



West Africa Regional Symposium on Promoting Area-based Approach (ABA) to Prevent and Eradicate Child Labour

CALL TO ACTION DOCUMENT

Accra, Ghana (May, 2024)

About the organisers

GLOBAL MARCH AGAINST CHILD LABOUR

The Global March Against Child Labour (Global March) is a worldwide network committed to eradicating the root causes of child labour. We harness the collective strength, resources, and experiences of our network to tackle systemic inequalities, reduce socio-economic barriers, and mitigate vulnerabilities that perpetuate children's exploitation. Our collective efforts are strategically aligned with the UN global vision of eradicating child labour through Target 8.7.

Know more about the organisation: globalmarch.org

THE GENERAL AGRICULTURAL WORKERS' UNION OF GHANA

The General Agricultural Workers' Union of Ghana (GAWU) is an agricultural trade union working to protect the interest of workers both wage earners and nonwage earners. GAWU is involved in world trade issues, globalisation and its effects on rural people, women activities, child labour, HIV AIDS, and sustainable development. It is an affiliate of the Trades Union Congress – Ghana and the biggest trade union organising farmers and agricultural employees in Ghana. GAWU started its activities towards the creation of Child Labour-Free Zones in Ghana in 2007.

WORK: NO CHILD'S BUSINESS

The Work: No Child's Business Alliance is run by the Save the Children Netherlands, UNICEF Netherlands and the Stop Child Labour Coalition (coordinated by Hivos). The three Alliance partners have jointly developed "Work: No Child's Business" with the aim to make a strong and lasting contribution to the elimination of child labour. This aim is closely aligned with the commitment of the Dutch government and parliament to invest in combating child labour

Know more about the organisation: wncb.org

Foreword

We, the local, regional and international civil society organisations (CSOs), trade unions and teachers' unions, from Ghana, Mali, Ivory Coast, Nigeria and Cameroon, present at the **West Africa Regional Symposium on promoting Area Based Approach (ABA) for Prevention and Eradication of Child Labour**, stand together in our commitment to take collective action to protect the rights of the children engaged in child labour and advocate for sustainable child labour free zones (CLFZs) for the eradication of child labour. We recall the Target 8.7, the international ILO conventions and ratifications, and the previous international agreements from the governments of West African countries which aim to eradicate child labour worldwide.

Noteworthy are the African Union's Ten Year Regional Action Plan, adopted by Africa heads of states during the African Union Summit in February 2020 and Ministers of Labour and Social Development in December 2019; The ECOWAS Regional Action Plan on Child Labour and its child policy and the commitments made at the recent 5th Global Conference on the Elimination of Child Labour (Durban, 2022); 2021 International Year for the Elimination of Child Labour; the Oslo International Conference on Child Labour, 1997, the Hague Global Child Labour Conference, 2010 which gave rise to the pragmatic Roadmap for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour; the III Global Conference on Child Labour, Brasilia, 2013 and the IV Global Conference on the Sustained Eradication of Child Labour, Buenos Aires, 2017, where hundreds of pledges were made for the elimination of child labour and forced labour. The world has united through these milestones, making resolute pledges to eliminate child labour and these endeavours reinforce our shared commitment to ensure a world free from child labour.

By intensifying our efforts, experimenting with new strategies, and working together to create, embrace, and implement better laws, national action plans, or policies on child labour, forced labour, modern slavery, and human trafficking, we can turn public promises into tangible actions. Particularly significant in this context are the crucial steps outlined in the Durban Call to Action. This includes ratifying or actively striving towards the ratification or enforcement of relevant international human rights standards, including international labour standards.

Acknowledging the importance of fulfilling these commitments, now more important than ever, as committed pathfinder and non-pathfinder countries and their respective stakeholders, together, we urge the members of the Alliance 8.7 and country governments in West Africa to commit towards: **"Prioritising Area Based Approach in Planning, Policies and Action to Eliminate Child Labour."** With the increasing number of African countries becoming PFCs, it is crucial to show progress and evidence on implementing effective solutions to address child labour. **Child Labour Free Zones (CLFZs) is one such solution and must be collectively adopted and promoted to address child labour in Africa.**

Call to Action

We commit to step up efforts to advocate for adoption and implementation of ABA for the prevention and eradication of child labour, particularly in these four key areas and including gender and child and youth participation as crucial intersecting components (as relevant to governments and other organisations):

- Promoting public, inclusive and relevant education whilst addressing learning gaps and alternatives for child labour survivors
- Implementing resilient livelihood structures and opportunities to ensure decent work and (living) income for adults as well as young people/child labour survivors
- Promoting integrated social protection measures that consider context-based challenges in child labour and the respective needs of vulnerable communities
- Ensuring effective implementation of national and regional policies, transparency in monitoring, and continuous improvement. Adopting a systemic approach that holds all relevant parties accountable for their roles in protecting children and upholding their rights

WE CALL ON

The Governments to:

1. Increase financial support for education

- Allocate a greater share of government budgets and GDP to education to improve quality and learning outcomes, reduce dropout rates, and provide relevant schooling for out-of-school children and child labourers
- Address Implementation Barriers: Adopt effective strategies to eliminate barriers such as school fees, transportation, and uniforms for low-income households
- Strengthen Technical Capacity: Improve the skills of teachers, district/community government offices, and teachers' unions to support area-based interventions targeting child labour eradication
- Establish skill centres in communities to build livelihood skills and promote decent work for young people

