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Novice GA 1: The Devastating Future of Children Amid Crises

Sustainable Goals Portion

The United Nations has created a list of 17 Sustainable Development Goals in order to address the world's most pertinent issues and establish a plan and set targets to slowly overcome them. Sustainable Development Goal 11 is described as "mak[ing] cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable." By the year 2030, the UN hopes to decrease the amount of people living in slums and provide access to basic services and building in order to promote better, healthier, and stronger communities. The topic of this committee is the Lost Generation, referring to children growing in communities of crisis that hinder their ability to be successful and ensure a future of poverty. Correlated with goal #11, this committee hopes to better these communities and their services to children, through the efforts and cooperation of the member states of the UN. It is the duty of the international community to help create sustainable settlements and improve the conditions of current ones for the purpose of its posterity.

Background

Regional conflicts are an immediate cause to detrimental side effects on children. Few examples of such disputes include: Myanmar's mass expulsion and genocide of the Rohingya, the Syrian regime's brutal suppression of a popular uprising, and the Cameroonian government's apparent determination to crush an Anglophone insurgency. In 2015, UNICEF reported that 13 million children were forced out of schools because of the conflicts in the Middle East and North

[1]Although the term "Lost Generation" can refer to the group of American writers who came of age during the time of World War I, in this context, the "Lost Generation" refers to the children in areas of conflict who lack the basic humanitarian needs and suffer long-term effects because of their situation.

Africa (MENA) region. Today, 500,000 Rohingya children have fled their homes and sought refuge in Bangladesh, which is the largest refugee settlement globally. Furthermore, the Venezuelan government's economic warfare against its own people, the silencing of dissent in Turkey and Egypt, and other crises around the globe, all undeniably reveal the dire situation faced by children caught in the middle of war and insurgency.

According to the United Nations, there are currently about 75 million children in conflict, who lack proper access to food, water, housing, safety, and education. The Lost Generation[1] refers to the millions of children currently growing and surviving in areas of conflict, thus resulting in underprivileged situations. As the numbers of children in these situations continue to arise in numerous countries of protracted crises, the international community struggles to cooperate in order to ensure better opportunities for these children. The degradation of health and the bleakness of a successful future are two major aspects that take a toll on children living in these situations.

As children are forced to adapt to and survive in life-threatening conditions, they lack the proper conditions for development, including access to clean water, food, and healthcare. Contaminated water causes deadly diseases, including cholera, guinea worm disease, typhoid, and dysentery. In the Rohingya refugee camps, 62% of accessible water is contaminated, according to the World Health Organization, which has caused numerous diseases such as acute watery diarrhoea (AWD). Two in five of those affected by AWD are children under the age of 5. In crises such as in Yemen, where war has ravaged the country in recent years, an estimated 85,000 children have died from acute malnutrition (due to starvation and scarceness of nutritional food). Globally, however, malnutrition is responsible for 3 million child deaths each

year. Lastly, the inability to receive proper medical care causes thousands of children, especially infants, to die from treatable and preventable diseases. As can be seen, the Lost Generation suffers greatly in due to a lack of basic necessities caused by their unfortunate situations.

Along with the lack of proper food, children living in these areas of conflict, are not exposed to education-- a main priority in their development. The United Nations warns that "99 percent of the world's young refugees who are now becoming the invisible generation will never get a place in college or higher education." Not only does education allow for greater financial opportunity and awareness, but it also provides a routine, normal schedule. The constancy and uniformity of school allows for a familiar and safe atmosphere to form in a situation where it is absent. Education increases morale and offsets the rapid increase of psychological disorders that accompany the regional conflicts. Schooling is not only crucial to a child's intelligence and growth, but it also plays an important role in maintaining their mental and physical health. Education is a multilateral solution that also provides normality to their hectic situation, as well as the opportunity for a better future.

One major issue countries face is the lack of stress on education. Education is a facility that is highly under advocated and has so much more room to grow. The lack of education brings with it a multitude of problems, that proves to be irremediable in the future. Children with little to no education are more likely to develop radical ideas, join terrorist and extremist groups, become sexually exploited, or be forced into manual labor. These events not only affect the children's current health status but also present obstacles to their future success, because they lack the important and necessary skills to enter the workforce as productive members of society, dooming them to life-long poverty. By not giving these children adequate attention, countries not

only ensure the children's social and economic downfall, but also harm their own country in the process. If this younger generation is not taken care of properly, the result will be a gap in the progression of society. If the children do not receive sufficient education, they will be unqualified and unable to lead the country in the days to come. By restricting and withholding the right to education, instead of advancing their future, they are regressing it.

It is clear that the Lost Generation is a crucial problem that must be resolved for the betterment of countless young lives. However, aid is only one part of the solution.

