

The United Nations logo, featuring a world map surrounded by olive branches, is rendered in blue on an orange background.

GATORMUN XXI

A blue silhouette of a gator is positioned horizontally across the lower half of the poster, set against a dark blue background.

**UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS
COMMITTEE**

BACKGROUND GUIDE



ERIN KLEIN

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR



Greetings to all of my UNHRC delegates!

My name is Erin Klein, and I am a fourth-year marine sciences major and agricultural and natural resources minor, with a certificate in Environmental Policy, Law, and Regulation. This is my second year on UF's Model UN team. Throughout my time in Model UN, I have had the privilege of competing in different conferences, meeting and learning from so many talented individuals and forming long-lasting friendships. Besides Model UN, I love exploring museums, painting, playing volleyball, and running with the Florida Running Club.

I chose the first topic, "access to clean water and sanitation" because I am enthusiastic about environmental activism and more specifically environmental equity. The UNHRC has established access to water and sanitation as a human right, but many around the globe are still left without it, especially impoverished communities and those that are predominantly composed of people of color. The issue becomes especially difficult when we realize that many countries are limited in their infrastructure and resources, meaning that one country's system of water purification and circulation might require an entirely different approach than another's. Delegates are expected to take this into account when drafting solutions to the issue. I would also like delegates to think about how we can create sustainable, long-lasting solutions as opposed to quick, temporary solutions to the water crisis.

With new child labor laws sweeping the United States, I was inspired to explore the issue of child labor on a global scale, hence our second topic. More generally speaking, a common theme that I encountered is that the vulnerable in society, poor children, are the most commonly preyed upon group when it comes to child labor. Labor exploiters tend to target children of a lower economic status by tempting their families with the prospect of acquiring wealth for their families, but often end up alienating the children from their



parents while abusing them. This further exacerbates the cycle of poverty that they are trapped in. Family members who do attempt to take legal action against perpetrators of child labor often find that the judicial system is stacked against them. The UNHRC has called its members to action against child labor, emphasizing its catastrophic effects on the mental and physical health of the children who are victims of it. This committee will build on that, discussing how we can further combat this issue.

Position papers are required for this committee, and guidelines for them can be found on the GatorMUN website. Please submit your position papers and any questions regarding the committee and/or position paper to gatormun@gmail.com. I am thrilled to meet you all and see your critical thinking and collaborative skills put to the test throughout our committee sessions.

Best of luck, delegates!

Erin Klein

Erin Klein

Director of UNHRC



RULES OF PROCEDURE



Quorum

A majority of voting members answering to the roll at each session shall constitute a quorum for that session. This means that half plus one of all voting members are present. Quorum will be assumed consistent unless questioned through a Point of Order. Delegates may request to be noted as “Present” or “Present and Voting.”

Motion to Suspend the Rules for the Purpose of a Moderated Caucus

This motion must include three specifications

- Length of the Caucus
- Speaking Time, and
- Reason for the Caucus

During a moderated caucus, delegates will be called on to speak by the Committee Director. Delegates will raise their placards to be recognized. Delegates must maintain the same degree of decorum throughout a Moderated Caucus as in formal debate. This motion requires a simple majority to pass.

Motion to Suspend the Rules for the Purpose of an Unmoderated Caucus

This motion must include the length of the Caucus. During an unmoderated caucus, delegates may get up from their seats and talk amongst themselves. This motion requires a simple majority to pass. The length of an unmoderated caucus in a Crisis committee should not exceed fifteen minutes.

Motion to Suspend the Meeting

This motion is in order if there is a scheduled break in debate to be observed. (ie. Lunch!) This motion requires a simple majority vote. The Committee Director may refuse to entertain this motion at their discretion.



Motion to Adjourn the Meeting

This motion is in order at the end of the last committee session. It signifies the closing of the committee until next year's conference.

Points of Order

Points of Order will only be recognized for the following items:

- To recognize errors in voting, tabulation, or procedure,
- To question relevance of debate to the current Topic or
- To question a quorum.

A Point of Order may interrupt a speaker if necessary and it is to be used sparingly.

Points of Inquiry

When there is no discussion on the floor, a delegate may direct a question to the Committee Director. Any question directed to another delegate may only be asked immediately after the delegate has finished speaking on a substantive matter. A delegate that declines to respond to a question after a formal speech forfeits any further questioning time.

