

# SOCIAL, HUMANITARIAN AND CULTURAL

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*Undersecretary-General*

Soniya Sapre, *Chair*

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Undersecretary-General,  
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Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the General Assembly of ILMUNC 2003! The GA is the largest deliberative organ of the United Nations, composed of representatives of all member states. This year, ILMUNC is simulating five GA committees with topics ranging from the regulation of chemical weapons to the prohibition of human cloning.

My name is Shanshan Cao, and I am the Under Secretary General of the General Assembly. This very long title basically means I will be in charge of the five GA committees – my responsibility is to make sure each committee runs smoothly and that delegates enjoy themselves and are engaged in productive debate and negotiation.

I am currently a sophomore at Wharton, University of Pennsylvania, and my concentration is Finance and Accounting. I have been involved with Model United Nations for five years, starting as a freshman in high-school. In my junior year, my school attended ILMUNC, and I enjoyed the conference so much that it became one of my main considerations when applying for college.

I hope you will enjoy ILMUNC as much as I did, and I encourage you to email me any questions you have concerning UPenn's Model United Nations program or just applying-to-college concerns in general.

See you at conference!

Sincerely,

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Dear Delegates:

Welcome to ILMUNC 03's SOCHUM! My name is Soniya Sapre, and I'll be serving as your chair this year. This is my fourth and final year at the University of Pennsylvania, where I study International Studies, with a focus on Latin America, as well as Finance and Public Policy. I have been in the International Affairs Association throughout college, chaired at previous ILMUNC conferences and was Undersecretary-General for General Assembly Committees at ILMUNC 2001.

With all of the recent developments in the international arena, ours is truly an exciting committee to participate in. All of the topics highlight very relevant issues, and we will see how the outcomes of our debates compare to the solutions developed in the real world. I'm sure the topics will provide our committee with a lot of scope for debate and innovative negotiation.

Your Secretariat has worked hard to create an environment for rich discussion as well as social interaction. Of course, feel free to contact myself or any of the directors prior to conference with any questions about Penn, the conference, the topics, or our committee. I'm looking forward to an educational and fun weekend!

Sincerely,

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## COMMITTEE HISTORY

**Social, Humanitarian and Cultural**

The Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Committee (SOCHUM) is the third of six main committees under the General Assembly of the United Nations. The Third Committee was created to address international issues in the three named areas and possesses much prominence by virtue of the numerous topics and situations which fall under its jurisdiction. Such issues also include economic and social matters that are allocated to the Third Committee because they do not fall within the scope of the other items on the agenda of the General Assembly. Like all Committees of the General Assembly, the Third Committee consists of representatives from all Member States, with each nation having one equal vote. All draft resolutions that are passed by the Committee are then presented to the General Assembly Plenary, a committee comprised of representatives from all of the General Assembly Committees. After debating each presented resolution, the Plenary determines whether or not the resolution will pass into effect.

The Third Committee differs from the other General Assembly Committees in that it does not discuss political issues, or issues dealing with security. In contrast, SOCHUM deals with issues of a more specific nature, including such topics as racism, drugs, and social development; questions relating to the world's social situation and to youth, aging, disabled persons and the family. One of the most important areas of discussion in the Third Committee is human rights. Questions concerning human rights include: implementation of human rights instruments; alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms; and human rights situations and reports of special representatives. SOCHUM is also affiliated with various international organizations established by the General Assembly, such as the Commission on Human Rights. Established by resolution in 1946 and currently located in Geneva, the Commission focuses on the maintenance and abuses of the human rights and frequently produces studies concerning such issues. Although technically a specialized committee of the Economic and Social Council, the Commission on Human Rights submits all of its resolutions to the Third Committee for review and presentation to the General Assembly Plenary. In the past, SOCHUM has dealt with questions of poverty and the rights and freedoms of women, children, refugees, the disabled and the elderly. The committee strives to help these people through protection laws, financial assistance, and programs designed to help them find employment and receive education.

Recently, the highest priority issues for the Committee have included crime prevention, criminal justice and international control of narcotics. In this vein, the Com-

mittee will assist in the preparation of the special session of the General Assembly dedicated to drug control in 1998. Other issues considered by the Third Committee, under twelve agenda items, include: social development; the advancement of women; questions relating to refugees and displaced persons; elimination of racism and racial discrimination; the rights of indigenous people; and the protection of refugees. Other topics of discussion include reports on the human rights situations in a number of countries, as well as on violence against women migrant workers and the promotion of children's rights. For example, the Committee has considered the follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995), as well as the status of the preparations for the International Year of Older Persons (1999). Due to various reform proposals concerning the issues that the United Nations addresses, the Organization is going through a delicate transitional phase. As a result, the questions addressed by the Third Committee have become more central to the life of the United Nations. Because SOCHUM is such a large committee, it has the power to discuss topics that involve any of the member nations of the UN, giving it a wide range from which to choose. The issues over which the Third Committee presides are not political issues. Therefore, the Committee's resolutions have a great moral and philosophical strength and are a means of building long-term solutions to the social, cultural, and humanitarian problems of the international community.

TOPIC ONE

## Immigration of Children for Child Labor

### Introduction

One of the most vicious forms of abuse, the trafficking of children remains a blatant human rights violation, leaving impermeable psychological, social, physical and mental scars on its victims. In spite of the fact that most governments are aware of its existence, until recently, little has been done to remedy the situation. Now, faced with international scrutiny, nations have taken more proactive corrective measures. As they tread on new territory, however, they need guidance and support in identifying sources of the problem and implementing possible resolutions. Thus, the role of the Social, Humanitarian and Cultural (SOCHUM) Committee ought to be to help guide these nations in their quest to eradicate the trafficking of children.

SOCHUM serves as the Third Committee of the General Assembly and focuses on quality of life issues. Its breadth allows it to cover a broad spectrum of topics, from natural disaster relief to women's rights.

### Statement of Issue

As per the 2000 Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, trafficking is defined as:

"the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons, by means of threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation"<sup>1</sup>

Due to its illegal nature and the clandestine activity surrounding it, there are no exact statistics available as to how many children are trafficked yearly. The United Nations' Children Fund (UNICEF) conservatively estimates that 1.2 million children are victims of trafficking<sup>2</sup>.

