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## 1. Letter From the Secretary General

Dear delegates,

With my absolute pleasure, I would like to extend a heartfelt welcome to each delegate who is participating in the very first edition of FBOMUN. As the Secretary-General of this conference, I can confidently say that I am beyond excited to witness your commitment and the talent in diplomacy that you will bring to this year's event.

This year marks the beginning of our journey, and as we take this first step with high dedication, our committees will highlight the global challenges that people face every day, while also offering spaces shaped by creativity and imagination. Throughout this journey, I wholeheartedly believe that you will find ways to overcome the challenges ahead by utilizing your critical thinking skills.

As you step into the world of Model United Nations, I strongly encourage you to think like diplomats and approach each agenda with creativity and resilience. Never forget that the experiences and skills you gain during this conference will not only stay here; they will stay with you and continue to guide you throughout your future, inspiring both yourselves and others.

Thank you all for being a part of this journey and for helping us shape the very first chapter of FBOMUN. I wish you a delightful conference that fulfills you both academically and socially. Remember that you are the ones who will make this path unforgettable. If you ever need any further assistance, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Tuna Cevat TUNÇ

Secretary General of FBOMUN'26

## **2. Letter From the Head Of Academy**

Beloved delegates,

It is a great honor to be able to welcome you all to our school's first ever MUN. As the Head of the Academy of FBOMUN'26, I look forward to meeting such great minds with the ability to discuss the current issues going on around the world and generate various solutions to the mentioned conflicts. We all worked hard as the FBOMUN team to ensure you an exceptional experience. Thus, I would like to thank my special academic team, and the Organisation Team that I am a part of. I feel privileged to be able to work with people who amaze me with their unestimatable imagination and creativity. I hope that you enjoy the conference as much as we do, and have many memorable experiences. If you ever feel like you are having an issue, please feel free to contact me any time at all; I would be pleased to help you in any way. Wishing you a great conference!

Best regards,

Simay Kar

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### 3. Letter From the Co-Under Secretary General

Dear Delegates,

It's my honour to welcome you all to FBOMUN'26. I'm the Co-Under Secretary General of the Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural Committee (SOCHUM), Murat Efe Erođlu. This will be my 4th experience as an Under secretary General. We prepared this study guide with lots of effort (also lots of postpones) and after detailed research and trying to make it easy to understand easily here it is. I would like to thank my Secretary General Tuna Cevat Tun and my Director General İlay avuřođlu for choosing me as an USG.

In this committee we will talk about one of the most important problems in the world: Child labor. After the Industrial Revolution started in Great Britain, this problem started to increase one by one. Because of the industrial revolution started in Great Britain, it rapidly spread to all the land Great Britain has. Nowadays, the force on children isn't as hard as in the past in developed and developing countries but it is still an enormous problem in undeveloped countries. Congo is a best example of these undeveloped countries.

Thanks to everyone who wants to attend this conference and our committee. Hope to see you soon on May 9 and 10. Please don't hesitate to contact me anytime on WhatsApp or via my mail below. Good luck with all the dramas that will be in the committee ;)

Murat Efe Erođlu

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#### 4. Letter From the Co-Under Secretary General

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to FBOMUN'26 everyone! My name is Sümeyra, and I have the honour of serving as the Co-Under Secretary General on the 3rd Committee of the United Nations General Assembly; the Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural Committee, SOCHUM, at this conference. This will be my 5th experience as a chairboard member. I'm filled with excitement and happiness because I am extremely interested in the subject. I'd like to thank my Secretary General Tuna Cevat Tunç, my Director General İlay Çavuşoğlu and my Head of Academy Simay Kar for considering me suitable for this position.

I would like to emphasize just how emotional an issue this agenda item truly is. In today's world, it is simply unacceptable that children are made to work so hard without receiving fair compensation or even risking their lives in the process. For this reason, I believe that discussing this matter in the committee will help raise awareness about this issue. *"A child shouldn't hold a pickaxe; they should hold a pen and a future full of hope."*

Also, I want to say thank each and every one of you for choosing to be a part of this committee. Your presence and participation are what will make it truly meaningful. I look forward to seeing you all on May 9 and 10, ready to challenge perspectives, defend positions, and most importantly, enjoy the experience.

If you ever need assistance, clarification, or simply want to chat about the topic, please don't hesitate to reach out to me via WhatsApp or the email listed below. Wishing you all the best of luck. Let's cook! 🔥

Warm regards,

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## **5. Introduction to the Committee**

### **a. Introduction of Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Committee**

The Third Committee of the United Nations General Assembly, or the Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural Committee (SOCHUM), focuses on issues dealing with fundamental human rights in the international community.