Points of Personal Privilege

Points of personal privilege are used to request information or clarification and conduct all other business of the body except Motions or Points specifically mentioned in the Rules of Procedure. Please note: The Director may refuse to recognize Points of Order, Points of Inquiry or Points of Personal Privilege if the Committee Director believes the decorum and restraint inherent in the exercise has been violated, or if the point is deemed dilatory in nature.

Rights of Reply

At the Committee Director's discretion, any member nation or observer may be granted a Right of Reply to answer serious insults directed at the dignity of the delegate present. The Director has the ABSOLUTE AUTHORITY to accept or reject Rights of Reply, and the decision IS NOT SUBJECT TO APPEAL. Delegates who feel they are being treated unfairly may take their complaint to any member of the Secretariat.



Directives

Directives act as a replacement for Draft Resolutions when in Crisis committees, and are the actions that the body decides to take as a whole. Directives are not required to contain operative or preambulatory clauses. A directive should contain:

- The name(s) of the author(s),
- A title, and
- A number of signatories/sponsors signatures' necessary to introduce, determined by the Director.

A simple majority vote is required to introduce a directive, and multiple directives may be introduced at once. Press releases produced on behalf of the body must also be voted on as Directives.

Friendly Amendments

Friendly Amendments are any changes to a formally introduced Directive that all Sponsors agree to in writing. The Committee Director must approve the Friendly Amendment and confirm each Sponsor's agreement both verbally and in writing.

Unfriendly Amendments

Unfriendly Amendments are any substantive changes to a formally introduced Directive that are not agreed to by all of the Sponsors of the Directive. In order to introduce an Unfriendly Amendment, the Unfriendly Amendment must be the number equivalent to 1/3 of Quorum confirmed signatories. The Committee Director has the authority to discern between substantive and non-substantive Unfriendly amendment proposals.

Plagiarism

GatorMUN maintains a zero-tolerance policy in regards to plagiarism. Delegates found to have used the ideas of others without properly citing those individuals, organizations, or documents will have their credentials revoked for the duration of the GatorMUN conference. This is a very serious offense.



Crisis Notes

A crisis note is an action taken by an individual in a Crisis committee. Crisis notes do not need to be introduced or voted on, and should be given to the Crisis Staff by sending the notes to a designated pickup point in each room. A crisis note should both be addressed to crisis and have the delegate's position on both the inside and outside of the note.

Motion to Enter Voting Procedure

Once this motion passes, and the committee enters Voting Procedure, no occupants of the committee room may exit the Committee Room, and no individual may enter the Committee Room from the outside. A member of the Dias will secure all doors.

- No talking, passing notes, or communicating of any kind will be tolerated during voting procedures.
- Each Directive will be read to the body and voted upon in the order which they were introduced. Any Proposed Unfriendly Amendments to each Directive will be read to the body and voted upon before the main body of the Directive as a whole is put to a vote.
- Delegates who requested to be noted as "Present and Voting" are unable to abstain during voting procedure. Abstentions will not be counted in the tallying of a majority. For example, 5 yes votes, 4 no votes, and 7 abstentions means that the Directive passes.
- The Committee will adopt Directives and Unfriendly Amendments to Directives if these documents pass with a simple majority. Specialized committees should refer to their background-guides or Committee Directors for information concerning specific voting procedures.

6 Roll Call Voting

A counted placard vote will be considered sufficient unless any delegate to the committee motions for a Roll Call Vote. If a Roll Call Vote is requested, the committee must comply. All delegates must vote: "For," "Against," "Abstain," or "Pass." During a Roll Call vote, any delegate who answers, "Pass," reserves his/her vote until the



Committee Director has exhausted the Roll. However, once the Committee Director returns to “Passing” Delegates, they must vote: “For” or “Against.”

Accepting by Acclamation

This motion may be stated when the Committee Director asks for points or motions. If a Roll Call Vote is requested, the motion to Accept by Acclamation is voided. If a delegate believes a Directive will pass without opposition, he or she may move to accept the Directive by acclamation. The motion passes unless a single delegate shows opposition. An abstention is not considered opposition. Should the motion fail, the committee will move directly into a Roll Call Vote.





