

IV GLOBAL CONFERENCE ON THE SUSTAINED ERADICATION OF CHILD LABOUR

Buenos Aires Declaration on Child Labour, Forced Labour and Youth Employment

16 November 2017

We, representatives from governments, employers' and workers' organizations, together with international and regional organizations and civil society organizations, have gathered at the *IV Global Conference on the Sustained Eradication of Child Labour* in Buenos Aires, Argentina, 14-16 November 2017, to take stock of progress made since the III Global Conference on Child Labour, in Brasilia, Brazil, in 2013, taking into account the Brasilia Declaration as well as The Hague Roadmap of 2010, to assess obstacles and to agree on measures to accelerate the eradication of child labour and forced labour and, in this context, promote full and productive employment and decent work for all, especially for youth. The international normative framework for these efforts is provided mainly by the eight fundamental Conventions of the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Protocol of 2014 to the Forced Labour Convention, 1930ⁱ and the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work; as well as other relevant ILO and United Nations (UN) Conventionsⁱⁱ;

Noting the estimates that 152 million girls and boys are still engaged in child labour, with 73 million in its worst forms; that 25 million people, including more than 4 million children, are still subject to forced labour, noting the importance of trafficking in persons; that 71 million youth are unemployed; that most child labour and forced labour is found in the informal rural and urban economies, not least in areas of armed conflict and crisis and is acute in the lower segments of some global supply chains;

Recognizing that child labour, notably its worst forms, and forced labour are major violations and abuses of human rights and dignity; and both causes and consequences of poverty, inequality, discrimination, social exclusion and lack of access to education; and **noting** that child labour, forced labour, poverty and decent work deficits for adults are all inter-connected and require an integrated and holistic approach to achieve their eradication;

Recognizing that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (hereafter “the 2030 Agenda”) represents a unique opportunity to accelerate the eradication of inequality and poverty; and **noting** its Target 8.7 to eradicate child labour in all its forms by 2025 and forced labour, modern slavery and human trafficking by 2030;

Welcoming the establishment of Alliance 8.7 to end forced labour, modern slavery, human trafficking and child labour, which can strengthen international cooperation, coordination and assistance through enhanced, appropriate multi-stakeholder partnerships to accelerate implementation of Target 8.7, as well as other relevant goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda;

Acknowledging that the full realization of fundamental principles and rights at work is one of the preconditions for decent work for all, in particular for women and young people; guaranteeing the protection of all workers; and providing an enabling environment for sustainable enterprises, the formalization of the informal economy and for realizing the right to education for all children;

Recognizing the importance of rural poverty reduction, the extension of social protection and access to public, free, complete, universal, quality primary and secondary education, affordable, quality technical vocational and tertiary education and life-long learning, and of area-based and community interventions for eradicating child labour and forced labour;

Reaffirming the key role that employers' and workers' organizations and social dialogue must play in the eradication of child labour and forced labour and in promoting decent work for all, in particular for women and young people;

Recognizing the role that civil society and international and regional organizations play in achieving these goals;

Recognizing that globalization, demographic, environmental and technological changes have an impact on labour markets and employment, and economic and social development, which cause challenges for the eradication of child labour and forced labour, unemployment, informality and inequality but may also provide new opportunities to eradicate them;

Recognizing that 71 per cent of child labour is performed in the various subsectors of agriculture, 42 per cent of this work is hazardous, and is mainly performed in informal and family enterprises that depend on their children's labour;

Noting that 12 per cent of forced labour takes place in agriculture, 24 per cent in domestic work, 18 per cent in construction and 15 per cent in manufacturing, among other sectors;

Noting that the unprecedented scale of migration and forced displacement has increased the number of children and adults who are or are at risk of becoming victims of child labour and forced labour; and that such risk can be mitigated or prevented by strengthened governance of labour migration;

Noting that child labour and forced labour are exacerbated by crisis situations arising from conflicts and disasters; and deeply concerned that conflict alone affects more than 250 million children, including those who are forcibly recruited into armed conflict and those subjected to sexual exploitation, with many more at greater risk of other forms of child labour;

Recognizing that the goal of universal ratification of the ILO fundamental Conventions, including the Protocol of 2014 to the Forced Labour Convention, 1930, the relevant human rights instruments, and the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children is important;

Underlining that the eradication of child labour and forced labour requires commitment to action, and effective implementation of the relevant normative framework;

Recalling that the violation of fundamental principles and rights at work cannot be invoked or otherwise used as a legitimate comparative advantage; and that labour standards should not be used for protectionist trade purposes;

