



HRC

Reducing child labour

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Forum:	Human Rights Council
Issue:	Reducing Child Labor
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Introduction

Child labor has occurred since the beginning of human history and has now become a debatable issue. According to the statistics given by the International Labor Organization, there are an estimated number of 218 million children in ages of 5 to 17 in child labor worldwide. This number is excluding child domestic labor and it is said to be that numbers would be extremely large if those numbers were included.

Definition of Key Terms

Child Labor

The term is used for the employment of children below a certain age at regular and sustained labor. It is considered exploitative by many international organizations. UNICEF defined the term as “work that exceeds a minimum number of hours, depending on the age of a child and on the type of work.”

- Ages 5-11: At least one hour of economic work or 28 hours of domestic work per week.
- Ages 12-14: At least 14 hours of economic work or 28 hours of domestic work per week.
- Ages 15-17: At least 43 hours of economic or domestic work per week.”

General Overview

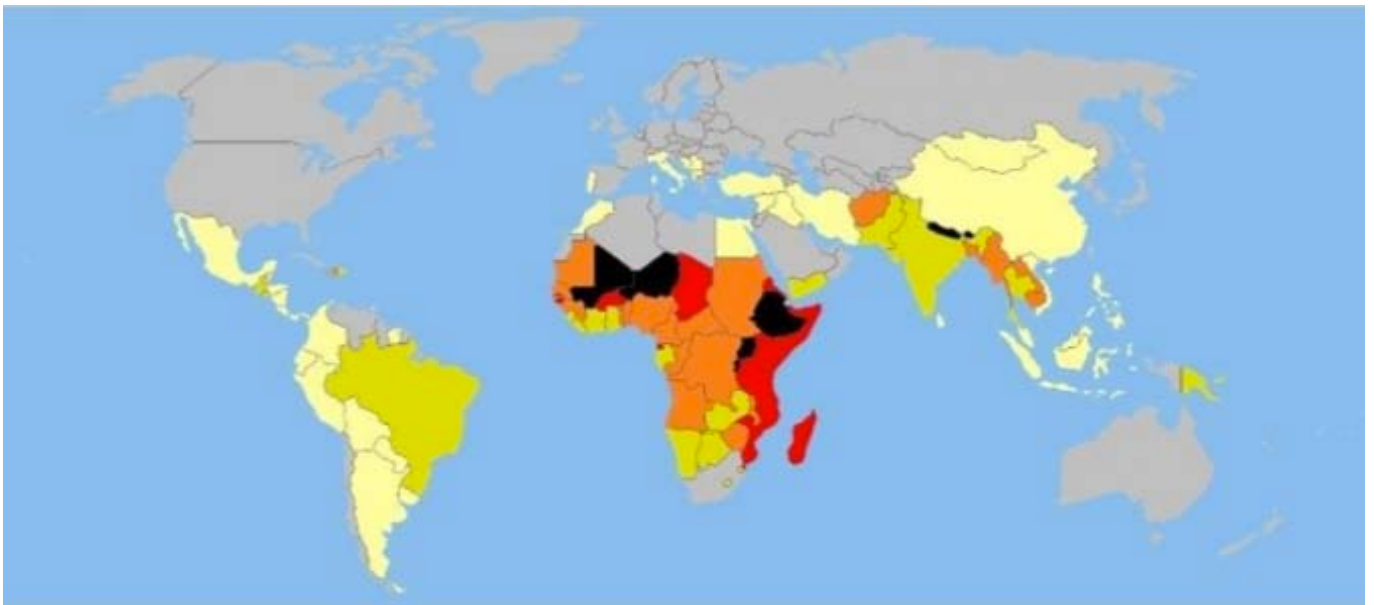
Child labor in general

Child labor began to be considered a human rights issue when the transformation came with the industrial revolution and the arrival of concepts such as children’s rights and workers’ rights historically. Children are regularly employed as guides for tourists or like in some industries, repetitive and tedious work for instance, weaving carpets, assembling boxes, polishing shoes, cleaning or arranging goods in shops. The United Nations and

the International Labor Organization consider child labor as exploitation and most countries of the world believe it to be highly inappropriate as well.

Nearly 70% of the child laborers are employed in agriculture and in some countries, they take up a third of the agricultural workforce. The work can be like work after school for their family to long hours of heavy work which may involve heavy machinery or harmful chemicals.

