

**Governing Body – 340th Session, October-November 2020**

**Policy Development Section**

**Workers' Group Comments**

**DOCUMENT FOR BALLOT BY CORRESPONDENCE**

**GB.340/POL/7(Rev.1)**

**Update on preparations for the V Global Conference on Child Labour**

The Workers' group would like to thank the Office for the document.

We take note of the major developments highlighted in the first part of the report and we welcome the ratification of C182 by the Kingdom of Tonga resulting in the universal ratification of C182. While this is an historic milestone, much needs to be done to ensure that commitments are transformed into action and the ILO and its tripartite constituents have a crucial role to play in that regard.

We also welcome the ratification of C138 by Myanmar in June and call for a strong campaign for universal ratification of the minimum age convention in light of the UN year and upcoming world conference.

We are now in a crisis situation, where the right to health, education, the right to water, the right to an adequate shelter and decent work for the families, as well as, universal social protection are absolutely relevant and needed. Economic pressure on the poorest families is at critical levels and many may be forced to depend on child labour out of dire necessity. Political commitment to end child labour is more necessary than ever.

We therefore welcome the revised country level activities under the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) and forced labour and also the office's call for sustained and additional funding.

Due to the cancelation of the 338<sup>th</sup> session of the Governing Body in March 2020, we did not have the opportunity to provide our comments on the developments since the IV Global Conference on Child labour held in Buenos Aires. In that sense, we would like to welcome the 96 countries for their commitments through pledges. However, in the current document, we miss the information on the follow up on the 96 pledges and how their implementation was and will be evaluated, and if the Office is working to increase the number of pledges. Consistency with International Labour Standards, an integrated rights based approach based on decent work, and long term sustainability, should be the basis any review.

UN Resolution 73/327, declared 2021 the International Year for the Elimination of Child Labour, and the document refers to a roadmap that is being finalized. We would like to have further information about the roadmap and particularly on the involvement of social partners in this roadmap.

Current global estimates show a steady decline in child labour statistics, however, the progress before the COVID-29 pandemic was already too slow to achieve the 2025 deadline set by SDG

8.7 to end child labour in all its forms, and we fear that the impact of the pandemic may lead to an increase, if we do not do enough to prevent it. We therefore support the call for member States to redouble their efforts to keep up with the target.

In relation to the upcoming V Global Conference, we would like to welcome South Africa for its commitment to host the conference.

We would also like to request further clarification on the different consultations processes that are presented in paragraphs 10 and 11. We would like the Office to further clarify the process, and to convene a tripartite meeting as outlined in point b paragraph 14, to discuss the way forward.

Finally, the document GB.338/POL/4 that we could not discuss in March 2020, indicated in paragraphs 17 and 18 that there were several financial constraints for the development of the conference. Therefore, we would like to request further clarifications on the availability of funding for the 2022 Global Conference.

With these comments, we can support the decision point

**IMEC statement on the update on preparation  
for the V Global Conference on Child Labour**

- We thank the Office for the document GB.340/POL/7. We further thank the Republic of South Africa for their offer to host the V Global Conference in 2022.
- We thank the ILO for the systematic review of country activities under IPEC+. IMEC welcomes the progress made by the Alliance 8.7- and its midterm review on progress made in pathfinder countries. We also welcome the achieved universal ratification of ILO Convention No. 182, which is crucial for ensuring zero-tolerance to child labour and we urge for its effective implementation.
- IMEC sees great importance in keeping the issue of child labour high on the agenda, especially within the ILO, as the international organisation on decent work for all. As described by the ILO on the World Day against Child Labour this year: “a time of crisis, a time to act.”
- This is now true more than ever, since due to COVID-19 the progress made in the recent years could be reversed. Vulnerable groups, including children, are being hit harder than everyone else. The current crisis may force many of them (back) into poverty, causes direct health risks and blocks access to education. This causes an increased risk of exploitation and child labour, which may put an end to the positive trends and achieved results over many years in the fight against forced labour, human trafficking and child labour.
- In this context, IMEC looks forward to the roadmap created by the Office for the International Year of Child Labour, 2021.
- In light of the current circumstances, IMEC understands and supports the request made by South Africa to not organise the conference in 2021 as planned, but to postpone it to 2022. IMEC finds it very important and would like to encourage South Africa to organise this conference at the beginning of 2022, as a landmark for the way forward after the end of the International Year of Child Labour.
- The proposed approach of the Office regarding the
  - consultations with the Government of South Africa, as the host country, on preparations to hold the V Global Conference on Child Labour in 2022, including the perspectives of the different regions; and
  - the tripartite consultation in Geneva prior to the March 2021 GB to discuss the way forward, is fully supported by IMEC and we look forward to actively participate in these meetings.
- We urge the ILO to pursue its actions on child labour expeditiously after the 340th Governing Body to ensure momentum in organizing and realising the conference in the 2022, in whatever form possible, taking into account the developments regarding COVID-19.
- Ending child labour and promoting decent work for all is now more important than ever.
- IMEC supports the decision point.



