



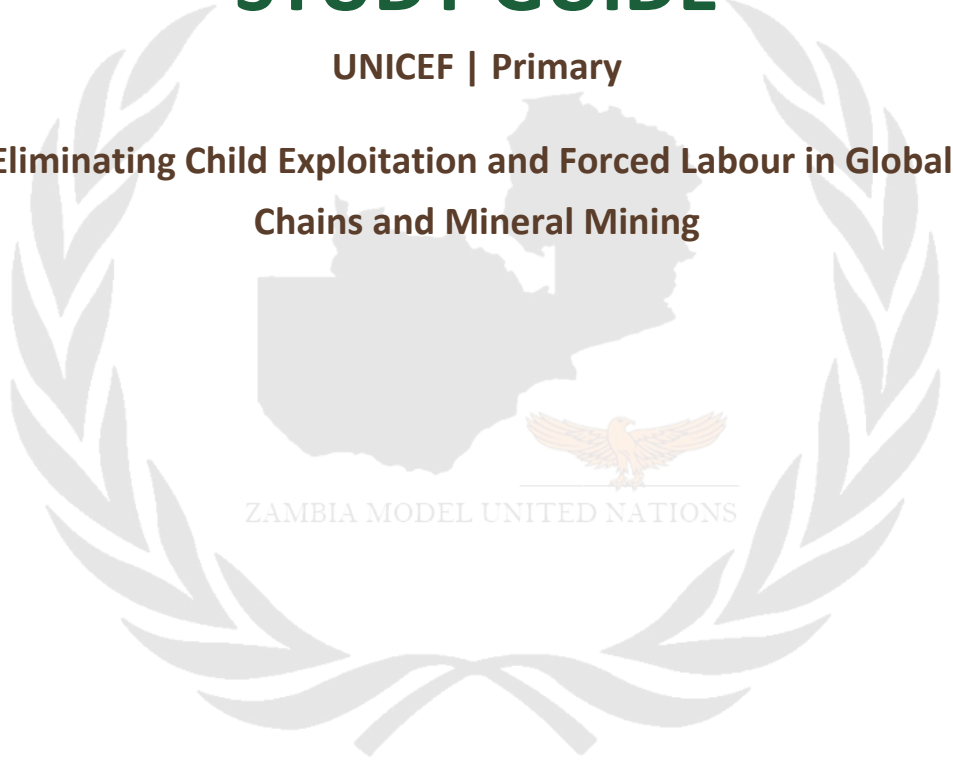
LUSAKA OAKTREE SCHOOL MODEL UNITED NATIONS
LOTSMUN 2026

Architects of Accountability • Redefining Power, Peace and Progress

STUDY GUIDE

UNICEF | Primary

**Topic: Eliminating Child Exploitation and Forced Labour in Global Supply
Chains and Mineral Mining**



ZAMBIA MODEL UNITED NATIONS

Message from the Secretary General

Dear Delegates,

It is my great pleasure to welcome you to LOTSMUN 2026.

This year, under the theme “Architects of Accountability: Redefining Power, Peace and Progress,” we invite you to consider not only how decisions are made but who is responsible for them, who is affected by them and how meaningful change can be achieved.

Model United Nations is more than an exercise in public speaking. It is an opportunity to understand complex international problems, challenge assumptions, negotiate with people who may disagree with you and transform competing ideas into meaningful solutions.

