

World Day Against Child Labour

Education: the right response to child labour

Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, June 12, 2008

By Ms. Kathleen Speake
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Honourable Ms. Bolormaa, Minister of Education, Culture and Science,

Chairperson, Mr. Enkhbat, Director, Primary and Secondary Education Department,

Ms. Enkhtuya, Director, Labour Policy and Coordination Dept, Ministry of Social Welfare and Labour

Mr. Begz, Director, Institute of Education

Ms. Narantuya, Deputy Director, National Authority for Children,

Ms. Javzankhuu, Consultant of the Deputy Prime Minister,

Esteemed officials from the Ministry of Education, National Human Rights Commission, National Statistical Committee, UN colleagues,

Ladies and Gentlemen, Good Morning

It is a pleasure to be with you in Mongolia, and especially today, on the occasion of World Day Against Child Labour, June 12, 2008. Ms. Constance Thomas, Director of the ILO China and Mongolia office is unable to be here today. I know that two years ago today, she stood here at the launch of the World Global Report on Child Labour, and commended Mongolia's efforts towards ending exploitative labour practices, and their commitment to end the worst forms of child labour.

The theme of this year's World Day is *Education, the Right Response to Child Labour*. About 165 million children world wide between ages 5-14 are involved in child labour. More than 70 million primary aged children are not enrolled in school.

More than ever, children need a good quality education if they are to acquire the skills necessary to succeed in work and life. The UN *Convention on the Rights of the Child* confirms that development of a quality primary education system that is free and accessible to all is a basic right for all children, and also key to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. The ILO's research in many countries shows that the longer children remain in school and develop a broad set of skills, the more likely they are to find decent work for the long term, and not fall into the worst forms of child

labour.

Further, the 13 member UN Inter-agency Coordinating Committee on Human Rights Education in the School System sees the integration of human rights in school curricula as fundamental to protecting children from exploitation.

Children need good teachers, and safe learning environments. Free and quality compulsory education up to the minimum age for entering into employment is a key tool in preventing child labour. That is why we say, "School is the Best Place to Work". In the words of the Minister, School is a Second Home.

I would like to congratulate the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, on the launch of its *Strategy for Full Integration of Children of Compulsory Education Age to Education*. I also look forward today to hearing about government activities undertaken over the last year in effort to reduce the worst forms of child labour, including children in hazardous work.

May I extend a special thank you to the Mongolian Trade Union of Teachers for their advocacy work under the banner of *Teachers Against Child Labour*, and to the children present for their exhibition and drama.

Mongolia continues to demonstrate excellent progress through its *National Time-Bound Programme to Eliminate the Worst Forms of Child Labour*. The government and its social partners have made substantial progress since the programme's inception in 2005 toward improving the enabling environment, and delivering integrated area-based interventions to prevent, withdraw and rehabilitate boys and girls engaged in the worst forms. Please allow me also to pay special tribute to the ILO project staff and collaborating partners for their tremendous commitment and accomplishments within this programme.

ILO is honoured to be part of Mongolia's efforts to meet its commitments towards the elimination of the worst forms of child labour by 2016. ILO Director-General, Juan Somavia notes substantial progress in connecting the fight against child labour with education. Let's keep up the momentum. Let's resolve to keep investing in the struggle for the right of all children to their childhood.

Thank you.