

Asia Regional Conference

Reaching SDG Target 8.7 on Eradicating Forced Labour, Human Trafficking and Child Labour

Kathmandu, 20-22 November 2019



Of the 152 million children in child labour globally, 62.1 million are in the Asia-Pacific region. Nearly 50 per cent of these children are in hazardous work. On the other hand, of the 24.8 million people in forced labour globally, a staggering 16.5 million, or over two-thirds, are in the Asia-Pacific region. Bonded labour, a form of forced labour, is of major concern in South Asia. South Asia is also one of the world's biggest regions of origin of migrant workers, a phenomenon that increases vulnerability to labour trafficking, exploitation, forced labour and child labour. Countries in the region continue to make significant efforts to tackle these issues, including through measures to strengthen legal and policy frameworks, preventive measures as well as through efforts to address implementation, enforcement and capacity issues.

Target 8.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals calls for the eradication of forced labour, human trafficking, modern slavery, and by 2025 for the end of child labour in all its forms. Alliance 8.7 is a global partnership in support of Target 8.7. The Alliance brings together actors at all levels to collaborate, share knowledge and ultimately accelerate progress towards Target 8.7. In July 2016, the Alliance was “launched” in South Asia in collaboration with the South Asia Initiative to End Violence Against Children (SAIEVAC), an apex body of SAARC, at a regional meeting in Bhutan. Sub-regional events on Alliance 8.7 were also held in Bangkok for South-East Asia and the Pacific in September 2016, and Pacific Consultations on Alliance 8.7 were held in Fiji in October 2017. At country level, Pathfinder Countries are committing to accelerate efforts with new action and new approaches from which others can learn to support Target 8.7's urgent deadlines. Out of the 15 Pathfinder Countries, four are from the Asia-Pacific region: Sri Lanka, Nepal, Viet Nam and Fiji.

Ratifying international instruments on child labour, forced labour and human trafficking is a key step towards tackling these issues. The Protocol of 2014 to the Forced Labour Convention (P29) and the Forced Labour (Supplementary Measures) Recommendation (No. 203) were adopted by the International Labour Conference in 2014. These instruments complement the ILO Conventions Nos. 29 and 105, as well as the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children. Together, they provide a comprehensive strategy and set of measures to respond to challenges posed by forced labour and human trafficking in the modern era. The Conference will include a focus on the 2014 Forced Labour Protocol as the most recently adopted international instrument directly linked to Target 8.7. The “50 For Freedom” campaign, led by the ILO together with the International Organisation of Employers and the International Trade Union Confederation, and the ILO Centenary Ratification Campaign call for the ratification of P29. In Asia, P29 has been ratified by two countries, Thailand and Sri Lanka.

Objectives

The target dates for SDG Target 8.7 are around the corner and the dual challenge of eradicating forced labour, modern slavery and human trafficking by 2030 and ending child labour in all its forms by 2025 must be met with a greater sense of urgency. The 2017 IV Global Conference on the Sustained Eradication of Child Labour, in its outcome document “The Buenos Aires Declaration on Child Labour, Forced Labour and Youth Employment”, set the framework for action and the pledges made by key stakeholders marked the commitment to act. In 2019, the UN declared 2021 the International Year for the Elimination of Child Labour. This will be a key milestone towards SDG Target 8.7. Within this framework, and as a follow-up to the Bali Declaration adopted at the ILO 16th Asia and the Pacific Regional Meeting and the Bali Process Declaration on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime, the Conference seeks to promote comprehensive approaches to eliminating all forms of child labour and forced labour in the region in the context of Alliance 8.7, including through promoting the ratification of the Forced Labour Protocol.

The **main objectives** of the conference are to:

- promote comprehensive approaches to eliminating all forms of child labour, forced labour and human trafficking in the context of Alliance 8.7, and setting country-specific targets for SDG Target 8.7;
- building on the commitment of Alliance 8.7 pathfinder countries to ratify and apply P29, advance such efforts across the region, sharing the experience of those countries that have ratified the Forced Labour Protocol or have taken initial steps leading towards ratification;
- showcase innovative approaches to tackling forced labour, child labour and human trafficking;
- strengthen tripartism and social dialogue on child labour and forced labour in the region.

The three-day meeting will combine high level panels and thematic sessions on topics of interest with workshops for in-depth discussion and spotlight presentations for sharing experience on topics including setting up national coordination mechanisms to achieve Target 8.7, harmonization of laws with the provisions of the Forced Labour Protocol, and complaints and referral mechanisms.



Participants

The conference participants will mirror the composition of the Alliance 8.7 Global Coordination Group, including representatives from governments, employers’ and workers’ organizations; regional organizations, UN agencies, civil society organizations, members of the Child Labour Platform and of the Forced Labour Business Network. The participants will also possibly include representatives of the Responsible Business Alliance and the Bali Process Business track which have recently been recognized by Alliance 8.7.

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