

ERADICATING CHILD LABOUR, FORCED LABOUR & PROMOTING YOUTH EMPLOYMENT BY 2025:

A GENDER PERSPECTIVE

**A JOINT PAPER BY MEMBERS AND PARTNERS OF
GLOBAL MARCH AGAINST CHILD LABOUR**



GLOBAL MARCH

**Against Child Labour
Contra el Trabajo Infantil
Contre le Travail des Enfants**

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Background

The three previous Child Labour Conferences have led the world to making a significant progress in the fight against child labour from 2000 to 2012. However, the recently produced ILO report on [Global Estimates of Child Labour: Results and Trends, 2012-2016](#), indicates that the pace of decline has slowed considerably in the last four years, precisely at a time when substantial acceleration is needed to reach the ambitious 2025 target date for ending child labour. While there was 30% reduction in child labour from 246 million in 2000 to 168 million in 2012, the 2017 global estimates reveal that a reduction of only one percent point has been made since 2012 till 2016, bringing the total number of child labourers in the world to 152 million- of which almost half them are in its worst forms, and 73 million are in hazardous work. Out of the total, it is said that 64 million girls and 88 million boys are now in child labour, which was hitherto estimated to be at 68.2 million for girls and about 100 million for boys in 2012-2013. In fact witnessing a change for the first time, there are 17 million more boys than girls in hazardous work, though this might be a reflection of under-reporting of work performed by girls.

The recent data also suggests that boys and girls undertake similar kind of work and the gap between work performed by girls and boys has narrowed considerably, notwithstanding the the unique hazards and risks faced by girls- especially the ones trapped in hidden forms of work, that can result in harming their health and jeopardising their education.

Moreover, the estimates of children's involvement in household chores, produced for the first time indicates that girls are much more likely than boys to perform household chores in every weekly hour bracket, and also perform "double work duty"- meaning both work in employment and in household chores. This suggests that girls as compared to boys are at a high risk of getting deprived of education and even if they do go to school, they are likely to perform poorly in terms of learning achievement and also lag behind their non-working peers in terms of grade progression.

In terms of regions, Africa topped with having the most number of child labourers in the world-with the highest share of child labourers in the agriculture sector, where girls are also actively involved. The report also made strong correlation between child labour and situations of conflicts and disasters- a situation where girls and boys find themselves in the most vulnerable position and at a high risk of getting trafficked and exploited.

This slowed pace in reduction therefore means that by 2025, 121 million children will still remain in child labour and girls will remain vulnerable to even graver forms of exploitation and trafficking, with deeper risks to their life.

Though the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015 gave us the specific target of eliminating child labour by 2025, and forced labour, modern slavery and human trafficking by 2030 under Target 8.7 of the SDGs, in the last 1.5 years it has been observed that Member-States have begun "cherry-picking" of SDGs, with many issues receiving more focus and funding than others and the issue of eliminating child labour by 2025, unfortunately taking a backseat in many countries- posing a dire need to combat the problem urgently.

This notion has been further strengthened with the new ILO report making a strong case that no single actor can solve the challenge alone and that eradication can be accelerated only through efforts that leverage expertise across a wide range of stakeholders. The upcoming IV Global Conference on Child Labour, to be held in Argentina in November 2017, gives us this opportunity to discuss the misses from the previous three Child Labour Conference, reckon the reasons for slowed

pace in reduction and focus on the issue holistically by incorporating the global goal of eradicating forced labour, human trafficking and by transforming hazardous work into decent youth employment, especially for girls through international cooperation, partnerships and innovations, building evidence-based knowledge, and improving and monitoring public policies keeping age, gender and regional considerations in mind.

