



THE VICTORIA SCHOOL

MODEL OF UNITED NATIONS XIV

UNICEF

United Nations Children's Fund

Presidents:

Ana María Martínez- The Victoria School
ammartinez@tvs.edu.co
+57 301 503 5917

Mariana Sánchez - The English School
marianasanchez@englishschool.edu.co
+57 315 223 0516



Level of the committee:

Junior

Language:

English

Opening Speech:

- One opening speech per topic (1 minute each)

Topics:

Topic A:

- Fighting Childhood Statelessness in Europe.

Topic B:

- Ending physical punishment suffered by children in Latin America and the Caribbean.
Approach: Increased vulnerability during quarantine and forced isolation.

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Welcome to UNICEF:

Delegates, it is our absolute pleasure to welcome you all to UNICEF; and of course, to welcome you to the fourteenth edition of TVSMUN. We would like for you to really feel engaged in the debate, enjoy and learn as much as you can from it. We hope you find the committee a safe place, somewhere to practice your communication and investigation skills freely. It may not be an advanced committee but the quality of the debate should speak for itself. We are looking for forward-thinking and reasonable solutions to flourish from the discussion. It is expected for you to come out as finer delegates, with improved critical and creative thinking. UNICEF is certainly the place to exhibit innovative yet well argued ideas, always bearing in mind the committee's priority: children's rights. Do not hesitate to approach us if any advice or explanation is needed before or during the debate.

We are looking forward to meeting you all.

Ana María Martínez and Mariana Sanchez, Presidents of UNICEF

Introduction to the committee:

UNICEF, as its name states, is a Fund of the United Nations that focuses on children's protection and their rights. This committee will work with the standard procedure of a MUN committee, and since it is Junior level, it will not be as demanding. However, it is crucial for you to look into the parliamentary procedure before the debate, you can find it in the TVSMUN Handbook.

UNICEF's Mission

“UNICEF works in over 190 countries and territories to save children's lives, to defend their rights, and to help them fulfil their potential, from early childhood through adolescence.”
(UNICEF 2020)

The United Nations Children's Fund is guided by the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989). They advocate for the protection of children's rights and fight to set ethical principles and standards on international behaviour towards children. UNICEF insists that “the survival, protection and development of children are universal development imperatives that are integral to human progress” (UNICEF 2020).

UNICEF works with nine main goals that guide their actions:

- Child protection and inclusion
- Child survival
- Education
- Social policy
- Gender
- Innovation for children
- Supply and logistics
- Research and analysis

And lastly, “UNICEF in emergencies”. As UNICEF works to provide lifesaving and long-term assistance before, during, and after emergencies.

UNICEF's Jurisdiction

***Jurisdiction:** [noun] legal power or authority, the area in which this power can be used.

(Oxford Wordpower Dictionary , 2000)

In other words: **What is UNICEF allowed to do? How does UNICEF act?**

UNICEF is of course, part of the United Nations and so it always acts in accordance to the UN Charter. Yet, it has its own leadership and budget. The programmes and funds of the UN “are

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financed through voluntary rather than assessed contributions.” This means that UNICEF is funded solely through voluntary support, government partnerships, the civil society and the private sector. Thus, UNICEF is able to finance its own actions, as long as they act in accordance with the UN’s principles and their own -which, again, are mainly guided by the Convention on the Rights of the Child-.

UNICEF is also known for working hand by hand with other UN organizations and programmes.

UNICEF, however, **does not** have any kind of authority to use force whatsoever, nor to directly intervene in a conflict with means other than providing assistance with the objective of protecting children. It is also important to understand that UNICEF does not have -nor any UN *programme* or *fund* for that matter- the right to change a country's laws, nor force them to do so. UNICEF does not have the power to meddle with a country’s internal affairs.

Did you know...

- UNICEF was awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace in 1965.
- The UNGA declared the year 1979 as the International Year of the Child, to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the Declaration of the Rights of the Child.

