



Report on
National Consultation on Elimination of Child Labour Practice in Nepal: Efforts and Role
of Trade Unions to Combat Against all Forms of Child Labour
South Asian Regional Trade Union Council (SARTUC)
15-16 December 2022 Kathmandu, Nepal

The South Asian Regional Trade Union Council SARTUC, with support from ITUC-AP, has conducted two days national consultation meeting on 15-16 December in Kathmandu, Nepal with the objective to find out the situation of child labour in Nepal; sharing knowledge and experiences from the trade unions on the situation and progress on child labour and to strategize the roles of trade unions to eliminate all forms of child labour in Nepal. The participants represented the major three national trade unions of Nepal – All Nepal Federation of Trade Unions (ANTUF); General Federation of Nepalese Trade Unions (GEFONT); and Nepal Trade Union Congress (NTUC).

In the welcome and opening session; Mr. Laxman Basnet, the General Secretary - SARTUC, Mr. Mahendra Prasad Yadav, Representative, ITUC-NAC, and Mr. S. M. Fahimuddin Pasha – senior office, ITUC-AP, welcomed all the participants to national consultation. Mr. Basnet welcomed all the participants along with the objectives of the consultation meeting and highlighted the importance of gathering of trade union leaders from key trade unions in Nepal. Furthermore, he emphasised the role of trade unions to eliminate child labour in Nepal. Finally, he expressed the bitter truth of the existence of child labour in Nepal despite the efforts from the government, CSOs and trade unions and the situation has further worsened with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Nepali society. Additionally, Mahendra Prasad Yadav, a representative from ITUC-NAC, expressed the bitter reality of child labour in Nepal. He added, technically, the number of child labour is declining in Nepal however, still, the number is 1.1 million in 2018 which was 1.6 million in 2008 and also, he questioned the data collection method for child labour. Firstly, the government has to think about the update of data on child labour after the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, he highlighted the importance of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Alliance 8.7 to eliminate child labour in Nepal. Similarly, **Mr. S. M. Fahimuddin Pasha** – senior office, ITUC-AP, highlighted the importance of SDG and the role of trade unions in eliminating child labour. He provided an overall situation of child labour in south Asia.

Mr. Keshab Prasad Adhikari, Coordinator - Department of Labour Studies, Tribhuvan University (TU), highlighted the situation of child labour in Nepal and its impact on the world of work. He presented the data on child labour in Nepal where the agriculture sector comprises the highest number of child labour in Nepal. Nepal has ratified most of the key international conventions concerning child labour – ILO conventions and UN conventions. However, a huge number of children involved in child labour involved in hazardous work indicates a gap in the implementation of laws, policies and international conventions on child labour and child protection in Nepal. Furthermore, he has shared his experience of various studies on child labour in Nepal,



conducted either by the university or by the government. **Dr. Pitambar Bhandari, Coordinator – Department** of Conflict, Peace and Development Studies, Tribhuvan University (TU), presented the historical scenario of the crisis in Nepal which impacted the situation of children. Mostly, in Nepal, the impact on children and child labour can be witnessed due to three major crises – a decade-long armed conflict; the mega-earthquake in 2015; and the COVID-19 pandemic in Nepal. One needs to look after the reason for child labour regardless of the number or data on it. The context is important for the situation of children where the crisis escalates in the number of child labour.

Mr. Aneesh Poudel from Underprivileged Children’s Educational Programs (UCEP) Nepal, presented on the child, child rights and child labour with interactive discussions with the participants. He divided the participants into three groups for group discussion on the role of trade unions in addressing combat child labour from the policy level; implementation level and societal level. All the groups discussed and presented their points.

Group 1: Role of the trade union in the elimination of child labour (Policy level)

- Celebrating child day and raising awareness.
- Submitting of memorandum to the government while making the constitution.
- Trade unions have worked to stop the act of child labour if it is found in any of the organisations.
- Trade unions have played a vital role to eliminate child labour from every sector. For example child protection programme; awareness programme; educational programme; child-friendly programme.

Group 2: Role of the trade union in the elimination of child labour (Implementation level)

- The campaign “Adult people at work and child at school” has been implemented by the workplace.
- Running of the educational programme.
- Ban on the products which are produced through the use of child labour.
- Submitting of memorandum to the related ministries or concerned body.
- Lobbying, discussion and pressurised programme for the implementation of national and international laws

Group 3: Role of the trade union in the elimination of child labour (Societal level)

- Awareness
- Advocacy (ILC/constitution/law/regulations)
- Legal gap fulfilment in local government



- Collective bargaining



Additionally, Mr. Poudel conducted a session on child labour and mental health which most of the participants found an interesting and a new topic in the field of trade unions. Some of the participants shared they have never thought from the perspective of mental health in child labour. Trade unions have advocated mental health as a part of OSH but not in the in-depth practice of mental health of child labour. Finally, the first day concluded with reflections on the entire day and sessions conducted. Most of the participants appreciated the fruitful discussion and insightful sessions and got excited for the next day.