The issue can hardly be said to be confined to one region of the world. Meera Sethi of the International Migration Organization elaborates, "there is not a single country on the continent that is spared", further explaining that most nations serve as suppliers, receivers or transit points<sup>3</sup>. A recent study by the ILO-IPEC on child trafficking confirmed the universality of the problem, establishing that trafficking is "a complex and diverse phenomenon that varies between different places, gender and ethnic groups."<sup>4</sup>

As identified by UNICEF, there tend to be specific patterns of child trafficking that affect every region of the world. Some of the most prominent are as follows:

- from Latin America to North America, Europe and the Middle East;
- from countries of the former Soviet bloc to the Baltic States and Western Europe;
- from Romania to Italy, and through Turkey and Cyprus to Israel and the Middle East;
- from West Africa to the Middle East: from Thailand and the Philippines to Australia, New Zealand and Taiwan;
- from Cambodia, Myanmar, and Viet Nam to Thailand;
- from Nepal and Bangladesh to India; and from India and Pakistan to the Middle East<sup>5</sup>.

The sexual exploitation of children will not be covered in this paper. This is not due to its lack of importance, but rather, its extraordinary breadth in nature. It is therefore handled in another paper altogether.

### History and Relevant International Action

In some regions of the world, the trafficking of children indirectly stems back to local traditions. For example, in parts of West Africa, it was not uncommon for a family to send one of their children to stay with and/or work for richer relatives in the city. But with "the fabric of the extended family breaking down, things have become distorted," says Lisa Kurbiel, a child-protection officer with UNICEF<sup>6</sup>. Instead of being sent to distant relatives, children are now being traded on an extremely dangerous – and extremely illegal – market.

The United Nations became fully enveloped in the issue with the passage of the historic "Convention on the Rights of the Child" on November 20, 1989. In addition to numerous articles reinforcing the importance of establishing fundamental guarantees for children, Article 11 explicitly reads: "States Parties shall take measures to combat the illicit transfer and non-return of children abroad... To this end, States Parties shall promote the conclusion of bilateral or multilateral agreements or accession to existing agreements."<sup>7</sup>

Through the early and mid-1990s, the international community squared their focus on the sexual exploitation of children. In 1996, the First World Congress against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children gathered in Stockholm to push the issue to the forefront of the international agenda. In the international community's attempt to resolve the problem, they were also forced "to deal with the increase in movement of human beings both within their own countries and across borders, and their exploitation not only in commercial sex but in many other forms of exploitative labour, including begging and hawking, agriculture, manufacturing, entertainment, fishing and domestic service."<sup>8</sup>



The International Labor Organization (ILO) then addressed the issue in June 1999 with the publication of its "Convention 182". The document explicitly defines the trafficking of children as one of a "the worst forms of child labour", and proceeds to urge all member states to implement appropriate national measures.

## Analysis

### *The Method*

While there is no exact procedure in terms of how traffickers smuggle their victims across the border, they tend to follow similar patterns. More often than not, traffickers will lure children and/or their parents with visions of either a better education or riches abroad. Mofisa Begum, a notorious smuggler in India who has trafficked over sixty children from Bangladesh in the past few years, explains, "We do tell the parents about camel racing and how their children would make them rich if they became adept racers."<sup>9</sup> [In the last five years alone, approximately 13,000 children have been smuggled from Bangladesh to India<sup>10</sup>]

Traffickers then proceed to cross the border, often with multiple children at a time.

Jean-Claude Legrand, a regional protection adviser to the UNICEF, notes that, "What makes trafficking so complicated is that it is not organised by organised crime groups. It is about one individual crossing a border with three children."<sup>11</sup> Officials can be easily bribed in third-world nations to overlook the passage of children without supervision. Other times, traffickers cross the border illegally, surpassing checkpoints. Even if stopped, they then either produce forged paperwork for the children or pass themselves as one of the children's parent.

A more recent method used by traffickers in the UK is to have children enter their arrival country under refugee status. They then are transferred to social services centers, are notorious for their lacks of security. Children are allowed to come and go as they please, and more often than not, end up back in the hands of traffickers. For before leaving their home countries, children are brainwashed into believing that the traffickers are "sacred figures". They are further told that if they fail to contact their contacts upon reaching their destination, they will be forever "cursed"<sup>12</sup>.

Upon arriving in the foreign countries, children are quickly introduced to the harsh truths of their situation. However, far from home, they have little choice but to accept it. They are then sold into servitude for pennies, until they fulfill a preestablished requisite number of years of labor. Even if they manage to escape, they often have nowhere to turn; few resources are available for victims of trafficking.

Some have charged that child trafficking is partly fueled by strict emigration and immigration regulations.

Instead of deterring those wishing to cross the border, these laws only increase the probability that children will sneak through porous borders, thus making their journey more dangerous.<sup>13</sup> Critics, however, counter that immigration laws are necessarily complex, as they must take into account various economic and political factors. To that end, they believe that it is unfeasible to propose a revision of emigration and immigration laws as one possible solution to child trafficking.<sup>14</sup>

### *A Framework*

In a highly effective framework, Professor Jyoti Sanghera and Author June Kane adopted a Supply-and-Demand model, differentiating between the "push" and "pull" factors contributing to the problem. "Push" factors are those that cause the child to leave their home place, such as (but not limited to) "poverty, family break-up, violence or other dysfunction, lack of job opportunities, low education levels or the wrong skills for the jobs that are available, family pressures or a sense of responsibility to provide for the family"<sup>15</sup> The "push" factor could also be the false perception that the "grass is greener on the other side", or rather, that a better life exists in another country.

"Pull factors", in turn, are those that determine where the trafficking victims are moved. For instance, a pull factor could be the need for cheap labor in a neighboring country.<sup>16</sup>

Below is an enumeration of some – though not all – of the most prominent factors that contribute to the trafficking of children.

