

United Nations International Children’s Fund (UNICEF)
Toronto International Model United Nations 2020
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Delegation of France

Topic A: Use of Child Soldiers

The delegation of France recognizes the imminent danger that children in our global community face due to the practise of using child soldiers in areas of conflict, such as in the Central African Republic. In the previous decades, France has conspicuously made the matter of protection of children in armed conflict a top priority and will continue to do so by actively collaborating with member nations in UNICEF to find the sustainable solutions in ensuring the safety of children on a global scale, particularly in war torn regions.

In 2007, France and UNICEF organized the “Free Children from War” conference which led to the consolidation of the Paris Principles and Paris Commitments; these were endorsed by 105 states (Paris Principles and Commitments). The main goals of these includes: the prevention of child recruitment in armed forces, the release of child soldiers, sanctions against the illegal recruitment of child soldiers, changing the stigma against child soldiers who have previously been used by armed forces, and the reintegration and rehabilitation of child soldiers into normal society (What are the Paris Commitments). Over 65,000 child soldiers have been released according to UNICEF since the signature of the Paris Principles and Paris Commitments. Furthermore in 2017, France and UNICEF organized the “Protecting Children from War” to revive the commitments of the Paris Principles and Paris Commitments among the international community (Children and Armed Conflict).

The delegation of France looks forward to the opportunity to collaborate with members nations of UNICEF in its goal to protect children from the armed forces on an international scale. Having recognized the hardships faced by child soldiers in their integration back into society (At Paris Conference), France looks favourably upon focusing on the rehabilitation of children back into their communities through mental health programs and vocational initiatives—such as the well-drilling initiative, ensuring proper funding for supporting ongoing initiatives that aid in the reintegration of child soldiers, and reducing the stigma around child soldiers upon attempt to assimilate into society.

Topic B: Access to Women's Education

The delegation of France recognizes that women, namely young girls, have disproportionately less access to education on a global level. As exemplified by the Sahel region, women are victim to a series of deterring factors that hinder or obstruct their access to education; these include armed conflict, child marriage, lack of sanitation, lack of resources for menstrual and reproductive health, and societal norms. The French delegation consider women's rights, including those to education, to be of great importance. In particular, France believes that menstrual and reproductive health resources and ensuring women's safety in areas of conflict are essential for improving the quality of life for women in less developed countries and increasing their access to education.

France was an active contributor in the Security Council resolutions on women, peace and security; a key goal of this was to increase the safety and protection of women during armed conflicts. In 2015, the French delegation implemented these resolutions through the inauguration of a national plan of action. Additionally, in 2019 a second plan of action was also adopted to France's active role in upholding the essential goals of the resolutions. Moreover, France echoed the sentiments of the 1995 Beijing conference that addressed sexual and reproductive rights of women, in 2014 in the follow up session of the Cairo International Conference on Population and Development. France emphasized the fundamental rights of women to decide and manage their own maternity (France's Actions for Women's Rights and Equality). France continues to actively promote the universal access to sexual and reproductive health for women as an attempt to mitigate the disproportionate lack of opportunities women have due to gender inequality (France).

The delegation of France looks forward to working with member nations of UNICEF to mandate policies and increase funding that would result in increased resources to menstrual and reproductive health for women in less developed countries, as well as protecting women in areas of conflicts. France firmly believes that these are two of the most critical factors that prevent women's access to education across the globe; by placing an emphasis on working to resolve them, the opportunities for women to have greater access to education would increase substantially.

Citations

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