**European Union**

**Statement**

**340<sup>th</sup> Governing Body**

**2 – 14 November 2020**

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**Update on preparations for the V Global Conference on Child Labour**

**GB.340/POL/7**

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**Geneva, November 2020**

**ILO Governing Body 340<sup>th</sup> session**  
**November 2020**  
**GB.340/POL/7**

**Update on preparations for the V Global Conference on Child Labour**  
**EU Statement**

This statement is made on behalf of the European Union and its Member States. The Candidate Countries the Republic of North Macedonia\*, Montenegro\* and Albania\* and the EFTA country Norway, member of the European Economic Area, align themselves with this statement.

We align ourselves with the IMEC statement.

1. We would like to express our appreciation to the Government of the Republic of South Africa for their proposal to host the V Global Conference on Elimination of Child Labour and Forced Labour. While the Conference was initially intended to take place in 2021, the International Year for the Elimination of Child Labour, the EU and its Member States understand it must now be rescheduled to 2022.
2. We are very pleased to note the universal ratification of the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No.182). However, we recall the need for enhanced implementation of Convention No.182, as well as Convention No.138 on the Minimum Age.
3. The EU is committed to guaranteeing the rights of the child in both its internal and external policies and will continue to cooperate with the ILO to stand up for the rights of every child to develop and reach their full potential in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocols.
4. The EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy 2020-2024 highlights the priority to address child labour in actions to reinforce labour rights. The EU Guidelines on the Rights of the Child as well as those on Children in Armed Conflict continue to guide our actions towards promoting, protecting and fulfilling the rights of the child with a focus also on the elimination and prevention of child labour. This zero tolerance of child labour is also expressed in EU trade policy.
5. The COVID-19 pandemic has further exacerbated the poverty situation on a global scale - one of the main triggers of child labour - and has imposed challenges to their education, development, safety and wellbeing.
6. It is absolutely vital to prevent a reversal or a standstill in the progress already achieved and to accelerate steps by all means in the fight against child labour and forced labour. We encourage the suggested overview of the realization into concrete actions of the pledges made three years ago in Buenos Aires. In this regard, we very much welcome the actions of IPEC+ Flagship Programme in addressing the impact of the pandemic on the most vulnerable on the basis of the human-centred approach.

\*The Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process

7. We encourage multi stakeholder engagement, together with coordinated urgent global action and underline the important role of Alliance 8.7 that combines the efforts of more than 200 partners towards achieving the SDG target 8.7. We welcome the progress made by the Alliance 8.7 that was presented in its new digital report and look forward to an update during the High-level Political Forum of ECOSOC in July next year.
8. With regard to the follow-up to the UN General Assembly resolution 73/327 on the International Year for the Elimination of Child Labour – 2021, the EU and its Member States would like to see a comprehensive “road map” developed by the Office providing a meaningful framework for effective engagement of constituents, relevant stakeholders and partners . We look forward to the communication plan that is currently under development.
9. In view of the preparation of the V Global Conference on Child Labour and the efforts to achieve SDG target 8.7, the EU and its Member States support the Office in organising a tripartite meeting with representatives of permanent missions in Geneva and social partners and strongly encourage participation of other relevant stakeholders and development partners including EU, Alliance 8.7., FAO and UNICEF. The regional consultations with the tripartite constituents and other partners will also provide a good platform for outlining future steps.
10. The EU and its Member States have always encouraged an active and meaningful engagement on a tripartite basis on the issue of child labour. We support the proposed tripartite consultations. We underline the importance of the tripartite consultations to build on the steps taken so far by the ILO and Alliance 8.7. as well as on the actions in process.
11. The ILO can count on the support and active engagement of the EU and its Member States on this important matter. We support the decision point.

UK Written Statement  
GB340/Pol 7

**Update on preparations for the V Global Conference on Child Labour**

The UK aligns itself with the statement by IMEC.

The UK Government thanks the Office for this update.

We would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the ILO on the significant achievement of the universal ratification of the Convention on the Worst Forms of Child Labour.

We agree with the proposed next steps set out in the report and look forward to participating in discussions leading up to the V Global Conference on Child Labour, which we agree should be postponed to 2022 under the circumstances.

The UK has made good progress on pledges made at the last conference, including through the roll-out of Independent child trafficking guardians across England and Wales.

We welcome the work done by the Office to drive forward work to tackle child labour, not least given the significant impacts of the pandemic, and the effect it may have on progress made over the last 20 years on rates of child labour. We look forward to continued dialogue with the Office on child labour with a view to achieving the SDG target 8.7 by 2025.

We look forward to taking part in the planned consultation meeting prior to the 341st Session (March 2021) of the Governing Body to discuss the way forward.