
Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural Committee

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Agenda item 1

Addressing Increased Orphan Populations in Developing Nations

I. Statement of the Problem

1. The global population of the world has been multiplying at a startling rate and with this explosion of people comes a new wave of orphans. The United Nations International Childrens Emergency Fund (UNICEF) defines an orphan as a child who has lost one or both parents^[1]. There are currently more than 183 million orphans worldwide, and by 2015 that number is expected to grow to an astounding 400 million, a disproportionate percentage of which are found in developing nations and in areas such as Sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America, and Asia^[2]. Many, (although not all) are dependent upon individual government funded and private organizations.

2. Concern has arisen about these developing nations ability to continue to care for a segment of the population completely dependent on government services. It costs nations anywhere from US \$234 to US \$702 to provide basic services for an orphaned child per year^[3]. With orphan populations rising and the current economic uncertainty, it is questioned whether developing nations will be able to continue providing basic services such as food, housing, and education.

3. An inability to care for orphan populations would have a drastic affect not only on individual children, but on nations as a whole. Unsupported, orphaned children would not gain many of the skills, such as literacy, needed to become successful contributors to society. In addition, there could potentially be an increase in numbers of child soldiers and youth violence as many of children are recruited into such organizations without the support of families or adult confidants.

II. History of the Problem

4. As long as there has been sedentary human inhabitants, there have been orphans. The development of orphanages in the early 100s CE marked the beginning of formal care of

orphaned children. Since then, governments have played an active role in the protection of orphaned individuals and may pay for basic services. In areas that have been ravaged by wars and conflicts, there has also been an upswing in orphan populations. In the Sudan for instance, an area plagued by violence since 1983, 1.7 million, almost 10 percent of Sudanese children are orphans^[4] Others areas of increased violence including Iraq, Afghanistan, and Uganda have also seen increases in orphan populations. Children orphaned by conflicts are often forced to fend for themselves moving from place to place and usually receiving no education. Some are even forced to join conflicts becoming child soldiers.

5. The development of the HIV/AIDS epidemic has also greatly increased orphan populations throughout much of the world. In 2000, the population of children orphaned due to AIDS had risen from less than 100 to over 13 million^[2] and was projected to reach a staggering 25 million by 2012^[5]. Distant relatives are forced to take-in orphaned children, and in 2000, 30 to 70 percent of African families were accommodating orphans^[2]. Today percentages of nations orphan populations largely reflect the percentage of HIV and AIDS victims. Since countries that have the largest HIV and AIDS cases tend to be developing nations, this is of special concern.

6. Chinas one child policy has had a profound impact on orphan populations as well. Although difficult to find an exact number (the Chinese government is wary to disclose the information), it is widely agreed that since the implementation of the the policy in 1990, orphan populations have increased, most notably among girls. Because the policy allows only one child per family, many families are forced to give up children to stay within the parameters of the one child policy or face heavy fines. Because boys carry on the family name and care for aging parents, they are often perceived as more valuable than girls, hence the predominantly girl orphan populations.

III. Potential Solutions

7. Delegates should remain focused on a solution that provides greater protection and support to growing orphan populations. Remember that while greater monetary support is important, new programs and initiatives could also prove effective in supporting developing nations increased orphan populations. Be sure to also be aware of the cultural differences that cause disproportionate percentages of certain demographics within nations. Delegates should also take into account the various Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) already working with various countries to aid orphan populations as well as work done by the United Nations International Childrens Emergency Fund (UNICEF).

IV. Position and Research Tips

Delegates should be sure to research:

- Their countrys orphan population and socioeconomic status
- Causes of orphan populations
- Costs associated with providing basic support for children
- Current support of orphaned children

Useful Web Sources

- <<http://www.un.org/en/ga/third/index.shtml>>
- <http://www.unicef.org/media/media_45279.html>
- <http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNACY333.pdf>

V. Note to Delegates

Good luck as you begin your research. I feel confident that this will be a very successful MUN conference. I look forward to working with you.

Ana Lopez

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- [5] "UNICEF - Press Centre - Joint report details escalating global orphans crisis due to AIDS." *UNICEF-UNICEF Home*. Web. 24 Apr. 2011 <http://www.unicef.org/media/media_19209.html> 7"EarthTrends:Feature - A Generation of Orphans: Another Challenge for AISA-Ravaged Countries." *EarthTrends, Environmental Information*. Web. 24 Apr. 2011