



## **A Call for Collaborative Efforts to Eliminate Harmful Practices Affecting Children**

On 16<sup>th</sup> June 2022, Uganda joins the rest of the world to celebrate the International Day of the African Child themed “*Eliminating Harmful Practices Affecting Children: Progress on Policy & Practice since 2013*”. This theme emphasises the need to reflect on progress achieved in eliminating harmful practices affecting children in Africa and what more needs to be done.

Harmful practices affecting children are forms of child abuse which are acceptable in society. Child labour is a normalized rights violation that is widely embraced by societies in Uganda and Africa.

According to a report titled “2020 Global Estimates on Child Labour” by the International Labour Organization, Sub-Saharan Africa stands out as the region with the highest prevalence and the largest number of children involved in child labour, with an estimated 86.6 million child labourers. In Uganda, the employment of a child under the age of 14 is illegal yet in many societies, children as young as 10 years are driven by circumstances like poverty, lack of access to education and socio-cultural beliefs to engage in casual labour to support their families. Child labour affects children’s development and is a violation of their right to education, health and protection from abuse and exploitation. Children who engage in child labour tend to work under difficult and unhealthy conditions and are vulnerable to commercial sexual exploitation, assault and wage discrimination.

Since 2013, Uganda has developed legal and policy frameworks tailored to protect and enforce the rights of children like the National Child Policy 2020, The East African (EAC) Child Policy 2016, The Children (Amendment) Act 2016, The National Strategy to End Child Marriage and Teenage Pregnancy 2011-2015/ 2019/2020, however, harmful practices affecting children still persist.



Eliminating child labour and other harmful practices affecting children will be achieved through addressing the root causes which create conditions in which child labour persists. These cannot be addressed by a single, independent stakeholder, but require a collaborative effort from various stakeholders including states, law enforcement, policy makers, development partners, CSOs and the business community.

We therefore recommend that the government and various stakeholders do the following in order to end harmful practices;

- prioritize access to quality and accessible education for all children,
- invest in programs that foster attitude and socio-cultural shifts regarding child labour and harmful practices affecting children especially in the most rural communities.
- Duty bearers should ensure the investigation of incidents and establish the accountability of perpetrators of harmful practices against children, including those advising, attempting to, aiding or condoning those practices
- To advance implementation of legislation, parents, as well as members of the extended family and the community should be involved and supported in discussions on children's rights and their protection from violence, on the impact of harmful practices and their root causes, and on opportunities for ending those practices.
- Implementation needs to be supported by strong national institutional mechanisms for the protection of children from violence, including harmful practices.