### *The Poverty Problem*

One of the reasons that children are so easily enticed by the smuggler's hollow promises is their desperation to escape the poverty that plagues their homelands. Dr. Rima Salah, UNICEF's Regional Director for West and Central Africa, explains:

"In this region, poverty emerges as a major and ubiquitous causal factor. Indeed, all of our countries are experiencing relatively high level of poverty and large proportions of the population live below the poverty line. . . . Thus, in the context of extreme poverty, the motive for the transfer of children is often economic."<sup>17</sup>

Faced with poverty, families will often encourage their children to migrate in pursuit of riches, either to send the money home or to simply get the child "off their hands". As one Albanian father explained, "If I had a stable job, I wouldn't send my kids anywhere. I was obliged to send them, because I was poor." The anonymous father sold his daughter for US \$170 to a smuggler (approximately 24,500 Albanian leks). She was then sent to Greece in order to sell trinkets at the age of four.<sup>18</sup>

### *Case Study: Mali and The Ivory Coast:*

The Ivory Coast is notorious for its infractions concerning the rights of the child. Smugglers regularly cross the borders, bringing back young children eager to work for less than minimum wage. Estimates place 15,000 chil-

dren working illegally in the country, most of them from Mali<sup>19</sup>. According to the International Labor Organization (ILO) and the United Nations' (UNICEF), 23% of those recruited are under the age of fifteen.<sup>20</sup>

The ease with which smugglers are able to recruit new victims is testament to the problems associated with the poverty plaguing Mali. The nation of over 11 million people is currently ranked 167<sup>th</sup> on the United Nation's development index (which consists of 174 nations). Further, parents "have an average of seven children and the vast majority of people live on less than US \$4 a day"<sup>21</sup>. A child finding a job in the Ivory Coast often translates to "survival money" for the entire family.

#### *The Punishment Problem*

There exist two distinct problems when it comes to punishment:

(1) Not all nations have retributive measures in place (e.g. Greece's penal code does not

"[address] penalties for the trafficking of migrants where transport is facilitated by coercion, deceit, or fraud for the purposes of forced labor... or that provides protection and support services to trafficked migrants<sup>22</sup>); and,

(2) Nations that do have such measures in place do not have the resources necessary to implement them (e.g. Most West African nations)

As a result, there is little incentive for traffickers to abandon their lucrative business. This problem is hardly contained to third-world nations; as of 2001, the United Kingdom still had to put in place legislation to punish offenders. Mr. Ould, deputy director of Anti-Slavery International, elaborates, "There is some discussion about the trafficking of women and within that it has been identified that a law on trafficking is needed, but it needs to be widened beyond sexual offences and prostitution."<sup>23</sup> Under the UK's current legislation, if convicted, child traffickers face a mere one and a half to two years.<sup>24</sup>

It should be noted that this can hardly be generalized to every nation, though. For example, in 2001 the Chinese government executed four persons for their role in the trafficking of children.<sup>25</sup>

#### *Case Study: Thailand:*

While much of the focus surrounding Thailand has been on the sexual exploitation of young female children, the trafficking of children is a substantial, ignored problem afflicting major cities such as Bangkok. Children from impoverished nations such as Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam flood into Thailand for the purposes of begging for money amongst the city streets (The four former nations are referred to as the Mekong region). Estimating the number of children in such a situation is nearly impossible; as pointed out by Laura Skolnik, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific's social affairs officer, "if you're talking about trafficking for non-sexual purposes, there's just no figures available, because they can be in places where they're very hard to find."<sup>26</sup>

However, even when caught, traffickers are rarely punished. As explained by Thailand Senior State Attorney Piyatida Jermhansa, "There's a problem of corruption and lack of law enforcement in the countries throughout the region, because [the traffickers] act like a network of organized crime, transnational crime, with complexity and influence and money involved... Even though we have the laws, it's kind of a failure because there are [sic] only one or two cases [of traffickers] indicted to the court."<sup>27</sup> Without retributive measures in effect, there are no checks to keep traffickers from repeatedly violating the law.

#### *The Education Problem*

The role of education in prevent the trafficking of children is a problematic one, with experts still arguing over the importance education plays in motivating a family to send their children into the work force. Some contest that destitute families encourage their children to go into the work force because they either do not see the value in a basic education, or cannot afford the cost of an education.<sup>28</sup> Others, however, counter that the argument is an outdated one, and that in today's age, even the most destitute of families can appreciate the value of a sound education.<sup>29</sup>

Also contributing to the education problem is the lack of secondary school opportunities in many nations. As a result, older children are often lured into neighboring countries with the promise of higher educational opportunities; it is only upon arriving there that they discover that they have been sold into domestic captivity instead.

#### *Case Study: Nepal*

While no exact numbers are available for Nepal, approximately 5000-7000 women and children are believed to be trafficked yearly<sup>30</sup>. The majority of children are trafficked for the purposes of labor have barely completed their primary education. While there is no evidence of a direct causation between these two factors, there does appear to be some sort of relationship worth noting.

#### *Multinational Corporations*

One of the key demand-side factors behind child labor is the presence of multinational corporations in third-world nations. United States' Senator (and former First Lady) Hillary Rodham Clinton briefly touched upon this aspect of trafficking, calling it a "tragic byproduct of globalization."<sup>31</sup> Nations' governments contend that because multinational companies insist on keeping their costs and products' prices low, they are forced to hire cheap labor<sup>32</sup>

#### *Case Study: Cocoa Beans*

After prices for cocoa hit a twenty-seven year low in 2000, cocoa plantations scrambled to find the least expensive – and most gullible – form of labor: children. As one owner explained, "Children are easier to discipline than adults. They wait and wait and wait and then, at a certain stage, they get fed up and escape and we get new ones."<sup>33</sup> It is not surprising, then, that the statistics are astound-

ingly high; approximately 15,000 Malian children trafficked illegally into the country work on Ivoirian cocoa and coffee plantations.<sup>34</sup> (Cote D'Ivoire is responsible for approximately 40% of the world's cocoa production<sup>35</sup>) A number of them are under twelve years-of-age, sold into indentured servitude for \$140, and work 12-hour days.<sup>36</sup>

## Possible Solutions

One reason so many previous resolutions have failed has been their repeated mistake of only focusing on "push" factors; that is, few resolutions look at the contributing "pull" factors.<sup>37</sup>

Essentially, any complete approach to the problem must have a four-pronged approach, addressing: (a) an increase in awareness of the dangers of child trafficking; (b) universal education; (c) a steady labor market with available career opportunities; and (d) a legal framework against trafficking.<sup>38</sup>

One concept that has failed in past legislation has been complete ban of child labor in countries. As explained by Phil Marshall, Programme Manager of the UNIAP,

"...historical evidence suggests that tighter controls on the movement of people migration will probably not significantly reduce migration but simply change its nature, by encouraging a move to more organised [sic] forms of smuggling, making people more vulnerable to trafficking. There is no evidence to suggest that tighter controls on the movement of people will reduce trafficking and good reason to believe it will do the opposite."<sup>39</sup>