Introduction

The main purpose of this paper by Global March Against Child Labour is to highlight the need of continued commitment and political will by governments and other stakeholders to eradicate child labour by 2025 and create decent youth employment by eliminating forced labour and human trafficking by 2030, especially for girls. The paper aims at bringing the issue of access to quality education for children, and creation of decent work opportunities for all children above the minimum age, including for girls, as a priority for governments and international community, as they meet for the IV Global Conference on Child Labour in Argentina- so that immediate commitments are made and actions are taken to ensure the momentum built towards eliminating child labour is not stalled, and that slowed pace in reduction is turned into accelerated progress. The paper also highlights the best practices carried out across different countries and regions that could be replicated and adopted to achieve Target 8.7 of the SDGs, and in turn achieve other related SDGs. Finally, it also suggests joint recommendations by the Global March network on the key priority areas identified that need commitment turned into actions, to achieve the shared goal of a child-friendly world-free from exploitation and ensuring education for all.

The paper focuses on three priority areas such as:

- a) Preventing and eradicating child labour, forced labour, human trafficking and promoting decent youth employment through child-friendly public policy and gender sensitive governance
- b) Counting every girl and boy, through evidence-based knowledge, data and monitoring, including children in hazardous work, illegal activities and trafficking.
- c) Protecting and promoting children's rights, especially of girls through international cooperation, partnerships and innovations aimed at efficiency and sustainability

The situations, priorities, best practices, and recommendations in this paper are based on an online survey conducted with the members and partners of the Global March Against Child Labour(Global March) network (comprising of trade unions, teachers' associations and child rights organisations), across the regions of Asia, Africa, Latin America and Europe, collecting responses from 11 influential respondents, who have significantly contributed to the elimination of child labour and promoted education in their countries through demonstrated actions and proven best practices. Thus their opinions hold great importance in collecting recommendations for member-led advocacy towards finding sustainable solutions at the IV Global Child Labour Conference in Argentina. The responses have been supplemented with literature review and secondary research on the issues, which have helped in sharpening Global March and its network's position and suggestions for the international community. The 11 respondents are as follows:

Bachpan Bachao Andolan (India), Bangladesh Shishu Adhikar Forum (Bangladesh), Ghana National Coalition on Rights of the Child (Ghana), Opcion (Chile), Grassroot Organisation for Development of Human Being (Pakistan), JARAK (Indonesia), Swantantrata Abhiyan(Nepal), Save the Children(US), WAO-Afrique (Togo), African Network for the Prevention and Protection Against Child Abuse and

Neglect (Tanzania), National Action Against Child Labour (Algeria), Ms. Urmila Bhoola (UN Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Slavery)

Child Labour, Forced Labour & Trafficking in Girls

The fact that girls face double burden of work, mentioned in the new ILO report on child labour, was further kindled through the online survey conducted in 2017 by Global March Secretariat with its network members and partners, which tried to understand as to what type of activity was more common amongst girls, and to what extent the experience of girls' work differed from boys, across different countries. The survey also investigated the policies present in the countries to protect such vulnerable girls, and the need for having better policies or laws that are missing in many countries on the issues of trafficking, forced labour and child labour. Some of the common findings from the survey collected are as follows:

1. Girl child domestic labourers and girls that were trafficked and forced into commercial sexual exploitation were frequently overlooked in child labour statistics of the government as well as in the analysis of child labour. This has thus resulted in gender biases- in both understanding of child labour and in policies addressing it, most of the times excluding it from the purview of legal and monitoring mechanisms.
2. Older girls were particularly found to face inequalities in education, due to their gender as well as due to practices such as child marriage. This means that by the time girls reach the minimum age of employment they will already be in a disadvantageous position than boys, suffering from lack of primary or secondary education, limited access to training in basic and vocational skills, and more vulnerable to migrating and getting trafficked into forced labour situations, hidden forms of labour and worst forms of child labour.
3. Many countries also reported of intra and cross-border trafficking amongst girls, who are further put into hidden forms of work such as into commercial sexual exploitation, and forced to work in hospitality and entertainment industry as well as in small-scale agricultural farms.

