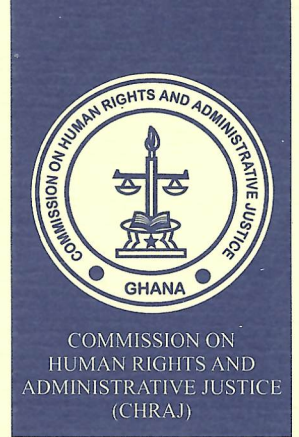


12th June 2025



PRESS RELEASE

COMMEMORATION OF THE WORLD DAY AGAINST CHILD LABOUR 2025

The Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ) joins the global community to commemorate the 2025 World Day Against Child Labour, under the theme:

“Progress is clear, but there’s more to do: Let’s speed up efforts.”

This year’s theme is a call to action—a reminder that although progress has been achieved globally and nationally, millions of children around the world still wake up each day trapped in work that is mentally, physically and socially harmful or morally bad. These children are denied their right to quality education, safe environment, and a future free from exploitation.

Globally, child labour remains a serious human rights concern. The International Labour Organization (ILO) and UNICEF estimate that 160 million children comprising 63 million girls and 97 million boys were engaged in child labour at the start of 2020. Out of this number, 79 million children were engaged in hazardous work that directly endangers their health, safety, and moral development. Sub-Saharan Africa remains the region with the highest prevalence of child labour, accounting for over 86 million children, or more than one in five children. Alarming, for the first time in two decades, global progress against child labour has stalled and even reversed in some regions. The global economic pressures induced by conflict, climate change, the COVID-19 pandemic, and rising inequalities continue to push vulnerable families and children into exploitative labour conditions. These dynamics not only rob children of their future but also undermine efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially Target 8.7, which calls for the elimination of child labour in all its forms by 2025.

Ghana has taken bold steps toward eliminating child labour. These include the ratification of ILO Conventions 138 and 182 on Minimum Age and Worst Forms of Child Labour, respectively; the enactment of national legislations such as the Children’s Act, 1998 (Act 560) the Labour Act, 2003 (Act 651); and the launch of the Ghana Accelerated Action Plan Against Child Labour (2023–2027) which provides a framework for coordinated action. Despite these efforts, child labour persists at troubling levels. Over 1.1 million children in Ghana aged 5 to 17 are engaged in some form of work. Approximately 28% of children in this age group are involved in child labour, and 20.7% work under hazardous conditions. An estimated 500,000 working children are out of school—68,500 have never attended, while more than 389,000 have dropped out. Furthermore, as of the third quarter of 2023, nearly 2 million Ghanaian youth aged 15–35 were not in education, employment, or training (NEET), further exacerbating cycles of poverty and vulnerability.

The persistence of child labour in Ghana is driven by a combination of structural, economic, and socio-cultural factors. Enforcement of child protection and labour laws remains weak,

particularly at the local level. Although Ghana has strong legal frameworks in place, there is a significant gap in implementation, monitoring, and prosecution of violations. Budgetary constraints and limited logistical support continue to hamper the effectiveness of child protection institutions at the district and community levels. Many child protection committees and Social Welfare offices operate without adequate resources or trained personnel, limiting their ability to respond to cases in a timely and comprehensive manner. Another pressing issue is the fragmentation of efforts among government agencies, civil society organisations, and the private sector. The lack of an integrated monitoring and response system hinders data sharing, joint planning, and accountability. As a result, children often fall through the cracks of the protection system. Cultural norms and practices that normalize child labour, especially in sectors such as agriculture, domestic service, street vending, and informal apprenticeships, remain deeply entrenched. These beliefs are often reinforced by poverty, where families feel they have no choice but to rely on their children's labour for survival.

To accelerate the pace of progress, CHRAJ urges the government and all stakeholders to take several decisive steps, including the urgent need to update and expand national data on child labour. Comprehensive and periodic surveys, combined with robust monitoring systems, are essential to capture emerging trends and identify vulnerable groups. Also, local structures must be empowered to play a more active role in prevention and response. Social Welfare Departments, and other agencies and institutions must be adequately resourced and trained to detect, report, and manage child labour cases effectively. The development of a harmonized digital monitoring and response system is critical. This system should enable real-time data sharing and coordination among the Ministry of Employment, the Ghana Education Service, CHRAJ, the Labour Department, and key civil society actors. Such integration will significantly improve case tracking, resource allocation, and overall efficiency.

Finally, the coverage of social protection programmes such as LEAP (Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty) must be expanded. These schemes should be linked directly to education and child welfare services to provide families with a viable alternative to child labour. In parallel, the capacity of law enforcement agencies must be strengthened to ensure that those who exploit children face real consequences under the law.

The ILO launched the World Day Against Child Labour in 2002 to create awareness of the prevalence of child labour around the world and to prompt action towards abolishing this menace in all its forms.



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