



Magazine

5TH GLOBAL CONFERENCE ON THE ELIMINATION OF CHILD LABOUR

DISCOVER THE EVENT

During the week of 15 to 20 May 2022, the Government of South Africa hosted the 5th Global Conference on the Elimination of Child Labour.

IT COMES AT A CRITICAL TIME

Despite progress in many regions, 160 million children are still in child labour. Numbers are rising, and the COVID-19 pandemic threatens to reverse years of progress.



CONTENT AND PRODUCTION

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OPENING BY PRESIDENT

ADDRESS BY PRESIDENT CYRIL
RAMAPHOSA AT THE OPENING CEREMONY
OF THE 5TH ILO GLOBAL CONFERENCE ON
THE ELIMINATION OF CHILD LABOUR

South Africa is honoured to host this Fifth Global Conference on the Elimination of Child Labour in partnership with the International Labour Organisation.

On behalf of the government and people of South Africa, I welcome you to our country and to the city of eThekweni. I wish to commend the ILO for organising this conference. In the quarter of a century since the first International Conference on Child Labour was held in Oslo in 1997, the ILO has been at the forefront of the global effort to eradicate the practice of child labour.

[click here to read the full speech](#)



PROTECT US CHILDREN - WE ARE THE FUTURE!



the first time the conference makes a provision for a Children's Forum amongst its sessions to add the voices of the children and join the global movement against child labour.

"South Africa is the only country in the history of the conference to include children in the conference. As children, we applaud the government of South Africa for giving us the platform to express our views and present solutions to the issues we face as children. This shows that as a country we are one step ahead in terms of the implementation of Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child", said Mhlungu.

If the nations stand together to protect the rights of children around the globe, a lot can change.

Children need to be included in the panels and discussions that are going to be held throughout the conference.

This was according to Thato Mhlungu, 2019 Speaker of the Nelson Mandela Children's Parliament and Child Rights Defender. Mhlungu is representing children participating in the 5th Global

Conference on the Elimination of Child Labour taking place at the Inkosi Albert Luthuli International Convention Centre in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal from 15 to 20 May 2022.

The conference is built on four previous Global Conferences, in Buenos Aires (2017), Brasilia (2013), The Hague (2010) and Oslo (1997). However, it is for





The conference takes place while South Africa is gearing up for the Child Protection Week campaign starting from 29 May to 05 June 2022 under the theme “Let us Protect Children during COVID-19 and Beyond. The campaign aims to raise awareness and education which advocates for the creation of safety nets within families and communities at large for the holistic care, development and protection of children.

“As a country, we need to strengthen the instruments that protect children 365 days” concluded Mhlungu.

Education is the most powerful tool to drive out child labour – education experts told the 5th Global Conference on Child Labour



Mshengu said as long as the control of the means of economic opportunities still resides in one racial group the African child will continue to suffer. He said the economic conditions faced by African children were harsh. He said African children were exposed to poverty, have to head households and were being subjected not only to drug consumption, but also used as drug merchants.

A panel of education experts have called on authorities to create a conducive environment – supported by mobilisation of infrastructure, financial resources, and well trained teachers among others - in order to eliminate child labour.

The panel was discussing investments and good practices on the reduction of direct and indirect costs for schooling and

eliminating barriers for access to school. Kwazi Mshengu, Member of the Executive Committee (MEC) for Education, Kwa-Zulu Natal, said that in South Africa the African child bears the most brunt of child labour and this can be explained from the historical point of view, that of denying the African child a quality education. Mshengu said the problem was not only child labour, but “cheap child labour”.





He said some of interventions introduced by government since 1994 such as compulsory primary schooling, the no-fees schools, school nutrition programmes and scholar transport programme were yielding positive results and keeping children away from child labour.

Agnes NyaLonje, Minister of Education at Republic of Malawi said the country had over two million children's in child labour. She said most of these were in agriculture, retail and domestic work. NyaLonje said Malawi was faced with lack of proper infrastructure to withstand nature elements such as cyclones.

STORY 3

he also cited financing as another challenge. NyaLonje said Malawi was stressed by debt and was appealing to international community to reduce debt financing. The Minister asked the international community to commit to investment in education.

“When we say bring children to school – where are the schools?” she asked. She said a lack of financing was denying the country an opportunity to digitise education and develop skilled teachers.

As the experts are discussing interventions to deal with the scourge of child labour a report jointly prepared by the ILO and UNICEF titled: “Child Labour – Global estimates 2020, Trend and the road forward” – and released in 2021 said a new analysis suggests a further 8.9 million children will be in child labour by the end of 2022 as a result of rising poverty driven by the Covid-19 pandemic.

The latest global estimates indicate that 160 million children – 63 million girls and 97 million boys – were in child labour globally at the beginning of 2020, accounting for almost 1 in 10 of all children worldwide.

The conference continues tomorrow. The conference is held at Inkosi Albert Luthuli International Conference Centre in Durban.





EVERY CHILD HAS THE RIGHT TO A FUTURE

BY NOMFUNDO XULU-LENTSOANE

“The 5th Global Conference on the Elimination of Child Labour is a source of tremendous hope for the 160 million children around the world who are trapped in child labour...” These were the heartfelt words of Ms Amina J. Mohammed, the Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations and Chair of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group.

She was addressing the official opening of the conference on 15 May in eThekweni, KwaZulu-Natal. “We are referring to children who work in mines, fields, construction sites. Hidden behind the homes of private homes and domestic solitude...and those who are denied the right to fully develop – physically and mentally,” she expressed adding that often times, these children are also denied the access to education.