Background

Formed in 2006, the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) is an intergovernmental body, whose members meet in Geneva multiple times a year to address and bring awareness to global and regional human rights abuses. Through joint action, the 47 members create resolutions which serve to prevent and curb infringements upon human rights. The UNHRC is also crucial in its role of disseminating information to media outlets, NGOs, and other entities.

The UNHRC involves a multitude of mechanisms and committees so that human rights violations and issues can be clearly brought to the attention of everyone in the council and thoroughly discussed (International Justice Resource). For example, the Universal Periodic Working Group carries out universal periodic reviews 3 times a year, in which they survey the conditions in regards to human rights in all member states of the United Nations. One cycle of the reviews results in recommendations made by the reviewing group to the country being reviewed on how to better implement human rights within their state. In addition, the committee holds a complaint procedure, which provides the opportunity for both individuals and organizations that have had a connection with such violations to anonymously report human rights violations to the committee, which are then screened and discussed so long as they are deemed credible. Finally, the Advisory Committee serves to provide the committee with a research base for their discussions.

The publication of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 was a large milestone in the history of human rights law and the effectiveness of the UNHRC, as the document was the first ever to define specific universal rights. The creation of the document was motivated largely due to the violence of World War II, with world leaders coming together with the aim of preventing this abuse of human rights from occurring again. The Declaration of Human Rights was produced by members of the Commission on Human



Rights, with U.S. First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt chairing the committee. After 18 months, the UDHR was officially given the approval of the UN General Assembly, with zero participating countries opposing the document. While the document is not legally binding, it has inspired the structure of many treaties, human rights documents such as the International Bill of Human Rights, and other legislation.



TOPIC 1: ACCESS TO CLEAN WATER



Figure 1

Overview

Two billion people around the world are without access to clean water for consumption (United Nations). This is a globally recognized crisis and one that the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights serves to address. The International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights has established water as a basic human right, stating that “the right to safe and clean drinking water and sanitation as a human right..is essential for the full enjoyment of life and all human rights”. All countries around the world are susceptible to water contamination, especially as industrialization continues to grow. It is important to acknowledge that, while water contamination occurs all over the world, regardless of a country’s wealth, water contamination looks different in different regions around the world due to the source of the contamination and the resources, or lack thereof, available to mitigate the issue.

In order to properly address the key issues related to water contamination, it is essential that the impact that climate change, largely worsened due to increasing industrialization, has on both



water availability and quality, is acknowledged. Firstly, climate change impacts water availability as it increases weather extremes, leading to events like droughts, which strip people of water. Climate change also impacts water quality as it increases the frequency of floods, which cause water to pick up contaminants and become unfit for drinking. This poses an especially large risk to people without the resources to adapt to climate change. More specifically, people of color and people of low-income backgrounds bear the largest portion of the burden of water contamination. This paper will further explore the connection between industrialization and water contamination.

The Paris Agreement was an unprecedented step towards combating global warming - related issues such as water contamination that stem from increasing industrialization. It was signed by 196 countries in 2015 and was put into action in 2016. The treaty's main goal is to prevent global warming greater than 1.5 degrees celsius in the next century and to decrease greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 43% before 2030. This document was monumental because it was the first time that a document was created that legally held all countries accountable to both combat and deal with the effects of climate change. The document was also monumental in terms of combating water scarcity. The Paris Agreement requires countries to construct Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), which are their structured plans to lower GHGs within their own nation. The treaty requires that countries periodically revisit and edit these commitments to properly address ever-changing conditions due to global warming, one being the availability, or lack thereof, of safe and sanitary water. The Paris Agreement also calls for developed countries to provide financial and technological support to developing countries in the fight against climate change and its effects. Besides closing the "climate gap" between developing and developed countries, the other struggle in the climate fight is ensuring that countries follow through on their NDCs. In order to hold countries accountable, they will be required to report their progress in an Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF) beginning in 2024. Many countries have already been instituting climate change policy, some examples being the participation in zero and negative carbon



practices such as the wider use of solar energy and bioenergy with carbon capture and storage (BECCS).

