

SOUTH ASIA

Vulnerability of Children in the Labor Market **Child Labor**

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SOUTH ASIA LABOR CONFERENCE

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We will look at

Trends – South Asia Children in Employment

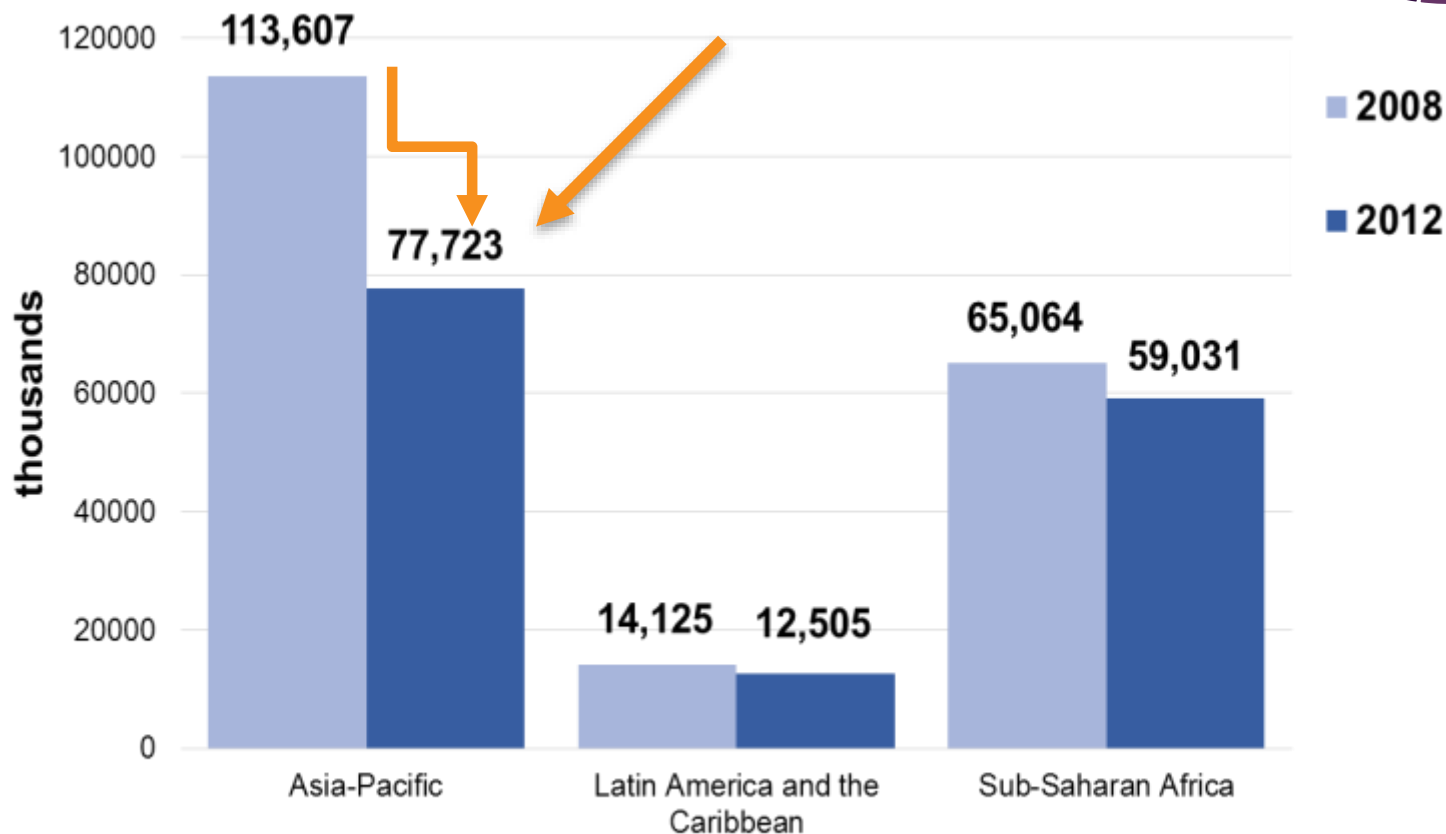
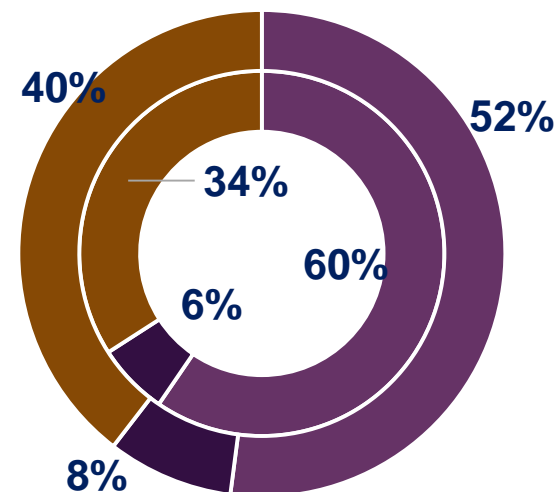
Legal Framework – defining Children's Labor Market Participation