“Those who do attend school suffer in performance due to their extra workload and they are likely to drop out early!”

Mentioning the added health risks which may lead to lifetime impairment for children who are victims of child labour, Mohammed said the only solution to this crisis is a right-spaced approach. “We need an approach that respects and upholds that every child has the right to health, education and protection. A right to a future... We need to come together to chart a new path for education, including closing the digital divide,” she said.

Speaking of the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets, Mohammed reminded congregants of SDG goal 8.7 which speaks to the elimination of all child labour by 2025.

SPEEDY TRANSITION FROM INFORMALISATION TO FORMALISATION IS KEY TO ELIMINATION OF CHILD LABOUR



The International Labour Organization (ILO) Director-General Guy Ryder has warned delegates during the 5th Global Conference on Child Labour that informality in the economies was helping propel child labour.

Ryder said if the informality numbers do not reduce the world might as well kiss goodbye all attempts to eliminate child labour. He said the world had made progress to reduce informality in economies however, Covid-19 had conspired to “regress our efforts”.

The ILO Director-General was sharing the floor with South Africa’s Employment Minister Thulas Nxesi and a prominent panel of experts on the topic of child labour in the midst of the deficits in decent work and youth employment, identify pressing global challenges, and identify priorities for the global community.

Ryder said the fight against the elimination of child labour has been characterised by “a go back - to go forward”.

“My impression over the last 20 years is that we got a little bit complacent. We were making really good progress until the

last 10 years. Things have now started to slow down. We stopped making child labour and its elimination a key policy objective – nationally and internationally. We talk a lot about child labour and have a lot of programmes against child labour. We need a political push against child labour.

“We have the global architecture. Nationally we also have commitments and thirdly we need to bring in all the stakeholders. We need to bring in all the stakeholders into the mix begin to regain the momentum quickly – which has somewhat dissipated. Let us not be distracted by the very real broad of challenges in the labour market – such as youth unemployment and others. Let us make sure that child labour figures in all the approaches – explicitly,” Ryder said.

The Global Conference held at Inkosi Albert Luthuli International Conference Centre (ICC) in Durban will during its duration include 28 side events, one-hour sessions that will allow delegates to further share knowledge and experiences related to the main topics addressed in the event.

Employment and Labour

Minister Nxesi said the big challenge facing Africa was that while child labour numbers were reducing in other continents, in the continent the numbers were rising.

“We must own up and do something urgently,” Nxesi said.

He said eliminating child labour is about social justice, creating a prosperous future, and hope for the children.

Nxesi said South Africa as a long-standing member of the International Labour Organization (ILO) had always stood for global social justice.

“But, in South Africa we also share the vision of the ILO and that of its member states - that of transforming the labour market and developing a decent world of work,” Nxesi said.



“But, in South Africa we also share the vision of the ILO and that of its member states - that of transforming the labour market and developing a decent world of work,”

Nxesi said.

South Africa take the issue of child labour very seriously. The country subscribes on the centenary declaration on the future of work that is premised on human-centred approach. The conference gives us an opportunity to show our commitment to eliminating child labour.

James Quincey chairman and chief executive officer of the Coca-Cola Company called for a swift action to eliminate child labour. He said political leadership have to demonstrate compassion for children trapped in the scourge of child labour.

He asked why is it that child labour and trafficking have never been discussed in Group of seven fora. Quincey has cautioned that child labour was endemic in the global supply chains and needed to be addressed urgently.

The conference continues tomorrow with discussions on: teachers and their unions in successful mobilisation to bring children back to school post-Covid; case studies on child labour; reducing child labour and forced labour through skills development; responding to child labour in times of crisis; the role of education; policy priorities to end child labour in Africa; scaling-up business due to diligence on child labour.





THE EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE AND CRISIS

While KwaZulu-Natal Province was still reeling from the shock of the devastating floods which left many families displaced, the 5th Global Conference on the elimination child labour held in Durban, discussed the effects of crises and disasters on children

Speaker after speaker called for participating Governments to put children at the centre of policies. They agreed if children are not at the centre of solutions to crises, the world will have a child protection crisis. Hani Mansourian of the Alliance for child protection in humanitarian action said the biggest challenge countries have “is an adultist society that does not put children at the centre”.





“Children often come secondary to the needs of adults because adults are policy makers,” he contributed. He warned that extreme weather is now the biggest threat to children’s lives. He noted that countries were not channelling resources to the right places.

His sentiments were echoed by Omar Faruk Osman, General Secretary of the Somali trade unions who also called for governments to equally support families and communities where children come from. He was at pains to explain that in Somalia not only were children faced with issues of extreme weather but insecurity.

“Somalia has all the connotations of conflict and climate change. It has a history of conflict and workplaces feel the might of the conflict and we have fewer jobs where children are recruited into armed conflict,” he said.

He shared that in Somalia there is no law prohibiting child labour, sexual exploitation and child trafficking.

Joining virtually Virginia Gamba, UN Specialist Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and armed conflict was very sceptical about the deadline of countries to end child labour by 2025.

“There are still countries that have not rectified the Convention of the Rights of the child and its protocols around children in armed conflicts. No one is talking about Covid 19 and the impact it has had on children and the vulnerability. The impact of the pandemic has also made it difficult for Child rights organisations to monitor child labour,” she said.



