

Committee: ILO

Topic: Eliminating the Use of Forced Labor in the Textile Industry

Report of the Chairs

I. Theme of the Conference

Model United Nations San Antonio (MUNSA) is a conference dedicated to fostering authentic and passionate debate amongst delegates in order to generate solutions to current global issues. The theme of *MUNSA XXIV: Envision* encapsulates our mission to urge delegates to foresee a future in which these problems have been dissolved. With collaboration in mind, delegates from every committee are encouraged to visualize innovative resolutions and a prosperous world to come. Together, we will propel ourselves into an age in which brilliant ideas converge to transform our world and address its most paramount issues.

II. Rationale

Forced labor is work issued to non-consenting people under the threat of penalty; it is, in effect, a form of modern slavery.¹ This issue mostly affects migrant workers, women, children, and people from disenfranchised groups. In the Asia-Pacific region, 24 million people are victims of forced labor including sex work, debt bondage, state-imposed penalties, and child labor.² In Africa, forced labor also stems from debt bondage and tradition imposed by authorities along with ethnic discrimination and the drafting of child soldiers.³ In order to eliminate these practices, this committee must look forward to a future where suffering countries no longer rely on forced labor.

III. Background of the Topic

Forced labor is perpetuated by the demand for fast fashion in western countries. In 1930, the UN held the Forced Labor Convention which outlawed all forms of forced work including human trafficking, debt bondage, and child labor.⁴ In 1957, the UN held the *Abolition of Forced Labor Convention*, which outlawed the use of state-imposed punishments for dissenting citizens.⁴ Despite these conventions, forced labor practices are still perverse in suffering

countries that depend on trafficked workers, migrants, women, and children to produce the textiles needed to meet the demands of Western countries. In 2014, a new protocol for the Forced Labor Convention was ratified to increase protection, compensation, and prevention of forced labor.⁴ It aims to increase the UN's ability to combat this issue as well as human trafficking. Despite these conventions, forced labor is still rampant as 24.9 million people⁵ are still affected compared to the 21 million people in 2012.⁶

IV. Contemporary Evidence of the Topic

Large companies are often unaware of what factories are producing certain parts of a product, or they don't care to look.⁷ As a result of this flippancy, the textile industry is saturated with forced labor. While the UN has ratified protocols to end this issue, it doesn't have any power to enforce it; often it must rely on governments that don't have the power or money to go through with the protocols. Yemen, for example, is currently fighting a civil war and is unable to enforce protocols ratified earlier in its history to reduce forced labor.⁸

Simply put, forced labor is modern slavery. This disturbing aspect of the international commercial economy has plagued the workforce for far too long. This committee hopes its delegates will take steps towards abolishing this practice.

V. References and Research Resources

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3. Sweden, & Hauchère, A. (2007, May 17). Combating forced labour and discrimination in Africa. Retrieved from https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/forced-labour/WCMS_082041/lang--en/index.htm

4. (n.d.). International Labour Standards on Forced labour. Retrieved from <https://www.ilo.org/global/standards/subjects-covered-by-international-labour-standards/forced-labour/lang--en/index.htm>
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6. (2012, June 1). 21 million people are now victims of forced labour, ILO says. Retrieved from https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_181961/lang--en/index.htm
7. Moulds, J. (n.d.). Child labour in the fashion supply chain. Retrieved from <https://labs.theguardian.com/unicef-child-labour/>
8. (n.d.). Ratifications for Yemen. Retrieved from https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:11200:0::NO::P11200_COUNTRY_ID:103523

VI. Note to the Delegates

Hello and welcome, all delegates, to MUNSA XXIV: Envision. We're all very excited to hear your opinions and witness the course of debate on these topics.

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