



**MINISTRY  
EMPLOYMENT & LABOUR  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION NUMBER: 2154 [NW2444E]**

**2154. Ms L L van der Merwe (IFP) to ask the Minister of Employment and Labour:**

What (a) number of South African children are involved in child labour as at the latest specified date for which information is available and (b) steps are being taken to prevent children from being used for child labour? NW2444E

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**REPLY:**

The Basic Conditions of Employment Act, prohibits work by children if the child is under 15 years old; under the minimum school-leaving age (where this is 15 years or older); over 15 years but under 18 years old, if the work is inappropriate for the age of the child or if the work places at risk the child's well-being, education, physical or mental health, or spiritual, moral or social development or has been prohibited through regulations.

The Basic Conditions of Employment Act further explicitly criminalises all offences related in the engagement of the child labour and regulates that any person convicted of the prohibition of child labour may be sentenced a maximum term of imprisonment of up to six years.

As a country, we further pride ourselves in the Child Labour Programme of Action (CLPA) which is the country's roadmap towards the prevention, reduction and eventual elimination of child labour. It serves to focus and guide the efforts of a number of Government departments and civil society groups, including business organisations, labour federations and organisations serving the interest of these children.

In order to collect reliable and credible statistics on child work in the country, the Department of Employment and Labour commissioned Statistics South Africa in 2019, to conduct a national household-based survey; the *Survey on the Activities of Young People* (SAYP). The SAYP is a household-based sample survey that collects data on the activities which children aged 7 to 17 years who live in South Africa get involved in.

According to the 2019 *Survey on the Activities of Young People* which was realised in March this year:

- There was a decline in the number of children who were involved in child labour from 779 000 in 2010 to 577 000 in 2015 and 571 000 in 2019;
- Children aged 16-17 years were more likely to be engaged in child labour;
- Compared to other population groups, black African children were more likely to be involved in Child labour;
- In both 2015 and 2019, the difference between boys and girls involvement in child labour was minimal;
- Children in KwaZulu-Natal were more likely than those in other provinces to be involved in child labour at 8,8% in 2019 from 10,0% in 2015;
- At 2,5% urban areas had the lowest proportion of children involved in child labour compared to 8,5% of children in non-urban areas in 2019;
- The proportion of children who were exposed to at least one hazardous working condition decreased from 34,2% in 2015 (0,8 of a percentage point) to 33,5% in 2019.
- Furthermore, girls (34,1%) were more likely to be exposed to hazardous conditions compared to boys (32,9%) when both engaged in all economic activities in 2019.
- In both 2015 and 2019, boys who were engaged in both market activities and production for own consumption (or household use) accounted for the largest share of children who were exposed to at least one hazardous condition (60,8% and 53,0% respectively).

END

