



DICASTERY FOR PROMOTING
INTEGRAL HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

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 (DPIHD)

Welcome address

Card. Peter K.A. Turkson, Prefect

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to welcome you at the International Conference on “Eradicating Child Labour, Building a Better Future”.

By hosting this event, co-organized with the Permanent Mission of the Holy See to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the Vatican COVID-19 Commission, the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development wishes to give its contribution to the cause of ending child labour in all its forms and to building a more just world. Our aim is to awake consciences, express solidarity to children and families affected by child labour, but also build trust and synergies among those who are engaged to put an end to the labour exploitation of children.

In a time in which mankind has made tremendous progress in terms of wealth, scientific knowledge, technologies and communication, we are still witnessing forms of exploitation that, in some cases, amount to contemporary forms of slavery. It is a scandal that the opulent lifestyle of one part of humanity is well too often obtained at the cost of the dignity of the most fragile members of the human family, that is children!

How many children are employed and even exploited in agriculture – including fishing, forestry, livestock herding and aquaculture – in mining, manufacturing and household services, not



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to talk about the shameful exploitation of minors in the prostitution, pornography and drug markets, and the enforced or compulsory recruitment of children in armed conflicts.

Let us ask ourselves how many products that we consume, or components of such products, are made through the exploitation of children! As Pope Francis puts it, “Such an economy kills”¹.

No one shall remain indifferent in the face of the violations of the dignity of children, wherever they happen and whatever form they may take, because we are all members of the same human family, we are all interconnected and interdependent; “we are on the same boat, all of us (...) important and needed, all of us called to row together”, because “no one reaches salvation by themselves”².

We believe that the magnitude of this phenomenon requires cooperation at different levels, involving States, intergovernmental organizations, the business community and workers' organisations, each through their specific role and responsibilities. At the same time, it is desirable to strengthen collaboration with civil society organisations, including faith-based organisations, whose commitment on the ground is well known, especially when it comes to the healing and rehabilitation of the victims.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In adopting the Sustainable Development Goals, including target 8.7, the international community committed itself, among other things, to take immediate and effective action to prohibit and eliminate the worst forms of child labour, including the recruitment and use of child soldiers, and end child labour in all its forms.

The Holy See welcomes this commitment with hope³ and strongly wishes that this gathering can contribute to achieving the said goal.

In this year that has been declared by the United Nations General Assembly as the *International Year for the Elimination of Child Labour* it is time to act together, to join efforts to

¹ POPE FRANCIS, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, 24 November 2013, N. 53.

² POPE FRANCIS, *Extraordinary Moment of Prayer*, Sagrato of St Peter's Basilica, 27 March 2020.

³ Cfr. Intervention of the Holy See to the *IV Global Conference on the Sustained Eradication of Child Labour*, Buenos Aires, 14-16 November 2016.



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build a world where no child is forced to work, where no family is in need, and where all children equally enjoy all human rights.

Thank you for your attention.

Cardinal Peter Kodwo Appiah Turkson
Prefect