Timeline of Child Rights

- **1924** - The League of Nations adopts the *Geneva Declaration on the Rights of the Child*.
- **1946** - The United Nations General Assembly establishes the International Children's Emergency Fund, **UNICEF**, with an emphasis on children throughout the world.
- **1959** - The UN's GA adopts the *Declaration of the Rights of the Child*, which recognizes, among other rights, children's rights to education, play, a supportive environment and health care.
- **1989** - The UN's GA adopts the **Convention on the Rights of the Child**. The Convention guarantees and sets minimum standards for protecting the rights of children in all capacities. UNICEF, which helped draft the Convention, is named in the document as a source of expertise.
- **2000** - The UN's GA adopts two *Optional Protocols* to the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child, obligating State Parties to take key actions to prevent children from partaking in hostilities during armed conflict and to end the sale, sexual exploitation and abuse of children.
- **2011** - A new *Optional Protocol* to the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child is adopted. The Committee on the Rights of the Child can field complaints of child rights violations and undertake investigations.
- **2015** - **Somalia and South Sudan** ratify the Convention. The Convention is the most widely ratified international instrument with 196 States. **Only the United States has not ratified to date.**

(UNICEF, 2020)

TOPIC A: Fighting Childhood Statelessness.

Introduction to the topic:

What is statelessness?

According to the UNHCR (United Nations Refugee Agency), the international legal definition of a stateless person is “a person who is not considered as a national by any State under the operation of its law”. (n.d)

Statelessness is usually referred to as an “invisible problem”, as people often do not even know about it. A stateless person is someone who has no nationality. On paper, stateless people do not exist. It seems like a simple or small problem, but without being identified as a citizen, people cannot go to school, work legally, own legal property, receive healthcare services, open a bank account, nor even get married.

We highly recommend you watch the following videos (2 minutes each) in order to better understand what is a stateless person and what is statelessness.

Stateless Person Definition - UNHCR 2018

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sap7aEVdgHo>

What does it mean to be stateless? - UNHCR 2019

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U8xZpNG39oc>

Background:

The UNHCR reports 3.9 million stateless people around the world, but the real global figure is frequently estimated to be at least 10 million people. Though it is extremely hard to estimate, as half of the countries (approximately) do not even count them. (UNHCR, 2020)

How do people become stateless?

First of all, it is important to understand that being undocumented is not the same as being stateless. Although, not having a birth certificate does put people at risk of becoming stateless, since it provides proof of parentage and where a person was born. UNICEF has worked on improving birth registration and civil registres, but millions of people around the world are still being denied a nationality.

Other factors that increase statelessness are:

- Discrimination in nationality laws:

Whether that be religious, racial or gender discrimination, more than $\frac{3}{4}$ of stateless people are known to be minorities (UNHCR,2020). In the case of gender discrimination, for example, a report led by UNICEF and the UNHCR (2019) states that twenty five countries have nationality laws that deny women the right to pass their nationality to their children.

- We recommend you to browse through this report, which explains the relationship between gender discrimination and childhood statelessness. It also has examples and stories of mothers and families whose children have become stateless due to discrimination, it will help you understand statelessness better. It is a bit long, but you might want to check the index and decide what segment is the most relevant for you:

- GENDER DISCRIMINATION AND CHILDHOOD STATELESSNESS (UNICEF and UNHCR Coalition)

<https://www.unhcr.org/ibelong/wp-content/uploads/Gender-discrimination-childhood-statelessness-web.pdf>

- **Conflict between gaps in nationality laws:**

There are countries that do not accept for children to inherit their parents nationality if they were born abroad, and others that will not give a nationality if *their parents* are not from their country: so what would happen to a child who is caught between these laws that prevent her/him to acquire a nationality? These gaps are a root cause of statelessness. Another problem is that there are countries where statelessness can be inherited, meaning that if the parents were stateless, so will their children, even if they are born in the country.

- **Conflict and situations of displacement:**

The lack of civil documentation amongst the displaced population also creates a high risk of falling into statelessness. People who are forced to leave their country due to armed conflict, for example, that within the chaos of fleeing war lose or leave the documentation that prove their ties to their country, thus making it impossible to register a birth.

The risk of statelessness also arises when a state is dissolved, ceases to exist or when its borders change. A historical example would be the fall of the Soviet Union, which dissolved into 15 different countries.

- **Deprivation of nationality:**

In some countries, citizens can lose their nationality simply from having lived outside their country for a long period of time (UNHCR,2020).