2. Invest in social protection and economic empowerment

- Support Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs): to boost social protection, economic resilience, and school attendance in high-risk communities
- Develop Community-Based Social Protection Schemes: Establish apolitical social protection initiatives in farming and child labour-prone communities

3. Manage and monitor data

- **Manage Child Labour Data:** Develop a coordinated data management system for child labour monitoring and remediation, accessible to all key stakeholders
- **Monitor Policy Implementation:** Form technical working groups with CSOs, government agencies, and trade unions to monitor policy implementation at all levels

4. Strengthen legislation and enforcement

- **Enforce laws covering minimum wage, safe working conditions, and reasonable working hours**
- **Establish Tripartite plus Bodies:** Create bodies to oversee labour policy implementation and resolve disputes, involving government, employers, workers' organisations and NGOs
- **Graduate Social Protection Beneficiaries:** Transition beneficiaries of existing social protection programs to new initiatives for continuous support

5. Invest in institutional capacity building

- **Form Alliance 8.7 Secretariat:** Establish a secretariat within the Ministry of Labour with CSO, union, and employer representation to institutionalise child protection issues and support the collation of reports of interventions and best practices
- **Capacity Building for Workers:** Invest in worker education on policies regarding decent work and income
- **Formalise Informal Organisations:** Strengthen informal organisations in child labour-prone communities to enhance their bargaining power

6. Strategically engage in international cooperation and dialogue

- **Engage International Partners:** Collaborate with international organisations for technical and financial support on employment initiatives
- **Promote Social Dialogue:** Encourage dialogue among government, employers, and workers' organisations for inclusive policymaking
- **Adopt Cooperative Approaches:** Promote cooperative approaches in target communities to foster social dialogue and improve livelihoods, such as the Village Savings and Loans model practiced in Nigeria





The Private Sector to:

1. Invest in integrated area-based approaches for impact:

- Implement child labour eradication programs within broader community development initiatives
- Utilise insights from area-based interventions like child labour monitoring systems and child labour-free zones to tailor solutions that address local challenges effectively
- Focus on vulnerable producers and smallholders where child labour risks are highest, ensuring tailored interventions and sustainable impact

2. Enhance due diligence and collaboration

- Enhance Human Rights Due Diligence by integrating local knowledge and outcomes from community-led initiatives
- Collaborate with certified producer organisations and local traders to implement an ABA to address child labour together
- Include living income initiatives as a critical strategy to reduce poverty and prevent child labour, in an ABA thereby addressing systemic inequalities

3. Contribute to community empowerment through local engagement and investment:

- Support formalised and informal producer organisations with strong community ties to strengthen local capacity and commitment to child labour eradication
- Encourage self-financing of capacity building on child labour laws and root causes, reducing reliance on external donors

4. Engage in multi-stakeholder dialogue for sustainable change:

- Engage in continuous dialogue with CSOs, trade unions, and communities to improve working conditions and collective bargaining rights
- Adopt a multi-stakeholder approach that prioritises community well-being and systemic change over company-centric strategies

The International Organisations to:

(ILO, UNICEF, African Union, ECOWAS)

1. Strengthen partnership and accountability

- Support Civil Society and NGOs: Collaborate with civil society organisations (CSOs), national and international NGOs to implement community led interventions projects
- Collaborate to form multi-stakeholder led learning centres/labs on area-based approach to continue its improvement and implementation

2. Promote indigenous solutions and sustainability

- Indigenous Policy Development: Include indigenous solutions to inform policies, prioritising community interests over foreign donor agendas
- Sustainable Impact Assessment: Emphasize the sustainability of projects by assessing their impact on policy accountability from a community perspective, using outcome harvesting methods for monitoring and learning

3. Improve advocacy and strategic engagement

- Targeted Lobbying and Engagement: Ensure that the relevant social groups, communities, and organisations (CSOs, government agencies, private sector) and beneficiaries are included in advocacy efforts of their interventions to influence policies and practices

The Alliance 8.7 to:

- Promote the ABA within the child labour platform and develop pilots with the members of this platform
- Provide a learning and sharing space to strengthen and promote child labour-free zones in the pathfinder countries
- Provide support to mobilise resources and funds to implement the CLFZs



Endorsements

This Call to Action has been endorsed by the representatives of the following organisations during the West African Regional Symposium held in Accra, Ghana on 29th May, 2024.

1. General Agricultural Workers Union (GAWU), Ghana
2. Work: No Child's Business, Mali
3. Save the Children, Ivory Coast
4. Save the Children, Mali
5. Child & Youth Protection Foundation (CYPF), Nigeria
6. Kids & Teens, Nigeria
7. Christian Rural and Urban Development Association of Nigeria (CRUDAN), Nigeria
8. Fairtrade Africa, Ghana
9. 100 Weeks, Ghana
10. Free the Slaves, Ghana
11. Child Rights International, Ghana
12. Verite, Ghana
13. The Herald, Ghana
14. Multikids Africa, Ghana
15. Ghana Broadcasting Corporation
16. Fako Agricultural Workers Union (FAWU), Cameroon
17. Education International, Accra
18. IC-NET, Ghana
19. Curious Minds, Ghana
20. International Youth Foundation, Africa
21. Ghana National Association of teachers (GNAT)
22. Teachers and Educational Workers Union, Ghana (TEWU)
23. Trade Union Congress (TUC), Ghana
24. Ghana Civil Society Cocoa Platform
25. CSOs Platform on SDGs, Ghana