

For A Future Without Child Labour

The Global March joins in celebrating the first World Day Against Child Labour and commends the pioneering efforts the ILO has made in the worldwide drive to eliminate child labour. The problem is clearly one of the most serious issues facing humanity today. With an estimated 246 million children engaged in child labour and almost 73% involved in its worst forms, something must be done now!

It is encouraging that since the unanimous adoption of Convention 182, most countries have ratified the instrument, declared their support for the cause, and undertaken several steps to address the problem. Unfortunately, this has not been enough. The very first article of Convention 182 calls on member states to “take immediate and effective measures to secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour as a matter of urgency.” In most countries, however, the efforts have not met this standard.

When we see children suffering through a life of slavery, prostitution, abuse, and despair, there can be no grounds for delay! We must change their lives now, with the same sense of urgency and determination we would show if our own children were in danger.

Most of the children who were suffering in the worst forms of child labour when ILO Convention 182 was adopted 3 years ago have not enjoyed any relief or rehabilitation since then. The world community has not even managed to stop the fresh recruitment of child labourers. When most of the children in the worst forms of child labour today began their life of exploitation since the adoption of Convention 182, we must recognise that our efforts have not been enough and we must do much, much more to end child labour.

The Global March Against Child Labour calls upon the international community to make the greatest effort possible to end this widespread violation of human rights and children's dignity. We call for the ILO and its members to:

- Recommit to ending child labour as one of organisation's and the world's top priorities
- Establish clear timetables for the elimination of child labour and its worst forms
- Closely and objectively monitor progress towards the elimination of child labour as a fundamental part of protecting the rights of all children
- Devote the maximum possible resources of the ILO to the cause of ending child labour and integrate the issue of child labour in all relevant spheres of the ILO's activities
- Advance the role of IPEC from the direct implementation of child labour projects to catalysing, supporting, and guiding nationally owned and managed programs for the time-bound elimination of child labour

- Mobilise the full involvement of all UN agencies, regional organisations, international donors, national governments, social partners, and civil society organisations for the cause of ending child labour.
- Make the effective elimination of child labour a top priority for all governments
- Make the effective elimination of child labour one of the core responsibilities of all employers' associations and trade unions
- Involve child labourers themselves in the process of ending their exploitation
- Generate the highest level of political support for the cause through the establishment of an International Task Force on Child Labour composed of heads of UN agencies, heads of state, and leaders from employers, workers, and civil society, to coordinate and accelerate international efforts to end child labour
- Celebrate the World Day Against Child Labour each year with activities and initiatives to spread greater awareness and strengthen public resolve to address the problem
- Promote ILO Convention 138 as an indispensable tool for ensuring that girls and boys of all countries have a chance for quality education before entering the world of work
- Ensure that bringing children from the exploitation of child labour into the enlightenment of education is placed to the heart of international development efforts and make working children a priority target group of educational programs
- Recognise and fulfil the special duty the ILO has to protect the lives and improve the future of a quarter of a billion humans working now as child labourers