SOLUTIONS TO END CHILD LABOUR

Minister of Labour in Kenya - Mr Simon Kiprono Chelugui

- Supply Chains to make sure that procured goods and not produced by children
- Criminalise early and forced marriages
- Upscale social protection programmes
- The poor should not be denied to make choices
- Invest in smart agriculture to avoid use of child labour in farms

Omar Fakur Osman - Federation of Somali trade unions

- need a wholistic approach and compliment each other and have cooperation across the board

Florence Willie - Papua New Guinea

- We must work together and put children at the centre of the conversation

Hani Mansourian - Alliance for child protection in humanitarian action

- We need to put children at the centre of all different levels

**CHILDREN
ARE
VICTIMS
OF CHILD
LABOUR
DUE TO
POVERTY**

By Precious Mupenzi

With the world gathering at the Durban ICC for the 5th Global Conference on Elimination of Child Labour, Precious Mupenzi spoke to the President of the 2021/22 Nelson Mandela Children's Parliament, Honourable Hamza Muhammad, to find out his opinion on the possible solutions needed to end the scourge of child labour.

Hon. Hamza Muhammad is from the Western Cape Province, South Africa. He is a Child Ambassador and President of the Nelson Mandela Children's Parliament (NMCP). The NMCP was established to celebrate the values, principles and commitment of Mr Nelson Mandela to the Children of South Africa.

Muhammad uses his ambassador status to advocate for children's rights, including children with disabilities.

"Most children are the victims of child labour due to poverty. Poverty and lack of resources lead to frustration in children and lead them to commit crimes, substance abuse and other violent acts.

One of the solutions could be empowering children with entrepreneurial skills from a young age so that they can explore many opportunities in the future. If children are equipped with entrepreneurial skills,





they can form groups and start their own small businesses.

Education is also the key to ending child labour. The right to education for children should be prioritised and protected at all costs to secure the future of the children.

All this requires us as children to participate meaningfully in the decision-making to ensure that our views and opinions shape the global conversation around solutions needed for reducing child labour,” said Muhammad.

Proper social security can save 15 million children from becoming child labour statistics in 2022



custodians of target 8.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals, describes the scale and key characteristics of child labour today, and changes over time. SGD Target 8.7 calls on all to take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of all forms of child labour as an essential step to achieving decent work for all, full and productive employment and inclusive and sustained economic growth.

The report comes on the back of child labour being identified as a persistent problem in the world today. The report estimates that 160 million children – 63 million girls and 97 million boys – were in child labour globally at the beginning of 2020, accounting for almost 1 in 10 of all children worldwide. Seventy-nine million children – nearly half of all those in child labour – were in hazardous work that directly endangers their health, safety and moral development.

“If most countries put proper social protection measures in place, child labour can decline by 15 million by the end of 2022, thus allowing a significant improvement in sustainable development goals (SDG) 8.7,” so said Mohamed Fall, the United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF) Regional Director for Eastern and Southern Africa. Fall however, warned that the outlook for children trapped or at risk of being dragged into child labour does not look rosy.

“Children continue to suffer from income and employment losses, and also suffer from health shocks,” he said. Fall was speaking during the plenary of the 5th Global Conference on the Elimination of Child Labour on the official launch of the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) report titled: “Child Labour: Global estimates 2020, trends and the road forward”. The report by the two co-

Key findings of the report were that:

- Child labour is higher for boys than girls at all ages - Among all boys, 11.2 percent are in child labour compared to 7.8 per cent of all girls. In absolute numbers, boys in child labour outnumber girls by 34 million.
- Child labour is much more common in rural areas - There are 122.7 million rural children in child labour compared to 37.3 million urban children. The prevalence of child labour in rural areas (13.9 per cent) is close to three times higher than in urban areas (4.7 per cent).
- Most child labour – for boys and girls alike – continues to occur in agriculture - Seventy percent of all children in child labour, 112 million children in total, are in agriculture.
- The largest share of child labour takes place within families - Seventy-two per cent of all child labour and 83 per cent of child labour among children aged 5 to 11 occurs within families, primarily on family farms or in family microenterprises. Family-based child labour is frequently hazardous despite common perceptions of the family as offering a safer work environment.

“Global progress against child labour has stalled for the first time since we began producing global estimates two decades ago. In addition, without urgent mitigation measures, the COVID-19 crisis is likely to push millions more children into child labour.

“The school closures – experienced through the Covid-19 is going to increase the risk. To reverse this trend a multi-sectoral approach is critical and that approach means a strong social protection regime. Evidence is clear, social protection including child benefits have a potential to mitigate this risk of children sliding into child labour,” Fall said.

He was at pains that only 26,6 percent of children worldwide were receiving social protection. According to the ILO-UNICEF report, child labour is more common in rural than in urban areas in almost all regions. It said Sub-Saharan Africa has the highest share of young children in child labour, while Latin America and the Caribbean has the largest share of older children

The report cited the worst forms of child labour as comprising practices similar to slavery, such as the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage and serfdom, and forced or compulsory labour, including forced or compulsory

recruitment of children for use in armed conflict; the use, procuring or offering of a child for prostitution, for the production of pornography or for pornographic performances; the use, procuring or offering of a child for illicit activities, in particular for the production and trafficking of drugs as defined in the relevant international treaties; and work that, by its nature or circumstances, is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children.

The 2020 ILO-UNICEF global estimates indicate a critical juncture in the worldwide effort against child labour.

“Global progress has ground to a halt over the last four years after having already slowed considerably in the four years before that. The ongoing COVID-19 crisis threatens to further erode past gains. In this United Nations International Year for the Elimination of Child Labour, we must act with renewed urgency to put progress back on track,” the ILO-UNICEF report said.



