



2ND CHILDREN'S WORLD CONGRESS ON CHILD LABOUR AND EDUCATION

New Delhi, India, 4-8 September 2005



Preface

Children are the Present... Their Voice is the Future

Once again, the children have proved that they are the leaders of today. They have all the courage and spirit to question those in power, and they have enough wisdom and vision to provide solution to many of the problems which adults think are complicated. More importantly, these children have emerged as icons of hope, rising from the most wretched conditions- former child slaves, victims of trafficking; physically, mentally and sexually exploited; socially excluded and oppressed. These children joined hands with a few committed youth leaders in the Second Children's World Congress on Child Labour and Education organised by Global March Against Child Labour and hosted by Bachpan Bachao Andolan from 4-8th September 2005 in New Delhi. "Why are the children studying in Government schools deprived of quality education? There is a facility of mid day meal in most of the Government schools, then why it is not taken seriously? What is done for those children who are forced to beg on streets and in many cases they are deprived of their hands, legs or even eyes to get people to sympathise? What are the laws against children being used as camel jockeys? Why is it that ILO does not concentrate on smaller countries like Ivory Coast?"

The questions kept pouring in and the adults with power, sitting on the podium, felt nervous about it. It is very difficult to face honesty; innocence and moral strength of a child, whose voice is still sacred and the words are straight, untouched by adult styled diplomacy. Thus, the diplomatic answers do not seem very satisfactory. The child delegates posed dozens of such question during the Accountability Session. Usually the people in power are invited "to bless and preach" children in schools and institutions. Children are showered with most beautiful phrases and words, sayings and poems, repeating the preciousness of childhood and the dignity of children. And, the leaders do not forget to narrate how good they have been with children and what "should" be done for their betterment.

Contrary to this, the accountability session tried to make the adults in position accountable to the children. It is not easy or convenient to defend the gap between words and deeds; promises and actions. The accountability session seeks to create a platform and a fearless opportunity for the victims, where the victims and authorities are brought face- to- face and the authorities are made accountable.

None present can ever forget the height of enthusiasm and hope generated in Success Stories session. It was a surprise for many in the audience when a 15-year-old former domestic servant Santosh Kumari, born and brought up in an urban slum in Jaipur, India, narrated her tale with a great sense of pride. She and her fellow children helped in the withdrawal of about 500 girls and boys from exploitative and hazardous work and enrolled them in schools. This was no mean achievement considering her tender years.

There is no comparison for the honesty and determination found in dozens of other children from 30 countries including Asia, Africa, Latin America, Europe, Middle East and North America. The congress was a combination of fun and intense work. Children held their head high when they sat on the back of an elephant or a camel during the joyful evenings and made adults nervous through the heavy bombardment of questions. One could see the perfect rhythm in their dancing and singing after the sessions and the same while articulating their aspirations and demands and while writing their declaration.



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Once again these children have proved how to break the geo-political boundaries and the language barriers. The Pakistani girls were crying while listening to Indian child delegates in a workshop, which was possible, as they understand each other's language, but what would you say to an Ethiopian girl who broke down listening to a Cambodian. What a perfect communication! It was not the language of words but the language of shared agonies, miseries, anger, hopes, dreams and future commitments. This was the true language of human love and compassion. They have proven once again that children have a lot to teach us.

The jam-packed auditorium applauded the collective wisdom of the child delegates shown in the historic Delhi Declaration. Child delegates from around the world, mostly former child labourers, have agreed on a declaration placing key demands on their governments and the international community and placing peace, elimination of child labour, universal education and poverty elimination and decent work for adults as the key interlinking priorities. After four days of discussions on the urgent need to eliminate child labour and provide universal education; and after exchanging their own experience of exploitation, abuse and denial of education, the children, drew the following key conclusions:

“Peace is the most basic human right. We have to ask ourselves why everyone is not able to have something so fundamental.” While living in peace, every child has not only a better chance of getting their rights, but also has a stronger potential to improve the world for their generations and those to come. The Delhi Congress echoed this sentiment, saying that terrorism and conflict is one of the greatest hindrances to a child's success. Child labour exists in all continents and some 180 million toil in its worst forms: bonded labour, sexual exploitation, drug trafficking, armed conflict and a wide range of work which injures their mental and physical health. Effective action, especially against trafficking, is urgently required. Most child labourers are denied access to education. Governments must provide compulsory, quality, formal and full time education, free of cost for all children, regardless of gender, race, religion, caste, ethnic or national origin or citizenship, economic status, language or disability. Children's participation at all levels must be ensured. The declaration concludes with the following inspiring words:

“We promise to continue to take action to eliminate child labour and make a better world for children. Now we ask all of you to join us, because only together can we truly achieve freedom for all. In this friendship, we will create a healthy and peaceful world for all.....We are the present, our voice is the future”

The Congress was not a singular event but one of the many activities in the movement against child labour and in pursuance of education for all. As an immediate follow up to the Congress, a group of three children, David and Rebecca from Peru and Suman from India joined a panel discussion with the Dutch Executive Director of the World Bank and the former Minister of Social Affairs of Netherlands, Mr. Ad Melkert; former Education Minister of Brazil, Senator Cristovam Buarque; veteran human rights activist Ms. Kerry Kennedy Cuomo and representatives from ILO, ICFTU, G-CAP, Child Labour Coalition, etc. at New York. This side event was organised by the Global March Against Child Labour (GMACL), Global Campaign for Education (GCE) and International Center on Child Labor and Education (ICCLE) to highlight the importance of inter-linkages between child labour, education and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The panel called upon the UN and the international community to recognise the importance of child labour elimination and education for all children as a pre-requisite for the achievement of the MDGs for the betterment of human kind. Rebecca, David and Suman also waved off balloons in front of the UN building along with other children and adults including UN's first lady Ms. Nene Annan,



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highlighting the demand for free and quality education for all. They were the representatives of solidarity on behalf of 3.5 million children who participated in 'Global Action Week on Education' in making and sending 5 million paper buddies under the slogan 'Send My Friend to School' before the G8 Summit in Gleneagles this July.



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Background

The first Children's World Congress on Child Labour was held in Florence, Italy, from 10th-13th May, 2004. The Congress was organised by the 'Global March Against Child Labour' and hosted by its European Coordinator along with the Italian Trade Unions. The event was attended by over 130 child delegates (including former child labourers and child activists). A total of 45 countries in the world participated in the congress. The child delegates were selected by children themselves through a fair and democratic process. This was meticulously done over the period of one year's deliberation as well as the national and regional consultations. The children assembled in Florence to share their views on the demand for a world free of child-labourers.

After four days of vigorous deliberation, workshop exercises, question-answer with leaders, law makers, international agencies and other stakeholders, the child delegates built and developed the Children's Declaration. The declaration was a zealous and powerful appeal to the world for ending child labour and making child rights a priority. The Congress concluded with a massive march that overwhelmed the city of Florence showing enthusiasm, strength and solidarity of both adults and children who united in the fight against child labour.