Key Issues

The first key issue/contributor is corruption. This corruption includes the lack of regulation placed on large corporations and their factories. According to the Carbon Majors Report of 2017, 100 of the largest corporations together have emitted 71% of “global industrial (greenhouse gases)” (CDP Carbon Majors Report, 2017). However, these corporations have been able to get away with this in part because of what is known as the “revolving door” theory. In the context of environmental politics, this is the idea that political figures will cater their policies to the agendas of corporate bodies to suit their own interests, whether that be acquiring a job with that corporation later, receiving funding from the corporation, or some other reason. This has been an issue in the fossil fuel industry, in particular, as six of the largest fossil fuel companies and some of their lobbying partners were found to have participated in 568 meetings with politicians from the European Commission from 2015 to 2021, which averages to about 1.5 meetings every week over 7 years (CDP Carbon Majors Report, 2017). This involvement of politicians in corporate business and vice versa is dangerous because corporations become motivated with the prospect of the financial gains from the relationship as well as stake in decision-making, while politicians can use their influence to benefit these corporations, but are damaging to the environment. These corporations also commonly outsource their factories to poorer countries and communities, in turn “outsourcing their carbon footprint”. This raises the pollution levels in the countries that the factories are outsourced to, while lowering the pollution levels in the countries that the goods are being produced for. The countries that the factories are outsourced to are typically growing industrialized countries such as India and China. This further exacerbates the water crises that many people in these countries face, while allowing countries and corporations outside of those countries to continue their practices.



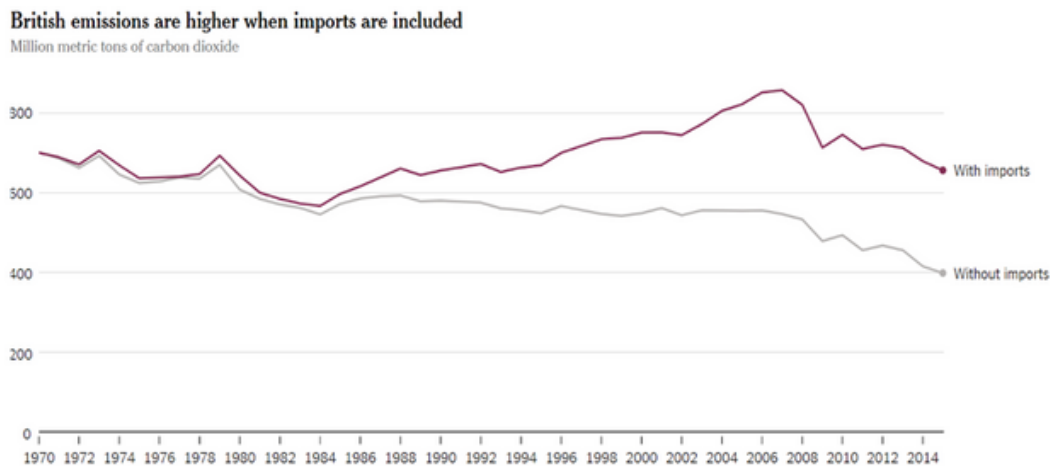


Figure 2

Furthermore, fossil fuel companies have taken part in further corruption by creating doubt about the existence of climate change. While companies such as European BP and Shell first truly acknowledged the presence of anthropogenic climate change in 2003, other companies such as ExxonMobil did not acknowledge the presence of climate change until 2014. Up until then, studies have shown that ExxonMobil helped spread climate change misinformation, as 80% of documents not available to the public admitted the presence of anthropogenic climate change, while only 12% of their public documents did (Grasso 2019). Even corporations that have publicly acknowledged global warming and announced to the public their plans to carry out more environmentally-conscious practices are commonly found to be engaging in “greenwashing”, or the practice in which a business markets their goods or services to make them appear environmentally conscious, typically to gain more profit, while they are actually not. While some corporations do not have sustainability pledges to begin with, the large corporations that do tend to make large promises to sustainability as it attracts a greater amount of customer loyalty, but few rules are put in place to hold them accountable. One of the world’s largest corporations and emissions producers, accounting in the world, Shell, is an example of this. In 2020, Shell committed to spending \$6 million on renewable energy, but not only were they unable to fulfill this requirement but were also found to be contributors to 1.6% of the global carbon budget from 2018-2030, according to their business blueprints (ClientEarth).