SOCHUM was founded in 1945 in reaction to the establishment of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights. The Third Committee promotes and enforces basic freedoms and ideals meant to be enjoyed by the entire international community such as the right to life, the expression of cultures, the freedom of political participation, the protection of children's rights, and the promotion of social development, among many others.

SOCHUM derives its legitimacy from the original United Nations Charter and operates with the goal of designing peaceful settlements for issues within the large spectrum of social, humanitarian, and cultural complications in the international community. This body does so by initiating studies that encourage recommendations for the promotion of international cooperation and fundamental freedoms for all.

### **b. Introduction of Agenda Item: Addressing the Exploitation of Children in the Mining and Agricultural Sectors in the Democratic Republic of Congo**

Although the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) is one of the world's richest countries in terms of natural resources, this wealth does not benefit its people. On the contrary, it leads to conflict, corruption, and the unjust exploitation of workers. Thousands of children are forced to work in cobalt, copper, and gold mines minerals used in technologies like smartphones and electric cars and are deprived of their basic rights.

Children are not only forced to work in the depths of mines without safety measures and exposed to harmful chemicals; the agricultural sector is also rife with exploitation. There, people perform heavy labor, earn very little money, and have no chance to attend school. This is not just a labor issue; it is a major human rights issue.

As SOCHUM delegates, you mustn't only raise your voices against these injustices but also generate real solutions. Discuss steps such as improving global oversight, helping children recover, creating alternative ways for families to earn a living, and ensuring that all mining activities worldwide are conducted ethically.



- e. **International Labor Organization (ILO):** It is the expert organization of the United Nations that determines the standards in working life. It is the most authoritative institution in the world in the fight against child labor.
  - i. **ILO Convention No. 138 (Minimum Age), 1973:** It is the contract that determines that the starting age of children cannot be lower than the age when compulsory education ends (usually 15).
  - ii. **ILO Convention No. 182 (Worst Forms of Child Labour), 1999:** It defines "naturally dangerous" jobs such as mining as "Worst Forms of Child Labor" and prohibits them without exception for anyone under the age of 18.
  - iii. **IPEC +:** It is the ILO's global technical support program that aims to completely eliminate child labor.
  
- f. **United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF):** It is the main UN body established worldwide to protect children's rights, meet the basic needs of children and help them realize their potential.

## 7. Historical Background: the Role of Mines on the Colonialism

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), despite possessing some of the world's richest natural resources, has historically had this wealth exploited by a mining economy shaped during the colonial era. In this section, we would like to explain this process with in a historical spectrum.



GIF: From [OldMapsOnline.org](http://OldMapsOnline.org), made by Simeyra Ç.

**a. 1885–1908: The Beginning of Colonial Exploitation**

Following the *Berlin Conference* of 1885, the Congo became the personal colony of *Leopold II* of Belgium and began to be administered as the *Congo Free State*. During this period, the region's natural resources (rubber, ivory, and some minerals) were heavily exploited. The local population was forced to work to meet production quotas and was subjected to harsh working conditions. This process marked the beginning of the systematic exploitation of the Congo's natural resources by external powers.

**b. 1908–1960: Belgian Colonial Rule and the Expansion of Mining**

In 1908, as a result of international pressure, the Belgian government took over the administration of the Congo, and the country began to be governed as the *Belgian Congo*. During this period, the mining sector grew quickly, and major mines were opened, particularly in the Katanga region. Major companies such as *Union Minière du Haut-Katanga* played a significant role in the production of copper, cobalt, and other some minerals. However, this economic growth didn't significantly improve the living conditions of the local population; on the contrary, harsh working conditions and low pay remained common.

**c. After that 1960: Independence and the Continuation of the Colonial Economic Structure**

In 1960, The Democratic Republic of the Congo gained its independence. However, the “raw material extraction” based economic structure established during the colonial period largely persisted. 3TG minerals have played a significant role in mining operations in there, particularly since this century. After the colonial era, these minerals have been extracted for global industries and shipped to international markets, largely without providing economic benefits to the local population.

Today, human rights violations and child labor in the mining sector remain a significant concern due to factors like political instability, weak oversight mechanisms, and poverty.

**8. Legal Outlook and International Response**

The child labor crisis in the Democratic Republic of Congo is not caused by a legal vacuum, but by obstacles to the implementation of existing laws. This chapter deals with both national legislation and international interventions led by the UN.

- a. National and International Legal Framework:** DRC is a party to basic international conventions for the protection of children's rights. However, there is a deep gap between local laws and realities in the field.

**i. ILO Conventions No. 138:**

- **Minimum Working Age:** The contract states that the working age cannot be less than the end age of compulsory education (usually 15).