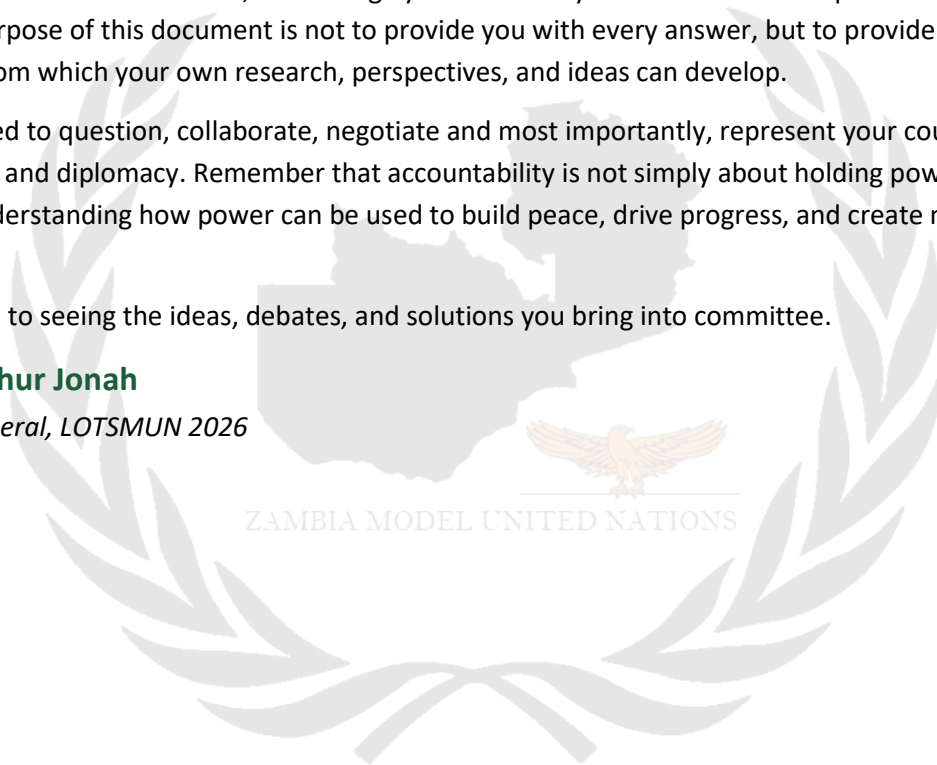
As you prepare for this committee, I encourage you to look beyond the information presented in this study guide. The purpose of this document is not to provide you with every answer, but to provide you with the foundation from which your own research, perspectives, and ideas can develop.

Come prepared to question, collaborate, negotiate and most importantly, represent your country’s position with accuracy and diplomacy. Remember that accountability is not simply about holding power responsible; it is about understanding how power can be used to build peace, drive progress, and create meaningful change.

I look forward to seeing the ideas, debates, and solutions you bring into committee.

Malenji Arthur Jonah

Secretary General, LOTSMUN 2026



ZAMBIA MODEL UNITED NATIONS

1. UNICEF

1.1 What is UNICEF?

UNICEF is the United Nations agency for children. It was created in 1946 and works to protect the rights of every child, especially the most disadvantaged, in peacetime and in emergencies. It works in over 190 countries and territories, on child protection, education, health, nutrition, clean water and more.¹ Its Executive Director is Catherine Russell.²

In this simulation, you are a **member country** at a UNICEF meeting. UNICEF does not order countries what to do. It supports governments, sets standards and shares knowledge, so the choices countries make decide whether children are protected. Here are some real rules and groups that matter for this topic:

Rule or group	What it does
UNICEF	Works with governments, communities and businesses to protect children from violence, exploitation and abuse. ^{3,4}
Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 32	Says children have the right to be protected from economic exploitation and from work that is hazardous or interferes with their education or development. Countries must set minimum ages for work, rules on hours and conditions, and penalties. ⁵
ILO (International Labour Organization)	The UN agency for work. It runs the labour conventions and, with UNICEF, produces the global estimates of child labour. ⁶
ILO Convention 182 (1999)	Bans the worst forms of child labour, including slavery, forced labour, trafficking, use of children in armed conflict and hazardous work. It became the first ILO convention to be ratified by every member, on 4 August 2020, when Tonga became the last country to ratify it. ⁷
EU Forced Labour Regulation (2024)	A European Union law adopted on 19 November 2024 that bans products made with forced labour from the EU market. ⁸

¹ UNICEF. What we do. <https://www.unicef.org/what-we-do>

² UNICEF. UNICEF Executive Director Catherine Russell remarks at the second regular session of the UNICEF Executive Board. <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/unicef-executive-director-catherine-russell-remarks-second-regular-session-unicef>

³ UNICEF. What we do... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

⁴ UNICEF. Child labour and responsible business conduct. <https://www.unicef.org/childrightsandbusiness/workstreams/global-supply-chains/business-conduct>

⁵ Child Rights International Network (CRIN). Article 32: Child labour (Convention on the Rights of the Child). <https://archive.crin.org/en/home/rights/convention/articles/article-32-child-labour.html>

⁶ ILO and UNICEF. Despite progress, child labour still affects 138 million children globally (Child Labour Global Estimates 2024, June 2025). <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/despite-progress-child-labour-still-affects-138-million-children-globally-ilo-unicef>

⁷ UN News. Convention on worst forms of child labour receives universal ratification (4 August 2020). <https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/08/1069492>

