

**Joint statement by High Representative/Vice-President Catherine Ashton,
Vice-President Viviane Reding, Commissioner for Development Andris
Piebalgs and Commissioner for Trade Karel De Gucht**

“Today we commemorate World Day against Child Labour.

The EU welcomes a steady decline in child labour since 2006 when the International Labour Organisation (ILO) set a visionary target to eliminate the worst forms of child labour by 2016.

We are also encouraged by the ILO's¹ report last year which showed that the speediest decline in rates of child labour are in the most harmful areas of work and among the most vulnerable children.

Nevertheless, there are no grounds for complacency: a staggering 115 million children are still exposed to hazardous work, and the global decrease in child labour is not prevalent in all regions and among all categories of children.

While the EU announced a number of concrete initiatives last year, we must step up our efforts to combat child labour, in particular its worst forms, and consolidate children's rights through a comprehensive approach which addresses the root causes of this phenomenon. EU development policy combats the root causes of child labour through targeted educational and poverty reduction programmes, such as the "Stop child labour campaign", "Education for All Fast Track Initiatives" and country-specific plans for education.

We believe that the EU and its Member States should discuss what must be done collectively to reach the 2016 target of a world free of the worst forms of child labour, taking into account the Hague 2010 Roadmap.

In the meantime, we call on our partners to ratify and to implement relevant ILO Conventions as well as the UN Convention on the Rights of Child and its two Optional Protocols.

We will continue to promote improved protection of children and the elimination of the worst forms of child labour in our initiatives in multilateral bodies, in particular in the UN General Assembly, the Human Rights Council and the International Labour Organisation.”

Background

Last year the Commission launched a Call for Proposal on Fighting Child Labour worth €11 million aimed at non-governmental organisations, the private sector and regional authorities. The Commission has a €14 million project with ILO called TACKLE on Child Labour and Education (website).

¹ See ILO report "Accelerating action against child labour: Global Report under the follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Right at Work. 2010.