



Save the Children

THE CENTRE
FOR CHILD RIGHTS AND BUSINESS

PRESS RELEASE

Sri Lanka, October 10, 2023 – The Centre for Child Rights and Business in Sri Lanka is brewing a transformation in the tea industry as it prepares to host its annual "Co-Creating a Family-Friendly Tea Industry" conference on October 17, 2023, under the theme 'Dignity', in the capital of Colombo. Supported by Save the Children's Country Office in Sri Lanka and the Planters Association of Ceylon, this multi-stakeholder event marks a significant step forward in the quest for dignity and child rights within the tea sector.

In a remarkable follow-up to last year's inaugural conference, which was a resounding success in bringing together over 100 stakeholders from the tea industry, government, unions, civil society, and development agencies, The Centre launched the Child Rights in Business (CRIB) Tea platform. This innovative platform has initiated a culture of collaboration and idea-sharing among stakeholders, igniting a fresh wave of solutions and initiatives.

At the core of this year's conference is the mission to co-create solutions for child rights challenges, including critical discussions on key priorities affecting tea plantation communities, encompassing youth skill development, parental care, housing and land rights, fair wages, child protection, education, and gender equity in the tea industry. Notably, The Centre will recognise outstanding [Seal members](#) who have demonstrated their commitment to child rights and made positive strides since the CRIB platform was launched.

Dr. Ines Kaempfer, CEO of The Centre, underscores the importance of making supply chain and business processes family-friendly, elevating the quality of life for employees. "Sri Lanka's tea industry stands as a shining beacon among tea-producing nations, actively working to enhance productivity and improve the lives of tea estate workers. We call upon more companies to invest in family-friendly supply chains and operational procedures."

Echoing this statement, Ahila Thillainathan, the Country Director for The Centre in Sri Lanka, emphasised the goal of embedding child rights in every facet of business operations. "We want to empower businesses to champion children's rights, especially within manufacturing, agriculture, and raw materials sectors, and we aspire to create meaningful and lasting change that benefits businesses, employees, and children alike."

Dr. Roshan Rajadurai, Media Spokesperson for the Planters Association of Ceylon, further stressed the need for unified action, particularly in the face of current economic challenges. "For decades, women have been the backbone of Sri Lanka's tea industry. It is our collective responsibility to safeguard these vulnerable populations."

Commenting on how partnerships have fostered notable progress, Julian Chellappah, Country Director of Save the Children's Country Office in Sri Lanka added "For over 8 years, Save the Children has worked tirelessly to improve the lives of children in tea estates, supporting local child protection systems and empowering youth to stand up for their rights. Together with our partner, The Centre for Child Rights and Business in Sri Lanka, we launched the 'Mother and Child-Friendly Seal for Responsible Business,' fostering child rights investments."



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Central to the conference's spotlight is The Centre's ground-breaking "Mother and Child-Friendly Seal for Responsible Business," introduced in 2022. This pioneering initiative equips businesses to evaluate and address child rights risks within their operations and supply chains, fostering collaboration with diverse stakeholders. For further information on the "Mother and Child-Friendly Seal for Responsible Business," visit www.srilanka-motherandchildseal.org.

The 'Co-Creating a Family Friendly Tea Industry' Conference 2023 is set to bring a diverse group of integral stakeholders to the table in reimagining business practices with dignity and child rights at the forefront.

Ends.

Notes for the Editor:

About The Centre for Child Rights and Business

The Centre for Child Rights and Business supports companies to deliver improvements within their supply chains that benefit workers, families and children, and deliver positive business outcomes. Our mission is to improve the lives of children by working with companies to promote and respect children's rights in all their operations, with a particular focus on supply chains in manufacturing, agricultural and raw materials settings. Throughout our work, we strive to create a tangible and long-term impact that serves both children, parent workers and businesses.

About Save the Children

Save the Children has been working in Sri Lanka since 1974, marking 50 years in 2024, and has been contributing to both humanitarian and development needs across the country, in the thematic areas of education, child protection, health and nutrition, vocational skills development, and child rights governance. In Sri Lanka and around the world, we do whatever it takes – every day and in times of crises –so children can fulfil their rights to a healthy start in life, the opportunity to learn and be protected from harm.

About The Planters' Association of Ceylon

The Planters' Association of Ceylon is the apex body of the plantation sector, representing 23 Regional Plantation Companies (RPCs) to promote, foster and protect the plantation industry of Sri Lanka and the interests of the planting community. The RPC sector provides direct employment to a workforce of approximately 165,000 workers, out of a resident community that is more than 1 million. Apart from providing, healthcare, maternal care and custodial childcare RPCs have constructed over 48,000 individual housing as well as water and sanitation facilities across its estates.

To learn more about the Mother and Child-Friendly Seal for Responsible Business, please visit www.srilanka-motherandchildseal.org

For further enquiries and to register, please contact info.SL@childrights-business.org.