

 12 june 2016  
WORLD DAY  
AGAINST  
CHILD LABOUR

END CHILD LABOUR IN  
**SUPPLY  
CHAINS**  
  
IT'S EVERYONE'S BUSINESS!

## **World Day Against Child Labour 2016**

*June 8th 2016, 13:30-15:30, Room XX, Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland*

### **Summary of panel discussion**

Prepared by the  
International Labour Organization (ILO)  
Governance Department  
Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work Branch (FUNDAMENTALS)

To mark the occasion of World Day Against Child Labour during the 2016 International Labour Conference, the ILO's Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work Branch organized an interactive panel discussion on the topic "End Child Labour in Supply Chains – It's everyone's business".

With 168 million children still in child labour, all supply chains, from agriculture to manufacturing, services to construction, run the risk that child labour may be present. Enterprises need to be vigilant to ensure that their supply chains are free from child labour or risk having their reputations tarnished and their business seriously damaged.

Child labour occurs largely in the rural and informal economies, in areas where trade unions and employers' organizations are often weak or absent and in areas that may strain the capacity of labour inspectors to reach. This also holds true for child labour in supply chains, where the work may be done in small workshops or homes, and may go undetected by firms at the top of the chain.

To address these issues, governments, social partners, the private sector and the public were convened in Geneva to mark the 2016 World Day Against Child Labour. The event started with a lively musical performance by the "Choeur pour l'Abolition du Travail des Enfants" (Choir for the Abolition of Child Labour). Their pre-event interview is available [here](#). Nomia Iqbal from the BBC introduced the panellists and informed the audience both in the room and watching live online that they could participate in the discussion by posting to the TwitterWall with the relevant hashtags.

Guy Ryder, the ILO Director General, stressed that child labour has no place in well-functioning and well-regulated labour markets. He pointed out how supply chains could help to set the pace in the global eradication of child labour with an effective policy mix that includes free and compulsory basic education, mainstreaming labour inspection in law and policy, and social protection. He called on tripartite plus organisations to double their efforts to cooperate and support innovative models to eradicate child labour in supply chains. His statement is available [here](#).

MaryAnn Mihychuk, the Canadian Minister of Labour, announced the country's ratification of ILO's Minimum Age Convention (No. 138). Taking this important step, the Minister said that Canada had now ratified all core treaties aiming to eliminate child labour and promoting children's rights. Highlighting the government's support for Canadian businesses doing business abroad in all sectors through global supply chains, she added that Canada was actively promoting responsible business practices and expected all Canadian companies to respect human rights and labour rights. Her post-event interview is available [here](#).

Jacqueline Mugo, Executive Director of the Federation of Kenya Employers and Secretary General of Business Africa Employers, said that no business, whether large or small, can risk having child labour in their supply chains. Acknowledging the complex challenges of overcoming child labour, she said employers are seeking coordinated action with all supply chain actors. A number of effective actions have already been taken by employers, including complying with child labour laws, assisting in transitioning children from the workforce, drafting and implementing supplier codes, and participating in the development and implementation of strategies to address the underlying causes. The Child Labour Platform has also assisted employers to understand and catalyse action with several pioneering companies already pledging to produce products without the use of child labour before 2020.

Philip Jennings, the General Secretary of UNI Global Union, highlighted the role of recognizing and implementing the right to organize and negotiate as an important tool to eradicate child labour in supply chains. Reminding everyone that the clock is ticking to achieve target 8.7, he said that there is no excuse for business for not identifying child labour in their supply chains, mentioning the multiple guidelines and fora in place.

Katharine Stewart, Director of Ethical Trading at Primark, described the company's continued efforts to measure both the prevalence of child labour in their supply chains and their initiatives' impact on solving it. Echoing the statement made by the ILO Director General, she also refuted any reason given for why companies do not know about child labour in their supply chains. In addition to aligning Primark's code of conduct with the ILO conventions, she said Primark developed a framework of policy and implementation that is effective, with collaboration at the heart of it. As a member of the Child Labour Platform, Primark has been able to enter to numerous cross sector conversations which have led to wider understanding of the issues. She also noted that Primark had signed a

PPP with the ILO for assistance in implementing its policy framework into its business operations.

Andrews Tagoe, Head of Rural Workers Programs, General Agricultural Workers Union of Ghana, spoke about the successful actions taken in the Torkor area of Ghana's Lake Volta region. In response to widespread use of child labour on the Lake, an integrated area-based approach was implemented to remove children from child labour, while also ensuring that they were not displaced into other forms of child labour. The approach provided the services needed to remove children from child labour, support families to find decent work and improve occupational safety and health standards. The intervention model relied heavily on the active participation of community members. His post-event interview is available [here](#).

Jorge Triaca, the Minister of Labour, Employment and Social Security of Argentina, announced the commitment of Argentina to organize the IV Global Conference on Child Labour in 2017, in line with the long-standing State policy on children protection in which children must be at school, studying or playing, and not at work. He pointed out the value of continuing discussions on topics such as child labour in supply chains; strategies to eliminate child labour; governments' responsibility to formulate policies on income transfer and internal auditing; as well as the shared responsibility of tripartite constituents to find a joint strategy to eliminate child labour. He concluded by encouraging wide and inclusive participation of the tripartite community at the next global conference. His pre-event interview is available [here](#).

Moussa Dosso, the Minister of Labour from Côte d'Ivoire, while expressing appreciation for the ILO's support in combatting child labour in Côte d'Ivoire, highlighted the importance of engaging with people in society on the incompatibility of childhood and the world of work, particularly the exploitation of children in supply chains. Recognising the plight of children exploited in supply chains, he expressed his appreciation for the theme of this year's World Day Against Child Labour as a way to raise awareness of and encourage reflection on this issue. The Minister clearly recognised that the fight against child labour is not purely a normative activity at policy level, but action such as providing access to schooling, health and non-hazardous work must also be made a reality. In support of this goal, action must be taken to reduce the vulnerability of the layers of society most susceptible to poverty. The Minister called on everyone to mobilise against child labour in the same spirit of the World Day that it is, indeed, everyone's business.

Speaking on behalf of the FAO Director-General, the FAO representative underlined that the elimination of child labour represents a convergence of the interests and goals of both the FAO and the ILO. With sixty per cent of children in child labour engaged in agricultural activity, it is important that both agencies coordinate their actions. The development of advocacy strategies to raise awareness of the negative impact that child labour had on ensuring sustainable food supplies was becoming increasingly important. Young people must be assured of decent work opportunities and inclusive social protection measures. The Director-General announced the launch of e-learning tool on Child Labour In

agriculture which had been developed through the International Partnership for Collaboration on Child Labour in Agriculture.

The International School of Geneva contributed artwork, poetry and a video to demonstrate their commitment to raising awareness of child labour. The participating students expressed their determination to contribute to the movement against child labour, having learned that 85 million children are engaged in hazardous work, causing long-term negative mental and physical health effects. Some of their contributions are available [here](#).

The key messages for the 2016 World Day highlight the role of businesses, workers' and employers' Organizations, governments and others in effectively addressing child labour in supply chains, in particular through:

- Recalling the guidance provided to companies through the ILO's Multinational Enterprises Declaration
- Reinforcing effective governance and social dialogue mechanisms
- Building collaboration between companies, governments including labour inspection, national social partners and management and workers representatives in enterprises
- Developing robust policies at the enterprise level and in collective bargaining agreements to address child labour when it is found.

The full video recording of the event is available [here](#).

For further information, please visit the 2016 World Day Against Child Labour webpage [here](#).