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Press release

Leading child-rights organisations launch a ground-breaking project to reduce child labour in Madagascar

Tana, Madagascar, 12 June 2023- In 2018 it was estimated that 47 per cent of children between 5 and 17 years old in Madagascar are involved in various forms of child labour, with 32% of the children engaged in dangerous working conditions (UNICEF, MICS)¹. Around **10,000 children** are estimated to be working in the mica sector in southern Madagascar, according to the 2019 “*Child Labour in Madagascar’s Mica Sector*” report by Terre des Hommes Netherlands and SOMO.

The report points out that children in southern Madagascar start being involved in mica mining from as early as **five years old**. Some children accompany their parents to the mica mines due to lack of daycare or because they are not able to go to school for various reasons, whilst others are forced to contribute to their family income. The hazardous work in mica mining provides severe health risks for children and their families who are usually earning so little that they are only able to afford one meal per day. Families in the isolated mica mining villages are often lacking access to basic social services, including education, water and health care.

Recognizing the urgency and importance of addressing child labour, the Joining Forces Alliance—composed of the six largest child-focused international NGOs, developed the three-year project known as “*Acting to End Child Labour (ACTE)*”. With funding from the European Union (EU), the project aims to contribute to the reduction of child labour targeting its worst forms in Burkina Faso, Madagascar, Mali, and Malawi. In Madagascar, the project will be implemented by Terre des Hommes Netherlands and Save the Children in close collaboration with local partners, including the Plateforme de la Société Civile pour l'Enfance (PFSCE).

On 12 June, the ACTE project was launched in Tana, Madagascar during the World Day Against Child Labour National Celebrations. Through the empowerment of children, parents and community leaders in Taolagnaro district and advocacy activities at national level the ACTE project aims to contribute to the elimination of the worst forms of child labour, with a specific focus on the mica mining sector.

Speaking during the launch, Philemon Ndremana, Project Manager, Terre des Hommes Netherlands Madagascar said, “Children’s well-being and future should be prioritized by providing them with the opportunity to learn and play, and by preventing their involvement in child labour. They have a right to access education and a right to be protected from exploitation. We have joined forces to address child labour through our interventions. We will train children in mica mining villages on child rights and life skills and provide parents and youth with alternative

¹ INSTAT/UNICEF, Madagascar 2018, Travail des enfants, Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS), PowerPoint presentation





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income-generating opportunities. Together with a large coalition of child-focused NGOs we will furthermore advocate with duty bearers at national level for actions to combat the worst forms of child labour. Thousands of children are depending on us, let us end child labour, once and for all.”

Arthur Ralaivao, who works for Save the Children International à Madagascar as ACTE Project Coordinator said:

“ Reinforcing child protection systems at all levels is essential to tackle the worst forms of child labour. The fight starts off with empowering children to feel valued, respected, and safe within their family and their community, and to make their voices heard. Children need to feel confident to advocate for their right to be protected against all forms of violence, at any time of their existence. We also need to improve the family environment so children’s rights are respected by equipping parents and caregivers with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to exert a positive parenting without the use of violence. All these efforts are nothing without the support from communities and authorities; reason why we need to combine our strengths and take action with one voice for and with children in order to fight against child labour”.

Joining Forces is committed to working with various stakeholders including the Government and the private sector to ensure children’s rights are prioritized and they are protected from the worst forms of child labour. Together, we can create a future where every child has an opportunity to grow, learn and thrive without the burden of child labour.

—ENDS—

Note to the editor

About Joining Forces

Terre des Hommes Netherlands and Save the Children are implementing the JOFA ACTE project in Madagascar as members of the Joining Forces Alliance. This is an alliance of the six largest child-focused agencies: ChildFund Alliance, Plan International, Save the Children International, SOS Children’s Villages International, World Vision International and the Terre des Hommes International Federation. Joining Forces was created in 2017 with the aim to use our collective power to accelerate change to secure children their rights and end violence against them. For more information about Joining Forces, visit: www.joining-forces.org

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