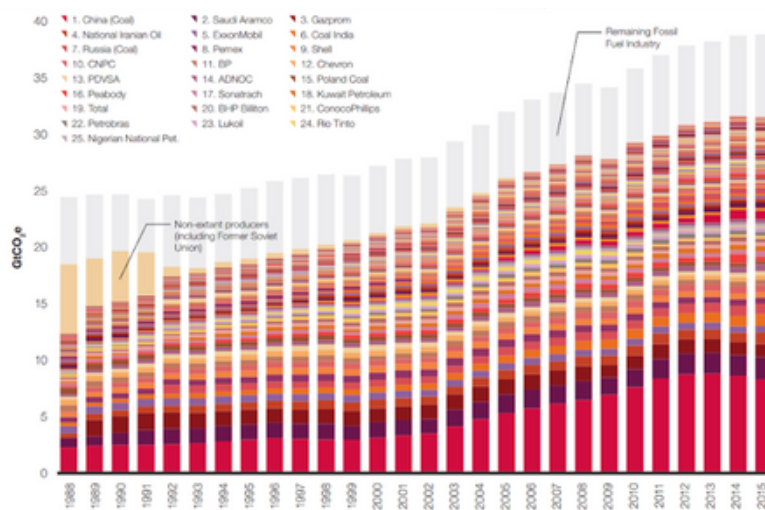


Figure 3

The final key issue in environmental inequality. While environmental inequality can take many forms, two of the more common aspects of this phenomenon, which often coincide, are environmental racism and the neglect of rural communities. Studies show that people of color are disproportionately impacted by environmental risks such as water contamination and climate change, which are also intimately linked. This, in turn, leads to an increased risk of these communities developing type 2 diabetes, heart disease, cancer, and many birth defects, among other deadly conditions. A study conducted by the Environmental Protection Agency showed that, in the United States, people of color experienced a 28% higher environmental risk than the general population (Mikati et al. 2018). More specifically, black people faced a 54% greater environmental risk than the general population (Mikati et al. 2018). This disparity relates to all areas of environmental risk, but can be seen clearly when looking at it from the scope of water contamination. A clear example of environmental racism can be viewed in the South Durban Industrial Basin (SDIB) of South Africa, which holds a predominantly black community composed largely of the people and their relatives who were forcibly relocated there during the South African apartheid. The SDIB was found in 2012 to have the highest levels of sulfur dioxide in the entire country and has consistently faced high levels of water contamination since the apartheid due to the placement of industrial facilities within the community. The health of the SDIB community continues to be affected by the disproportionate pollution levels, despite years of complaints from residents.

This disparity can also be found between rural and urban communities, with rural communities being disadvantaged and either not having access to clean water or facing a shortage of water altogether. Water distribution requires extensive infrastructure as well as employees to operate the facilities, which many rural communities do not have the financial resources and infrastructural capacity to support. For example, many rural regions of Albania lack clean water because they do not have the money to afford technology and equipment to carry out chlorination and other water filtering processes. Additionally, many industrialized countries have old infrastructure in their rural communities that is unfit for safely distributing water. One example of this is the corrosion of the pipes that the water travels through, leading to lead poisoning and other serious health effects.

The urban-rural disparity can also be seen when looking at levels of fecal contamination in water in different communities. Fecal contamination of water sources is an issue that largely affects very rural areas of both industrialized and nonindustrial countries as they lack proper sewage systems. One of the largest barriers to drinkable water in rural communities is improper sewage systems. Rural communities often lack the financial assets to afford proper wastewater treatment facilities and struggle to find enough consistent labor to run the facilities. Additionally, the spread out nature of many rural communities makes it difficult to construct systems that reach the entire community. The health implications of this are many. Diarrheal disease alone, which is caused largely by water contamination from improper sanitation, is the second most common cause of death in children younger than five; in fact, it was the cause of death for around 9% of children younger than 5 years in 2019 (UNICEF).

Case Study: India

India has experienced increased levels of industrialization in the past couple of decades, contributing to its high levels of contaminated water and putting the health of its people at risk. In 2019, India was ranked 120th out of 122 for its water quality, with 70% of its freshwater was found to be unfit for consumption, largely due to air pollution and improper infrastructure for sewage



management (The Times of India). Additionally, fecal contamination of India's water bodies has caused a plethora of illnesses such as diarrhea, polio, and cholera, which has a 25-50% death rate in extreme cases (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention). These illnesses pose an especially large risk to young children and the elderly, with diarrheal diseases being one of the leading causes of death in children.