Action to End Child Labor

Challenges and Learning from South Asia

Regional Trends

Number of children in **child labour**,
 5-17 years, by region, 2008-2012



Children's employment

It is not the entire story on child labor

The percentage of 7 to 17 year old children in employment ranges widely across South Asia and direct inter-country comparisons are difficult

Not all employment below 18 yrs is child labor, and
 Not all child labor is reported in children's employment statistics
 Child labor is often the missing part of the labour market storyboard

Of 4 countries with comparable data, the employment ratio (%) is:

	7-17yrs	7-14 yrs
Bangladesh	17.5	11.6
Sri Lanka	16.6	10.7
India	6.7	2.5
Bhutan	6.3	4.6

Large number of children are reported as **neither in education nor in employment**

Currently, national statistical surveys in South Asia do not capture children's Participation adequately.

Current status of Children's participation in the labour market

Agriculture: *relentless in employment of children*

Absorbs the highest percentage of children in employment in every South Asian country for which data is available

Rural children *continue to be at a greater disadvantage*

Are more likely to **work**, less likely to attend **school** and more likely to be **inactive** across much of South Asia

Family labor *is high on the scale across the region*

Accounts for a significant percentage of employment; declines as children get older

Gender: *Girls' vulnerability is a stubborn reality of great concern*

The activities of millions of South Asian children, mostly girls, rural residents, and youth are not captured in national statistics and reflected as *inactive* (neither in school nor work)

Note: Based on data analysis of South Asian countries except Afghanistan – 2005 to 2008



The missing link in a life-cycle approach to employment

From child labor to inactive youth to adults with decent work deficits

The outcome for millions of children who transition to youth from child labor is a world without decent work

Child labor reduces chances for education; increases vulnerabilities caused by **skills mismatch** and **under-skilling**

Mandated and enforced **free and compulsory education** has been slow in taking root in South Asia – *Bangladesh (1990); Sri Lanka (1998); India (2009)*.

Almost 100 million South Asian youth, over 31 per cent of the total, are unemployed or inactive

