



Concerted effort needed to prevent child labour

SAMUEL DOUDU / 15 JUNE 2016



At the press launch in Accra on June 9 to announce the 2016 World Child Labour Day, on the theme: "End Child Labour in supply chains in Ghana," the Project Director of the International Labour Organisation (ILO), Madam Lalaina Rasafindrakoto, made a relevant statement.

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“Until parents are able to support themselves financially, children will continue to be used to help top up household incomes in all stages of supply chains, including agriculture, fishing, mining, retail and other sectors,” she said.

Concerted efforts

In another statement to mark the event, the acting Country Director of the Christian Children's Fund of Canada (CCFC), Mr William Anim-Dankwa, last Saturday further called for a concerted effort by the government, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), local churches and mosques, as well as opinion leaders, to help prevent the high incidence of child labour in rural communities in the Northern Region.

He also called for the “arrest” of all children between the ages of seven and 16 who worked as female porters, popularly known as “Kayayie”, in the urban centres of the country. He noted that when the laws of the country on child protection were enforced, it would help stem the tide of child labour in the country.

Mr Anim-Dankwa made the call at a community sensitisation forum at Yongdakpemyili, a farming community in the Tamale Metropolis, last Monday, to mark this year's International Day Against Child Labour on June 12.

The durbar, organised by the CCFC in collaboration with World Vision, the Campaign for Female Education (CAMFED), Regional Advisory Information and Network Systems (RAINS) and Right to Play, all NGOs, was on the topic: ‘Elections as a potential source of conflict.’

The ILO first launched World Child Labour Day in 2002, and since then, June 12 every year is marked as such to foster the worldwide movement against child labour in any form.

He stated that majority of the people in rural areas in the region were ignorant of what constituted child labour and therefore there was a need to heighten the awareness of the issue in those communities to stem the tide of child labour.

Election violence

Mr Anim-Dankwa used the occasion to appeal to parents not to allow their children to be used to perpetuate violence as the nation approached election 2016 and also be careful of how their children were used for child labour.

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He told members of the community that per the definition by the International Labour Organisation (ILO), child labour involved work that deprived children of their childhood potential and dignity, and which was harmful to their physical and mental development.

Mr Anim-Dankwa was, however, quick to explain that not all labour by children was considered as child labour, especially when children supported their parents in light family work which was not harmful to their health or development and was done after school, or did not affect attendance at school.

Other forms of child labour

He mentioned other forms of exploitation of children as the trafficking of girls for prostitution and as household servants, which is very rife in Ghana, and the entire West African sub-region.

Mr Anim-Dankwa advised parents not to shirk their responsibilities towards their children in order not to push them into hazardous work that would deprive them of their physical and mental development.