



Tool kit for development and implementation of
National Action Plans (NAPs)
on Child Labour



Political Commitment

Tool C.2

Briefing Note

Leveraging Political Commitment

Political commitment could be considered the make or break of a NAP – in a sense, political commitment to allocate resources to elimination of child labour can be seen as the litmus test for national ownership! So, even before the concrete NAP formulation starts, garnering political commitment is essential. Using advocacy and awareness raising to create an environment, in which labour rights and child rights are seen as key issues that need to be addressed (and not only in words!), is a long term, strategic intervention that must go on before, during and after the formulation of a NAP. In most countries, it will be necessary to activate social partners, research communities, the media etc. to undertake sustained advocacy and often it pays to team up with other UN agencies for this! Activate the social partners – they can play a vital role (see social partner brief).

How to use this tool

This tool is primarily a source of inspiration and meant to remind users to the need to think in political commitment as something that needs to be addressed in connection with NAPs. Political commitment is often treated as an exogenous factor – an assumption or a pre-condition – when undertaking strategic planning on child labour. Political commitment is, however, something that can be addressed and influenced when considered explicitly. This note provides a few, simple suggestions for activities meant to build commitment to the NAP among key policy makers.

Questions on this tool may be directed to the ILO Country Office. You may also ask your Regional Specialist on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work or ILO FUNDAMENTALS for further advice and ideas.

Further reading

ILO-IPEC (2010): [*Roadmap to make Central America, Panama and the Dominican Republic a Child Labour Free Zone. Programming, Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation Guide*](#), ILO San Jose.

ILO-IPEC (2013): [*Implementing the Roadmap for Achieving the Elimination of Child Labour by 2016. A Training Guide for Policy Makers*](#), ILO Geneva.

Other related tools from the tool kit

Tool C.1 – National Ownership

Tool C.3 – Social Partners Participation

Practical Ideas

Knowledge is the basis for all attempt to build political commitment to elimination of child labour. Knowledge about the political landscape will be useful for deciding on advocacy strategies: who to target as potential champions, organisational requirements etc. Even more importantly, at least basic knowledge about the child labour situation in the country is a requirement. It is much easier to start a convincing conversation when we have solid evidence and practically impossible to convince policy makers to pay attentions to, not to mention allocate resources to, something when we don't really know, what this "something" is. Therefore, basic evidence must be available – though a full-scale national child labour survey may not be needed, at least not to begin with. Smaller scale studies, media reports, experience from project etc. can be a very good starting point for analysis and dialogue. Doing a budget analysis may also be useful.

Engaging policy makers well before the Nap is ready – even before the consultations start – does not necessarily have to be costly or time demanding. Policy makers are ususally busy people, so making sure information and messages are presented in a succinct and easily accessible format is key. Different countries have different traditions, but here we'll look at a few concrete activities that can be used to mobilise political commitment:

Policy maker round table meetings provide a closed forum where policy makers can share view and ideas informally and where partners can share their thoughts, evidence and experiences. Policy makers are busy, so be time conscious and keep the meeting to a maximum of two hours. Moreover, be ready to use "fringe hours" if needed. Lunch, breakfast, COB time meetings have proven useful in many countries where meetings during regular office

hours is difficult. In addition, think about the number of participants to a meeting – smaller groups tend to foster more in-depth conversations.

Inviting policy makers to participate in NAP consultations is more often than not a must. Opening and closing sessions are the usual fora and it is always a good idea to present to policy makers, present in the closing session, the results of the consultations.

Written up-dates from the steering committee/drafting group/MOL to select policy makers can be a useful addition to meetings and events. This could include regular newsletter from the steering committee or targeted mailing lists.

Making use of WDACL and other "days" and invite policy makers to make statements (words do create expectations and obligations) or simply watch and listen and to interact with children and young people can be an effective tool for awareness raising and advocacy.

International events, such as conferences or reporting on international conventions may be an opportunity to flag national child labour issues, linked to the international events. For example, if an international conference on human trafficking is taking place or a report on child labour in a sector is published, social partners can release statements on how they see the situation in the country or the media can be approached to seek niterviews with responsible policy makers.

Below a generic agenda for a one-and-a-half hour policy makers orientation meeting (lunch, breakfast or COB time meeting). As always, this is NOT a blue-print and the agenda must be adjusted to the context. In an environment, where there is resistance to acknowledging child labour, you may want to spend more time on why child labour should be a priority or hold in-depth discussions on issues of contention.

Time	Topic	Possible Speakers	Explanation
20 minutes	Arrival and serving breakfast/lunch/refreshments Welcome remarks	Chair of the National Steering Committee/MOL high level officials. (S)he is also chairing this meeting	If time is short, get serving done and over with so that participants can eat while listening – so let the first session be a presentation to give participants a chance to complete their meal. In the welcome remarks, stress the informality of the meeting and that this is a chance for policy makers to gain insights and engage in an open change of views and ideas.
10 minutes	The global perspective: Child labour and the SDG (see separate tool) Child labour and global supply chains ILO conventions and obligations	MOL technical staff/Child Labour Focal Point/Labour Standards reporting staff etc. Representatives of social partners	Linking child labour with the wider development agenda often illustrates, why child labour is a priority as it becomes clear how child labour is an inhibition on development. If child labour and/or forced labour in export industries is an issue, looking at the trade implications, the reputational risks etc. could be included here. The risk of economic losses can be an important reason for addressing child labour. Often people (including policy makers) find it difficult to draw the line between children helping out in a family unit (i.e. at the farm, in the shop etc.) and child labour and distinguishing between poor labour conditions and actual forced labour. Hence, going through definitions as contained in the conventions and sharing specific, contextual examples to illustrate is a good starting point.
10 minutes	Why is child labour a priority issue in [country] Brief summary of what we know about child labour in [country]	Statistical Office Staff, technical staff from relevant government agencies involved in research. Representatives of social partners	If possible, change speaker – it wakes people up! Stress the reasons (national development, trade, international human rights obligations, the right thing etc.) most important to the country. This is also the time and place to present available evidence.
10 minutes	Q&A	Chair of meeting	

Time	Topic	Possible Speakers	Explanation
15 minutes	Up-date on specific issues, e.g. National Child Labour Survey, background reports for the NAP, the NAP development plan, plans for WDACL, etc.	Relevant technical staff from partner agencies (speakers will depend on the topics).	This will depend on the status in each country – but presenting concrete action is important to demonstrate commitment among partners and the importance of the subject. Relate as far as possible to the agendas of the policy makers present.
20 minutes	Discussion	Meeting chair	
5 minutes	Summing up and way forward, thank you and good bye (for now).	Meeting chair	This is time to solicit specific commitments from those present in the meeting – for example to take forward the NAP in the approval process, to speak in a WDACL event, etc.