However, despite the grand success of the first congress held in Florence, it got deprived of valuable contributions as certain parts of the world could not be represented. A large number of children especially from Asia and Africa were unable to participate in the congress as they were denied visa by the Italian Government for security reasons. This brought about a drastic fall in the number of child delegates attending the congress.

The Second Children's World Congress on Child Labour and Education was organised by the 'Global March Against Child Labour', which was held in New Delhi, from 4th to 8th September, 2005. The Congress was hosted by its Indian core partner 'Bachpan Bachao Andolan (BBA)'. An independent event management group named 'Graphisads' was hired to provide all logistics, travel, accommodation, food and other necessary support.

A year after the first congress, children were now together once again! The second congress included child participants in addition to, decision-makers, beneficiaries and others. 200 child delegates and participants from 21 countries, mainly representing Asia and Africa attended this congress. Finally justice was not denied! They became united in sharing their experiences and proposed way-outs for ending the social plague that still affected the lives of more than 246 million children worldwide. Together they carried forward the torch of their predecessors, continuing their work with dedication and sincerity. They conscientiously worked towards transforming the appeal of the Children's Declaration to a Children's Plan of Action in order to fight child labour and achieve education for all.

Children at the 'Second Children's World Congress on Child Labour and Education', got the opportunity to come out of the shadows, raise their voices and make the world leaders accountable to their promises. Former child labourers and child advocates took centre stage, drawing from their own experiences, their opinions and urging for action to end child labour. Many of the child delegates had horrendous experiences to share and expressed their desire and dream to end child labour. Personal success stories "from exploitation to education" were demonstrated by the child delegates and their commitment and leadership skills were displayed through the drafting of the Delhi Declaration. A roadmap towards eliminating child labour and ensuing education for all, was proposed.



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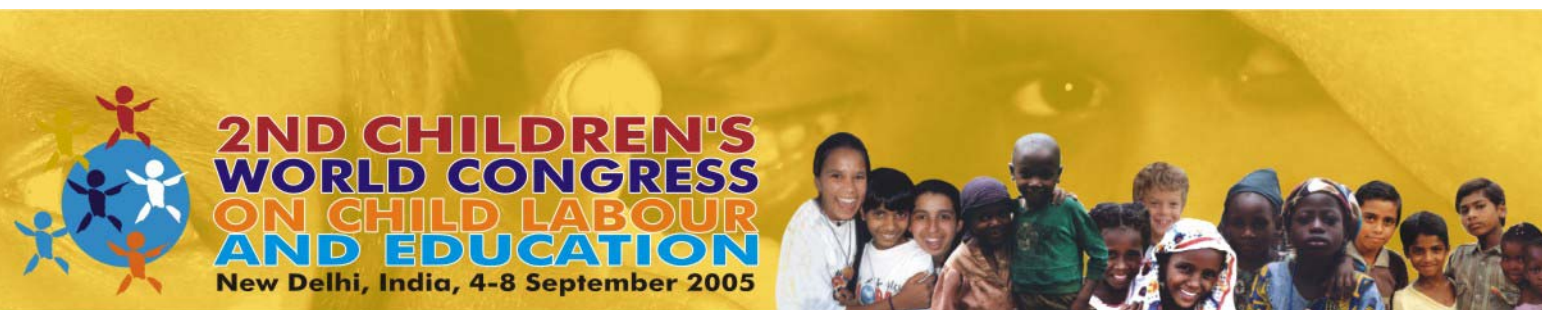
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The Second World Congress provided the children with an opportunity to emerge as social activists and world leaders in order to become the fore runners of the fight for childrens' rights. It offered a unique opportunity and power to the children in shaping the future growth and development of childrens' movement. The Congress carried forward the previous congress's agenda by true heart and spirit! The voices of the children assembled from different parts of the globe echoed,

"Today the power is in our hands. We define the future. We are the present and our voice is the future".

A distinctive aspect of the five-day event was the preparation of declaration by the children themselves. It elaborates a set of actions based on the Florence Declaration. The second congress highlighted the triangular paradigm inter-linking child labour, poverty and education. It emphasised the need to ensure peace and stability in eradicating child labour. The five-day event clearly displayed that in spite of hardships existing in various corners of the world, every child dreams and desires. Their rights simply cannot be snatched away!



Objectives

The basic aim of the congress was to empower children to lead the worldwide efforts for ending child labour and ensuring free and quality education to all.

OBJECTIVE	ACTION	OUTCOME
<p>To provide a platform to the children for interaction and collective participation, especially the ones who were denied visas for attending the first congress.</p>	<p>Second Children's World Congress on Child Labour and Education organised in New Delhi by Global March and hosted by Bachpan Bachao Andolan</p>	<p>122 children selected for the Florence Congress from 21 countries (mainly from Africa and Asia who were denied visa) participated actively in the Second Children's World Congress. Another 100 children from different parts of India participated in the Congress as observers.</p>
<p>To share their opinions, experiences and ideas and learn from each other.</p>	<p>Various sessions and workshops were designed with the aid of professional facilitating (children focused) organisation to provide the participating children with a platform for sharing and learning.</p>	<p>Ice-Breaking Session: All children participated actively in various ice-breaking workshops. Recap from Florence: Children who had previously participated in the Florence Congress introduced and gave a brief recap of the Florence Congress Country Presentation: This session saw children from 21 countries analysing their country situation on child labour, child trafficking, education and peace. Successful Stories and Best Practices: 42 children shared their stories, motivations and inspirations. Recreational Workshop: Children in 3 groups participated in capacity building workshops. Group Discussions: All children participated in the GDs.</p>
<p>To empower them in emerging as leaders in the struggle against child labour.</p>	<p>Selection of children in a democratic manner by the children themselves during the recreational workshops to chair the joint sessions. Accountability Session designed to</p>	<p>All children and joint sessions were chaired and conducted by selected/ elected children, with minimal adult intervention. Children asked pointed and succinct questions to the panel of adult child rights experts and office</p>