Usually, it is the combination of more than one factor that ends in situations of statelessness. Statelessness comes with discrimination and limited access to critical services such as education and health care (UNICEF,2019). Children are additionally exposed to protection risks: violence, abuse, trafficking and other forms of exploitation.

Relevant actors:

- States

As explained earlier, many of the situations that enhance the risk of statelessness have to do with the nationality laws of each country. Thus it is crucial for you to be aware of your delegation's nationality policy and their laws.

- UNHCR

Much of the information on this guide and on the topic itself is directly tied to the United Nations Refugee Agency, so it is important for you to be familiar with their actions and plans regarding the fight against statelessness. Although, you must remember that even if the topic is closely tied with UNHCR, the committee, as UNICEF, will be focusing on *Childhood Statelessness*.

- NGO's

Short for Non-governmental Organizations, NGO's, as its name suggests, are separate and independent entities, that sometimes even oppose governments or government actions. NGOs are created for the community and maintain their humanitarian objectives, they are seen as authoritative and impartial because of their work with academics and the very reason of being non-governmental, which also gives them more freedom when it comes to their actions. It is important for you to take them into account when researching ways on how to fight statelessness, since they *might* be providing more aid than some states.

How Topic A will be handled in the committee:

The most important thing for you to remember is that we will be focusing on *Childhood Statelessness*, so both your research and solutions should be focused on children. There are no clear "opposite sides" on this topic, nevertheless, it is important to take into account that countries do differ on certain aspects. Because this topic is closely tied to nationality laws and policy reforms, countries tend to be very decisive on the matter. If your delegation currently has a specific nationality law that might be considered discriminatory, for example, you must research the reason behind it and why they are not willing to change it, in order to make your

point. Despite the differences you encounter, the objective is for you to come up with a solution or approach to address *Childhood Statelessness*.

The case study: Ending childhood statelessness in Europe

“Despite the scale of the problem, most European countries have no framework to effectively deal with statelessness. This has left many stateless persons vulnerable to discrimination and human rights abuse. Unable to work, receive healthcare, and access social support systems, stateless people in Europe are often destitute and exploited. In many countries, stateless persons are held in immigration detention for long periods – sometimes indefinitely – simply because there is no country to return them to. Breaking the vicious cycle of destitution and detention requires law and policy reform.” (European Network on Statelessness, 2020)

We recommend you browse through this report on “Ending childhood statelessness in Europe” by UNICEF. It is a bit long, but do not let it overwhelm you, the information given is clear and easy to read. Identify the big titles first, and then choose what segment you are most interested in or the one that you consider the most useful. If not, you may use the second source, a website, that also addresses childhood statelessness in Europe.

1. **Pdf Report:**

<https://www.unicef.org/eca/media/5941/file/Ending%20childhood%20statelessness%20in%20Europe%20UNICEF-UNHCR.pdf>

2. **Website:**

<https://reliefweb.int/report/world/ending-childhood-statelessness-europe#:~:text=While%20there%20are%20no%20precise,children%20identified%20as%20'stateless'>

Research questions:

- What does *being stateless* imply?
- How do stateless children live?
- To what risks and dangers are stateless children exposed to?

- Is your delegation involved in armed conflict or any other situation that may enhance statelessness?
- What are your delegation's policies on nationality laws and statelessness?
- How have countries dealt with childhood statelessness? Could your delegation apply similar measures?

You might also want to research:

- The Coalition on Every Child's Right to a Nationality
- Global Action Plan to End Statelessness 2014 - 2024
- Handbook on Protection of Stateless Persons

QARMA's:

- What are the best measures to reduce childhood statelessness?
- How can the lives of stateless children improve? -Whilst still living in statelessness-
- Who should take action when it comes to reducing childhood statelessness? What kind of actions?
- What can be done in order for childhood statelessness to stop being an "invisible problem"?

