

Committee: Middle School 1

Topic: Child Labour in Southeast Asia

Background of the Committee:

The United Nations International Child Emergency Fund a member of the United Nations Development Group and focuses on providing humanitarian and developmental assistance to children and mothers in developing nations. UNICEF was founded in 1946 to provide emergency healthcare and food to children of countries in World War II. Now, UNICEF is a multinational organization that has saved the lives of over 90 million children, provided humanitarian assistance worth over \$5 billion USD. UNICEF is made up of 190 member nations that convene every June to discuss various crises and issues concerning underprivileged children, deliberate on humanitarian actions, make policies to adjudicate child predators and offenders, and represent the general interest of every member nation. Each of the member nations has a vote, and to reach a consensus on an important issue a $\frac{2}{3}$ majority is needed in favor. However, on less important matters, UNICEF only requires a simple majority or 96 votes.

Goals of the Committee:

The goal of the committee is to draft pragmatic, well-thought-out resolutions, through collaboration with other nations to create creative and practical solutions. Delegates are reminded to be respectful to other delegates and provide opportunities for others to voice their opinions. Delegates are urged to prepare speeches and research prior to the conference. A successful delegate is one that is poised, confident, compassionate and cements themselves as a capable leader. We look forward to seeing you in committee!

Background of the Topic:

Child labour, as defined in Article 3 of ILO Convention No. 182, is the work carried out to the detriment and endangerment of a child, in violation of international law and national legislation. Child labourers are a prominent issue, especially in Southeast Asia, a region comprised of Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam, and the Philippines. According to the Human Rights Watch, over 160 million children across the world can be identified as child labourers. Child labour can be classified into two main types which are hazardous tasks and drug or illegal material obtaining labours through the use of these child labourers. Many child labour cases have been reported in factories of the farming industry. In one case, Sagar Burman of Bangladesh had endeavored in speaking out against the abuse in the mill of his employment and was killed in the process of doing so. The ILO, in its training guide, has labeled Sagar Burman's plight as one of the worst forms of child labour. In total the ILO catalogs four worst forms of child labour: forced slavery of children, the use of children for pornographic reasons, offering a child to engage in illicit activities including the use of drugs, and work which results in harm to his or her health. The effects of drugs and poverty are also driving reasons for the number of child labourers. Some families, plagued by extreme poverty, sell off children as child slaves to gain an income which results in more youth being forced into this practice. In fact, poverty accounts for the origination of nearly 36% of all child labourers in the region. Children often will perform strenuous acts against their will, but

sometimes are led to believe that the menial tasks will give them a higher status in their community and will provide monetary benefits. According to IPEC, the problem of Child labour can also result in malnutrition. The health and development of these children are negatively affected and many times these children are deprived of proper education. Children begin to lose their aspirations to work in many different fields, as these adolescents are mentally, physically, and socially affected. Children who have to do the sort of work which may harm their health in effect, through the development of illnesses or self-harm. This issue shows no signs of resolving, with the population of child labourers in developing nations, such as sub-Saharan African nations, to increase by 15 million by the next decade and reach 65 million by 2020.

UN Involvement:

The United Nations Resolution A/52/593 called upon governments to ensure the protection of children from economic exploitation. It also encouraged administrative, social, and educational measures to ensure the protection of children. The United Nations Resolution A/RES/51/77 encourages nations to sign and ratify the Convention on the Rights of the Child as a commitment to the protection of children. It aims to reach the goal of universal adherence set at the world summit for children. Another such resolution aimed towards the promotion and protection of the rights of children is the UN resolution A/51/492. Resolution A/51/492 also improved guidance and assistance cooperation at the national and international level, and provided suggestions of international human rights instruments and mechanisms to intensify and accelerate action to end child labour. The United Nations' International Labour Organization, also known as the ILO, has created an International Programme for the Elimination of Child Labour or the IPEC for research and development purposes. One form of child labour, child prostitution, has been especially frowned upon by the international community. Child prostitution affects the international community negatively due to the fact that some of the youngest citizens of the world, children, are put in danger, causing world leaders to seek ways to eradicate this problem. That is why the UN has collaborated with Australia in what is known as Project Childhood through the UNODC, Interpol, and World Vision using a dual prevention and protection approach. In a joint coalition, the UNODC and ILO have used public campaigns, training and telephone hotlines to reach out to participating governments, communities, and tourism industries. This has given more people the awareness to look for predators and possible victims of child labour, and has given children a way to be rescued from their dire situation. The UN also created the World Day against Child Labor on June 12th, based upon principles in the ILO's Minimum Age Convention No. 138 and Worst Forms of Child Labor Convention No. 182, to spread more awareness of the dire plights of these youthful victims. The World Day against Child Labor campaign puts the global community closer to Sustainable Development Goal No. 8.7, or the goal of "eradicating forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking and securing the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour." In response to the October 2013 meeting of Global Conference of Child Labor, the Director-General of the ILO, Guy Rider, prepared a special report to assess the child labour situation and the rate of progress made by UN international bodies. The special report, titled *Marking Progress against Child Labor*, noted the progress made through "particular policy choices and accompanying investments in education and social protection." *Marking Progress against Child Labor* also expressed its delectation to the cooperation of member nations involved and the increasing amount of ratifications of the two ILO child labour conventions: Convention No. 182 and