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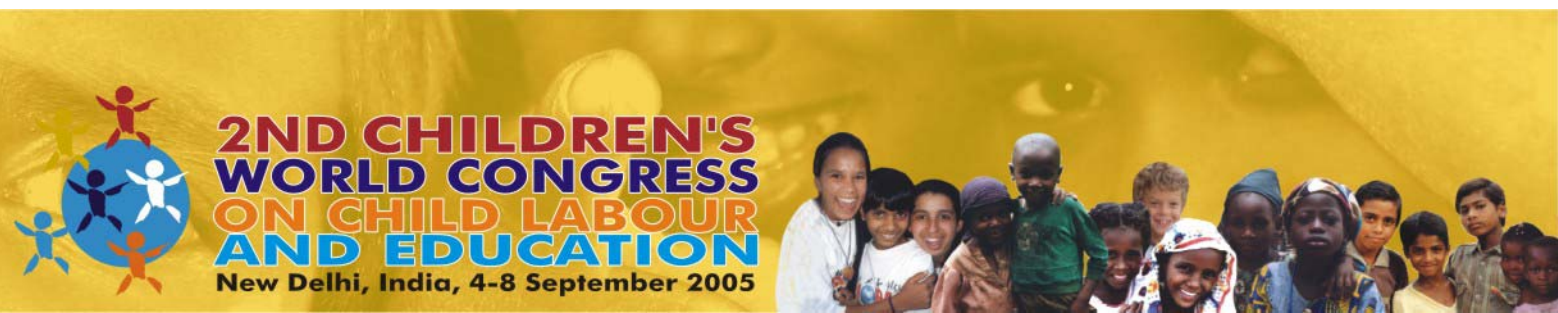
OBJECTIVE	ACTION	OUTCOME
	empower children to seek answers from accountable adults.	bearers.
To formulate a Children's Plan of Action and implement the Declaration of the first world congress, which was constituted by the children in the first congress.	6 Group Discussions were organised to facilitate the understanding of the Children's (Florence) Declaration and to provide them with a space to transform it.	The Delhi Declaration formulation by the children on the foundation of the Florence Children's Declaration provides a roadmap for the elimination of child labour, provision of education for all and gives a clear emphasis on establishing peace as a fundamental right.
To strengthen the Children's Reference Group duly elected by the child participants in the First World Congress.	Introduction and Recap from Florence Congress session designed Group Discussion session among the Florence Children's Reference Group	Children from the Florence Children's Reference Group introduced and gave a process recap of the Florence Congress. Children of the Florence Children's Reference Group participated in a group discussion wherein they deliberated on the progress and initiatives taken by them since the Florence Congress and map a future direction
To elect the new child leaders. The new Children's Reference Group will take lead to facilitate the communication, coordination and implementation of the decisions taken at the world congresses (Declaration/Plan of Action).	Workshops designed and conducted in a child friendly manner that facilitated the election/ selection of Children's Reference Group democratically by the child participants,	Children's Reference Group elected democratically. A member of the newly elected Children's Reference Group along with two other children participated in a panel discussion in New York on "Child Labour and MDGs" with the Delhi Declaration at the time of 2005 UN World Summit immediately after the World Congress.
To represent the voices of children in global, regional, or national forums and in discussions and actions on child labour.	Global March, Global Campaign for Education and International Center on Child Labor and Education organised a parallel discussion – "Child Labour and MDGs" to the UN Summit in New York on 13 September 2005.	Three former child slaves, including one member of the newly elected Children's Reference Group participated in the panel discussion. The children carried the Delhi Declaration with them and reiterated their demands to the World leaders for an urgent implementation of children's demands.
To strengthen, broaden and consolidate a worldwide child and youth movement against child labour through the	Election of the Children's Reference Group consisting mainly of former child labourers and a few child activists	The Children's Reference Group members committed to strengthen and broaden their network in time to come. The Global March will facilitate this



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establishment of a strong network.		process by providing necessary support. Already email accounts have been started for the members by the Global March.
To remind governments to fulfil their promises of ratifying and implementing ILO Conventions 182 and 138.	<p>Elected Members of Parliament (of India) and concerned officials were invited to participate in the Congress</p> <p>Accountability session designed to remind the world leaders of their commitments</p> <p>Formulation of the Delhi Declaration</p>	<p>The concerned Ministers, Members of Parliament and officials in the Government of India and representatives of the UN/donor agencies present in the Congress committed in translating their promises into actions.</p> <p>In the Accountability session, the children again reminded the world leaders of their promises and urged them to take immediate action.</p>
To strengthen the struggle against child labour and provide education for all by involving the civil society members, trade unions, teachers unions, NGOs, and other stakeholders.	Adult Panel Discussions were organised on the issue of child labour, education and MDGs involving all segments of the civil society.	Consensus among the various civil society players and organisations to act in convergent and complimentary manner. Wide representation from all walks of the civil society, including Trade Unions, Teachers Unions, Child Rights Organisations, NGOs, bi-lateral and multi-lateral organisations, academia, media, business, students, parents and other stakeholders.
To demand for synergising efforts on the elimination of child labour, achieving education for all, poverty reduction and restoring security and peace as one of the corner pillars of child rights.	Children and Adult Panel Discussion Sessions were designed to explore the synergistic efforts on the elimination of child labour, achieving education for all, poverty reduction and restoring security and peace as one of the corner pillars of child rights.	The Delhi Declaration categorically proclaims the inclusion of peace and security as a fundamental right.
To urge international organisations for increasing their support to programmes aimed at eradicating child labour, poverty reduction, achieving universal, free, and quality education for all children.	<p>Group Discussion and subsequent drafting of the Children's Declaration aimed at helping children understand the importance of solidarity and support from developed countries and donor agencies.</p> <p>The accountability session was designed to provide an opportunity for the children to remind</p>	<p>The Delhi Declaration demands a greater allocation of development aid both by the governments and the international organisations.</p> <p>The Declaration has been widely circulated through newspapers, websites, and its distribution will continue as to reach the maximum of people.</p>



OBJECTIVE	ACTION	OUTCOME
	these institutions of their role and what is expected from them.	
To transform events into processes of empowerment among the children in order to establish self-confidence and self-esteem in creating a new world, free from child labour	All sessions designed to facilitate uninhabited interaction among children. Workshops designed to empower children by inculcating self-confidence and leadership skills.	With the successful implementation of the Declaration children will directly or indirectly collaborate with institutions and other stakeholders and will continue their lobby to act with respect to their demands.



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Proceedings of the Congress

Sunday, September 04, 2005

The first day of the five-day Second Children's World Congress began on 4th September at 10.00 a.m at the SCOPE Convention Centre, SCOPE Complex, Lodhi Road, New Delhi. The bright sunny morning at the venue buzzed with activities as child delegates kept pouring in from around thirty countries of the world for registration.

The children hailed from varied backgrounds and countries. Some seemed shy and some hesitant while many tried to look quite at home. An initial rapport was developed through group activities and ice-breaking exercises in order to encourage free and uninhibited interaction. It was important to ensure that the children felt comfortable in each other's company, so that they could display their concerns and opinions freely and in unison. To bring them all on a single platform, the children participated in different group activities, which included creating montage of still images showcasing the plight of child labourers, writing, composing and singing a multi-lingual international song on child labour, making paintings and installations, exploring the realities in the lives of child labourers, their homes, families, aspirations and tribulations.

