

Stakeholders Tasked on Child Labour Elimination

Stakeholders across various geographic regions have been urged to unite their efforts to eliminate child labour in the country.

This charge was given by various speakers at a one-day stakeholders' seminar by the Oyo State Steering Committee on Child Labour which held on Tuesday, April 10, 2019. The final draft of the State Action Plan (SAP) on child labour elimination was also presented at the event.

While making a presentation titled 'Impact of Child Labour Responses in Agro Communities,' the Head of Leaf, British American Tobacco Nigeria (BATN), Oluwakayode Oshodi, decried the prevalence of child labour in the agricultural sector. He attributed the situation to the limited understanding of the impact of child labour by the rural folks, which underscores the imperative need for training and heightening their awareness on the phenomenon of child labour.

"The agricultural sector is one where child labour is prevalent. There is a thin line between helping a parent and exposing a child to child labour," he said.

He noted that parents who engage their children and wards in child labour see it as a short-term and cost-saving benefit failing to realise the long-term consequences therein.

Speaking on the efforts of BATN in the eradication of child labour, he noted that not only does the company constantly ensure that its farming partners and stakeholders understand the impact of their decisions as regards child labour, but it also conducts regular spot checks on their farms to ascertain compliance with its child labour policy.

"We ask farmers to share with us evidence of the child's school attendance and take steps to reward members who are compliant through our annual Farmers' Productivity Awards," he added.

Earlier in his address, the Chairman, Oyo State Steering Committee on Child Labour (SSCCL) and controller Federal Ministry of Labour, Mr. Ogunbiyi Adewole, stated that the purpose of the meeting was to validate the final draft presentation on the state action plan on child labour elimination. He noted that the Ministry and State government were working with all stakeholders to achieve the mandate.

In another presentation, the Secretary, Oyo SSCCL, Marcus Williams, while giving a summary of the State Action Plan (SAP) on child labour, stated that it provides the roadmap for the National Policy on the Elimination of Child Labour in Oyo State. He listed the key thematic areas of the plan as (i) policy, legal framework and assessment (ii) child protection (iii) awareness campaign (iv) monitoring and evaluation, among others.

Speaking on best practice on child labour elimination, Williams identified gradual integration of victims and rehabilitation as pivotal to the achievement of positive results.

“There is a lot that goes into re-integration of victims. Gradual integration is very important in the elimination of child labour. Therefore, stakeholders need to understand the dynamics of gradual integration and must work together in this regard,” he added.

The seminar, which held in partnership with BATN, had in attendance members of staff of the Oyo State Ministry of Labour, members of various security and paramilitary formations, including the Police, the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), Nigeria Immigration Service; The Ministry of Women Affairs, the Justice Development and Peace Commission (JDPC), NGOs and members of the organised private sector.