



PLATFORM FOR LABOUR ACTION

"Advocates for vulnerable and marginalized workers"

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PRESS STATEMENT BY PLATFORM FOR LABOUR ACTION (PLA) ON THE COMMEMORATION OF THE WORLD DAY AGAINST CHILD LABOUR 2026

Theme: "Red Card to Child Labour: Fair Play for Children, Decent Work for Adults"

Date: 12th June 2026

Today, as Uganda joins the rest of the world in commemorating the World Day Against Child Labour, Platform for Labour Action (PLA) stands in solidarity with children, workers, communities, employers, government institutions, development partners, and civil society organizations in calling for urgent action to eliminate child labour in all its forms.

This year's theme, "Red Card to Child Labour: Fair Play for Children, Decent Work for Adults," is a powerful reminder that child labour has no place in our communities, workplaces, farms, or supply chains. Just as a red card removes unfair play from the field, society must decisively reject child labour and instead ensure that children are in school and adults have access to decent, productive, and fairly remunerated work.

Uganda continues to face an alarming child labour crisis. Recent evidence shows that child labour increased significantly over the past decade, with millions of children engaged in economic activities, many of them in hazardous sectors such as agriculture, domestic work, informal trade, mining, and other exploitative forms of labour. The challenge remains particularly acute in agricultural value chains where poverty, limited educational opportunities, weak enforcement, and harmful social norms continue to expose children to exploitation.

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At PLA, we believe that every child deserves the opportunity to learn, play, develop, and realize their full potential. No child should be carrying sugarcane, spraying chemicals, harvesting rice in dangerous conditions, working as a domestic worker, or undertaking any work that deprives them of their childhood, education, health, and dignity.

As we commemorate this day, PLA is proud of the significant progress achieved under the European Union-funded project **"Business and Community Actions to Eliminate Child Labour in the Sugar and Rice Supply Chains in Uganda,"** implemented between 2023 and 2026 in the districts of **Iganga, Bugiri, and Kaliro** in partnership with Action on Poverty (APT).

The recently completed independent evaluation found that the project achieved transformative results in reducing child labour through a comprehensive approach that combined community mobilization, business accountability, strengthened legal frameworks, and household economic empowerment. Among the key achievements are:

- 1,239 children were withdrawn from hazardous child labour
- 600 children were successfully reintegrated into formal education and vocational training, giving them a second chance to pursue their dreams.
- More than 6,700 households took action to prevent child labour, demonstrating a major shift in community attitudes and practices.
- Community awareness campaigns reached over 177,000 people, contributing to increased public understanding of children's rights and the dangers of child labour.
- Nearly 2,000 business actors in the sugar and rice value chains were trained on child rights and responsible business conduct.



- 148 business associations and commercial farmers adopted Child Rights Business Principles, strengthening accountability within agricultural supply chains.
- Three district child protection ordinances were developed, with Iganga District successfully gazetting its ordinance to strengthen enforcement and accountability.
- 2,253 vulnerable households received livelihood and skills training, helping families increase income and reduce dependence on child labour.
- Most importantly, child labour prevalence in the project areas declined from 40.6% to 34%, demonstrating that coordinated action can produce measurable change.

These achievements affirm that eliminating child labour is possible when communities, businesses, government institutions, and development partners work together.

The fight against child labour is not new for PLA. For over twenty years, PLA has implemented child protection programmes addressing child labour, child trafficking, exploitation in domestic work, commercial agriculture, urban informal work, and conflict-affected communities. PLA is a recognized member of the National Steering Committee on the Elimination of Child Labour and the Alliance 8.7 national coordination mechanisms in Uganda.

With support from the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad) and other partners, PLA implemented the Eradication of Child Labour in Uganda (ECLU) project between 2020 and 2023 in Kampala, Iganga, Bugiri, and Kaliro. Through this intervention: 1,000 children at risk or engaged in exploitative labour were supported, 400 children were assisted to remain in or return to primary education, 600 children received vocational skills training and certification, More than 1,000 vulnerable households were supported with livelihood skills, savings groups, and income-



generating activities, contributing to increased household incomes and reduced vulnerability to child labour.

These interventions demonstrate PLA's long-standing commitment to addressing the root causes of child labour, including poverty, lack of access to education, weak enforcement, and limited economic opportunities for adults.

Our Call to Action

As we mark this important day, PLA calls upon:

Government of Uganda

- Accelerate the implementation of the National Action Plan for the Elimination of Child Labour.
- Strengthen labour inspection and enforcement mechanisms.
- Allocate adequate resources to child protection and labour administration structures.
- Support all districts to develop and implement child protection ordinances.

Employers and Businesses

- Adopt and implement Child Rights Business Principles.
- Conduct due diligence across supply chains to identify and eliminate child labour risks.
- Promote decent work, fair wages, and safe working conditions for adults.

Communities and Families



- Prioritize children's education and protection.
- Reject harmful norms that normalize child labour.
- Report cases of child exploitation and abuse.

Development Partners

- Continue investing in integrated programmes that address child labour through education, livelihoods, social protection, and business accountability.
- Support scaling up of successful models from Busoga to other agricultural value chains and regions.

Conclusion

On this World Day Against Child Labour, we reaffirm our commitment to a Uganda where every child is protected, educated, and empowered to thrive.

The evidence is clear: when adults have access to decent work and sustainable livelihoods, children can remain where they belong—in school, at play, and free from exploitation.

Together, let us show a Red Card to Child Labour and ensure Fair Play for Children and Decent Work for Adults.