Similarly, some have suggested that the key to combating the trafficking of children is stronger laws concerning mandatory education. However, until the opportunity costs of attending school are lowered, there remains little incentive for families to abide by national laws.<sup>40</sup> Thus, mandating that all children must attend a given number of years of schooling through blanket education laws would also be rendered ineffective. Thailand, however, has taken a marketing-based approach to the problem, choosing to specifically identify and target those most likely to be trafficked. One program then offers these high-risk children scholarships in the hospitality field, thereby lowering the probability that they will leave their nation for better jobs elsewhere.<sup>41</sup>

As with the majority of issues raised by the United Nations, it is imperative that body come up with solutions on both an international scale, while also encouraging member states to take appropriate national actions. For example, the United States has recently taken measures to punish traffickers, including life imprisonment for sex-traffickers. In a revolutionary step, Congress also reversed its previous logic of punishing victims by deportation; instead, the government now provides up to 5,000 visas yearly for trafficking victims.<sup>42</sup>

Any solution must also address the stigma felt by many victims of child trafficking. Many children volun-

tarily allow themselves to be sold, tempted by the promise of wealth beyond their dreams or the prospect of personal growth through migration. After discovering their beliefs are shattered by the realities of child labor, they are too ashamed to return home. For example, when asked by a reporter why he didn't return home, 15-year-old Wambi Bakayoko explained, "I can't because then I won't get my money and even if I did manage to escape I have no money to get back and, if I did, how could I face my family?"<sup>43</sup> It is a refrain echoed by many.

## Conclusion

The trafficking of children is an especially pertinent topic for the committee, as it involves the victimization of a population without a voice. As outlined previously, in many cases, children are trafficked across borders with the permission or encouragement of their parents. With this absence of parental concern, it is arguably therefore the duty of this committee to take on the role of the children's guardian, and consequently adopt appropriate measures.

The most prominent reasons of child trafficking include poverty, lack of educational opportunities, the presence of multinational corporations and the absence of appropriate national legal frameworks to prosecute traffickers. Any comprehensive set of resolutions must address all of these factors to completely tackle the issue at hand.

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## TOPIC TWO

**Over Population****Introduction**

A situation that has been going unnoticed for quite some time has now been brought into the global spotlight. Recently, much media attention has been drawn to the atrocities being committed in many third-world nations in order to achieve some form of population control. Much of what has been unearthed has elucidated that human rights of these individuals are being compromised, and as a result, this situation must be addressed immediately.

**Statement of the Problem**

Recent population statistics are indicating a ballooning effect that runs worldwide. The Second World Conference on Aging (May 25, 2002) indicated that according to current growth forecasts, by year 2050, the world will be plagued by the perils of aging population. This plague results from the high population birth rates witnessed at the present. The problem is not the recognition of these rapidly increasing rates. It is, rather, how countries are choosing to deal with them.

In many underdeveloped nations, health professionals are often directed to take matters into their own hands. Normal measures of curbing birth rates and fertility such as contraception and legitimate surgery are expensive processes, which are time-consuming as well. Because of these barriers, physicians either choose or are forced into practicing unsafe and invasive acts which, in return, cause major human rights violations.

As a result, the problem is two-pronged. First, the problem of human rights violations that infringe on one's reproductive freedom must be addressed and curbed. Doing so, however, does not deal with another problem that is equally pressing: the world's growing population. For, as long as the world's population continues to grow unchecked, nations will continue to attempt various techniques to limit growth. In order to fully remedy the problem of human rights violations, other mechanisms by which to reduce fertility and birth rates must be examined.

**History**

The fear of our natural resources being exhausted by a rapidly-growing world population is certainly nothing new. Statisticians, theorists, and leaders have often predicted that overpopulation is leading us into a dead-end situation in which we are slowly approaching the carrying capacity of the land, exhausting all of its natural resources in the process. Such was predicted when the

growing world population hit 1 billion persons, and this prophecy has been revised and repeated countless times since. With the world population now reaching upwards of 6 billion persons, with a 1.2% growth rate (approximately 77 million individuals per annum), the UN Populations Division has made several fatalistic predictions regarding the results of the inevitable problems of overpopulation.

The United Nations Population Division, in their *2000 Revision*, has put out revised statistics discussing world population predictions. Using current and historic trends, the UNPD predicts the world population to rise somewhere between 150% and 200%. This growth, however, results entirely from less developed countries. Most estimates, using varying data sets to calculate hypothetical population curves, exhibit flat to even slightly negative population growth for more developed regions. The most liberal of estimates puts growth for these developed regions nearing 12%. Thus, the majority of growth results from less developed regions. In fact, the UNPD predicts anywhere between a 200% to 600% increase in population. The result of these discrepant population changes is that these predictions show that citizens of less developed nations will outnumber those of more developed nations by a ratio of 10:1.

These statistics triggered global response, for such a drastic in population distribution would require varying the economic support system of the world. Beginning in the 1970s, developed nations began a vigorous campaign to curb the population problem. Terms such as *social setting* and *program effort* were coined. The former indicated "whether and to what degree certain social and economic conditions were conducive to spontaneous fertility decline. The latter were another term for "political will." The author of this framework contended that "countries with highly conducive social settings need apply much less program effort than countries with constrained social settings. Countries with weak social settings need far more political will and program effort to achieve fertility declines equivalent to those of the more socioeconomically favored countries. Levels of funding and the program effort scores can be regarded as measures of political will."

Developed nations used similar logic and proceeded to provide economic incentives for countries to bring down fertility rates, thereby reducing population growth. These programs, begun in 1950s and running through the present in some nations, were to be administered by citizens within the country. They were to teach females and males alike about use of contraceptives and other mechanisms of family planning. For over 50 years, the United States, Britain, France, and Germany heavily funded these programs. American and British companies donated free contraceptives to less developed nations, while advertising campaigns were launched in the native languages.

Yet, fertility rates skyrocketed, and by the late 1980s, Asia and Africa had fertility rates of twice or three times that of developed regions. As the funding from the devel-

oped nations was outcome-based, leaders of less developed nations demanded results and turned to invasive practices. Poorly paid rural hospital workers were paid per patient brought into the hospital for sterilization procedures. Hospitals and physicians were also paid for each Tubal Ligation surgery performed. Doing the surgery properly, however, requires resources, time and money. As a result, the surgeries were performed improperly and dangerously in order to cut cost.

The result: over 30 countries spanning Asia, Africa, and Eastern Europe began to partake in the process of female genital mutilation (FGM). More recently, FGM has been propagated by the governments of the less developed nations as well, as they have begun to provide economic incentive to perform Tubal Ligation surgeries. Thus, the end reveals that human rights abuses are taking place, and in the process, reproductive freedom is being stripped.