Supporting sources Topic A:

- **Stateless Person Definition - UNHCR 2018**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sap7aEVdgHo>
- **What does it mean to be stateless? - UNHCR 2019**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U8xZpNG39oc>
- **To understand "birth registration":**
<https://www.unicef.org/protection/birth-registration>
- **Risks of statelessness for children of undocumented parents in Europe**
<https://www.statelessness.eu/blog/risks-statelessness-children-undocumented-parents-europe>

- **Ending Childhood Statelessness in Europe**

<https://reliefweb.int/report/world/ending-childhood-statelessness-europe#:~:text=While%20there%20are%20no%20precise,children%20identified%20as%20'stateless'>

Topic B: Physical Punishment Suffered by Children in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Introduction to the topic:

According to UNICEF (2018) “The Convention on the Rights of the Child obliges States parties to prohibit and eliminate all types of violence against minors, including corporal punishment and taking into consideration all the spaces in which they live, including at home”. Yet, in Latin America 62% of the children experience physical punishment. Only 10 countries have actual legislation that *completely* prohibits corporal punishment against boys, girls and adolescents, and none of them are in the Caribbean.

A good source to understand the magnitude of the situation– is this visual presentation created by the Pan American Health Organization and the World Health Organization Regional Office for the America, that uses indicators, graphs and data, also indicating as the guidelines on how they act from the health sector perspective on violence against children.

- **Violence against children in Latin America and the Caribbean: Data and action**
https://www.paho.org/hq/index.php?option=com_docman&view=download&slug=violence-against-children-in-latin-america-and-the-caribbean-data-and-action&Itemid=270&language=es

Background on the Topic:

The United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child has defined corporal punishment as the following:

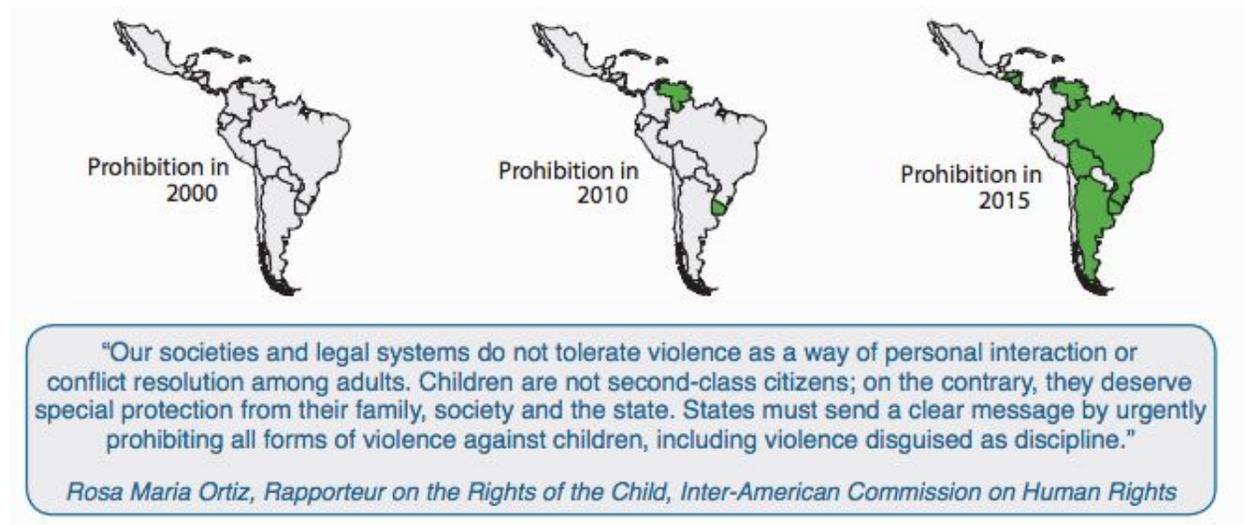
“any punishment in which physical force is used and intended to cause some degree of pain or discomfort, however light. Most involves hitting (“smacking”, “slapping”, “spanking”) children, with the hand or with an implement – whip, stick, belt, shoe, wooden spoon, etc. But it can also involve, for example, kicking, shaking or throwing children, scratching, pinching, biting, pulling hair or boxing ears, forcing children to stay in uncomfortable positions, burning, scalding or forced ingestion (for example, washing children’s mouths out with soap or forcing them to swallow hot spices). In the view of the Committee, corporal punishment is invariably degrading. In addition, there are other non physical forms of punishment which are also cruel and degrading and thus incompatible with the Convention. These include, for example, punishment which belittles, humiliates, denigrates, scapegoats, threatens, scares or ridicules the child.”