The pre-lunch session divided the children into three groups - story telling, music and painting. Each of this group had about 50 children with two facilitators helping to interact with each other. The workshops for the groups of children were held in three separate halls: the Tansen Room, Amir Khusro Room and the Annexe. The ice breaking activities not only helped the children know and understand each other better but also helped them to appreciate each other and portray before others their own feelings, beliefs and stories, in spite of diverse background, languages and attitudes. It was during the ice-breaking session that various children were selected to chair the inaugural and other sessions of the Congress. The ice-breaking session was facilitated and coordinated by 'Shiksha', an NGO group with resource persons from diverse backgrounds and specialising in facilitating children's programmes.

The inaugural session began in the post lunch session in the auditorium. The chairing of this session was conducted by young Amarlal, a child delegate. Amarlal, 12 years old, was a bonded child labourer working in stone quarries. While emphasising the importance of education in the lives of the children, little Amarlal, insisted that every child should have access to go to school.

Shri Arjun Singh, Honourable Minister of Human Resource Development, Government of India was the Chief Guest of the inaugural session. He inaugurated the World Congress by lighting the lamp along with others. Mr. Kailash Satyarthi, Chairperson, Global March Against Child Labour and Bachpan Bachao Andolan, delivered the welcome speech. Other speakers from the International Council included Mr. Simon Steyne, Trade Union Congress of UK and a worker member of the ILO Governing Body and the IPEC Steering Committee, Mr. Elie Jouen, Deputy Secretary General of the World Teachers' Confederation, Education International, Sh. Ravi Prakash Verma, Member of Parliament, Chairperson of Parliamentary Forum on Education and Ms Anna Victoria Vasquez, Head, CESIP from Peru.

Mr Kailash Satyarthi while extending a warm welcome to all expressed his deep respect and regard for the children who in spite of being exposed to all sorts of exploitation had braved it all and were able to make it to the congress today. He stated that they were icons of hope in today's world emanating vibrations of energy around us. He was convinced that children and youth today were not prepared to wait anymore for opportunities to plod along. He referred to the ILO conventions on child rights and the unfulfilled target of meeting the programme on 'Education For



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All' by 2000, now postponed to 2015. He stated that "Only two and a half day's global military expenditure was enough to impart education to all the world's children". Mr. Satyarthi referred to the induction of a triangular paradigm in our planning and action programmes in order to achieve the goals on child labour, poverty alleviation and education for all. Mr. Satyarthi asked for an urgency, honesty and determination in response by all concerned.

The chief guest Mr Arjun Singh, Honourable Minister of Human Resource Development, Government of India in his inaugural address referred to the children as 'blossoms in the dust', which the society prefers to bypass. He said, these were the catalytic agents that the society prefers to ignore. He expressed his pleasure and gratitude to Mr. Satyarthi, for holding the global march at an opportune time. The Honb'le minister announced that the next parliament session would be drawing up a charter in introducing a Bill for constitution of a Commission at national and state levels. This will exclusively deal with all issues pertaining to children and see that the existing programmes are implemented properly and also suggest measures for their improvement. Further, he added that the Children's Declaration prepared by the delegates of the Children's Congress would be seriously considered by him and his ministry.

The voices of the children echoed from the podium loud and clear towards a common action plan with the chief objective of eliminating child labour and exploitation. Though they spoke in different languages, each one of them had the same message solidarity, friendship, peace and education. Mesfin from Ethiopia, Pauline from Belgium, Carlos from Mexico, Emily from United States and Alireza from Iran brought welcome messages from their countries.

Mr Simon Steyne, the Global Trade Union leader, specified that child labour did not exist in vacuum and was not a charity either. He stated that every dollar that is invested in education fetches seven dollars in return. Failure to act has increased child labour over the last decade.

Mr Elie Jouen, Deputy Secretary General, World's Teacher's Confederation, Education International stated that the coalition between Education and Global March was essential, which has been established. He suggested a follow up to this congress be organised. He asked the children that they ought to go to their teachers for consultation during the time of need.

Mr. Ravi Prakash Verma, Member of Parliament, Chairperson, Parliamentary Forum on Education and a long time Bachpan Bachao Andolan activist, was the guest of honour. He pledged that the new generation will certainly bring success. It will soon be demanding food, school, sport activities and love from the society.

Mr. R. S. Chaurasia, General Secretary, Bachpan Bachao Andolan, delivered the vote of thanks and stated that there was a gradual change in all the laws. As a result he was confident that child labour will get eradicated some day. He was sure that the second congress will emerge with concrete recommendations to meet the same.

Monday, September 05, 2005

The second day conducted parallel sessions for both adults and the children.

The children's session began with a recap from Florence Congress presented by the Children's Reference Group. Pauline from Belgium was the first speaker. Other speakers of the session were Emily (United States), Alireza (Iran), Raju (Nepal), Rotana (Cambodia) Carlos (Mexico), Nanase (Japan) and Mukesh (India). These child delegates stated the main theme of Florence Declaration and the objectives of assembling together once again for the Second Children's



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World Congress at New Delhi. The children also raised the issue that many children from Asian and African countries were denied visas for attending the Florence Congress due to security reasons. They were happy that those children were now able to come and participate in the second congress.

The young representatives from all corners of the globe read out parts of the Florence Declaration, focussing on peace, education and elimination of child labour. These children expressed their own interpretations of the declaration, in their native languages.

The session that followed before tea break, was a country presentation by child delegates on the situation of child labour, child trafficking, education and peace of their respective countries. Child representatives from each country presented their country scenario. Each of these child speakers brought to light the burning issues in their countries. In spite of their tender ages, the messages were clear and focused. They wanted holistic development of children and they wanted their Governments to keep their promises. During this session children from 14 countries were able to present their country situation, while child representatives from 7 other countries gave their country's presentation the next day due to paucity of time.

The parallel session for the adults was a panel discussion on 'Situational Analysis by regional & national coordinators on ILO conventions and the Dakar Framework of Action'. This session was chaired by Mr. Elie Jouen, Deputy Secretary General, World's teacher's confederation, Education International. Other speakers included Mr. Patrick Schoof from Child Labour Coalition, USA and Mr. Simon Steyne, the Global Trade Union leader.

Mr. Simon Steyne refreshed the participants by talking about the content, meaning, and conventions briefly. Talking about the ILO convention 138 and 182, Mr. Simon, emphasized the urgency to ratify these by all governments. He stated that, about 180 million are in the worst forms of child labour meaning majority of the children are involved in hazardous work. Referring to the triangular paradigm and the efforts put in by the Global March he was hopeful that India will ratify these.

