CHANTILLY MODEL UNITED NATIONS PRESENTS

UNICEF

CHMUN XXI
General Assembly

Committee Background:

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) was founded in 1946. It is the UN agency that protects the rights and well-being of children around the world. UNICEF works in over 190 countries and territories. It provides emergency aid, offers long-term support for health and education, and advocates for policies that help young people reach their full potential. From providing vaccines and clean water to rebuilding schools after conflicts, UNICEF is central to addressing humanitarian crises and long-term development needs.

UNICEF focuses on the most vulnerable children, those in conflict zones, displaced communities, and those living in poverty. Its programs support areas such as child protection, gender equity, nutrition, early childhood education, and adolescent development. As the world faces challenges like war, climate change, and economic instability, UNICEF collaborates with governments, nonprofits, and civil society organizations to create safe spaces where children can survive and thrive.

However, progress is not guaranteed. In many areas, children miss out on opportunities due to discrimination, underfunded education systems, and harmful cultural practices. Some countries lack legal frameworks to protect children's rights, while others have enforcement issues due to conflict or weak institutions. Delegates in this committee need to develop practical, sustainable, and rights-based solutions to urgent child-focused issues. Resolutions should focus on equity, cultural sensitivity, and the belief that every child—regardless of gender, location, or background—deserves a future.

Topic A: Combatting Child Labor in Global Supply Chains

One of the most important global issues affecting children today is child labor. Over 160 million children worldwide are still working, many of them under hazardous or exploitative conditions, despite international efforts to lower rates over the past few decades. The relationship between child labor and global supply chains—the intricate networks that manufacture and distribute goods worldwide—is among the most challenging issues to address. Before they reach customers, goods like electronics, coffee, clothes, and chocolate frequently travel through several nations and businesses. Children may work in factories, mines, or farms along the way, frequently without proper compensation, protections, or access to education.

Rarely are these supply chains transparent. Businesses frequently depend on outside vendors, many of whom subcontract to smaller companies with little supervision. Because of this, it is very difficult to determine whether a product was manufactured using child labor, and it is even more difficult to hold businesses responsible. The governments of the sourcing nations frequently lack the political will or financial means to implement labor laws. Families in poverty, particularly those where schools are underfunded or inaccessible, may rely on their children's earnings to make ends meet. As a result, children are compelled to prioritize employment over education, losing out on the opportunity to gain skills and escape poverty.

In order to increase corporate transparency, fund community education, and promote stricter labor laws, UNICEF and the International Labour Organization (ILO) have teamed up with governments and corporations. However, a lot of these actions are optional, and their implementation is still uneven. Countries must enact legally binding standards for ethical sourcing, increase educational access, and fortify social safety nets that lessen families' dependency on child labor if they want to see significant change. By requesting fair-trade goods and putting pressure on businesses to keep a closer eye on their supply chains, consumers can also play a part. In order to ensure that economic

development does not come at the expense of childhood, the committee's delegates must think about how to approach this problem with locally effective and globally coordinated solutions.

Additional Questions to Consider:

- How can governments increase enforcement of child labor laws without harming small businesses that rely on informal labor?

- What international mechanisms can be used to hold multinational corporations accountable for labor conditions in their supply chains?

- How can education be made a viable alternative to child labor in regions facing extreme poverty?

- What role should consumer activism and corporate transparency play in reducing demand for child labor?

- How can UNICEF support both short-term protections for children currently working and long-term strategies for prevention?

Helpful Links

UNICEF – Child Labour

https://www.unicef.org/protection/child-labour

International Labour Organization – Child Labour and Supply Chains

https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/child-labour/lang--en/index.htm

United Nations – Sustainable Development Goal 8.7: End Child Labour

https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal8

World Economic Forum – Ending Child Labour in Supply Chains

https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2021/06/child-labour-supply-chains-responsible-business

Walk Free Foundation – Global Slavery Index: Child Labour

https://www.globalslaveryindex.org/2023/findings/highlights/child-labour/

Topic B: Rebuilding Education Systems in Post-Taliban Afghanistan

The Taliban's resurgence after the previous Afghan government fell in 2021 has had a disastrous impact on the nation's educational system, especially for girls. Afghanistan had made great strides in increasing access to education in the previous 20 years. With the aid of foreign assistance, thousands of schools were rebuilt, teachers were trained, and enrollment rose, particularly among girls who had previously been shut out of formal education. More than nine million Afghan children, including more than three million girls, were enrolled in school by 2018. When the Taliban implemented broad restrictions on girls' education in August 2021 and prohibited the majority of female students from continuing their education past the sixth grade, that progress came to an abrupt end.

Afghanistan is currently dealing with one of the world's most serious educational crises. In the majority of provinces, girls are not allowed to pursue higher education, and female educators have been kicked out of classrooms. Lack of funding or safety has forced the closure of many schools, and others are left without staff or basic supplies. Infrastructure is deteriorating in rural areas, and thousands of students have been displaced by conflict. Fear, poverty, and social pressure keep many families from sending their children, especially daughters, to school, even in places where it is legally permitted. Addressing these issues has become even more difficult as a result of the loss of international aid, as government salaries are still unpaid and educational resources are limited.

In the face of these limitations, UNICEF and other humanitarian organizations have supported community-based learning centers, disseminated radio-based instruction, and provided informal teacher training in an effort to maintain education. Though they frequently function in secret or on a small scale, these programs give hope. International campaigns to promote girls' education have encountered opposition, and significant progress has been sluggish. Denying education to a whole generation of Afghan girls jeopardizes not only their futures but also the nation's long-term progress.

Additional Questions to Consider:

- What strategies can protect girls' access to education in countries where governments impose gender-based restrictions?

- How can informal or community-based education programs be scaled while maintaining safety and quality?

- What is the role of international aid in rebuilding education systems under authoritarian regimes?

- How can education programs in Afghanistan be made more resilient to political instability?

- What ethical considerations arise when engaging with regimes that violate children's rights?

Helpful Links

UNICEF – Education in Afghanistan

https://www.unicef.org/afghanistan/education

Human Rights Watch – Taliban's Ban on Girls' Education

https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/06/13/afghanistan-taliban-education-ban

Save the Children – Afghanistan Education Crisis

https://www.savethechildren.org/us/where-we-work/afghanistan

UNESCO – Education Under Attack: Afghanistan

https://www.educationcannotwait.org/news-stories/afghanistan-education-under-attack

Global Partnership for Education – Afghanistan Overview

https://www.globalpartnership.org/where-we-work/afghanistan