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Policy Development Section

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Social Dialogue Segment

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Preparations for the Sixth Global Conference on the Elimination of Child Labour

Purpose of the document

This document provides information on the preparations for the Sixth Global Conference on the Elimination of Child Labour, to be hosted by the Government of Morocco in 2026. It presents a way forward, touches upon external partnerships, communication, and logistical and financial aspects, and sets out the role of the ILO. The Governing Body is invited to request the Office to pursue the preparations for the Sixth Global Conference and the course of action proposed in this document, and to update the Governing Body at its 355th Session (November 2025) on progress made (see the draft decision in paragraph 28).

Relevant strategic objective: Fundamental principles and rights at work.

Main relevant outcome: Outcome 1: Strong, modernized normative action for social justice.

Policy implications: None.

Legal implications: None.

Financial implications: Additional extrabudgetary resources will need to be mobilized to pursue the proposed course of action.

Follow-up action required: See the draft decision.

Author unit: Governance and Tripartism Department (GOVERNANCE).

Related documents: [Resolution concerning the third recurrent discussion on fundamental principles and rights at work](#), International Labour Conference, 112th Session, 2024; and [GB.352/INS/3/1](#).

► Introduction

1. Since 1997, the Global Conference on the Elimination of Child Labour has provided countries with a forum at which to discuss, share good practices, advance policies and commit to the elimination of child labour.¹ The Global Conferences have resulted in a series of declarations, which serve to identify policy priorities and mobilize political support for the elimination of child labour. The Fifth Global Conference² was held in Durban in May 2022, hosted by the Government of South Africa. It concluded with the adoption of the Durban Call to Action.³
2. Following the expression of interest to hold the Sixth Global Conference voiced by the Minister of Economic Inclusion, Small Business, Employment and Skills of Morocco at the global event to celebrate the World Day Against Child Labour on 12 June 2024, the Government of Morocco formally confirmed its interest in a letter sent to the Director-General on 11 September 2024.
3. Since the Fifth Global Conference, progress has been made in some countries and regions by ILO constituents both in relation to law as well as practice. However, the collective commitment enshrined in target 8.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) on ending child labour in all its forms by 2025 will not be achieved.
4. While the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), achieved universal ratification in 2020, only three further ratifications of the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138), have been received since 2022 (Australia, Bangladesh and Liberia). Universal ratification of Convention No. 138 would require an additional 11 Member States to ratify it.
5. The last global estimates on child labour,⁴ published in 2021, indicated a critical juncture in the worldwide effort to tackle child labour. Global progress had ground to a halt between 2016 and 2020 after having already slowed considerably in the four years prior to that. The COVID-19 pandemic and other global, regional and/or national crises threatened to further erode past gains.
6. As part of the preparations for the World Day Against Child Labour (12 June), the ILO and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) will publish the updated global estimates on child labour, providing information on the current state of child labour and a benchmark for efforts to be undertaken until 2030.
7. The Sixth Global Conference, which is scheduled to be held in the second quarter of 2026, will provide an opportunity for follow-up to the outcomes of the Second World Summit for Social Development, to be held in November 2025, in relation to child labour and its root causes.⁵
8. Against this backdrop, the Sixth Global Conference will take stock of progress achieved and challenges encountered since the Fifth Global Conference held in Durban in May 2022;

¹ ILO, "Global Conferences on Child Labour".

² More information is available on the website of the Fifth Global Conference, <https://www.5thchildlabourconf.org>.

³ *Durban Call to Action on the Elimination of Child Labour*. See GB.349/POL/INF/1 for an overview of the follow-up to the Fifth Global Conference, including progress in implementing the Durban Call to Action.

⁴ ILO and UNICEF, *Child Labour: Global Estimates 2020, Trends and the Road Forward*, 2021.