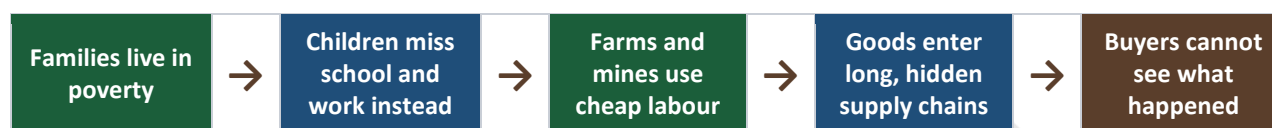
⁸ Latham & Watkins. EU adopts ban on products made with forced labour (November 2024). <https://www.lw.com/en/insights/2024/11/EU%20Adopts%20Ban%20on%20Products%20Made%20With%20Forced%20Labour>

2. Introduction to the Topic

This topic is about **child labour**, **forced labour** and **exploitation** in the making of the goods we buy. A **supply chain** is the long path a product travels, from the farm or mine where a material is produced, through factories and traders, to the shop where it is sold. When the path is long and hidden, no one may know whether children were harmed along the way.

It is important to know the difference. Article 32 does not say that children may never do any work. It says children must be protected from work that is **hazardous**, harms their education or hurts their development.⁹ Helping at home in safe ways is different from child labour.

Here is one way the problem builds up:



This is a simplified picture. UNICEF says child labour is both a cause and a consequence of poverty, so it can keep families trapped for generations.¹⁰ It shows why the answer needs both **better rules for businesses** and **help for families**.

2.1 The scale of the problem

The 2024 estimates from the ILO and UNICEF found that nearly **138 million children** were in child labour in 2024, and about **54 million** of them were doing hazardous work. That is more than 20 million fewer than in 2020, and about half the 246 million in 2000. But the world missed its target of ending child labour by 2025, and progress would need to speed up about eleven times to end it within five years.¹¹

Sub-Saharan Africa has the heaviest burden, with around 87 million children, nearly two-thirds of the world total. Agriculture accounts for 61% of child labour, services (including domestic work) for 27%, and industry (including mining) for 13%.¹²

138 million children were in child labour in 2024	54 million were doing hazardous work	87 million of them lived in sub-Saharan Africa
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⁹ Child Rights International Network (CRIN). Article 32: Child labour (Convention on the Rights... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

¹⁰ UNICEF. Ending child labour through a multisectoral approach (brief, December 2021).

<https://www.unicef.org/media/111686/file/Child%20Labour%20Brief%20Dec%202021%20Final.pdf>

¹¹ ILO and UNICEF. Despite progress, child labour still affects 138 million children globally... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

¹² ILO and UNICEF. Despite progress, child labour still affects 138 million children globally... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

3. Key Definitions

These definitions are written in simple language and adapted from the UN, ILO and UNICEF sources listed in the bibliography. Learn them, because you will use them in speeches and clauses.

Term	Meaning
Child	A person under 18 years old.
Child labour	Work that harms children or takes away their childhood, health, education or dignity. ^{13,14}
Hazardous work	Work that is likely to harm a child's health, safety or development, such as heavy loads, dangerous tools, dust or tunnels. ^{15,16}
Worst forms of child labour	The most serious kinds, including slavery, forced labour, trafficking, use in armed conflict and hazardous work. They are banned by ILO Convention 182. ¹⁷
Forced labour	Work that a person is made to do against their will, under threat or pressure.
Exploitation	Treating someone unfairly to make a profit, for example making children work for very little pay. ¹⁸
Child trafficking	Moving children from one place to another to be exploited. ¹⁹
Convention on the Rights of the Child	The UN treaty setting out the rights of every child. Article 32 protects children from economic exploitation. ²⁰
Minimum age	The youngest age at which a child may work. Countries must set one, with rules on hours and conditions. ²¹
ILO	The International Labour Organization, the UN agency that sets labour standards. ²²
ILO Convention 182	The 1999 treaty banning the worst forms of child labour. Every ILO member has ratified it. ²³
Ratify	When a country formally agrees to be bound by a treaty. ²⁴

¹³ Child Rights International Network (CRIN). Article 32: Child labour (Convention on the Rights... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

¹⁴ ILO and UNICEF. Despite progress, child labour still affects 138 million children globally... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

¹⁵ ILO and UNICEF. Despite progress, child labour still affects 138 million children globally... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

