UNICEF Committee

Issue: Implementing measures against the exploitation and violence against children

Introduction to topic:

Globally, it is estimated that up to 1 billion children aged 2–17 years, have experienced physical, sexual, or emotional violence or neglect in the past year. That being stated, it is proven that experiencing violence in childhood impacts lifelong health and well-being. In addition to this, three quarters of children between the ages of 2 and 4 are regularly subjugated to violent discipline by caregivers, while only 60 countries have full legislative prohibition of corporal punishment at home. This is just a few of of the faces of the despicable phenomenon of child maltreatment. Another issue that faces children globally is the threat of exploitation. The use of children for private benefit, in instances such as child domestic work, child soldiers, use of children in the transport of narcotics, and sexual exploitation, are too common in today's world. Recent estimates show that 152 million children worldwide are child labourers, that roughly equates to 1 in 10 children worldwide. That number is significantly too high and while some action has been taken, there is still a lot of work to be accomplished to help prevent, and ultimately put an end to exploitation and violence against children. Every child has the unquestionable human right to be protected from any type of violence inflicted upon them.

Definition of key terms:

Adequate parental care An arrangement by which a child's basic physical, emotional, intellectual and social needs are met by their carers and the child is developing in line with their potential with no issues.

Assessment The process by which the problems, needs (physical, emotional, intellectual and social) and rights of a child and their family is evaluated and understood in a wider context of the community.

Child abuse "a deliberate act of ill treatment that can harm or is likely to cause harm to a child's safety, wellbeing, dignity and development. Abuse includes all forms of physical, sexual, psychological or emotional ill treatment."

Child exploitation refers to the use of children, against their consent, for private benefit or gain. This can take the form of sexual exploitation, child soldiers or child laborers. Child exploitation often results in cruel or harmful treatment of the child, as the activities they are forced to partake in can cause emotional, physical, and social problems.

Child headed household A household in which a child or multiple children, typically an older sibling, assumes primary responsibility and acts as the primary caretaker, running the household and providing for the members of the aforementioned household.

Child labor work that is mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful to children and interferes with their schooling by depriving them of the opportunity to attend school, obliging them to leave school prematurely or requiring them to attempt to combine school attendance with excessive work.

Child trafficking the action or practice of illegally procuring and relocating children, typically for the purposes of forced labour or sexual exploitation.

Child protection "Measures and structures intended to prevent and respond to abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence affecting children."

Disclosure The way by which a victim of violence and/or exploitation informs someone that the abuse has occurred. The disclosure may be direct, through a straightforward confessional statement, or may be done through hints, divulging small details at a time. More often than not, disclosure is made by a nurse, a doctor, a social worker, noticing the child and assessing them as exploited. Both types should be recognised.

Background information:

Violence and exploitation against children can be seen in various forms and is influenced by a plethora of factors, ranging from personal characteristics of the victim and perpetrator to their cultural, social and physical environments. However, due to absence of disclosure from the victims, much of the aforementioned abuse remains undiscovered. This occurs for multiple reasons, one being fear: many children are afraid to report violence acted out upon them, as there exists a real threat for them if they do.

Another important factor is societal acceptance of violence as morally acceptable or normal in certain communities. According to the Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children, approximately 106 countries lack prohibition of the use of corporal punishment in educational facilities, 147 countries do not prohibit it within alternative care, and currently 16 countries have prohibited it fully at home. The lack of legislative prohibition is attributed to the lack of information on this issue and the absence of proper infrastructure to allow anonymous disclosure. Another factor to be taken into consideration is the difference in cultural values. In certain societies, corporal punishment might regarded as normal, while it may be shocking in others.

The absence of disclosure is also attributed to the lack of safe or trusted ways for individuals, both children and adults, to report it.

Keys facts relating to the issue:

- Three quarters of children between the ages of 2 and 4 are regularly subjugated to violent discipline by caregivers
- Only 60 countries have full legislative prohibition of corporal punishment at home.
- 15 million adolescent girls between the ages of 15 and 19 have experienced some degree of sexual violence
- Every 7 minutes, an adolescent is killed by an act of violence somewhere in the world.

