

Talking Points

2022 World Day Against Child Labour

Universal Social Protection to end Child Labour

10th June 2022

Honourable Parveen Bala
Minister for Employment, Productivity, and Industrial Relations,

Mr Osea Cawaru
Permanent Secretary for Ministry for Employment, Productivity
and Industrial Relations,

Social partners, Teachers and Students.

This is an important event as we **mark** the International Day Against Child Labour. On this occasion, I am very pleased to deliver this statement on behalf of the International Labour Organization.

The theme for this year's Day Against Child Labour is "Universal Social Protection to End Child Labour." On this day, the International Labour Organization, together with Governments, workers, employers, and all partners, are calling to invest more in social protection systems to make sure that we have solid social protection floors and protect children from child labour.

Child labour is a violation of every child's right to a childhood – and a breach of every government's most fundamental duty to protect its children.

For nearly two decades, beginning in 2000, the world was making steady progress in reducing child labour. But over the last few years, conflicts, crisis, and the COVID-19 pandemic have plunged more families into poverty – and forced millions more children into labour.

Today, 160 million children are still engaged in child labour – some as young as 5 years old. That's almost one in ten children across the globe. Nearly half of these children are engaged in hazardous work, which is likely to cause physical and emotional harm to them.

Behind these big numbers are individual children, each with hopes and dreams for the future.

Child labour is both morally unacceptable – and strategically short-sighted. Children must be in school. And when they are in school, they have a better chance to fulfil their own potential, in turn help their families get out of poverty.

Unfortunately, too little progress has been made in expanding social protection services to reach the families in greatest need worldwide. The families of approximately 1.5 billion children aged 14 and under receive no family or child cash benefits at all.

Despite progress made in the coverage of social protection in recent years, it has not been enough. As of 2020 and prior to COVID-19, only 46.9 per cent of the global population were effectively covered by at least one social protection benefit, while the remaining portion – as many as 4.1 billion people – were left wholly unprotected. It is estimated that without mitigation strategies, the number of children in child labour could rise by 8.9 million by the end of 2022, due to higher poverty and increased vulnerability.

The eradication of child labour is not only a moral priority, but clearly an achievable goal if political will and resources are in place. The evidence suggests that social protection can play a critical role in achieving these ends.

Dear Students,

I am so glad that you have taken time to be part of this event. When I look at you, I see the bright future of this country and the region. Today my daughter Aida has joined me in this event, and I have a message to you all.

Please remember that *“Education is the passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs to those who prepare for it today”*.

And we, adults, will do our best to make sure that you continue your studies successfully and do very well in your careers.

I am also happy to announce that ILO in partnership with the Ministry of Employment, Productivity & Industrial Relations is providing 10 tablets that will support the studies in your schools and enable you to learn more on Child Labour.

I take this opportunity to thank you all for coming and listening to us.

I would like to assure you that ILO will continue to support the government and our social partners to further develop programmes and projects that support Decent Work for all.

Vinaka.