



LAUREATES & LEADERS  
- FOR CHILDREN -

## Justice for Africa's Children

We, the Laureates and Leaders for Children from across the world, have come together to demand that world leaders deliver justice for Africa's children. Freedom remains out of reach for millions of Africa's children, even when the world is wealthier than it has ever been. Humanity is losing its moral compass.

In June 2021, the ILO and UNICEF announced the first shocking increase in the number of child labourers worldwide in two decades, during the first four years of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (2016-2019). Even before the start of the pandemic when the world grew \$10 trillion richer, the number of child labourers in the world rose to an appalling 160 million children, over half of which (i.e. 86 million) are in Sub-Saharan Africa. This is the consequence of racial and systemic discrimination against Africa.

The historical and systemic exploitation of Africa is partly to blame but injustices and discrimination perpetrated by our generation are stealing the lives and the futures from millions more children. With the advent of COVID-19, these inequalities have taken on new dimensions and are increasing at a rapid pace, including through the blatant and shameful manifestation in the form of vaccine apartheid. The weight of these inequalities, unfortunately, is borne disproportionately by the poorest and most marginalised children. Moreover, underfunded, under-implemented or selectively enforced policies and programmes mean that already vulnerable groups such as ethnic and religious minorities, rural and agricultural communities, girls, and children on the move are much more likely to be in extreme poverty and child labour. All of this is compounded by corruption and conflict which has a devastating effect on children's rights.

The situation is aggravated by the fact that Africa has the lowest social protection coverage in the world, and functions that were the least covered include access to education, sickness benefits, benefits for children and family, unemployment protection, and pensions benefits.

African countries are among the most resource rich in the world, yet they don't receive the profits they are due because of a discriminatory global tax system. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the world had a common enemy like never before, but instead of uniting humanity with our response, we disproportionately helped businesses and people in richer countries and left the most vulnerable to fend for themselves. We know that only 0.13% of the \$12 trillion released as COVID relief globally was allocated to multilateral funding to low-income countries. The rest was largely used to bail out large corporations. The emergency IMF Special Drawing Rights gave \$2,000 per European child and \$60 per African child. The international community's continued and institutionalized subjugation of Africa is appalling and must end.

Africa is heading towards its first economic recession in 25 years, as a result of the pandemic. This, along with the lack of access to vaccines, means that adults lose employment and families are pushed into even more severe poverty, forcing children to fill in as exploited and enslaved workers. The immeasurable suffering of our children is set to magnify even further, and we can no longer afford to look the other way.

The good news is that there is a powerful and proven solution, direct social protection for children. We know it works as seen through the examples of Bolsa Familia in Brazil, mid-day meals in India, and cash transfers in Ghana and Uganda. Universal social protection systems, such as pension programmes in Kenya and Tanzania, and social protection floors can support and strengthen families. Emergency social protection measures to help the poorest families during the COVID-19 pandemic worked where they were put in place. Social protection eliminates extreme poverty and inequality which drives millions into child labour. It has been used for decades and in richer countries is the largest item of government expenditure. Just a tiny fraction, i.e. less than \$53 billion, spent in poorer countries annually would extend social protection to all children and pregnant women in low income countries and substantially reduce extreme poverty. The globalisation of social protection is a historic idea whose time has come.

Africa's children are our children. It is our individual and collective moral obligation to protect them. To end child labour in Africa, we call on the courage, compassion and humanity of all world leaders to:

1. Ensure direct child benefits to every child in Africa by prioritising domestic budgets and targeted programmes while the international community meets its aid responsibilities through child-focused funding of the UN Secretary General's Global Accelerator on jobs and social protection
2. Achieve just representation of African countries in global decision making, end discrimination in Special Drawing Rights, and establish fair tax and trade rules with African countries as equal partners
3. Cancel all debt for low and lower-middle income countries in Africa, hold corrupt leadership or businesses to account, and eliminate vaccine apartheid by temporary waivers of intellectual property rights and access to raw material to counter COVID-induced vulnerabilities in Africa and around the world

We also call on African leaders to empower young people to come forward and claim their voice. They are the most powerful voices for change and the architects of Africa's future. Together with a strong civil society and a supportive government, youth can be the masters of Africa's destiny.