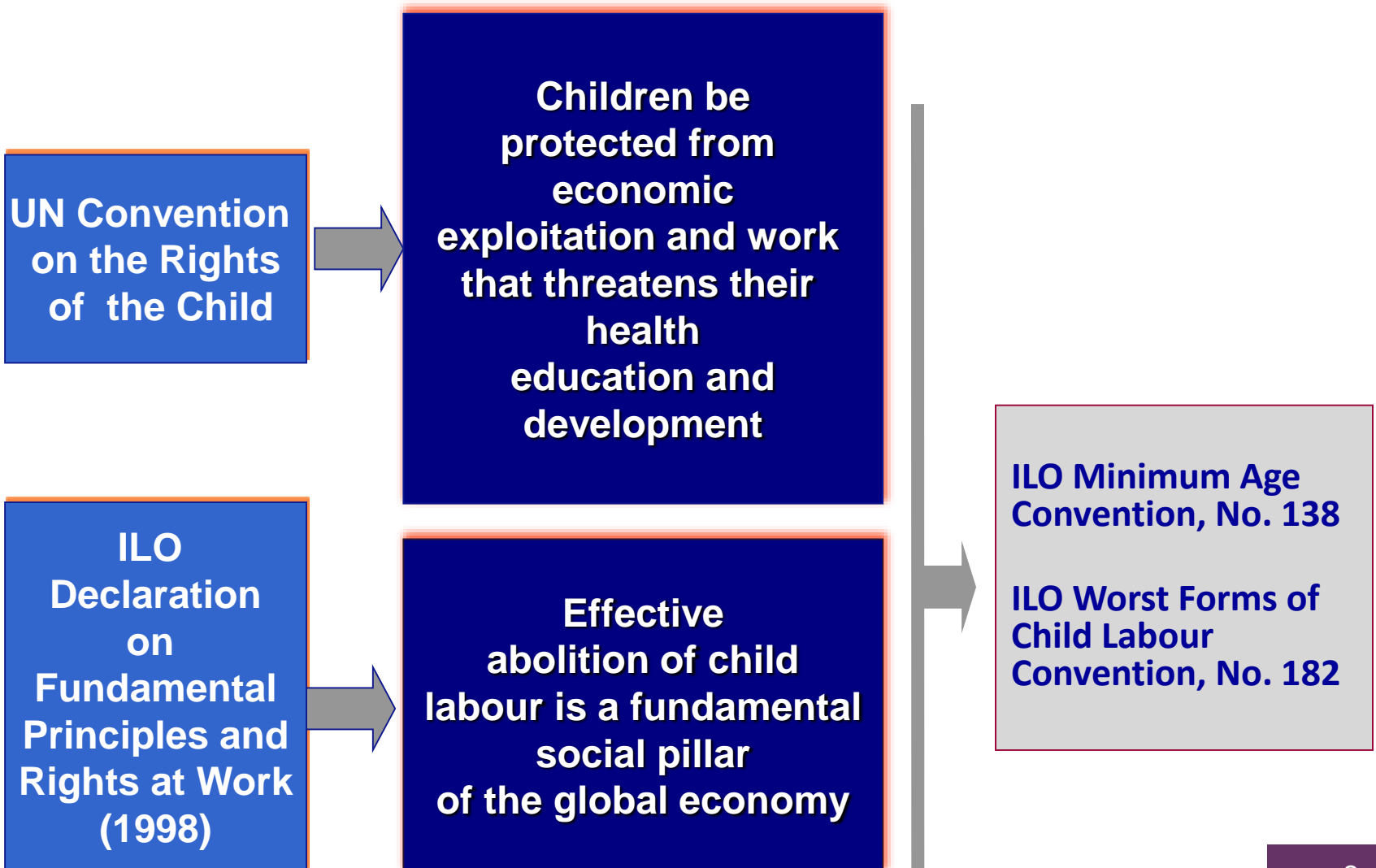
South Asian women alone account for over one quarter of the world's inactive youth

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Legal Framework

Defining Children's Labour Market Participation

UN/ILO Conventions: Protecting Children from Child Labour



Convention No. 138

ILO Minimum Age Convention No. 138 & Recommendation No.146

National policy for the
effective abolition of child labour
(Art. 1)

Specification of **minimum age** for
employment > end of compulsory
education (Art. 2)

C. 138	General Age	Exceptions for developing/countries
Basic Minimum Age (Art. 2)	15 years	14 years
Hazardous work (Art. 3)	18 years (16 years conditionally)	No exception
Light work (Art. 7)	13-15 years	12-14 years

Convention No.182

ILO Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention No. 182 and its Recommendation No. 190

Calls for immediate Action to eliminate the worst forms of child labour as a matter of urgency

Art. 3

- a) Children in **slavery**, or similar practices, e.g. **sale and trafficking, debt bondage, forced or compulsory labor**, including forced recruitment for use in armed conflict
- b) Use, procuring or offering of children for **prostitution and pornography**
- c) Use, procuring or offering of children in **illicit activities**
- d) Children in **hazardous work** or circumstances likely to harm their safety, or morals

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Action to End Child Labor in South Asia

Progress

National Child Labor Policies

National Plans of Action, Master Plans, Road Map

Legislative measures

Amendments; hazardous work lists

Policy measures

mainstreaming in national education, youth employment, child protection, other policies, conditional cash transfers, health schemes, others

Targeted national/sub-national funded projects

(India – NCLP; Bangladesh – Worst Forms; Pakistan – Punjab Province; Sri Lanka – Ministry of Labor's allocation for capacity development/awareness)

