

“MOMENTOUS” NEW AGREEMENT TO PROMOTE CHILD RIGHTS AND CHILD PROTECTION IN SOUTH ASIA

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Press Release

ILO NEWS (Kathmandu): A “momentous partnership” agreement to promote children’s rights and child protection in South Asia has been signed by the Regional Secretariat of the South Asia Initiative to End Violence against Children (SAIEVAC) and the International Labour Organization (ILO).

The new Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) aims to reinforce the two organizations’ work on child rights and child protection by improving cooperation between them. It will focus on exchanging information and good practices, providing technical advice, organizing consultations, meetings and workshops.

The MOU will also support the implementation of SAIEVAC’s five-year workplan and will use the mechanisms and processes of the South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC).

The agreement was signed by Dr. Rinchen Chopel, Director General of the SAIEVAC Regional Secretariat and Ms. Tine Staermose, Director of ILO Decent Work Support Team (DWT) for South Asia, at the ILO Country Office in Kathmandu, on Tuesday 28 August 2012.

Welcoming the partnership, Dr. Chopel, said, “This cooperation framework will strengthen SAIEVAC’s efforts to improve child rights in general and end violence against children in particular, by helping us to influence policies, plans and programmes”.

Ms. Staermose said, “This momentous partnership with SAIEVAC is an excellent opportunity to address the scourge of child labour at the regional level using SAARC’s processes and mechanisms. Given the huge numbers of children and working children in South Asia, this is a battle that we must win. Addressing child labour is a fundamental element of the Decent Work Country Programmes that South Asian countries are currently implementing. The ILO is delighted to be able to support this work”.

“The ILO’s experience in other regions has shown the important role regional bodies can play in supporting child rights, yet in Asia the potential for this remains undeveloped,” said Ms. Constance Thomas, Director of the ILO’s International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC), which has supported the ILO – SAIEVAC partnership for many years. “Partnerships like this give us hope that countries will win the battle against child labour.”

The MOU will promote child rights and child protection in line with the UN Convention on Rights of the Child, the ILO Convention on the Worst Forms of Child Labour, 1999 (No. 182), the ILO Convention on Minimum Age to Employment, 1973 (No. 138), and their related Recommendations and Protocols, taking into consideration specific country situations. It will also promote the implementation of SAARC Member State's Commitments on Children, including the SAARC Development Goals.

SAIEVAC is a regional initiative led by the governments of South Asian countries (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka) in partnership with children, civil society organizations, and the South Asia Coordinating Group against Violence against Children (SACG).

The ILO is the UN specialized agency dealing with work and work-related issues.

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