



UNICEF

Study Guide

Committee: The United Nations Children's Fund
(UNICEF)

Eliminating Child Labour

Chair: Dheer Jhaveri

Co-Chairs: Neel Panandiker and Suryaksa Nishandar

Letter from the Chair:

Dear Delegates,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the United Nations Children's Fund at BDMUN 2022. UNICEF in itself is a humanitarian committee that strives to achieve universal protection and empowerment of children all around the world. With a presence in more than 190 countries, UNICEF actively works to allow children from all backgrounds to survive, thrive and fulfill their boundless potential.

My MUN Journey began five years ago - a shy, naive boy with a passion to make a difference. I always had that fire within me to make a change and MUN's allowed me to express that fire. Several conferences, a myriad of awards, countless memories, and six chaired conferences later, I stand before you to empower the potential and talent within.

With that being said, I expect a competitive, determined and agenda driven committee that aims at tackling the most relevant issue to us all. This year's agenda at UNICEF is "*Eliminating Child Labour*", a keystone principle of the UN Sustainable Development Goals. The consequences of failing to agree on a resolution that tackles such a resonate problem are staggering! Millions of children might be subjected to extreme bodily and mental harm as well as sexual or economic exploitation. 99% of the times, child labour cuts access to medical healthcare and education, restricting their fundamental rights and threatening their futures.

Delegates, you have a duty. A duty to ensure that no child does not have a place to sleep, no child should work 12 hours a day, no child should be subjected to physical torture, and no child should be exploited ever again.

A word of advice: Be well researched, confident and clear while speaking, and most importantly? Have fun. Looking forward to seeing all of you in person!

Regards,
Dheer Jhaveri.

About the Committee:

UNICEF works in the world's toughest places to reach the most disadvantaged children and adolescents—and to protect the rights of every child, everywhere. Across more than 190 countries and territories, we do whatever it takes to help children survive, thrive, and fulfill their potential, from early childhood through adolescence.

As the world's largest provider of vaccines, we support child health and nutrition, safe water and sanitation, quality education and skill building, HIV prevention and treatment for mothers and babies, and the protection of children and adolescents from violence and exploitation.

Before, during, and after humanitarian emergencies, UNICEF is on the ground, bringing life-saving help and hope to children and families. Although non-political and impartial, we are never neutral when it comes to defending children's rights and safeguarding their lives and futures.

UNICEF works with the United Nations and its agencies to make sure that children are on the global agenda. Through research and practical solutions for children, UNICEF strikes a balance.

Since UNICEF was established in the aftermath of World War II, we have been at the frontlines of humanitarian crises, armed conflict, and natural disasters. Undeterred by the scale of the crisis, we rise to the challenge, reimagine what is possible, and respond by helping millions of children survive and thrive. Our on-the-ground expertise has reached more than 191 countries and territories through committed partnerships and a passion for innovation.

Day in and day out, we work in some of the world's toughest places to reach the children and young people who are most at risk and most in need. We work to save their lives, to protect their rights, to keep them safe from harm, to give them a childhood in which they're protected, healthy, and educated, and to give them a fair chance to fulfill their potential.

UNICEF's Strategic Plan, 2022–2025, reflects UNICEF's unreserved commitment to promoting the rights of all children, everywhere, as stated in the Convention on the Rights of the Child and guided by the Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action. It comes at a crucial time when the human rights of children are under threat to a degree that has not been seen in more than a generation.

It is the first of two sequential plans for 2030 and it represents UNICEF's contribution to child-focused Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in all settings. As such, it provides a global framework for country programmes and national committees.

The Strategic Plan will guide synchronized action towards an inclusive recovery from COVID-19, acceleration towards the achievement of the SDGs, and the attainment of a society in which every child is included, without discrimination, and has agency, opportunity, and rights fulfilled. The Plan was informed by the voices of children, communities, governments, UN sister agencies, the private sector, civil society, and other partners. It outlines key programmatic goals

and a related set of result areas, changes strategies, and enablers, including new or accelerated approaches on topics like climate action, mental health, and social protection.

To meet the ambitious goals of the Strategic Plan, UNICEF will draw on its presence in over 190 countries and territories and its deep expertise and thought leadership based on field evidence, research, and data. UNICEF will also use its voice and partnerships to leverage financing and other resources and expertise from national governments, the private sector, and the international development community, including key United Nations partners.

Introduction to the Agenda:

Nearly 1 in 10 children are subjected to child labour worldwide, with some forced into hazardous work through trafficking.

