

International day of children's rights



It was in 1995 that the French Parliament decided to make November 20th the ' World Day of defense and promotion of children's rights '. The aim of this international day is to make people aware of the numerous injustices committed against children in the world. It also aims to assert the International Convention on the Rights of the Child of 1989.

The Declaration of the Rights of the Child adopted by the United Nations in 1959

“Every child, without any exception whatsoever, shall be entitled to children rights, without distinction or discrimination on account of race, colour, sex, language, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.” Declaration of the Rights of the Child, 1959

A convention and rights adopted by the United Nations in 1989

The International Convention on the Rights of the Child is a text of 54 articles, adopted by the United Nations on November 20th, 1989. It asserts that a child is not only a fragile human being but that it is a person who has the right to be educated, looked after and protected, wherever in the world they are born. And also that a child has the right to have fun, to learn and to express themselves.

This text is very important, but it is not enough: much remains to be done to make the rights of children a reality. Rights are only real if they are put into practice - for the children as well as for all of us. Promoting the rights of children is first of all to create the social, economic and cultural conditions so that everybody can enjoy them. Only then can children's rights really be respected.

The situation in France

The rights of children must become a reality in daily life, particularly basic rights, for example, the right to protection, health, culture, education and infant welfare.

Even if French children are better off than in other parts of the world, according to the CNLE (“Conseil National des politiques de lutte contre la pauvreté et l'exclusion sociale”), in 2010, 19,6% of youngsters under 18 years old lived in poverty, which represented one child out of five and there could be nearly 3 millions of poor children in France today.

That's why the French committee of the associations for the rights of children (Conseil français des associations pour les droits de l'enfant) declared in 2012" *Even if France is considerate towards its 15 million children under 18, it can do better*".

The situation in the world

According to the International Labour Organization:

- there are still 168 million children in child labor in the world with more than half of them (85 million) working under dangerous conditions.
 - Most of these children (78 million) are in Asia and the Pacific but sub-Saharan Africa continues to have the highest percentage of its children in child labour with 21%.
 - They can work at all sorts of jobs, mainly because they and their families are extremely poor but most of them work in agriculture (59%), services and industry.
- Last but not least, some children also work in illicit activities like the drug trade and prostitution or other traumatic activities such as serving as soldiers.

Therefore, even if the global situation have got better since 2000 with the total number of children in child labor in the world decreasing by one third (1/3), much remains to be done for children.

Fortunately, watchdog organisations and NGOs with people like Kailash Satyarthi work hard to stop violations of children's rights and to protect children's interests nationally or worldwide.

Kailash Satyarthi's fight for children's rights

Kailash Satyarthi is an Indian human rights activist fighting against child labour. He has won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2014 for founding the association "Bachpan Bachao Andolan" also called "Save the Childhood Movement" in 1980 and also for saving many children and their families from slavery in the factories where they were working. He is also at the head of the Global March Against Child Labor.

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