

Statement

World Conference on Child Labour, 8-10 October 2013, Brasilia

Dear representatives from governments, workers, employers and civil society all over the world,

thank you very much for the invitation and this great platform to exchange ideas and ways out of the worst forms of child labour. I am proud to speak on behalf of the Association of German Development Non-Governmental Organisations ([VENRO](#)) – an organization with more than 100 members from civil society, all of them striving for the realization of children's rights worldwide.

Our goal is to identify ways for a sustainable eradication of child labour with a special focus on its worst forms. This is a difficult task because the problem of child labour is complex. It requires a complex solution. Thus, we would like to highlight the following four aspects.

First of all, we have to be aware that we deal with different types of child labour that make different approaches necessary. The worst forms have to be eliminated immediately according to the ILO Conventions and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. But there are also other forms of child labour that need a differentiated approach. Children that work under non-hazardous conditions often show us, that a simple ban is not the right way. As long as their families are poor and in need of their support, they want to help. At the same time they claim their right to education, protection and health. In Latin America and West Africa they even claim their right to work and to unite in trade unions. Thus, we have to find individual solutions focussing on the rights, well-being and best interest of each single child. None of them will solve the problem over night. But until child labour is banned approaches like moving children from the worst forms of child labour to non harmful forms offering decent work conditions, evening classes or protection clothes will help them to realize some of their rights. Simultaneously, it is important to improve their capacities and life skills which will help to realize children's rights and overcome all forms of child labour in the long-run.

Secondly, child labour is not an isolated phenomenon. It is caused by the economic and social poverty facing the children's families. Anyone interested in finding real solutions must start here. We need a political, socio-economic and legal framework on the national and international level that tackles the root causes of working children and provides decent work opportunities for adults, good educational and health systems, social protection, living wages and an elaborate legal framework to realize children's rights.

Thirdly, we have to put the finger in the wound and focus more on those aspects that have been neglected so far. This includes the effective implementation of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights as well as the situation of vulnerable children, domestic labour, hazardous child labour along global value chains and the informal economy where most exploitative child labour is found.

Fourthly, despite all the negative aspects we associate with child labour, it does show that children are able to bear responsibility and do a lot to support their families. Anyone wishing to combat child labour can learn from these children. Instead of having to bear their great loads, they could make a huge contribution towards solving the problem they face in their societies and countries. Successful programs are those in which children and adults work side-by-side to find ways of avoiding exploitation, those which facilitate children's rights to education and health care and which incorporate both families and the social environment, to

constantly keep our vision of conquering child labour all over the world in focus. But most of these children live in rural areas, they are not online and they did not have the chance to participate in the Online Dialogues in the forefront of this conference. Thus, let's invite them to participate in the next Global Conference on Child Labour!

Here in Brasilia we have a unique chance to agree on the next steps – let's go for it!

Thank you very much!