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Economic and Social Council Chair report

Committee: UNICEF

Agenda 1: Ways to ensure education for Syrian refugees

Agenda 2: Stopping the recruitment of child soldiers

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Agenda 1: Ways to ensure education for Syrian refugees

1. Agenda Introduction

A. General Overview

Since the onset of Syrian Civil War in 2011, huge amount of people from Syria have fled from their own country, seeking for safety for their family and for their well-being somewhere else.

As of the exact meaning of huge amount of people, just in February 2016, the United Nations has noticed 13.5 million Syrians requiring assistance, and in the midst of those numbers, 6.6 million are internally displaced within Syria, and over 4.8 million are refugees outside of Syria.

Internally or externally displaced, these wanderers are often referred to as "Displaced" people, which means fleeing from where they once lived is not something that they opt to do, but done because of their surrounding situations, in this Syria's case, Civil War.

The main international agency that roots for protection of such refugees and wellbeing of them is United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) but since the agenda indicates for ways to ensure proper education for them, and as early education taking place is highly recommended, this chair believed agenda would be fit to be fruitfully discussed in UNICEF committee. UNICEF and NGOs put education at the core of the strategy to address the effects of the conflict on Syrian children.

B. Definition of Key Terms

Refugees: "Refugees" refer to a group of people who have fled their country because they are in fear of persecution mainly because of their religion, nationality, or they are in a particular social group or organization. Owing to such fear they are feel unsafe in their own country bounds due to unavailability of such protection of that country. The term refugee, as in case of Syria, Syrian refugees are citizens and permanent residents of Syria who are outside the country since the beginning of Syrian Civil War in 2011. The history and the root cause of Syrian Refugees will be discussed on the History Section.

C. Urgency & Importance

The urgency of educating Syrian refugees is great, and the system for educational purposes is in dire need. There are currently 1 million Syrian Refugee Children in the world. Lack of English skills is blocking the access of education, therefore making it a factor of high drop out rates.

The delegates should be aware why we are coming together to discuss the importance of educating Syrian refugees. In 2014, Syrians alone account for a third of 220,000 migrants who've appeared on Europe's shores. They are the largest group entering Europe in 2016, and the reason that are most cited for them to take such a perilous journey is for better education opportunity.

2. Status Quo

Currently, the European migrant situation is such that it can be legitimately described as a 'crisis'.

The United Kingdom has already played a crucial role in supporting education of nearly 250,000 children from Syria. Through this work, it is increasingly recognized that education in a safe environment can provide betterment for the

vulnerable. Education can, at the same time, deliver a long term empowerment and healing process in households and communities by providing a hope for the future.

Until now, the international focus has been mostly about handling practical difficulties of delivering education, which are building classrooms temporarily, recruiting teachers and training them. However, there should be more attention on quality of education. To give an example, in Jordan, education there weren't satisfying for Syrian refugees due to lack of value in it, which led to lower enrollment rates.

In order to make the best out of education and make it a tool for creating a lasting difference, the quality of teaching and learning environment is an important task to be solved by us. We should know that refugees worldwide spend an average of 17 years in displacement and with an estimated 195,000 Syrians aged 18-25 in Jordan and Lebanon alone, their school experience as refugees will be most likely the only one that they will ever get.

Also, when Syrian young people are far from home in host countries, they find themselves lacking access to jobs- and this is where education steps in. The resilience built through education will enable them to develop skills such as ability to cooperate, critical thinking, and communicating peacefully which are all possible if higher quality education were to happen.

Yet, the numbers enrolled in education programmes for refugees are negligible. Quality issues degrade enrollment rates, leading for more Syrians to choose to work in part time jobs, gaining any employment they can, rather than sending their children to school.

About 1 million Syrians have requested asylum in various countries, particularly Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, and the EU. Pledges have been made to the United Nation to permanently resettle 170,000 registered refugees. until February 2016. However if their stay in host countries don't guarantee them a life including education, it is basically eradicating their potential for survival.

3. History

The root causes of Syrian refugees moving out to survive in other places can be traced back to the time when Syria civil war started in 2011.