Agenda 2030 is heading toward imminent failure if we do not end child labour in Africa. We are, yet again, breaking our promises to our children. As long as Africa's children are working in fields, mines, shops and homes, they are not in schools. They are forced to work in place of millions of adult jobs thus prolonging intergenerational cycles of poverty and inequality. Africa is a mirror to the world. The realisation of the rights of a girl in a Sub-Saharan African country, who is exploited and abused and denied her right to dream, will be the true assessment of our efforts to achieve the promise to leave no one behind. She is our child. Until every child in Africa is free, none of us are free.

We, Laureates and Leaders for Children, stand with the children, youth, citizens and leaders of Africa to fight for our shared vision and responsibility to give every child in Africa a free, safe, healthy and educated childhood. It is time for justice for all of Africa's children. It is time to stand with Africa.

Signatories (by alpha order)

#### **Nobel Laureates or Nobel Prize winning organisations**

Mr. Houcine Abassi  
2015 Nobel Peace Laureate

Mr. Abdessattar Ben Moussa  
2015 Nobel Peace Laureate

Dr. Peter Agre  
2003 Nobel Laureate in Chemistry

Dr. Elizabeth Blackburn  
2009 Nobel Laureate in Medicine

Dr. Harvey Alter  
2020 Nobel Laureate in Medicine

Dr. Martin Chalfie  
2008 Nobel Laureate in Chemistry

Prof. Hiroshi Amano  
2014 Nobel Laureate in Physics

Mr. Michael Christ  
International Physicians for the Prevention of  
Nuclear War  
1985 Nobel Peace Laureate

Amnesty International  
1977 Nobel Peace Laureate

Prof. Aaron Ciechanover  
2004 Nobel Laureate in Chemistry

HE Óscar Arias Sánchez  
1987 Nobel Peace Laureate

Dr. Barry Barish  
2017 Nobel Laureate in Physics

Mdm. Lisa Clark and Philip Jennings  
International Peace Bureau  
1910 Nobel Peace Laureate

Prof. Mario R. Capecchi  
2007 Nobel Laureate in Medicine

His Holiness the Dalai Lama  
1989 Nobel Peace Laureate

Dr. Johann Deisenhofer  
1988 Nobel Laureate in Chemistry

Prof. Peter C. Doherty  
1996 Nobel Laureate in Medicine

Mdm. Shirin Ebadi  
2003 Nobel Peace Laureate

Dr. Mohamed ElBaradei  
2005 Nobel Peace Laureate

Mdm. Beatrice Fihn  
International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear  
Weapons  
2017 Nobel Peace Laureate

Prof. Andrew Fire  
2006 Nobel Laureate in Medicine

Prof. Joachim Frank  
2017 Nobel Laureate in Chemistry

Prof. Jerome Friedman  
1990 Nobel Laureate in Physics

Mdm. Leymah Gbowee  
2011 Nobel Peace Laureate

Prof. Avrem Hershko  
2004 Nobel Laureate in Chemistry

Prof. Roald Hoffmann  
1981 Nobel Laureate in Chemistry

Prof. Gerard 't Hooft  
1999 Nobel Laureate in Physics

Prof. Takaaki Kajita  
2015 Nobel Laureate in Physics

Mdm. Tawakkol Karman  
2011 Nobel Peace Laureate

Prof. Finn Kydland  
2004 Nobel Laureate in Economics

Mdm. Mairead Maguire  
1976 Nobel Peace Laureate

Mr. Mohamed Fadhel Mahfoudh  
2015 Nobel Peace Laureate

Prof. Eric Maskin  
2007 Nobel Laureate in Economics

Prof. Edvard Moser  
2014 Nobel Laureate in Medicine

Prof. May-Britt Moser  
2014 Nobel Laureate in Medicine

Dr. Denis Mukwege  
2018 Nobel Peace Laureate

Prof. Yoshinori Ohsumi  
2016 Nobel Laureate in Medicine

Prof. Giorgio Parisi  
2021 Nobel Laureate in Physics

Prof. Edmund S. Phelps  
2006 Nobel Laureate in Economics

Dr. William Phillips  
1997 Nobel Laureate in Physics

Mr. Abdur Rahim Khan  
Grameen Bank  
2006 Nobel Peace Laureate

HE José Ramos Horta  
President of Timor Leste (2007-2012)  
1996 Nobel Peace Laureate

