



World Day against Child Labour

Act Now: End Child Labour

World Day against Child Labour which is celebrated every year on the 12th of June, is meant to raise awareness on the plight of children all around the world who are forced into labour. As per the most recent statistics released by the International Labour Organisation (ILO), **152 million children** are in child labour of which 72 million and 62 million are in Africa and Asia respectively. By definition, a child is a human being under the age of 18 years old. The ILO Convention sets the general minimum age for admission to employment or work at 15 years (13 for light work) and the minimum age for hazardous work at 18 (16 under certain strict conditions). It provides for the possibility of initially setting the general minimum age at 14 (12 for light work) where the economy and educational facilities are insufficiently developed. Any type of employment below the set minimum age is considered as child labour.

Child labour is a violation of fundamental human rights. It causes many developmental delays in children- both physical and psychological which lead to lifelong impacts. It robs children of their right to education and the possibility of a bright future and a life lived in dignity. Article 32 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, ILO Convention 182 on the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour and ILO Convention 138 on the Minimum Age of Employment recognize the right of every child to be protected from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to interfere with their education or harm their health.

Seychelles has ratified all key international conventions related to child labour. Since its set-up in 2019, the Seychelles Human Rights Commission has not received any formal complaints pertaining to child labour. However, the lack of record does not mean that such incidents do not go on undetected. The UN report of the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children in 2014 stated as follows;

“According to official sources, cases of forced prostitution of Seychellois girls, including minors, by their boyfriends/pimps who control their earnings are not uncommon. Drug and substance dependency of both the girls and their pimps are identified as the leading cause of such types of sexual exploitation.

For the combined fifth and sixth reports of Seychelles on the Convention of the Rights of the Child (2018), a series of recommendations were given in relation to child labour and child trafficking, particularly drawing attention to the need for strengthening of institutional structures and

mechanisms to protect children from economic exploitation; strengthening of public awareness of child labour; law reviews; prompt investigation and prosecution of cases and; protection and rehabilitation of child victims.

Research has shown that child labour is inevitably linked with poverty. During the Covid-19 pandemic, people with low income and those living below the poverty line have been hit the hardest. Given the dire situation, if economic conditions do not improve, decades of progress done in line with elimination of child labour will be easily reversed and it is quite possible that Seychelles will not be spared. Measures taken should be conscious of the economic difficulties encountered by poor families. Incentives such as adequate social protection can help reduce the risk of child labour. Since girls are more likely to be victims, rigorous campaigns on the emancipation of our girls and educational programmes should be put in place to empower young girls and reduce the risk of teenage pregnancy. There ought to be supporting mechanisms that cater to teenage mothers so as to discourage girls from dropping out of school. It is equally the responsibility of each community member to ensure that children are not being exploited, through proper vigilance and prompt reporting of cases. The Seychelles Human Rights Commission urges members of the public to come forth and report these incidents to concerned authorities and plead for appropriate action to be taken when these cases are lodged.

Child labour is child abuse. It is everybody's concern. Let us act now so that our children can have a future they rightly deserve.