

Forum: Special Conference on Children’s Rights in the 21st Century
Issue: The question of child labour
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Position: Co-Chair

PERSONAL INTRODUCTION

Dear Delegates,

My name is Nicky Katsara and it is my honour to be one of the co-chairs of the Special Conference on Children’s Rights in the 21st Century. I have participated in both the first and second PSMUN and I am really glad that I was given the chance to attend as a chair this year’s conference, as well.

Two years ago, in the Platon MUN Conference, I had my first MUN experience as a delegate and that’s when my MUN journey started. Despite my young age and 8 conferences later, I have come to understand the immense value of being involved in such an activity and simulation. MUN undoubtedly provides all the young people involved with the unique opportunity of understanding international politics and finding solutions to some of the most complex and demanding issues our world is faced with, issues of political, financial, humanitarian, and environmental nature.

As a Chair, my role is to enhance your efforts in researching, forming your resolutions and coming up with solutions to the very problems political leaders and diplomats have failed to find an adequate solution to. This is the objective I am trying to accomplish by writing this study guide. So, I sincerely hope that this study guide proves helpful. In any case, you should not rely solely on this study guide. The issue of child labor is a vast one and you will certainly need to research more, especially in order to adopt your ideas to your country’s policy. I strongly urge you to contact me anytime if you need any clarifications or further information.

I am looking forward to meeting all of you at the conference.

Regards,

Nicky Katsara

INTRODUCING TOPIC

"What this is all about is political will. If our own country and other countries made it clear that child labour is both illegal and unacceptable, then this problem wouldn't exist."

-Craig Kielburger

The issue of child labour has moved onto the agendas of governments, trade unions, activists, the media, and investors as never before. In 2012, the International Labour Organization released a report stating that 168 million children around the world are engaged in child labor. That number accounts for 11 percent of the world's child population. Today, approximately 215 million children work, many of them full time. Children are forced to commit commercial sex acts, forced into a system of domestic servitude, and employed in occupations that are mentally, physically, socially and morally harmful. They have no access to education as they don't attend school, and have little or no time to play. Many do not receive proper nutrition or care. They are denied the chance to be children. More than half of them are involved in dangerous practices (hazardous environments, slavery or other, illicit activities and armed conflict).



One should also bear in mind that child labour is associated with an enormous cost for the children and for society, as it keeps them out of schools and hampers the healthy development of their minds and bodies. Children's most basic rights - protection and freedom from exploitation-are anchored. Child labor means that children are denied their rights to full-time quality education, which is the key to escaping poverty. By continuing child labor and by forcing children to work for example instead of learning, the cycle of poverty is perpetuated.

DEFINITION OF KEY-TERMS

Child labor

International Definition

“According to the ILO’s Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, “child labor is the enslavement (i.e., sale, trafficking, debt bondage, serfdom, compulsory labor) of anyone under the age of 18. The definition includes the use of children in armed conflict, prostitution and illegal activities such as drug trafficking. Lastly, any work deemed to be harmful to the health, safety or morals of the child is considered to be child labor.”

United States’ Definition

“The Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 prohibits the employment of minors in “oppressive child labor, which is the employment of a child under 16 by anyone other than that child’s parent(s) or guardian(s). However, the Secretary of Labor permits the employment of individuals between 14 and 16 so long as the work is not in the manufacturing or mining industries and so long as the child’s health, well-being and education are not negatively affected. Occupations that are deemed hazardous to the health or well-being of individuals between 16 and 18 years old are also considered to be “oppressive child labor.”

Child labor: Any enslavement — whether forced labor, domestic servitude, bonded labor or sex trafficking — of a child.