¹⁶ Humanium. The current state of child labour in cobalt mines in the Democratic Republic of the... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

¹⁷ UN News. Convention on worst forms of child labour receives universal ratification (4 August... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

¹⁸ Child Rights International Network (CRIN). Article 32: Child labour (Convention on the Rights... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

¹⁹ UN News. Convention on worst forms of child labour receives universal ratification (4 August... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

²⁰ Child Rights International Network (CRIN). Article 32: Child labour (Convention on the Rights... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

²¹ Child Rights International Network (CRIN). Article 32: Child labour (Convention on the Rights... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

²² UN News. Convention on worst forms of child labour receives universal ratification (4 August... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

²³ UN News. Convention on worst forms of child labour receives universal ratification (4 August... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

²⁴ UN News. Convention on worst forms of child labour receives universal ratification (4 August... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

Term	Meaning
Supply chain	The whole path a product takes from raw material to the shop or the buyer.
Raw material	A basic material, such as cocoa, cotton or cobalt, that is used to make other things.
Traceability	Being able to follow a product or material back through every step to its source. ²⁵
Due diligence	Checking carefully for risks, such as child labour, in a company's own work and in its suppliers, and acting on what it finds. ²⁶
Responsible purchasing	Buying in a way that supports fair conditions, for example paying fair prices and not demanding impossible deadlines. ²⁷
Mining	Digging materials such as copper, cobalt or gold out of the ground.
Artisanal and small-scale mining (ASM)	Mining done by individuals, families or small groups, often by hand and with few safety rules. ²⁸
Cobalt	A metal used in rechargeable batteries. More than half of the world's cobalt reserves are in the DRC. ²⁹
Critical minerals	Minerals such as cobalt, copper and manganese that are needed for modern technology and clean energy. ³⁰
Poverty	Not having enough money or resources to meet basic needs such as food, housing and schooling.
Social protection	Support from governments, such as cash payments to poor families, to help them cope with hard times. ³¹
Child protection system	The laws, workers and services that work together to keep children safe from harm. ³²
Enforcement	Making sure that laws are followed, for example through inspections and penalties. ³³
Remediation	Putting things right for a child who has been harmed, for example by helping the child return to school.
Accountability	Making sure that people and institutions answer for what they do, through reports, checks and honest results.

²⁵ Terre des Hommes Netherlands. Child labour persists in Zambia's manganese and copper mining as... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

²⁶ UNICEF. Child labour and responsible business conduct... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

²⁷ UNICEF. Child labour and responsible business conduct... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

²⁸ Terre des Hommes Netherlands. Child labour persists in Zambia's manganese and copper mining as... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

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³¹ UNICEF. Ending child labour through a multisectoral approach (brief, December 2021)... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

³² UNICEF. Ending child labour through a multisectoral approach (brief, December 2021)... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

³³ US Department of Labor, Bureau of International Labor Affairs. Child labor in the Democratic... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

4. Case Studies

These cases show the problems and some solutions in real life. Facts come from the sources in the bibliography. Numbers can change and some are estimates, so check dates and methods. **You must represent your assigned country's view.** The descriptions are deliberately not graphic.

4.1 The DRC: cobalt and children

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) holds more than half of the world's cobalt reserves.³⁴ Cobalt is used in rechargeable batteries. UNICEF has estimated that about 40,000 children work in DRC mines, and a CBS News investigation in 2018 found that roughly 20% of DRC cobalt is mined by hand.³⁵ In 2024, over 6,200 children were identified in Haut-Katanga and Lualaba provinces alone. Children dig, carry heavy loads and handle ore without protective equipment, and earn less than \$2 a day.³⁶

Progress is slow but real. The African Development Bank's PABEA-Cobalt project helped 9,016 children leave mining by December 2024, and the DRC created a commission called CISTEMA in 2020.³⁷ But the US Department of Labor rated the DRC "minimal advancement" in 2024, and said child labour and forced child labour still exist in mining several minerals, including cobalt, copper, gold, coltan and tin.³⁸ The CBS investigation also found that without labels, it is impossible to trace child-mined cobalt through the global supply chain to the companies that buy it.³⁹

4.2 Zambia: children in manganese and copper mining

Zambia is not far from these problems. A report published in July 2026 found that child labour persists in Zambia's artisanal and small-scale mining of manganese and copper. Children as young as 10, mostly boys, crawl into narrow shafts, carry heavy loads, sort and move minerals, and older teenagers supervise younger workers or act as lookouts. Zambia's 2023 Child Labour Survey counted about 1,462 children in mining and quarrying, though data on mining is limited.⁴⁰