Partnerships

ILO MOU with SAARC Apex Body on Children (SAIEVAC); 2 SAARC Regional Workshops on Child Labor organized by Govt of India; private sector involvement

NCLP – National Child Labor Project Scheme

SAIEVAC – South Asia Initiative to End Violence against Children

Recommended Strategies for South Asia (1)

Mainstreaming of child labor issue

in key policies, programs, budgets of development/human rights frameworks at the planning, monitoring and evaluation stages

Support to implementation/ratification of C.182 & C. 138

- Upgrading policy, legal framework and enforcement, promoting integrated approach to labor inspection.
- Support to constituents in view of CEACR comments;
- Synergies and interfaces with other relevant UN conventions
- Promoting inter-agency collaboration
- Institutional capacity development and integration in national training programs, *such as staff colleges, SAARC HR Development Centre, teacher training institutes, business HRD training, among others*

Recommended Strategies for South Asia (2)

Advocacy, Awareness Raising and Beyond

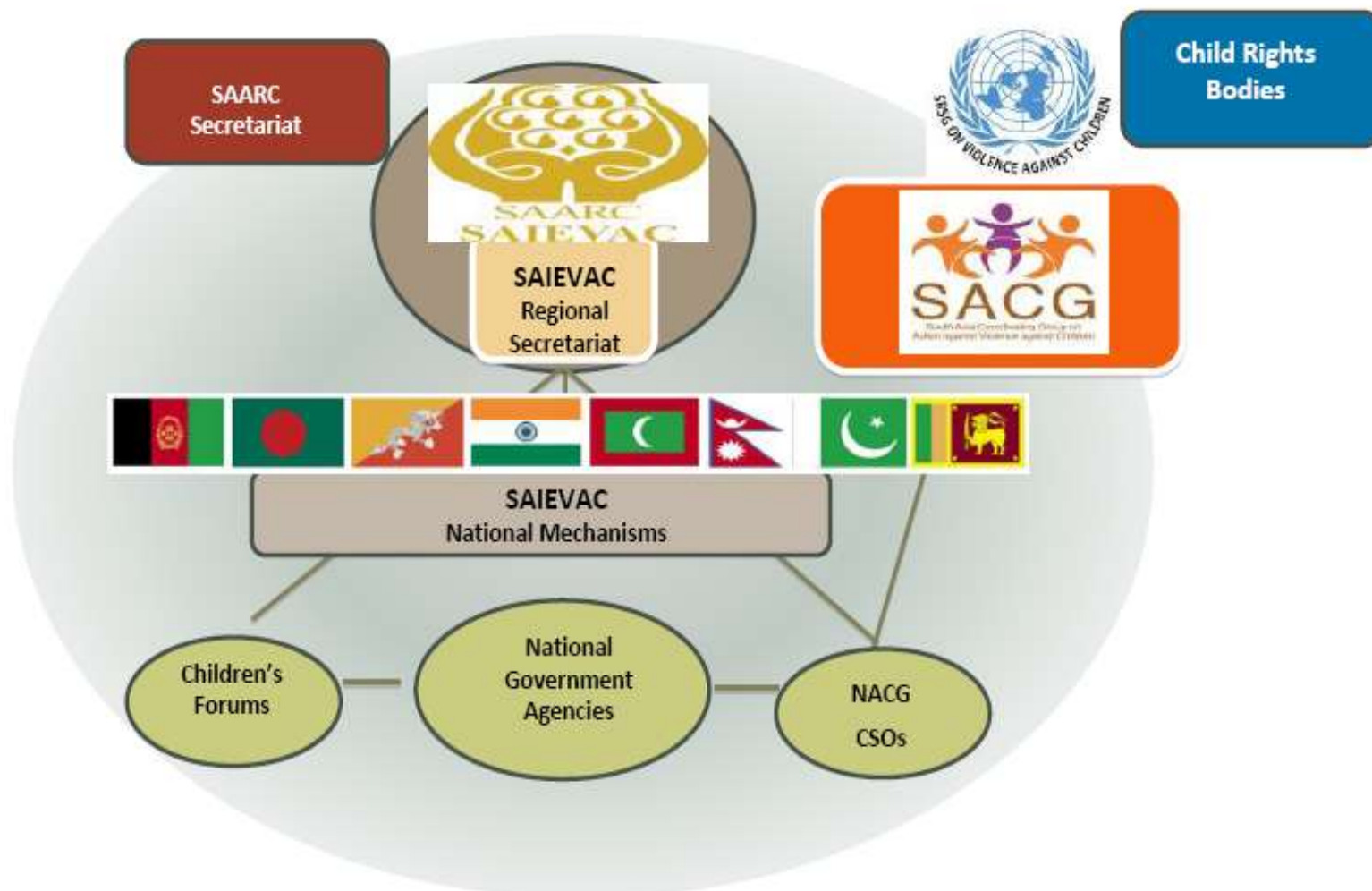
- Support to targeted awareness raising and campaigns at all levels and across areas of relevance
- Training and engaging with the media, *including in partnership with the SAARC Information Centre, others*

