



Embassy  
of the Federal Republic of Germany  
Beirut

**Statement of His Excellency  
Mr. Christian Clages  
German Ambassador to Lebanon**

**at the Launch of the National Action Plan to Eliminate  
the Worst Forms of Child Labour in Lebanon by 2016**

*7 November 2013*

*Presidential Palace – Baabda, Lebanon*

H.E. the President of the Republic of Lebanon  
H.E. the Minister of Labour  
Representative of ILO  
Ladies and gentlemen,

Children are our future. The degree of civilisation of a society is recognisable by the manner in which it is treating its vulnerable people and notably its children.

I feel honored to address you with some words of welcome on the occasion of the launching of the National Action Plan on the elimination of particularly bad forms of child labour.

My Government is a long term supporter of the ILO activities worldwide. It has also contributed considerably to ILO's programs against child labour in Lebanon, and this is why I have the privilege to speak to you.

Allow me to make some remarks.

We all agree on the necessity to protect children from economic exploitation and from work which could have negative impacts on their education and their physical and mental well-being. The children's rights are spelled out in the Convention on the Rights of the Child of 1989.

In this sense, we can subscribe to the slogan: Stop child labour – school is the best place to work!

We want children as much as possible to enjoy the freedom to play, to explore the world in a cheerful manner and to develop their personalities free of oppressive constraints. I would like my eleven year-old son to be well prepared to enter the world of the adults via a structured, reasoned and intelligent educational system.

It is not only a personal and moral obligation which we have vis-à-vis our own children and the children of others. Combatting child labour is at the same time an economic and social necessity. We need qualified and responsible young in our societies to shape the future.



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We know what child labour leads to when children become adults: A lifetime of low earnings, social exclusion and unrealized potential, as our ILO colleague Ms. al-Nashif has stated in her Foreword to the NAP.

Combatting Child labour is in the end part of a combat against poverty and unemployment of the young.

Ladies and gentlemen,

the German funded ILO project has contributed, in cooperation with the Lebanese partner institutions, to creating awareness and the building of institutional structures to face the challenges of existing forms of child labour.

In the National Action Plan, Minister Jreissati is pointing to the fact that the difficult economic and social situation in Lebanon due to the crisis in the neighbouring country has a negative impact on the situation of the children.

This increases the necessity to act, and I hope that the Action Plan will facilitate swift action.

I strongly believe that the unacceptable forms of work of minors should not only be ostracised and sanctioned by the Penal Code. There must be as well an efficient administration to supervise and inspect the private sector to ensure that the labour laws are abided by.

I appeal to the authorities to ensure such an administration.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to pay my respect to all those who have contributed to the important work which has been done until today. I wish you vision and energy to keep up your engagement for the sake of the children.