



Concept note for thematic session

## Effectively tackling child labour and other decent work deficits at the initial tiers of supply chains

6th Global Conference on the Elimination of Child Labour,  
Marrakech, Morocco

Thursday 12 February 2026 – 11.15 to 13.00

### I. Context

The fragmentation, complexity and geographic dispersion of supply chains can create challenges for all actors to contribute to the global goal to end child labour and to uphold respect of all fundamental principles and rights at work, including in business operations. This is particularly the case in the initial tiers of supply chains, where raw materials are extracted, produced and sourced through several layers of intermediaries, and where factors such as weak governance, poverty and informality exacerbate the risks of child labour and other decent work deficits.

To more effectively tackle child labour across their supply chains, in recent years companies have expanded their focus beyond their direct business relationships to the upstream level where there has historically been less visibility of suppliers and business partners, but greater risks of child labour. Companies are doing this by further strengthening traceability mechanisms, leveraging technological advances and engaging in partnerships with a wider range of stakeholders to address the systemic and complex nature of child labour and other decent work deficits.

Governments have also advanced their responses to tackle child labour in supply chains by adopting a combination of measures ranging from strengthening social dialogue to addressing entrenched socio-economic vulnerabilities of children, adults and communities and supporting the development of sustainable enterprises, including of small and medium businesses. New approaches, such as the use of trade agreements, import bans and due diligence regulation, are being increasingly utilized to eliminate and prevent child labour in business



operations, using supply chains as an entry point, and to incentivize responsible business conduct more broadly.

Overall, there is growing recognition across actors that effectively tackling child labour requires a multi stakeholder, whole of supply chain approach that leverages a smart mix of measures to address the root causes of child labour, implementation and enforcement gaps as well as to strengthen national and cross-border social dialogue. Despite some successful efforts, turning these into scalable change for the millions of children and workers in poverty and vulnerable situations remains a global challenge for all actors.

## II. Questions addressed

Guided by the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and ILO's Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy (MNE Declaration), this thematic session will draw on the experiences of governments, businesses, social partners' organizations operating in different supply chains to examine how they are scaling up their responses to the challenge of preventing and addressing child labour and other decent work deficits in the initial tiers of supply chains and to reflect on the most successful practices and approaches across industries. It will also provide an opportunity for the speakers to further elaborate on measures to improve the effectiveness of existing efforts and the opportunities to further invest in innovative practices that can lead to sustainable change towards decent work for all.