United Nations Involvement

To combat the increasing number of diseases affecting children in developing countries in 1953, United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) was initiated by the United Nations to oversee the distribution of emergency food and healthcare to children, through the "Children and Armed Conflict" program. Resolution 2427 of the "Children and Armed Conflict" program provided a framework for mainstreaming protection, rights, well-being and empowerment of children throughout the conflict cycle, as well as in sustaining peace efforts. With a similar approach, UNICEF has worked with the Security Council to develop the Blue Helmet Peacekeeping mission to decrease the number of abductions, military recruitment, killing, and exploitation of the youth. All 120,000 UN peacekeepers working under the Blue Helmet are military personnel of national armies, and in the past, their duties included: protecting children and civilians in high-conflict areas, as well as monitoring a disputed border and peace processes. The UN peacekeepers act as local police, in conflict-ridden areas.

In 2014, the United Nations launched the Children, Not Soldiers campaign, which was originally an initiative headed by the Secretary-General. This campaign aimed to bring global

consensus that child soldiers should be banned from war and armed conflict. Through this program, over 130,000 boys and girls have been released as a result of action plans mandated by the UN Security Council aimed at ending and preventing the recruitment and use of children in conflict. Gaining popularity quickly, this campaign prompted various countries to change their laws in order to support the fight against child soldiers. For example, the government of Afghanistan criminalized the recruitment of children, and it introduced age assessment guidelines to prevent the recruitment of children. Furthermore, a second country, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), put in place all necessary measures to end and prevent the recruitment of children in its armed forces and is no longer listed for this violation in the annexes of the annual report of the Secretary-General on "Children and Armed Conflict". Another example of the potential of this program is shown by the government of Somalia, which established a child protection unit in the Somali armed forces and put in place mechanisms for the handover to the United Nations of children found in the ranks of its army. All of these examples highlight the efforts by countries to promote the wellness of children, but also show how much work is still needed. This campaign gained immediate support by almost all national security forces and NGOs supporting the UN. Before ending in 2016, this campaign led to over 20,000 children being released and reintegrated into society, with the assistance of UNICEF.

Along with peacekeeping missions, the United Nations initiated the Convention on the Rights of the Child in November of 1989, which consisted of the drafting of 54 articles that established a comprehensible list of children's rights. The articles stated that every child in all nations have basic fundamental rights, which includes life, survival, protection from violence, and lastly, the right to an education. Under the terms of the convention, governments are required

to meet all children's basic needs to help them reach their full potential. The Convention is the most widely ratified human rights treaty in history. 2019, is the 30th anniversary of the Convention and as a new goal, at the 74th General Assembly, the Head of the Convention aims to implement the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at local, national, regional and global levels. Following this convention, many governments, including the United States, Japan, and France, revised their laws and policies to ensure that more children have access to healthcare and nutrition.

In 2015, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 2225 to gather information and reports in response to the increasing number of mass abductions in children in Uganda and other African nations. This resolution urged nations to conduct thorough investigations and gather statistics regarding the undocumented crimes committed against children in war-torn nations. In 2001, Resolution 1379 requested that the Secretary General attach an amendment to the UN yearly report on children-related crimes, that lists the countries who had recruited and used children to fight in war during that year. Thus, this increases transparency and incentivizes countries to take action against the child-soldier crisis occurring in Africa and Middle Eastern nations, such as Somalia and South Sudan.

In March of 2012, UNICEF brought out the Children's Rights and Business Principles, which were the first comprehensive set of guidelines to expose companies to the full range of actions and policies that are permitted in the workplace and marketplace, emphasizing initiatives and good practices in the workplace. This document articulates the difference between the responsibility of business to respect – doing the minimum required to avoid infringing on children's rights - and support – taking voluntary actions that seek to advance the realization of

children's rights. Children's Rights and Business Principles call on business to put in place appropriate policies and processes, as set out in the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. This includes a policy commitment and a due diligence process to address potential and actual impacts on human rights. The Principles identify a comprehensive range of actions that all businesses must take in order to protect child rights and maximize positive business impacts in the workplace, the marketplace and the community.

In addition to these actions, the Sustainable Development Goal was also initiated by the United Nations in a General Assembly meeting on July 8, 2017. The Sustainable Development Goals are a collection of 17 global goals set by the United Nations General Assembly in 2015 for the year 2030. Noting that the Security Council was currently dealing with the war in Yemen, affecting millions of children, former British Prime Minister Brown also highlighted the escalating crisis in Venezuela and the half million children out of school in Central African Republic (CAR). By following a program that was launched in Uganda to help with the influx of South Sudanese refugees, he stressed the need to reopen a thousand schools in Afghanistan, where there are still 3.7 million out of school children, and the ongoing refugee crises in, among others, Myanmar, Sudan and Syria.

Questions to Consider

1. Has your country undergone serious conflicts in the past? How did your country deal with the consequences that the children faced?

2. What actions can be taken to ensure that refugee children constantly fleeing from areas of conflict will receive proper education?

3. How will humanitarian efforts, such as those providing food and shelter, reach all those affected?

4. After addressing short-term, physical needs, what steps will be taken to aid long-term effects such as psychological trauma?

5. How will the needs of young adults, who have been in areas of conflict for a majority of their childhood and therefore lack education, be addressed?

6. Will your country support any legal means taken to address children in areas of conflict?

7. For countries without conflicts, what actions can be taken to help children in areas of conflict? Will your country be willing to give refugee children shelter and education?

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No Lost Generation is an NGO that brings together key partners to achieve outcomes essential

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