

International Conference
Eradicating Child Labour, Building a Better Future
19 November 2021
14:30-16:30 CET
Sala Etchegaray, Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development
[Zoom Registration](#)

“It is not possible to close our eyes to the exploitation of children, deprived of the right to play, to study and to dream.” – Pope Francis

The United Nations General Assembly has declared 2021 the *International Year for the Elimination of Child Labour* and urged the global community to take the necessary measures to achieve Goal 8.7 of the UN 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development. Pope Francis has called for universal responsibility in the elimination of child labour. Inspired by this call to care for the “future of the human family,” we and our partners vow to give a voice to the 160 million children who suffer this unacceptable scourge. Working together, we know that things can change (*cf. Laudato Si’, 13*). In this context, the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, together with the Permanent Mission of the Holy See to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the Vatican COVID-19 Commission, is organizing an international conference to give visibility to the exploitation of children and to express solidarity with all individuals and families who suffer the injustice of child labour. It is our hope that by gathering together with local, intermediary, and global stakeholders, we may facilitate conversations that lead to meaningful advocacy and action, especially in this time of COVID-19 pandemic that exacerbated the plague of child-labour.

Opening prayer

Dominic Chai, S.J., Vatican Covid-19 Commission

Introductory remarks

Cardinal Peter K. A. Turkson, Prefect of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development
Kailash Satyarthi, Nobel Peace Laureate
Maximo Torero, Chief Economist, FAO

1st Panel: SEE – Why does child labour persist in the 21st Century? Identifying and overcoming obstacles to child flourishing

Moderator: Bernd Seiffert – FAO focal point for child labour

- Global trends and barriers: Perspective of an international organization (Cornelius Williams, Associate Director for Child Protection, UNICEF)
- Update on the recent estimates and policy recommendations (Michaëlle De Cock, Head, Research and Evaluation Unit, ILO)
- Policy and culture: Perspectives from the field (Chetra Khieu, Operation Director, Damnok Toek, Cambodia)

Group Discussion

2nd Panel: JUDGE – How does child labour impact children’s dignity? A focus on health and education

Moderator: Sr. Alessandra Smerilli, Interim Secretary of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development

- Outcomes and lost opportunities (Maximo Torero, Chief Economist, FAO)
- Voices from the ground (Nasreen Sheikh, Empowerment Collective, Nepal)
- International NGO perspective (Philip Goldman, President, Maestral International, USA)

Group Discussion

3rd Panel: ACT – Facilitating conversations and advocating for global cooperation: The church in dialogue

Moderator: Mons. Tejado Segundo, Under-Secretary of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development

- Building local and international alliances (Gianni Rosas, Director, ILO Office for Italy and San Marino and Ana López Castelló, Chief Technical Adviser Child Labour Prevention and Eradication Programme, Latin America)
- Local church activism (Sr. Catherine Mutindi, RGS, *Democratic Republic of Congo*)
- Sustainable business practices (Carla Caballeros, Executive Director of the Cámara del Agro, *Guatemala*)

Group Discussion

Concluding remarks

Mons. Fernando Chica Arellano, Holy See Permanent Observer at the United Nations Organizations and Bodies for Food and Agriculture (FAO, IFAD, and WFP)

Maurizio Martina, Assistant Director-General / Special Adviser to the Director-General, FAO