

Welcome Delegates to PANGEA 2020 and the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF).

UNICEF's mission is to advocate for the protection of children around the globe, and it was founded in 1946 by the General Assembly after World War II in order to respond to the needs of children whose homes had been demolished during the war. Today, UNICEF is committed to addressing the needs of children in over 190 Member States and territories around the world. It advocates for the protection of children's rights, to help meet their basic needs and to expand their opportunities to reach their full potential. This mission is accomplished through a series of programs based on survival and development, education, gender equality, health services and research, and policy activism. With this mission in mind, we will be addressing two topics:

1. Protecting the Rights of Refugee, Migrant, and Internally Displaced Children
2. Preventing the Recruitment of Children in Armed Conflict

UNICEF receives funding through donations of various governments, non-governmental organizations, corporations, and private entities and all contributions are voluntary. The UN does not provide funding for UNICEF's projects or daily operations. Large portions of fundraising are done through the national committees of UNICEF, the oldest of which is the United States of America. The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) serves as a guideline for assessment and integration of child benefits in individual Member States.¹

1. Protecting the Rights of Refugee, Migrant, and Internally Displaced Children

With over 50 million children currently displaced from their homes, the child migrant and refugee crisis is currently at its worst period since World War II. Migration due to war and armed conflict have detrimental effects, and often

¹ "What is the Convention on the Rights of the Child?" UNICEF, <https://unicef.org/child-rights-convention/what-is-the-convention>

result in asylum seekers who have no place to go. Over 100 Member States have detained children in their migrant detention centers. Children in refugee centers are five times less likely to be enrolled in school, more likely to be forced into some form of human trafficking (such as forced labor or sexual exploitation). Therefore, the protection of refugee, migrant, and internally displaced children is of the utmost importance today.² It falls upon UNICEF and its Member States to ensure that children, at all stages, are ensured the proper health care, housing, education, and guardianship that they deserve.

3. Preventing the Recruitment of Children in Armed Conflict

Throughout history, children have been at risk of being recruited in armed conflicts, with a detrimental impact on children and their community. Recruitment may be forced or voluntary under social, economic or safety concerns, and covers the inclusion of sexual slavery, suicide missions, and serving as messengers and spies. Approximately 250,000 children are currently serving as child soldiers around the world, 40 percent of whom are girls, many of whom are forced not sexual slavery. Disputing Member States with high levels of poverty and migration are susceptible to child armament. As with armed conflict, children are exposed to violence, whether they are witnesses or commit violent acts themselves, and are often abused, exploited or killed by their recruiters.³

Since 1998, more than 100,000 children have been released from their combat roles and reintegrated into their communities in over 15 Member States. While being forcibly kept in these armed groups, the children are exposed to and commit acts of violence, causing both mental and physical harm. It is within the purview of UNICEF to foster solutions that help address the extent of these physical, emotional and mental damages, and restore their

² “Child Refugee and Migrant Crisis,” UNICEF, <https://www.unicefusa.org/mission/emergencies/child-refugees>

³ “Child Recruitment by Armed Forces or Armed Groups,” UNICEF, https://www.unicef.org/protection/57929_58007.html

rights. The reintegration process provides psychological assistance, medical care, and economic support through UNICEF-funded transit centers, foster families, or immediate families. UNICEF is today working to promote legal framework and resolutions to prohibit the recruitment of children in all forms of armed conflict and armed forces.

Committee Directive

Delegates should ask themselves how Member States are addressing the CRC, in terms of protecting and addressing migrant, refugee, and internally displaced children, in terms of current legislation. They should also look at Member States in which child recruitment into armed conflict is legal, and ask about legislation on this issue. They should consider the work of regional bodies which might be of use in helping Member States resolve these critical issues.