



SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE **BOLLETTINO**

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Press Release of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development

International Conference “Eradicating Child Labour, Building a Better Future”.

19 November 2021

In his Message to the FAO Global Meeting on the Elimination of Child Labour in Agriculture on 2 November, Pope Francis said that “even more so when it manifests itself as exploitation, child labour becomes a scourge that cruelly harms the dignified existence and harmonious development of the youngest children, considerably limiting their opportunities for the future, as it reduces and damages their lives to meet the productive and lucrative needs of adults”.

For their part, UNICEF and the International Labour Organisation (ILO) report that in the time of the COVID-19 pandemic, progress towards the elimination of child labour has stalled for the first time in 20 years, with numbers reaching 160 million children worldwide. It is in this context that the United Nations General Assembly has declared 2021 the International Year for the Elimination of Child Labour.

To focus attention on this scourge and to encourage coordinated initiatives to protect children, the Vatican COVID-19 Commission of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, together with the Holy See Permanent Mission to the FAO, is promoting an International Conference on the theme: “Eradicating Child Labour, Building a Better Future”, to be held on 19 November, in virtual format, from 14.30 to 16.30 CET.

The conference will focus on the persistence of child labour in the 21st century and the obstacles to overcoming this scourge. Attention will be paid to the issues of health and education to understand how child labour affects the dignity of children. Finally, the importance of dialogue and international cooperation will be stressed in order to jointly address a problem that crosses territorial and cultural boundaries.

During the meeting, a video will be screened that gathers the Holy Father’s thoughts and statements on the subject, and other short video contributions, made in the field, will deal with the rights to minors at work, how to promote their dignity, and the Church’s commitment to building a world where the wound of child labour has

been healed.

The meeting will be opened by greetings from the Prefect of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, His Eminence Cardinal Peter K. A. Turkson, Nobel Peace Prize winner Kailash Satyarthi and FAO chief economist Maximo Torero. Among the speakers: Cornelius Williams, associate director for child protection at UNICEF; Michelle De Cock, head of the ILO Research and Evaluation Unit; and Nasreen Sheikh, founder of Empowerment Collective, in Nepal. There will also be testimonies from the field, the perspective of NGOs working against the scourge of child labour and the commitment of the local Church on the ground. Business models that put the dignity of children at the centre will also be offered.

The meeting will be concluded by Msgr. Fernando Chica Arellano, head of the Holy See delegation to FAO, and by Maurizio Martina, special advisor to the director general of the FAO.

To follow the meeting, simply register at the link:

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_A1tudxQbQKSJuCqY2N_USg
