



Dear Delegates,

It is a pleasure to welcome you to the 2014 Montessori Model United Nations Conference.

The following pages intend to guide you in the research of the topics that will be debated at MMUN 2014 in committee sessions. Please note this guide only provides the basis for your investigation. It is your responsibility to find as much information necessary on the topics and how they relate to the country you represent. Such information should help you write your Position Paper, where you need to cite the references in the text and finally list all references in the Modern Language Association (MLA) format.

The more information and understanding you acquire on the two topics, the more you will be able to influence the Resolution writing process through debates [formal and informal caucuses], and the MMUN experience as a whole. Please feel free to contact us if and when you face challenges in your research or formatting your Position Papers.

We encourage you to learn all you can about your topics first and then study your country with regard to the two selected topics. Please remember that both committee members need to be well versed and ready to debate both topics.

Enjoy researching and writing your Position Papers.

We look forward to seeing you at the Conference!

MMUN Secretariat Team

info@montessori-mun.org



UN Economical and Social Council

The world's economic, social and environmental challenges are ECOSOC's concern. A founding UN Charter body established in 1946, the Council is the place where such issues are discussed and debated, and policy recommendations issued.

As such, ECOSOC has broad responsibility for some 70% of the human and financial resources of the entire UN system, including 14 specialized agencies, 9 “functional” commissions, and five regional commissions.

The Council holds regular meetings throughout the year with prominent academics, business sector representatives and 3,200+ registered non-governmental organizations. ECOSOC's biggest gathering, however, is reserved for the summer, when it holds its annual, month-long substantive session in July.

Held in alternate years in New York and Geneva, the session is divided into 5 segments — High-level; Coordination; Operational Activities; Humanitarian Affairs; and General — which cover both global issues and technical, administrative questions.

With its focus on pressing development challenges (employment, education, health, etc.), the High-level segment regularly attracts policy-makers from the top ranks of government. The segment's Annual Ministerial Review (AMR) and biennial Development Cooperation Forum (DCF) has been a notable success, too, focusing on select themes drawn from the UN's Millennium Development Goals.

Source: <http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/about/index.shtml>

Child Labor

Topic Background



Around 215 million children across the globe work full time jobs, with no access to education or play time like other young children.ⁱ 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 50 to 60 million working children are between five and 11 years and are exposed to hazardous circumstances, which is the definition of child labor because of the effect on their physical and mental health.ⁱⁱ

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. In Nepal, for example, children are exploited as dish washers or used in fabric industries. An estimated 1.6 million children between the ages of 5 and 17 are in the work force.ⁱⁱⁱ Like many other countries, Nepal's constitution vouches for the rights of children, but enforcement of the law is very weak. In 2011, however, the worst forms of child labor were identified and addressed by the Nepalese government by providing "free and compulsory" educational requirements and various forms of legal protection.^{iv} Though resources are running low and many provisions have yet to be implemented, these actions are encouraging other nations to take a stand against child labor and enforce currently existing laws protecting children.

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

Past Action

The International Labor Organization (ILO) was founded in 1919 to abolish child labor by devising standards and protocols based on the age of the child and safety of the workplace. The ILO has conducted research, hosted meetings, and created standards that are appropriate for working children across the globe. For example, convention number 138 of the ILO states that "the minimum age for admission to employment shall not be less than the age of completion of compulsory schooling." to place emphasis on education.^{vi} In order to make informed decisions, the ILO hosts the International Labor Conference in Geneva annually to create effective solutions.



The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) is the first legally binding document to provide a complete set of human rights to children all over the world. The initial formation of the Convention consisted of groups such as the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and several non governmental organizations (NGOs), along with the member states of the Commission on the Human Rights. The CRC was designed to provide a legal framework to guide other nations so they could take appropriate measures to enforce the principles outlined in the document. The four core principles of the Convention are non-discrimination; devotion to the best interests of the child; the right to life, survival and development; and respect for the views of the child.^{vii} Children's rights activists are taking the steps to spread awareness and enforce the principles outlined in the CRC, and though many nations have yet to enforce laws concerning child labor, outlining guidelines is a huge step towards success.