Distribution of child labor



Grey: No data

Yellow: 0.01 to 10% children at work

Green: 10 to 20% children at work

Orange: 20 to 30% children at work

Red: 30 to 40% children at work

Black: More than 40% children at work

Child soldiers and child prostitution

The two most condemned of the many forms of child labor are the use of children for military purposes and child prostitution.

Child Soldiers

In areas of armed conflict, boys between the ages of 14 and 18 are often recruited to join in the war. As a result, over the past ten years, approximately two million children have been killed, over one million have

been orphaned, over six million have been seriously injured or disabled and over ten million have been left with serious psychological trauma while in conflict. Since 1998 there have been armed conflicts involving child soldiers in at least 36 countries and over 300,000 are currently fighting in 30 different war zones around the world. Some of the soldiers are as young as 7.

Child prostitution

The origin of sexual exploitation turns out to be poverty. Some men and women pay and persuade parents to send their children to the city or another country to “work”. Girls find themselves locked up in brothels or national and international prostitution networks. They then reimburse the money given to their parents along with the interest- an eternal debt. Children are forced to become sexual slaves due to the debt that increases daily. The *Worst Forms of Child Labor Convention*, 1999 of the International Labor Organization states that the “use, procuring or offering of a child for prostitution is one of the worst forms of child labor.”

UN Involvement

Many United Nations Organizations (UNOs) have been working in unison with member nations to eradicate child labor.

The International Labor Organization (ILO) has created a number of conventions. For example the Minimum Age Convention (1973) and launched programs such as the International Program on the Elimination of Child Labor, in order to manage child labor.

The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) has funded many programs and has helped governments approach the problems on child labor. UNICEF India is in charge of the Child Protection Program, a program that has a main focus on the particular issue.

Country Positions

France

Children under the age of 16 may not be employed, with a few exceptions for those in certain apprenticeship programs or working in the entertainment industry. Work between the hours of 10 p.m. and 5 a.m. may not be performed by children under the age of 18. These laws are enforced through periodic checks by labor inspectors.

China

Although the law prohibits the employment of children under the age of 16, the government has not adopted a proper policy to combat child labor. This is why child labor is one of the biggest social problems in China. Children

are an abundant source of labor and in some areas they take up 10 to 20 percent of the work force. It is estimated that 10 million children are out of school and that over 5 million are working in factories.

Russia

Around 3.4 million of Russian children under 18 are employed and a big percentage of this number is made up of those who are recruited for prostitution, filmed in pornographic videos, and those who work at family enterprises and agricultural fields. These underage employees often do not have medical inspections and neither do they conclude labor contracts. This results in them having to work 200 hours per month without breaks and time off on weekends. According to the Russian state statistics service, 219,900 children between the ages of 15 and 17 were employed in 2006.

United Kingdom

Children under 16 years old are not permitted to work in an industrial purpose unless it is part of an educational course. However there were reports that children were being trafficked into the country and forced to work as domestic servants, drug couriers, or beggars or as pickpockets.

United States of America

Child labor is being used in more than two dozen companies. They are forced to start working at the age of four in fields and factories. They work for eight hours a day and their wages are much less than the minimum wage. Child labor is hard to detect in the US because slaveholders range from lawyers to teachers.

Indonesia

Child labor in Indonesia is continually growing. Many children work on large fishing boats- jermals. Very few of the workers on them are adults. They work for twelve hours a day in horrible working conditions then they sleep in rusty, dirty shacks. The work places are filthy and dangerous. It's torturous. However, they only get paid nine dollars a month.

Possible Solutions

The following points may be considered as possible solutions:

- Removing the factor triggering child labor, poverty.
- Letting more and more people to realize the situation of poverty in their countries and getting more support.
- Enforcing laws on banning child labor.
- Making school compulsory and free to all children.

Timeline of Events

Date	Description of event
1780~1840	The industrial revolution resulted in a massive increase in child labor. Many laws were passed in England, the USA, and Scotland to put a stop to child labor, however hardly any were enforced.
1837~1901	Victorian era: young children were employed to work long hours in factories and mines-dangerous workplaces at very low wages.
1938	The U.S. Congress passed the Fair Labor Standards Act
December 11, 1946	UNICEF was established to support the children after World War II
November 20, 1989	The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Children was adopted

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