Acknowledging, in the fight against child labour and forced labour, the relevance of the ILO's Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy, the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, and the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises;

Despite the progress made at the national, regional and international level towards eradicating child labour and forced labour; we regret that the global goal of eliminating the worst forms of child labour by 2016 has not been reached, that the decline in child labour has slowed and that numbers of people in forced labour has remained high over recent years; and we therefore recognize the urgent need to accelerate efforts at all levels;

We declare our commitment to the eradication of child labour and forced labour, and call upon governments, social partners, international and regional organizations, civil society organizations and all other relevant stakeholders to take up the following principles and actions:

1) Principles

Public policies and programmes addressing child labour and forced labour should:

- i) respect, promote and protect human rights, in particular fundamental principles and rights at work and the rights of the child;
- ii) serve the best interests of the child;
- iii) recognize the need for rights and obligations to be matched with appropriate and effective remedies when breached;
- iv) be designed and implemented through tripartite social dialogue, and as part of coherent and coordinated national policies for decent work;
- v) pay special attention including to social protection and to integrated measures to support families;
- vi) pay due attention to persons in situations of vulnerability, who might be victims of discrimination on any grounds and to social and economic exclusion;
- vii) be evidence-based;
- viii) be sensitive to gender, age, disability and origin, where appropriate;
- ix) assure that children, who are capable of forming their own views, and adults directly concerned, have the right to express their own views freely in all matters affecting them, with the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child; and
- x) make effective, efficient, and results-based use of resources, focusing on impact.

2) Actions

We declare our commitment and urge the wider international community to commit to:

1. Policy and governance

- 1.1. Accelerate efforts to end child labour in all its forms by 2025, generate the conditions for full and productive employment and decent work for young people, and to eradicate forced labour by 2030 while addressing the root causes of child labour and forced labour;
- 1.2. Seek to align, as a matter of urgency, policies, strategies and time-bound action plans at corresponding levels, relevant to the eradication of child labour and forced labour, in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;
- 1.3. Promote integrated, coherent and effective public services and policies in the fields of labour, justice, education, agriculture, health, vocational training and social protection as a strategy to eradicate child labour and forced labour;
- 1.4. Strengthen the capacity of and involve public authorities, social partners, civil society, local communities and enterprises to develop and implement such policies, strategies and action plans at all relevant levels;
- 1.5. Strengthen the organizational capacity of local communities, as appropriate, in their efforts to prevent, detect and eliminate child labour and forced labour; to ensure that relevant authorities are aware of and replicate these efforts;
- 1.6. Taking into consideration the objective of universal ratification of the ILO fundamental Conventions, including the Protocol of 2014 to the Forced

Labour Convention, 1930, promote the effective implementation of Conventions Nos. 138, 182, 29, and 105, the Protocol of 2014 to the Forced Labour Convention, 1930, and related Recommendations, as well as the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocols, and the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children;

- 1.7 Strengthen national legal frameworks and their enforcement, including the periodic review and update of the national list of hazardous work prohibited for all children, and efforts to eradicate hazardous child labour, particularly in sectors and occupations where it is most prevalent;
- 1.8 Strengthen the capacity of labour inspection and other enforcement services, according to national law, to better detect and address child labour and forced labour, assist victims, promote and ensure compliance with legislation;
- 1.9 Take effective measures to prevent child labour and forced labour, and to protect the victims, in particular those who are in a situation of vulnerability, by ensuring their access to administrative and judicial mechanisms, effective remedies, such as (re)integration into education, rehabilitation, as well as providing for appropriate sanctions for the perpetrators;
- 1.10 Pay particular attention to the needs and circumstances of those in situation of vulnerability in building and maintaining national social security systems, including social protection floors, taking into consideration the Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102) and the Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202), to eradicate and prevent child labour and forced labour;
- 1.11 Strengthen policies and programmes aimed at ensuring equal access to free, public, and compulsory education for all children; retaining children, especially girls and other children in vulnerable situations, in quality and

inclusive education systems; and favour evidence-based strategies to promote a smooth school-to-work transition, transferable life-long skills training, quality apprenticeships, employability, and full and productive employment and decent work for youth;

1.12 Promote coherent and integrated strategies to achieve the transition from informal to formal economies, social development and innovation, with a focus on women and young people;

1.13 Empower children and young people, particularly girls and young women and others who are in situations of vulnerability, and protect them from becoming victims of sexual exploitation and trafficking in persons;