- 1) **Domestic Servitude** :Employees working in private homes are forced into serving and/or convinced that they have no option to leave.
- 2) **Sex Trafficking** :Women, men or children are forced into the commercial sex industry and held against his or her will by manipulation and/or force.
- 3) **Forced Labor:** Human beings are forced to work under the threat of violence and they are not getting paid. These slaves are treated as property.
- 4) **Bonded Labor:** Individuals are compelled to work in order to repay a debt and unable to leave until the debt is repaid. (the most common form of enslavement)

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Going back to the Industrial Revolution, 4 years old children were employed in production factories with dangerous working conditions. The Victorian era became

notorious for employing young children in factories and mines. Child labour played a crucial role in the Industrial Revolution from its outset, often brought about by economic hardship. In the early 1900s, thousands of boys were employed in glass making industries. Children as young as three were put to work and many of them also worked as prostitutes. Factories and mines were not the only place where child labour was prevalent in the early 20th century. Home-based manufacturing across the United States and Europe employed children as well. Governments and reformers then thought that labour in factories must be regulated and that's why the legislation that followed moved the work out of factories into urban homes, so that families and women could generate income while taking care of household duties. While this new form of child labour had been spread out in Australia, Britain, Austria and Germany, in 1946, Frieda Miller - then Director of United States Department of Labour - told the International Labour Organisation that these home-based operations offered, "low wages, long hours, child labour, unhealthy and insanitary working conditions." We live in the 21st century but child labour is still common in many parts of our world. Accurate present day child labour information is difficult to obtain due to disagreements between data sources as to what constitutes child labour. It ranges between 250 to 304 million, if children aged 5–17 involved in any economic activity are counted. If light occasional work is excluded, ILO estimates there were 153 million child labourers aged 5–14 worldwide in 2008. Some 60 percent of the child labour was involved in agricultural activities and another 25 percent of child labourers were in service activities. The remaining 15 percent laboured in assembly and manufacturing in informal economy, home-based enterprises, factories, and such operations. Two out of three child workers work alongside their parents and are not getting paid, while some other work as guides for tourists in order to bring in business in shops. In the rural areas child labour occurs very often (70%) and in the informal urban sector not that predominantly (26%).

One would wonder what brings people to force children to labour. International Labour Organisation (ILO) suggests poverty is the greatest single cause behind child labour. Income from working children, even if small, may be between 25 to 40% of the household income. Lack of schools and in general education is also a major factor that drives children to labour. Children are forced to work, as in many areas –most predominantly in rural areas- there are no school facilities.

In European history many cultural beliefs have encouraged child labor. Many view working as a child as an opportunity to build your character and develop your skills or even learn and practice your father's work and follow his footsteps. In LEDC's (Less Economically Developed Countries) girls are simply not expected to have access to proper education and are from an early age pushed into child labour such as providing domestic services.

TIMELINE OF IMPORTANT INCIDENTS

The following list includes the most important conventions, laws, or programs concerning child labor.

Name	Year	Information
Convention on the Rights of the Child	20 November 1989	“Parties recognize the right of the child to be protected from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child's education, or to be harmful to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development”
Convention No. 138 on the Minimum Age for Admission to Employment	1973	Countries that ratify this Convention undertake a legal promise to stop child labour and ensure that children below a certain “minimum age” are not employed.
Convention No. 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour	1999	“It calls for ‘immediate and effective measures to secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour and defines the worst forms of child labour.’”
Child Labor Deterrence Act	1992	"This bill would prohibit the importation of products that have been produced by child labor, and included civil and criminal penalties for violators."
International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC)	since 1992	“IPEC’s aim is to work towards the progressive elimination of child labour by strengthening national capacities to address child labour problems, and by creating a worldwide movement to combat it.”

MAJOR ORGANIZATIONS

The National Child Labor Committee

The National Child Labor Committee (NCLC) is a private, non-profit organization founded in 1904 with the aim at promoting the rights and the well-being of children which are forced to child labor. Despite years of enlightened laws and democracy, the work of NCLC is still needed. Now in its tenth decade the National Child Labor Committee dedicates its efforts to educating children about the working conditions, preventing the exploitation of children in the labor market, improving the health and education opportunities for the children of the migrant farmworkers and increasing public awareness of the work done on behalf of the nation's children.

International Labor Rights Forum

The International Labor Rights Forum (ILRF) is a nonprofit advocacy organization that describes itself as "an advocate for and with the working poor around the world". ILRF, formerly the International Labor Rights Education & Research Fund, was founded in 1986. "ILRF believes that all workers have the right to a safe working environment where they are treated with dignity and respect, and where they can organize freely to defend and promote their rights and interests. ILRF works to develop practical and effective tools to assist workers in winning enforcement of protections for their basic rights, and hold labor rights violators accountable."