Thus these different experiences of girls and boys make it important to integrate gender concerns into child labour research, advocacy, programmes and policies. Research and policies that reflect gender disparities will provide a stronger basis for actions aimed at reducing child labour and preventing trafficking and violence against girls.

Priority Actions

Global March network supports a 'systematic rights based approach' based on a three pronged strategy called 'triangular paradigm'- which are three key processes affecting the future of the world, in particular our children - *the elimination of child labour, education for all and poverty alleviation*. Bringing together policy and action for a unified response to child labour, illiteracy and poverty-with special focus on eliminating high risks and vulnerability for girls, is thus a priority for Global March. This approach also serves to have a better coordination of poverty reduction, social welfare, justice, labour and education policies that ensure cost-effectiveness and efficiency and advancement of child rights.

Thus an effective systematic rights based approach based on the triangular paradigm will consist of the following priority areas that need to be converted into actions, to achieve the goal of eliminating child labour by 2025:

1: Preventing and Eradicating Child Labour, Forced Labour, Human Trafficking and Promoting Decent Youth Employment Through Child-Friendly Public Policy and Gender Sensitive Governance

To prevent and eradicate child labour, forced labour and promote decent youth employment, a robust legal and policy framework is needed that include regulations and standards that comply with United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, as well as other international standards and good practices. These Conventions and Recommendations such as ILO Recommendation No. 190 and No.146, provide an impetus to ensure that children, including girls receive special attention and the issue is viewed holistically. However as reported by Global March members and partners under the survey, most countries reported of disharmony between laws, poor implementation and coordination amongst departments and related ministries, dilapidated situations of monitoring systems as well as insufficient financial and human resources allocated to it, which contribute to the causes and consequences of child labour.

Recommendations for Governments:

Governments have the prime responsibility to take lead in tackling child labour. They are the prime custodians of children's safety, freedom education and their wellbeing. Here are some ways in which they can ensure the goal is achieved, as suggested by the Global March network from all across the world:

- a) Ratify ILO Conventions 182 on Worst Forms of Child Labour, ILO Convention 138 on Minimum Age of Employment by year 2019, ILO Convention 189 on Domestic Workers as well as other ILO conventions and Optional Protocols of Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- b) Create and harmonise laws based on the ILO Conventions, Recommendations and Convention on the Rights of the Child as well as other international standards and Sustainable Development Goals, to prevent, increase and accelerate efforts to end child labour by 2025 and generate effective conditions for full, productive and decent youth employment and end forced labour and human trafficking, especially in girls by 2030.
- c) Promote and implement holistic approach towards tackling root causes of child labour, trafficking and forced labour, specifically directing efforts towards alleviating poverty amongst children and their families, bearing in mind the differentiated effect on poverty on girls, and ensure their access to quality education.
- d) Adopt and review time-bound, measurable and realistic targets, action plans and strategies, along with identifying appropriate human resources and allocating adequate gender responsive national, district and local budgets for prevention and eradication of child labour along with enrolling and retaining children in schools, especially girls and the most vulnerable children and sections, through free quality, inclusive, and gender sensitive equitable education for all and ensure smooth transition from school to the world of work, through transferable lifelong skills, vocational training, to secure full, productive and decent employment, as well as appropriate compensation for victims of exploitation and trafficking.

- e) Strengthen evidence based actions targeting specifically girls, bearing in mind the invisible nature of their work, such as domestic work and commercial sexual exploitation that are many times a result of human trafficking.
- f) Form and participate in regional and international partnerships to tackle the issue of human trafficking, forced labour and promote multi-stakeholder, multi-lateral cooperation, and replicate best practices demonstrated across the world as per the local context.

