

12 June 2014

**Message of H.E. John W. Ashe
President of the 68th Session of the United Nations General Assembly,
for World Day against Child Labour**

Each year on June 12, the United Nations family observes World Day Against Child Labour. 168 million children still engage in illegal forms of labour, mostly in the informal economy and agriculture. Eighty-five million of these children work in severely hazardous conditions. Several millions more are victims of forced labour, commercial sexual exploitation, and other illicit activities.

But in recent years we have made progress. Since 2000, the United Nations has reduced child labour by one third, with the fastest decline achieved between 2008 and 2012. By pursuing increasingly successful, integrated approaches - treating not just the symptoms of child labour but also targeting its roots, we have made prevention the heart of our response.

Imagine a world in which every child attended school and nobody was forced to work against their will. This year's World Day theme "Extend Social Protection: Combat Child Labour!" stresses the central role of programs that reduce poverty and vulnerability.

I call on Member States to recognize that social protection is a right, one that is central to the task of ending child labour. We must work to ensure that children have access to basic resources including nutrition, health and education, so that they may fully realize their potential.