It has worked towards eliminating child labor through research, public campaigns and the promotion of the ratification of ILO's resolutions and the reform of US legislation.

Fair Labor Association

The Fair Labor Association (FLA) is a non-profit collaboration of universities, civil society organizations, and businesses. It describes its mission as promoting adherence to international and national labor laws.

International Centre for Trade Union Rights

International Centre for Trade Union Rights is "an organizing and campaigning body with the fundamental purpose of defending and improving the rights of trade unions and trade unionists throughout the world."

International Labour Organization

The International Labour Organization (ILO) is a United Nations agency dealing with the vast problem of labour. 185 of the 193 UN member states are members of the ILO. In 1969, the organization received the Nobel Peace Prize for promoting peace, justice for workers, technical assistance to LEDC'S.

The Child Labor Coalition

The coalition believes that no child, regardless of race, sex, nationality, religion, economic status, place of residence, or occupation, should be forced to labor. Activities of the coalition range from testifying before state and federal legislatures and agencies on child labor to conducting campaigns and hosting conferences.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

A solution is to create more unions to fight child labor. With more unions, more people will be encouraged to help against child labor and they will be aware of what is really happening inside the work force. However, what can play a significant role towards eliminating child labor are laws. Laws concerning the right to access to compulsory education in both MEDC's and LEDC's for both boys and girls, laws concerning the creation of a minimum family income. Many families due to their bad financial condition are forcing their children to work as they do not have another choice in order to make it through the economic hardships of today's world. Most countries have laws against child labour, however, some governments support child labour (regardless of these laws) as a way of preventing further worse living scenarios for the children. If some children in some countries stop working, their families will end up having severe financial problems and as a result the children will suffer mentally and physically. That's why many NGO's try to solve the problem from another perspective. They focus on providing children with information on their rights or by guaranteeing them safer working conditions. Other NGO's help the children in the transition from work to school by building centers where they are provided with healthcare and a tailored education. Bearing in mind that there are 800 million unemployed adults in the world- yet working children are estimated to be at over 300 million-one should consider the possibility of replacing these working children with their unemployed parents. As a result, we would have higher family incomes and resulting rise in production costs would have little impact on exports sales. Global social movements have also proven we can end child labor. An ambitious social movement to eradicate child labor globally came together two decades ago – and has enjoyed unprecedented success. The ILO for instance launched the World Day Against Child Labour in 2002. Our goal is to support the World Day Against Child Labour and to seek further help and support from governments, employers' and workers' organizations, NGOs and civil society, international and regional organizations and active citizens worldwide. While the ILO has collected a lot of data on child labour in recent years, there are still many gaps, as we are in need of more data especially in areas such as domestic servants, farms or home-based out-workers. As consumers, we are the driving force behind the global economy - let's drive it the right direction though. We can raise

awareness, we can question stores about the labour conditions under which their goods were made. If buy it, we should know who made it. Labelling is the key answer.

INTERESTING FACTS & FIGURES AND QUOTES

Facts and figures

- Global number of children in child labour has declined by one third since 2000, from 246 million to 168 million children. More than half of them, 85 million, are in hazardous work (down from 171 million in 2000).
- Asia and the Pacific still has the largest numbers (almost 78 million or 9.3% of child population), but Sub-Saharan Africa continues to be the region with the highest incidence of child labour (59 million, over 21%).
- There are 13 million (8.8%) of children in child labour in Latin America and the Caribbean and in the Middle East and North Africa there are 9.2 million (8.4%).
- Agriculture remains by far the most important sector where child labourers can be found (98 million, or 59%), but the problems are not negligible in services (54 million) and industry (12 million) – mostly in the informal economy.
- Child labour among girls fell by 40% since 2000, compared to 25% for boys.

Source: [Marking progress against child labour - Global estimates and trends 2000-2012](#) (ILO-IPEC, 2013).

"Child labor and poverty are inevitably bound together and if you continue to use the labor of children as the treatment for the social disease of poverty, you will have both poverty and child labor to the end of time."

Grace Abbott

"There is no trust more sacred than the one the world holds with children. There is no duty more important than ensuring that their rights are respected, that their welfare is protected, that their lives are free from fear and want and that they can grow up in peace."

