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Students march against child labour

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Schoolchildren march around the Queen's Park Savannah with representatives from the Ministry of Labour and the International Labour Organisation to commemorate World Day Against Child Labour yesterday.

Photo: Keith Matthews

By Kayode James

Rain failed to dampen the spirits of scores of schoolchildren who gathered at the Queen's Park Savannah yesterday to march against child labour.

More than a hundred students joined representatives from the Ministry of Labour and the International Labour Organisation for the mid-morning event, which was held to commemorate World Day Against Child Labour.

The march was shortened due to the morning's intermittent rain, but the students, who hailed from several primary and secondary school, appeared to enjoy the experience, and strolled eagerly along to the music of Excellent Stores' Silver Stars pan side.

In a statement delivered by acting permanent secretary of the Ministry of Small and Micro Enterprise Development Carl Francis, Labour Minister Danny Montano reminded the schoolchildren of their role in the struggle against child labour.

"You have a responsibility in this fight. You have been provided with the golden opportunity of a sound education, so take advantage of it. Study hard and excel at what you do. Let the spirit of the Soca

Warriors be your guide," said Francis as he read from Montano's statement.

Montano also noted the importance of the education system in the prevention of child labour.

"Through education, children's developmental needs are addressed and they are equipped with the means not only for economic survival but with the opportunity for future success."

Citing child labour as an unwelcome phenomenon that needs to be eradicated, Montano urged employers to be more aware of their company's recruitment practices, particularly in light of new provisions against child labour in the Occupational Safety and Health Act.

"We need to ensure that our professionals pay special attention to instances of the use of children in the workplace and take necessary corrective action," he said in his statement.

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