The report says **poverty** is the main driver, and that child labour usually happens inside family-based mining. It warns that weak traceability lets minerals linked to child labour reach European and Asian markets without buyers knowing. It recommends better research, stronger inspections, better traceability, social protection programmes and closer work between government and industry.⁴¹

4.3 Cocoa: the chocolate supply chain

Child labour is not only found in mining. A 2020 study by NORC found about 1.56 million children in cocoa-related child labour in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana in 2018–19, and 95% of them, about 1.48 million, were in

³⁴ Humanium. The current state of child labour in cobalt mines in the Democratic Republic of the... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

³⁵ CBS News. Children mining cobalt in Democratic Republic of Congo: CBS News investigation (5... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

³⁶ Humanium. The current state of child labour in cobalt mines in the Democratic Republic of the... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

³⁷ Humanium. The current state of child labour in cobalt mines in the Democratic Republic of the... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

³⁸ US Department of Labor, Bureau of International Labor Affairs. Child labor in the Democratic... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

³⁹ CBS News. Children mining cobalt in Democratic Republic of Congo: CBS News investigation (5... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

⁴⁰ Terre des Hommes Netherlands. Child labour persists in Zambia's manganese and copper mining as... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

⁴¹ Terre des Hommes Netherlands. Child labour persists in Zambia's manganese and copper mining as... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

hazardous conditions. In cocoa-growing households, 43% of children in Côte d'Ivoire and 59% in Ghana were in child labour.⁴² The chocolate industry spent about \$215 million on certification schemes and aimed to cut the worst forms of child labour by 70% by 2020, but the researchers said that the goal was set without fully understanding how complex the problem is.⁴³

4.4 The European Union: a law with teeth?

In November 2024, the European Union adopted a regulation banning products made with forced labour from its market. It applies three years after it was published. The European Commission investigates cases outside the EU, and national authorities handle cases inside it. A decision in one member state is recognised in all the others. A database will help authorities spot risky areas and products. Countries must set penalties that are “effective, proportionate and dissuasive”.⁴⁴ The regulation adds to other due diligence laws.⁴⁵ Producer countries will want to know how it will affect their farmers and miners.

4.5 Progress so far: what the numbers tell us

Child labour has fallen by about half since 2000, from 246 million to 138 million children. In Asia and the Pacific it fell from 49 million to 28 million, while in Latin America and the Caribbean it fell from 8 million to 7 million. But sub-Saharan Africa still has around 87 million children in child labour.⁴⁶ The ILO and UNICEF urge governments to expand social protection, strengthen child protection systems, ensure quality education, provide decent jobs for adults and enforce accountability across supply chains.⁴⁷

4.6 More cases to research

The US Department of Labor lists child labour in the mining of cobalt, copper, diamonds, gold, coltan, tin and tungsten in the DRC.⁴⁸ Look at what your own country has done to protect children and to check its supply chains.

⁴² Confectionery News. NORC final report released, finds over 1m cases of child labour in West Africa's cocoa sector (19 October 2020). <https://www.confectionerynews.com/Article/2020/10/19/NORC-final-report-released-finds-over-1m-cases-of-child-labour-in-West-Africa-s-cocoa-sector/>

⁴³ Confectionery News. NORC final report released, finds over 1m cases of child labour in West... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

⁴⁴ Latham & Watkins. EU adopts ban on products made with forced labour (November 2024)... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

⁴⁵ Latham & Watkins. EU adopts ban on products made with forced labour (November 2024)... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

⁴⁶ ILO and UNICEF. Despite progress, child labour still affects 138 million children globally... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

⁴⁷ ILO and UNICEF. Despite progress, child labour still affects 138 million children globally... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

⁴⁸ US Department of Labor, Bureau of International Labor Affairs. Child labor in the Democratic... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

5. Major Actors

5.1 Countries and regions

Your delegation may represent any country, and your country may not be listed here. The table shows broad patterns only. **Always check your country's recent statements, laws and policies before you rely on them.**