Mr. Bikash Thapa, CEO, CTRaDe, started the session in second day with the self-reflection exercise (meditation for one minute to think positively) and divided the participants into three groups and started group work based on the following topics.

Group ‘A (Bagmati)’: Key challenges to eliminate child labour in Nepal

Sectors	Reasons/challenges	Solutions
• Transport	• Lack of education or awareness	• Awareness raising by stakeholders.
• Construction or Brick Kiln	• Poverty or financial scarcity	• Take initiatives to alleviate poverty.
• Hotel/restaurants	• Poverty or financial scarcity	• Take initiatives to alleviate poverty.
• Domestic work	• Not having parents and financial scarcity	• Government or organisations have to look after
• Agriculture and tea estate	• Lack of education and Poverty	• Modernisation of agriculture • Proper implementation of acts and laws.

Group ‘B (Sagarmatha)’ Roles of the trade unions, governments, non-governmental institutions, educational institutions and CSOs for the elimination of Child labour.

Roles of the trade unions

- Law-making (3 levels of government) for the elimination of child labour.
- Lobbying, discussion and pressurised programme for the effective implementation of national and international laws.
- Organising the parents.
- Cooperation and coordination with the concerned body.
- Awareness campaign at the workplace.



- Educational campaign



Roles of the government bodies

- Law-making of required acts and laws.
- Effective implementation of national and international laws.
- Create opportunities for decent work at the local level.
- Regular monitoring of regulatory bodies.
- Strict implementation of social security fund.
- Arrangement of price and punishment.
- Establishment of qualitative rehabilitation centre.
- To include the courses regarding the elimination of child labour in the academic curriculum.

Roles of the non-governmental institutions

- Field (on-site) inspection and lobby and information to the concerned bodies working for awareness.

Group ‘C (Shanti)’: Sectorial engagement of child labour; major sectors where child labour is high in number. Why; reasons?

Sectors where a high number of child labours

1. Construction: Brick Kiln, pebble and sand, furniture.
2. Small hotels: Lunch houses (*khaja ghar*), *Bhojanaalaya*, restaurants.
3. Carpet and garments
4. Domestic workers
5. Transport
6. Agriculture

Reasons

1. Poverty
2. Poor education and health
3. Conflict and war
4. Natural calamities/disasters
5. Companionship

Finally, the facilitator divide the participants into three groups according to their affiliated trade unions – ANTUF; GEFONT; and NTUC and asked them to prepare an action plan and presentation

to address the issue of child labour in Nepal. He requested them to prepare three possible actions that could be achieved by their trade unions within the given time frame.

Action plan for ANTUF (Group A)

S.no	Activities	Process	Timeline	Responsible persons
1.	Data collection	Cooperation and coordination with local level and stakeholders through the operation of sub-committees / sub-associations.	Within 3 month	ANTUF and related sub-committees along with province-level committees
2.	Interaction	Between the government, employers and trade union.	6 month	ANTUF
3.	Reduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination between Trade unions. • Regulations for the implementation of national and international standards. • Coordination with the government for income generation opportunities for poor households. • Social bargaining, attention to political parties. • Involvement of orientation training in trade union education for the reduction of child labour. 	1 year	ANTUF

Action plan for GEFONT (Group B)

S.no	Activities	Process	Timeline	Responsible persons
1.	Awareness	On-site discussion	Till Fagun (February/March)	Migmar Gopal Sherpa (Construction)
2.	Research	Comprehensive field discussion	Till 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SARTUC/GEFONT • Taranidhi Pant
3.	To involve the informal sector in contribution-	Reach out to the workplace and individual labourers	Till 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GEFONT • Taranidhi Pant

	based social security.			
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Action plan for NTUC (Group C)

S.no	Activities	Process	Timeline	Responsible persons
1.	Short term <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sector recognition Awareness Pressure making program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Field study Rallies and posters Peaceful sittings, press conferences etc. 	3 month	Related sub-unions (federation)
2.	Mid-term <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning Interaction with stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft preparation by a related committee Seminar, conference 	6 month	Federation and related sub-unions
3.	Long-term <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alternative solutions for the elimination of child labour To emphasise on implementation of laws. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning at the origin location and coordination with other trade unions. Submitting of memorandum to the government for making child-friendly laws. To encourage the participation of trade unions at the policy-making level. 		NTUC, related sub-unions, stakeholders and concerned body

During the closing session, a short speech was given by **Mr. S. M. Fahimuddin Pasha** – senior office, ITUC-AP. He expressed his gratitude to all the participants for their interactive participation throughout the two days. Also, he thanked all the resource persons for making the two days of consultation interactive, informative and energetic. He further suggested all the trade unions and trade union leaders shall work together to eliminate child labour and other labour issues.