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Immediate steps are needed to avoid falling further behind during the ongoing COVID-19 crisis. The pandemic has clearly heightened the risk of child labour, above all through a sharp rise in poverty that may increase families' reliance on child labour, and through school closures that deny families the logical alternative to sending children to work. The report said to reduce these risks, there was a need for implementation of expanded income support measures for families in situations of vulnerability, child benefits and other means, will be critical. So too will back-to-school campaigns and stepped-up remedial learning to get children back in the classroom.

“We are at a critical juncture in the worldwide drive to stop child labour. COVID-19 threatens to further erode past gains. While nearly 86 million fewer children are in child labour now than when we began measuring the phenomenon globally in 2000, recent trends affirm we have fallen far behind on our collective commitment to ending all forms by 2025.

The report calls for: special attention to address the heightened risk of child labour in growing crises, conflicts and disasters; addressing child labour risks in domestic and global supply chains; Sound policy choices and resource allocation; Governments will need to adopt creative resource mobilization strategies to expand their fiscal space; extending debt relief and debt restructuring in already heavily indebted countries so that social spending is not crowded out by increasing debt service payments.

The conference will end on Friday with the adoption of a Durban Call to Action programme.

By Lumka Oliphant

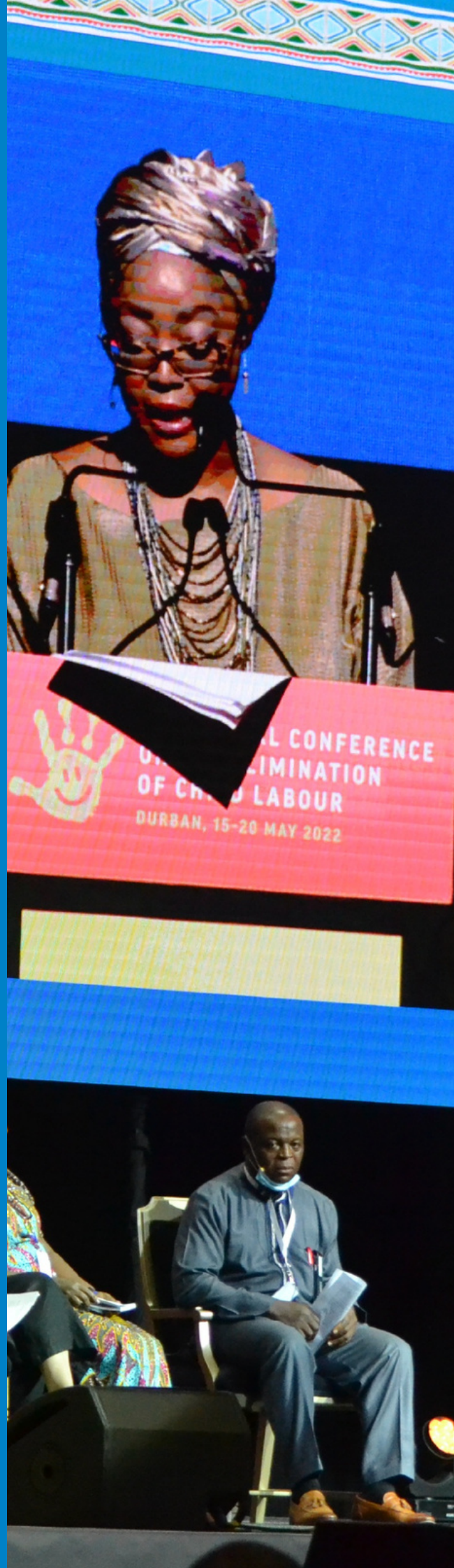
AN UPSCALED SOCIAL PROTECTION SYSTEM IS KEY

An upscaled social protection system is the answer in dealing with child labour, delegates at the 5th Global Conference on the elimination of child labour heard in Durban. They agreed that “it is the engine of development as it assures children their human rights.”

Indeed, human rights have financial implications. Social protection is not about handouts, but about the creation of wealth and sustainable and inclusive growth, said moderator Cynthia Samuel-Olonjuwon, Assistant Director-General and Regional Director for Africa of the International Labour Organization (ILO).

Samuel-Olonjuwon stressed that all countries have a scope for domestic resource mobilisation and can strengthening their social protection systems.

Dr Shimelis Tsegaye Tesemma shared at the conference that Africa’s investment on social protection was still low despite having the highest poverty gaps. “Finance is at the centre of this low coverage and countries that are committing the least are the most poor,” he said.



Tesemma argued that there was a possibility to expand if countries especially African countries reprioritised its resources.

“There is money that can be saved and redirected where it’s most needed!”

Some of the solutions he provided included:

- less expenditure of the military,
- The subsidising of fuel because these were for the rich
- Commitment to combat corruption and illicit financial flows
- Alleviating the burden of debt from African countries by the West

He concluded by stating that this was not a responsibility of Western governments but of African governments and finance was not a challenge but commitment.



**PUBLIC-
PRIVATE
COLLABOR
ATION TO
ERADICATE
CHILD
LABOUR**



The 5th Global Conference on the Elimination of Child Labour held at the ICC on 15 – 20 May 2022 called upon experts, lawmakers, government, trade unions, private sector, and international organisations to conceptualise the pivotal role of Public-Private Collaboration in tackling and forced child labour.

One of the side events at the conference tackled the importance of collaboration between the public and private sectors within the context of integrated approaches to prevent and address child labour. It brought together seasoned experts in the agricultural sector to share experience and expertise on agricultural supply chains concerning the cocoa sector in West Africa. With the rise of child labour in Africa especially in the agricultural sector, there is a serious need to act on the root causes of child labour.