UNICEF also has many programs to prevent violence against children to increase safety for individuals all across the globe. Many anti violence campaigns have been created through UNICEF, and humanitarian initiatives help children working in circumstances like war zones, natural disasters, and dangerous work conditions.^{viii} Communication is key for UNICEF to promote the idea of safety for children.

The United Nations encourages the work of non governmental organizations (NGO's) to further the cause of eradicating child labor. One active NGO called "Save the Children India" works to ensure children's rights and focuses on four pillars: child survival, child protection, education, and responding to emergencies and disaster risk reduction.^{ix} Save the Children India also takes the initiative to reach out to donors for their projects, organizations for supplies, and the government to implement stricter measures. This organization has existed since the 1920's, and has created many specific relief projects such as providing health programs, night schools, and protection programs.^x

Possible Solutions

Child labor is fueled by the lack of law enforcement, economic demands, and a social acceptance of children in the work force. Many countries rely on child labor for their economies and it is up to the international community to create clear standards to avoid the mistreatment of minors. To eradicate this issue, creating unions, reducing poverty, and increasing education will steer nations away from promoting child labor.

There are 3 areas in which the UN can develop possible solutions:

- **Creating Unions.** To better working conditions, hours, and pay, it is important for workers to come together and create worker unions to stand up for their basic needs and rights as citizens. How do we create appropriate standards for minimum wages, hours worked, and age of working children? What measures can be taken by governments to uphold conventions and laws passed against child labor?
- **Reducing Poverty.** Many families are forced to send their children into the workforce because of their overall low income, and by reaching out to various poverty stricken areas, the need for child labor can be diminished if basic needs are addressed. In what ways can we make poverty stricken families

independent? What supplies or basic needs are necessary to provide poverty ridden areas in order to initiate change?

- **Increasing Education.** Children must know the emphasis on primary education, and to inform them, education programs must be provided throughout the world. How can we encourage education for children in nations where the cultural norm is to work?



The global community is responsible for the safety and well being of all individuals, including young children that are vulnerable to dangerous conditions. By eliminating child labor, children will have better lifestyles with proper education, basic needs, and opportunities to succeed in the future.

Further Research

Guiding Questions

- Is child labor used in your country or region of the world? What is your government doing about child labor?
- How can we draw the world's attention to child labor and the ongoing process of eliminating this issue?
- What methods can we use to educate children in poverty stricken areas?
- What are some of the basic standards that should be implemented globally with respect to child labor?

Research Sources

- UNICEF – Child Protection from Violence: http://www.unicef.org/protection/57929_57972.html
- UN Overview on Child Labor: <http://www.un.org/en/globalissues/briefingpapers/childlabour/>
- International Labor Organization: <http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/lang--en/index.htm>

GI

ⁱ UN Child Labor Day Background: <http://www.un.org/en/events/childlabourday/background.shtml>

ⁱⁱ Labor Day Briefing: <http://www.un.org/cyberschoolbus/briefing/labour/>

ⁱⁱⁱ Child Labor in Nepal: <http://www.cnn.com/2013/08/14/world/asia/nepal-child-labor>

^{iv} Worst Forms of Child Labor: <http://www.dol.gov/ilab/reports/child-labor/nepal.htm>

^v UN Resources for Speakers: <http://www.un.org/en/globalissues/briefingpapers/childlabour/quotes.shtml>

^{vi} Database of Labor Legislation: http://www.ilocarib.org.tt/projects/cariblex/conventions_6.shtml

^{vii} Convention on the Rights of the Child: <http://www.unicef.org/crc/>

^{viii} UNICEF End Violence Campaign: <http://www.unicef.org/endviolence/about.html>

^{ix} Save the Children India: <http://www.savethechildren.in/about-us.html>

^x Save the Children India History <http://www.savethechildren.in/about-us/history.html>