



Joint UNIACC Statement for the World Day Against Child Labour 2008

In its resolution 59/113A of 10 December 2004, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed the World Programme for Human Rights Education (WPHRE) to begin on 1 January 2005 with a view to encouraging the elaboration and implementation of human rights education initiatives at the national level. The focus for 2005-2009 is on the integration of human rights education in the primary and secondary school systems, and a related Plan of Action has been adopted by the General Assembly in 2005. The UN Inter-Agency Coordinating Committee on Human Rights Education in the School System, composed of 12 UN entities and affiliated organizations, is responsible for promoting coordinated United Nations support to the national implementation of the Plan of Action.

*Celebrated on June 12 each year, the **World Day Against Child Labour** calls the world's attention to the plight of millions of girls and boys around the world who are victims of child labour. It highlights the dangers and hazards faced by children who work at an early age, and the action necessary to tackle child labour. In 2008, the message of the World Day is that **Education is the right response to child labour.***

According to estimates of the International Labour Organization, there are 218 million child labourers between the age of 5 and 17, of whom 126 million are performing dangerous tasks or working in conditions that are hazardous.

We, members of the UN Inter-Agency Coordinating Committee on Human Rights Education in the School System, call the attention of Member States to the extreme gravity of this problem. Child labour is a violation of children's fundamental rights. Education is an essential tool for protecting children from exploitation. Efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals - in particular, Millennium Development Goal 2 related to universal primary education by 2015 - cannot be achieved without the progressive elimination of child labour.

We highlight the need to ensure for all children access to free, universal, quality education up to the minimum working age, with a view to empower children with life skills and tools to escape from poverty and attain an adequate standard of living. Educational institutions, teachers and educators - whether in formal or non-formal settings - are instrumental in transmitting human rights values.

We strongly encourage Member States to ensure education, and in particular human rights education, as a concrete response to child labour. The political commitment expressed with the proclamation of the World Programme for Human Rights Education should result in national action. Human rights should be integrated in educational policies, processes, methodologies and tools, and should be practiced in the learning environments within which education takes place.

For more information on the UN Inter-Agency Coordinating Committee on Human Rights Education, please visit: <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/education/training/programme.htm>

For more information on the World Day Against Child Labour, please visit: www.ilo.org/ipec