Partnerships and Networks

- Enhancing South Asia Regional Integration and Partnerships to promote child rights in the context of SAARC regional integration, *e.g. support to implementation of SAARC Conventions, ILO-SAIEVAC MOU*
- Enhancing partnerships and alliances - with and amongst governmental and other agencies - *parliamentarians, social partners, policy makers, national platforms, e.g. NACGs (National Coordinating Group on Action against Violence against Children), think tanks, educators, others*
- Dialoguing with the private sector and their partners to address child labour in the supply chains.

South Asia Initiative to End Violence against Children (SAIEVAC) – SAARC Apex Body

South Asia Coordinating Group on Action against Violence against Children (SACG) – A UN/INGO interagency group



⇒ ILO – SAIEVAC MOU 2012

⇒ ILO: SACG Chair 2013-14 and Member of SAIEVAC Governing Board; SACG's focal point for SAARC Secretariat and SRSV-VAC, etc.

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Challenges and Learning from the ILO's Experience in South Asia

Challenges in South Asia to addressing Child Labor

Countries among the highest number Out-of-School-Children

Pakistan and India among highest numbers

Low investments in education

South Asia 3.4 % of GDP – lower than East Asia (4.4) and Sub-Sahara Africa (4.3)

Gender disparities

In edu survival, dropouts, opportunities,

Transition gaps

child labor-to-school or decent work at legal age; school-to-work

Institutional interface gaps

Lack of mandates and practice to facilitate inter-agency convergence, coordination and collective impact

Enforcement gaps

growing economic liberalization, industrialization and urbanization

The economy

household and child poverty (75% below \$2/day), hunger, lack of opportunities

Increasing informality

Increasing unemployment for highly skilled

Increased vulnerabilities

from conflict, terrorism, natural disasters, movements, globalization

Social fabric: disparities

class, caste, minorities; intolerance and inadequate support systems

Shocks, often compounded

lack of social protection to cope with droughts, food prices, sickness or death in family

Mobility/migration

uninformed, unplanned, often too early and too risky – internal and cross-border

Learnings from South Asia (1)

South Asian capacity for innovative programming is boundless

It established the first models in private-multi-lateral/stakeholder partnerships and integrated comprehensive programming (mid-1990s)

Resourcing of child labor policies, plans, measures

is a challenge but Indispensable

The mainstreaming strategy can produce quick and sustained results

If all key agencies are involved in the planning and action

Government labour inspection systems are important;

Child labor monitoring systems serve an important purpose and complement, but are not an alternative

The ILO's unique tripartite approach adds unique value

and is to be fully utilized – in traditional and innovative ways

Civil society organizations can play an important supportive role

in service delivery, advocacy and awareness raising

Learnings from South Asia (2)

Manageable and active child labor related structures are need

for coordination, coherence, leadership, vision and effective implementation and oversight

Institutional capacity is the lifeline for sustained success and impact

across sectors – horizontally and vertically

Action aligned with mandates of agencies

Is more likely to result in sustained impact and change

Modest, indigenous measures, and innovation based on them

can be among the most feasible, sustainable and successful

Family-focused approaches work

including income replacement through empowering families and convergence of impact of protection measures

Thank you!



Acknowledgements:

ILO/DWT South Asia: Working Draft for Discussion - *Children's employment in South Asia: An analysis of national household survey statistics and data on child labour* May 2013(based on UCW Report 2012)

Photos: Sherin Khan