
ILO: New Global Partnership Against Child Labour in Agriculture

Three United Nations agencies have joined forces with key international agricultural groups to launch a new landmark global partnership to address the plight of children working in agriculture, on the occasion of the World Day against Child Labour.

The initiative will focus on policies and activities to promote the application of laws on child labour in agriculture, mainstream child labour issues into national agricultural activities, and promote youth employment opportunities in rural areas.

“It is only by mainstreaming child labour issues into mandates and policies and by working together that we can strengthen the worldwide movement to eliminate child labour,” International Labour Organization (ILO) Director-General Juan Somavia said, welcoming the new partnership.

The World Day was launched in 2002 as a way to highlight the plight of working children. The ILO estimates that 218 million children worldwide, from 5 to 17 years old, are engaged in some kind of labour, with 126 million children engaged in the worst forms of child labour.

The agency noted in a news release that worldwide, agriculture is where by far the largest number of working children can be found – an estimated 70 per cent, of whom 132 million are girls and boys aged 5-14, “who often work from dawn to dusk on farms and plantations, planting and harvesting crops, spraying pesticides, and tending livestock.”

“These children are helping to produce the food and beverages we consume,” said ILO.

The UN Food and Agriculture Organization stressed that putting an end to child labour in agriculture must become a political priority, saying it is “simply unacceptable” that 132 million children are forced to work the land under unhealthy and hazardous conditions.

Most studies point to poverty as the root cause of child

labour, with children working both for their own survival and for that of their families, according to an FAO news release.

“The true winning strategy against child labour is to reduce poverty in rural areas of the developing world, offering income opportunities, addressing health and safety in agriculture, improving pesticide management, and ensuring sustainable development,” said José María Sumpsi, FAO’s Assistant Director-General for Agricultural and Consumer Protection.

In addition to the ILO and FAO, members of the new partnership are the International Fund for Agricultural Development, International Food Policy Research Institute of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research, International Federation of Agricultural Producers, and the International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers’ Association.

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INDIA: Child rights to be taught in school

[NEW DELHI, 1 November 2007] - The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) in India has written to district collectors to ask that articles from the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) are read out in every class, and morning assemblies, at least twice a week

Children will now be educated about their rights and the laws protecting them in their classrooms. Since children are least likely to be aware of their rights and the laws meant to protect them, the NCPCR wants the move to begin from 14 November, Children’s Day, to make the day meaningful for them.

Besides schools, the NCPCR wants hostels, orphanages, juvenile observation homes, children’s homes and shelter homes etc also to take up this activity. “Despite having certain rights and laws, children never complain against the atrocities or the humiliation they face. They are simply not aware about what to do and where to go in such situations. Hence, it is important let them know of articles, laws and issues related to their rights so that they can stand up and speak against atrocities,” said a member of NCPCR.

Accordingly, children will be told about their rights in schools and at home. They will be informed that they have the right to be protected from being hurt and mistreated in body or mind.

[Source: Daily News and Analysis India; www.dnaindia.com]