



SECOND CHILDREN'S WORLD CONGRESS ON CHILD LABOUR AND EDUCATION

BACKGROUND AND JUSTIFICATION

The first ever *Children's World Congress on Child Labour* took place in Florence, Italy, from 10th to 13th of May 2004. Organized by the Global March Against Child Labour, and hosted by its European Coordinator Mani Tese and the Italian Trade Unions CGIL, CISL and UIL, the event was attended by over 130 child delegates (former child labourers and child activists) from 45 countries. These children selected by children themselves through a fair and democratic process over one year of national and regional consultations assembled in Florence to share their views and to demand a child-labour free world.

After three days of discussions, workshops, questions-and-answer with leaders and law makers, international agencies and other stakeholders, the child delegates developed the **Children's Declaration**, a passionate and powerful appeal to the world to end child labour and make children's rights a priority and closed the Congress with a big march which overwhelmed the city of Florence and showed the enthusiasm, the strength and the solidarity of adults and children together in the fight against child labour.

The Children's World Congress sent a clear message to the international community about their commitment and resolve to eliminate child labour. It demonstrated the strength of child and youth participation and leadership on child labour and education issues. Florence was not the ultimate goal, but a platform to give a clarion call to the world leaders. Children, who participated in the event, took their experiences along with them to share within their own communities, political leadership, trade unions and civil society and rally support from various stakeholders. The strong message from the Children's World Congress resounded at national, regional and international levels. The voices of the children challenged the conscience of the world leaders and Government Heads who participated and responded at the Children's World Congress.

Together, we believe the children can play a defining role in shaping the future of the world. Children are not only leaders of the future, but also the leaders of today.

Despite its great success, the Florence Congress was deprived of many valuable contributions: 300 children were supposed to attend the Congress, but at the last moment, the large part of them, especially from Asia and Africa, were denied the visa to enter Italy because the Italian Government considered them a security risk.

For this reason the Global March Against Child Labour is organising the ***Second Children's World Congress on Child Labour and Education***, which will be held in New Delhi, India, from 4-7 September 2005, and followed by a physical march on 8 September 2005.

One year after the first ever international conference, where children were the main speakers, decision makers and beneficiaries, 150 child delegates mainly from Asia and Africa whose right to participation was unfairly stolen last year will get justice in the end. They will be meeting to share their experiences and propose their solutions to a social plague that still affects the lives of more than 246 million children worldwide. There will also be a representative delegation from Europe and Americas that will include the members of the Children's Reference Group from Florence. Together they will be carrying forward the torch of their predecessors, continuing their work and transforming the appeal of the Children's Declaration to a Children's Plan of Action to fight child labour and achieve education for all.

The Second Children's World Congress will give once again the children the opportunity to emerge as social activists and world leaders at the forefront of the fight for children's rights. The Congress will offer unique opportunity and power to the children in fashioning the future growth and development of the children's movement.

Overall Goal

To empower children to lead worldwide efforts to end child labour and to ensure free, quality education for all

Objectives

The Second Children's World Congress on Child Labour and Education will seek:

- To provide justice to the children, who were denied the visa and could not participate in the First World Congress, giving them a platform to share their opinions, experiences and ideas and learn from one another, and empowering them in the process to emerge as the leaders in the struggle against child labour.
- To formulate a Children's Plan of Action to implement the Declaration made by the Children in the Florence World Congress
- To strengthen the Children's Reference Group, elected in the First World Congress by the child participants with the new child leaders to be elected in the second congress. The new Children's Reference Group will take lead to facilitate the communication, coordination and implementation of the decisions made in the World Congresses (Declaration/Plan of Action) and to represent the voices of children in global, regional, or national discussions or actions on child labour.
- To strengthen, broaden and consolidate a worldwide child and youth movement against child labour and for education for all through the establishment of a strong network.
- To remind governments to fulfil their promises to ratify and implement ILO Conventions 182 and 138 and implement Dakar framework of action for education for all children.
- To strengthen the struggle against child labour and for education for all involving the civil society members, including trade unions, teachers unions, NGOs, and various other stakeholders, which can give significant contribution to the goal

- To demand for synergising efforts on the elimination of child labour, the achievement of education for all, poverty reduction and restoring security and peace as one of the cornerstones for children's rights.
- To urge international organisations to increase their support to programmes aimed at eradicating child labour, poverty reduction, achieving universal, free, and quality education for all children.
- To call on international development agencies, development banks and donors to give education the support it needs.
- To urge for debt and debt service reduction in favour of national and international educational programmes
- To transform an event into a process in order to empower children and make them realize that they are capable of creating a new world free of child labour

WHO WILL BE THE PARTICIPANT TO THE CONGRESS?

Former child labourers and child activists from Asia and Africa already selected as child delegates for the First World Congress who were not able to attend the Congress due to the denial of visa by the Italian government as well as few child representatives from America and Europe.

Child Reference Group members who were democratically elected by all child delegates during the Florence Congress.

Special invitations will be extended to adult speakers from UN organizations and governments who are directly involved in the implementation of the ILO Convention 138 and 182, on the rights of the child and Dakar framework of Action on EFA, who will participate in the accountability session answering the questions of the child delegates.

BEYOND THE WORLD CONGRESS

Participants from the Second Children's World Congress will be involved in:

- Promoting and strengthening children/youth groups/networks at local, national and international level.
- Following-up on the decisions and recommendations made during the Second World Congress (Children's Plan of Action)
- Meeting with different groups involved in decision-making at different levels to advocate for concrete actions based on their demands. The groups may include politicians, civil society leaders, and representatives from international organisations, such as UN specialised agencies and funding agencies.
- Participating in discussions on the eradication of child labour and promotion of universal, free, quality education.
- To pursue all available means to increase the level of support locally, nationally and internationally for free, compulsory and meaningful education, accessible for all girls and boys. The March will insist that children's education be a top priority in local, state/provincial and national budgets.
- Advocacy at local and national levels to ensure that the demands of the World Congress are heard and felt at all levels of decision-making.