Forum: GA3: Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Committee

Issue: Measures to insure human rights and eliminate child labor in low income areas.

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**Introduction:**

Child labor has been one of the world’s oldest problems since the far past. Before the 1940s, when child labor laws were brought up, many children aged 8-14 were working mainly in fields of agriculture, factories and mining. Although child labor rates have decreased favorably, it still remains as a serious problem in the developing nations.

In 2010, sub-Saharan Africa reached a record high incident rate of child labor. Some African nations even had more than 50% of children aged 5-14 working. Therefore, the number of children exploited of labor still remains dangerously high, estimated 218 million in 2013.

Poverty is seen as the main factor of child labor. So child exploitation appears often in developing nations and rural areas. Lack of access to schooling also acts as a main factor of child labor. Children are forced to choose labor instead of education due to the desperate need of money, and because their parents judge labor as relatively worthy. Cultural reasons also exist, for example, takinggirls’ labor for granted because of religious reasons. Nations in war also record a high rate of child exploitation.

The elimination of child labor is a common goal that is agreed upon almost all the nations worldwide. However, still many children workers exist in the global society today. It is not a simple problem because for developing nations, human rights are often abused by exploitative employers. The regulations are loose, and access to adequate education and safe environment is not available. Because their economic status is still low and often still remains in industrial society, low paying informal economy also acts as a factor of child labor. Delegates must focus on the various interests of developing nations in particular for solving the agenda.

**Key Terms:**

Child labor

Child labor is work that puts children under 18 in an environment which derives children of their opportunity of schooling, or harms them physically or mentally, and psychologically. Not all child labor is detrimental, for example, labor that helps children establish healthy economical standards under right parental protections. But in this agenda, delegates should talk about child labor that puts children in hazardous environments.

Less Economically Developed Country (LEDC)

LEDC is an abbreviation for Less Economically Developed Country or we may know it as a developing country. Countries that are claimed to LEDCs are relatively poor countries.

Human Rights

Human rights are rights inherent to all human beings, regardless of race, sex, nationality, ethnicity, language, religion, or any other status. Human rights include the right to life and liberty, freedom from slavery and torture, freedom of opinion and expression, the right to work and education, and many more.  Everyone is entitled to these rights, without discrimination.

**Background:**

Universal Declaration of Human Rights

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) is a milestone document in the history of human rights. Drafted by representatives with different legal and cultural backgrounds from all regions of the world, the Declaration was proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in Paris on 10 December 1948 by General Assembly resolution 217 A (III) as a common standard of achievements for all peoples and all nations. It sets out, for the first time, fundamental human rights to be universally protected. Since its adoption in 1948, the UDHR has been translated into more than 501 languages – the most translated document in the world and has inspired the constitutions of many newly independent States and many new democracies. The UDHR, together with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and its two Optional Protocols (on the complaints procedure and on the death penalty) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and its Optional Protocol, form the so-called International Bill of Human Rights.

Child labor statistics and reasons

Around 152 million children across the globe work full time jobs, with no access to education or play time like other young children. Child labor includes being exposed to dangerous working conditions, slavery, and illegal activities including drug trafficking and human trafficking. Food, water, and healthcare, along with physical safety are all issues that must be addressed for children who are forced to work to earn a living. About 73 million working children are exposed to hazardous circumstances, which is the definition of child labor because of the effect on their physical and mental health.

Many nations use child labor to increase profits in their business industry, which promotes the utilization of cheap labor in exchange for a better economy.

Reasons for continued child labor include lack of education, cultural values, easy profit for businesses, and poverty within families. In addition, enforcement of currently existing child labor laws is weak, so many protocols and conventions denouncing child labor are ineffective. Juan Somavia, the director of the International Labor Organization (ILO) once said, “A world without child labor is possible with the right priorities and policies: quality education, opportunities for young people, decent work for parents, a basic social protection floor for all. Driven by conscience, let’s muster the courage and conviction to act in solidarity and ensure every child’s right to his or her childhood. It brings rewards for all.”

It is important for the United Nations to encourage nations to be active in enforcing existing laws to eradicate child labor.

**Timeline:**

1973

ILO convention on the minimum age for admission to employment and work.

1989

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).

1992

The creation of the ILO’s International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC), with the overall goal of the progressive elimination of child labour.

1996

The median age for a child to enter the workforce in Pakistan was seven years old.

1999

ILO convention on the worst forms of child labour.

2010

Launch of the Child Labour Platform (CLP), a forum for business to exchange knowledge and learn from other’s approaches to tackling child labour in the supply chain.

2011

United Nations Human Rights Council endorses the ‘’Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights’’

2011

Launch of ‘’Guidance Tool on How to do Business with Respect for Children’s Rights to be Free from Child Labour’’ by the ILO and International Organisation of Employers (IOE).