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SIXTH ITEM ON THE AGENDA

Preparations for the IV Global Conference on Child Labour Report

Purpose of the document

This document provides information on the forthcoming IV Global Conference on Child Labour to be organized by the Government of Argentina in November 2017. It presents the proposed main Conference objectives, as well as the preparatory activities foreseen by the Office for its organization and to provide assistance to the Government and the social partners of Argentina. It invites the Governing Body to welcome the proposal to widen the agenda of the Conference in line with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) target 8.7 (see draft decision in paragraph 15).

Relevant strategic objective: Protecting workers from unacceptable forms of work (outcome 8).

Policy implications: Full alignment of the IV Global Conference on Child Labour with SDG target 8.7 and other ILO related and promoted actions.

Legal implications: None.

Financial implications: The capacity of the Office to provide the required support to respond to constituents' requests for assistance will depend on the level of funding secured from regular and extra-budgetary sources.

Follow-up action required: Put in place measures to support the Government and the social partners of Argentina in the organization of the IV Global Conference on Child Labour.

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Related documents: GB.320/POL/8; GB.320/PV; GB.325/INS/6; GB.325/POL/7.

Background

1. As per the 2012 global estimates issued by the Office, 168 million children are still involved in child labour. Of these children, 83 million are simply too young to be working, and 85 million are involved in the worst forms of child labour – primarily hazardous work, including 5.5 million in forced labour.¹ A further 15.5 million adults worldwide are also victims of forced labour.²
2. The ILO–IPEC report *Marking progress against child labour: Global estimates and trends 2000–12*, launched in Brasilia and Geneva in September 2013, showed that greatly accelerated progress had been made against all forms of child labour during 2008–12, a period in which ILO constituents increasingly adopted and implemented more coherent and integrated strategies to combat child labour, including through policies to provide free education, social protection and decent work opportunities for young people, and stronger measures to enforce legislation and to prevent hazardous work. ILO support for a more integrated approach to combat child labour and forced labour had been informed, inter alia, by the 2012 International Labour Conference resolution concerning the recurrent discussion on fundamental principles and rights at work.³ However, despite the positive trends in respect of child labour, the report warned that the goal of eliminating the worst forms of child labour by 2016 would not be achieved. The recurrent discussion on fundamental principles and rights at work to be held at the 106th Session (June 2017) of the International Labour Conference will provide further opportunity to discuss trends and effective policies to end child labour.
3. Since 1997, countries around the world have shared good practices and policies and committed to the elimination of child labour in the series of Global Conferences on Child Labour: held in Norway (1997), the Netherlands (2010) and Brazil (2013). The last one, the III Global Conference, held in Brasilia in October 2013, adopted the Brasilia Declaration on Child Labour,⁴ and, at the end of the Conference, the Government of Argentina announced that, in cooperation with the ILO, it would host the IV Global Conference on the Sustained Eradication of Child Labour in 2017.
4. During its 320th Session (March 2014), the Governing Body decided, inter alia, to endorse “... the Brasilia Declaration” and requested “... the Office to ensure its integration into the ILO Global Action Plan on Child Labour and the work of the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour; and reconfirmed its commitment to the elimination of child labour as one of the fundamental principles and rights at work, and thus as one of the

¹ ILO: *Marking progress against child labour: Global estimates and trends 2000–12*, Geneva, 2013, http://www.ilo.org/ippec/Informationresources/WCMS_221513/lang--en/index.htm.

² ILO: *ILO Global estimate of forced labour 2012: Results and methodology*, Geneva, 2012, http://www.ilo.org/global/topics/forced-labour/publications/WCMS_182004/lang--en/index.htm.

³ ILO: *Resolution concerning the recurrent discussion on fundamental principles and rights at work*, International Labour Conference, 101st Session (Geneva, 2012), http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---relconf/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_194631.pdf.

⁴ GB.320/POL/8.

Organization's highest priorities in the realization of the Decent Work Agenda, and requested the Office to put in place all necessary means to achieve this objective.”⁵

5. In September 2015, world leaders adopted the 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs) and 169 associated targets of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. Goal 8, which stands at the heart of the 2030 Agenda, seeks to “Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all”. Among the substantive targets set under goal 8, target 8.7 seeks to “Take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, including recruitment and use of child soldiers, and by 2025 end child labour in all its forms.”
6. The SDGs call on member States, their social partner constituents and other relevant stakeholders collectively to eliminate child labour by 2025 and forced labour by 2030; to progress towards non-discrimination and to promote labour rights in accordance with, inter alia, international labour standards and the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. Target 8.7 can be achieved provided that there is well-informed understanding of what is and will be required to sustain and accelerate progress to end child labour in all its forms by 2025 and to eliminate forced labour, modern slavery and human trafficking by 2030. The adoption of SDG target 8.7 presents an unprecedented opportunity to promote greater coherence, synergies and collaboration among ILO constituents and other partners concerned with child labour, forced labour, modern slavery and human trafficking with a view of accelerating the eradication of these fundamental rights violations, among other actions, through enhanced partnerships.

