Inclusive social protection allows families to keep their children in school even in the face of economic hardship. Increased investment in rural development and decent work in agriculture is essential.

We are at a pivotal moment and much depends on how we respond. This is a time for renewed commitment and energy, to turn the corner and break the cycle of poverty and child labour.

—Guy Ryder, former ILO Director-General, current United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Policy

WHAT IS WORLD DAY AGAINST CHILD LABOUR?

WHAT IS CHILD LABOUR?

Defined by the ILO, child labour is work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity, and that is harmful to physical and mental development. It refers to work that is mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful to children; and/or interferes with their schooling.

FAST FACTS/STATS

Nearly half of child labourers were working under hazardous conditions in 2020.

Over ¾ of children in child labour are out of school.

70% of child labourers work in agriculture like farming and livestock herding.

50% of child labourers are girls.

33% of children in child labour are out of school.

Approximately 70% of child labourers work in agriculture like farming and livestock herding.

ILO CONVENTION NO. 182

Article 7 on Education:

Each Member shall, taking into account the importance of education in eliminating child labour, take effective and time-bound measures to:

- Prevent the engagement of children in the worst forms of child labour.
- Identify and reach out to children at special risk.
- Ensure access to free basic education, and, wherever possible and appropriate, vocational training, for all children removed from the worst forms of child labour.
- Take account of the special situation of girls.
- Provide the necessary and appropriate direct assistance for the removal of children from the worst forms of child labour and for their rehabilitation and social integration.
- Identify and reach out to children at special risk.

THE ILO URGES IMMEDIATE ACTION AS CHILD LABOUR ESTIMATES GROW TO 160 MILLION
Urge local, national, and international governments to implement child-sensitive social protection systems.

Improve access to quality education for all children, regardless of gender, by urging local governments to invest in teacher trainings and technology implementation within schools.

Urge governments to assist poor families with programs such as cash transfer and school feeding programs which enhance employment and education opportunities.

Utilize international coalitions and organizations to spread awareness about child labour and create feasible solutions endorsed by both the public and private sector.

Raise level of international awareness of child labour by utilizing social media platforms.

By alleviating poverty, the root cause of child labour, families across the world will be able to engage in sustainable livelihoods.

Promoting equal access to education and opportunities for girls helps break the ongoing cycle of discrimination and violence against women.

Boosting social protections for children and expanding access to education will create more opportunities and reduce poverty over time.

Promoting decent work with safe environments, fair compensation, and worker protections directly mitigates child labor.

Read more about how child labour relates to the SDGs here.