Companies and governments are increasingly implementing systems to monitor and remediate child labour as part of a wider effort to tackle child labour and for companies as part of due diligence human rights responsibilities.

According to International Labour Organisation (ILO), more than 72 million children in sub-Saharan Africa -nearly one in five are victims of child labour. Experts further estimate that the number has since increased due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

All the speakers spoke with one voice and said, “child labour must be eliminated starting from the root causes”.

Jean-Marie Delon, Sustainability and Government Relations Director from West Africa, spoke about Child Labour Monitoring and Remediation System as the most widely accepted implemented method which should be adopted as a system to eradicate child labour. The system is based on ILO methodology and has since been implemented and adopted by many companies in the cocoa and chocolate sector. He advised that the agricultural sector needs to increase the living standard of farmers as poverty contributes to the roots of child labour. Expanding economic conditions for women and prioritising education.

The government needs to enforce child labour policies and intensify measures to address child labour.

Mr Andrew Addoquaye Tagoe, Trade Unionist emphasized that collaboration is needed at three levels (global, national and community) to ensure interconnection, coordination and equal voice to strengthen collaborations and support the global movement against child labour.

A young man with short dark hair and glasses is shown in profile, speaking into a silver microphone. He is wearing a dark blue jacket over a blue shirt and a white lanyard. The background is a warm, orange-red gradient. The overall mood is serious and focused.

**GUARANTEE OF A
BRIGHTER FUTURE,
END CHILD LABOUR!**

By Nomfundo Xulu-Lentsoane

Speaking at the Children's Forum on day four of the 5th Global Conference on the Elimination of Child Labour, Kabwe from Zambia expressed that the term Child Labour is relative to circumstances.

"Practical knowledge far surpasses theoretical knowledge," he said - explaining how, in instances where there is no greener pasture in the future, it is best for children to gain any possible skill as soon as they are given the opportunity to.

"We have a lot of African children that want to be big people in life but restrictions of life have failed them. You would find that they would do part-time work after school just to buy a T-shirt. They would be trading in the streets or trying to sell goods, going into agriculture or trying to do certain work," said the 18-year-old whilst making a recommendation to the International Labour Organisation (ILO).

"ILO must enforce the regulations, you made the Convention No.138. You set the minimum age to 15! In other words, you are saying that at the end of formal education it (working) should be allowed. But then you came back and say different categories of work is allowed for certain ages," he said and referred to the African continent's visions which, for him - especially when it comes to Vision 2030 - sing from a different hymn sheet.

"Providing education is the basis of everything but we want a quality education. We don't want an education on how 'this is how you grow a plant' only in theory. We want practical practice so that when, even if I do not go to tertiary level, I will still be able to sustain myself and know that this is how you plant..." he said.

As a child from Zambia, a country which depends on the agricultural sector for 85% of the population, Kabwe has a view that children should learn from a young age how to plant - even if it is in a small scale.

"When a child learns and sees the plant/crop grow, they will never forget that. They say charity begins at home," he voiced - with the addition of his understanding that depending on the government system is not realistic for the high number of children who are being educated.

"Why do you tell children that tomorrow you will be a teacher, tomorrow you will be a lawyer - when you are not going to employ me? In order to eradicate this (Child Labour), it has to work both ways. If the government says be educated, then they must say tomorrow we will employ you as long as you are done (studying). Don't tell say that the private sector will be the employer," he says - adding that government must give a guarantee of employment to children in order for them to know that they do not need to fend for themselves for their future to be bright.

Durban Call to Action on the Elimination of Child Labour

5TH GLOBAL CONFERENCE
ON THE ELIMINATION
OF CHILD LABOUR

DURBAN, 15-20 MAY 2022



Durban Call to Action on the Elimination of Child Labour

PREAMBLE

We, the representatives of governments, employers' organizations and workers' organizations, together with United Nations Agencies, international and civil society organizations, businesses, children and academic institutions, the participants of the 5th Global Conference on the Elimination of Child Labour, gathered in Durban, South Africa and around the world, stand together in our commitment to prevent and eliminate child labour and forced labour;

Welcoming the universal ratification of the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182) by all ILO Member States, an historic first, which is also the most rapidly ratified Convention in the history of the ILO, and the decisive strides made by governments, employers' organizations, and workers' organizations resulting in a decline in child labour of some 86 million since 2000;

Alarmed that, according to the 2020 Global Estimates of Child Labour, 160 million girls and boys remain in child labour, half of whom are in hazardous work; 112 million are in agriculture; and the recruitment of child soldiers continues; and that in the 2016-2020 period, child labour increased by 8.9 million, entirely among children aged 5-11;

Noting with grave concern the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, armed conflicts, and humanitarian and environmental crises, which threaten to reverse years of progress against child labour;

Convinced that meeting target 8.7 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, to end child labour in all its forms by 2025, requires immediate, intensified, gender-responsive, well-coordinated, multi-sectoral, multi-stakeholder, rights-based action to scale up efforts to eliminate child labour and forced labour;

Recalling target 8.7, the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138), the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29) and the Protocol of 2014 to the Forced Labour Convention, 1930, the Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No. 105); the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and its first and second Optional Protocols; the United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, SDG target 1.3¹ and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child;

¹ SDG target 1.3: "to implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable"

Reaffirming the importance of employers' organizations and workers' organizations and the central role of social dialogue in the elimination of child labour;

Recognizing the dynamic role of Alliance 8.7 as an important worldwide partnership, to accelerate action, conduct research and share knowledge, drive innovation and leverage resources;