In 2013, after the war broke out, displaced refugees were relocated in less troubled parts of the country, in desperate want to flee from violence, chaos, and shortages of food, and other necessities. Inside Syria, it became harder for Syrians to find a safe place to settle in their own native country. In September, in the midst of dark worsening conditions in Syria, Sweden becomes the first EU country to allow permanent residency to all asylum seekers. There are indeed some concerns rising regarding people-smuggling operations but since approximately 8000 Syrians are affected by the decision, it is mainly welcomed.

4. Stance of involved nations/organizations

-Turkey

Turkey is the largest host country with over 2.7 million Syrian refugees. With many Syrian refugees, education is becoming an important topic to be discussed.

-South America

South America, mainly Argentina and Brazil offer refuge to Syrians. In Argentina, more than 300 refugee families have come. Brazil was the first vocal country in North and South America to offer humanitarian visas to refugees.

- Germany

Germany has received the biggest number of refugees in 2015, and the influx of refugees is expanding so tremendously that its federal states has criticized the government for its intake number of migrants. Germany's stance is that all the other Eurozone nations step in to take part in fair distribution of refugees. However, it is difficult to find other nations willing to participate in helping.

- Austria, Hungary, and the Balkan states

Since Eastern European nations including Hungary and Balkan States border Asia, they are the most sensitive to migrants' movement. Also, they are not politically or economically stable like other EU countries are and therefore have a lesser room for migrants. Before talking about education of refugees, we should be concerned of their well being and safety first.

- Rest of developed world

In the status quo, USA, Japan, and Russia and many others are still being criticized for not taking an active part in welcoming refugees in their country but rather just helping them in monetary ways. Monetary aids have contributed to solving the problem but avoiding the core issue and not taking in migrants is just ignoring the whole situation.

5. Future Outlook and Possible Solutions

Aiming for Syrians and host communities aged 18 to 25 in Jordan and Lebanon, many associations and councils are helping to bridge both access and quality for better education. One project that is 3 years long, is EU-funded Language and Academic Skills and E-learning Resources (in short LASER) program which allows approximately three thousand disadvantaged young people to learn necessary language and academic skills and get a higher education learning online with UK's Open University.

Possible Solutions for this agenda must come out as a result of cooperation of various organizations, nations, and groups, in order to facilitate the resolution of providing education for disadvantaged, in this case, refugees. Working with NGOs and thinktanks for policies and field work would be helpful. EU countries and other members of UN must work together to bring feasible solutions.

To come to a consensus of each nations gathering in the committee, chair highly encourages to overcome strong nationalistic stance. True tolerance is needed in the spirit of this meeting.

Societies can be conceived as a elaborate combination that consists of different activities, systems and organizations. When this complex activities jointly improves organizations, development occurs.

6. Conclusion

One of the most important means of sustaining developments in a country is the educational system in a society. Education enables new generation to face opportunities in the future and challenges the knowledge from the past. It shows young generation to the opportunities ahead of them and therefore raise their motivation to be equipped with mental capacity to devise ways. A proper education gives them a taste of normal life and a glimpse of hope in the future.

An education for these Syrian refugees will allow these people to be more peaceful and be inclusive in host communities

7. Questions to Consider

- 1) What have EU accomplished so far to resolve this agenda?
- 2) What kind of impact will this agenda have on the world?
- 3) What are the different stances each nation have?
- 4) With various conflicting clashes, how can the committee come to consensus?
- 5) What are the proper steps or actions that should be taken to relieve the problem of education Syrian refugees?
- 6) How can the members of EU be incentivized to accept more migrants?

Agenda 2: Stopping the recruitment of child soldiers

1. Agenda Introduction

A. General Overview

Around the world, over 300,000 children are recruited as child soldiers. It is legal that certain people from developed countries volunteer as child soldiers for their military career. However, in many developing countries, children are forced to join armies of the government or rebel forces, which is illegal according to international laws.

Such outlawed recruitment of child soldiers is considered as a huge problem in international society. Most of all, children with child soldier experience suffer from severe post-war trauma. Child soldiers are ordered to conduct violent acts including using deadly weapons, and even killing their enemies. During these experiences, children fall into mental anguish and unstableness which have detrimental effect on their growth to adulthood. It is likely that these traumatized children would create an unstable and problematic society when they grow up. Not only children abused for military uses go through both physical and mental pain beyond description, outlawed recruitment of child soldiers can threaten the future of a country.

