

# Durban Call to Action on the Elimination of Child Labour

5TH GLOBAL CONFERENCE  
ON THE ELIMINATION  
OF CHILD LABOUR

DURBAN, 15-20 MAY 2022



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## 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 1.3<sup>1</sup> and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child;

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<sup>1</sup> 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 of 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 smallholder 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 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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