However, conditions have improved due to increased monitoring and regulation of pollution sources in India, with only 46% of rivers in 2022 being classified as contaminated. India's Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) instituted the National Water Quality Monitoring Programme (NWMP) and began monitoring the quality of freshwater bodies in India starting in 2009, identifying polluted bodies for treatment. To combat the sewage problem, India has also established the Pavitra Ganga program, which is a partnership between India and the European Union, which aims to improve water quality in India by improvement of sewage treatment infrastructure. They plan to use more cost-effective and energy-efficient strategies such as breaking down sewage by way of anaerobic respiration, water testing, and using detector technology to pinpoint areas in water bodies with high pollutant concentrations.

Case Study: United Kingdom

The United Kingdom has experienced large amounts of water contamination in the past years from polyfluoroalkyl substances, or (PFAS). These chemicals, given the nickname "forever chemicals", remain in the environment rather than breaking down. They are used in close to 10,000 materials, which are found in products such as detergents, water resistant materials like those found in fabrics, nonstick surfaces, and even firefighting foam (The Guardian). Due to the widespread use of PFAS in products such as these as well as in industry, the chemicals have entered water sources across the UK, making water unsafe for drinking and causing serious health problems in many communities such as kidney and thyroid damage, cancer, and infertility. Samples taken in the UK and Europe have detected the chemicals at 17,000 locations, with researchers encountering very high levels of the toxin (1,000 nanograms PFAS/L



encountering very high levels of the toxin (1,000 nanograms PFAS/L water) in 640 of the locations (The Guardian). The government of the UK is facing increased pressure to place more strict regulations on the usage of PFAS, especially as the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has recently instituted some of the first regulations on PFAS usage. Additionally, their permitted water levels in England and Wales are 25 times higher than that of the United States (The Guardian).



TOPIC II: CHILD LABOUR



Figure 4

Overview

According to UNICEF, close to 160 million children, or 17% of children around the world, are victims of child labor, and almost half of these children are subject to working in unsafe conditions. Furthermore, those in poor, rural areas are much more susceptible to becoming victims of child labor than those who are of better economic means. According to the International Labor Organization (ILO), child labor is 'work that deprives children of their childhood, potential and dignity, and that is harmful to physical and mental development', including missing school due to work. The National Library of Medicine groups child labor cases into the following three classifications: "work outside the home, family work, and excessive household chores". The specific parameters for child labor as defined by UNICEF are listed below:

1. Age 5 to 11 years: At least 1 hour of economic work or 21 hours of unpaid household services per week.
 2. Age 12 to 14 years: At least 14 hours of economic work or 21 hours of unpaid household services per week.
 3. Age 15 to 17 years: At least 43 hours of economic work per week.
- Child labor peaked in Europe and North America in the 1880s as the rise of industrialization called for an increase in labor, but started to decrease in the 1900s as the industrialization contributed to more

efficient machinery which in turn decreased the push for children to work. However, global levels of child labor spiked in 2021, largely due to the COVID-19 pandemic, increasing by more than 70 million since 2016 UNICEF). The exploitation of children for work has therefore been a focal point amongst member states of the United Nations throughout its history.

The International Labor Organization (ILO), formed in 1919 with the goal of eliminating child labor, was one of the first major bodies that worked to combat child labor. The ILO produced many conventions that worked to combat child labor, the first being Convention no. 138 (1976). This established that, in order to work, a person must be greater than or equal to the “age of completion of compulsory education”, or 15 years. It also stated that workers must be 18 or older to engage in work that could possibly compromise the well-being or “morals” of the worker. Another major contract that was established by the organization was Convention no. 182, or the “Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention” (1999). This document specified different types of child labor and put emphasis on combating those that were most detrimental to the health of children. It identified four criteria for the most serious forms:

- 1. 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;*
- 2. The use, procuring or offering of a child for prostitution, for the production of pornography or for pornographic performances;*
- 3. 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;*
- 4. Work which, by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children.*

This convention also put emphasis on the need for children to be able to receive basic education for their own development and therefore improved quality of life, something that child labor creates a large barrier to. This is a topic that will be further discussed later in this paper.