B. Definition of Key Terms

-Child soldier : Child soldier is defined as “any person under 18 years of age who is part of any kind of regular or irregular armed force or armed group in any capacity, including but not limited to cooks, porters, messengers and anyone accompanying such groups.”

-Recruitment: The recruitment of workers, soldiers, or members is the act or process of selecting them for an organization or army and persuading them to join.

2. Status Quo

It is estimated at least more than half a million children under 18 have been recruited for business related to armed forces, paramilitaries and civil military in more than 30 countries. In addition, girls are reported to account for more than 30~40% of child soldier recruitment. Child soldiers, which are used in combat operations, for sexual purposes, to lay or clear landmines or to work as spies, messengers, porters or servants, typically go through the process of being stolen from their families, maimed, raped, drugged, used as sex slaves or otherwise abused. Due to problems regarding drug use and battles field experiences of hostility, even after being released and going through rehabilitation, former child soldiers tend to be drawn to a life of crime.

Experts suggest that during the long civil war and ensuing rebel riots in Liberia between 1989~1995, more than 21,000 children took part in the fighting. In neighboring Sierra Leone, where 11-year conflict was only settled in 1999, many minors were forced to witness and take part in horrible crimes against civilians, including amputations, rape, beheadings and burning people alive. Over 7,000 children served as soldiers in Sierra Leone.

3. History

For decades, the international community has worked to end the use of child soldiers. While progress has been made in international law, problems regarding

child soldiers and their rehabilitation remain unsolved. Here are some examples of past measures taken against the situation:

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocol

The UN Convention on the Rights of a Child has a significant protocol on prohibiting the use of children under the age of 18 in armed forces. The convention also took a major role in convicting some of the most active child soldier recruiting nations, though military abuse and uses in hostilities of children continues till this day among more than 50 state and non-state armies. This protocol has been ratified in 110 countries. However, the UNCRC is commented to engage more in real scene projects, since words themselves have little influence in activation of protocol violating countries.

International Criminal Court Jurisdiction and International Law

In an effort to cut the vicious chain of continuing recruitments, using children at battlefield has been outlawed by international law and by the newly established International Criminal Court (ICC).

The establishment of the Red Hand Day

Red Hand day is the 12th of February and commemorates the practice of child soldiers in wars and armed conflicts. It also holds events to draw public attention and participation for preventing child soldier recruitments.

Efforts of international organizations

International and multi-national organizations including Child Soldiers International, UNICEF and NGOs have been working on the disarmament and rehabilitation of child soldiers and their rehabilitation. However, the number of child soldiers is on the steady rise, and there still remains a task of seeking ways through the vicious cycle of recruitment and child soldiery.

Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers

Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers seeks to pressure governments to meet their international obligations on preventing child recruitments, as laid out in the Optional Protocol on children in armed conflict.

4. Stance of involved nations/organizations

-Afghanistan

During the Afghan civil war, militias recruited thousands of child soldiers. Some of them are even used as suicide bombers and gunmen. At least 200 boys under 18 are serving in the Afghan National Police and about 100 boys aged 12 to 17 are being detained by Afghanistan's National Intelligence Directorate. Also, girls who are recruited in armies are being sexually abused by the Afghan police, the Taliban and private security companies.

-Canada

Canada has long been recognized as a leading advocate on children and armed conflicts. Canada hosted the first International Conference on War Affected

Children in Winnipeg in 2000, galvanizing support from the international community to address children and armed conflict issues. It played a strong role in creating and negotiating the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict. Canada also endorsed the February 2007 Paris Principles , which provides guidelines for all actors working in the field to prevent the recruitment and use of children in conflict and to reintegrate children, affected by war.

-DR Congo

One in ten child soldiers (30,000 children) are found in Democratic Republic of Congo. It is alleged by the United Nations that 15 to 30 percent of all newly recruited combatants are under 18 years old. One of the reasons why they use child soldiers is that they find it hard for enemies to kill children. Therefore, the number of children recruited in armies remains high.