Acknowledging the African Union Ten-Year Action Plan on Child Labour; the Declaration of Abidjan; the Accra Declaration of the International Partnership for Cooperation on Child Labour in Agriculture (IPCCLA); the Paris Principles and Guidelines on Children Associated with Armed Forces or Armed Groups; the ASEAN Roadmap on the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour by 2025; the 2022-2027 Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child; the European Union Child Guarantee; the 2021-2024 EU strategy on the rights of the child and the 2020-2024 EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy; the 2022-2025 Strategic Plan of the Regional Initiative Latin America and the Caribbean Free of Child Labour; the SAIEVAC Regional Action Plan on the Elimination of Child Labour;

Building upon the commitments made in the context of the 2021 International Year for the Elimination of Child Labour, as well as on the outcomes of previous Global Child Labour Conferences, namely: the Oslo International Conference on Child Labour, 1997, which mobilized a worldwide movement against child labour; the Hague Global Child Labour Conference, 2010, resulting in a practical Roadmap for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour; the III Global Conference on Child Labour, Brasilia, 2013, which embedded efforts against child labour within a framework of fundamental labour rights; and the IV Global Conference on the Sustained Eradication of Child Labour, Buenos Aires, 2017, where some one hundred pledges for action to eliminate child labour and forced labour were made, resulting, inter alia, in ratifications of ILO child labour conventions, new major funding commitments, and tangible interventions for the elimination of child labour;

Underlining the need to improve legal frameworks for a strong economic recovery from the COVID-19 crisis and the promotion of decent work for all; to create an enabling environment for innovation, productivity and sustainable enterprises; and to take measures to formalize the informal economy;

Reaffirming the fundamental principles and rights at work, namely the effective abolition of child labour, the elimination of all forms of forced or compulsory labour, freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining, and the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation;

Recalling the right of a child to education and the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health as well as protection from all forms of violence;

Reminding that the right to education is a human right and that providing children with universal access to free, compulsory, quality basic education is important to ensure that human beings reach their full potential, that socially excluded children and adults have greater opportunities to lift themselves out of poverty, and to support national development; and that digital education opens new learning opportunities that should be accessible to all without exacerbating inequalities or creating new vulnerabilities for children;

Acknowledging the importance of building a culture of life-long learning and improving access to skills development opportunity, quality education and training to meet labour market needs of today and the future of work, given the changing nature of work;

Recognizing that decent work for all, including for women, in all their diversity, and adequate income for adults, inclusive and well-performing education systems, and adequate social protection systems are essential for child labour elimination and for protection against poverty, the main cause of child labour;

Respecting children's capacity to form their own views and their right to effectively participate and express those views freely in all matters affecting them;

Recognizing the responsibility of businesses and their contribution to the elimination of child labour and forced labour by carrying out due diligence in their operations and supply chains and ensuring responsible and sustainable business practices that address the root causes of child labour and forced labour, in line with the Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy, and the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights; further acknowledging the role of guidance from the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, including the Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises and Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible Business Conduct.

CALL TO ACTION

We adopt on the twentieth day of May of the year two thousand and twenty-two this Durban Call to Action on the Elimination of Child Labour. We commit to scale up action to:

- I Accelerate multi-stakeholder efforts to prevent and eliminate child labour, with priority given to the worst forms of child labour, by making **decent work** a reality for adults and youth above the minimum age for work.
- II End child labour in **agriculture**.
- III Strengthen the **prevention and elimination** of child labour, including its worst forms, forced labour, modern slavery and trafficking in persons, and the **protection** of survivors through **data-driven and survivor-informed policy and programmatic responses**.
- IV Realize children's **right to education** and ensure universal access to free, compulsory, quality, equitable and inclusive education and training.
- V Achieve **universal access to social protection**.
- VI Increase **financing and international cooperation for the elimination of child labour and forced labour**.

IMPLEMENTATION

Implementing the Durban Call to Action

- A We commit to take measures, including gender-responsive measures, to tackle child labour, particularly its root causes, and reignite and upscale activities toward SDG target 8.7 to end child labour in all its forms by 2025, recognizing the central role of public labour administrations, in coordination with other relevant authorities.

- B** To assist in the implementation and communication of progress related to the Call to Action, the ILO will create and host a centralized information repository that collates relevant policies, plans, efforts and achievements of Member States in meeting their commitments to achieve SDG target 8.7.
- C** The universally-ratified ILO Convention No. 182 requires ILO Member States to design and implement programmes of action to eliminate as a matter of urgency the worst forms of child labour. ILO Convention No. 138 requires Member States that have ratified the Convention to create a national policy designed to ensure the effective abolition of child labour. Such programmes and policies often take the form of National Action Plans for the elimination of child labour.
- D** Member States commit to submit such National Action Plans, and other relevant policies, to the ILO for presentation in the centralized repository. Member States that have not yet developed such plans are encouraged to do so. Member States are encouraged to include information on the implementation of this Call to Action and the outcome documents of previous Global Child Labour Conferences, and other efforts to combat child labour, in the reports that they submit on their ratified Conventions and under the Annual Review procedures of the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, 1998.
- E** Civil society organizations, including women's rights organizations, the private sector and other entities, including survivor leaders and small producers' organizations, should take measures within their own competence to support and work together with governments, employers' organizations and workers' organizations in the implementation of this Call to Action.
- F** Member States commit to take stock of progress made toward achievement of target 8.7 during the period from 2022 until 2025 and at the VI Global Conference on Child Labour. They are encouraged to share information on good practices to eliminate child labour based on lessons learned and evidence from national and regional initiatives.