- **Light Work:** Allows children between the ages of 13-15 to work in "light jobs" that will not harm their education and impair their health.
- **Dangerous Jobs:** In risky jobs (such as mining) in terms of health, safety or morality, the working age is definitely determined as 18.
- **Exception of Developing Countries:** For countries with insufficient economy and education system, the minimum age can initially be determined as 14 (even that the DKC is included in this scope, this does not apply to mining).

ii. **ILO Conventions No. 182:**

- **Article 3 - Definitions:** The Convention "Worst Forms" collects it under 4 main headings:
  - a. Slavery, child trafficking and forced labor (including labor for debt).
  - b. The use of children in prostitution, pornography or illegal activities.
  - c. The use of children in illegal business such as drug production and trade.
  - d. Dangerous Works: Works that are likely to harm the health, safety or morality of children due to their nature or conditions.
- **Mining Highlight:** Entering mining tunnels in the DKC, carrying heavy loads and being exposed to chemicals directly <sup>4</sup>. It is considered dangerous work within the scope of the article.
- **Emergency Action Plan:** Countries that are parties to this agreement (including the DKC) should not only prohibit such work; they should prepare "Emergency Action Plans" to withdraw and rehabilitate children from these jobs.

iii. **The DRC Mining Code (2018):** With the updates made in local legislation, sanctions such as heavy fines and license cancellation have been imposed on companies employing children in mine sites.

iv. **The Dodd-Frank Act (Section 1502):** Although it was a US law, it revolutionized the global supply chain by requiring it to document that mines from the DRC were "unconflictive".

b. **UN Involvement:** The United Nations is not only an organization that provides humanitarian aid, but also the coordinator of the solution.

i. **UNICEF's Integrated Approach:** UNICEF directs children through tunnels to school by establishing "Child Friendly Spaces" in mining areas and providing economic support packages to families.

ii. **MONUSCO (UN Stability Mission):** The UN peacekeeping force in the east of the country is trying to reduce the risk of children being "forced to work"

by preventing the mines from being controlled by armed groups.

- iii. **The Fight Against Impunity:** The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) provides technical support to increase the judicial capacity of the local government by reporting violations on the ground.

## 9. Nowadays; Sectoral Analysis & Statistics (2025-2026)

In general, everyone focuses on cobalt mines, but statistics show that the agricultural sector is much more insidious and widespread. Although the headlines make cobalt mines adorned, more than 60% of the working children in Congo are actually in the fields. Conflicts in the east of the country are the cause of mining, and poverty in the west and center is the cause of child labor in agriculture. On this section, we would like to explain this title with two subtitle.

### a. Mining Sector: The "Visible" side of Crisis

The mining sector is the focus of the international public opinion and the media. Because the exploitation here is directly related to the supply chain of technology giants (Apple, Tesla, Samsung, etc.).

- i. According to 2024-2025 data, more than approximately 360,000 children work in mines in the states of Haut-Katanga and Lualaba alone (in light of UNICEF data and local discussions).
- ii. Tunnel collapses, spinal disorders due to heavy load carrying and respiratory diseases due to mineral dust affect children.
- iii. **ASM:** Child labor is not carried out in industrial fields, but in 90% unsupervised, primitive (craft) quarries.

You can use the compounds and elements in Key Terms to investigate the minerals related to this subject in detail.

### b. Agricultural Sector: The "Invisible" side of Crisis

Although the mines attract a lot of attention, according to the 2025 projections of the ILO and UNICEF, the main center of gravity of child labor is agriculture.

- i. Approximately 60% of the children working in DRC are in the agricultural sector. This is a much higher rate than mining.
- ii. **Fields of Activity:** Production of cocoa, coffee, rubber and palm oil. Also family farming for the food needs of the local people.
- iii. Children, who usually work with their families, completely break away from education and do heavy physical work in the fields from the first light of the morning until the evening.

- iv. The use of cutting tools, unprotected exposure to pesticides and working in extreme heat is a danger for children.

<i>Criterion</i>	<b>Mining</b>	<b>Agriculture</b>
<b>Main Reason</b>	Global technology demand	Extreme poverty and food needs
<b>Visibility</b>	High <i>(Media and Company edition)</i>	Low <i>(Rural and domestic)</i>
<b>Degree of Hazard</b>	Acute <i>(Risk of instant death/insury)</i>	Chronic <i>(Loss of education, pesticide poisoning)</i>
<b>Number of Employees</b>	~360,000 <i>(Haut-Katanga/Lualaba)</i>	Millions of children <i>(Nationwide)</i>

*Table: Comparison of Mining and Agriculture*

According to the data of the end of 2024, *about 7.5 million* children in the DRC cannot go to school due to conflict and poverty.

