

## PRESS STATEMENT IN CELEBRATION OF WORLD DAY AGAINST CHILD LABOUR 2024

The Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice commemorates this year's World Day Against Child Labour by calling on government and other relevant stakeholders to accelerate efforts towards achieving the U.N. Sustainable Development Goal 8.7<sup>1</sup> and the total eradication of child labour in Ghana.

In 2002, the International Labour Organization (ILO) launched the World Day Against Child Labour to create awareness of the prevalence of child labour around the world and to prompt action towards abolishing this menace in all its forms. The theme for this year's celebration; ***Let's Act on Our Commitment: End Child Labour!*** focuses on encouraging improvement of the implementation of ILO Convention No. 138 for Minimum Age for Admission to Employment or Work (1973) and Convention No.182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour (1999). These fundamental Conventions oblige all ILO member States to ensure the eradication of child labour, with or without ratification of these Conventions.

While child labour is a global phenomenon, it is more prevalent in Africa. One in every five children in Africa (19.6%) is a child labourer and in absolute terms, 72.1 million children are in child labour situations across the continent.<sup>2</sup> Africa and Asia Pacific Region account for nearly 90% of all children involved in child labour globally. This trend is reflected in Ghana, as about 28% of children between 5-17 years are engaged in child labour, while around 21% are in hazardous working conditions.<sup>3</sup> Also, child labour is prevalent among children who are out of school and in Ghana, more than 1 million primary and secondary school-aged children are currently out-of-school. In addition, 33% young women and 28% young men are not in education, employment and training. Children in Ghana work in various sectors, including fishing, cocoa production, and mining.

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<sup>1</sup> "Take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, including recruitment and use of child soldiers and by 2025 end child labour in all forms"

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/23322705.2023.2259785>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.unicef.org/ghana/press-releases/new-ghana-accelerated-action-plan-against-child-labour-2023-2027-launched>



Ghana has made some positive strides in addressing child labour. Aside legislation and the ratification of International Conventions to address child labour such as the Children's Act, 1998 (Act 560), UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs), and Convention No. 138 and No. 182;<sup>4</sup> in 2023 Ghana launched a new five-year Ghana Accelerated Action Plan Against Child Labour 2023-2027. The plan highlights the relevance of multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder collaboration in addressing the root causes of child labour, for instance strengthening social protection systems, improving access to quality education, enhancing livelihood opportunities for families, and promoting decent employment opportunities for the youth. Also, the plan recommends updated measures based on lessons learned from previous action plans and has the aim to achieve the SDG 8.7 by 2025.

However, with current trends of child labour situations across the country, much still needs to be done by way of doubling up efforts towards abolishing child labour and its attendant's effects in Ghana. Extreme poverty, social norms and local customs, poorly enforced regulatory policies and insufficient resource allocation to prevent and address child labour are some of the existing challenges inhibiting efforts at eradicating the menace of child labour in Ghana.

While acknowledging various initiatives to resolve the intractable problem of child labour in Ghana, including child labour monitoring systems, the Integrated Social Services and the Social Welfare Information Management System which are aimed at improving coordination between social protection, child protection and health service providers; the Commission further urges government and other relevant stakeholders to strengthen inter-sectoral coordination, implement well targeted community sensitization programmes on issues of child labour, and enhance access to quality education. In addition, the government must ensure adequate budget allocation to finance social service initiatives especially at the decentralised level and to harmonise Child Labour Monitoring and Remediation Systems in the country to ensure effective outcomes.



**Joseph Whittal**  
Commissioner

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<sup>4</sup> Others include the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, the ILO Forced Labour Convention (No 29) and the Abolition of Forced Labour Convention (No. 105), the ILO Convention on Labour Inspection (No. 81), the Domestic Violence Act, 2007 (Act 732), the Human Trafficking Act, 2005 (Act 694), the Criminal Code, 1960 (Act 29) and the Criminal Code (Amendment) Act, 1998 (Act 554).