Good Practice

Brazil: Cash Transfer Programme to End Child Labour and Reduce Poverty

In 1996, Government of Brazil introduced The Programa de Erradicação do Trabalho Infantil (PETI) as a cash transfer programme aimed at reducing hazardous child labour, which was further integrated into the social welfare programme known as Bolsa Familia in 2003 which provides financial aid to poor Brazilian families; if they have children, families must ensure that the children attend school and are vaccinated. Its predecessor was Bolsa Escola which was an anti-poverty scheme conditional only on school attendance, pioneered by Brazilian Senator, Cristovam Buarque, who is also the co-founder of “Parliamentarians Without Borders for Children’s Rights” initiative of Global March. Evidence showed that PETI reduced the number of hours children worked by around 50 per cent and Bolsa Escola helped in reducing poverty, thus having major impacts on reducing child labour. PETI also reduced the probability of children being involved in hazardous or risky work. Like Bolsa Escola, Bolsa Familia takes a holistic approach of reducing poverty, ensuring children are in school and are protected from diseases and illnesses.

Recommendations for Social Partners and NGOs:

Even though government has a prime responsibility to take a lead in the prevention and eradication of child labour, forced labour, trafficking and promoting decent youth employment, they cannot achieve this mammoth goal by themselves. Their work needs to be supplemented by other social partners and NGOs such as civil societies, trade unions, child rights organisations, women’s rights organisations, teachers’ associations and other social actors. Here are some ways that they can play an effective role in assisting the government, as suggested by the Global March network:

- a) Advocating for increased investments in child centric/ welfare policies including public education, public and school infrastructure and quality public services, with an emphasis on rural areas, vulnerable communities, crises affected areas, and weaker sections of society such as marginalised ethnicities and girls
- b) Advocate for access of girls and boys to quality, inclusive and equitable education, skill development and vocational training leading to decent employment in the future.
- c) Advocate for creating and enforcing child responsive and gender responsive budgets for national and local policies, programmes and schemes, and participate in national, international and regional partnerships to strengthen the work of the government and accelerate the progress towards ending child labour by 2025 and forced labour and trafficking by 2030.

- d) Organise trainings and capacity building activities amongst government and non-governmental institutions and businesses, to promote child-friendly enforcement of policies as well as discouraging child labour, forced labour and trafficking within their immediate purview.
- e) Promote community involvement and child participation to strengthen voice against child labour, forced labour and trafficking.
- f) Strengthen relationships with lawmakers and policymakers to influence their voices and decisions on the issue of child labour, forced labour, trafficking and decent youth employment.

Good Practice

India: Bal Mitra Grams or the Child Friendly Villages

In India, Bachpan Bachao Andolan(BBA) a grassroots organisation founded by Nobel Peace Laureate, Kailash Satyarthi founded a holistic rights based model aiming to empower communities to promote child rights and end child labour at its source- from the villages, called the “Bal Mitra Grams” or the “Child-Friendly Villages”. Taking the area based approach, the model identifies vulnerable communities and out of school children and child labourers through its field activists followed by a mass drive of withdrawing children from child labour with the help of communities and enrolling them in schools. To ensure their retention and awareness on their child rights, the model creates three civil society groups called the Bal Panchayat or the Children’s Parliament, the Youth Groups and the Women’s Groups, which complement each other’s work and raise concerns with the village authorities to resolve general issues of the village, as well as issues of children in particular. With its successful operations for last 16 years covering 500 villages across India, the model has impacted more than 6,50,000 children, keeping children at the centre and ensuring child participation in the overall decision-making process.

Recommendations for Businesses:

Companies and children interact on a daily basis. Because of these constant interactions, the businesses have enormous power to protect children from harm and to improve their lives, especially amongst girls. This can be done at many different levels, including the way in which companies operate facilities, develop and market products, provide services, or exert influence on economic and social development.