As mentioned before, although large strides have been made to combat child labor in the past, there remains much to be done. The agricultural sector accounts for the largest percentage of child laborers- 70% of all children engaged in child labor (ILO). Children working in agriculture, primarily farms, are subject to long hours, many in poor weather conditions. Additionally, they work with harmful chemicals such as pesticides and dangerous machinery, both of which carry with them significant safety concerns. Domestic workers are the second most common forms of child labor, at 20% (ILO). Many children find side jobs serving their employers in their homes or in those of people who know their employers and soon find themselves being abused. Industry is the third most common category for child labor, and comprises 10% of child labor practices (ILO).

Key Issues

Child labor is an issue that disproportionately impacts developing countries over developed countries. Furthermore, more than 1 in 5 children in less developed countries are involved in child labor (UNICEF). Typically, those who carry out child labor prey on poverty-stricken families and take advantage of the fact that they are looking for opportunities to provide for their families. In addition, children from poor families will often take up jobs in the hopes that it will provide families with more economic assets, and instead end up trapped in a cycle of abuse. Additionally, many children in poor regions face external pressure from their families to enter the workforce in the hopes that it will allow their family to escape poverty, but the child is instead exploited and is unable to escape the cycle of poverty.

Perpetrators of child labor also take advantage of rural communities, many of which are poor, contributing to and exacerbating the issue. Rural areas contain almost three quarters of poor people globally (International Labour Organization). They also face

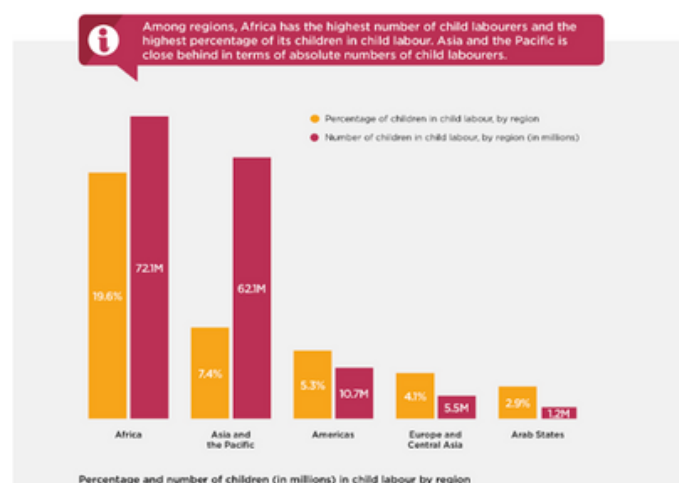


Figure 5



a 3 times higher risk of child labor than those in urban areas (Rural 21). Additionally, rural areas are found to be more disconnected from other parts of the country, making it easier for child labor to go unnoticed. Many exploiters can easily cut off contact between children and their families because of the family's lack of resources for contacting their children, including phones and legal assistance. In conjunction with poverty, child labor occurs disproportionately in rural areas partly due to the fact that there is a shortage of jobs in rural areas, so many families are desperate for any work that they can find.

As stated earlier in the paper, those who are victims of child labor often work in hazardous conditions, taking a large toll on their physical and mental health, which is especially damaging considering they are still in their developmental years. A study conducted by Ibrahim et al. (2018) found that child labor contributed to stunted growth, weakened immune systems, hearing loss among other permanent disabilities, and caused “behavioral and emotional disorders” in children in addition to many other serious conditions. In industrial settings, children are subject to toxic chemicals and face a large risk of falling or injuring themselves from using machinery, especially given little to no protective gear. It was found that in Iran, the greatest frequency of injuries occurred in industrial work settings, at 58.2% (Ibrahim et al. 2018). The chemicals used in the agricultural sector, largely pesticides, also pose a large neurological threat to the children working in that area. Long working hours in intense weather conditions also pose a risk.

Furthermore, many children are mistreated by their overseers, often verbally and physically abused. A study on working children in Turkey found that 62.5% of working children faced abuse where they worked, with 53.6% facing emotional abuse, 25.2% sexual abuse, and 21.8% physical abuse (Ibrahim et al. 2018). Young girls are also more likely to experience sexual assault, many times by a customer. Girls who were younger than 12 years, uneducated, and found to be working for longer than 8 hours a day were more likely to be targeted by predators (Ibrahim et al. 2018). In more extreme cases of child labor, such as prostitution, children are at risk of contracting



diseases like HIV and Hepatitis B and C, which their families often do not have the money to afford treatment for.

