



EUROPEAN UNION

Delegation of the European Commission to South Africa

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Press Release

.../for immediate release

Universal Children Day – Focus on fight against child labour

Joint Statement of European Commissioners

B Ferrero-Waldner (External Relations and European Neighbourhood Policy),
C Ashton (Trade), L Michel (Development and Humanitarian Aid),
and V Spidla (Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities).

"Some 165 million children between the ages of 5 and 14 are estimated to be currently involved in child labour. Child labour is a grave human rights' violation and undermines efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goal of universal primary education. We will continue in our joint efforts to achieve progress towards our common goal of eradicating child labour."

The fight against child labour is a core commitment of the EU's human rights agenda and needs to be tackled at all levels and through concerted efforts from governments, industry and the international community. The EU pursues a comprehensive approach to the elimination of all forms of child labour, covering political, trade, development and governance dialogue, and actions with regard to poverty alleviation, the labour market, social dialogue and social protection with an emphasis on free and universal primary education. Therefore we encourage all partner countries to ratify and implement the relevant ILO Conventions on child labour.

We will continue our efforts in working with partner countries and international organisations, but also with the private sector, trade unions and non-state actors to promote corporate social responsibility globally. Several programmes of the EU are proof of the wide array of ongoing activities in this field."

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Background on ongoing activities:

The Commission supports various actions worldwide to strengthen children's rights and prevent child labour. Through the European Initiative on Democracy and Human Rights, the Commission has supported the implementation by NGOs of a series of projects in Brazil ('Empowerment of the Waste Picker's Associations and Protection of their Rights' and 'Stock Market-School Citizen - Income and Education to Prevent Child Labour Exploitation'), Cambodia ('Utilising the Buddhist monks and school students to prevent sexual abuse and child labour'), Egypt ('Campaign Against Child Labour in the Egyptian Agrarian Sector') and Morocco ('Awareness to Fight Against Child Labour').

Moreover, the “Project for Eradicating the Worst Forms of Child Labour” – supported by the European Delegation in Turkey (the budget allocated was 5.3 million euros) – aimed at enhancing the capacity of the Child Labour Unit in the Ministry of Labour and Social Security and providing approximately 3000 Turkish children and their families with education, rehabilitation and support services in seven different provinces.

Most recently, the European Commission, the ILO's International Programme for the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) and Pakistan's government signed an agreement to implement a project to combat child labour in Pakistan. The Commission's contribution (€4.75 million) will help Pakistan's government and IPEC to tackle child labour in the formal and informal economies, for example domestic work, car repair workshops or recycling of waste. The project, due run until 2013, aims to take children out of the worst forms of work immediately and rehabilitate them. It will also involve prevention work.

Finally, the European Commission also supports initiatives by the business community to promote decent work through corporate social responsibility (CSR).

The EU's Human rights & Democratisation Policy:

http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/human_rights/child/index.htm

International aspects of EU employment and social affairs policy:

http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/international_cooperation/index_en.htm