⁵ Child labour is referenced in para. 9(a)(i) of the key messages of the tripartite input to the Second World Summit for Social Development (2025), adopted by the Governing Body at its 352nd Session (October–November 2024). See GB.352/PV, para. 902(a), and GB.352/INS/21/1(Rev.2).

encourage peer learning, information-sharing, cooperation and policy coherence both within and among Member States at the regional and international levels;⁶ play a central role in shaping a collective response to the non-attainment of target 8.7 of the SDGs on eliminating child labour by 2025; and provide inputs to post-2030 processes.

9. It is therefore expected that the Sixth Global Conference will reinforce the commitment of all stakeholders to accelerate the fight against child labour and foster coherent national, regional and global efforts.
10. Significantly, the Global Conference provides an opportunity to highlight links between the elimination of child labour and other fundamental principles and rights at work; provide further impetus and mobilize commitments for the acceleration of progress on fundamental principles and rights at work through the Global Coalition for Social Justice; and leverage advocacy and cooperation through partnerships such as Alliance 8.7, global business initiatives⁷ and the Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions.

► Sixth Global Conference on the Elimination of Child Labour

The way forward

11. In line with its plan of action to give effect to the conclusions concerning the third recurrent discussion on fundamental principles and rights at work,⁸ the ILO has begun preparations for the Sixth Global Conference on the Elimination of Child Labour. As for previous Global Conferences, the Office will set up a technical task team composed of headquarters and field staff to coordinate with the host Government on the thematic and logistical preparations for the Sixth Global Conference. This task team will shortly start working with the Government of Morocco and continuously consult with the regional coordinators of the Government group, as well as with the secretariats of the Employers' group and the Workers' group.
12. As for the preparations for previous Global Conferences, tripartite regional consultations for Africa, the Arab States, Asia and the Pacific, Europe and Central Asia, and the Americas⁹ will be held by each regional office in coordination with headquarters to help identify the specificities of each region and the focus of the Sixth Global Conference, as well as to shape its agenda and determine the nature and content of its outcomes. Guidance will be provided on the expected outcomes of the regional consultations.
13. The tripartite regional consultations are scheduled to commence after the 113th Session (2025) of the International Labour Conference. As for previous Global Conferences, each region will propose observers to be invited from international and regional organizations and other stakeholders with mandates closely related to the elimination of child labour.

⁶ In line with para. 20(t) of the conclusions concerning the third recurrent discussion on fundamental principles and rights at work. See ILO, [Resolution concerning the third recurrent discussion on fundamental principles and rights at work](#), International Labour Conference, 112th Session, 2024.

⁷ Such as the Child Labour Platform, the Global Business Network on Forced Labour and the Global Business and Disability Network.

⁸ GB.352/INS/3/1.

⁹ The regional consultations for the Americas will be coordinated by the Regional Initiative Latin America and the Caribbean Free of Child Labour.

14. In order to respect each region's specificities, other arrangements for the consultations (e.g. duration, in-person or online participation, discussion format) may differ between regions. All requests will, however, be subject to the approval of the Officers of the Governing Body. This will allow regions a certain level of flexibility as to how to organize the consultations while at the same time ensuring coherence in the preparations for the Sixth Global Conference.
15. Two inputs are envisaged to be produced for the regional consultations: (a) regional estimates and characteristics based on the global estimates on child labour; and (b) a report summarizing the results of an online questionnaire for inputs to the Global Conference.
16. It is proposed that the online questionnaire should be open for completion between mid-June and mid-July 2025 and be made available to Alliance 8.7 partners. It is proposed that the questionnaire should be guided by a limited number of questions on the focus of the Global Conference, post-2025 priorities and desired outcomes. The use of artificial intelligence for the analysis of the information provided in the questionnaire is envisaged.
17. Following the conclusion of the tripartite regional consultations, the results of the consultations will be shared through a tripartite consultation process for the development of a draft outcome of the Global Conference,¹⁰ which will be conducted in the first quarter of 2026. This tripartite process, to be held in accordance with established practice in the run-up to previous Conferences, will be open to the representatives of the Employers' and Workers' groups, as well as all representatives of permanent missions of ILO Member States.