Convention No. 138. The UN resolution A/RES/51/77, created on 20 February 1997, was written to establish the rights of children, especially those being exploited. In Article II, Operative 28, the General Assembly called upon the states who ratified the resolution to take immediate and effective action against those persons exploiting children for menial work. Operative 29 stresses the need for all humanitarian responses in conflict situations to emphasize the special humanitarian needs of youth. The ILO's project to "Combat Trafficking in Children and Women for Labour Exploitation in the Mekong Sub-region and South Asia" has been strongly supported by the United Nations. This project has worked to train instructors to teach children in these regions self-defense and has offered direct socio-economic alternatives to youth victims of child labour and trafficking and to those at risk of becoming child labourers. Due to the actions and involvement of many international organizations, the world incidence of child labour has decreased from 25 percent in 1960 to 10 percent in 2003, according to World Bank estimates.

Possible Solutions:

Delegates should design solutions focused on child labourers in Southeast Asia. These solutions should be unique, creative, detailed, and targeted towards stopping this issue at the root of the problem. Delegates should also focus their solutions on how to help victims and potential victims of child labourers and how to target the people who hire the child labourers themselves. Solutions should focus on self-sustainability where the UN would no longer need to intervene and be able to leave. A focus should be put on victims who have gone through this trauma and helping them recover. Delegates also need to ensure that, while crafting their solutions, their solutions must not infringe on the political sovereignty of any Southeast Asian nation. An example of a solution is to impose sanctions on member nations that don't enforce the policies the United Nations have already established in the ILO's Worst Forms of Child Labor Convention No. 182 and ILO's Minimum Age Convention No. 138 to enforce this ruling. This would lead to the introduction of rehabilitation camps for children rescued from child labour. Creating an international court under the United Nations specifically to prosecute child labour employers would be very beneficial as well. A truly beneficial solution would be the creation of a new funding program for the families of children in Southeast Asia, to eradicate this problem at the source. A funding program would give children and their families the economic help that they needed to keep their children out of child labour. Delegates must understand that this is a complex problem, and a unique multi-step solution would help end this problem.

Questions to Consider:

1. How has the scale and impact of child labour in Southeast Asia changed in the past decade?
2. Why have previous solutions such as A/RES/51/77 and A/51/492 which have been focused on national enforced action not been effective in combating the problem?
3. Can the implementation of cost-consuming solutions lower the economic output and standard of living of third world countries in the region of Southeast Asia?
4. How does your country contribute to the solution, whether economically, logistically, or through personnel?
5. How can Southeast Asian countries deal with corruption in their enforcers tasked with combating this issue?

Works Cited:

- Human Rights Watch. "Child Labor." *Human Rights Watch*, Human Rights Watch, www.hrw.org/topic/childrens-rights/child-labor
- ILO. "A/51/492 Exploitation of Child Labour." *United Nations*, United Nations, www.un.org/documents/ga/docs/51/plenary/a51-492.htm
- ILO. "C138 - Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138)." *Convention C138 - Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138)*, United Nations, 19 June 1976, www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB%3A12100%3A0%3A%3ANO%3A%3AP12100_ILO_CODE%3AC138
- ILO. "C182 - Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182)." *Convention C182 - Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182)*, United Nations, 19 Nov. 2000, www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB%3A12100%3A0%3A%3ANO%3A%3AP12100_ILO_CODE%3AC182
- ILO. "ILO - Child Labor." *Child Labour*, ILO, www.ilo.org/global/topics/child-labour/lang--en/index.htm
- International Programme, et al. "Implementing the Roadmap for Achieving the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour by 2016: Training Guide for Policy Makers." *Training Course Guide: Implementing the Roadmap for Achieving the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour by 2016: Training Guide for Policy Makers*, ILO, 26 Aug. 2013, www.ilo.org/ipecc/Informationresources/WCMS_202336/lang--en/index.htm
- UN News Centre. "ILO-Sponsored World Day against Child Labor." *United Nations*, United Nations, www.un.org/en/events/childlabourday/
- UNICEF. "Child Labour Data." *UNICEF DATA*, World Bank, www.data.unicef.org/topic/child-protection/child-labour/
- UNICEF. "Child Labour." *UNICEF*, United Nations, 22 May 2017, www.unicef.org/protection/57929_child_labour.html
- UNICEF. "Home Page." *UNICEF*, United Nations, www.unicef.org/