

Ean Fish

AS: Topic #2 - The Exploitation of Children in Africa

YUNMUN XXXVI

Across Africa, children are forced into dangerous occupations that strip them away from their childhood. Whether they are forced to work perilous jobs to help their families survive, or they are dragged into armed conflicts as child soldiers, they are being stripped of their rights. These youth are often denied access to education, healthcare, and safety itself; basic necessities that every child deserves. Even when schooling is available, many are unable to attend regularly. In sub-Saharan Africa, the primary school enrollment rate is only about 79%. This means that a staggering one in five children are currently not enrolled in school. The statistics only worsen with age: 33% of youth aged 12-14, and nearly 60% percent of those aged 15-17, are out of school entirely.¹ When kids are out of the school system, whether due to poverty, employment, or conflict, it becomes much harder to break the cycle of exploitation and instability.

The African Union (AU) has made efforts to protect children through agreements like the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (1990) and the Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict (2002).²³ Still, despite these commitments, millions of children continue to face exploitation as a result of poverty, weak enforcement of laws, and ongoing conflict.

The African Summit Committee is being asked to find practical, long-term ways to protect children and give them real hope for the future. Delegates should consider how African nations can strengthen legal protections, improve access to quality education, and create safer economic opportunities for families. It is equally important to think about how to support and reintegrate former child soldiers into their communities with dignity and care.

Delegates should consider:

1. How can the African Union and its member states better enforce child-protection laws?

¹ [Education in Africa | UNESCO](#)

² [African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child](#)

³ [Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict](#)

2. What role can education, poverty reduction, and local development programs play in preventing child exploitation?
3. How can the AU and the United Nations work together to rescue, rehabilitate, and reintegrate children affected by conflict?
4. What accountability measures could ensure that governments, militias, and private actors stop exploiting children?

Through cooperation, education, and stronger governance, African nations can take meaningful steps toward ending the exploitation of children as laborers and soldiers, and ensuring that every child has the chance to grow up safely with the freedom of education.

Just as a reminder, please make sure to carefully review all your position papers. Plagiarism as well as the use of AI will lead to disqualification from receiving any awards (even the shtick award). As always, everyone should feel free to email me at efish1@mail.yu.edu if you have any questions or points of clarification. While this is an ongoing issue, I truly believe that if we can come together as countries then we can take steps to conquer this problem.

Best of luck,

Ean Fish

Chair, African Summit Committee

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