## **10. Informations about Significant Countries**

### **a. United States of America**

Child labor in the United States was a common phenomenon across the economy in the 19th century. Outside agriculture, it gradually declined in the early 20th century, except in the South which added children to textile and other industries. Child labor remained common in the agricultural sector until compulsory school laws were enacted by the states. However, lots of companies which are located in the USA are producing their products in undeveloped countries by children.

### **b. People’s Republic of China**

Child labor is not a negligible social phenomenon in China; about 7.74% of children aged from 10 to 15 were working in 2010, and they worked for 6.75 h per day on average, and spent 6.42 h less per day on study than other children. About 90% of child laborers were still in school and combined economic activity with schooling. The results show that child labor participation is positively associated with school dropout rate. A child living in a rural area is more likely to work. Compared with place of residence, the gender of a child are less important. The educational level of the household head and its interaction with the gender of the household head seem to be unimportant. However, household assets per capita and household involvement in non-agricultural activities are negatively related to the incidence of child labor. A child from a household with more adults is less likely to work. The prevalence of child labor in China exhibits significant regional variations. The child labor incidence is correlated with the development level of each region: the Western region has the highest percentage of child labor, followed by the Eastern and Central regions.

### **c. Uganda**

In recent years, Uganda has experienced a significant surge in child labor, rising from 14% in 2016/17 to 39.5% equivalent to 6.2 million children in 2021 (UBOS, 2021). This figure excludes children involved in household chores. This increase has occurred despite numerous policy interventions and the implementation of national action plans aimed at eliminating child labour by the Government of Uganda. In addition, Uganda produces these items by child: Bricks, Cattle, Charcoal, Coffee, Fish, Gold, Rice, Sand, Stones, Sugarcane, Tea, Tobacco and Vanilla.

**d. Nigeria**

Child labor in Nigeria is the employment of children under the age of 18 in a manner that restricts or prevents them from basic education and development. Child labour is pervasive in every state of the country. In 2006, the number of child workers was estimated at 15 million. Poverty is a major factor that drives child labour in Nigeria. In poor families, child labour is a major source of income for the family. Nigeria has over 62.9 million children aged 5-17, making up 30.3% of the population, according to data from the NCFLS, which surveyed 16,418 households nationwide. About 6 million of Nigeria's children do not go to school at all. In the current conditions, these children do not have the time, energy or resources to go to school. Domestic servants were the least visible form of child labour, and often sexually harassed. Amongst the informal economy and public places, street vending employed 64%. In informal enterprises in semipublic places, children were often observed as mechanics and bus conductors.

**e. Ethiopia**

Poverty and its related problems are some of the main causes of child labour in Ethiopia. The 2001 survey reported that about 90 percent of the children working in productive activities replied that they were working to either supplement family income (23.8 percent) or to improve it (66.0 percent). Poverty in Ethiopia is chronic due to, among others, population pressure, land degradation, unemployment and under-employment among adults and school leavers (youth). Children are paid lower wages than adults, not unionized, and do not demand workers' rights. They are also thought by some to be more efficient in certain types of work, though this has not been demonstrated. Thus, these people tend to prefer child workers to adults.

**f. United Kingdom**

When the Industrial Revolution began, industrialists used children as a workforce. Children as young as four and five years old often worked the same 12-hour shifts as adults, although some worked shifts as long as 14 hours. By the 1820s, 50% of English workers were under the age of 20. Many workers under 12 were employed by their parents (not directly by the business owner), and worked alongside parents in support roles. According to the Census of 1851, the majority of working children were not in factories, but were filling traditional roles, especially farming and domestic service. The 1851 Census shows that 98 per cent of children under the age of 10 did not work regularly for wages. Of children aged 10 to 14, 72% were either attending school or unoccupied.

## **11. Questions that a Resolution Paper Should Address**

1. How and with what substances can SOCHUM clean the DRC in terms of child labor?
2. What role should the UN Peacekeeping Force or other international bodies take on to increase the capacity of the DRC government to enforce existing child protection laws (the number of auditors, combating bribery)?
3. How can digital recording systems (blockchain) be integrated into local mining cooperatives to prevent data manipulation in the journey from the well to the port where the mine is extracted?
4. How can the governments treat the companies which produce their products by child?
5. How should the long-term treatment and rehabilitation processes of children exposed to heavy metals and mercury be supported by international organizations in cases where the local health system is inadequate?
6. How can we bring the exploitation in the agricultural sector, which is the main center of child labor, to the agenda when international attention is focused on cobalt mines?
7. How can governments teach children that they should not work, and what can they do to prevent poor families from forcing their children to work?

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