

Uganda adapts new National Action Plan for the Elimination of Child Labour to consider the harsh reality of COVID-19.



The Government of Uganda launches its second National Action Plan against Child Labour on 1 May 2021. A critical step, which demonstrates a renewed commitment towards the elimination of child labour which takes into account the harsh realities imposed by COVID-19 through their new National Action Plan on Child Labour (NAP II). As millions more children could be pushed into child labour due to the global pandemic, now more than ever, it is critical to renew commitments for effective and long-lasting solutions to protect children from child labour.

“The NAP provides a framework for the prevention, withdrawal, rehabilitation and integration of child from child labour. The successful implementation will require a multi-sectoral approach, building synergies, effective reporting and documentation, mainstreaming, innovation, participation and commitment by all stakeholders, supportive policy, legal and regulatory framework.”

- Mr. Frank Tumwebaze, Minister of Gender, Labour and Social Development

In early 2021, the Government updated the NAP II before public launch to include COVID-19 implications on child labour. The revised action plan is the one of the first National Action Plan to Eliminate Child Labour which recognises the potential impact of the COVID-19 lockdown on vulnerable families, and notes that initiatives to eliminate child labour need to factor in the health, economic and social consequences of the pandemic.

The ECLT Foundation is encouraged by the successful collaborative approach the Government of Uganda has taken to develop the NAP II, which aims to reduce child labour in households, communities, and all sectors by 4% by 2022. The drafting process brought together Government ministries, employers, farmers, workers, development partners, community representatives, district officials and the ILO. Engaging various actors in the development and implementation of the NAP II contributes to more sustainable and far-reaching solutions for the elimination of child labour.

Through NAP II, there is now a clear, multi-stakeholder way forward to improve the protection offered to children against child labour, to put a stop to child labour displacement from one supply chain to another, and to promote decent work throughout Uganda. National Action Plans like this one are a crucial piece of the puzzle when it comes to bringing systemic and sustainable progress towards SDG 8.7 for the elimination of child labour by 2025. NAPs highlight a nation-wide commitment, set standards, create private and public partnerships and provide a framework for implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

Uganda's first National Action Plan (2013-2017) successfully brought together stakeholders and reported progress in school enrolment rates, increased access to social protection and enhanced tripartism amongst Government, the Employer Organisations and Labour Unions to address child labour.

Child labour in Uganda

[Over 2 million children](#) in Uganda are doing work that puts their health, safety, development and education at risk. This accounts for 14% of the entire child population of the country. Child labour affects every sector in Uganda, and it is a major issue in mining and agriculture including tobacco, sugarcane, tea and coffee, amongst many others. Robust and sustainable solutions must take into account the complex realities faced by children, farmers and families, including within contexts of COVID-19, migration, early marriage or prevalence of HIV/AIDS.

Clear objectives for concrete results

To accelerate progress in the elimination of child labour, NAP II takes the best practices identified in the first National Action Plan a step further and focuses on implementation towards achieving the five following objectives:

1. To strengthen the legal, policy and institutional framework for addressing child labour.
2. To enhance partnerships and coordination for elimination of child labour.

3. To increase access to social protection, education, skills development and social assistance services for children, households and communities affected or at risk of child labour.
4. To enhance research and advocacy on child labour issues for increased public awareness and required actions; and
5. To strengthen the Monitoring and Evaluation System for the elimination of Child Labour.

For each objective, NAP II outlines a system of activities, and allocates a means of monitoring and evaluation, the responsible stakeholder(s) and an annual budget to each of these setting out a clear path to put the plan into action.

Working together to close gaps

To bring national standards to local communities, ECLT has been supporting multi-stakeholder processes in the Hoima and Kikuube districts since 2014 on the development, implementation and evaluation of District Actions Plans against child labour. Review of the ground-breaking 2016 Hoima DAP showed strong progress in awareness raising in communities on child labour and capacity building on child and social protection systems.



Next steps

NAP II was launched on 1 May, 2021 and will continue to be disseminated throughout 2021. The ECLT Foundation will support the Government of Uganda, as well as the ILO, FAO and UNICEF, carrying out regional dissemination workshops to ensure the NAP is widely accessible to all relevant stakeholders around the country.

ECLT's Affiliate Office in Uganda brings together representatives across supply chains to coordinate and harmonise the implementation of the NAP to prevent children from falling between the gaps into child labour.

"The ECLT Foundation remains a committed partner in progressively and sustainably eliminating child labour and will follow the call of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the new ILO Strategy to collaborate with all relevant stakeholders at national and international levels," affirmed Karima Jambulatova, ECLT Executive Director. "We stand ready to support governments and other stakeholders moving forward in 2021."



About the ECLT Foundation

The ECLT Foundation is committed to collaborative solutions for children, farmers and families that combat the root causes of child labour in areas where tobacco is grown.

Based in Geneva Switzerland, we advocate for strong policies, share best practices to multiply our impact, and engage rural families so they can benefit from farming while ensuring that their children are healthy, educated and encouraged to reach their full potential.

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