## Relevant International Action

Reproductive rights have been explicated and established under various internationally accepted documents. Starting just after WWII, in which the General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, reproductive rights have been somewhat of an integral part of subsequent international human rights treaties. The following five treaties/conventions discuss the notion of reproductive rights and their inextricable ties to human rights: the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women; the Convention on the Rights of the Child; and lastly, the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD).

The ICCPR protects the certain integral rights including "the right to marry and to found a family." The ICESCR enumerates similar rights, reiterating the rights to health and family planning services and information. Both these two covenants were adopted in 1966, and drew heavily from the content from the UDHR. CEDAW (1979) was the next groundbreaking step in the international community for reproductive freedom. The CEDAW convention provided that individuals "shall ensure access to specific educational information to help ensure the health and well-being of families, including information and advice on family planning." It also stressed equality in services regarding family planning, as well as appropriate services associated with pregnancy, confinement, and post-natal periods. More importantly, CEDAW contended that decisions whether or not to have children must not be limited by spouse, parent, partner or government. But instead, these decisions must be made with proper and full consent based on information about contraception, sex and family planning. The CRC restated much of what was already enumerated in ICCPR and ICESCR. Lastly, the ICPD (1994) provided a definition of reproductive rights that

remains one of the more internationally accepted definitions to date:

"Reproductive rights embrace certain human rights that are already recognized in national laws, international human rights documents and other consensus documents. These rights rest on the recognition of the basic right of all couples and individuals to decide freely and responsibly the number, spacing and timing of their children and to have the information and means to do so, and the right to attain the highest standard of sexual and reproductive health."

Conferences since have also discussed the concept of reproductive rights, and have used the ICPD as a building block on which to continue adding concepts of improving women's legal, economic, social, and educational status, specifically when dealing with reproductive rights.

## Analysis

Developed countries have supported and managed projects to influence human reproductive tendencies in underdeveloped nations. They do so with the intention to allow women to choose their desired family size, and plan accordingly. Regardless of actions, the result is that the programs have, for the most part, been very unsuccessful. Fertility rates remain high, as do population growth rates. Let us examine, by region, why and where these family planning programs went awry.

### Asia

Family planning in Asia has been a very important topic, as the world's top two populous countries are located within the borders of the continent. India is suffering from a rapidly increasing population that is growing at one of the fastest global rates. In the 1950s, India implemented "India's Family Planning Program." The government recognized that overpopulation was a grave concern, and took drastic action. Education of sterilization replaced education of contraception. Government agencies were given sterilization quotas to fill on a weekly basis, and if these quotas were not met, hospital funding or salaries were withheld. Incentives such as radios and TVs were given to those workers who could convince enough people for surgery. In 1976, India declared a state of emergency, and forced sterilization upon its peoples who lived in poor neighborhoods. Private loans and jobs favored those who could show proof that they had been sterilized. However, even with such invasive and drastic measures, India's population did not witness any slowing of growth during this time. "Upon learning of these semi-forced, safety-negligent policies, we get what is likely to be a fairly accurate explanation why family planning efforts have failed to curb rampant population growth in India. When the only option available to many people is one that is irreversible, not to mention potentially life-threatening, people would probably be inclined to opt for no contra-



ceptives at all.”

Countries like India have much greater problems that contribute to the ballooning population problem. The first of which is *maternal mortality*. Of the nearly three-quarters of a million women who die every year in childbirth (excluding complications immediately afterwards), 99% are from poor nations. Malnourishment propagates disorders like anemia, which puts women at a greater risk of developing postpartum hemorrhage, a main cause of maternal mortality. India also is noted for its specifically young average marriage age. Getting married young leads to a longer period of fertility for the couple which, in turn, results in larger families. Similar factors have been witnessed in Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan, as well as in some African nations.

Unlike India, in nations where family planning seems to be working to curb the effects of population, that still is not a sure indicator that human rights are not being violated. In China and other parts of Southeast Asia, for example, after the introduction of family planning in 1973: the birth rate was halved; the marriage age rose by two years; the GDP increased 4.7-fold; and the per-capita GDP increased 3.4-fold. Infant mortality dropped, and family planning provided more opportunities to receive education. Seemingly, the program was successful. Human rights violations, though, were rampant even in this situation. Because the government limited the amount of children one could have, people took matters into their own hands. In China, male children are more desirable than female children. As a result, if a couple knew they were expecting a girl, they would often try to abort the child at home or in clinics in which no trained professionals worked. Sometimes, couples would go through with the childbirth only to leave the female child on the street to perish. In the process, the human rights of children were violated, as were the reproductive rights of women who were, quite regularly, forced by their spouse to abort the female children. Since the government outlaws such practices, the process quite often ended up being fatal for the child and life threatening for the mother.

### Africa

For purposes of analysis, the majority of sub-Saharan African can be grouped together, for the results have been nearly identical with the exception of a few countries. Most of these countries were involved in the attempts of the developed world to aid in population control, and hence, they bore the brunt of forced family planning. Patients were made sterile without consent when they came in for routine operations, while others were victims of FGM. Many a story graphically describe the victimization of young women for whom sterility was imposed on them:

“Oh, Rahima I thought I was going to die...Everytime I wanted to cry, I looked around to see if someone would help, but I just saw smiling faces, and I felt shy again and I opened my mouth and pretended like I was laughing, but I was dying inside.”

These approximately 20 nations, though, saw no changes in their fertility rates or population growth. Furthermore, these practices were met with much resistance, and at times, police and military personnel were used to enforce population policies.

Reasons for this response are evident. First, there exist many general cultural resistances as well as distrust and dislike of the local or national governments as a result. There also exists a much lower standard of living as well as lower level of development. Most households are involved in farming or similar industries. Extra children have economic worth in the field, as they provide another body to work. In most of the 20 countries in sub-Saharan Africa, fertility rates range from six to eight children per woman, and have shown little promise of reduction any time in the near future. These countries also have infant mortality rates over 15% with per-capita incomes of less than \$1000. Very few children, in these communities, are educated. As a result, there is much resentment expressed towards family planning when it was introduced in these areas for the human rights of the citizens are often overlooked.

This, however, does not preclude the possibility that it cannot happen. Countries like Ghana, Kenya, and South Africa have witnessed sharp declines in fertility, infant mortality, and sharp increases in education rates. During the financial crisis of the 1980s,

“Their populations had already assumed that children’s health could be guarded by modern medicine and that both boys and girls would normally go to school. The subsequent economic crisis and family financial outlays associated with cost recovery in structural adjustment programs did not reverse these assumptions but rather convinced many parents that their educational and health expectations could be maintained only if they had children more widely spaced.”

