



South Asia Regional Child Rights Group Calls for an Urgent End to Child Domestic Labour and All Violence against Children

New Delhi, India (June 11, 2014) – Blending their voice with that of the children and civil society in South Asia and the global community, the South Asia Coordinating Group on Action against Violence against Children (SACG) calls on Governments and all concerned groups to take swift action within their countries and regionally to ensure that social protection is extended to vulnerable children and families and to those affected by any form of violence – irrespective of their social or geographical status.

On this World Day Against Child Labour, the SACG strongly advocates for the realization of the right to social protection, together with the range of child rights that Governments are committed to. Adequate access to education, health care and nutrition is critical to securing children from the violence they are subjected at the workplace, in schools, homes and safe shelters in their communities or as they are forced or tricked to leave their homes for the unknown.

SACG commends all efforts that contributed to the reduction of 75 million in the number of child labourers since 2000, as indicated by ILO global child estimates released in 2013. Laudable as this progress is, it also is the alarm bell that draws attention to the fact that around the world, 168 million children continue to struggle in child labour and of these more than 85 million are in hazardous work. Asia and the Pacific region continues to have the highest numbers of children in child labour – 78 million of them. The situation in South Asia, as elsewhere, clearly warrants a surge of extraordinary proportions, if the battle against child labour is to be won in the foreseeable future.

Child labour, as other forms of violence, is the result of compounded underlying causes that are often deep, structural, and interwoven and reinforce each other. Among these are widespread poverty, gross inequality of income distribution, issues of class or caste and other shocks to families coupled with inadequate social protection for 70 percent of the world population, and lack child protection for millions of children.

SACG recognizes that the prevention, removal, and reintegration of children involved in exploitative or abusive child labour requires long-term national and community-based solutions and effective child and social protection systems. An urgent, reinforced and multi-pronged approach is the imperative.

Noting the wide-ranging commitments that Governments have made in regard to children, the SACG calls on South Asian Governments, as primary duty bearers, to:

- Make national social and child protection systems sensitive and response to children's multiple needs for care, security, development and protection from all violence against children in all settings;
- Put in place specific strategies to reach the vulnerable groups of children and families;

- Enhance policy coherence and collaborative efforts, including in delivery systems to ensure that children receive timely services and support; and
- Strengthen child rights institutions, and the participation of civil society and children in planning and decision making processes.

The SACG further calls for **civil society organizations, the social partners, and business in South Asia** to contribute to the strengthening of the child protection and labour law compliance systems. It calls for enhanced collaboration and synergy with Governments and amongst themselves; the promotion of safe child participation to give children a meaningful voice; and, in addition to other measures, a strengthening of children's resilience, support to monitoring and reporting mechanisms, prevention and response services, and accountability systems.

Recognizing the significance of SAARC's apex body on Children, the **South Asia Initiative to End Violence against Children (SAIEVAC)**, SACG calls for SAIEVAC Governing Board Members to fully implement its Five-Year Work Plan with support and cooperation from all concerned entities of the SAARC Governments, civil society and children and the international community.

We call for **the Media** to promote productive dialogue and debate on child labour and other forms of violence against children, and to engage in raising awareness on the rights of children in domestic work, at all levels of society. We urge the media to act responsibly, and to uphold confidentiality of personal Planete Enfants information and dignity principles when reporting on acts of neglect, abuse, exploitation, and other forms of violence against children.

ABOUT SACG:

The South Asia Coordinating Group on Action against Violence against Children (SACG) brings together United Nations agencies and international and regional NGOs and other actors working at the regional level for child rights and protection in South Asia. Among these are ILO (SACG Chair), World Vision International (SACG Co-Chair), UNICEF, UNFPA, UNODC, UNESCO, ECPAT International, Plan International, Save the Children, Child Helpline International, SOS Children's Villages International, Centre for Reproductive Rights, Terre de Hommes, and Planete Enfants, working in partnership with the SAIEVAC Regional Secretariat and its national mechanisms.

Through multidimensional efforts, SACG aims to end all violence against children in South Asia in partnership with similar national groups and coalitions across the region. We support and engage in policy dialogue and advocacy, coordination, networking, capacity building, knowledge sharing, and new knowledge generation activities. SACG maintains a longstanding partnership with SAIEVAC and the Office of the UN Secretary General's Special Representative of the UN Secretary General on Violence against Children.

For further information on the SACG initiative, please contact: Sherin Khan, SACG Chair at khans@ilo.org or Mark Kelly, SACG Co-Chair at mark_kelly@wvi.org

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