

# MESSAGE FOR THE WORLD DAY FOR OVERCOMING EXTREME POVERTY – OCTOBER 17, 2019

*Posted on 15 October 2019*



## INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR OCTOBER 17 Message for the World Day for Overcoming Extreme Poverty & the United Nations International Day for the Eradication of Poverty

This year marks the 30th anniversary of the adoption of the historic Convention on the Rights of the Child and we are reminded of the importance of defending the rights of every child, regardless of their race, religion or abilities.

Childhood is a special time in everyone's life. It is a time when children should be encouraged to learn, play and develop physically and intellectually in a safe, supportive and caring environment. Children are vulnerable and depend on their families and communities for guidance, care and support.

While a nurturing childhood experience is an essential element in the development of

healthy and productive future generations, hundreds of millions of children continue to be robbed of a meaningful childhood through no fault of their own or their families. The opportunity to achieve a peaceful, productive and meaningful childhood is destroyed when children are forced to endure the destructive deprivations of extreme poverty.

In families living in extreme poverty, children are often required to work to help their families in ways that are neither harmful nor exploitative. However, it is unconscionable when millions of children are forced into the worst forms of child labour, including slavery and slavery-like practices. Governments must act swiftly and decisively to protect children from such exploitation and abuse while, at the same time, addressing the root causes of child poverty and child labour.

In this regard, governments must fulfill their duty and obligations to ensure that families and communities are sufficiently empowered through effective poverty reduction opportunities and initiatives. Economic and social action to end extreme poverty must include social protection systems to address the needs, concerns and rights of children and their families. In a world of unprecedented wealth, it is simply unacceptable that most children living in extreme poverty have no social protection.

*We must ensure that we reach those left the furthest behind, and overcome poverty in all its dimensions.*

For this to happen, we need strategies and policies that promote and create social inclusion and social dialogue. Children must be included in this social dialogue so that they are recognized as full actors in determining their own well-being rather than passive recipients of choices made on their behalf. Indeed, child participation is one of the core principles of the Convention.

Children and young people have the right to freely express their views and to participate in decisions that affect their lives. They can contribute valuable insights that decision-makers and others may be unable to provide. Their views and opinions should be listened to and taken seriously, especially in the fight to eradicate child poverty and child labour.

It is critical that children's participation must be an ongoing process and not a one-off event. Too often consultation is mistaken for participation. Whereas the process of consultation gathers children's views, participation means that children actually join in decision-making that affects their welfare.

The [Tapori Children's Network](#) and other similar children's initiatives, for example, demonstrate the important socially inclusive ways in which children come together to empower themselves and to participate more effectively in their families and communities as agents of change. Such initiatives and activities must be supported and encouraged by governments and communities as the building blocks for social inclusion

and social dialogue.

Therefore, on [October 17](#) this year let us resolve to come together to defend the rights of children everywhere and to empower children, their families and communities to end extreme poverty.

Donald Lee

President, International Committee for October 17