



International  
Labour  
Organization

**Address of ILO Director General represented by ILO Regional Director for Arab States,  
Ms. Nada Al-Nashif  
“Launch of the National Action Plan for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour by 2016”  
November 7, 2013  
Presidential Palace**

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Your Excellency General Michel Suleiman, President of the Lebanese Republic,

We thank you Excellency for hosting this milestone event.

We would also like to thank H.E Minister of Labour and his team at the Child Labour Unit, as well as each and every member of the National Steering Committee against Child Labour. Of course, none of this would have been possible without their steadfast support and tireless efforts.

***ILO and child labour***

Combating child labour is at the core of the International Labour Organization’s mandate underpinned by social justice principles. The ILO has pioneered the international standards that define and shape our collective understanding of children’s appropriate place in the world of work. Indeed, ILO has integrated the two following conventions, the Convention on Minimum Age (C138) and the Convention on the Worst forms of Child Labour (C182) as core conventions.

**Progress in Lebanon**

In 2000, Lebanon partnered with ILO to join in the global battle against this scourge. Since then, Lebanon has ratified core international conventions and enacted pro-child legislation.

Decree No. 8987 of 29 September 2012 concerning the prohibition of employment of minors under the age of 18 in work that may harm their health, safety or morals, represents a strong deterrent of the worst forms of child labour.

***A National Action Plan at a critical time – child labour is on the rise again***

The launch of the National Action Plan comes at critical time. Despite significant gains in recent years, there are now indications that child labour and its worst forms are once again on the rise. This is contrary to global trends, where the number of child labourers has dropped by a third to 168 million since 2010. This can be attributed to social and economic challenges and the latest developments in the region, leading to the unfolding tragedy of Syrian refugees, including hundreds of refugee children who have been left with no choice but work to cater for their families’ needs.

### ***Achievable plan***

The Plan seeks to put Lebanon's international commitments into practice by reaching out to everyone who has a stake in a fairer society and through preventive measures, the withdrawal and rehabilitation of child labourers, and direct support for their families.

The growing challenges should not deter us from achieving this inclusive national vision. With the right level of political will and donor support, Lebanon can be one of the few countries globally to meet the 2016 deadline for the elimination of the worst forms of child labour.

### ***We must work together and harness international support***

We must act quickly and efficiently to spare thousands of children in Lebanon from falling into the trap of a lifetime jeopardised health, social exclusion and unrealised potential and undermining their hopes in a better future.

To put this plan into action, we must all work together and assume our responsibilities: government, workers and employers, civil society and international partners. Lebanon will need the support of the international community to raise more than US\$23 million to implement this plan and eliminate the worst forms of child labour.

### ***The ILO's continued support***

We pledge to continue the ILO's technical assistance and advisory services, as well as support to help mobilise the necessary resources, in addition to promoting linkages with UN partners, especially to enhance the capacities of the Ministry of Labour's Child Labour Unit and to support the National Steering Committee in managing the roll out of the National Action Plan and monitoring and evaluating its implementation.

In conclusion, we look forward to a sustainable, strong and effective partnership in order to secure the present and future for all of Lebanon's children.

Thank you.