Child Labor Essay, Research Paper

By definition, child labor is described as any economic exploitation or work that is likely to be hazardous, or interferes with the child s education, or is harmful to the child s health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral, or social development. Although this is clearly stated in Article 32 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which was started by UN in the 1920’s, it is often ignored in the developing world where child labor has become a growing issue.

The United Nations, aware of the undesirable situation with child laborers, has devised several methods in effort to stop this problem. These methods include monetary aid to and education for children in developing nations, but so far it has only scratched the surface of this complex problem. Since so many children find themselves in this situation, UNICEF, an organization working under the UN, realizes that it will take time for the problem to be solved. However, with approximately 250 million children working worldwide, something must be done.

A first step for worldwide awareness is for people to realize that most child labor doesn t take place in old, run-down factories, but in unregulated parts of the economy such as agriculture and domestic services. Surprising to most, even countries such as the United States still have their share of problems. In a recent “awareness swap” between American and Bangladesh children, both groups experienced the sight of little kids laboring in sweatshops. Although the UN wants to help, it is somewhat limited in its abilities to make dramatic changes. If it puts legal restrictions, such as trade sanctions against imports from countries using child labor, that could actually bring more harm to the children than good. UNICEF has recently decided that in order to combat this problem, education is the key. By providing education for the children of poor nations, the UN hopes that the children will be able to improve their skills and accept higher- positioned jobs when they are adults. Along with this push of education for all children, funding to help UNICEF combat the problem has been set up, and there are many public service announcements making the problem known to the general public.

Overall, the efforts made by UNICEF are having positive effects on child labor worldwide. In its efforts, the UN is acting within the Economic and Social Council, which deals with human rights, the environment, and other economic issues. They help out UNICEF in their decision making and aid their economic needs. However, this problem is very prevalent in all societies in the world, and it will take many years for the problem to be conquered. With the UN working with other organizations around the world to bring education and aid to the children in these situations, we can hope that this problem will one day be solved, and children from all over the world will be treated as children and not as a laboring force.