;
- In many regions, theoretical understanding needs to be applied in practice. Recognising forced labour in the Uzbekistan context, what measures should be established to reduce the risk ,and how to apply those safeguards is still work in progress. Many people still deny the problem.
- Better targeted communication is needed to ensure that information on labour rights is getting to people at risk. Targeted training should provide authorities with guidance and instruments on risk management.
- A national high-quality training strategy on forced labour for all responsible actors involved in the cotton harvest should be developed. The training infrastructure of hokimiyats, ministries and accredited organizations should be used.

## Labour relations in the cotton harvest (1)


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- ILO experts visited around 100 farms and interviewed around 200 pickers.
- The primary employment relationship between farmer and picker is confused by many intermediate entities. Many pickers do not know for whom they legally work.
- Written individual contracts between farmer and picker should be the preferred option. Contracts should specify wages, working conditions (food and water, transport, accommodation, sanitary, working time, etc.), termination provisions and justify any deductions.
- Cotton picking is neither a spontaneous nor individual activity. Every year pickers' brigades are formed up to two months before the harvest. Nearly all pickers are "called" by someone. This year, more emphasis has been put on recruiting from amongst the unemployed.
- At the request of the Farmers' Council, labour is provided directly or indirectly by mahalla community officers, Women's Committee and Kamolot, by school and college Directors, university Rectors, hospital Directors, Heads of enterprises and state budget organizations, and by local authority officials.
- Most pickers deemed to be at risk are dependent on the intermediary for their main income. This entails the risk of abusive labour practices and exploitation.




## Labour relations in the cotton harvest (2)

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- The employment relationship and role of intermediaries lack sufficient regulation. Picking is variously justified as national duty, community obligation, a temporary transfer of tasks, or an opportunity to earn additional income.
  - National minimum standards are specified for wages and working conditions but their application varies. Cotton pickers in adjacent fields can work under different conditions of employment.
  - Inspections seem to be conducted by a variety of organizations and without common standards. The Labour Inspectorate could play a coordinating role in addition to its state control function.
  - Brigade leaders assume responsibilities for cotton pickers, but their status is not clearly defined. Farmers are accountable for their pickers but cannot easily verify whether they conform to the law.
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## Labour relations in the cotton harvest (3)

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- Creating a functioning labour relations system for cotton pickers would be a major step in reducing the risk of forced labour. The foundations are being put in place but much remains to be done.
  - The Ministry of Labour role should be improved in
    - defining, regulating and enforcing roles, responsibilities and standards of labour relations in cotton, including intermediaries;
    - providing information and other services through local employment assistance centres for temporary agricultural workers;
    - advising Pahtashtab on labour availability, wages and working conditions during the harvest to convert any reluctant pickers into voluntary pickers.
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## Supervision/Checking (1)

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- ILO experts noted cases of good internal tracking, control and reporting on implementation of measures to reduce the risk of child and forced labour in their Ministry or organization. This is not yet widespread. Practices need to be audited regularly to ensure that they perform.
- The public education system, with its tradition of pupil registers, extra curricular activities and teacher/parent meetings, is well advanced on child labour. This culture should be extended to implementing measures against risks of forced labour.
- Declarations of willingness by vulnerable people may be unreliable if they are told to consent by those on whom they depend. There should be parallel measures and options for expressing an alternative view.

## Supervision/Checking (2)

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- Annual national monitoring of child and forced labour by the FTUU, CCIU and other organisations was conducted again in 2016. The capacity of national monitors to use ILO methodology and indicators is improving.
- The Feedback Mechanism, which allows potential victims to report problems and ask for assistance, is evolving. Public confidence in the mechanism is crucial. Reforms since last year include anonymous complaints to the FTUU's Feedback Mechanism, greater transparency and appeals. The Ministry of Labour's Feedback Mechanism engages Labour Inspectors in legal procedures.

## Schools and colleges

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- ILO experts visited over 180 kindergarten and schools, and over 39 colleges and lyceums, and spoke to over 250 teaching and non-teaching staff. Pupil attendance was high. Staff attendance was also generally high. Some staff said they pick cotton outside normal working hours. The institutions function normally during the harvest, as far as ILO experts could tell.
- Measures to prevent child and forced labour include Ministerial instructions, awareness and training events, extra-curricular activities for children and attendance tracking of pupils and staff. The focus is on child labour.
- Vocational college students are not called to pick cotton, even if 18 years or older, though attendance registers need improving in some colleges.



