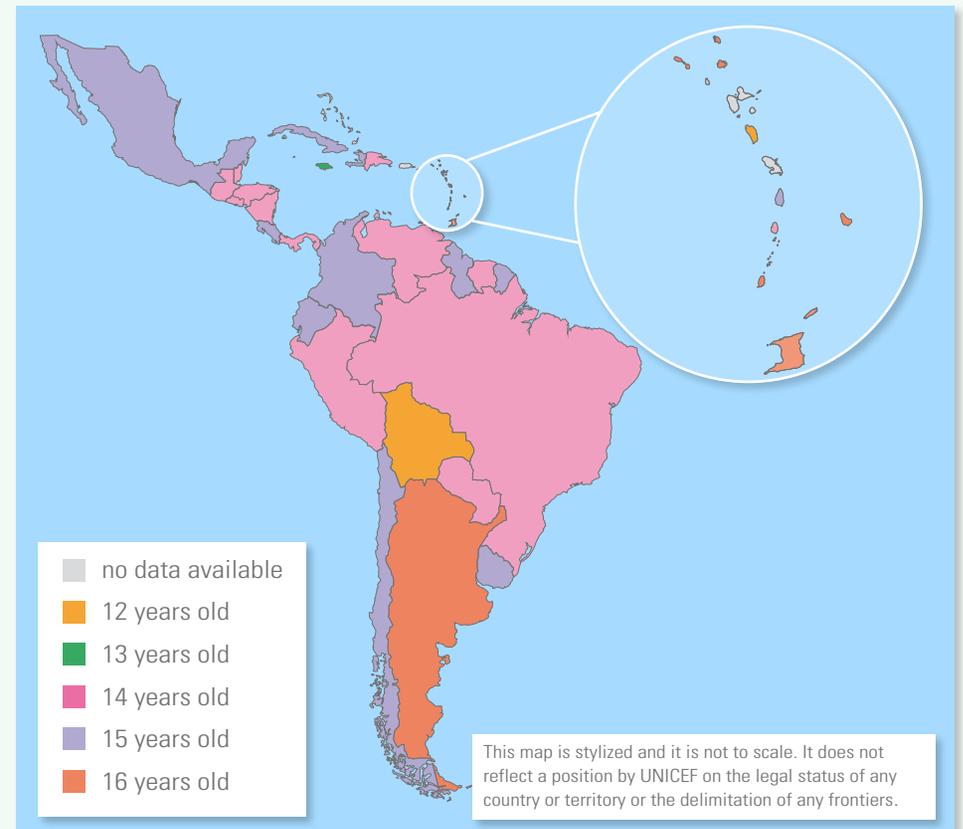


## MINIMUM AGE FOR ADMISSION TO EMPLOYMENT

- The minimum age of admission to employment is critical in protecting children from all forms of child labour and exploitation. It also takes into account the positive dimensions for adolescents to contribute to society in conditions that do not impair their development, health and education.
- The general minimum age designates the age at which a child is allowed to work on a full-time basis. Work performed under the minimum age for employment is considered child labour.
- ILO Convention No. 138 establishes this age at 15, with the possibility to temporarily set the general minimum age at 14 for countries which economy and educational facilities are insufficiently developed.
- International standards also recognize a minimum age for light work that does not interfere with the child's education – with limited daily and weekly working hours and light activities. It should be at least 13 years of age – or 12 temporarily for insufficiently developed countries. According to international standards, all forms of hazardous work are forbidden before the age of 18.
- Countries in LAC usually have a general minimum age of admission to employment comprised between 14 and 16 years old. Light work is usually authorized over 12 years of age and hazardous work is forbidden under 18. A handful of countries however have ages that are below those required in international standards.
- A concern is the exception for family owned business, present in several laws in particular in Caribbean countries, for which the minimum age does not apply.

## MINIMUM AGE OF ADMISSION TO EMPLOYMENT



*Minimum age for admission to employment is "the age at which a person is deemed able to work without impairing his or her development, in particular his or her access to education"*