The chair, Mr. Elie Jouen refreshed the participants on the Dakar Framework of Action. He said that several UN agencies like the UNESCO, UNDP and others have declared to eliminate child labour in 10 years. While elaborating the six main goals of Global commitment of the Dakar conference, he stated that the international community and governance had agreed upon it. He pointed out some of the main issues like the low level of budget allocation for the education sector by many governments. At least 6% of the budget is required to be diverted for this sector while hardly 2 to 5 % were being presently allocated by most governments. He stated that very few of the rich countries barring the exception of Netherlands, Sweden, Denmark and Norway, contribute 0.7 % of their GNP for the development of smaller and poorer countries.

Mr. Patrick Schoof from Child Labour Coalition, USA, before speaking invited the regional and national coordinators to come up and speak vis-à-vis the ILO Convention and the Dakar Framework of Action.

Several regional and national coordinators from various parts of the world provided their inputs. Ms. Susan from Iran, Mr. Ivan Rodriguez from Costa Rica, Central America, Mr. Sossou Serge from Guinea, West Africa, Mr Gauri Pradhan from Nepal, Mr. Isaac Tomas Ruiz from Peru, South America, Ms. Suman from India, Mr. Rafiq Khan of Pakistan and Ms Mariarosa from Italy, spoke about their understanding on the basis of experiences of their countries.



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Mr. Patrick Schoof, pointed out that child labour coalition hardly had any interaction from Canada. He said that Canada has been left alone and efforts need to be made to link it up. He stated that as far as USA is concerned, with relation to both the ILO conventions it has been particularly disappointing. There was a need for pesticides regulation and child enforcement regulatory. Quoting from a survey result, Mr Schoof, revealed that children would leave school for months on end during the agricultural season and would spend more than 12 hours per day working in Mac Donald's. He emphasised that nothing much is being done for them and that there was an urgent need to look into these issues.

The post lunch session was about 'Successful Stories and Best Practices'. The session dealt with initiatives taken by youth advocates of respective countries/ communities in order to combat child labour, inspirations, motivators and impediments. The session was chaired by a child delegate, Lilibeth a former domestic labourer from Philippines. The chief guest of the session was Mr. Kapil Sibal, Honourable Minister for Science and Technology, Government of India. Also present on dias were Mesfin (Ethiopia), Bhagiram (Nepal), Kamil (India) and Jenifer (Costa Rica).

Young Lilibeth spoke about her life as a domestic slave and how she had been rescued. Today she works as an activist volunteer with a child rights organisation. Stories of exploitation, trafficking and torture poured in from child delegates. Each child had a story to narrate and was confident to speak about it. Children from Belgium, Cambodia, Costa Rica, Iran, Japan, USA, Mexico, Macedonia, Ethiopia, Nepal, Philippines, Ivory Coast, Spain, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and India shared their stories.

Mr. Kapil Sibal listened patiently and intently to the child delegates. He was speechless for a moment listening to the horrific experiences that some of the children had experienced. He commented on the vulnerability of children and how they become easy preys to exploitation. He mentioned that it was the duty of the global community to ensure that children were protected and sheltered. Mr Sibal is also the Chairperson of the Committee on Free and Compulsory education Bill under Central Advisory Board of Education and was keen to ensure free access to compulsory education for children aged 6- 14 years of age. He assured the children that the Bill would be tabled at the earliest in the Parliament. He stated that while 37,000 crores of rupees were being spent on education of children in the age group of 6 to 14 years, 80,000 crores of rupees were being spent on the defence sector in the country.

In the post tea session, while the children were busy drafting and selecting committee members, from their respective groups, an ongoing parallel session for the adult panel discussions was on 'Trade Union and Teachers' Unions Session: Social Dialogue in the fight against Child labour and Education for All'.

The session was chaired by Mr. Simon Steyne, International Officer, Trade Union Congress. The panellists included Mr. Elie Jouen, Deputy Secretary General, Education International, Mr. Ram Pal Singh, President of All India Primary Teachers Federation (AIPTF), Comrade Shamim Faizee, CITU, Comrade Krishna Chakraborti, UTUC, and Mr. Amrish Trivedi, CFTUI.

The chair highlighted the objectives of the session, which dealt with the trade union policies and activities against child labour and providing education for all. He spoke about the importance of a social dialogue for international, national and economic policies.

Mr. Elie Jouen was the first presenter and spoke on the aspect of legal legislation. Unions he thought could exist in association with the freedom of association. He said, attention needs to be



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given on the quality of education. Thus at the international level, more attention is being given to recruitment, training of teachers and quality of education.

Comrade Shamim Faizee from CITU, spoke about the triangular paradigm, and pointed out that the third paradigm of poverty alleviation programme was missing. He felt the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan was faulty and education policy should be so devised such that children are able to go to schools. Awareness has to be based on realities.

Comrade Krishna Chakraborti of UTUC, was of the belief that only Socialism can eliminate child labour. In capitalist societies, owners remain owners and workers remain as slaves. He insisted that only a revolution can change the system. Eliminating child labour cannot be possible without changing the socio-economic system. Laws needed to be changed in favour of child labour.

Mr. Amrish Trivedi, (CFTUI), representing WCL, stated that despite all, the situation is not a diminishing one. Although convention 182 has been massively ratified, the implementation process has been weak. The WCL in 1998 did play a major role in the Global March. He was certain that ratifying the convention 138 is the only solution. Mr. Ram Pal Singh, President of All India Primary Teachers Federation (AIPTF) stated that the history of teachers' organisation in India has been remarkable. The teachers have struggled and sacrificed their lives during the freedom movement. Criticising the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, he said it was a total failure. Results were to be achieved by 2003 but we are now progressing into 2006.

The chair concluded the session by stating that the greatest incidence of child labour is in the informal economy. He agreed that the major issues were a lack of public resources, lack of implementation and no common ground for lobbying.

Tuesday, September 06, 2005

The morning of the third day of Second Children's World Congress was most active with six parallel sessions for children in addition to two parallel sessions for the adult panel discussion. The press conference with some of the children, who showed exemplary courage and leadership, also took place.

The day began with the children opting for specific themes on child labour and education. The five themes were:

- A. Child Slavery, Bondage and other Worst Forms of Child Labour
- B. Children in Agriculture
- C. Child Trafficking
- D. Children in Armed Conflict, Terrorism, Peace and Security
- E. Child Labour and Role of Education

The sixth group constituted of child delegates who participated in the Florence Congress in 2004. This group discussed about their actions and activities undertaken since the Florence Congress and also deliberated on the ways that need to be forged ahead. Every member came up with suggestions for activities that the group as a whole and children as individuals would undertake to combat child labour.

After prolonged and exhaustive discussions the children presented the outcomes of their discussions to all present in the post lunch session. Honourable Dr. Justice V.S. Malimath, Former Chief Justice of Kerala and Karnataka High Court in India was the Chief Guest for this



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session. Former Judge of the Supreme Court of India and member of the National Human Rights Commission, Justice Malimath expressed his appreciation on the clarity of understanding about the outcomes of complex issues that were presented by the children. He encouraged the children to carry on with the struggle against child labour and promote the cause of 'Education for All children'.