One of the reasons child labor is so harmful is because it is detrimental to a child's education. Studies show that, as children work more, they spend less time in school and their test scores suffer as a result. Many stop attending school altogether. Studies found that, among research conducted on 60 less developed countries, children who work are 10% less likely to attend school than children who do not work in 30 countries. This disparity reached 30% in 10 countries (Guarcello et al. 2006). This is coupled with the fact that many children in poor areas do not have proper access to education. Many parents in low-income countries choose to send their children to work rather than to school because they find the economic benefit of their child working to be higher than having them attend school. This is the case in many countries where school is too expensive for many to afford or is of poor quality. Additionally, many families are looking for solutions for urgent financial problems, and find that having their child work is the only viable option. Children who do attend school and also work often do not do well in class, many eventually dropping out, because of the fatigue from working while going to school, they do not have time to study on top of work, or are forced by those who employ them to drop out. A study conducted in an area of Varanasi revealed that 90% of the families in the community, including the children, worked to weave sarees (Human Rights Watch). In that same community, only one school was available for the 2,000 children in the community (Human Rights Watch). The school only had occupancy for 82 students in the area and contained only one teacher, so the remaining children solely worked (Human Rights Watch).

Case Study: Child Labour in Yemen Civil War

Child labor is a common practice used by the Yemeni government in the Yemen Civil War, which began in 2014 and still occurs today. According to UNICEF, since 2015, almost 4,000 boys and girls have been exploited as soldiers, sex slaves, and other roles in the Yemen Civil War. Many children, some boys as young as 7 and 8, are recruited by the promise of 20,000 Yemeni rials, or the



equivalent of \$80, tobacco, and the assurance that they will receive honor for serving (Nasser 2023). Many young Yemeni girls are exploited as well and become victims of sexual assault and rape at the hands of Yemeni soldiers, often contracting STDs or becoming pregnant.

Children who become involved in the Yemen Civil War are often impaired for the rest of their lives, both physically and psychologically from the trauma of being forced to carry out and witness acts of violence being committed. Child labor impacts the country as a whole as it prevents children from receiving an education, which would in turn improve their opportunities and quality of life and benefit the economy of Yemen. The use of children in the conflict goes against the Rights of the Child Act, which labels the use of children younger than 15 years in armed conflict as a war crime. The Houthis, an extremist group involved in the conflict, have vowed to the United Nations to stop using children in their forces, have only slowed their recruitment, but continue to exploit high numbers of children in the war. The United Nations has applied pressure to hold the perpetrators of child labor in the Yemen Civil War, but has much to do.



Figure 6

Case Study:

Migrant children in U.S. agricultural industry

There has been significant rollback in the United States of laws that are meant to protect children from unethical labor practices. This

has been very visible in the case of migrant children in the United States agricultural sector, which includes the highest proportion of child labor in the U.S. as well as worldwide. Migrant children are common victims of child labor in the U.S. agricultural sector, many coming to the United States in search of better opportunities and finding jobs in agriculture to be some of the few available to them. One of the most common crops in the U.S, tobacco, is what many migrant children find themselves picking. Aside from the long hours, often under poor weather conditions, there are few regulations that protect children from the dangers of the work. For example, the “agriculture’s hazardous occupation orders”, a set of regulations with the aim of protecting workers in the agricultural sector from being harmed, has remained unchanged over the past 50 years (NPR). Workers in the tobacco industry are at risk of nicotine poisoning, also called green tobacco sickness, which occurs when workers “absorb tobacco through their skin”. Short-term impacts of the illness include dizziness and nausea, while long-term impacts can include infertility, cancer, and a shortened lifespan. Although efforts have been made to monitor companies and ensure that they are instituting safe labor practices, many agricultural child labor laws have been rejected in Congress, with some of the argument against regulations coming from “farm lobbying groups” who argue that these regulations will inhibit childrens’ ability to gain farming experience and damage farms. While many congressional members and activists have fought to reinforce laws that protect children from child labor, there is much distance to cover.



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