Stonyhurst MUN

Human Rights Committee

Topic: The issue of Child Labour

Child labour remains a grave human rights concern that requires urgent global attention. Despite international efforts and legal frameworks in place to combat child labour, millions of children around the world continue to toil in hazardous conditions, deprived of their rights to education, health, and a childhood free from exploitation.

According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), as of 2020, an estimated 160 million children between the ages of 5 and 17 are engaged in child labour globally. 79 million of these child labourers are engaged in hazardous work, posing a direct threat to their physical and psychological well-being.

Regions affected the most gravely include Sub-Saharan Africa, which remains the region with the highest incidence of child labour, with nearly 1 in 4 children involved in child labour. Asia-Pacific follows closely, with over 78 million child labourers, followed by Latin America and the Caribbean region who have shown progress, but child labour remains a significant issue.

Poverty is a primary driver of child labour, pushing children and families to prioritize immediate income over long-term prospects like education. Another catalyst for child labour are armed conflicts and natural disasters that can displace families, making children more vulnerable to exploitation.

Child labour deprives children of their right to education, limiting their potential and perpetuating the cycle of poverty. These children often face physical and psychological harm, leading to long-term health issues.

International progress has been made through the ILO's Convention No. 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour and Convention No. 138 on Minimum Age for Employment. This convention provides a robust legal framework for addressing child labour. Furthermore, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) recognizes the right of every child to be protected from economic exploitation and harmful work.

There has been significant progress in recent years, with the number of child labourers decreasing by nearly 100 million since 2000. Promising initiatives like the Global March Against Child Labour and Child Labor-Free Zones are contributing to global efforts to eliminate child labour.

The global community, including members of this esteemed Human Rights Council, must prioritize the eradication of child labour.

Points to consider:

* How can the key underlying causes of child labour in different regions be addressed effectively?
* How can we strike a balance between eradicating child labour and ensuring that marginalized families have access to alternative sources of income and livelihoods?
* What measures can be taken to strengthen the enforcement of existing international legal frameworks and conventions against child labour at the national level?
* How can we ensure that education becomes a viable alternative for children, thereby preventing them from entering the workforce prematurely?
* What role should multinational corporations play in addressing child labour in their supply chains, and how can they be held accountable for violations?
* In conflict-affected regions, what strategies can be implemented to protect children from being recruited into armed forces or forced to engage in child labour?
* How can countries share best practices and resources to effectively combat child labour on a global scale?