As a result, while it is granted that the condition in countries like Ghana and Kenya differ from other sub-Saharan nations, it provides hope to nations like Sierra Leone, Uganda, Angola, etc.

### Possible Solution

The analysis should demonstrate a certain correlation that exists between overpopulation and poverty. The solution to the situations in Asia and Africa somehow must combat the both of them. In order to combat overpopulation and fertility rates, one must begin to look in the direction of contraception. As of May 16, 2002, more than 62% of married or in-union couples use contraception. This is one statistic that is not as disparate. 70% of couples use contraception in developed regions versus 60% in less developed regions. With greater exposure and education, contraception could be effective in lowering fertility rates. Secondly, if one combats the socio-economic perils of the society at hand, then he can also combat the



problems associated with overpopulation. The majority of these nations are densely populated, but many of the nations discussed in this guide still have a lower population density than countries like Belgium or the United Kingdom. Nor is it even a matter of fact that they cannot be adequately supported by the resources of the land, because, for many of these nations, it's more so a problem with their distribution networks as opposed to their quantitative supply. If such a plan can raise the citizens' socioeconomic level to a point where they can, as a result, understand why contraception is a good idea (i.e. Ghana or Kenya), then they will no longer be pitted up against their own governments. Without having conflict with their governments, human rights violations will dwindle in number.

## Conclusion

The connection between human rights violations and overpopulation is one that has been brewing for decades. The first case examined in this guide is of India in the 1950s in which atrocities were committed against the Indian people, which compromised their human rights. Similar incidents occurred in China, Southeast Asia, and Africa. As a result, a solution must be negotiated which would halt such violations. This solution, however, if it wishes to be a long-standing one, must combat the root of these problems. This root cause, while made up of several different factors, has one main artery, and that is poverty.

## TOPIC THREE Sexual Abuse

*Definition of 'sexual exploitation' by young African children: "...when them big man go loving with small girl for money. Them big men can go loving to small girls, they can call girl when she walking along road, and then the girl go and they go in house and lock the door. And when the big man has done his business he will give the small girl money or gift."*<sup>1</sup>

## Introduction

For years, the United Nations has battled injustices throughout the world, stepping in when it has felt persons were being mercilessly abused at the hands of immoral perpetrators. The international body now finds itself with a more difficult task at hand: what to do when United Nations workers themselves are the ones undeniably in the wrong?

More than half of the 21 million refugees in the world are children.<sup>2</sup> Many of these refugees live in extreme poverty at United Nations camps. Workers at these camps are expected to supply minors and other refugees with food, shelter, education and safety. Yet, recent allegations have surfaced in various camps reporting sexual exploitation of children and young women by the very people that should be helping them – UN aid workers themselves. Currently, the United Nations has a zero tolerance policy toward sexual exploitation, and is working to avoid such problems by employing more women to distribute food. The UN policy also forbids sexual relations between workers and the refugees, and states that any worker who violates this rule will be fired. Yet the problem of sexual exploitation is a serious issue that cannot be solved solely by deterrence. More specific and effective reforms need to be in place for the exploitation to stop.

## Statement of the Issue

### *Initial Allegations Emerge*

Allegation of sexual abuse in Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone by United Nations' peacekeepers first broke in early February 2002. Its discovery, a surprise to many, was the byproduct of a series of workshops that were being conducted to help better understand the experiences of refugees. Interviews with women and children resulted in discussions about the serious abuses within UN camps. Reports indicated that the male UN aid workers perpetrated the abuses against female minors under their care, a seemingly common practice. The report also mentioned that peacekeeping soldiers, local government officials, and local community leaders also sexually abuse young females. In one report, more than 70 people tied to over 40 NGOs were named as guilty of sexual exploitation.<sup>3</sup> In

spite of the fact that the accounts were unverified at the time, the sheer multitude of cases indicated a serious problem. Soon after these initial reports were made, the UN launched an investigation<sup>4</sup>.

The international media, in the meantime, quickly swept upon the case, moving it to the front page around the world. The ensuing uproar was nearly instantaneous, with editorials calling for the need for reform within the United Nations and other NGOs. In addition to the United Nations, other NGOs that were implicated include (but are not limited to): Save the Children-UK, Doctor Without Borders, American Refugee Committee, the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies/Guinean Red Cross, Lutheran World Service/World Federation, Norwegian Refugee Council, Council of Churches, Germany's BMZ, Medical Relief International (MERLIN) and Family Empowerment Program.<sup>5</sup>

#### *Who are the victims?*

A joint UNHCR/SCF-UK study has shown that, due to their positions in society, those most likely to be victimized are teenage females. Those especially vulnerable are girls who are orphaned or separated from their parents. The perpetrators, in turn, "are often men in positions of relative power and influence who either control access to goods and services or who have wealth and/or income".<sup>6</sup> This description fits most male NGO workers, both local and international.

In initial interviews conducted by the UNHCR [sample size: 1500], girls reported exchanging sex for (amongst other things) oil, bulgur wheat, soap, tarpaulins or plastic sheeting, medicines, transport, ration cards, loans and access to education<sup>7</sup>. Another form of payment was, obviously, cash. Young women have received anywhere from US \$5 - \$300 for sex with United Nations' peacekeepers<sup>8</sup>. Humanitarian workers, though, can hardly be said to be as generous, with some offering as little as 10 US cents for sex with a young Liberian refugee girl<sup>9</sup>. One man in Sierra Leone complained, "If you do not have a wife or a sister or a daughter to offer the NGO workers, it is hard to have access to aid."<sup>10</sup> Sexual use of young women to secure aid or receive payment seems to be expected as part of the NGO presence.

## History

Understanding the full extent of this problem requires a brief examination of the region's history. A backdrop to the plight of the refugees will help the committee better understand the position refugees find themselves in. Also, the committee needs to have a general understanding of the history of sexual abuse in the region by humanitarian workers in order to understand how widespread and shocking the recent allegations are compared to the previous, smaller accusations that have surfaced in African countries in the past.