FORTY-NINE IMMEDIATE AND EFFECTIVE MEASURES TO TAKE

Making decent work a reality for adults and youth above the minimum age for work

- 1** Strengthening integrated efforts to promote, respect and realize all fundamental principles and rights at work, recognizing their inseparable, interrelated and mutually reinforcing character;
- 2** ensuring safe and healthy working conditions, which are fundamental to decent work, and the protection of young persons from hazardous work;
- 3** taking into account an adequate minimum wage, either statutory or negotiated;
- 4** developing and strengthening mechanisms of social dialogue;
- 5** increasing efforts to formalize the informal economy, and to extend the coverage of labour law, particularly in agriculture, where most child labour occurs;

- 6 generating economic and productivity growth, and decent employment in the context of a just transition, digitalization and demographic shifts;
- 7 implementing a transformative agenda for equality, diversity and inclusion and eliminating discrimination;
- 8 strengthening the prevention of and fight against forced labour, modern slavery and trafficking in persons for all forms of exploitation, and the protection of its victims or survivors;
- 9 implementing risk assessment mechanisms for child victims of trafficking for labour exploitation, and monitoring long-term reintegration of child victims or survivors;
- 10 creating an enabling environment for sustainable enterprises to prosper, invest and create decent work opportunities;

Ending child labour in agriculture

- 11 increasing investment in the economic and social development of rural areas as a strategy for reducing poverty, recognizing that the elimination of child labour is an essential prerequisite for decent work in the sector and can contribute to sustainable food systems;
- 12 facilitating increased access to finance and credit, including for small holder farmers, particularly in Africa, to promote investment and innovation;
- 13 creating mechanisms to improve the labour conditions of smallholder and family farms in order to end their functional dependence on child labour, as well as of families who earn their livelihood in fishing, forestry and livestock herding, and to secure adequate incomes for small producers and owner-operators, through, for example, increasing productivity and supporting diversification; supporting, in line with relevant ILO instruments including the Promotion of Cooperatives Recommendation, 2002 (No. 193), the establishment and functioning of cooperatives, as well as representative organizations of small producers; reassessing piece-rate wage systems in agriculture and recognizing the need to guarantee adequate minimum wages for agricultural workers, sufficient to meet their families' needs;
- 14 adopting an action plan to eliminate obstacles to the establishment, growth and the pursuit of their lawful activities of organisations of rural workers, to give agricultural workers a role in economic and social development, in line with ILO Rural Workers' Organisations Convention, 1975 (No. 141), in law and in practice;
- 15 ensuring the participation of agriculture-related ministries and other agricultural stakeholders, including employers' organizations and workers' organizations, in national policy and legislative frameworks and action plans, and cooperation between agricultural extension services and labour inspection and other relevant authorities;
- 16 enabling and encouraging, through regulatory measures and other approaches, agricultural stakeholders and communities to adopt safe agricultural practices and to eliminate or minimize work-related hazards and risks, including exposure to harmful substances, such as hazardous pesticides, promoting increased availability of more efficient and safer machinery, equipment and tools, and employing the use of sustainable technologies in order to improve occupational safety and health and eliminate the need for child labour;

- 17 strengthening agricultural labour markets and creating decent work opportunities for youth, women and men and supporting innovative vocational education and training in agri-food production and processing services;
- 18 improving data collection and collaborating with relevant United Nations Agencies such as UNICEF and the FAO, to jointly progress towards the elimination of child labour in agriculture, including in fisheries and aquaculture and supporting the 2020 FAO Framework on Ending Child Labour in Agriculture and the International Partnership for Cooperation on Child Labour in Agriculture;

Preventing and eliminating child and forced labour through data-driven policy and programmatic responses

- 19 reinforcing the effective implementation of national laws, regulations and policies on child labour and forced labour by strengthening the capacity of law enforcement bodies, labour inspectorates, agricultural extension services, child protection and education services, and other relevant authorities to investigate, prevent and remediate child labour and forced labour, modern slavery and trafficking in persons;
- 20 strengthening systematic, gender-sensitive responses to protect children, including by promoting universal access to birth registration, adequate nutrition, accessible and affordable quality childcare, psycho-social support, child protection and quality education services;
- 21 strengthening the regular collection and management of disaggregated data, including by sex and age, as the basis for evidence-informed policies and programmes against child labour and forced labour;
- 22 integrating ethical and effective survivor engagement where, as appropriate, in child and forced labour research, policy development, and programming (including through the design, implementation, evaluation and lesson learning phases of the programme cycle); and empowering survivors and supporting their leadership capacity and capability;
- 23 improving data collection and knowledge generation on child labour in agriculture, mining, domestic work, the larger service sector, and in manufacturing, in order to inform tailored responses;
- 24 fostering systemic behavioural changes at community level, particularly in rural areas, and raising awareness, using participatory methods, of the right to education and the need for immediate action to abandon child labour practices;
- 25 strengthening efforts to eradicate child labour, forced labour and other violations of fundamental rights at work in crisis situations arising from conflicts and disasters, in particular by incorporating child protection concerns, including child labour, in all phases of humanitarian action and protecting the right to compulsory education;
- 26 incorporating the elimination of child labour, fundamental rights and decent work into climate action plans and just transition policies;
- 27 ending child labour in supply chains by promoting and supporting transparency, due diligence and remediation in private and public supply chains and procurement policies, including those of multilateral organizations, in line with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and the ILO Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises

and Social Policy; mitigating child labour risk, including by addressing decent work deficits in supply chains and tackling the root causes of child labour; recognizing the importance of using multi-stakeholder, whole-of-supply chain approaches and integrated area-based approaches; strengthening capacity, including among small and medium-sized enterprises along supply chains and in areas where the production of raw materials occurs; and promoting responsible recruitment, greater coherence between public and private initiatives and increased awareness of consumers;

