



NGOCSTIP Statement on Nobel Peace Prize Winner Kailash Satyarthi

The NGO Committee to Stop Trafficking in Persons was delighted by the selection of Kailash Satyarthi, leader in world efforts to abolish child labor trafficking, to share the 2014 Nobel Peace prize.

Satyarthi has said that his own childhood experience in India of seeing other children working instead of being educated made him want to solve that problem when he grew up. "I think of it all as a test. This is a moral examination one has to pass...to stand up against such social evils."

Human trafficking and child labor flourish in places where the supply chain is fragmented. The International Labor Organization estimates that there are 168 million child laborers, and that 26 percent of all forced labor victims are under 18 years old. It is further estimated that children comprise 21 percent of victims of sexual exploitation. In India, twelve percent of all children ages 5-14 are child laborers. According to the ILO, a high percentage of children trafficked for one form of slavery are later sold into another.

In 1980, Satyarthi gave up a successful career as an electrical engineer and began working full time to end child slavery. He is credited with saving tens of thousands of lives. He and his colleagues have been brutally attacked while carrying out raids on factories liberating children and often, entire families, held captive as bonded laborers.

In 1980, he founded Bachpan Bachao Andolan, which has rescued 82, 800 children and led to the withdrawal of over 200,000 bonded and child laborers. BBA has demanded policy changes and the enforcement of anti-trafficking legislation in India.

In 1997-8, under Satyarthi's leadership, the first Global March against Child Labor mobilized worldwide participation from NGOs, trade unions, teachers, children and individuals to protect and promote the rights of children, especially freedom from economic exploitation and the right to free education. The march had its culmination at the ILO Convention in Geneva, which drafted the ILO Convention against the Worst Forms of Child Labor. The Convention, unanimously adopted a

year later, is the fastest ratified ILO Convention, with 172 countries ratifying. (www.globalmarch.org)

Among his many other accomplishments, Satyarthi founded RugMark, now Good Weave (www.goodweave.org), a certification for rug protection that is child labor free. In just two decades, Good Weave has reduced the number of children exploited in this industry by two-thirds.

“Child slavery is a crime against humanity. Humanity itself is at stake here. A lot of work still remains, but I will see an end to child labor in my lifetime,” Satyarthi told the Associated Press.