

Next steps to end child labour in global supply chains

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A major conference takes place this week in the Netherlands that aims to set out the next steps in ending child labour in global supply chains. ILO Director-General Guy Ryder took part in a panel discussion at the conference, which has been organized by the Dutch government in collaboration with the ILO, the Global March Against Child Labour and the Netherlands Enterprise Agency.

LEIDEN, The Netherlands (ILO News) – ILO Director-General Guy Ryder has called for a whole-of-supply-chain approach to address child labour in global supply chains during his opening statement to the conference. He said that efforts against child labour in global supply chains will be inadequate if they do not extend beyond immediate suppliers and include those involved in the extraction and production of raw materials.

He also urged governments to address the root causes of child labour in global supply chains, such as poverty, informality and insufficient access to education.

“Today, 152 million children are still in child labour. The need to accelerate progress is obvious,” said Ryder. “The UN resolution declaring 2021 as the International Year for the Elimination of Child Labour is a tremendous opportunity to keep the momentum, and to accelerate action towards the achievement of zero child labour, in all its forms, by 2025.”

Sigrid Kaag, the Dutch Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation, announced that the Netherlands will become a pathfinder country of Alliance 8.7 – the first EU Member State to do so.

The Alliance 8.7 partnership brings together 225 partner organizations which are committed to collaborate to achieve Target 8.7 of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, which calls on governments around the world to end child labour by 2025 and to put in place effective measures to end forced labour, modern slavery and human trafficking by 2030. Pathfinder countries commit to go further and faster to achieve Target 8.7. They implement new actions, try new approaches and share their knowledge. With this announcement by the Netherlands, 20 countries have so far committed to accelerate their efforts as Alliance 8.7 pathfinder countries.

A recent report compiled by the ILO, OECD, IOM and UNICEF, Ending child labour, forced labour and human trafficking in global supply chains, provides the first-ever estimates of child labour in global supply chains. The study indicates that the link between child labour and global supply chains is often indirect. A significant share of child labour in global supply chains occurs in their lower tiers, in activities such as raw material extraction and agriculture, making due diligence, visibility and traceability challenging.

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