1.14 Promote inclusive rural development to eradicate and prevent child labour and forced labour, through the expansion of the scope of services provided by the state, the promotion of decent work, improved productivity, the creation of a favourable business environment and use of technology, safer agricultural practices, access to knowledge and education for children and young people, financial and agricultural extension services, markets and opportunities for value addition and non-farm employment, among others means;

1.15 Take measures to protect all migrants and children on the move, in full respect of the fundamental principles and rights at work, and the rights of the child, including coordinated efforts at national level, and cooperation between origin, transit and destination countries;

1.16 Promote fair labour recruitment practices, the protection of workers in the hiring process and ensure that regulation of labour recruiters is in accordance with the ILO General principles and operational guidelines for fair recruitment;

1.17 Strengthen implementation of actions to eradicate child labour and forced labour in crisis situations arising from conflicts and disasters, with particular attention to the protection of children, and other persons in situation of vulnerability, regardless of their legal status;

2. Knowledge, data and monitoring

2.1 Strengthen national capacities to regularly collect and disseminate disaggregated data, such as by sex, age and sector, in particular on victims and populations in situations of vulnerability, with due regard to the protection of personal data;

2.2 Make progress on the commitment to produce, at national level, as appropriate, standardized indicators on relevant targets of the 2030 Agenda and implement efforts to monitor progress within the global indicator framework;

2.3 Support international cooperation for the exchange of evidence-based data and good practices to address cross-border cases of child labour, forced labour and trafficking in persons;

2.4 Urge the International Labour Office, in close collaboration with other UN agencies and other international and national partners, to continue producing global estimates and stimulating sharing best practices on child labour and on forced labour;

2.5 Conduct research on child labour and forced labour and their root causes in order to accelerate action to eradicate them. Such research should pay particular attention to supply chains, the informal economy, the rural economy, crisis and conflict zones, and high risk sectors, and should also support efforts to build capacity in the countries most affected as well as to identify and share best practices;

3. Partnerships and innovation

- 3.1 Promote global partnerships involving governments, employers' and workers' organizations and other relevant stakeholders, including youth organizations, and children, as appropriate, to design and test innovative approaches on the eradication of child labour and forced labour and to harness technology wherever beneficial;
- 3.2 Promote active participation of all States, social partners and other stakeholders in Alliance 8.7 to develop collaborative approaches to the eradication of child labour and forced labour;
- 3.3 Promote increased funding, at all levels, for the fight against child labour and forced labour, encourage international organizations to increase technical support, and improve coordination among funding streams with the aim of deploying funds, taking into account the socio-economic needs of States, to accelerate the achievement of the 2030 Agenda deadlines relevant to child labour and forced labour;
- 3.4 Promote subregional and regional initiatives aimed at the sustained eradication of child labour, such as the Regional Initiative Latin America and the Caribbean Free of Child Labour, resulting from commitments undertaken at the III Global Conference on Child Labour (Brasilia 2013). Other subregional and regional initiatives also constitute important platforms for the generation of concerted policies and innovation involving relevant stakeholders aiming at the eradication of child labour and forced labour;
- 3.5 Recognizing that enterprises should respect human rights, encourage them, in line with the ILO's Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy and the UN Guiding Principles

on Business and Human Rights, to carry out due diligence in their supply chains in order to identify, prevent, mitigate and account for how they address adverse human rights impacts of their activities, particularly in relation to child labour and forced labour;

- 3.6 Encourage governments to consider adopting and implementing policies, notably preventive policies in their supply chains, including by evaluating and monitoring their respective procurement policies, sharing promising and best practices in implementation and enforcement as fits their needs and involving, meaningfully, relevant stakeholders to prevent child labour and forced labour. For these purposes, enterprises also play an important role in securing the effective abolition of child labour and forced labour; and
- 3.7 Support widened sharing and application of best practices, as well as the implementation of cooperation actions through strengthened international development assistance, including North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation.

The participants express their gratitude to the Government of the Republic of Argentina for hosting this Conference, and welcome the Government of Argentina's intention to bring this Declaration to the attention of the ILO Governing Body for further consideration and follow-up.

ⁱ Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29) and Protocol of 2014 to the Forced Labour Convention, 1930; Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87); Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98); Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100); Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No. 105); Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111); Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138); and Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182).

ⁱⁱ UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989; and its Optional Protocols, 2000, on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, and on the involvement of children in armed conflict; and the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the UN Convention on Transnational Organised Crime, 2000.