**Committee: UNICEF**

**Country: Nepal**

**Agenda Item: Assessing the Current Situation of Child Labor**

Nepal is the 93th largest country in the world and a nation of a great history and natural beauties (e.g., Mount Everest). It is located at the South Asia. It has a total area of 147.181 km2. Nepal has a population of approximately 30.8 million citizens. It’s capital and largest city is Kathmandu. Nepal is lying along the southern slopes of the Himalayan mountain ranges. It’s a landlocked country located between India and China. The economic state of Nepal unfortunately isn’t very promising. But especially after the pandemic period poverty increased which leaded child labor to rise from 2% to 10 %. Nepal government has made numerous of regulations to prevent child labor.

The International Labor Organization (ILO) defines child labor as “work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity, and that is harmful to physical and mental development”. There are many reasons that cause children to work. But “low income and poverty” are among the most significant ones. Poverty plays a key role in driving children to work. Children work because their families rely on their wages or domestic work (including unpaid and care work, often performed by girls) to make ends meet. High prevalence of child labor is usually associated with high rates of poverty and informality, low coverage of social protection, and exclusion from education. There are 62 million children in child labor in the Asia-Pacific region, accounting for 7% of the population of children, according to the 2017 Global Estimates on Child Labor. 28 million of them are in hazardous, mostly in agriculture but also in mining, brick making and domestic work. The involvement of children in the other worse forms of child labor such as forced labor and trafficking also exist. Nepal alone has nearly 1.1 million in child labor. Out of them, 220.000 are in hazardous work, exposing them to unsafe and unhealthy working conditions. The second National Master Plan on child labor has unveiled 17 different sectors with high potential of child labor. Out of these 17 sectors, occupations related to agriculture, domestic work, brick-production, entertainment, transportation, and construction are considered to be the ones with the highest prevalence of working children.

Nepal Government adopted the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act in 2000. The Act defines the minimum working age as 14 years for children to enter employment. The Act also regulates the work of children between ages of 15-17 years with a view of keeping children’s work safe and healthy. It bans children’s work from hazardous occupations and forced labor. The Child Labor Prohibition and Regulation Act 2000 and the Act Relating to Children, 2018 are two key legislations protecting children’s rights and prohibiting and regulating child labor in the country. The Nepal Government analysis said that assessing social protection programmes can have a positive impact on reducing child labor. Ensuring that sufficient resources are allocated for social protection for children and their families is essential for providing an enough level of protection, including preventing and reducing the risk of child labor. Institutional mechanisms are important factors for the implementation of laws and policies. Child labor, being a cross-cutting issue, needs a well-coordinated and combined effort from all relevant institutions. The institutions authorised to look after children’s issues at the Federal Level are also mandated to work on child labor issues. At the Provincial Level, the Social Development Ministry is authorised to work on child protection. However, the structures and capacity of the Provincial Government to work on children’s issues is yet to be strengthened.

Consequently, we as Nepal believe that adequate investments on social protection for children is critical. These investments in early life increase the chances of good nutrition, high educational outcome, lowers the risk of child labor, and prepare children to undertake productive labor activities once they reach working age ensuring employment and eventually a more secure life. Building a social protection system that is responsive to the needs of the children is imperative for the realization of their rights as well as for the national development of Nepal.