#### *Regional History*

Since the late 1980s, Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone have experienced countless uprisings and cases of government instability, prompting citizens to leave their homes for the relative safety of refugee camps. Liberia suffered a bloody civil war from 1989-1996, and Sierra Leone's protracted ten-year civil war was declared officially over only this past year. Guinea, in the meantime, has often suffered as the middleman between the skirmishes of the other two nations.<sup>11</sup> Today, approximately 1.1 million persons live in refugee camps across Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea, with the numbers continuing to grow<sup>12</sup>. As recently as February 2002, it was estimated that 1,300 refugees from Liberia were arriving in Sierra Leone daily<sup>13</sup>. This puts a large part of the population in contact with NGOs. These people are usually the ones with no money and no possessions who live off of donations from the camps.

#### *History of Sexual Abuse*

While the recent course of events has certainly been the most widespread allegation of sexual abuse, the United Nations has not been immune to a handful of smaller scandals. As early as February of 1994, an investigation in Mozambique revealed that some peacekeeping troops paid for sex with local children. Three years later, United Nations' personnel and foreign aid workers in Angola were also accused of sexually exploiting children. In an attempt to diffuse the situation, the United Nations established a committee to investigate the allegations.<sup>14</sup> This placed the issue on the list of concerning topics for the UN, but little was done to change policy.

More recently, another investigation was launched in 2001 after charges that United Nations' peacekeepers in both Eritrea and Ethiopia had sexual relations with under-age children<sup>15</sup>. During the beginning of 2002, new slew of accusations emerged. United Nations' investigators revealed that UN workers in Nairobi unlawfully collected millions of US dollars from refugees during the early 1990s in exchange for safe passage from Africa.<sup>16</sup> More reports of sexual exploitation surfaced each day as the press began to pick up the issue. Recently, various conventions have been called to discuss the issue, and the United Nations has recognized the need to restructure missions in reaction to these allegations.

## Analysis

#### *Rape as an acceptable part of environment ("rape culture")*

After years of enduring war, life in many African nations has deteriorated almost completely. Social values have disappeared, along with family bonds and any sense of stability. Refugees constantly refer to a sense of helplessness that pervades their lives, and thereby women find themselves forced to exchange sex for more basic resources. UNHCR Spokesmen Ron Redmond elaborates: "[S]ex is the 'currency' with which [women] are expected to 'pay'

for things ranging from passing school exams to crossing a border.”<sup>17</sup> Having no other resources to gain what they need, women find themselves in the position of having to exchange sexual favors for material goods. This exchange has almost become an expected part of daily life, however undesirable it is for the women themselves.

Men, in turn, are taught from childhood that “younger women are more desirable as sexual partners.”<sup>18</sup> Many hold the mistaken belief that sex with a virgin can cleanse a man from Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs). Others realize that virgin girls are cleaner and represent less of a risk for contracting a disease. Because this trade occurs so frequently within society, men have come to expect it. NGO workers in particular have money and valuables that refugees desire, and also are away from home for long periods of time, and so become perpetrators of sexual abuse.

The prostitution of women refugees has only increased the number of nonconsensual sexual relations in refugee camps. As explained by a recent UNHCR report, “the strong link between sex and money has made it difficult for boys to find girlfriends since their financial status is very poor”; as a result, some young boys resort to rape since they cannot afford the high prices demanded by their female counterparts<sup>19</sup>. This is another example of how the role of women is becoming defined as one of property available to abuse.

Also contributing to the problem is the environment that fosters sexual violence against young women. When such occurrences become so commonplace that they fail to garner attention, an atmosphere is set to cultivate prostitution. It should be noted that while sexual violence does occur against young boys as well, it is rarely differentiated from homosexuality. The latter topic is still one that carries with it a social stigma, and therefore most cases are not reported. With a lack of available data, it is therefore quite difficult to gauge the extent of the problem<sup>20</sup>. In both cases, however, lack of reporting only increases the amount of rape in the camps. When men do not feel they will suffer punishment for the deed, there is nothing but morals lost long ago to stop them.

#### *Lack of funding*

The severe lack of funding by international donors has resulted in diminished resources and staff size, both of which only further contribute to the problem. When questioned about the recent abuse citations, UNHCR officials are all quick to point to the recent budget cuts as one of the primary factors contributing to the problem. Assistant High Commissioner for Refugees Kamel Morjane defended the organization, explaining that “[they] are aware that when an organization like [theirs] sees its budget cut by 20 percent, these kinds of consequences are to be expected.”<sup>21</sup> Sadly, it does not look as if the institution’s financial problems are bound to end soon: as of June 2002, UNHCR had projected a shortfall of US \$100,000,000 for the upcoming year<sup>22</sup>. The lack of funding available has

led to an inability by the United Nations’ staff to cope with the numbers of refugees. The insufficient aid has resulted in a boundary as to the number of staff members who can be hired, thus contributing to the overall problem of limited oversight. It is also more difficult to guarantee that workers will hold high morals, as the UN is desperate to have people who will work for such low salaries. As noted by the United States’ Committee for Refugees (USCR),

*“at the peak of the refugee crisis in Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone, UNHCR deployed fewer than ten protection officers to monitor 700,000 refugees and returnees... The disparity between aid for African refugees compared to other regions is an ethical failure by UNHCR and the international community for which refugees have paid dearly, as the newest charges of sexual exploitation indicate.”*<sup>23</sup>

The USCR, in turn, blames the UNHCR for its own failure to procure enough funding. They describe a vicious cycle, in which the agency deliberately underestimates its budget to please their international donors. This process has, not surprisingly, disillusioned many of their staff members.<sup>24</sup>

Further complicating the issue is the (reasonable) fear by UNHCR Head Commission Ruggers that the recent sex scandal will motivate international donors to withdraw support altogether, either due to ‘moral indignation’ or their newfound belief in mismanagement by the organization<sup>25</sup>. This keeps the problem hidden, which, as mentioned above, only increases the number of sexual abuse cases in the camps.

