

Not Made to be Maids

International Campaign to Protect Child Domestic Workers

Approximately 15 million children, mostly girls, are employed as domestic workers worldwide. They often work 12 or more hours a day, seven days a week, cooking, cleaning, washing clothes, and caring for their employer's children. They often receive little pay, if they are paid at all. Forced labor and trafficking is not uncommon, and their isolation in private homes leaves them at particular risk of exploitation and violence, including sexual abuse. Evidence shows they are even less likely than other working children to attend school. In many countries, even those legally old enough to work are excluded from national labor laws, leaving them no legal right to a minimum wage, weekly day off, or limits to their hours of work.

HOW YOU CAN HELP:

Urge your government to protect child domestic workers from exploitation and abuse by ratifying the ILO Domestic Workers Convention (International Labor Organization Convention No. 189 concerning Decent Work for Domestic Workers). This groundbreaking convention was adopted in 2011 to provide domestic workers —children and adults alike—the same rights as other workers and to help eliminate child domestic labor. It obliges governments:

- To take specific steps to eliminate child labor in domestic work;
- To set a minimum age for domestic work in line with international standards (usually age 15), and ensure that work by children above that age does not deprive them of schooling;
- To ensure that domestic workers who are old enough to legally work are entitled to the same rights as other workers, including daily rest and weekly days off, limits to hours of work, minimum wage coverage and overtime compensation.

This convention is a critical new tool for child protection, with the potential to improve the lives of millions of children.

ACTION SUGGESTIONS:

- 1) **Write your government:** Ten international organizations have sent a joint letter to ministers of labor around the globe urging them to protect child domestic workers by ratifying the Domestic Workers Convention. Invite national NGOs in your country to add their names to this letter and send it to your national government.
- 2) **Meet with your ministry of labor:** Meet with your ministry of labor, and urge them to make a public pledge on June 12, the World Day Against Child Labor, to ratify the convention.
- 3) **Engage with Members of Parliament:** Write and meet with members of Parliament to educate them about child domestic labor and to urge support for ratification of the convention.
- 4) **Organize events:** The 2013 World Day Against Child Labor, observed worldwide on June 12, will focus on child domestic labor, with a new report from the ILO detailing the scale of this global

phenomenon. Organize public events on June 12 to publicize the ILO report and urge your government to ratify and implement the Convention.

- 5) **Advocate for the Global Conference on Child Labor:** An estimated 140 governments will attend the 3rd Global Conference on Child Labor from October 8-10 in Brasilia. Urge your government to use the conference as another opportunity to pledge its ratification of the Domestic Workers Convention.
- 6) **Join the 12 by 12 Facebook group:** Join the [12 by 12 Facebook page](#) and post about your activities. The 12 by 12 campaign was initiated by the International Trade Union Confederation to urge 12 ratifications of the Domestic Workers Convention in 2012.

Additional resources:

[The Domestic Workers Convention: Turning Global Labor Standards into Change on the Ground](#) (Human Rights Watch)

[Home Alone: End Domestic Slavery](#) (Anti-Slavery International)

[12 by 12 Campaign](#) for the Rights and Protection of Domestic Workers (International Trade Union Confederation)

[International Domestic Workers Network](#)

[Global March Against Child Labor](#)