

Concept note for a thematic session on

European Union's actions to end child labour and support sustainable value chains

at the 5th Global Conference on the Elimination of Child Labour, Durban, South Africa

Wednesday 18 May from 16:45 to 17:45 pm

The Background

The European Union is firmly committed to SDG target 8.7 and is engaged to ensure that products and goods entering the EU are not tainted of child labour and comply with international labour standards and environmental agreements.

As a major aid donor and global trade partner, the EU has the potential to help address child labour in supply chains through diversified support measures and initiatives.

Recently, the EU has taken a major initiative in proposing a legislation on Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence. When adopted, the EU directive will oblige larger companies active on the EU market to observe the social and environmental standards along all tiers of their supply chains, including suppliers and trading partners active in EU partner countries. The EU will deploy accompanying measures to help public and private stakeholders in Europe and in partner countries to address the implications and help lever better working conditions, including addressing child labour. The EU has recently produced with the International Trade Centre a guidance document to help identify options to design such support actions.

Of course, business alone cannot solve the complex problem of child labour. That's why the EU works in other areas that significantly contribute to reduce child labour. The EU is a major donor in the area of compulsory, inclusive and quality education: at least 10% of the development aid will be devoted to education for the period 2021-2027.

In developing employment and decent work strategies, the EU improve workers' livelihoods and promote labour rights in a number of key export oriented sectors such as garment and textiles. Other support aims to tackle socio-economic inequalities, improve social protection schemes, women and youth employability, social justice, human rights and gender equality.

In improving the business climate, the EU also works to encourage private investments and to support the private sector development in developing countries, both as determinant factors to generate decent and sustainable jobs.



Objectives

The side event aims to share knowledge and exchange best practices on how to eliminate child labour in key value chain sectors exposed to increasingly global challenges.

Through examples showing that integrated and tailored solutions have produced positive impact, the session will advocate for sustainable actions by a multitude of partners, public and private, in domestic and global value chains. EU initiatives and projects' results will be presented to build awareness and foster commitment for upscaling pilot interventions.

Some tangible results of the EU funded project CLEAR Cotton implemented by ILO and FAO will be presented with documented witnesses of African producers and reintegrated children into school and training. The EU Sustainable Cocoa Initiative will show how a multi-stakeholder approach can help raise producers' livelihoods, reduce child labour and tackle deforestation.

Following the EU official announcement by the Commissioner to join the Alliance 8.7. at the high level opening panel, this side event will explain how the EU intends to contribute in supporting partner countries accelerate efforts to eliminate child labour in particular in value chains and connected areas.

Child labour is often hidden in complex supply chains like cotton, coffee, cocoa and cobalt: let's shed light and act together for transparent, fair and sustainable value chains aiming to end child labour forever.

In this context, a new EU funded action on Ending Child Labour in Global Value Chains will be introduced. The intervention will select a few key sectorial value chains where child labour is prevalent and for which trade with the EU is significant. The project will involve knowledge sharing and pilot interventions based on building multi-stakeholder partnerships.

It will be a first intervention as accompanying measure to the recent EU proposal for a Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence legislation. In this respect, the EU-ITC guidance document on Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence will be introduced, as one key tool to help partner countries companies assess and mitigate risks, including in relation to child labour, in their operations and supply chains.