Major Countries and Organisations Involved

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

UNICEF is one of the most involved UN organisations relevant to the issue at hand. Given that their mission statement is to drive change for children and young people every day, across the globe, it is evident that their contribution is of mass effect. UNICEF works with 190 countries and territories to save children's lives, to enforce and defend their rights, and to aid in their development so that they can fulfil their full potential. Involved particularly with issues relating to child labour, their approach to prevention involves providing access to basic services, working to strengthen national child protection systems, as well as advocating and promoting social change. Furthermore, they work with governments in various countries to implement programmes directly targeting child labour. In response to the call to end violence against children by 2030, UNICEF has strengthened its evidence based approach. Actions taken by the organisation include, but are not limited to: supporting coordinated national plans and actions to

address the issue, strengthening legislative and policy frameworks, shifting social norms and practises that perpetuate violence, implementing policies to prohibit violence and improve services, and educating girls and boys to be aware of their rights and therefore exercise them by all means possible.

United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)

In 2001, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to conduct an in-depth study on the question of violence against children. In response, OHCHR, along with other UN agencies, has made and continues to make an advocacy effort to raise awareness and to bring this problem into the general public's eye.
In November 2007, the United Nations General Assembly established the post of Special Representative of the Secretary-General on violence against children. This resolution encourages multiple UN bodies, OHCHR being a main contributor, to cooperate and support the Special Representative.

World Health Organisation

The World Health Organisation largely contributes to the resolution of the issue at hand through working on numerous initiatives, as exemplified by their work with the International Society for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (ISPCAN) to produce the first international guide on how to prevent child maltreatment. A further example of their involvement is their work in establishing INSPIRE, which is a group of 7 interlinked strategies aimed at reducing violence against children. WHO and a variety of other organisations work to address the causes of childhood violence and exploitation, including in familiar situations.

Relevant UN Treaties, Resolutions, Events and Initiatives

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is a document of paramount importance and weight in actions assumed by United Nations bodies. It is a great milestone in the history of the fight to attain equal human rights, as it establishes a standard of action and morality tone followed by all member nations.

Promotion and protection of the rights of children 03.12.2007 (A/62/435)

A resolution central to General Assembly's efforts to prevent the violations of the rights of children internationally. A statement from the report summarises the intent of the resolution and

is as follows: "At its 3rd plenary meeting, on 21 September 2007, the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the General Committee, decided to include in the agenda of its sixty-second session the item entitled: "Promotion and protection of the rights of children: "(a) Promotion and protection of the rights of children; "(b) Follow-up to the outcome of the special session on children" and to allocate it to the Third Committee

Global Study on Children Deprived of Liberty

Children deprived of liberty remain an invisible and forgotten group in society notwithstanding the increasing evidence of these children being in fact victims of further human rights violations. Countless children are placed in inhuman conditions and in adult facilities – in clear violation of their human rights - where they are at high risk of violence, rape and sexual assault, including acts of torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Previous Attempts to solve this issue

UNICEF #ENDviolence campaign

This is a social media targeted campaign by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) with a mission statement which reads as follows: "Children should feel safe at home, in school and in their communities. But it is in these places that most violence against children happens – often at the hands of the people they see every day. For many children, violence wears a familiar face. Violence may be closer to home than you think. Recognise it. Report it." The campaign centres around using incentivised and increased disclosure to help tackle the issue at hand.

The 2030 Agenda for Children: End Violence Solutions Summit

The report on the summit identifies its purpose: "to highlight and share mutually supporting initiatives that advance the cause of children's rights, and to prevent and bring to an end to all forms of violence against children, to spread solutions that end violence against children; to highlight how the Partnership supports the 2030 Agenda and strengthens children's rights, and to make the rights of the child known and safeguarded; and to reinforce a shared commitment for action to end all forms of violence against children.

Possible Solutions

Enforcement of national and international law

 Classically, dealing with strengthening the enforcement of already existing legislation, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, would be very proactive given the negligence of member nations of documents such as the Declaration, through ill practices such as child

Increased quality of educational programmes

Increasing the quality of support they provide to their students through subsidising them would be proactive in ensuring that if a child is maltreated in a familiar environment for example, they would be provided institutional support in their educational environment. Another potential solution in the realm of educational programmes would be the establishment of new educational programmes that would ensure measures such as but not limited to: education of soon-to-be parents on how to respect their child's rights, education of children and adolescents on their rights and how to exercise them, etc.

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Policies dealing with Societal norms

Dealing with the implementation of media-related policies that promote a change in societal norms, such as increasing media coverage of high-intensity situations of child maltreatment, would further clarify the detestable nature of child abuse, and would draw the issue to the public's eye. When the issue is brought to public attention, advocacy would be made easier and it could provide an easier route to disclosure and help to victim.

Safe spaces in developing areas

Given that the presence of child maltreatment is correlated to level of development in the nation a clause supporting the establishment of safe spaces managed by relevant UN bodies would be beneficial to a resolution dealing with the issue at hand.

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