Communication

18. The Office and the host Government will set up a small team to develop a coordinated communication strategy for the Global Conference. Communication products could include the creation of a dedicated website, a social media campaign encouraging ILO constituents, as well as potential partners, to disseminate content, and the development of a media engagement strategy.

External partnerships

19. A central goal of the Global Conference is to facilitate new partnerships and enhance existing ones, leveraging the distinct roles and mandates of participants.
20. Alliance 8.7, as an inclusive global partnership committed to achieving target 8.7 of the SDGs by accelerating action, sharing knowledge, driving innovation and mobilizing resources, has the potential to play an important role in the run-up to the Sixth Global Conference, including in the context of the process envisaged in paragraph 16 above. Established in 2016, Alliance 8.7 has more than 400 partners and 37 pathfinder countries and candidate countries, which have committed to going further and faster to achieve SDG target 8.7. The Global Conference provides an opportunity for Alliance 8.7 partners to strengthen mechanisms for exchange and cooperation and to enhance coordination with tripartite and United Nations (UN) initiatives.
21. UN agencies, notably UNICEF and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, as well as UN Special Rapporteurs, Resident Coordinators and other experts with a mandate relevant to the elimination of child labour, will also be approached to contribute to and participate actively in the Global Conference.

¹⁰ This process, led by the Government of Morocco, should also include an agreement on methods of work during the Global Conference, such as terms of reference for the tripartite drafting committee convened during the Global Conference.

22. Children have the right to express their views on matters and decisions that affect them, and to have those views taken into account. In line with robust child safeguarding procedures, the Global Conference will, as for the Fifth Global Conference, solicit input from affected children, including children in child labour.

Logistical preparations, financial commitments and the role of the ILO

23. It is foreseen that the Sixth Global Conference will be held with in-person participation ¹¹ over a period of two to three days. All ILO Member States ¹² will be invited to send a tripartite delegation. ¹³ In order to ensure an equal opportunity for all UN Member States to participate, the least developed countries will receive special consideration. ¹⁴ UN agencies, civil society and other organizations will also be invited to participate.
24. As at previous Global Conferences, the host Government, together with interested Member States as donors, will make a significant financial contribution towards the preparations for and holding of the event.
25. As for previous Global Conferences, the ILO will contribute technical, human and financial resources. It will work closely with the Government of Morocco on all aspects of the Global Conference, including to develop the agenda, draft technical papers and conduct research to inform the discussions. The Government of Morocco will be responsible for most of the on-site organization of the Global Conference, including with regard to sending invitations to governments and other stakeholders, the venue, the security of participants, local logistical arrangements and related costs. A memorandum of understanding will be signed between the Government of Morocco and the ILO reflecting their respective roles and responsibilities.
26. Social dialogue and tripartism will be the key means to achieve the goals of the Global Conference. The Office will organize a briefing or meetings prior to the 353rd Session of the Governing Body (March 2025) with the regional coordinators of the Government group and the secretariats of the Employers' group and the Workers' group to consult on the above aspects of the preparations and provide information on other key aspects of the Global Conference.
27. Similar meetings will continue to be held until the start of the Sixth Global Conference in 2026. The Office and the host Government will also provide updated information periodically through the ILO website and on the dedicated website for the Sixth Global Conference, once it becomes functional.

¹¹ The use of webcasts will be considered, but active participation is likely to require physical presence.

¹² Subject to any decisions by the Governing Body or the International Labour Conference concerning certain Member States.

¹³ In keeping with past practice, the invitations to employers' and workers' organizations will be coordinated through the secretariats of the Employers' group and the Workers' group respectively.

¹⁴ As for the last three Global Conferences, the Office will seek financial support to facilitate their participation.

► Draft decision

28. The Governing Body requested the Office to pursue the preparations for the Sixth Global Conference on the Elimination of Child Labour and the course of action proposed in paragraphs 11–27 of document GB.353/POL/4, taking into account the views expressed and guidance provided during the discussion, and to update the Governing Body at its 355th Session (November 2025) on progress made.