The ILO Workshop on Labour Inspection and Child Labour session was chaired by Mr. R. S. Chaurasia, General Secretary, Bachpan Bachao Andolan. The first speaker was Mr. Simon Steyne, International Officer of Trade Union Congress. He mentioned the significant role played by Labor Inspectors to deal with child labour issues. The Convention 182 of ILO suggested ways to help Labor Inspectors to perform their function properly. Mr. Tuomo Poutiainen, Child Labour Monitoring Specialist, ILO IPEC from Geneva presented his talk through PowerPoint presentation on how child labour could be detected and stopped early. Sensitisation of labour inspectors towards child labour would go a long way to eradicate child labour.

There were two parallel sessions of adult panel discussion in the forenoon itself.

The first parallel session in the forenoon was on Peace Initiatives: Linking education, child labour, MDGs and Peace/ Elaboration of a Common Plan of Action. Dr. Sudhanshu Joshi, Executive Director of the International Centre for Child Labour and Education, Washington DC, chaired the session. It was an interactive discussion which highlighted the issue of peace as a pre-requisite for holistic development of nations in general and children in particular.

The first speaker Mr. Patrick Schoof from the Child Labour Coalition said that it is difficult to state whether the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) were a step forward or a step backward as there is no inclusion of the aspect of child labour. He pointed out that the US contributes only 0.15 % of their GDP as against the commitment of 0.7%. Mr. T.K. Mathew from Deepalaya India, stated that Education is a pre-condition to development and that Peace is an outcome of shared living and access to information. Mr. Anil Kumar Singh of "Wada Na Todo" (Don't Break Promises) campaign agreed that people were not even aware about MDGs. For us, he said MDGs are vague commitments so we need to focus on national issues. Mr Amit Mitra, a social scientist and child rights specialist revealed from his experiences in the field that most people believe that their situation is because of God's will or that they have not worked hard enough. The ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Agriculture need to come together but have never been involved in any structural reforms.

Mr. Kailash Satyarthi, Chairperson, Global March Against Child Labour and President, Global Campaign for Education firmly believed that elimination of child labour can not be achieved without eliminating poverty. Referring to both the UNESCO's Dakar framework of Action and the MDGs, he said, the element of child labour has not been referred to at all. Talking about the massive concentration of workers in the unorganised sector he was sceptical about the talks on minimum wages. He stated that a child's education costs about 380 dollars per year while maintaining a soldier would need an expenditure of 20, 000 dollars annually. Dr. Shanta Sinha of the MV Foundation stated that it was basically a battle of ideology. Mostly child labourers are in the conflict situations. The conflicts are usually camouflaged. She said that the Indian national goals are much ahead of the MDGs. The national goals have been achieved and hence cannot be ignored.

Valuable inputs came from the other members of the distinguished panel which included Mr. Bruno Oudmeyer, Country Director of Plan International India, Mr. Scott Beale from the US Embassy, India and Mr. Dilli Choudhary from BASE, Nepal.



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The second afternoon session on adult panel discussion dealt with 'Education for All: The Key Strategy to Combat Child Labour, The role of International Institutions, Governments and Social Partners and the need for Convergent Policies, Planning and Action'. This session was chaired by Dr. Bupinder Zutshi a social scientist and population studies specialist from the Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. The discussions centred on the ways and means to ensure free, compulsory, equal and good quality education are accessible to all children. Mr. Elie Jouen from Education International, Belgium presented an estimated cost of providing education to all to the tune of US \$8 billion during a period of 10 years and if the industrialized countries contributed 0.7% of their GNP, the total amount mobilised would be \$12 billion. Thus it would become financially feasible. The lack of political will is the major hindrance, he said. Dr. Shantha Sinha from MV Foundation India said that in-school children are as important as children out of school. She said that all mobilisations must result in institution building.

Ms. Enakshi Ganguly from HAQ Centre for Child Rights, India stated that no differentiation should be made between the various forms of child labour. In fact child labour in general should be eliminated. She pointed out that lack of political will is the main cause of child labor problem. Ms. Lindy Van Vliet from NOVIB, Netherlands spoke about the various educational programmes in India that NOVIB funded. She stated that the local area condition plays an important role to ensure accessibility of education for all.

Dr. Bupinder Zutshi presented his paper through power point presentation. Taking Andhra Pradesh as a case study, he stated that the state of Andhra Pradesh for the last one decade has received the highest funding from several agencies but despite this, child labour in the state is rampant. School drops outs are more in rural areas and there is significant gender variation. The prevalence of the practice of para-teachers has also affected the quality of education.

All panellists stressed on prioritising education for all children and more importantly on the need for retention of children in schools.

Wednesday, September 07, 2005

The forenoon session of the fourth day of congress was devoted for deliberations on Accountability. The children had been waiting with baited breath for this session so that they could come up with hard-hitting and probing questions openly. The panel had a wide representation with a galaxy of speakers waiting to take up the children's curiosity and queries. Mr. Guy Thijs, Director ILO-IPEC, Ms. Lindy van Vliet from Novib, Netherlands, Dr. Bharti Sharma, Chairperson, Child Welfare Committee, Government of India, Mr. Harry Sethi, Director, Socio-Economic Development Corporation, FICCI and Mr Amit Mitra, a social scientist and child rights specialist presented their respective perspectives and tried to appropriately satisfy the questions put up by the children. Parvati Tiwari, a child delegate and a former child domestic labour from Nepal, chaired the session. Also present on dias were Beauty (India), Mary (Malawi), Emily (USA), Al Amin (Bangladesh).

The afternoon Session was graced by the presence of Mr. Oscar Fernandes, Minister of State for Statistics and Programme Implementation, Government of India. He was extremely appreciative of the work the children were doing and encouraged them to actively participate in the struggle to end child labour.

Presentation of the Children's Declaration: The Children's Declaration drafted by the assembled child leaders and child activists after 3 days of deliberation consisted of a charter of demands and



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a roadmap to eliminate child labour and provide free quality education for all in a peaceful and secure environment.

The children and the declaration received a standing ovation from the audience. After the presentation of the declaration, all the participating children got on stage to sing a song on child labour. This international song had been written, composed and sung by children from different parts of the world and it was sung in their own languages. This was followed by a skit on child labour, child exploitation and hopes of future and freedom, designed and enacted by the child participants. Children further presented the paintings and installations prepared during the ice-breaking sessions. The common thread that bound all these varied forms of expression was the children's urgent demand to end child labour!

At the end of a fruitful four-days of deliberations and discussions, the venue shifted to a resort on the outskirts of Delhi. All child delegates, participants and adults from across the world were enthralled by a gala cultural evening, a glimpse of the various traditions and cultures through dances from different parts of India. The evening was complete with a live band and a spread fit enough for the royals. The festival of colours referred to as Holi, was celebrated with all the children enjoying smearing each other with colours. It was an unforgettable evening to a memorable event.