Kofi Annan

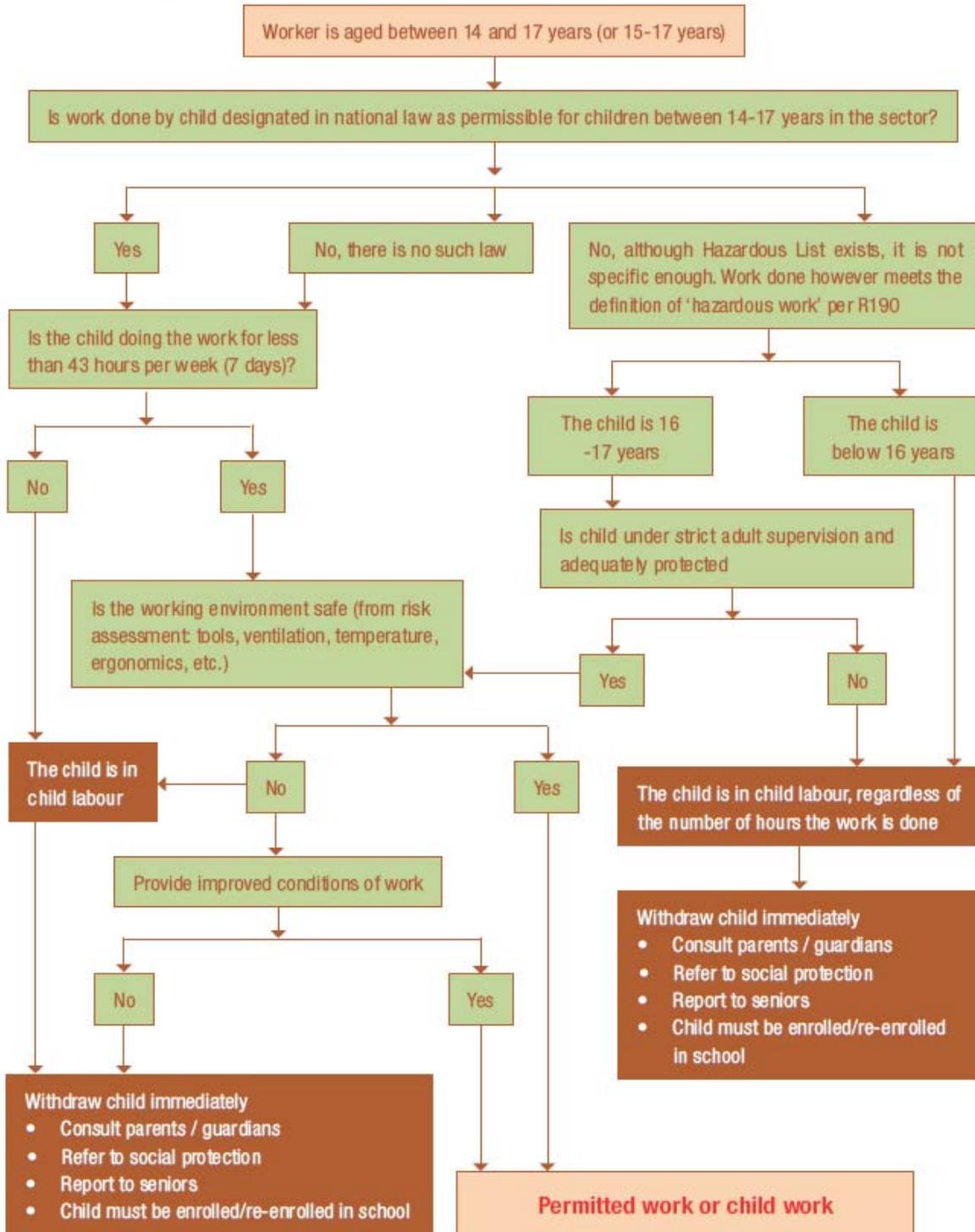
"...in serving the best interests of children, we serve the best interests of all humanity."

Carol Bellamy

"If we can't begin to agree on fundamentals, such as the elimination of the most abusive forms of child labor, then we really are not ready to march forward into the future. "

Alexis Herman

iii) When worker is aged between 14-17 years (developing countries) or 15-17 years (developed countries):



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