Children are the most vulnerable and dependent of citizens, and so the most susceptible to being assaulted. The report on “*Progress towards prohibiting all corporal punishment of children in Latin America*” (2015) explains that it is common in Latin American societies to believe that physical and other humiliating punishments are a necessary part of “disciplining” children, despite the fact that physical punishment and other violations of their physical integrity and human dignity cannot be justified. It also explains how experiencing corporal punishment to a poor mental health in both childhood and adulthood. It is also linked to “increased aggression and antisocial behaviour in children and an increased likelihood of perpetrating, experiencing and accepting violence as an adult.” Furthermore, it damages family relationships whilst teaching children that violence is an acceptable way to resolve conflict.

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Two out of every three children under the age of 5 are victims of various types of violence within their own homes. Additionally, 11% of the adults in the region consider corporal punishment as an adequate tool to educate children. In the Caribbean, the acceptance of corporal punishment as a method of discipline is almost 3 times greater than in the countries of Latin America (UNICEF,2018).

María Cristina Perceval, UNICEF Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean, expressed her concern on the issue:" UNICEF urgently appeals to the governments of the region to ensure the total prohibition of physical punishment in all fields".



(UNICEF, Save the Children, & Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment. (2015, May). [Map illustration]. Progress towards Prohibiting All Corporal Punishment of Children in Latin America. <http://endcorporalpunishment.org/wp-content/uploads/regional/LA-briefing-2015-EN.pdf>)

Relevant actors:

- States

As explained earlier, part of the problem relies on the lack of legislations that protect children in their own countries. Thus it is crucial for you to be aware of the measures that your delegation has taken in order to address the issue.

- **The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child**

“The body of 18 Independent experts that monitors implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child by its State parties.” (UNHRC,2020)

- **Save the Children**

A global membership organization, made up of Save the Children International and 29 national members.

Current situation:

You may look for the current state of your delegation’s policies on the prohibition of physical punishment against children in the following website:

Reports on every state and territory: Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment

<https://endcorporalpunishment.org/reports-on-every-state-and-territory/>

How Topic B will be handled in the committee:

The idea is for you to analyze how you could cooperate with one another in order to improve the situation in the region. There are no “opposite sides” in this debate, so it would instead become a discussion on the best measure or approach to address the issue. However, it is still very important for you to research your delegation’s current position regarding the measures or policies that are being implemented, and if they are actually working. You could also research a specific approach that another country has successfully implemented, and perhaps modify for it to work in the different countries of the region. Just keep in mind that UNICEF’s priority is always the children, and thus, this committee's priority is building solutions, not arguments.

Approach: Increased vulnerability during forced isolation.

This approach will allow the debate to focus on a much more current and imperative perspective on protecting children and eradicating physical violence against them. This source will not only

give you a very good context on the issue, but also provide you with many other -and reliable- sources as well:

PROTECTING CHILDREN DURING COVID-19: End Violence Against Children

<https://www.end-violence.org/protecting-children-during-covid-19-outbreak>

Research questions:

- What is domestic violence?
- What are your delegation's policies or laws on domestic and physical violence against children?
- What consequences could physical violence have on a child? (Long and short term)
- Which countries have successfully dealt with eradicating physical punishment against children? Could their measures be adopted to your delegation's context?
- How can culture play a role in the normalization of physical violence against children?

You might also want to research:

- Convention on the Rights of the Child

QARMA's:

- Which could be the best measures to reduce physical punishment against children?
- How can the lives of children be protected in their own homes?
- Who should take action when it comes to reducing physical punishment against children? What kind of actions?

Supporting sources Topic B:

- **Progress towards prohibiting all corporal punishment of children in Latin America**
<http://endcorporalpunishment.org/wp-content/uploads/regional/LA-briefing-2015-EN.pdf>
- **Reports on every state and territory: Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment**

<https://endcorporalpunishment.org/reports-on-every-state-and-territory/>

- **Violence against children in Latin America and the Caribbean: Data and action**
https://www.paho.org/hq/index.php?option=com_docman&view=download&slug=violence-against-children-in-latin-america-and-the-caribbean-data-and-action&Itemid=270&language=es
 - **PROTECTING CHILDREN DURING COVID-19: End Violence Against Children**
<https://www.end-violence.org/protecting-children-during-covid-19-outbreak>
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Topic B:

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