Realizing children's right to education

- 28 eliminating direct and indirect barriers to quality, compulsory education for girls and boys, such as distance, cost, safety, security and gender- and disability-specific barriers; eliminating fees, as appropriate, and promoting universal scholarships and school feeding; ensuring no one is excluded from quality education by taking into account the particular needs of children in the most vulnerable situations, including those with disabilities and marginalised children, including migrant children; taking account of the special situation of girls, including girls at risk of sexual and gender-based violence and exploitation; and ensuring alignment between the minimum age for admission to work or employment and the age of completion of compulsory education, in line with ILO Convention No. 138;
- 29 expanding education infrastructure for schools and safe commuting solutions, particularly in rural and remote areas; ensuring universal access to water, sanitation and hygiene in schools as well as equitable access to digital education, reinforcing national and international efforts to close the digital divide, and supporting educational curriculum development in primary and secondary schools by including subjects related to food and agriculture;
- 30 improving teaching and learning outcomes, including by recruiting qualified teachers in sufficient numbers to close the teacher gap and providing them with good conditions of work and supporting teachers' unions; promoting the teaching of foundational skills as the basis for higher order learning, learner-centred approaches and relevant learning content; and improving literacy on a large scale, particularly in Least Developed Countries;
- 31 taking action to prevent and eliminate all forms of violence and harassment in schools, such as prohibiting corporal punishment and supporting teachers and pupils to adopt non-violent behaviours and adopting whole school approaches;
- 32 providing adequate and relevant training, skills development and vocational education for girls and boys above the minimum age for employment, including quality apprenticeships, particularly in rural areas to improve employability and increase attractiveness of jobs in agriculture; building foundational skills, especially among young women and girls, children from minority groups, and children with disabilities; and matching labour market needs and opportunities;
- 33 ensuring support to ensure successful school-to-work transitions;
- 34 ensuring, in accordance with national contexts, the necessary funding of compulsory education so that all governments seek to commit at least four to six per cent of GDP and/or at least 15 to 20 per cent of public expenditure to education, as recommended by the UNESCO Education 2030 Framework;

Achieving universal access to social protection

- 35 progressively extending access to comprehensive, adequate, sustainable, gender- and age-responsive, disability-inclusive social protection, including through the establishment of national social protection floors;
- 36 promoting universal child benefit payments, such as cash transfers, and child dependent allowances in social welfare payments; promoting basic household income security for all, including children and young persons in extreme poverty and those with disabilities (including covering disability-related extra costs), to increase household resilience to shocks, reduce the risk of child labour and remove children from child labour;
- 37 improving access of communities depending on agriculture for their livelihoods to social and agricultural insurances;
- 38 expanding child labour monitoring systems, linked to the provision of social protection services;
- 39 supporting robust parental benefit systems including through support for maternity and paternity benefit systems;
- 40 providing for equitable and sustainable financing for social protection systems through effective domestic and international resource mobilization, including official development assistance, particularly for Least Developed Countries and in light of demographic trends and the impact of climate change;

Increasing financing and international cooperation

- 41 mobilizing domestic resources, developing and adequately funding national action plans, statistics and other data on child labour, and integrating child labour concerns into relevant national development policies and plans;
- 42 promoting policy coherence, particularly between social, trade, agricultural, financial, labour, economic, education and training and environmental policies, in pursuit of a human-centred approach to a future of work free of child labour and forced labour;
- 43 coordinating more closely objectives related to child labour, forced labour, and decent work, and related capacity-building assistance, with fiscal, monetary, international trade and investment policies, in order to widen their benefits and achieve inclusive, sustainable and resilient economic growth, full, productive and freely chosen employment and decent work, and sustainable production throughout domestic and global supply chains;
- 44 assisting developing countries, particularly in Africa, in attaining long-term debt sustainability and enhancing their ability to sustainably finance programmes to eliminate child and forced labour through coordinated policies aimed at fostering debt financing, debt relief and debt restructuring, and sound debt management, as appropriate, and address the external debt of heavily indebted poor countries to reduce debt distress;
- 45 calling on the relevant international and regional financial institutions to consider how best to enable sufficient and timely access to funds for the effective implementation of the Durban Call to Action;

- 46 supporting multilateralism, South-South and triangular cooperation and the leading role of the ILO, Alliance 8.7, particularly through its support for Pathfinder Countries to accelerate progress toward achieving SDG target 8.7, as well as cooperation among multiple States, civil society organizations, businesses, employers' organizations and workers' organizations, and other entities to eliminate child labour, including through regional initiatives such as the Regional Initiative Latin America and the Caribbean Free of Child Labour, which provides a model that other regions could adapt to their circumstances, as appropriate;
- 47 strengthening cross-sectoral cooperation to mainstream child labour elimination in other international priorities, notably climate change, environmental protection, hunger eradication, poverty reduction, fighting inequalities, decent jobs, clean energy, digitalisation, water and sanitation, peacekeeping and peacebuilding, migration, youth empowerment, and gender equality;
- 48 enhancing international cooperation to eliminate child labour and forced labour among indigenous and tribal peoples, minority groups, migrant populations and other vulnerable groups, and to mobilize national and regional responses to eliminate the commercial sexual exploitation of children;
- 49 exploring the possibility of bilateral and multilateral initiatives to increase corporate accountability.

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