

Committee: UNICEF

Topic: Establishing measures to prevent child slavery and forced labour

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Introduction

This debate will focus on preventative measures to reduce child slavery and forced labour. The key components of this debate will be centred around modern slavery, child slavery and forced labour, which have been defined below.

Definition of key terms

Child - a child is defined as anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday.

Slavery - condition in which one human being is owned by another.

Forced labour - work that is performed involuntarily and under the threat of any penalty.

Background information

The issue of child slavery and forced labour has arisen due to a deep socio-economic divide between geographical locations in the UK and between first world and developing countries.

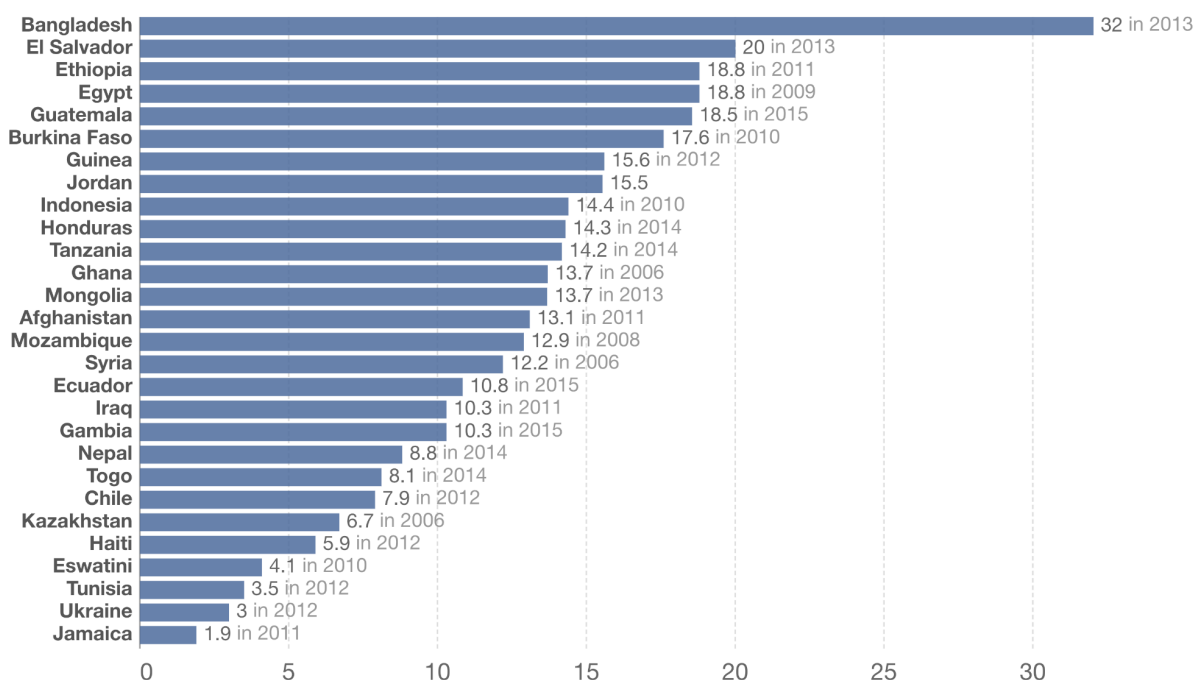
Today, in 2022, throughout the world around 218 million children work, many full time. These children do not receive an education; many also are not provided with proper nutrition or care.

More than half of these children are exposed to working in hazardous conditions, slavery, illicit

activities including involvement in drug trafficking and prostitution, as well as involvement in armed conflict. Whilst numbers of enslaved children remains high, particularly within countries with inadequate living standards, historically, there have been countries that have managed to eradicate child labour within the course of a century, such as the United Kingdom. Recently, global trends have shown a significant reduction in child labour in recent decades; however there is still drastic disparity in the progress that different countries have successfully achieved. Below, the chart shows the average weekly working hours of children ages 7-14. This date was collected between the years 2000 and 2012.

Average weekly working hours of children

Average weekly working hours for children ages 7-14 who are involved in an economic activity for at least one hour in the reference week of the corresponding survey (irrespective of school attendance).



Source: International Labour Organization, UNICEF and World Bank

OurWorldInData.org/child-labor/ • CC BY

This chart highlights the vast amount of prevention that still needs to be put in place in order to definitively eradicate child labour. This issue is important as although there has been significant progress in more developed countries; there are still vast numbers of enslaved children, showing that there are still measures that need to be put in place to prevent increasing numbers of children in forced labour.

Stakeholders

Relevant UN Treaties, Resolutions and Reports

CO29 - Forced Labour Convention (1930)

- Extorting somebody into compulsory labour will be punishable as a penal offence, the penalties imposed by law should be adequate and strictly enforced.

PO29 - Protocol of 2014 to the Forced Labour Convention, 1930

- Emphasises the urgency of eradicating forced labour in all its forms.

Previous Attempts to Solve the Issue

In 2021, the NSPCC detailed long term preventative measures that attempted to solve the issues of child slavery and forced labour. These measures included addressing the inequality within the socio economic divide, improving societal and professional understanding and awareness of modern day slavery and making the forced labour and modern slavery industry unprofitable, therefore reducing the demand for enslaved children. Additionally, they concluded that there must be reinforced regulatory checks on

children migrating to the UK from overseas and that professionals in different sectors must work together at an international level to better identify and support vulnerable children who are at risk of trafficking. This would include increased cross border investigations and assessments and better liaison with social welfare services overseas. Furthermore, the NSPCC suggested that in order to better identify and support children who have migrated to the UK from overseas, professionals need training and development in areas such as: the impact of migration and displacement on children, training on approaches to working with migrant, trafficked and asylum seeking children, increased information on global safeguarding and child protection issues and up to date information on worldwide legislation on trafficking and modern slavery.

Possible Solutions

<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-abuse-and-neglect/child-trafficking-and-modern-slavery> - prevention

<https://www.unicef.org/protection/child-labour> -UNICEF's response

Some possible solutions in order to better prevent child slavery and forced labour could include the following: ensuring accessible free education of a good quality in order to offer an alternative to child labour and to break the poverty cycle by improving prospects for decent work in adulthood. Secondly, investing in child survival initiatives and ensuring access to basic services such as, nutrition, water, sanitation, hygiene and healthcare services. Thirdly, stronger social protection systems in order to guarantee adequate standard of living to offset the vulnerabilities that push people into forced labour and child trafficking. Additionally, the NSPCC's measures of

reinforced regulatory checks on children migrating to the UK is vital in preventing child slavery and forced labour.

Bibliography

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/slavery-sociology>

<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-protection-system/children-the-law#skip-to-content>

<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-abuse-and-neglect/child-trafficking-and-modern-slavery>

<https://ourworldindata.org/child-labor>