Here are some ways suggested by the Global March network, in which businesses can contribute in ending child labour, forced labour, human trafficking and create a viable environment for employees to work and generate decent work opportunities that can be profitable to them in the long run and also respects the human rights of all workers. Businesses should thus:

- a) Review national labour codes to prevent any violation of labour laws on hazardous work and minimum age of employment for both girls and boys alike.
- b) Adopt and implement strict policies against child labour. Looking deep down manufacturing or servicing unit and sub-contractors’ workforce in supply chain is essential, to avoid any reporting of child labour, sexual or physical harassment amongst girls or instances of forced labour

- c) Setup an Occupational Safety and Health Management System (OSHMS) that helps - prevent accidents, injuries and diseases in the workplace in a continuous manner and respect the special circumstances and health issues and conditions faced by girls.
- d) Promote and develop child-friendly practical business practices by placing children at the centre of their corporate social responsibility initiatives and everyday operations, and support in ending child labour by investing in communities, through promoting education amongst children, with special investments in girls, as well offering vocational and skill trainings and apprenticeships to older children including young girls, as well as adopting collective bargaining agreements that are crucial mechanisms to enable workers to improve terms and conditions of their employment.

Good Practice

Costa Rica: Promoting Holistic Development for Decent Youth Employment

Global March's partner, DNI Costa Rica implements a model called 180 Degrees that empowers girls and boys between the age of 12 to 18 years, who due to their difficult circumstances have left their education and are in child labour or in poverty. The model helps the girls and boys through socio-educational, training and entrepreneurship processes and prepares them for decent employment, increasing their empowerment and autonomy. The model also integrates psychosocial services and legal, as well as artistic and recreational actions to promote the formation of opinion, expression and citizen participation. It further engages families of these children to their strengthen their family relationships, and thus has considerably helped many children in continuing education and breaking out of poverty through job placement after they turn 18.

2. Counting Every Girl and Boy, through Evidence-Based Knowledge, Data and Monitoring, Including Children in Hazardous Work, Illegal Activities and Trafficking

Because of many knowledge gaps, lack of proper definitions, lack of data as well as ineffective monitoring in the field of child labour, little is known about the conditions in which child labourers work and what kind of abuses and risks they face at their workplace. This is particularly alarming for child labourers working in informal and rural economies, where invisible work such as domestic work, household chores, commercial sexual exploitation and agricultural work is rampant amongst girls as well as situations of trafficking and forced labour. Many respondent countries of the survey complained of having no data or having inadequate data on the issue of child labour, forced labour and trafficking, (especially situation of girls) which fail to assist in policy planning, monitoring and evaluation of the situations. The main reason for the paucity of statistical data on child labour, forced labour and trafficking found is the low priority it tended to receive in the past. However this is slowly changing. Thus to support policy and programme development, the knowledge base along with proper monitoring mechanisms, especially relating to the work of girls need to be strengthened. Here are some ways as suggested by the Global March network to improve data and monitoring system, to achieve the goals by 2030:

Recommendations for Governments:

Governments must take lead in collecting evidence based knowledge, dissemination and monitoring as they not only have the resources but also have a wider reach and overview of the situation with improved capacities year after year. Thus some suggestions by Global March network for governments are:

- a) Create national and global knowledge mechanisms, based on universal definitions and standards on collecting data and provide free access to non-governmental, regional and international organisations and others, for research findings, good practices, trans-national cases, and lessons learnt on policy, programme, implementation and evaluation.
- b) Strengthen capacity, resources and funding allocation to regularly collect and disseminate consistent and comparable disaggregated data by especially gender, age, ethnicities, economic and social sector and nature of work, particularly in sections of society, regions and people in high risk occupations/sectors that are vulnerable and at the risk of engaging into child labour, forced labour and trafficked for labour and sexual exploitation. Disaggregation must also be done by age, on education levels, qualification, training activities and employment and incomes in order to guide them in their policy-making.
- c) Integrate knowledge from child labour, forced labour and trafficking statistics with poverty reduction strategies as well school enrolment and retention strategies which would help in analysing if families of child labourers are receiving the benefit of poverty reduction and school enrolment schemes of the government, are the households targeted in any of the priority actions etc.