Type of country	What to expect
Mineral-producing countries, such as the DRC and Zambia	Need income from mining and want to keep their markets open. They often ask for help with schools, inspections and social protection rather than bans. ^{49,50}
Cocoa- and farm-producing countries, such as Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana	Depend on farming income and often want fairer prices for farmers, so families do not need child labour. ⁵¹
Countries that buy and import goods, such as the EU members	Are more likely to support laws that require companies to check their supply chains and to ban products made with forced labour. ⁵²
Countries with the most child labour, mainly in sub-Saharan Africa	Have around 87 million children in child labour and often stress poverty, schools and funding. ⁵³
Rich donor countries and funds	Give money for education, social protection and child protection. They often ask for clear plans and checks on results. ⁵⁴

Almost every country says it wants to end child labour, and the ILO convention has been ratified by every member.⁵⁵ The disagreements tend to come over **money** (who pays), **trade rules** (whether to ban products) and **responsibility** (who must do more).

5.2 Organisations and networks

- **UNICEF.** Works with governments and businesses to protect children.^{56,57}
- **ILO.** Sets labour standards and produces child labour estimates with UNICEF.⁵⁸

⁴⁹ US Department of Labor, Bureau of International Labor Affairs. Child labor in the Democratic... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

⁵⁰ Terre des Hommes Netherlands. Child labour persists in Zambia's manganese and copper mining as... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

⁵¹ Confectionery News. NORC final report released, finds over 1m cases of child labour in West... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

⁵² Latham & Watkins. EU adopts ban on products made with forced labour (November 2024)... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

⁵³ ILO and UNICEF. Despite progress, child labour still affects 138 million children globally... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

⁵⁴ ILO and UNICEF. Despite progress, child labour still affects 138 million children globally... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

⁵⁵ UN News. Convention on worst forms of child labour receives universal ratification (4 August... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

⁵⁶ UNICEF. What we do... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

⁵⁷ UNICEF. Child labour and responsible business conduct... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

⁵⁸ ILO and UNICEF. Despite progress, child labour still affects 138 million children globally... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

- **African Development Bank.** Runs the PABEA-Cobalt project that helped 9,016 children leave mining.⁵⁹
- **Save the Children and other charities.** Run reintegration programmes for children leaving mines and work in communities.⁶⁰
- **Terre des Hommes.** A children's rights organisation that reported on child labour in Zambia's mining.⁶¹
- **Companies that buy minerals, cocoa and other goods.** They decide how closely their suppliers are checked and how they buy.⁶²
- **Families and communities.** The people closest to the problem. Solutions have to work for them.⁶³



⁵⁹ Humanium. The current state of child labour in cobalt mines in the Democratic Republic of the... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

⁶⁰ Humanium. The current state of child labour in cobalt mines in the Democratic Republic of the... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

⁶¹ Terre des Hommes Netherlands. Child labour persists in Zambia's manganese and copper mining as... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

⁶² UNICEF. Child labour and responsible business conduct... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

⁶³ Terre des Hommes Netherlands. Child labour persists in Zambia's manganese and copper mining as... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

6. Preparing for Committee

6.1 Questions a strong resolution answers

1. **What problem does it solve?** Child labour on farms, in mines, in factories, or in the whole supply chain? In which place, and for whom?
2. **Who will do it?** Name who will run it, such as governments, companies, communities or organisations.
3. **How will it be paid for?** Ideas without money or a plan stay ideas.
4. **Does it help families as well as children?** Will children be able to go to school, and will families have enough income?
5. **Does it make companies accountable?** How will buyers check where their goods come from?
6. **Does it reach the hardest places?** Mines, farms and informal work are often far from inspectors.
7. **How will it be checked?** Add reporting, and a date to review progress.
8. **Can it win support?** Will delegates from different regions and views vote for it?

6.2 Guiding questions for your research

1. How many children are in child labour in your country or region, and in which sectors?
2. Has your country ratified ILO Conventions 138 and 182 and put them into law?
3. Does your country produce minerals, cocoa or other goods that are exported? Or does it import them?
4. What laws does your country have on supply chain due diligence or on banning goods made with forced labour?
5. How does your country support poor families and keep children in school?
6. What can your country realistically offer: money, inspectors, technology, training?
7. Which countries share your goals, and which will you need to persuade? Where would you compromise?

6.3 Where to research

- **UNICEF** website, including its pages on child protection and children's rights in global supply chains.
- **ILO** and **UNICEF** global estimates of child labour.
- **US Department of Labor** reports on child labour in different countries.
- **UN News** (news.un.org), for recent reports in plain language.
- Your country's statements at the UN, and the websites of its labour, education and trade ministries.

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