Sir Peter Ratcliffe  
2019 Nobel Laureate in Medicine

Sir Richard J. Roberts  
1993 Nobel Laureate in Medicine

Mr. Kailash Satyarthi  
2014 Nobel Peace Laureate

Prof. Jean-Pierre Sauvage  
2016 Nobel Laureate in Chemistry

Prof. Susumu Tonegawa  
1987 Nobel Laureate in Medicine

Prof. Ariel Warshel  
2013 Nobel Laureate in Chemistry

Mdm. Jody Williams  
1997 Nobel Peace Laureate

### **Leaders**

HRH Prince Ali Bin Al Hussein  
Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

Mr. Mo Ibrahim  
Founder, Mo Ibrahim Foundation

HRH Princess Rym Al Ali  
Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

HE Mladen Ivanic  
President of Bosnia and Herzegovina (2014-2018)

Mdm. Farida Allaghi  
former Libyan Ambassador to the EU

HE Ivo Josipovic  
President of Croatia (2010-2015)

HE Salim AlMalik  
Director-General, Islamic World Educational,  
Scientific and Cultural Organisation

Mdm. Kerry Kennedy  
President, RFK Human Rights

Mr. Abdulaziz Altwaijri  
former Director-General, Islamic World  
Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

Mr. Peter Kodjic  
General Secretary, All Africa Student Union

Mata Amritanandamayi  
Spiritual Leader

HE Jadranka Kosor  
Prime Minister of Croatia 2009-2011

Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon  
United Nations (2007-2016)

HE Zlatko Lagumdzija  
Prime Minister of Bosnia and Herzegovina (2001-  
2002)  
Deputy Prime Minister (2012-2015)

Mdm. Irina Bokova  
Director-General, UNESCO (2009-2017)

HE Stefan Löfven  
Prime Minister of Sweden (2014-2021)

Mdm. Sharan Burrow  
General Secretary, ITUC

HE Moussa Mara  
Prime Minister of Mali (2014-2015)

Mdm. Lorena Castillo Garcia  
First Lady of Panama (2014-2019)

HE Rexhep Meidani  
President of Albania (1997-2002)

Mr. Hikmet Cetin  
Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey (1991-1994)  
Speaker of the Parliament (1997-1999)

Mr. Amre Moussa  
Secretary-General, Arab League (2001-2011)

HE Emil Constantinescu  
President of Romania (1996-2000)

Mr. Narayan Murthy  
Founder, INFOSYS

Mr. Richard Curtis  
UN SDG Advocate

HE Joseph Muscat  
Prime Minister of Malta (2013-2018)

Mr. David Edwards  
General Secretary, Education International

HE Rosen Plevneliev  
President of Bulgaria (2012-2017)

HE Ameenah Gurib-Fakim  
President of Mauritius (2015-2018)

Mr. Ismail Serageldin  
Vice-President, World Bank (1992-2000)  
Co-Chair, Nizami Ganjavi International Center

Mr. Gurjit Singh  
Former Ambassador from India to Germany,  
Indonesia, Ethiopia, ASEAN, and the African  
Union

HE Manmohan Singh  
Prime Minister of India (2004-2014)

HE Petar Stoyanov  
President of Bulgaria (1997-2002)

HE Eka Tkeshelashvili  
Deputy Prime Minister of Georgia (2010-2012)

Mdm. Marianna Vardinoyannis  
UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador

HE Vaira Vike-Freiberga  
President of Latvia (1999-2007)  
Co-Chair Nizami Ganjavi International Center

Mdm. Kateryna Yushchenko  
First Lady of Ukraine (2005-2010)