#### *Vulnerability of refugees (POVERTY) and self-sufficiency*

Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone are all considered Least Developed Countries (LDCs) in the eyes of the United Nations. LDCs are characterized as those nations with a low income, weak human resources and a low level of economic diversification<sup>26</sup>. The poverty of the nations and of the refugees leaves them especially vulnerable to sexual exploitation by officials. Even with UN aid, many families struggle to get by on a daily basis. As reported by the UNHCR, “Food rations given to the refugee community for 30 days... finish within ten”, leaving the refugees with little option but to starve or quickly raise funds for food purchases<sup>27</sup>. Many parents, burdened with more children than they are capable of feeding, send their older children off in search of money. In these desperate situations, women and girls are forced into prostitution to gain food, shelter, safe conduct, or papers. The large concentration of military troops (mostly single men) in some areas only perpetuates this problem. The men control all the resources, and demand sex as payment for the scarce supplies they distribute.<sup>28</sup>

Most comments in the 2002 reports revealed a climate of fear because of the refugee’s extreme dependence on aid workers. Unfortunately, self-sufficiency is not a feasible option for many of these families, due to a lack of job and educational opportunities. Although basic school-



ing is free for refugee children, related expenses such as school supplies are not, thereby making school out of the reach for many children. What makes the situation particularly frustrating is the scarcity of opportunities afforded to young mothers, who are often forced to leave school. With a lack of childcare centers available, young mothers are confined to one of three options: leaving their child with family members, taking their child to school, or not attending school. Unfortunately, the first two options are not viable for many women; deteriorating family bonds make it difficult for women to find reliable childcare help, and many young women are ashamed to take their children with them to school. As one girl-mother in Guinea, "When I go to school with the child I feel bad because I am not free and if the child messes up I have to leave and clean him up. The other students will be complaining that the class smells and I feel really bad."<sup>29</sup> Even those who do attend school are not immune to prostitution there: teachers apparently regularly trade grades for sex<sup>30</sup>. Consequently, many young mothers find themselves abandoned without any sort of support system. Their peers shun them for being 'dirty,' while older women dismiss them as 'children.' Not surprisingly, many call themselves 'lonely'<sup>31</sup>.

#### *Mismanagement and Lack of Responsibility*

A controversial report released by the United States' Committee on Refugees cites mismanagement by the United Nations High Commission on Refugees as being one of the primary reasons contributing to the prevalence of prostitution in the area. More specifically, the organization notes the inaccuracy with which censuses were conducted through the 1990s, which consequently led to inaccurate reporting as to the number of refugees. These imprecise numbers, in turn, allowed staff members an extraordinary amount of flexibility regarding the distribution of relief items<sup>32</sup>.

The choice of management also needs to be better monitored. For the most part, refugee leaders have been "self-appointed, corrupt, and almost exclusively male."<sup>33</sup> They have not hesitated to exploit their trusting subordinates, and, serving as the voice for the population, there are few avenues for complaint.

### **Possible Solutions and Relevant International Action**

While leaders continue to emphasize the need for reform, no one is exactly certain what steps need to be taken to remedy the problem. As a short-term solution, refugee camps have replaced many male employees with their female counterparts, held joint workshops, developed a preliminary code of conduct, and conducted awareness campaigns<sup>34</sup>.

#### *Established punishments*

As previously noted, part of the problem is the fact

that women and children do not have any reliable method of reporting instances of abuse; it is futile for them to complain of abuses to refugee camp representatives, as the representatives themselves are often guilty of sexual abuse. UNHCR spokesmen Ron Redmond noted that in discussions with abused refugee children, they described how they did not know to whom to turn<sup>35</sup>. The United Nations' current Security Council president, Ole Peter Kolby, has emphasized that establishing a secure channel of communication is one surefire way of resolving the issue<sup>36</sup>. The question, then, is how such a channel can be created. Also, another UNHCR country representative, Chrysantus Ache, said in June of 2002 that complaints of sexual abuse should have clear evidence to allow swift and just repercussions. However, cases such as these often lack evidence and rely on one woman's word against that of an aid worker.<sup>37</sup>

As with other parts of the world, sexual abuse carries with it a tremendous social stigma, thus prompting many victims to not report its occurrence. One unnamed mother in Sierra Leone explains, "to be frank, no girl will easily admit to being affected because it is a shame here."<sup>38</sup> Education programs could help women to change social stigmas against sexual abuse, but UN teachers cannot change the entire way of thinking of a country. Other ways to aid mothers in avoiding the stigma — such as methods for childcare so that the woman can properly care for their young — could help with the problem.

Currently, there have been three major efforts to address the problem at hand. One is a campaign for U.N. Reform (CUNR) established to "promote a more democratic, accountable, and transparent UN system"<sup>39</sup> which aims, among other things, to strengthen the resources of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and establish courts and procedures to deal with violations of human rights of women.<sup>40</sup> Also, the United Nations itself addressed the issue of sexual exploitation at a May 2002 Special Session on Children in NYC. The two day long session ended with a campaign to "Say Yes for Children" aimed at changing the world so that children can enjoy their right to peace, health, and dignity.<sup>41</sup> However, the assembly focused more on improving the lives of children in general than on the problem of aid workers exploiting refugees. Finally, on May 16, 2002, in Ngara, a three-day workshop conducted by UNHCR called together NGOs and refugee representatives to discuss how to curb exploitation. These committees have discussed reforms and brought national attention to the issue, but more specific reforms within the UN need to occur before the problem can seriously be addressed and treated.

#### *Miscellaneous*

On a related note, the body ought also to consider what measures should be taken to aid victims of this sexual abuse. An initial survey of young women in the area revealed that staff members rarely used condoms, potentially leading to a plethora of health-related complica-



tions<sup>42</sup>. The introduction of birth control in the area is controversial, as it would both help women to avoid pregnancy, but it would also enable men to rape women with little or no consequence, and leaving no proof of the deed behind. The introduction of condoms, however, is also a major aid in fighting the war against AIDS. The committee should fully consider the social, economic, and administrative consequences of introducing birth control. At the time of the assessment, though, the UNHCR did not have the mandate or capacity to investigate the number of children who have potentially been exposed to HIV/AIDS or STD infection<sup>43</sup>.

## Conclusion

While this paper has dealt almost exclusively with the deteriorating situation of refugees in Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone, it would not be beyond the scope of the committee to expand their resolution to address the possibility of similar abuses throughout the world. UNHCR spokesmen Ron Redmond acknowledged that, "this is a problem that is not just isolated in West Africa, although it appears the extent of the problem in West Africa is quite broad"<sup>44</sup>. At this time, however, the UNHCR has made no plans to enlarge their investigation to other regions. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Ruud Lubbers elaborated, "This example [of sexual abuse] will alert the world will alert humanitarian workers and organizations... I don't think a second survey will get the same attention."<sup>45</sup> It is therefore left to the discretion of the committee whether or not it wishes to continue the investigation. A comprehensive resolution addressing the problems of sexual abuse, mismanagement, lack of sexual and literary education and childcare, and lack of funding, would certainly better the situation in these three countries. SOCHUM is in a prime position to address this issue, and bring the problem and possible solutions to the attention of the world at large.

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