6th Global conference
on the elimination
of child labour

Marrakech • 11 > 13 february 2026

Concept Note for a Thematic Session on

Preventing and Responding to Child Exploitation and Abuse in Digital Environments:

From Global Commitments to National and Sectoral Action

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

Thursday, February 12, 2026 – 11 :15-13 :00

1. Background

Digital technologies have become integral to children's lives, enabling unprecedented opportunities for learning, connection, creativity, and participation. At the same time, digital environments have introduced new, often hidden, forms of child labour. These include monetized content creation and influencer 'work' as well as 'worst forms of child labour' such as technology-facilitated trafficking and child sexual exploitation and abuse. Emerging technologies—such as generative artificial intelligence, immersive platforms, encrypted services, and algorithmic recommendation systems—are further reshaping both the scale and complexity of these forms of exploitation.

Despite global commitments and existing child labour, child rights, and human rights frameworks, national systems and international cooperation mechanisms have struggled to keep pace with rapidly evolving technologies and online business models. Prevention, reporting, investigation, and support to affected children remain uneven, especially in contexts affected by poverty, displacement, limited access to services, gender inequality, and low digital literacy. Children facing intersecting vulnerabilities, including girls and children with disabilities, are often disproportionately exposed.

Addressing child exploitation and abuse in digital environments requires a coordinated, child-rights-based approach that places children's dignity, safety, and best interests at the center. This includes aligning regulatory and policy frameworks, strengthening

platform responsibility and safeguards, enhancing law enforcement and judicial cooperation, and investing in prevention, education, child-centered responses, and child participation. It also requires sustained collaboration across governments, international organizations, the private sector, civil society, academia, and children themselves.

2. Objectives

This panel will examine how global commitments can be translated into concrete national and sectoral action. It will highlight the respective responsibilities of governments, industry, international organizations, and multi-stakeholder partnerships in preventing harm, protecting and supporting children, while ensuring that children's voices and lived experiences inform policy and practice.

The panel aims to:
- Strengthen shared understanding of how digital and emerging technologies are changing the nature and scale of child exploitation and abuse.
- Identify priority actions to translate global commitments into national and sectoral responses, including regulation, enforcement and child protection systems.
- Promote clearer accountability across governments, industry and partners to prevent harm, improve reporting and investigations, and ensure child-centred support.
- Elevate child participation and youth-led/survivor-informed approaches as essential to effective and rights-based solutions.

3. Issues Addressed

Panelists will explore:
- How are digital technologies introducing new forms of child labour? What digital activities meet recognised standards for child labour and the worst forms of child labour?
- How do existing standards need updating for the digital age? Which regulatory and oversight approaches are proving effective, and what is needed to keep pace with generative AI and new online services?
- Platform safeguards: What concrete "safety-by-design" measures, transparency and reporting pathways should be expected from platforms, and how can compliance be strengthened?
- Operational cooperation: How can cross-border collaboration (evidence-sharing, case referrals, judicial cooperation) be improved, including with industry?

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- Prevention at scale: What prevention and education approaches measurably reduce harm, especially for children facing intersecting vulnerabilities?
- Survivor-centred systems: How can countries strengthen referral pathways, psychosocial support and access to justice while avoiding re-traumatization?
- Meaningful participation: How can children and youth inform solutions safely and ethically, and what models of participation are replicable?

4. Format

This session will take the form of a high-level, moderated panel discussion, combining strategic interventions with practical implementation perspectives. A short video message will set the normative context, followed by interactive exchanges among panelists representing governments, international organizations, industry, multi-stakeholder partnerships, and youth or survivor-informed initiatives.

The discussion will prioritize forward-looking, action-oriented contributions and encourage dialogue across sectors to support coordinated and sustainable responses at national, regional, and global levels.