## Medical staff

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- ILO experts visited nearly 50 medical care facilities. They function normally during the harvest, as far as the ILO experts could tell.
- Staff attendance is usually monitored.
- Awareness of child and forced labour risks is high, but preventative measures are not well developed.
- The Health Ministry should pay more attention to risks of forced labour, given there is a policy against medical staff going to harvest other than to provide medical services and the ILO Survey shows they can be at risk.

## Students

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- Higher education institutions are not fully operating during the harvest as students are picking cotton for about one month. Brigade leaders are from faculty or Kamolot.
- Recruitment, working conditions and logistics are organised between Kamolot, university Rector and Farmers' Council, who lack expertise and mandate in labour relations.
- Evidence of students' requests to participate is provided but few other safeguards operate. Given the dependency of students, the real extent of voluntariness is unclear. Students remain at risk of forced labour.
- Deductions from earnings are made for food in some student brigades but not in others. Accommodation quality varies considerably.
- The Ministry of Higher Education should see forced labour as a relevant topic because students interrupt education and their staff function as temporary labour agents.

## Other organized pickers

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- According to the ILO Survey, staff of public budget and private entities are at risk of forced labour. This year, hokimiyats were asked not to request contributions of staff, money or prizes for the harvest. Other sources report that such requests are less insistent than in earlier years.
- Few entities have measures against such risks. For private entities, the risk may have an effect on their business.
- Some employers have superficial awareness of these risks and the protective measures to take. The Ministry of Labour and social partners should continue awareness-raising and inform entities and hokimiyats accordingly.

## Conclusions and recommendations (1)

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- Recognising the risks will enable authorities and institutions to take specific measures against forced labour.
- The Ministry of Public Education has measures in place to prevent organised use of children in the harvest. Child labour generally does not exist in cotton picking. On-going vigilance is needed, and this seems fully recognised in Uzbekistan.
- The information campaign on child and forced labour has been substantial. Further media targeting of groups at risk and recruiters and local officials is needed.
- Much has been done to build capacity on issues of forced labour. It is work-in-progress. High quality training at all levels should emphasise recognising risks in the Uzbek context and developing practical measures.

## Conclusions and recommendations (2)

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- There are intermediaries participating in the recruitment process which can lead to involuntariness. Strengthening a functioning labour relations system for cotton pickers would be a major step in reducing the risk of forced labour and the Ministry of Labour has a central role. A comprehensive approach would have to involve the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources.
- The Farmers' Council together with other accredited organisations involved in the recruitment of pickers need to shift focus towards the unemployed population.
- The Ministry of Higher and Specialised Secondary Education should cooperate with the Ministry of Labour on measures to ensure voluntariness and better working conditions of student brigades.
- The Ministry of Health and Ministry of Higher and Specialised Secondary Education need to increase awareness among their staff and students about the risks of forced labour.

## Conclusions and recommendations (3)

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- Important measures have been introduced for voluntary recruitment but they are not yet robust enough to change decisively recruitment practices or the experience of pickers.
- National monitoring and Feedback Mechanism are playing an increasing role in preventative measures. These should continue to generate public confidence.
- Changing ingrained practices and social attitudes of a large-scale organised recruitment system takes time, political will and capacity. This will involve many actors. Yet the issue is entirely manageable.

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Thank you

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## Annex 7

### List of acronyms

AP	Action Plan
CCIU	Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Uzbekistan
CEACR	Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations
CSSE	Centre for Secondary Specialised Education
FBM	Feedback mechanism
FC	Farmers' Council
FTUU	Federation of Trade Unions of Uzbekistan
HDP	Horticulture Development Project
ILO	International Labour Organization/ Office
GPE	Improving General Secondary and Pre-School Education Project
LI	Labour Inspection
MAWR	Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources
MH	Ministry of Health
MHSSE	Ministry of Higher and Secondary Specialised Education
MF	Mahalla Fund
ML	Ministry of Labour
MPE	Ministry of Public Education
RESP	Rural Enterprise Support Project (RESP II, including RESP II Additional Financing)
TPM	Third Party Monitoring
SKWRIP	South Karakalpakstan Water Resource Improvement Project
WB	World Bank
WUA	Water Users' Association