-Germany

In Germany, one major conflict of the past where children were used in battle is World War II. It stems from the rise of the Nazi following World War I. Since the beginning of the 1930s, with Adolf Hitler's ideas of economic recovery, Hitler sought to gain power and invade other nations. During that time, child soldiers named the Hitler Youth played a significant role. However, after the war, the Hitler Youth was dissolved and many children were left without homes and were forced to live in harsh conditions with little food or money.

-Iran

Basing itself on the Koranic traditions about war, Iranian law prohibits the recruitment of those under 16. Nevertheless, by the middle of the Iran-Iraq War, those rules were broken. With embellished stories such as “distribution of plastic keys to paradise” which was distributed to young Iranian military volunteers, symbolizing the certain entry into “paradise” for volunteers who were killed. Therefore, such myths lead to children as young as 13-year-olds volunteering to join the army. Also, the country has reported that they are accepting volunteers at age 16 in armies and those at 17 can work for the police.

-Iraq

About 11 million out of million Iraqi citizens are under the age of 18. This means the Iraqi regime has a significant number of potential forces that are to be used in wars. Accordingly, the Iraqi government began organizing children as young as 10-year-olds into units. They have since been engaging in war as early as the Gulf War in 1991 and the Iran-Iraq war. Since the early 1990's, there have been various types of boot camps organized for thousands of Iraqi children. For instance, until March 2003, there was vigorous military training of children under the Ba'ath party government in power. The Ashbal Saddam, formed after the 1991 Gulf War, recruited 10-to-15-year-olds who attended three-week training courses in use of weapons, hand-to-hand fighting and infantry tactics.

-Myanmar / Burma

According to Human Rights Watch, as many as 70,000 boys are serving in Myanmar's national army Tatmadaw. What's more surprising is that despite the fact that the government has stated only ones that are 18 or over be accepted, children as young as 11 are being forced to join the military. The Burmese

government were condemned of the recruitment and the use of children in militaries. In June 2012, Burma and the United Nations signed a Joint Action. According to the agreement, the government of Burma was committed to ending all recruitment and use of children in armed forces by December 2013. However, a report by Human Rights Watch on May, 2003 indicated that Burma has failed to do so.

-The United States

The United States does not permit compulsory recruitment of any person under 18 for any type of military service. However, the U.S. does permit 17-year-olds to volunteer for service in its armed forces. This practice is subject to a range of safeguards, including requirements for proof of age prior and parental consent. U.S. law and policy are consistent with its obligations under the Optional Protocol (OP) to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict, which permits governments to accept 16- or 17-year-old volunteers into their armed forces under certain conditions. The OP prohibits any compulsory recruitment of children under the age of 18 into governmental armed forces and requires State Parties to take “all feasible measures” to ensure that members of their armed forces that are under the age of 18 do not take a direct part in hostilities. It also requires Parties to prohibit and criminalize the recruitment and use in hostilities of persons under age 18 by non-state armed groups.

On September 15, 2008, the Child Soldier Accountability Act was passed by both the House and Senate, and cleared for White House action. This Act would prohibit the recruitment or use of child soldiers, extend U.S. criminal prohibitions relating to recruitment and use of child soldiers, designate certain persons who

recruit or use child soldiers as inadmissible aliens, and allow the deportation of certain persons who recruit or use child soldiers.

5. Future Outlook and Possible Solutions

Outlawed child soldier recruitment is a huge threat to a person, for a country and obviously for the entire humankind. Therefore, an effective way to stop the recruitment of child soldiers should be fully discussed. Before discussing the resolutions, delegates must consider the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, shortened as CRC. There are four main rights that a child can appreciate: The Right to Survival, The Right to Protection, The Right to Development, and the Right to Participation. It is crucial that resolutions to stop the recruitment of child soldiers uphold these values.

The chair highly encourages that the delegates establish international scale solutions. For instance, the delegates can create a protocol regarding the issue of outlawed child soldiers, or bring changes to a former international law to increase the rights of young children who are suffering as child soldiers. In this process, cooperation between nations is essential. The chair also suggests resolutions that involve non-government parties such as NGOs, which have serious concerns towards the problems of child soldiers as well.

There are many possible steps that each delegate can take. Delegates can pursue their own way of thinking regarding the main agenda, to make a better world. The chair is looking forward to see a lot of creative resolutions from the delegates.