Good Practice

Indonesia: Addressing Hazardous Work of Children in Jermal Fishing

In Indonesia, many children are employed in jermal platforms, constructed for fishing from piles of wood implanted at the bottom of the sea. They are exposed to fatal and life- threatening accidents, drowning and violence. To eliminate child labour from jermal fishing, the Government with support from ILO setup an Integrated Monitoring Team (IMT), with participation of government agencies at provincial and central level, labour inspectorate, and NGOs. The IMT created databases with updated information about child labourers and their status, children at risk and their families, as well as other beneficiaries, which further helped in withdrawing children from hazardous work along with changing attitudes and practices of communities and families through awareness raising and capacity building.

Recommendations for Social Actors and NGOs:

Social actors and NGOs can not only critique and fight against the challenges and failures of the government, but can also partner with the government in effective data collection, dissemination, analysis and monitoring. Here are some suggestions from the Global March network for the social actors and NGOS:

- a) As civil society and non-governmental experts on the issue, social actors and NGOs can indulge in-depth analysis of various aspects of child labour, especially among girls and further understand the relationship between child labour and challenges faced by girls in the labour market, as well as bring new gender perspectives to the debate.
- b) Serve as a knowledge base and network on the issue of child labour, forced labour, trafficking and decent youth employment and assist the government in expanding this knowledge network under its aegis.
- c) Research on the issues through research institutions to understand the socio-economic phenomenon, keeping gender roles and their impact on society and economy in mind that can have an enormous impact on how the debate proceeds.

Recommendations for Businesses:

Businesses hold a great potential in contributing towards collecting evidence based knowledge that can accelerate the progress towards combatting child labour, forced labour, trafficking and promoting decent youth employment. Here are some ways they can be do it as suggested by Global March network:

- a) Technological driven businesses can help in tracking, collecting and disseminating knowledge on child labour, forced labour, trafficking and decent youth employment, especially to ensure protection of girl's rights.
- b) Technical innovations can drive mass contribution in adding to the data knowledge and its reporting and redressal mechanisms that can be used for promotion of rights of girls and for the protection of trafficked children.
- c) Businesses can report the presence of child labour in supply and service chains as well as in the sub-contracted businesses, thus adding onto the data on child labour in the business sector.

3. Protecting and Promoting Children's Rights, Especially Of Girls, Through International Cooperation, Partnerships and Innovations, Aimed at Efficiency and Sustainability

As the issue of child labour, forced labour and trafficking are complex issues, their solution is also complex and involves multi-stakeholder efforts which need to be synergised through international cooperation, partnerships, collaborations and innovations. For achieving Target 8.7 of the SDGs, Alliance 8.7 has been formed and it is vital that not only global alliances like Alliance 8.7, Global Partnership for Education, Global Partnership for Violence Against Children and Global Partnership for Women's and Girls, need to work in coordination with each other, but governments and businesses alike must also form regional and international partnerships to tackle the issue. The respondents of the survey has also reported a high need for close collaboration and cooperation amongst all actors, and minimising duplication of efforts in a strategic area of action. Here are some suggestions suggested by Global March network:

Good Practice

Pakistan: Advocacy with Parliamentarians for National Commission on Child Rights Bill

In February 2017, the National Assembly of Pakistan enacted the pending “ National Commission on Child Rights Bill” which will evaluate, safeguard and promote rights of the child in the country, through an independent Commission. Global March’s partner, Grassroot Organisation for Development of Human Being (GODH) in Pakistan, played an important role in its passing through persistent deliberations with Members of Parliament to ensure this bill is passed in the National Assembly.

Recommendations for Governments:

- a) Encourage, participate and organise collaborative and innovative efforts concentrating on making progress on the issues and endorse the actions taken by multi-stakeholder global partnerships and alliances by integrating their suggestions and strategies in national action plans, for coordinated action towards protecting children, especially girls.
- b) Promote community based solutions and empowering communities to end child labour, forced labour, trafficking and promote decent youth employment, keeping children and rights of girls at the centre of the approach.