## MINIMUM AGE FOR ADMISSION TO EMPLOYMENT- A SIGNIFICANT ISSUE FOR ADOLESCENTS' RIGHTS IN LAC

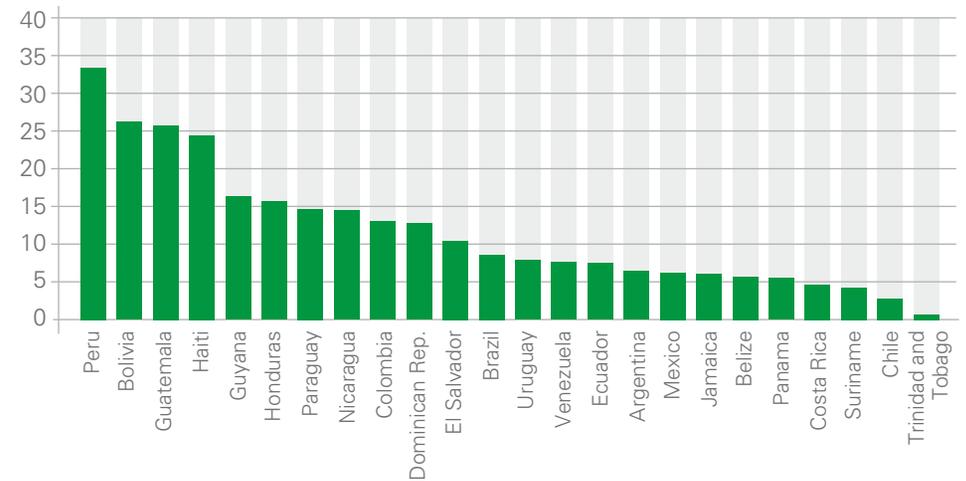
The ILO estimates that 12.5 per cent of children aged 5 to 17 in Latin America and the Caribbean are in employment. 12.5 million children across the region (8.8 per cent of children aged 5 to 17) are engaged in child labour and 9.6 million (6.8 per cent) carry out hazardous work (ILO, 2013). It is estimated that 2 million children are engaged in domestic labour, with the highest levels in Brazil, Haiti and Guatemala (UNICEF, 2014).

All countries in Latin America and the Caribbean have set a minimum age for admission to employment, ranging from 12 years old in Bolivia and Dominica to 16 years old in six countries. Recent developments in this area have raised preoccupations as to possible drawbacks. In Bolivia, the new Children's Code adopted in July 2014 provides that the minimum age of employment is 14. However, the Code introduces two important exceptions that constitute serious obstacles to the full protection and fulfilment of children's rights. In Peru, while the children's code sets 14 years as the general minimum age, it provides that on an exceptional basis work can be authorized from 12 years old if it does not impair the child's health, development and education. The law further considers that parents' consent is presumed, unless they explicitly express their opposition.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

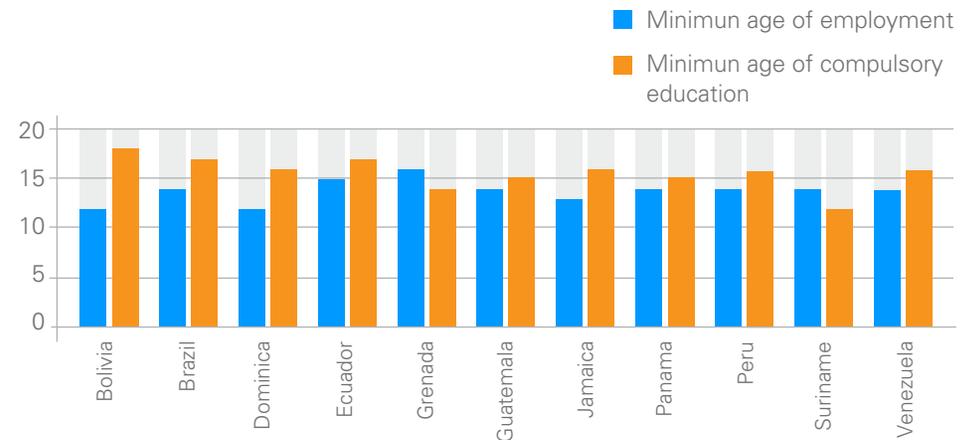
- Ensure that laws regarding minimum ages for admission to employment are fully in line with international standards, in particular ILO Convention No. 138.
- Remove exceptions that enable underage children to work under certain circumstances, in particular family business, with no limitations in terms of age and the nature, conditions and duration of the work.
- Strengthen linkages in the legislation between the child protection and social protection system as a way to prevent child labour.
- Ensure minimum age for admission to employment is equal to the age of the end of compulsory education.

CHILD LABOUR RATE (AGE 5-17)



Source: UNICEF datasets, State of the World's Children 2014.

MINIMUM AGE OF EMPLOYMENT VS. MINIMUM AGE OF COMPULSORY EDUCATION IN A SELECTION OF COUNTRIES



Source: UNICEF 2014.