Not all work done by children should be classified as child labour that is to be targeted for elimination. The participation of children or adolescents above the minimum age for admission to employment in work that does not affect their health and personal development or interfere with their schooling is generally regarded as something positive. This includes activities such as assisting in a family business or earning pocket money outside school hours and during school holidays. These kinds of activities contribute to children's development and to the welfare of their families; they provide them with skills and experience and help to prepare them to be productive members of society during their adult life.

The term “child labour” is often defined as work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential, and their dignity, and that is harmful to physical and mental development. It refers to work that:

- is mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful to children; and/or
- interferes with their schooling by depriving them of the opportunity to attend school; obliging them to leave school prematurely; or requiring them to attempt to combine school attendance with excessively long and heavy work.

Whether or not particular forms of “work” can be called “child labour” depends on the child's age, the type and hours of work performed, the conditions under which it is performed, and the objectives pursued by individual countries. The answer varies from country to country, as well as among sectors within countries.

The worst forms of child labour involve children being enslaved, separated from their families, exposed to serious hazards and illnesses, and/or left to fend for themselves on the streets of large cities—often at a very early age.

Whilst child labour takes many different forms, a priority is to eliminate without delay the worst forms of child labour as defined by Article 3 of ILO Convention No. 182:

- all forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery, such as the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage and serfdom and forced or compulsory labour, including forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict;

- the use, procuring or offering of a child for prostitution, for the production of pornography or for pornographic performances;
 - the use, procuring or offering of a child for illicit activities, in particular for the production and trafficking of drugs as defined in the relevant international treaties;
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History of the Problem:

Child Labor Defined: Historically, “child labor” is defined as work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential, and their dignity, and that is harmful to physical and mental development. However, not all work done by children should be classified as child labor. Children or adolescents’ participation in work that does not affect their health and personal development or interfere with their schooling is generally regarded as being something positive. This includes activities such as helping their parents around the home, assisting in a family business, or earning pocket money outside school hours and during school holidays.

Abusive Child Labor: What is to be prevented is child labor in its most extreme form: children being enslaved, separated from their families, exposed to serious hazards and illnesses, and/or left to fend for themselves. Forms of extreme child labor existed throughout American history until the 1930s. In particular, child labor was rife during the American Industrial Revolution (1820-1870). Industrialization attracted workers and their families from farms and rural areas into urban areas and factory work. In factories and mines, children were often preferred as employees, because owners viewed them as more manageable, cheaper, and less likely to strike.

Historical documents revealed that American children worked in large numbers in mines, glass factories, textiles, agriculture, canneries, home industries, and as newsboys, messengers, bootblacks, and peddlers. In the latter part of the nineteenth century, many labor unions and social reformers advocated aggressively for state and local legislation to prevent extreme child labor. By 1900, their efforts had resulted in state and local legislation designed to prevent extreme child labor. However, the conditions in states varied considerably on whether they had child labor standards, their content, and the degree of enforcement.

The lucky ones swept the trash and filth from city streets or stood for hours on street corners hawking newspapers. The less fortunate coughed constantly through 10-hour shifts in dark, damp coal mines or sweated to the point of dehydration while tending fiery glass-factory furnaces – all to stoke the profit margins of industrialists whose own children sat comfortably at school desks gleaning moral principles from their McGuffey Readers. By and large, these child laborers were the sons and daughters of poor parents or recent immigrants who depended on their children’s meager wages to survive. But they were also the offspring of the rapid, unchecked industrialization that characterized large American cities as early as the 1850s. In 1870, the first

U.S. census to report child labor numbers counted 750,000 workers under the age of 15, not including children who worked for their families in businesses or on farms. By 1911, more than two million American children under the age of 16 were working – many of them for 12 hours or more, six days a week. Often they toiled in unhealthful and hazardous conditions; always for minuscule wages.

Young girls continued to work in mills, still in danger of slipping and losing a finger or a foot while standing on top of machines to change bobbins, or of being scalped if their hair got caught. And, as ever, after a day of bending over to pick bits of rock from coal, the breaker boys were still stiff and in pain. If a breaker boy fell, he could still be smothered, or crushed, by huge piles of coal. And, when he turned 12, he would still be forced to go down into the mines and face the threat of cave-ins and explosions.

