International Labour Standards

Why in news?

In the International Labour Organization's (ILO's) 101-year history for the first time, a labour standard has been universally ratified.

What does this mean?

- This historic moment was made when the Kingdom of Tonga decided to outlaw the worst forms of child labour (Convention 182).
- **Convention 182** was adopted in international labour conference, 1999.
- It prohibits the sexual exploitation of children, trafficking, deployment in armed conflict and other conditions that compromise their overall well-being.
- It complements the ILO's efforts under the Minimum Age **Convention 138** of the year 1973.
- Convention 138 prevents the employment of children below a lower age threshold.

When did India ratify?

- In 2017, India ratified the Convention 182 and Convention 138.
- This move has signalled its legal commitment to the elimination of child labour.

What is the influence of these ILO conventions?

- Under the influence of both these ILO standards, millions of young children have been rescued from hazardous conditions of work.
- In turn, these have resulted in significant increases in enrolments in primary education.
- However, the landmark ratification does not detract from the enormity of the challenge that remains.

What are the challenges?

- An estimated 152 million are trapped in child labour and 72 million of them are engaged in hazardous work.
- The current efforts would have to be stepped up significantly to achieve the goal of total abolition of the scourge of child labour by 2025.

- But the COVID-19 pandemic is threatening a reversal of recent gains.
- There are widespread job losses, deterioration in conditions of work, decline in household incomes and temporary school closures.

What are these Conventions part of?

- The two instruments on child labour are among the eight core ILO Conventions.
- These eight conventions are regarded as embodying the spirit of the 1998 declaration on fundamental principles and rights at work.
- Instruments relating to the freedom of association and the elimination of discrimination in employment and occupation are among the others.
- They provide the framework to counteract the predominance of informality in the conditions of work.
- They should be a priority for governments.

What could be done?

- The world prepares to designate 2021 as the year to abolish child labour.
- So, the governments must seize the moment to instil hope in the future generations.

Source: The Hindu

Quick Facts

International Labour Organization

- The ILO was created in 1919 by the Versailles Peace Treaty.
- After the demise of the League of Nations, it became the first specialized agency associated with the UN.
- Its secretariat is in Geneva, Switzerland.
- It has 187 of the 193 UN member states plus the Cook Islands.
- It is responsible for drawing up and overseeing international labour standards.
- It has a tripartite governing structure – representing governments, employers, and workers.
- It publishes Global Wage report.

Eight Core Conventions of the ILO

- Forced Labour Convention (No. 29)
- Abolition of Forced Labour Convention (No.105)

- Equal Remuneration Convention (No.100)
- Discrimination (Employment Occupation) Convention (No.111)
- Minimum Age Convention (No.138)
- Worst forms of Child Labour Convention (No.182)
- Freedom of Association and Protection of Right to Organised Convention (No.87)
- Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention (No.98)

