

Van: ITUC Press <press@ituc-csi.org>
Verzonden: woensdag 12 juni 2013 14:56
Aan: ITUC Online
Onderwerp: World Day Against Child Labour - ITUC OnLine

INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION (ITUC)

ITUC OnLine
057/120613

World Day Against Child Labour

Brussels, 12 June 2013 (ITUC OnLine): The ITUC is calling on governments to step up commitment to the global fight against child labour, with new evidence from the ILO that progress is slowing. 215 million children are still at work instead of in school.

"The two ILO Conventions on child labour have been ratified by the vast majority of governments, but tens of millions of children are experiencing the exploitation and misery of child labour when they should be getting a decent education. The economic crisis, and the obsession with austerity, are severely hampering efforts to get the children out of work and into school," said ITUC General Secretary Sharan Burrow.

177 governments have now ratified ILO Convention 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour, while 165 have ratified Convention 138, which is the main global reference point for the age at which people under the age of 18 can begin work experience, apprenticeships or enter work full-time.

A special focus on the World Day Against Child Labour this year is the situation of children trapped in domestic servitude, facing some of the most severe exploitation and physical and psychological abuse. So far, 10 countries have ratified Convention 189 on Domestic Work, adopted by the ILO just two years ago.

"Out of sight, out of mind, can no longer be the reality for children in domestic servitude or indeed in any other form of exploitation. The global community needs to boost action directed specifically at tackling child labour, and also focus on quality education, social protection and labour inspection, instead of the erosion of these crucial services to satisfy subjective fiscal targets that are tearing communities apart," said Burrow.

The union movement is concerned that much of the focus for action on child labour has been on specific projects, without governments putting comprehensive policies in place. An overall government policy and programme approach is essential. Without this, sustained impact from individual projects to tackle child labour in particular locations or sectors is difficult or even impossible.

For more information, see:

ILO-IPEC <http://www.ilo.org/ipecc/lang-en/index.htm>

Global March Against Child Labour <http://www.globalmarch.org/>

12 x 12 campaign <http://www.ituc-csi.org/domestic-workers-12-by-12?lang=en>

The ITUC represents 175 million workers in 156 countries and territories and has 315 national affiliates.

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