Thursday, September 08, 2005

It was the International Literacy Day and the culmination of the Second Children's World Congress. The Global March Against Child Labour and Bachpan Bachao Andolan (BBA), led a powerful march to demand an end to child labour and provide free quality education for all. It consisted of 200 child delegates and participants from 21 countries, former bonded and child labourers, participants, delegates, NGO organisations, academia, children and other stake holders. The march originated from Rajghat and terminated at the Ramlila grounds. Thousands of children, women and men crowded the venue at Ramlila grounds demanding "Let all Roads Lead to School".

"We want quality education now", "No more tools in tiny hands", "We want books, we want toys", "Education for Liberation, Liberation for education", "Down Down Child Labour" and the like filled the air from Rajghat to Ramlila Maidan. The goodwill ambassador of Bachpan Bachao Andolan and famous Ghazal Maestro, Pankaj Udhas flagged off the march.

Mr Kailash Satyarthi, Chairperson, Global March and Bachpan Bachao Andolan underlined that the governments, national and international, UN agencies, intergovernmental agencies, the civil society, the media, the business sector and all others must act with urgency and honesty to fulfil the demands of the children. The time for empty promises are long gone, it is now time to act for the sake of our future and our children.

Children from Ethiopia, Pakistan, Philippines, Cameroon, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Iran, Mexico, Malawi, Costa Rica, Japan, and Nepal were among the countries that joined hands with children from states of Bihar, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Orissa in India along with thousands of men, women and children in this march.

'The Times of India', the largest circulated National Daily Newspaper in India reported that 50,000 children, men and women participated in the march.



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Children's Declaration

We are the Present, Our Voice Is the Future

We, the delegates of the Second Children's World Congress on Child Labour and Education, have come to the city of New Delhi, India, from all different parts of the world, speaking different languages, growing up with different cultures and backgrounds, because we all know that child labour must be eliminated. This Congress was organised to rectify the injustice during the last Congress in Italy when children from Asia and Africa were denied visas to attend. These children felt much discriminated against and their voices and opinions were greatly missed during the discussions in Italy. Now we have revised the Florence Declaration to include their ideas.

Each country had a different selection process to choose the delegates. All children who participated in the selection process had either faced child labour in their own experience or had learned about it and joined the fight against child labour. With the passion and desire to solve this terrible crime against 246 million children around the world, we were all qualified to take part in this Congress. This is why the discussions for the last 3 days have been very fruitful.

Before we even start to discuss about child labour, we must appreciate that the only way the children can have their rights is in the situation of peace. Peace is the most basic human right. We have to ask ourselves why everyone is not able to have something so fundamental. While living in peace, every child has not only a better chance of getting their rights, but also has a stronger potential to improve the world for their generations and those to come. This sentiment was echoed by the Delhi Congress, saying that terrorism and conflict is one of the greatest hindrances to a child's success. Firstly, many children are involved in the production and execution of ammunitions for war. Media and entertainment are promoting hateful ideas and propaganda, which perpetuated war, crime, and violence. Conflict is also often propagated by the corrupt political heads for their personal benefit and interest. In that way, a cycle of hate and distrust between religions and ethnic group's crops up, when in reality the conflict could be truly only between businessmen and leaders. Also, this gives way to warranted distrust of the government. When the government is seen as ineffective or corrupt, people become aggravated and desperate so they turn to terrorist groups. The government of the world have to see education, unemployment, poverty, terrorism and child labour as connected entities. While children have no choice in nations waging wars, they are almost always the most affected.

While the governments put an enormous amount of money to weapons and war, there are still children who cannot read or write. They have no homes to live in or food to eat. The government must take the needs of children as a priority. They must provide all that is necessary to live while still protecting our rights.

When we started discussing about child labour, we found that many issues were common to all different parts of the world. We heard personal stories from the children about; child trafficking, sexual exploitation, working on fishing boat, cleaning car, selling things on street or in market, pornography, collecting garbage, transportation and shipping, brick making and demolishing, the making of medical utensils and other dangerous materials, drug trafficking, domestic servants, bounded labourers, farming, mining, weaving carpets, child soldiers, working in factories and sweatshops. Majority of the children are engaged in agriculture which is extremely dangerous. These children are misused everyday and have no one to speak for them.



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While most people and governments are aware these problems exist, they are hidden or just ignored. This does not change the fact they all are very dangerous to the physical and mental well being of a child. These forms of child labour must be stopped. Most of the children have expressed that they are losing faith in the governments because of their empty promises. They have made many promises to end child labour through education and better social services. But they do not act. Their promises are not met with real commitment or resources.

Trafficking of children is a major problem faced by the world today. Children are sold, forced into prostitution and sexually abused, their kidneys are taken out and sold, and even eyes are sold by unscrupulous traffickers. Governments must fight against this. They must enforce the laws they already have. But today's laws may not be enough so they must make more effective ones. The governments in countries where trafficking happens must work together to have laws which can criminalise the traffickers. They need to make strict laws regarding trafficking and implement them. The security forces of bordering countries must work together because all instances of inter-country trafficking happened because of neglectful or corrupt officials who see the problem and profit from it or do nothing.

Another practice that causes child labour is child marriage. When children marry young, they often have to discontinue their education. They have children younger and most of times have many more. This can cause over population and poverty, two factors related to child labour.

As it is a responsibility of governments to protect our rights, end child labour, and provide free, equal education and good quality, we have many demands for the governments. Governments must provide compulsory quality education free of cost. Education must also be provided equally to all children regardless of gender, race, economic status, religion, places of birth, citizenships, caste, disability, indigenouness or languages. Every country has to make sure the issue of child labour is taught in every school.

The position of teacher is a respected authority in a society so when a teacher is chosen he or she should be knowledgeable, properly educated, child friendly, and should refrain from using physical or mental abuse or humiliation as means of discipline. There should be a mechanism to check that the teachers are doing their job well and these laws to provide education. In order to do this, teachers must be provided with a good standard of living, meaning higher wages, housing which is close to the school and or transportation. They have to teach without discrimination or bias.

School facilities must be improved. Unsafe buildings, unsanitary conditions, lack of separate toilets for girls and boys, clean water, electricity, lighting, fans or heaters, equipment, libraries, laboratories, lack of health care facilities; all these are barriers to good quality education., It has been proven that when students in developing nations are given food at school, attendance increases and performance improves. Many girls are left out of schools because they have to care for their younger brothers and sisters therefore we propose that government crèches are mandated. There should be a student union where student's concerns and ideas are addressed. This union should be able to create a set of guidelines that teachers and administrators must follow. The gap between rich and poor is evident in school. Public schools are not now providing the same standards as private institutions. This gap must be filled.