The IV Global Conference on Child Labour, Argentina, November 2017

7. In November 2017, Argentina will host the IV Global Conference on Child Labour. The initial main objective of the IV Global Conference will be to contribute – through the exchange of experience and lessons learned from successful and innovative policies, programmes, practices and intervention models, and in high-level technical thematic discussions – to further consolidating global commitment to the joint effort to accelerate the pace of elimination of child labour, in order to secure its end by 2025 as required in target 8.7.
8. However, taking account of the call of target 8.7 also to end forced labour, modern slavery and human trafficking by 2030, and the urgent need also to promote progress in that regard, the Office considers that the scope of the IV Global Conference should be widened to also include forced labour, modern slavery and human trafficking of adults, taking into account the fact that forced labour, slavery and trafficking of children have already been covered by previous Global Conferences on Child Labour.
9. Within the framework of SDG target 8.7 and in line with the Governing Body's conclusions regarding the 2030 Agenda,⁶ the ILO has launched Alliance 8.7: Working together to end child labour and modern slavery, in close collaboration with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and other partners. The ILO's flagship programme, the International Programme on the Elimination

⁵ GB.320/PV, para. 523.

⁶ GB.325/INS/6, para. 44(e).

of Child and Forced Labour (IPEC+),⁷ will contribute to this endeavour. In view of this strengthened collaboration on both child labour and forced labour, the IV Global Conference could lay the foundation for further concerted action related to SDG target 8.7 in future years.

10. The Argentinian Government has informed the Office that, by Decree No. 808/2016 of 24 June 2016, the National Commission in charge of organizing the Conference was created. In the same communication, the Office was informed that, within the SDGs and Alliance 8.7 framework, the scope of the IV Global Conference is broadened to cover both the elimination of child labour as well as of forced labour. The Conference will also comprise “an analysis and discussion of active social and economic inclusion policies in line with the generation of quality Youth Employment”.
11. In 2017, the Office (the Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work Branch (FUNDAMENTALS) in collaboration with the Department of Statistics (STATISTICS)), will publish new global estimates on both child labour and forced labour to be used as benchmarks towards reaching target 8.7. The development of these new estimates is being closely coordinated with other United Nations agencies, notably UNICEF and the UNODC. In June 2017, the 106th Session of the International Labour Conference will undertake a further recurrent discussion on fundamental principles and rights at work. Both will inform and contribute to guiding the discussions at the IV Global Conference.
12. To provide policy leadership to constituents, and other relevant stakeholders and concerned parties, and to inform discussions at the IV Global Conference, the Office will also produce technical papers on accelerating the pace of reduction of child labour and modern slavery through the provision, in line with SDG 8, of decent work alternatives, in particular, for young people of legal working age. In addition, the Office will identify good practices existing in successful and innovative intervention models to address the root causes of child labour and forced labour, and will disseminate them before and during the IV Global Conference. As required, the Office will also offer policy, technical and logistical support to the organizing commission of the IV Global Conference, as well as to any other concerned party.
13. The Office, in coordination with the Government and the social partners of Argentina, will also offer its assistance for the identification of potential development partners, both public and private, interested in supporting efforts in respect of the organization of the IV Global Conference in November 2017.
14. The Office will facilitate the organization of tripartite Regional Meetings to share information about the Global Conference and to discuss progress towards the elimination of child labour and forced labour, in coordination with United Nations partner agencies, subject to the confirmation of financial resources. The final agenda and draft outcome document for the IV Global Conference will be prepared in close collaboration with the Conference organizing commission, taking into account both the tripartite consultations to be organized in Geneva, as in the previous Global Conference, and the abovementioned tripartite Regional Meetings.

Draft decision

15. *The Governing Body:*

⁷ GB.325/POL/7, paras 9 and 34.

- (a) welcomes the proposal made by the Argentinian Government to enlarge the scope of the IV Global Conference on Child Labour in 2017 to encompass the forced labour of adults in addition to all forms of child labour;*
- (b) endorses the proposal for Regional Meetings and global preparatory tripartite consultations, as specified in paragraph 14; and*
- (c) requests the Director-General to take the necessary action to provide the Government and the social partners of Argentina with the required technical assistance for the organization of the IV Global Conference on Child Labour in 2017, taking into account the Governing Body discussion.*