Concept note for a thematic session on

From Research to Action: the state of child labor and forced labor research and the need to build the evidence base to increase policy impact

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

Tuesday 17 May from 16:45 to 17:45 pm

Background

Although the latest global estimates provided sobering evidence that global progress against child labor has stagnated since 2016, one positive takeaway is that having these estimates enables the global community to understand the seriousness of the issue and respond accordingly. Our ability to track our global progress in the fight against child labor, forced labor and human trafficking is due to the efforts by Member States to collect data and support the research needed to understand the scope of the issue. Research has also shined a light on the root causes of child labor, forced labor and human trafficking and, to some extent, the promising practices and policies needed to reverse these trends in time to achieve SDG target 8.7. But there is still so much more to know about these issues, especially for the most vulnerable populations facing the worst forms of exploitation. Furthermore, there is a growing body of research available that can be used to guide policy and better target limited resources to accelerate evidence-based action.

Objective

The proposed event will describe the progress that has been made in building the evidence base on child labor, forced labor, and human trafficking. It will highlight important gaps in knowledge and efforts underway to bridge these gaps. It will also emphasize the importance of effective use of data, rigorous research, and targeted use of resources for direct services to better reach vulnerable populations and make the most effective use of limited funding across countries.

Overview of the side event

Filling gaps in knowledge will be a crucial step forward. In addition, closing the gap between research and policy by identifying research priorities and creating opportunities for sharing policy-relevant evidence is also essential to ensure that research informs policy responses. This event will build on the expertise of various organizations that have different approaches to filling evidence gaps and translating research into policy action and solutions to sustainable development.

An experienced moderator will facilitate the event. The first segment of the event will be a brief review of the state of research and evidence on child labor, forced labor, and human trafficking. This will lead

to a presentation on gaps in knowledge, advances in data collection methods since the last Global Conference, and the need for increased research to inform policy. Tools to bridge the research-to-policy divide (such as those developed by the host organizations) will also be discussed to illustrate these points.

The second segment of the event will feature a round table discussion, the goal being to facilitate a dialogue between four to six speakers (policy actor, funding partner, and researcher) on bridging the research to policy gap. The speakers will share some challenges unique to their role in the fight against child labor, forced labor and human trafficking and offer insights into the way forward to overcome these barriers.