After disasters, educations must be continued. Poverty of a country, hardship of a country will only increase if we do not provide for education.



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When we speak about the governments, we talk not only about the role of national governments but also other governmental bodies at international and regional levels that are responsible for protecting our rights. First and most importantly, governments must listen to children. The governments must make the issues of the children a priority and include children in the decision-making that affects their lives. Governments must also provide opportunities for children to participate and express their opinions.

Governments must criminalise child labour but should never criminalise the children. They must create and carry out laws that strictly punish the adults who have abused children for their own interest. Governments must support the children if they want to bring cases of them being used as child labourers to court, by providing a free attorney. Children should be able to turn in the people who have abused them without fear of getting trouble. These children must be rescued and rehabilitated.

Governments should encourage adults to work. Adult workers always have to be allowed to unionise in their workplace, because the union can help protect them from dangerous working conditions and provide them the minimum wage. It is important that adults are protected as workers so that the children do not have to work.

Governments must establish a National Plan of Action to end child labour. These plans should be made together with children. Governments must make sure that overseas development aid (ODA) goes directly to its purpose and does not end up in the wrong hands.

Governments must make a system to put some trademarks for the products that are not made by child labourers.

Governments, not only should they work with other governments, they should also work with civil society and trade unions to be at most effective. In return, the civil society must understand the demands of the children and work together with them. NGOs also have to use the resources that they have honestly and directly for the children.

It is also parents' responsibility to listen to children. The children need love, respect and dignity. It is in the hands of parents to provide with happy and stable family life. Parents must talk about issues such as child sexual exploitation or abuse even when they are not comfortable because this is the only way a child will know his or her natural rights of safety and security. Parents must understand the importance of proper education no matter of the gender of the child.

Having identified the current situation of child labour and our demands from the adults, we now show our commitment and the role in ending child labour. We, the children, have to start initiatives to spread awareness about child labour in our own local communities and villages. We must educate each other about child labour, from a child to a child to promote child participation.

We must work at national level and establish a Children's Parliament, in every country, that is not just a symbol but a source of power for children to change the situations. This Parliament would elect a representative to the country's government. These representatives would also meet at a congress at regional and at international to look at the problems at a larger scale, and report back to their governments and local communities.



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We have to start a network of children so that we can keep contact with each other to be educated on the issue all over the world. This network will be made up of children from all over the world, and it will spread the stories of child labour and opinions. The network will help us plan more effective actions in our struggle against child labour. The network will also be a medium to report on the governments' progress in eliminating child labour. Also, we believe for the vigilance of this movement, children, both activists and child labourers must meet on a regular basis.

We believe that the use of art, dance, music and drama as a form of expression and means to spread awareness about child labour is very important. These are ways in which children from any background can connect with, understand and enjoy.

We must also use media to spread our voices. We would create our own form of media, such as newspaper developed by the children for the children, for us to freely express our opinion. Media also must be more friendly and tell the truth about child labour and help us combat child labour. We have to bring the efforts to end child labour out to the villages, where the fight is not as strong. Information about child labour sometimes only reaches cities and people in the villages do not have information about the dangers of child labour. We must get them involved.

We promise to continue to take action to eliminate child labour and make a better world for children. Now, we ask all of you to join us, because only together can we truly achieve freedom for all. In this friendship, we will create a healthy and peaceful world for all.

Today, the power is in our hands. We define the future.



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Children Extraordinaire

Lilibeth, Phillipines

I'm Lilibeth Masambox, 18 year old from Davao City, Southern part of Phillipines. I started to work at the age of 8 years in a farmland in my hometown, When I was 13 years old I migrated to Davao city to work as a domestic worker for 3 years. I went to school every day that was my dayoff from work. Instead of doing worthwhile things, I joined the Visayan Forum activities like leadership training, team building workshop. I became a member of SuMapi, a national oranisation of domestic workers. Then after participating in the school and the activities of Su Mapi, I was elected the President of Davao chapter of SuMapi. Today, I am 2nd year high school student and my role as the President is to organize members and activities like signature campaign for domestic worker bill and the celebration of the day of Domestic Workers in Davao city.

Suman, India

I had to start working along with my elder brother as domestic labour at the age of 5 years to sustain my sick mother and ourselves after my father who used to work as a rickshaw puller died. Soon after my 2 sisters also died and we migrated to my maternal uncle's place where my mother and elder brother worked as domestic labour. My family circumstances forced me to leave school and start work after my mother fell seriously ill. After sometime my mother got to know about Bachpan Bachao Andolan and I was sent to Bal Ashram, transitory rehabilitation center of freed child labourers. In Bal Ashram, I have learnt about children's rights and have also participated in motivating other children and parents to send children to school by participating in rallies like the Shiksha Yatra, an educational campaign to build pressure on the government to insure free, compulsory, quality and equal education for all. I have been enrolled by BBA in a formal school and today at 12 years, I am in class 9th. The big achievement for me is that coming from extremely poor conditions with no hope to study again, I got the opportunity to rejoin school and I achieved 77% marks in the Govt. Board Examination of class 8th . I also visited Pakistan in April last year for the campaign to promote Indo-Pak peace through cricket between children.

Bhagi Ram Chowdhry, Nepal

I used to work as domestic child labour since 5 years of age in a rich landorid's house. My parents were very poor, my family condition was very miserable. The landlord did not pay me anything; I was not even given enough food to eat. I was like his slave. I was not aware of my rights. Once the landlord hit me and I had to be admitted in hospital. I was admitted in school by BASE, it provided with all the facilities along with school materials. I am 15 years old now and in class 9th. I also now teach about child rights and human rights to like me and parents like mine and make them aware about their rights and duties and about child labour.

Mesfin, Ethiopia

I wanted to go to school. But, my parents did not allow me to go to school. I tried to convince them by telling them the importance of education, but they did not understand. I persisted in my efforts and finally after a long time my parents greed to send me to school. I go to school now and I am happy that I can make a better future for my self.

Jennifer Chavarria, Costa Rica

I am 15 years old and live in Purral, a poor suburb of San Jose, and I am the elder of six children. We live with our mother, which is a single mom. I began working in the streets by the age of 7, selling little things. This kind of work is very dangerous, because of the traffic, the pollution, the



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long hours. I once worked as a street seller hired by a lady, from 6am to 12am, and received little in return. When things get difficult in my family, my brothers and sisters work also with me. In the markets and in the streets people don't respect you, they tell you things and mistreat you. Although it was not easy for me, I attended school and finish my 6th grade last year. I was able to study thanks to a program called "open classroom", which allow us to combine work and study. In Costa Rica compulsory education goes to 9th, but I was not able to follow my secondary studies because of lack of space in the school. Now I take charge of my brothers and sisters, preparing the meals and taking care of them, while my mother works. I would like that we and other children in our situation receive more help and no children are forced to work