Recommendations for Social Actors and NGOs:

- a) Social actors can direct their efforts towards contributing in ending the problem by forming partnerships at national, district, local and community level, so that all stakeholders can participate in the achievement of the goal.
- b) Assist in rehabilitation of victims of trafficking, child labour and forced labour, especially girls who have been subjected to gender based violence, not only within the borders of a country, but trans-national violence against girls because of trafficking and other related causes.

Recommendations for Businesses:

- a) Businesses can form partnerships and provide financial and other resources to national, regional and global alliances on the issue, for them to work effectively, with a special investment in girl’s education and decent working opportunities.
- b) To promote collective corporate social responsibility actions, businesses across different sectors can come together and pledge to work to eradicate the problem and give more opportunities to girls to participate and realise their rights.

Good Practice

Zimbabwe: Global Apprenticeship Encouraging Training for Youth

The Employers' Confederation of Zimbabwe which is also a part of the National Steering Committee on Child Labour in the country and thus responsible for implementing the national action plan, promoted global apprenticeship programmes in partnership with the Government of Zimbabwe and Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions from 2010-2014. This programme aimed to trained young workers from 15 to 35 years of age in different sectors, to enter decent work opportunities in urban and rural setup and invited businesses to join the programme which filled 4000 jobs, and thus reduced poverty and eliminated child labour in the target communities.

Looking Ahead

With SDGs giving a clear mandate on leaving no one behind and chalking out clear roles for governments, NGOs, businesses, individuals and other stakeholders in the international community through collaborative action based on better data and monitoring, these global goals present a renewed opportunity to fight violence against children, through holistic and solution based approach. With the new ILO estimates on child labour evidently mentioning that even though child labour is mostly prevalent in low-income countries but it is by no means meant only a low-income country problem, it is obvious that the mandate of ending child labour applies to all countries and not only the global "South", and that the global "North" or the western world must also identify child labourers within their societies and take necessary steps to contribute to zeroing the number of 168 million child labourers.

With the relative successes of the three previous Child Labour Conferences, the world is now looking ahead towards the IV Global Child Labour Conference, to be held in Argentina in November 2017. Simultaneously, with the new estimates showing considerable slowed pace of reduction in last four years, there is a strong call for leaders to take the goals and targets prescribed in the SDGs seriously- notably the issue of child labour, forced labour, trafficking and decent youth employment, with special attention on girls, in the ambit of holistic child protection. Thanks to the steps taken so far and the political will shown by all actors to meet the Target 8.7 specifically, a climate has been created whereby investments in education, socio-economic protection and empowerment and realisation of child rights is not a far-fetched dream anymore, however the business-as-usual approach needs to be dropped in order to achieve the dream. Targets set by other national and international actors will also only prove to contribute towards ending the scourge.

While progress has been slow, Global March network believes that these converging global development targets for children provide fertile ground for accelerating progress for eliminating child labour, forced labour, trafficking and move towards decent youth employment practices. Looking ahead, Global March will pursue comprehensive systematic anti-child labour interventions in

countries where child labour is still prevalent and provide sustainable community based solutions to fight the problem and ensure its prevention. Ending child labour, forced labour, trafficking and promoting decent work opportunities for all future generations is the responsibility of all. Neither poverty, nor socio-political crises can justify an out of school child or a child working in hazardous conditions or being trafficked to work in slavery. Global March network is committed to placing children and girls at the centre of its future interventions to positively contribute in eliminating all forms of violence against children and girls. Efforts by the governments, backed by robust legal frameworks, effective implementation and monitoring mechanism through evidence based knowledge, along with collaborative efforts by social actors and businesses can help in bringing us closer to the goal and uphold the rights of all children-girls and boys alike. Children must be empowered as agents of change and child participation must be encouraged at all levels of interventions by the governments as well as the social actors.

Time has come to act now, because every single minute matters, every single child matters.



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