Child Labor Reform: In the early decades of the twentieth century, the number of child laborers in the U.S. peaked. Child labor began to decline as the labor and reform movements grew and labor standards, in general, began improving, increasing the political power of working people and other social reformers to demand legislation regulating child labor. Union organizing and child labor reform were often intertwined, and common initiatives were conducted by organizations led by working women and middle-class consumers, such as state Consumers' Leagues and Working Women's Societies. These organizations generated the National Consumers' League in 1899 and the National Child Labor Committee in 1904, which shared goals of challenging child labor, including through anti-sweatshop campaigns and labeling programs.

Since 1900, there have been several efforts to regulate or eliminate child labor. One of the primary leaders in this effort was the National Child Labor Committee, which was organized in 1904. The National Child Labor Committee and various state child labor committees were gradualists in philosophy, preparing them to accept whatever was achievable even if it was not sufficient. They used flexible tactics and were resilient in the face of defeat and slow progress. Furthermore, these committees pioneered the use of mass political action, including expert investigation, photography, pamphlets, leaflets, mass mailings, and lobbying. However, their success was dependent on the political climate of the nation overall as well as developments that reduced the need or desire for child labor.

The National Child Labor Committee campaigned for tougher state and federal laws against the abuses of industrial child labor, and Lewis W. Hine was its greatest publicist. A teacher who left his profession to work full-time as an investigator for the committee, Hine prepared a number of the committee's reports and took some of the most powerful images in the history of documentary photography. The Library of Congress holds the papers of the Committee, including the reports, field notes, correspondence, and over 5,000 of Hine's photographs and negatives. This album depicts children at work in canneries and is accompanied by a follow-up report for a group of canneries previously investigated by Hine.

From 1911 to 1916, Hine traveled across southern and eastern states, capturing thousands of unflinching images that exposed the heartless treatment of children. More often than not, Hine had to resort to trickery to gain access from resistant, even hostile, employers. He posed variously as a Bible salesman, industrial photographer, fire inspector, and insurance agent to get candid shots, sometimes with a hidden camera. Children might be removed from view before they arrive, or they might be barred from the premises altogether. When Hine couldn't find a way in, he waited outside the gates and photographed the children as they entered and exited.

The tireless efforts of reformers, social workers, and unions seemed to pay off in 1916, at the height of the progressive movement, when President Woodrow Wilson passed the Keating-Owen Act, banning articles produced by child labor from being sold in interstate commerce. The act was struck down as unconstitutional by the Supreme Court just two years later.

Between 1902-1915, child labor committees emphasized reform through state legislatures and, as a result, many laws restricting child labor were passed. However, gaps remained, especially in the south. This led to a push for a federal child labor law, which Congress passed in 1916 and 1918, but the Supreme Court declared them unconstitutional. Opponents of child labor then sought a constitutional amendment to authorize federal child labor legislation. Congress passed the amendment in 1924, but many states failed to ratify it due to the conservative 1920s political climate and opposition from some church groups and farm organizations that feared increased federal power.

The Great Depression catalyzed changes in political attitudes in the United States, especially surrounding child labor. President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal sought to prevent extreme child labor, and almost all of the codes under the National Industrial Recovery Act significantly reduced child labor. The Public Contracts Act of 1936 required boys to be 16 and girls to be 18 to work in firms supplying goods under federal contracts. The Beet Sugar Act required children to be 14 to work in cultivating and harvesting sugar beets and cane. The Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 (FLSA) set the minimum working age at 14 for employment outside of school hours and at 16 during school hours. Furthermore, non-agricultural work in interstate commerce required a minimum age of 16 during school hours and 18 for positions designated as "hazardous" by the secretary of labor.

Overall, these laws were successful, not only because of the generally widespread disapproval of child labor but also because many previously unemployed adults became employed once children were limited in the workforce.

PAST ACTIONS

Minimum Age for Admission to Employment or Work

Type of Work	Developed countries	Developing countries
Light Work	13 Years	12 Years
Regular Work	15 Years	14 Years
Hazardous Work	18 Years	18 Years

ILO Convention No. 182 requires governments to give priority to eliminating the worst forms of child labor undertaken by all children under the age of 18 years.

They are defined as:

- All forms of slavery—including the trafficking of children, debt bondage, forced and compulsory labor, and the use of children in armed conflict; The use, procuring, or offering of a child for prostitution, for the production of pornography or pornographic purposes;
- The use, procuring, or offering of a child for illicit activities, in particular, the production and trafficking of drugs; and
- Work which is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of the child as a consequence of its nature or the circumstances under which it is carried out.

Convention 182 is explicitly complementary to Convention 138 and must not be used to justify other forms of child labor.

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HMUN procedure:

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