

CHILD MARRIAGE IS CHILD LABOUR

Conference notes that new data from Save the Children reveals an alarming crisis in Afghanistan, as 3,000 Afghans are repatriated daily from Pakistan, following a tightening in regulations by Pakistani authorities. More than 70 percent of returnee parents and community leaders, who took part in a survey compiled by the aid organisation, said early marriage and child labour were major risks faced by repatriated children currently not in school.

With lack of documentation, money and access identified as major barriers for schoolchildren, parents who are facing poverty often feel the only stable choice they can make is to arrange a marriage for their daughter, or enter them into the workforce early.

This crisis highlights the need for urgent action to address the issue of child marriage as a form of child labour, a crisis documented in the AIDS Free World report, *Child Marriage is Child Labour*.

These girls will join the estimated 15 million girls who, over the next year, will be forced into “marriages.” Instead of receiving an education alongside their peers, child “wives,” are forced to work long hours cooking and cleaning. They work night shifts caring for babies and younger children. Under the control of older “husbands” they are physically and psychologically abused and raped repeatedly. They work in conditions that threaten their lives and their health, suffer human rights and labour violations on a daily basis, and many die as a result.

If these activities were performed in a third-party household, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) would count them as work, and they would be included in child labour statistics, and in international action to end child labour. But because the children are illegally married, the ILO regards their workplace as their valid household and excludes them.

Conference believes that “child “marriage” is not merely a harmful traditional practice: it is a crime; it is child labour in its worst form, and a complete violation of a girl’s human rights.

Conference further believes that “child marriage” should be included amongst the worst forms of child labour as defined by the ILO core convention 182, *Worst forms of child labour*.